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Recovering the Saumurois: Lay Patronage to Saint-Florent of Saumur, ca. 950-1150

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RECOVERING THE SAUMUROIS: LAY PATRONAGE TO SAINT-FLORENT OF SAUMUR, ca. 950-1150

by

Adam C. Matthews

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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In the mid-tenth century, the lay powers of the Loire valley established the abbey of Saint-Florent at Saumur with the local aristocracy welcoming the monks and forming spiritual and economic relationships through acts of patronage. The brothers remembered gifts of property, grants of rights, and exemptions in charters which were ultimately collected into the abbey’s first cartulary, the *Livre Noir*. Despite this wealth of sources, historians have paid only cursory attention to Saint-Florent in recent scholarship. The present study incorporates the abbey’s charter sources into broader debates concerning society in eleventh-century France. The use of case studies provides insight into the societal norms of aristocratic families in the environs of Saumur. This examination demonstrates that inter- and intra-familial cooperation was a defining quality of the Saumurois, and one which the counts of the Loire valley facilitated and maintained through public acts of authority. This image of the Loire opposes traditional interpretations of social upheaval around the year 1000. A summary of interactions in the Saumurois adds to the growing scholarly rejection of the *mutationiste* paradigm. In doing so, the evidence of the Saumurois might be more fully integrated into our understanding of central medieval France.
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Adam C. Matthews
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NOTES

Note on Names and Places

An effort has been made to convert the names of notable figures, such as the counts and countesses of the Loire valley, into their standard modern English equivalents. This has also been done with common names attributed to lesser known figures—an example: Bernardus = Bernard. Ambiguous names, such as Go(s/d)fredus (could be either, Geoffrey, or Godfrey), with multiple spellings provided in the same source, or those without modern equivalents have been left in the Latin spelling found in the charters and cartulary entries.

Except for major cities, such as Angers, Tours, and Poitiers, and recognizable modern locations, place names have been left in their Latin spelling.

Note of the Dating of Entries in BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930

For the dating of entries in the Livre Noir—unless otherwise specified, I have deferred to the dating scheme presented in Marc Saché, *Inventaire Sommaire des Archives Départementales Antérieures à 1790 Maine-et-Loire Archives Ecclésiastiques*, *Serie H*, t. 2 (Angers: Siraudeau, 1926).
Note on the Appearance of Latin Words and Letter Groupings

In Chapter 2, a distinction is made between abbreviations for Latin words versus letter groupings. In the text, words appear in italics, while individual letters and letter groupings are rendered in bold.
Principal locations of the Loire valley and centers of significant property donation.
INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1026, the Loire valley’s political landscape dramatically changed. The house of Anjou, after a protracted conflict, finally took from the counts of Blois one of the principal fortifications of the central Loire—the castrum of Saumur. This victory cleared a path for Angevin dominance of the valley which had previously been blocked by strong Blésois influence. The events at Saumur, however, also affected the monastic landscape of western France. Following two centuries of struggle for survival and security, the monastery of Saint-Florent was burned during the attack. Nevertheless, with the close of the Saumurois as a warzone and under the careful management of a savvy abbot, William of Dol (1070-1118), the community survived.

Indeed, Saint-Florent grew into one of the region’s most patronized houses and controlled properties extending from the Welsh marches to Norman Sicily. The abbey reached its zenith during the latter half of the eleventh century. By the end of the thirteenth century, the monastery boasted three hundred monks and administered more than one hundred priories.1 The abbey became a key social player on the Loire. Kin networks forged lasting bonds with the monks through gifts of property. In pursuing the favor of the house’s patron saint, this diverse group of local families and individuals also formed relationships amongst themselves. Saint-Florent helped to define the lay community and strengthen the interconnectivity of its members. In making gifts to the monks, individuals sought the recognition (laudatio) of their family members and expressed concern for the spiritual welfare of their loved ones.

1 George T. Beech, Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?: The Case for St. Florent of Saumur (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 7.
The donation records are not limited to the financial or political concerns of the abbey. They also depict intimate details of the relationships which were vital to the legitimacy and continuity of gifts. To protect both social and economic interests, the monks committed transactions to parchment. These charters included information which the brothers viewed as essential for ensuring the security of monastic properties while also preserving the continued spiritual association with the abbey’s many patrons. This effort resulted in the accumulation of a rich body of records. To this day, the corpus continues to serve as one of the abbey’s chief legacies to modern scholars.

The surviving collection of Saint-Florent’s charters and cartularies is one of the largest in western France—rivaling that of Marmoutier. The abbey’s records in recent scholarship have been used to comment on subjects with only limited relevance to the monks and their patrons. Saint-Florent has never been the topic of a comprehensive, book-length analysis and few studies have used the entirety of the available charter evidence. With many of the sources having received only cursory examination, a substantial gap exists in scholarly perceptions of the Loire in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Many groundbreaking studies in the history of this region, such as Stephen White’s Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints, have neglected the role played by Saint-Florent.² What has gone largely unrecognized is that by using the abbey’s records it is possible to examine the lay patronage of one of the richest monasteries in western France. In conducting this examination, historians may gain insight into how the

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² See also, Stephen White, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050-1150 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1988), 17. White listed five abbeys he believed were the most important houses of the Loire region. His argument for inclusion in this list was based on grounds that their past and wealth conformed to similar patterns from the tenth to the twelfth centuries (see Chapter 4).
individuals and families of the Saumurois experienced interpersonal and interfamilial relationships—as well their bonds with the monks themselves.

Sources

The Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis (HSF) is the sole chronicle concerning the abbey’s history. In this text, the monks narrated the foundation and external affairs of the abbey from the ninth century through the twelfth century.³ The recent works of George Beech (2005) and Philippe Depreux (2006) demonstrate the scholarly consensus that a precursor of the HSF had been composed in the middle of the eleventh century and later, in the thirteenth century, was copied into the Livre Rouge.⁴ An edition of the HSF was first published by E. Martene in 1717.⁵ A more complete edition was published in 1869 by Paul Marchegay and Émile Mabille.⁶

The most numerous sources for the abbey of Saint-Florent, however, are as yet unexamined documents pertaining to notices, donations, sales, mortgages, confirmations, and quitclaims made by the monastery’s patron community. In contrast to the neighboring monasteries of Saint-Aubin of Angers, La Trinité of Vendôme, and others, Saint-Florent—like the abbey of Marmoutier—is unusual in that a great many charter

³ Archives Départementales de Maine-et-Loire, H 3715.
⁶ For the most recent edition, see Paul Marchegay and Émile Mabille, “Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis,” in Chroniques de eglises d’Anjou recueillies et publiées pour la Société de l’histoire de France (Paris: Libraire de la Société de l’Histoire de France, 1869), 217-328. This work will hereafter be cited as “Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis.” With the existence of this edition, full examinations of the originals are no longer conducted in a significant manner.
originals survive.\(^7\) In addition to a plethora of charters (each with multiple copies), there are four unpublished cartularies: the *Livre Noir*, *Livre Blanc*, *Livre d’argent*, and *Livre Rouge*.\(^8\) These sources are distributed between the Archives départementales de Maine-et-Loire and the Bibliothèque nationale de France.\(^9\) The *Livre Noir* (BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930) is the monastery’s earliest cartulary and covers the period of the abbey’s greatest influence during the last three quarters of the eleventh century and the first decades of the twelfth century. By the mid-twelfth century it was displaced by the *Livre Blanc* as a repository for contemporary entries. The *Livre Noir* is also the cartulary that is most coeval to the originals of its component entries. On equal footing with the *HSF*, the *Livre Noir* is the richest source for this ‘golden age’ of the abbey’s history. It is, however, also one of the most neglected sources in prior scholarship. In 141 folios the *Livre Noir* records 271 exchanges which range in date from 824 to 1159. The bulk of these transactions, however, are from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.\(^10\)

The original *Livre Noir* was thought lost in the early nineteenth century but later was found in the Phillipps Library and returned to France in 1908 (it was catalogued as Phillipps 70 in that collection).\(^11\) This manuscript was then conserved in the Bibliothèque

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\(^9\) For more detail on each cartulary and the location of specific charters of relevance, see Primary Sources in Bibliography. See also, Répertoire des cartularies médiévaux et modernes, abbaye de Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur (in traitement électronique des manuscrits et des archives): http://www.cn-telma.fr/cartulR/producteur130/.


\(^11\) The version of the cartulary in my possession is a microfilm of the BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930. Hereafter, unless otherwise specified, ‘*Livre Noir*’ refers to BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930.
nationale de France and remains there to this day. In 1909, Henri Omont made an initial catalogue entry for the cartulary. Using Omont’s work, in 1926, Marc Saché created a complete summary of the entries in his *Inventaire Sommaire des Archives Départementales Antérieures à 1790 Maine-et-Loire Archives Ecclésiastiques*. More recently, in compiling material for the *Traitement électronique des manuscrits et des archives* (*Télma*), archivists have identified two full copies and one partial copy of the cartulary. One, AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3712, is in Angers. Another, AD Tours, H 1171 (*Tours Cedex*), is in Tours. The partial copy (in French) BnF Fr. 24133, is in Paris. In addition to these three copies, *Télma* reported ten extracts from the original cartulary (or at least from one of its copies). Six of these are in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, one is in Tours, another in Poitiers, and another in Dijon. In the nineteenth-century, Paul Marchegay and Émile Mabille reorganized these sources into collections based on geographic groupings (their work pulled together charters from multiple sources).

While Marchegay never produced a critical edition of the *Livre Noir*, in 1843 he published an abbreviated French summary. His annotations followed the folio organization present in the original cartulary, but as the original was still in England during his work and did not return to France until 1908, it is uncertain whether his work was based on the copy, AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3712. His purpose for doing this was to compile a list of persons, churches, and priories documented in the cartulary. While

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12 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930.
14 See the traitement électronique des manuscrits et des archives: www.cn-telma.fr/cartulR/codico8181/?para=4990119.
helpful, Marchegay’s examination cannot serve as an edition of the cartulary for further study. His work, though one hundred and fifty years old, has not received necessary revisions or qualifications but remains a principal source for gathering evidence concerning the monastery. Until his partial editions of the primary sources are updated with new and comprehensive treatments of the original documents, use of them will continue to limit possible interpretations of the abbey’s past.

Previous Scholarship on the Abbey of Saint-Florent

In 2005, George Beech noted that despite the sheer density of the sources, “Saint-Florent remains a largely unknown quantity in the ecclesiastical history of medieval France.”16 This situation is improving. Nonetheless, most of the publications using Saint-Florent’s documents touch only tangentially on affairs of the monastery. Building on work done in the 1980s by his student William Ziezulewicz, Bernard Bachrach used Saint-Florent’s charter and cartulary evidence in *Fulk Nerra* (1993). He deployed the abbey’s documents as resources for the political history of Anjou. However, Bachrach’s focus on his biographical subject shaped his reading of these sources.17 The social relevance of the charters was not a focus in his work. In 2004, Richard Barton examined Saint-Florent’s records for his *Lordship in the County of Maine*. Emphasizing the social impact of lordship, Barton described the significance of Saint-Florent’s evidence in understanding the use of power and customs of aristocratic society.18 While his analysis

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16 Beech, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?*, 4. In note 4 Beech stated that no comprehensive work on the abbey has been conducted since Jean Huynes, ’seventeenth-century work: Histoire générale du monastère de Saint-Florent près Saumur. This work is preserved in both Les Archieves departmentales de Maine-et-Loire (Angers, H 3746) and La Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris 1862).
18 Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, 133, 142-3. On these pages, Barton addressed the issue of unlawful exactions taken from the monks.
is of great value, Saint-Florent was still tangential to Barton’s focus on the county of Maine.

Bachrach’s student, William Ziezulewicz, is one of the few scholars to have worked specifically on the patron community of Saint-Florent. The value of Ziezulewicz’s interpretations, however, remains limited. This is largely because of the manner in which he employed the sources. Ziezulewicz did not ignore the cartularies but his use of their entries was cursory. He favored instead the HSF. This preference is particularly noticeable in his analysis of the abbey’s early history. Moreover, his contributions came in the form of brief articles which restricted the range of his investigations. Ziezulewicz produced most of his scholarship in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, English language publications concerning the abbey have relied heavily upon his interpretations. This tendency is especially true of Ziezulewicz’s proposed structure of Saint-Florent’s abbatial elections into three phases.\(^{19}\) In the end, Ziezulewicz’s conclusions beg further questioning.

Like English-speaking historians, recent French scholars have made only brief inroads into Saint-Florent’s sources. The monastery’s cartularies and charters contain a great deal of information relevant to the broader events and personalities of central medieval France. Taking advantage of these sources, historians such as Isabelle Soulard Berger, and Dominique Barthélemy have used the Livre Noir to support their theses.\(^{20}\) In terms of assessing the structural elements of the sources themselves, except for

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\(^{19}\) Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur, ca. 950-1118,” *Church History* 57 no. 3 (Sep. 1988): 297.

nineteenth and early twentieth-century archivists, the only modern treatment the cartularies of Saint-Florent as codices has been Philippe Depreux’s work on the Livre Noir.\textsuperscript{21} The shared tendency of both English and French historical work has been to use Saint-Florent’s sources to support studies of other areas of France, rather than to comment on Saint-Florent’s role in the Loire valley.

In addition to the absence of a comprehensive analysis of the abbey as a whole, there are scholarly gaps in two primary areas. The first major gap is that the use of the HSF has eclipsed that of the charters and cartularies in particular cases. This is especially true for the early history of the abbey. When charters were cited, they have been those pertaining to the monastery’s external relationships with the magnates of western France and England. Though charters are being used in increasing numbers, the four unpublished cartularies have still not received the attention which they deserve as a cultural legacy of the central medieval Saumurois. The prioritization of the evidence arose from an imbalance in what has been considered important about the abbey. Despite Saint-Florent’s dominating presence in medieval northwestern France, historians have not adequately stressed the role of the abbey outside the realm of political history. The second major gap is the absence of publications concerning how Saint-Florent interacted with its own properties and the aristocratic donors below the level of the comital magnates. By neglecting these two areas, prior scholarship has inhibited progress towards a comprehensive understanding of Saint-Florent.

The present study endeavors to bring Saint-Florent into the mainstream of social history. Using the monastery’s records, one can begin to define the nature of interactions between Saint-Florent and its patrons, as well as examine the character of the Saumurois as a social group. As will be seen, the abbey’s charter evidence demonstrates that the local community was stratified, but not socially disjointed. The great families of western France, and those living in the shadow of the monastery’s walls, were connected by their mutual desire for the favor of the monks and their saint. This communal cohesion and its potential for more concerted patronage was facilitated by the leadership of the comital families of Anjou, Blois, and Poitou. Through the judicial prerogatives of their offices and their desire to encourage group patronage, the counts and their kin created a stable environment for patron families to make their donations. In this cooperative society, Saint-Florent became a hub around which kin-groups formed bonds with one another and overlooked distinctions based on social status. Additionally, this was a process in which women played a leading and oftentimes independent role. The charters depict women, at all social levels, as leaders and partners in the donor community. In these ways the character of interpersonal relationships in the Saumurois was one of mutual support. The importance of understanding the nature of this community lies in its inclination to foster collective interest and speaks against the view of castellan violence and oppression often associated with the decades around 1000. Armed with the evidence from Saint-Florent, historians may be better equipped to comment more accurately on the social character of western France in the eleventh century.
Approach

The aforementioned points will be addressed in four stages. The first stage will trace how the community orbiting Saumur came into existence and what foundational characteristics are visible in Saint-Florent’s earliest charters. The second will explore the nature and practical purpose of the *Livre Noir* and how its organizational structure affects historical interpretations of interpersonal relationships. The third will illustrate the influence of comital leadership and the role of women in ensuring stable and productive patronage within the Saumurois. The final stage will examine how interactions within patron families reinforced the norm of collective and mutually supportive action.

In support of these arguments, the charter and cartulary evidence will be of particular importance. As stated above, the surviving sources are diverse in genre. They range from hymns to papal privileges to several hundred charters. This rich variety of evidence has been neglected, in previous studies, in favor of the *HSF*. The present analysis will help to bring charters on an even footing with this later document and show that they are sources for tracking the abbey’s history. The *HSF*, as a chronicle, conforms to patterns evident in other monastic *historiae* composed in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. While the *HSF* remains invaluable for understanding the beginnings of the monastery, it is primarily an expression of the monks’ idealizations of their community’s history at the time the chronicle was created. Examining *acta* from the ninth through twelfth centuries offers a useful contrast to the *HSF*. This check on the biases of the chronicle author(s) increases the value of the *historia* by providing perspective.
Saint-Florent served a social purpose which was comparable to the functions of other monasteries both within and outside the Loire valley.\textsuperscript{22} Using charters and the earliest of the monastery’s four cartulary collections, the present study will describe important characteristics of the abbey’s patron community. To accomplish this objective two issues of terminology must be explained.

First, in examining the transactions of these early donors, particular emphasis will be placed on individuals and kin-groups who gave gifts to the monks, but were not members of the upper echelon of the great lords of the Loire valley. Historians have referred to this group as the “petty nobility,” “lower nobility,” “petty castellans,” or “\textit{milites castri}.”\textsuperscript{23} There is, however, no consensus on the boundaries of this category. Indeed, it is not a distinction medieval people would have recognized, but a broad description of a group which has been the focus of debates over societal change in the early eleventh century. By examining the relationship between this “group” and the great magnates of France, scholars may be better able to discover how the cooperative nature of the patron community in the Saumurois (a social unit in which these two groups worked in conjunction) speaks against the arguments for a \textit{mutation féodale} around the year 1000.\textsuperscript{24}

While, this categorization of what I will refer to as a ‘lesser aristocracy’ provides a useful historiographical tool, there were families of varying economic means in Saint-
Florent’s patron group. A family’s wealth and influence in the Saumurois often affected what property it alienated and in what ways its possessions were transferred to the monks (i.e. donation versus sales and mortgages). Scholars have debated whether the term aristocracy should be favored over nobility.\(^\text{25}\) For the purposes of the present work, the term ‘lesser aristocracy’ will be defined as those patrons alienating property in such a way as to gain material return for their property through means of sale, mortgages, and rents. Distinctions disconnected from context, but often made, at the castellan, viscomital, or comital level, are artificial and will not be used.

The second terminological point is the definition of the Saumurois as a place constituting a social unit. In examining Burgundian abbeys, Bouchard has suggested that a monastery’s greatest geographic influence was limited to within a thirty mile radius of the house—the distance of a day’s travel. From this compact area the monks acquired most of their property and in it lived their donors.\(^\text{26}\) By these criteria, the Saumurois would stretch from Chinon in the east to the environs of Angers in the west; from Thouars in the south to Mouliherne in the north (see Map). The monastery’s charters demonstrate, however, that geographical barriers did not invariably limit the dealings of monks and aristocrats or the formation of meaningful relationships. Instead, more amorphous dimensions for the Saumurois should be favored. The limits of the region can more accurately be defined by the locations of Saint-Florent’s major parishes and the extent of ties of lordship in specific locales. While these areas were often not within a


\(^{26}\) Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, 200.
day’s travel of the monastery, the inhabitants were fundamentally connected to the monks through strong political, social, and spiritual bonds. These are connections which indicate what the Saumurois may have been in practice.

Before delving further into the particular characteristics which defined the abbey’s patron group, one must understand how this broader community of persons, intrinsically tied to the abbey, came into existence and what attributes defined its initial composition. In this regard, the foundation of the monastery at Saumur must also be recognized as the establishment of a community bound by the relationships between the saint and his donors. In addition, this exploration will demonstrate the value of understanding the initial social community as it existed between 950 and 1000.
CHAPTER 1

The Journey to Saumur and the Emergence of a Donor Community

Publications dedicated to the social history, especially the early history, of the monastery of Saint-Florent remain scant. William Ziezulewicz and George Beech are among the few scholars to have elaborated on the origins of Saint-Florent. Both have noted how little material is to be found on the subject.\(^{27}\) In 1988, Ziezulewicz convincingly argued that the abbey’s monks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries molded their past in ways similar to those used in contemporary houses.\(^{28}\) The HSF contains a familiar narrative: Carolingian royal foundation, pillage at the hands of the Northmen, and an eventual comital re-foundation.\(^{29}\) By the twelfth century, the monks attributed the beginnings of their community to Charlemagne, and credited Louis the Pious with having provided additional support. In the HSF, Charlemagne placed the monks at Montglonne (\textit{Mons Glonna/ Glomna}).\(^{30}\) The cartulary evidence confirms this location. The incipit of the \textit{Livre Noir} reads, “In this work is contained the ancient precepts of Kings Louis [the Pious], Pippin [of Aquitaine], and Charles the Bald, concerning the abbey of monks of Saint-Florent of Montglonne or the other monastery which was constructed by Count

\(^{27}\) Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur,” 291. See also, Beech, \textit{Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?}, 5.

\(^{28}\) Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur,” 291.

\(^{29}\) White, \textit{Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints}, 17. This series of events was common to the development of the most notable abbeys of the Loire.

\(^{30}\) Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis,” 220. “Fertur quippe istud coenobium a Karolo Magno, imperatore, columnis marmoreis olim nobili structura fabricatum, praedisi innumeris pluribusque donariis nobilitatum; non minus etiam a Ludovico prole ipsius, cognomento Pio...”
Theobald in the place which is called Saumur.”

Though the Historia is formulaic in nature, this cartulary incipit confirms the two-part foundation narrated in the HSF.

No surviving charter indicates that Charlemagne established Saint-Florent. This claim was likely an attempt to allege an ancient and prestigious foundation. The earliest extant source concerning a monastic community dedicated to Saint Florent is a charter issued by Charles the Bald in 845. Though an original no longer exists, the Livre Noir records a donation made decades earlier by Louis the Pious in 824. Later charters confirm concessions made by Louis, and thereby reinforce the hypothesis that the cartulary’s first entry was copied from an original. If this is correct, we may then conclude that 824 is the latest the monastery could have been built. Thus, while Charlemagne’s involvement remains doubtful, his son’s recognition and support is documented.

As with the date of foundation, the location of Montglonne also poses a degree of ambiguity. The charters of the 840s indicate that the boundaries within which the abbey was first settled had shifted pagi. In 845, the abbey was recognized by Charles the Bald as “the monastery of Saint Florent, which was constructed above the Loire riverbed, that is in the pagus [of] the Mauges.” Two years later, in a precept of Pippin II of Aquitaine, a passage lauding Abbot Dido described him as: “a venerable man truly most dear to us, Dido, abbot from the monastery which by common name is called Montglonne, situated above the riverbed of the Loire, in which the splendid, holy confessor Florent lies buried bodily, [the monastery] which is situated in the pagus of

31 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 1r-1v. “In hoc corpora continentur antiquorum praecepta regum Ludovici, Pipini, Karoli calvi de abbatia sancti Florentii Glomnensis coenobii seu de alio coenobio quod constructum est in loco qui dicitur Salmurus a Teutbald comite.”
32 Archives Départementales de Maine-et-Loire, H 1833.
33 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1835.
34 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1833. “quod est constructum super alveum Ligeris, in pago videlicet Medalgico.”
Poitou.”

Although Montglonne would seem at first glance to have relocated from the Mauges to Poitou, such confusion was common in ninth-century charters. The boundaries of Carolingian *pagi* were fluid. Barbara Rosenwein has noted that the locations of particular *villae* discussed in Cluny’s charters often carried conflicting *pagus* designations in various documents. This uncertainty of *pagus* boundaries was likely the case with Montglonne. Despite such minor confusions, the monks were still situated at Montglonne in May, 847. The actual location was mentioned for the last time in a charter dated to June of the following year. In 848, Charles the Bald and his wife issued a charter in which they stated, “We wish to restore the devastated places of the saints.” This document records some specifics of the devastation and sheds light on the impetus to move the community.

The concessions offered in this charter were likely part of a concerted effort by Charles to make repairs following warfare throughout the Breton March after the battle of Fontenay (841). At the beginning of the decade, Duke Nominoë of Brittany had revolted against Charles and had been assisted by a disgruntled Lambert II of Nantes and Norse mercenaries. The situation escalated in 843. The count of Nantes, Renaud d’Herbauges, was killed while leading an army into Brittany. At the same time, Vikings simultaneously sacked Nantes and murdered the city’s bishop. The Northmen and Nominoë’s supporters subsequently ravaged the surrounding lands.

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35 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1834. “vir venerabilis adeo nobis dilectissimus Dido, abba ex monasterio quod vulgari nomine dicitur Glomna super alveum Ligeris sito, in quo sanctus confessor opimus Florentius corpora humatus iacet, quod est situm in pago Pictavo.”

36 Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter*, 27.

37 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1835, and BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 5r-v. “Quorundam etiam sanctorum loca vastata restaurare cuperemus.”

38 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 82v-83v. “ab initio regni Caroli, filii Ludovici, quo regnante facta est destructio monasterii Sancti Florentii a Nemeneio Brittone, usque ad abbatem Fredericum, qui illud monasterium reedificauit et alterum apud Salmurum nouum constituit.” For details of this campaign see Jean-Christophe
The saint’s properties were damaged by these raids. Charles’ 848 charter is the last extant document until after 960, but it is not the last entry in the royal section of the *Livre Noir*. That entry comes on January 16, 866. The charter evidence allows us to see that, before the 860s, the monastery received royal patronage but was in decline by mid-century. This was largely because of its proximity to contested territory. In the wake of these troubles, the monks decided to abandon Montglonne. In the 866 entry Charles and his wife stated, “We deemed to concede to them [the monks] of the sacred body of blessed Florent, the cell alongside the Loire River in the *pagus* called Bourges.” With this grant, the relocated monks entered a new arena of social and political connections.

The preceding description is informed by charter sources, rather than the *HSF*, which approaches the early history far differently. The *Historia* provides a compelling narrative. Supposedly, in the wake of the Viking’s devastation, a monk named Absalon guided the community from Montglonne to the abbey of Saint-Philibert at Tournus, where the two houses shared space. Upon the departure of the Northmen, however, the brothers of Saint-Florent wished to return to their monastery. The abbot of Saint-Philibert, however, refused to give up Saint Florent’s relics. Absalon then felt obliged to steal them. Upon closer examination, these events fall into a topos used by many houses

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39 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 1r-1v.
40 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 1r-1v. “sacredoribus corporis beati Florenti concedere sibi dignaremus cellam secus fluvium Ligerem in pago Biturice dicitur”
in Western Francia. As Ziezulewicz has admitted, the HSF chronicle was derived from patterns of monastic *historiae* common in the twelfth and later centuries.

The work of Jean Dunbabin has illustrated the dangers of overreliance on the HSF. Dunbabin argued that the Viking raids of the ninth century were exaggerated by monastic writers. The accounts afforded the opportunity to create stories designed to advance the prestige of regular houses and to rationalize relic translations. In particular, Dunbabin cited the monk Ermentarius as having altered the story of the flight of the brothers of Saint-Philibert to Burgundy. An examination of the tradition of the monks of Saint-Florent, makes it apparent that there was an eagerness for a connection with the exodus of Saint Philibert’s devotees to such an extent that the chronicler actually wrote his predecessors into Ermentarius’ tale,

And so with those [men] fleeing, the monks of Saint-Philibert of Boulonnio, dwelling not far from Montglonne, agreed to join together and were united, both having fled the madness of barbaric persecution, they together and at once decided and proposed to take themselves to regions of Burgundy, wherever Christ directed them to settle.

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42 Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 57. Narrative accounts of relic thefts (*translationes*) were commonly used to publicize a community’s relics and provide miracle stories when the exploits of a saint were not well known. Complete fabrications of thefts were not uncommon. *Translationes* served a purpose similar to that of hagiographic texts, see Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 63.

43 Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur,” 291.


45 “Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis,” 221-222. “Quibus itaque fugientibus, Sancti Philiberti de Boulonnio monachi, haud longe a Monte Glona commantes, obvio concursu sociantur, babaricae persecutionis rabiem parti proposito fugientes, qui partes Burgundiae pariter decreverunt expetere simulque proposuerunt, quocumque eos Christus direxerit, commanere.”
In the chronicle this passage was immediately reinforced by a poem emphasizing the similarity of the patron saints of the two institutions.46

The HSF was written into the Livre Rouge between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.47 It was likely pieced together from earlier texts and histories of the abbey.48 From the abbacy of William of Dol (1070-1118) through the thirteenth century, the abbey made a concerted effort to strengthen its legitimacy within the Loire valley. As the community grew into a political and economic power, it began to create the four cartularies recording the house’s property transactions, and a new vita for Saint Florent.49 If the HSF was composed in the late twelfth century, the text fits into this effort to create a literary corpus capable of furthering the monastery’s program of expansion. By associating its own past with Ermentarius’ well known narrative, Saint-Florent of Saumur strengthened the account of its origins.

Great emphasis must be placed on the fact that the HSF is not the sole (nor the earliest) source for events during this period. As we demonstrated above, the narrative of Saint-Florent’s move may be deduced from diplomatic sources as well. The HSF, composed centuries after the initial foundation and intended for twelfth- and thirteenth-century audiences, carries a different sense of rhetoric than do the

46 “Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis,” 233.
47 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3715, ff. 45-63.
48 Beech, Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France? 9. See also, Depreux, “Mémoire de la constitution du patrimoine foncier et translation de reliques: la liste des abbés défunts dans le Livre Noir de Saint-Florent de Saumur,” 409-410. Depreux argued that one of the earlier sources on which the HSF was based could be the Fragmentum Veteris Historiae Sancti Florentii (FVH). The FVH was written into an addition/intrusion found in the Livre Noir (fol. 82v-83v). It provides a brief summary of the abbots prior to the tenure of Abbot Sigo. For an edition of the FVH, see, Marchegay and Mabille, Chroniques des églises d’Anjou, 207-216.
charters. When examining the surviving acta, one finds a much calmer and thoughtful decision for the move from Montglonne. Charles the Bald’s concessions and attempts at repair in 848 were not enough to protect and maintain the community. A general risk of seaborne attacks continued. While the chronicler described a dramatic flight, it is more likely that continued residence at Montglonne simply posed too great a risk to the monks and by 866 they had asked Charles for assistance in moving.\(^\text{50}\) The king’s charter, found in the Livre Noir, certainly indicates a calmer and more deliberative process which draws one to conclude that relocation was possibly inevitable.\(^\text{51}\) It may even have been preceded by a few years of economic difficulty. This charter shows that the monks did not make a unilateral decision, as the HSF asserts. The community recognized its chief patron and appreciated the necessity for the king’s blessing.

The brothers were absent from the area around Montglonne for close to a century, but from 950 to 1026 they were twice resettled in the Loire valley. Around 950, Count Thibaud of Blois (d. 974) re-established the monks within a fortress (castrum) at Saumur.\(^\text{52}\) The abbey’s presence in its new home was strengthened in 979 by Thibaud’s son, Odo I (d. 996), who confirmed his father’s grants.\(^\text{53}\) Around the time of Odo’s acknowledgment of the monks’ placement, other notable figures

\(^{50}\) BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 8r-v. “Ut ad suorum refugium monachorum et ad […] corporis beati Florentii concedere sibi dignaremus cellam situs fluvius Ligerim in pago Biturico quae dicitur Nobiliacus.”

\(^{51}\) BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 8r-v.

\(^{52}\) AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 n.1. See also, Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur,” 291. Richard Barton argued that there was inter-comital cooperation in 960 when the counts of Blois, Anjou, and Maine all confirmed a donation to Saint-Florent made by a certain Aremburgis. See Barton, Lordship in the County of Maine, 32, 85. The word the monks most frequently used for the fortification at Saumur was castrum. This term carries several different meanings. In the present work, fortress will be favored. Bachrach noted that Saumur was situated on an old Roman road leading from Tours. It is possible, therefore, that there was a longstanding precedent for a fortification at Saumur, such as a Roman road fort. A direct Roman antecedent, however, has not been confirmed. See Bachrach, Fulk Nerra, 8.

\(^{53}\) BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v. See also, AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840, n. 1.
in the region took note of the new monastery. Four years before, Archbishop Arduin of Tours (d. 980) issued a charter, recorded in the Livre Noir, which recognized the monastery’s location “in the castrum which is called Saumur.”

The third and final re-foundation came in 1026, when Fulk ‘Nerra’ agreed to Abbot Frederick’s insistence that the house be moved outside the walls of the fortress of Saumur; earlier in the year the Angevins had inadvertently burned the abbey during their siege. This constituted last re-foundation of Saint-Florent. Even though the location within Saumur changed in the 1020s, by the mid-tenth century the monks had settled in what would be the site of the monastery until the French Revolution.

Most of our charter evidence comes from the decades between the late tenth and early twelfth centuries. The significance of the second foundation at Saumur (ca. 950) is, therefore, paramount. Many of the aristocratic families who would later serve as lay donors to the house came from the Saumurois. Even the Angevin siege of 1026 did little to interrupt donations from local patrons. Though new families loyal to the counts of Anjou were granted properties in the Saumurois, many of the fideles of the counts of Blois retained their property and places in the lay community. To appreciate the events leading up to the third foundation we must examine how the developing prosperity of Saint-Florent at the close of the tenth century was related to the coalescence of a social community. The great

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54 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 10v-11r. “in castrum qui dicitur Salmurus.” See also, AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1838.
55 Bachrach, Fulk Nerra, 190.
wealth of the monks was to play a pivotal role in the wars over the Loire valley, and would bring armed conflict to the abbey’s doorstep in the 1020s.

**Initial Property Acquisitions**

Little can be said concerning the nature of Saint-Florent’s estates at Montglonne. After the relocation of the abbey to Saumur, however, the increase in charters makes it possible to identify the community’s estates and privileges. Though Count Thibaud must certainly have provided land and concessions around 950, no evidence survives of which properties these were or of their value. One can only speculate that the lands given to them were clustered around Saumur. In the 960s, the monks described the monastery as being located “in the *pagus* of Anjou, in the *vicaria* of Saumur.”

The charters of this period reveal that, by the middle of this decade, the abbey’s core lands were stable enough to allow the monks to rent out holdings.

In 966, a lease was publicly issued within the *castrum* at Saumur by Abbot Amalbertus (d. 985). Eleven named monks witnessed this exchange. The brothers rented out half an *arpennum* of vineyards to a woman named Sufficia and her sons Ingelramnus and Baldricus. Though two males were listed in the lease, the scribe clearly denoted Sufficia as the principal in the exchange. This reveals her position as the head of her household. That both parties benefited in the exchange must be stressed because collective cooperation and mutual advantage would become cornerstones of the Saumurois patron community. In addition to a *solidus* and three *denarii*, the abbey acquired a new connection to a local family. For her part,
Sufficia gained more than rented land. On the feast day of Saint Florent, the brothers agreed to celebrate one Mass on behalf of the matron and her sons.\footnote{AD Maine-et-Loire, H 2117 n. 1.} Arrangements such as this indicate that the monks had reached a turning point in their relationship with local aristocratic families. The abbey now could serve as both a spiritual and economic resource for the laity of the Saumurois.

Saint-Florent had by then become financially self-sufficient at its new location. More importantly, the monks had been accepted into the region’s aristocratic community. Sufficia and her children were publicly associated with the monks through a spiritual and economic relationship. By remembering these three laypersons in the liturgical calendar and leasing property in the environs of the abbey, the monks set a precedent by which they could thereafter cement bonds with local families. These relationships, however, were certainly not restricted to the brothers’ immediate neighborhood.

Within two years, the monastery was accepting gifts from outside the immediate environs of Saumur—particularly from the Touraine and Poitou. Between 968 and 975, Archbishop Arduin of Tours (d. 980) confirmed or conceded four separate transactions to the abbey. One was a confirmation of a donation to the monks that Gislebert (Gislebertus), a deacon/canon of Arduin’s archdiocese, had given in 968. Two confirmations issued in June 969 recorded gifts made by two priests, Isembert (Ingelbertus) and Girard (Girardus). Arduin likely made these as a set at his court in Tours. The last donation came in 975 and was a direct concession
by the archbishop.\textsuperscript{60} Arduin also appears as a witness to a donation made by the count of Blois in February 979.\textsuperscript{61}

Sufficia was likely among the important lords with lands neighboring the monastery, but Arduin, as the metropolitan of Tours, was perhaps the most powerful ecclesiastic person in the Touraine. Taken together, patronage such as Sufficia’s and Arduin’s indicates the monks’ pursuit of connections with an ever wider range of individuals wielding various levels of influence. The brothers pursued this growing diversity of patrons in other regions.

In 977, Ermentrude, the widow of Manegaudus (a \textit{fidelis} of the count of Poitou), issued two documents granting land to Saint-Florent.\textsuperscript{62} Both of these high-profile gifts came from the \textit{villa} of Sanctenous in the county of Poitou. The property had come into Ermentrude’s possession as an alod which her late husband had bequeathed to her as a widow’s dower. Both gifts also appear to have been given largely out of religious devotion. The first charter simply granted land to the monks in the hope that the saint might intercede for her and her husband.\textsuperscript{63} The second charter, still primarily religious, was also practical in nature. It stands as an example of how a woman, as a recipient of property from her affinal kin, freely used her wealth to support her own family.

Ermentrude strategically employed her marital properties to provide for her natal relatives. She gave another portion of her alod to the monks requiring that it

\textsuperscript{60} For the four transactions given at Tours see, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, ff. 9r-10r, 10r-v, 10v-11r, 11v-12r. These four entries form a block in the \textit{Livre Noir} that comes between the royal charters of the ninth century and the comital charters of the late tenth century.
\textsuperscript{61} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v.
\textsuperscript{62} AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3497, n.1. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 13v-14r. For the second document see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 13r-v.
\textsuperscript{63} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 13r-v.
be shared with her brother, Hugh, after her death. These properties were of great value. They included mills, arable land, and pastures. Count William of Poitou (d. 995), the viscount Adraldus, two abbots, and nine other named persons witnessed Ermentrude’s charters. Thus, through the unilateral decisions of a female lord, Saint-Florent gained connections to the upper echelon of Poitevin aristocracy.

In the following year, Odo I of Blois (d. 996) recognized a problem that would trouble Saint-Florent until 1026. The castellan of Saumur was a *fidelis* of the count of Blois. This lord was also, periodically, an enemy of the monks. A consideration of the documents discussed above makes it clear that after three decades at Saumur the abbey had accumulated significant wealth. Capitalizing on the brothers’ success, the castellan demanded additional exactions from the monastery. In February 978, Count Odo issued an *actum* on behalf of the monks. He labeled the castellan’s *exactiones novas* as *injustas leges* and removed them. In doing so he invoked the memory of his father’s reestablishment of Saint-Florent.  

Odo asserted his authority to intervene as the brothers’ protector and also bound himself closely to the monastic community. The witnesses of this document included some of the most powerful individuals of the Loire region. In addition to the count, Odo’s brother, Archbishop Hugh of Bourges, Archbishop Arduin of Tours, the comital treasurer Avisgaudus, the viscounts Gelduin and Gautfredus, and six other lords all witnessed Odo’s abolishment of the castellan’s exactions.

These examples indicate that the first half-century of the monastery’s existence at Saumur was defined by the house’s growing prestige and influence. A

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64 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 n.1. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v.  
65 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 n.1. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v.
reckoning of the abbey’s possessions provides the context needed to understand the eleventh-century developments in the monks’ social landscape. Armed with this understanding, we are better equipped to explore how the monastery’s pre-1000 patrons set precedents for interaction and cohesion throughout the eleventh century.

The initial donations were largely drawn from the environs of Saumur, the Touraine, and the counties of Anjou and Poitou. Additionally, the socio-economic status of patrons varied widely. Many donors acted for the joint benefit of their close relatives (both deceased and alive) and themselves. A great many of these patrons were women who controlled their own lands and independently cared for the interests of their kin.66 This indicates that females were leaders within families and recognized as such in the broader community. These social themes which were visible in the monks’ early patron community grew into core attributes of the eleventh-century donor culture. On the eve of the second millennium, the abbey was a new, but important, social and political presence in the Loire valley. In the following decades, however, this growing clout was jeopardized by warfare.

Caught between Blois and Angers

The monastery’s economic structure changed after Saumur came under permanent Angevin control in the 1020s. From the late tenth century, Saumur had been a vital Blésois fortress capable of limiting Angevin advances on Tours.67 This meant that until the fall of the castrum in 1026, Saint-Florent and its local properties were in a warzone. The capture of Saumur had been a chief ambition of

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66 As we have seen, Sufficia and Ermentrude, widow of Manegaudus, are notable examples.
67 Bachrach, Fulk Nerra, 28, 155. Saumur, like other castri on the Loire, had a controlling effect on both economic (through trade) and political movement along the course of the river. Thus, the position of Saumur and the strategic value of its castrum ensured its involvement in the warfare between Anjou and Blois.
Fulk ‘Nerra’ (d. 1040) since his accession to the county of Anjou in 987—though Fulk’s grandfather, Fulk the Good (d. 960) had cooperated with Theobald of Blois in reestablishment of Saint-Florent.68

Bachrach has argued that Fulk ‘Nerra’ had a three-phase relationship with the monastery.69 The first phase was characterized by a harassment of Saumur’s castellan—Gelduin, an uneasy Blésois fidelis.70 Assaults on Gelduin included ravaging the monastery’s lands around Saumur (something Gelduin himself was also prone to do).71 It also included attempts to bully the abbots of Saint-Florent into making concessions regarding the monastery’s dependant house just west of Angers, Saint-Florent-le-Vieil. Fulk even forced Abbot Robert (d. 1011) to acknowledge his lordship in 1010.72 The eastward push against Blésois control of the middle Loire continued as the Angevins encircled both Tours and Saumur with rings of offensive fortresses. Bachrach’s second phase came in 1026 with Fulk’s siege of Saumur and Gelduin’s counterseige. In the first assault the monastery was

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69 Bachrach, Fulk Nerra, 189-90.
70 Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur, ca. 950-1118,” 291-93. For events in 978, see AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 n.1. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v. For the case against Gelduin in 1011, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 27v-28r. Gelduin was the last Blésois castellan of Saumur. Tension defined his relationship with the monks. On multiple occasions, he forced uncustumary exactions on the monks. The situation required the intervention of the Blésois on two occasions. The first involved Odo I in 978, and the second involved Odo II in 1011. With the death of Abbot Adhebert in 1013, the monastery was in need of a new abbot. Odo II, as the grandson of the community’s second founder, was in a position to make the selection. He suggested Gerald of Thouars to the chapter. Gelduin, however, advocated for Galo—the monks' cellarer. When his lord's candidate won, Gelduin ravaged the monastery’s territory to such an extent that Odo had to intervene, as his father had done. The abused lands of the monastery were placed under the protection of the abbots of Marmoutier. For the next fifty years, this neighboring house selected Saint Florent’s abbot with secular authorities only nominally confirming the candidate. This period ended in 1070 when William of Dol was elected as abbot and the influence of Marmoutier ended. After his loss of the castrum, Gelduin disappeared from the abbey’s records.
71 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 n.1. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v.
72 See Chapter 3 for an examination of Bachrach’s conclusions concerning Abbot Robert’s acceptance of Fulk as his lord.
destroyed and the *castrum* taken. Having finally obtained Saumur and with it successfully defended from counterattack, Fulk installed a new *vicarius* named Fulchard (Fulchardus) of Rochfort-sur-Loire. With the monastery in ruins, its future was uncertain.

Fulk and his *fidelis* seized the relics of Saint Doucelin from the brothers, and attempted to relocate the monastery to Angers. Abbot Frederick (d. 1055) protected his house, and the relocation of the abbey did not occur. Far from being at the mercy of Fulk, Abbot Frederick convinced the count to permit reconstruction outside the *castrum* walls. This agreement was completed before Odo II’s counterseige. After a treaty was struck with Count Odo II (d. 1037) the following year, the Angevins entered their third phase with the monastery.

Bachrach argued that this phase saw continued abuse of the abbey under Angevin domination.bachrach argued that this phase saw continued abuse of the abbey under Angevin domination.

Bachrach’s student, William Ziezulewicz, supported this supposition. As evidence, these historians cited tolls and unjust exactions at the hands of comital officials. The charter evidence from both before and after 1026, however, does not indicate all-encompassing abuse. Under the lordship of the counts of Blois and thanks to close relations with the archbishops of Tours, Saint-Florent had been able to protect and extend the concessions previously made to the house. The monks even went as far as to forge papal grants of immunities and privileges issued by Charles the Bald. Their independence was often threatened

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73 Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra*, 189-90.
75 There was a history of Saint-Florent’s *fisc* being abused. Forgeries were strategic efforts to maintain independence, see Stephen Fanning, “Family and Episcopal Election, 900-1050, and the Case of Hubert, Bishop of Angers, 1006-1047,” *Medieval Prosopography* 7 (1986): 49. For the papal forgery from the
by the machinations of the various factions during the wars at the turn of the
eleventh century—political maneuverings in which Saint-Florent actively
participated. As will be further illustrated in Chapter 3, these challenges were the
result of circumstances brought on by a large scale war, rather than the intrinsic
predatory nature of an uncontrollable castellan class.

It would be a mistake, therefore, to take exactions as proof that Saint-
Florent became disconnected from a local aristocracy bent on bleeding the monks
dry. The charter evidence demonstrates that in the wake of the 1020s, Saint-Florent
grew rapidly in wealth and social influence. While the political strife in which
Saint-Florent became embroiled undoubtedly impeded the abbey’s effort to form
relationships with local families, previous scholars did not use charter evidence
emphasizing community cooperation. The early charters analyzed in this section
stand as evidence for an early donor community, in which the presence of Saint-
Florent was a catalyst for further development and cohesion.

Before describing the maturation of the early patron group one must first
understand the structure and nature of the sources from which examples of
communal interaction are derived. The most important source for such an analysis
is the *Livre Noir* itself. Its innovative character indicates how the monks valued
both the property they received and their relationships with benefactors.

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*Livre Noir*, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 22r-23v. This entry’s heading states, “Privilegium Iohannis papae
ad Robertum abbatem.”
CHAPTER 2

The Livre Noir and the Creation of Saint-Florent's First Cartulary

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, scholars realized the full potential of cartularies as resources for prosopographical analysis and qualitative and quantitative social history. This led to such works as Barbara Rosenwein’s examination of the property of Cluny and Constance Bouchard’s study of monastic holdings in Burgundy.⁷⁶ Indeed, cartularies and their component charters continue to serve as leading sources for the study of relationships between the laity and the Church. As scholars have increasingly mined their contents, they have endeavored to create new editions of them.⁷⁷ While these sources are vital to the examination of social bonds between monks and lay donors, they also provide crucial insight into the monastic mindset which informed those relationships—particularly in the realm of memory.

Saint-Florent produced four cartularies in the central Middle Ages, yet none of these has been edited or received more than cursory attention. Major works focusing on monastic records in central France, like Stephen White’s Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints, make no mention of Saint-Florent’s large documentary corpus.⁷⁸ In omitting Saint-Florent, one of the most prosperous French abbeys remains detached from the broader history of social development in the Loire valley in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it will demonstrate the unique

⁷⁶ Rosenwein, To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter. See also, Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister. See also, Constance Bouchard, Holy Entrepreneurs: Cistercians, Knights, and Economic Exchange in Twelfth-Century Burgundy (Ithaca: Cornell, 1991).
⁷⁸ Stephen White, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints.
qualities of Saint-Florent’s oldest cartulary, the *Livre Noir*, and thereby advocate an incorporation of Saint-Florent’s records into the study of this region. It will also explore the mindset of the monks who created the cartulary. Using the *Livre Noir* as evidence, the present chapter will offer examples of how monks approached relationships forged with patron families.

A compilation of charters was an ambitious project which required much forethought. Some cartularies were the work of a single scribe, while others were created by several monks over many decades (as was the case with the *Livre Noir*). Regardless of the number of hands at play, cartularies were planned constructions requiring significant economic and labor resources. The brothers carefully made decisions concerning the layout and organization of component entries. By examining cartulary structures, one gains understanding of how monks re-constructed communal memory and represented history. What follows is an examination of the place of the *Livre Noir* in the eleventh-and twelfth-century developments of this documentary genre.\(^79\) To accomplish this goal, one first must separate twelfth-century intrusions from entries included in the initial eleventh-century phases of the *Livre Noir*’s creation, because meanings in diplomatic sources are apparent only when viewed within the context of the circumstances governing their production.\(^80\) A use of comparative paleographical analysis and an awareness of the historical context will serve as the foundation of this approach. Through isolating the initial entries, one can identify the intended organization. This method illustrates that the *Livre Noir* codex conformed to patterns of cartulary organization which historians

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commonly associate with the later twelfth century. An additional result of this separation of initial entries from later additions will be a better understanding of the social climate which informed twelfth-century intrusions.

**Cartularies, Authorship, and Memory**

In exploring these issues, one must consider how mental landscapes which enabled the creation of a cartulary were formed from Saint-Florent’s collective memory of its patrimony. The historian, then, will be better poised to comprehend how such codices were conceived. When exploring documentary memory, one must acknowledge the connection between memory and authorship. As Matthew Fisher has argued, inscription and authorship were not separate enterprises. A scribe-author, even when copying a charter, engaged in an act of creation. The cartulary copyist(s) modified and often truncated the work of an earlier monk who had composed a charter.\(^{81}\) When the *Livre Noir’s* organizers presented a group of entries pertaining to the same series of transactions, they usually provided a full witness list only for the first entry. This was a consciously planned and consistent practice in the cartulary.

Authorship, as a meta-process, was limited by the cultural boundaries set by the community in which a writer lived. Brigitte Bedo-Rezak has argued that a charter was the foundation of a “dual level of consciousness” built on the transmission of a scribe-author’s interpretation of a transaction—an interpretation ultimately confined within, what Foucault would call, the system of the monastic community in which an individual

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\(^{81}\) Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012), 1-3. “Copying, of course, is the province of scribes rather than authors, yet historical writing (I would also include documentary writing), even derived and assembled from previous texts is authored.”
lived. That perspective was then delivered using the formulaic structure of a genre, which was itself a cultural product of monastic attitudes toward a saint’s lands. A scribe-author’s recollection of an exchange was divorced neither from the cultural imprint of his house’s view of the transaction nor from the predetermined form of the genre within which he was writing. The creation of a cartulary was little different. It was, however, a far more complex exercise in memory. The act of collation was a re-visitation of numerous processes of remembrance, and corresponded exactly to how many charters were included in a codex. If a cartulary recorded 271 transactions (as does the Livre Noir), then preserved within it are 271 separate productions of memory. The collation of these into a single text added an additional layer of cultural construction: the organization of multiple interpretations, which were ultimately confined within the monastic community’s sense of its past.

While an argument that collective monastic thought was not stagnant is plausible, this should not lead to the conclusion that monks made modern distinctions between the various generations accepting lay donations. Monks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries did not disconnect themselves from their forbearers or successors in ways recognizable to modern observers. For these regular communities, the past was not linear. It was a cumulative and collective past—one shared communally with earlier and later

82 Bedos-Rezak, “Diplomatic Sources and Medieval Documentary Practices,” 316-317. See also, Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 170. A monastery as an institution based on sworn obedience to an abbot was a center of “disciplinary power” created through “hierarchical observation,” “normalizing judgment” and a “combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination.”


84 Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister, 39. “A cartulary was drawn up for the same purpose as the original charters, to ensure that the transactions recorded in the documents were not forgotten.”
generations of brothers. This is one reason why many cartularies were organized not chronologically or even by dating of component exchanges. The distance of time did not lessen the importance of a transaction. Despite alleged currents of individualism rising in the twelfth century, the regular clergy (while not detached from the secular world) stressed group-thinking. Cartularies serve as strong indicators of this mindset. By examining these codices scholars can reconstruct how this memory was built.

The *Livre Noir* provides an example. In the course of Duke Nominoë of Brittany’s revolt against Charles the Bald in 843, Breton and Norse raiders sacked Saint-Florent at Montglonne. This episode was among the factors that led the monks to leave their initial location. Three hundred and twelve years and two re-foundations later, the raid was still a painful memory in need of resolution. In 1055, a scribe-author opened an entry by noting the names of thirteen abbots of the period at Montglonne. He went on to discuss the translation of the relics to a new location. The entry was closed with the phrase, “From the beginning of the reign of Charles, son of Louis, ruling during the destruction done to the monastery of Saint Florent by Nominoë of Brittany, from then until the abbacy of Frederick [d. 1055], who rebuilt that monastery and constituted it anew near Saumur.”

The recollection of this Breton connection did not end with this 1055 charter. It was

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85 Bouchard, “Monastic Cartularies: Organizing Eternity,” 28. See also, Patrick Geary, *Futura Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 57-9. Geary argued that the theft of relics was influenced by competition between monastic houses over the economic value of patronage. I assert that such competitive impulses, among other factors, strengthened the brothers’ sense of group identity.


87 Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 6-7. Morris argued that personal individualism entered into medieval society between 1080 and 1150. This notion contrasts with previous views which placed the development of individualism after 1200. He defended an earlier timeframe based on a distinction that he made between political individualism and personal individualism.

88 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 82v-83v. “Haec sunt nomina quorundam abbatum huius loci defunctorum.”

89 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 82v-83v. “ab initio regni Caroli, filii Ludovici, quo regnante facta est destructio monasterii Sancti Florentii a Nemeneio Brittone, usque ad abbatem Fredericum, qui illud monasterium reedificauit et alterum apud Salmurum nouum constituit.”
carried beyond the initial organization of the cartulary. Around 1136, a monk entered into 
the *Livre Noir* another transaction pertaining to Count Conan III (d. 1148)—a descendent 
of Nominoë. By placing Conan adjacent to his infamous forbearer, the scribe-author 
demonstrated that his (likely also his house’s) recollection of Nominoë’s actions was 
imprinted on the monks’ memory and associated in their minds with contemporary 
relationships with Breton magnates. Almost three centuries separated the events 
described in the document. While circumstances were beginning to change as positive 
relationships with Bretons were forged, this did little to mitigate the power of the 
memory of the connection made through the attacks of 843. Though this example 
illustrates the prominent role of remembrance as a motivating factor for cartulary 
creation, cartularies were also potentially valued as administrative tools.

**The development of cartularies**

Robert Berkhofer has argued that the collection of donations into a codex was a 
product of eleventh- and twelfth-century trends in monastic politics and estate 
management. The Carolingian period saw the separation of abbatial property from a 
chapter’s *mensa conventualis* (land reserved for the welfare of the brothers); which 
caused the removal of monastic property for the needs of secular authorities—particularly 
lay abbots. Such threats affected the incentive for charter composition. Prior to 1100, 
monastic charters were not concerned with managerial purposes and economic efficiency,

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90 The monks began a new cartulary, the *Livre Blanc*, in the early twelfth century. The existence of 
intrusions in the *Livre Noir* indicates that they made a conscious decision to enter the charter into the older 
cartulary as opposed to the new one. The incentive for this was likely the desire to group the memory of 
particular transactions together. This selection process was a statement.

91 The Breton connection was likely confused after 1070. The establishment of priories and the influx of 
wealth from Brittany may have challenged the memory of Breton hostility.

92 Robert Berkhofer III, *Day of Reckoning: Power and Accountability in Medieval France* (Philadelphia: 
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 73. See also, Bouchard, “Monastic Cartularies: Organizing 
Eternity,” 22-32.
but rather sought to stress the legitimacy of gifts and define property as a sacred trust of the house’s patron saint. Only at the turn of the twelfth century did writing become more than an aid to memory.93

In response to Michel Parisse’s and Georges Declercq’s conclusions about the differences in East Frankish and West Frankish movements toward cartulary production, Berkhofer demonstrated that the factors of changing lordship, new systems of record keeping, and local variation caused different monasteries to adopt cartularies at different times. Ultimately, however, cartulary production often corresponded to the necessity of protecting a house’s estates through finding or fabricating confirmations of property and privileges.94 As with the benefits of confirmations, cartularies helped to further efforts by monks to realize their idealized patrimony. In fitting Saint-Florent into this hypothesis, one ought to take note of changes in economic, political, social, and organizational circumstances which may have prompted a need for the Livre Noir. Here a discussion of the history of Saint-Florent in the mid-eleventh century proves useful.

In 1070, the path to Saint-Florent’s prosperity was secured. A young and charismatic monk from a powerful Breton family, William of Dol (r. 1070-1118), was elected abbot of Saint-Florent. His election signified a major shift in the abbatial patterns of Saint-Florent. Fifty-seven years earlier, Odo II had appointed Gerald of Thouars. Gerald’s management of the fisc was so disastrous that the count removed him. Control of the monastery was then given to Marmoutier—whose abbot chose the next two abbots from his house’s sphere of influence in the Touraine. William of Dol’s election in 1070 was novel because his lack of previous connections to the eastern Loire inaugurated

93 Berkhofer, Day of Reckoning, 48-52.
94 Berkhofer, Day of Reckoning, 73-74.
Saint-Florent’s independence from external control. William was lord of Saint-Florent for forty-eight years, and, under his leadership, the house became a major monastic power. William’s father, Rivallo of Dol (a fidelis of William of Normandy), was influential in Brittany after the defeat of Conan II. Breton participation in the Norman Conquest allowed Abbot William to use familial connections to secure donations of property in England and even in southern Italy. By the twelfth century, Saint-Florent was a fixture of the cultural and religious landscape of the Loire valley, Brittany, and the Norman principalities. Indeed, the Breton connection paved the way for monastic reform in Brittany.

This rapid expansion of Saint-Florent’s wealth necessitated new ways of thinking about estate management. As at other late eleventh-century monasteries, novel purposes for writing formed the keystone of new ways of managerial thinking. Berkhofer has argued that, corresponding to the securing of confirmations and creation of cartularies, three changes occurred to monastic conceptualization of property: a shift toward viewing land as a profit generating resource; an increased use of administrative writing; and a working relationship between chapter and abbot. Saint-Florent experienced these three developments at the same time it began new projects such as the Livre Noir and the precursor text to the HSF. First, the abbey enjoyed an explosion of land donations in the last quarter of the eleventh century. Second, the proliferation of charters from this period and the cartulary’s creation demonstrate the value of written records—and also the need

97 Regan Eby (Boston College) and Amy Livingstone (Wittenberg University) are currently investigating this topic.
98 Berkhofer, Day of Reckoning, 91.
for new ways of organizing them.\textsuperscript{99} Lastly, the chaotic events of the first seven decades of the eleventh century prohibited effective communication between abbot and chapter. Prior to the late 1020s, warfare and Abbot Gerald’s reckless management had endangered the community. Outsiders from Marmoutier governed the chapter for the next five decades. These troubles ended in 1070, when William was elected from within the chapter. In light of the consistency of these developments to Berkhofer’s observations, we can conclude that the administrative restructuring under William of Dol was the catalyst for the beginning of the \textit{Livre Noir}. As an administrator, the new abbot possessed the managerial incentive, financial and labor resources, political stability, and time to undertake the production of a cartulary. This conclusion, however, is but one of two possibilities.

Henri Omont and Marc Saché both concluded that the \textit{Livre Noir} was begun in the mid-eleventh century.\textsuperscript{100} Saché further clarified that 1040-1070 was the likeliest range for the beginning of the codex (noting later twelfth-century additions).\textsuperscript{101} Saché’s range places the cartulary’s point of construction either under the abbacy of the Marmoutier abbots, Frederick and Sigo, or under the first independent abbot, William. Marmoutier was a large abbey. Many eleventh-century records from the house have been preserved including five cartularies from 1000-1199.\textsuperscript{102} One cannot rule out that the influence of Marmoutier and Frederick’s and Sigo’s familiarity with its administrative practices

\textsuperscript{99} The cartulary proved useful enough that the abbey subsequently created three additional cartularies by the close of the Middle Ages.
\textsuperscript{100} Omont, “Cartularie (Livre Noir) de l’abbaye de Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur,” 64. See also, Saché, \textit{Inventaire Sommaire}, 474-5.
\textsuperscript{101} Saché, \textit{Inventaire Sommaire}, 474-5. “la plus grande partie a été transcrête au milieu du XII\textsuperscript{e} siècle entre 1040 et 1070 environ.” Saché made a simple dating error in this statement. More problematically, he did not provide a defense of this range.
\textsuperscript{102} White, \textit{Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints}, 17, note 61. The Marmoutier cartularies are designated: MB, MD, MM, MP, and MV.
served as the catalyst for the commissioning of the *Livre Noir*. The only real defense of Saché’s dating comes in the form of a summary of the deeds of the abbots up to Sigo. This source is found as an entry in the *Livre Noir* (fols. 82v-83v)—it is also referred to as the *Fragmentum Veteris Historiae Sancti Florentii*. The fact that the space for Sigo’s entry was left blank (only his name is present) suggests that this intrusion was present prior to Sigo’s abbacy. The post-Conquest donations and the circumstances of William’s tenure, however, offer an equally compelling rationalization. Though both positions are defensible, Berkhofer’s criteria suggest that Saché’s range should not halt at 1070, but rather be extended to allow for the possibility that, under William’s abbacy, there were circumstances opportune for the creation of a cartulary. Whatever the codex’s point of commission, by the end of William’s tenure the cartulary was an established project. A paleographical evaluation of the cartulary helps us to explore these issues better.

**Defining the initial organization**

Clear distinctions between hands indicate that the *Livre Noir* was an endeavor executed by multiple scribe-authors. When the brothers planned the cartulary, they were likely aware that they did not possess all the documents pertaining to particular property groupings. To allow for later discoveries or the addition of new charters— which could be written to commemorate an exchange that had previously been a verbal contract—gaps were reserved for future additions. These gaps ranged from the size of a column to

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104 Depreux, “Mémoire de la constitution du patrimoine foncier et translation de reliques: la liste des abbés défunts dans le Livre Noir de Saint-Florent de Saumur,” 410. For this general practice in cartularies, see Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, 38. For an example of a gap which was never filled, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 22r.
almost an entire folio.\textsuperscript{105} When later scribe-authors inserted charters, they often did not use all the space provided. Thus, some gaps were preserved. One should be wary, however, of concluding that the presence of gaps indicates an intrusion. For aesthetic purposes, monks sometimes, after finishing a charter on a page and being left with a gap of several lines, opted to begin the next transaction on the subsequent page.\textsuperscript{106} In other cases, the close examination of such a space reveals an erasure.\textsuperscript{107} For these reasons, the identification of later intrusions must rely on historical context and paleographical analysis.

The best test of later additions is an examination of dating schemes (when provided), to inspect the structural elements of a folio or page and an identification of variations in the scripts of suspected intrusions. The scribe-authors of Saint-Florent did not consistently date entries. Historical context, however, helps to offer ranges which make many entries datable, if not dated. Using this method—context in the document as reference points—one discovers that the \textit{Livre Noir} contains sixteen charters datable to after 1100—approximately six percent of the 271 exchanges.\textsuperscript{108} These entries are twelfth-century intrusions, but are certainly not the only later additions.

Since there are many ambiguities, isolating the documents inserted in the original organization is not a straightforward process. In light of this challenge, identifying those that are surely datable is worthwhile because such an examination provides insight into

\textsuperscript{105} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fols. 34r-v. This folio is an example of the maximized use of intentional gaps. Three charters were fit into one folio, while three-fourths of a column was left over.

\textsuperscript{106} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 65r-v. Though the rubric of 65v would have fit on 65r the scribe opted to leave a gap.

\textsuperscript{107} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 67v. Note the break in text prior to the witness list.

\textsuperscript{108} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fols. 34r (1150), 34v (ca. 1120), 34v (1151-1157), 51r (1080-1100), 57r (ca. 1120), 74v (ca. 1100), 82r (1136), 99r (1118-1126), 101v-102r (1104), 102r-v (1105), 114v (1119), 139v (1100-1110), 140r (1100-1118), 140r-v (ca. 1140), 140v (1150-1160), 140v-141r (1159). Some entries provide a date. Dates provided are for the point the transaction took place rather than the time of transcription. For confirmation, see Saché, \textit{Inventaire Sommaire}, 474-502.
the priorities of Saint-Florent’s mid-eleventh-century scriptorium. The charters written on
the first fifty folios were almost certainly included in the primary compilation because
they were transcribed using the same structural elements and script apparent in the first
folio, which bears the incipit and an illuminated initial. This structure is defined by two
columns of approximately thirty-one lines. Initials are present at the outset of every entry
in this section. Display scripts are mixtures of rustic capitals and uncial characters,
written in red. The most notable feature is an effort to copy the royal and chi rho
monograms, crosses, and the layout of names included in the witness lists of the charter
originals. In doing so, the scribes incorporated a number of Tironian notes indicating the
office, profession, or occupation of a given witness (a common example is the word
monachus). These appear to designate offices and titles for individuals in witness lists
throughout the original sections. These elements appear infrequently in later additions.

The initial scribes used an exemplary Caroline book hand. Saint-Florent’s
scriptorium did not yet display the pregothic tendencies of the twelfth century. While
variations in appearance and affinity for particular ligatures and abbreviations signify that
multiple monks worked on these sections, there are enough adherences to standard forms
that the treatment of the early sections may be discussed as a whole. The cartulary
presents many of the features expected of eleventh-century Caroline minuscule. The
characters are round, clear in appearance, and unconnected. The ascenders of b, d, and h
are elongated well past the headline. Letterforms are regular and conform to standard
patterns. Feet are not present on most minimis. Upright d predominates. Uncial d is
found only in display scripts and occasional proper nouns. Round s appears only when in

the initial position of a sense unit or name. It is otherwise absent. The uncial a is ubiquitous. The letter g presents a wide and open bowl. In some cases, the curvature of the pen provided this bowl with a broken appearance.\textsuperscript{110} The Tironian et is not present. The e-caudata was not used for the ae diphthong—the spelling of which was generally preserved rather than reduced to e. Ligatures are rare save for the et and NT ligatures.\textsuperscript{111} Abbreviations are common with pro, per, prae, uel, est, esse, quod, quae, que, and others.\textsuperscript{112} Enclitic-que always appears as (q:). By noting these traditional Caroline characteristics, intrusions such as the one on 62r are separable from those added much later in the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{113} In contrast to the eleventh-century Caroline script, the twelfth-century entries display pregothic features, which contrast significantly with the entries made in the period of the original organization or with additions made soon thereafter.

These later sections were not regularized as were the original inclusions. The practice of incorporating various additions individually at various points in the twelfth century disallowed a uniformity of execution and, therefore, new entries appear as visual interruptions between blocks of eleventh-century charters. Three intrusions on 34r-v serve as illustrative examples of both pregothic features at work as well as how additions were thematically incorporated into the original organization. A scribe-author using a script from the original composition continued writing from 33v onto 34r. After seven lines this entry ends and a charter written around 1150 begins. The new hand is

\textsuperscript{110} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 2r, col. 1, ln. 31. See glomna,
\textsuperscript{111} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 12r, col. 2, ln. 16. See presumant,
\textsuperscript{112} I make a distinction between abbreviations for Latin words and letter groupings. In the text, words appear in italics, while individual letters and letter groupings are rendered in bold. Additionally, display scripts are written using capitals.
\textsuperscript{113} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 62r (1055-1070).
characterized by an angled appearance, competition between uncial d and upright d, a lack of minimis with feet, shorter ascenders than would be expected in Caroline, a compact bowl of g, the halting of f and upright s on the baseline, and alphabetic symbols for et and est.\textsuperscript{114} This entry does not continue onto 34v, however, but continues in the lower margin, adding an extra three lines spread across the whole of the page.

Another intrusion appears on 34v (copied ca. 1120). Water damage to this folio caused the ink in this entry and the subsequent charter to bleed, but some observations are still possible. The scribe-author of this entry was not the same as that of the charter on 34r. In the first charter on 34v there is a competition between round s and upright s. The bowl of g is open, wide and flattened at the bottom. The letter f descends below the baseline and occasionally bends left above the headline.\textsuperscript{115} The final addition in this series (ca. 1151-1157) ends after five lines in column two. It is the most damaged of the three but its general appearance is angular and small.

This folio, therefore, includes three pregothic intrusions recording events from three different dates in the twelfth century and entered by three separate scribes. One should additionally note that they were not added in the order in which they appear. Understanding the order of insertion is helpful as this demonstrates the process by which entries were incorporated. The intrusion on 34r breaks the organizational scheme by extending into the lower margin. The reason the scribe wrote the end of the charter in the margin was that the first entry on 34v was already present. The scribe who copied the initial charter on 34v had likely left room for a charter (unavailable to him) which needed to be entered after the eleventh-century entry ending on 34r. This reveals that this scribe

\textsuperscript{114} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fols. 34r.
\textsuperscript{115} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fols. 34v. See filius and florentii.
believed that the transaction unavailable to him should appear before the charter he himself was entering. When a later monk found or invented the missing charter, he had only the space left on 34r in which to work. In the last entry on 34v, the final charter intended for this grouping was included. It is evident from these three examples of twelfth-century intrusions that incorporating later charters was a thoughtful practice which took note of the schematization emphasized in the original organization—that of geographic orientation (in this case, property related to England). By examining the folios which were certainly used in the first collation of the cartulary, scholars might better understand its thematic organization and how that theme was respected and followed in intrusions added almost a century later.

**Thematic Organization**

In analyzing the thematic structure of the *Livre Noir*, one must pay particular attention to three aspects of the presentation. The first is the running headings. These indicate the unifying factor of transactions grouped together (usually the name ascribed to the property in question). The second is the order in which the charters were arranged under each heading group. The last is the rubrics of the individual charters. Rubric summaries often indicate the type of exchange. Examples are helpful to understand this approach better.

After the initial section of the cartulary that lists the earliest royal gifts at Montglonne and major confirmations begins the groupings of charters based on property holdings. While the organization is usually based on the property and not the individual, an arrangement reliant on the status of the principal is still observed. The headings of the first of these property groupings are indicative of this tendency.
After the end of the hymn on 8r, the display script heading, DE S(AN)C(T)O TURONUS, appears stretched across 8v and 9r. The subsequent pages, up to 11v, bear a single-word heading: TURONUS. Together there are five charters dealing with properties around Tours on the pages bearing these headings. Looking more closely at the component charters falling under these headings, it is apparent that they were ordered by the socio-political status of the principal(s). Indeed, for the convenience of the reader, the scribe-authors provided this information, as well as the type of transaction, in rubrics. In regards to the type of transaction, the order of this series is as follows: I. fols. 8r-v = praeceptum of Charles the Bald, II. fols. 9r-10r = notitia of Archbishop Arduin of Tours, III. fol. 10r-v= donum of a priest named Gerardus and confirmed by Arduin of Tours, IV. fols. 10v-11v= a confirmation of a donation by Arduin,116 V. fol. 11v= a confirmation of a donation by Arduin.117

To summarize, this particular series provides five entries (8r-11v) pertaining to properties in the Touraine which were either donated or confirmed by a king or an archbishop. Following this collection are others bearing headings such as: IN PAGO PICTAUO,118 DE SANCTENOU,119 and IN TOURONICO.120 Interspersed between these headings are short groupings such as DE BERNEGONNO121 and ARMERICUS UICECOMES TOARCENS(US), TEMPORE ROTBERTI ABBATIS.122

116 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 10v-11v “auctoritas domni Arduini archiepiscopi de manso qui uocantur Ad his situ(m) in pago Turonico qu(a) dedit Gisleb(ert)i...”
117 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 11v “ITEM AUCTORITAS ARDUINI ARCHI(-)EP(ISCOP)I.”
118 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12v-13v.
119 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 13v-14r.
120 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 17v-20r (On 19r the heading changes to IN TOURONICO ET IN PICTAUO.)
121 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 15v.
122 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 19v.
Another organizational guide was the stock-rubric, ITEM UNDE SUPRA. The scribe-authors employed this phrase as a rubric for entries either linking charters made on the same occasion, or those referring to charters entered immediately before the one bearing this rubric. From 32v to 34r, five entries appear detailing property either sold or donated by the widow, Odila. The middle three of these bear the rubric, ITEM UNDE SUPRA. In the first two entries, Odila transferred property to the monks. The third charter then discussed how the monks disposed of the property. In this transaction, the prior, Letardus, mentioned the previous two charters. He specified:

I, Letardus, a monk fulfilling the office of prior in the monastery of Saint-Florent; handed over arable land which the aforementioned Odila—just as is seen above [in the previous entry] sold and transferred to Saint-Florent and its monks, to the faber, Landricus, for complantum by such an agreement.123

At first glance, this series suggests the usual pattern (noted above) of grouping separate charters into a series. Along with headings, the phrase ITEM UNDE SUPRA was a frequently applied tool used to link transactions into a series. These five entries, however, were not made from separate charters.

Prior to their incorporation into the Livre Noir, the transactions pertaining the Odilae family were collected into a pancarte after the last transaction had been

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123 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33r–v. (eleventh century) “...ego Letardus monachus prioris officium in caenobio [appears misspelled in the entry] Sancti Florentii administrans, terram arabilem quam Sancto Florentio et suis monachis Odila supradicta sicut in supra scripto conspicitur vendidit et tradidit, cuidam fabro nomine Landricio tradidi ad complantum, conventione tali...” I have added punctuation for clarification. For the meaning of complantus, See Niermeyer J.F. Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus (Netherlands: E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1976), 228. A complantus is, “a contract by which a proprietor grants land to a person who undertakes to plant vines on it, on condition that half of the vineyard will be returned to the proprietor later.”
completed. This summary pancarte was written in elegant Caroline minuscule. All five of its entries were copied by the same scribe author—a monk other than the one who entered the pancarte into the cartulary. The defining tendencies of this scribe-author were over-emphasized \textit{et} ligatures, a competing usage of flat-topped and rounded \textit{g}, and long-stemmed uncial \textit{a}.\footnote{AD Maine-et-Loire, H 2189.} This case is a valuable example because it demonstrates how the monks incorporated pancartes into the eleventh-century cartulary organizations and the importance of consistency of presentation to Saint-Florent’s scriptorium. The monks broke pancartes into their constituent transactions and separated them using ITEM UNDE SUPRA.

This uniform approach does not mean, however, that a scribe-author always sought to make a perfect cartulary copy. Uniformity was stressed, but the cartulary organization was favored over that of the previous pancarte. The Odilae pancarte, AD Maine-et-Loire, H 2189, comprises five entries detailing the gifts Odila made to Saint-Florent. The third and fourth, however, deal with how the monks used the property in these gifts. Once copied into the \textit{Livre Noir}, however, the fourth entry was moved to the end of the series, after the final donation. It is unlikely that this was arbitrarily changed.

While the exact motivation for this rearrangement is not readily apparent, the monks apparently felt the transactions would be made clearer by the reorganization of the entries. That the last entry of the cartulary (the fourth in the pancarte) does not have ITEM UNDE SUPRA as a header—in fact it has no introductory phrase—does not mean that it was intended to be separate from the series. Close examination of how spacing was used in the entries of this section suggests that this stylized rubric was entered in a similar
manner to other rubrics. It was added after the series was copied. The scribe-author of the fifth cartulary entry left space for the rubric—indicating that he expected its inclusion—but, for an unknown reason, it was not added. The rubric’s absence, however, should not be taken as an indication that this entry was being isolated from the series, as missing rubrics are not uncommon occurrence in the cartulary.

These examples suggest that the scribe-authors of the Livre Noir adhered to an organizational pattern based on both the geography of the property being discussed, as well as grouping entries by principal. As the Odilae pancarte demonstrates, loyalty to structure could even lead to a reorganization of information contained in the original documents. Scribe-authors used both rubrics and headings to regularize multiple forms of records into uniform cartulary entries. This structural approach was carried on throughout the sections of the cartulary included in the initial organization.

Such series, however, were more than mere tools of convenient reference. They were an expression of how collective memory regarded both land and events. This meta-process was seen above in the discussion of how Nominoë’s hostility was incorporated into the cartulary by grouping together Breton charters relating to the event. Every series was a similar exercise.

Trends in cartulary development

Thus far, we have seen that the initial scribe-authors of the Livre Noir favored a thematic organization based on groupings by estate. Yet, where does this particular codex fall in the broader trends in cartulary production in the central Middle Ages? Estate-based structures were attractive to lord-abbots because they increased a cartulary’s value as a managerial tool. This signified a change. Berkhofer has argued that traditional
commemorative concerns persisted but that twelfth-century cartularies were beginning to reflect administrative thinking. The *Livre Noir* displays administrative concerns in the last half of the eleventh century. This is not surprising. The unusually quick expansion of property acquisition in this period would have necessitated efficient means of administrative organization. It should be noted that, with respect to the general development of monastic cartularies, the *Livre Noir* was not wholly innovative. It still demonstrated a deep concern for the commemoration of the earliest gifts. This conservative interest is displayed in the codex’s incipit:

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IN HOC CORPORE CONTINENTUR ANTI(-)
QUOR(UM) PR(A)ECEPTA REGU(M) LUDOUICI, PIPINI,
KAROLI CALUI, DE ABBATIA S(AN)C(T)I FLORENTII
GLOMNENSI<=> COENOBI; SEU DE ALIO CENO(-)
BIO Q(UO)D CONSTRUCTU(M) EST IN LOCO Q(U)I DICIT(UR)
SALMURUS A TEUT(-)
BALDO COMITE: 126
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There was an eagerness to connect the abbey, from the outset, with lauded Carolingian rulers as well as to summarize the history of the house by mentioning its change of location. By doing so, the incipit also acknowledges Saint-Florent’s connection to the powerful families of the Loire through the confirmations of the

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126 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, lv. As this ends the incipit to the cartulary, I took the meaning of this punctuation mark as that of a modern colon. A similar mark is visible in line four. That mark, however, is smaller and huddled closer to the baseline. In addition to its general appearance, this mark serves the grammatical purpose of a semicolon. I, therefore, transcribed a semicolon, rather than a colon.
Blésois counts. To support the assertions of the incipit, the monks transcribed all the confirmations referred to in this statement. The tone of these earliest entries is commemorative, rather than interested in property boundaries or economic interests—elements found later in the cartulary. There is no indication that the properties discussed in this section were actually held by the monks in the mid-eleventh century. They were concentrated around Montglonne and may have been forfeit when the community moved. With the loss of these estates and incomes, the importance of these transactions in the organization would not have been their economic value. Their position as the first entries served to forge a connection with earlier kings and so elevate the prestige of the house.

Following this initial listing, the brothers provided a hymn celebrating the foundation of the abbey. The hymn’s placement is noteworthy. The aforementioned geographically themed groupings follow this hymn. I argue that the placement of the hymn as a boundary entry indicates the dual nature of the entire codex. The hymn separates and draws attention to the two objectives of the cartulary. The first was to display the impressive confirmations of illustrious rulers—thereby protecting the house’s patrimony. The second was to provide an effective organization of the monk’s property. This structure served both to implement, as well as to record the administrative practices inaugurated by the abbots of the mid-eleventh century. In light of this examination, the Livre Noir stands as evidence that Saint-Florent was among the first French monasteries to explore the new possibilities of estate management which would lead to the proliferation of cartularies in the twelfth century.

128 A key example is the recording of occurrences at a parish administered by rotating provosts. See BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 30v-31r.
century. Thus, the monks often approached bonds they forged with donors as a source of both social relationships and well as property generating sources of revenue to be managed.

The *Livre Noir* is a source fully capable of conveying the social relevance of relationships created through patronage. This cartulary’s role as an administrative tool also places that social meaning in an economic context. The *Livre Noir* was a dual-functional resource of both memory and administration. Its existence suggests that the monks and their patron community formed a complex society with many levels of mutual interest encouraging donations. These interests were often connected to larger political trends occurring in the Loire valley—ones which deeply affected donor relationships in the Saumurois.
Knowing the political history of the Loire valley in the decades surrounding 1000 is vital to understanding the social composition of the Saumurois because the region faced a particularly high level of violence in this period. Some scholars have attributed the appearance of hostilities to the creation of an uncontrollable castellan class. Represented as fundamentally destructive and coercive, this group disallowed productive social interaction. If one follows this interpretation, then much of the evidence from the monastic records appears disjointed. If, however, we see the events in the Loire between 980 and 1020 as the result of political hostilities among the great lords of the region, then the violence appears as a series of incidents brought on by isolated political circumstances, rather than an endemic lawlessness of the cultural environment.

The eleventh-century social landscape of the Saumurois was a product of political structures shaped by war. Before 1026-1027, the Loire was a principal theater for competition between Anjou and Blois. After the fall of Saumur to Fulk ‘Nerra,’ the community was challenged by new Angevin lordship, which demanded heavier exactions from the monks. In light of these events, both the aristocratic and monastic populations of the Saumurois were affected by political uncertainty, shifting loyalties, and rivalries. It should not be assumed, however, that this community was defined by newly oppressive private lordships and unlawful violence. Unlike situations which have been argued for

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Catalonia, the Mâconnais, and other regions in the early eleventh-century, the Saumurois did not experience a *mutation féodale* around 1000.\(^{130}\) The intermittent hostilities and occasional violence were not inherent features of the society, but were created by the exceptional circumstance of Saumur’s military value in a struggle between two comital powers.

This chapter will show that by understanding the political context of the region and how this context affected community relationships, one can see how traditional comital leadership heavily influenced inter-familial and interpersonal interaction in the Saumurois. It was an atmosphere in which cases were freely (and fairly) adjudicated in the lawful courts of counts and viscounts. At the same time, norms developed in response to Saint-Florent’s role as a force for social cohesion. The monastery was a center for forging relationships between donor families and the community’s saint. Strong comital oversight only intensificed the local connection to Saint Florent. By acting as mediators of disputes between the laity and the monks, and by encouraging patronage, the counts and countesses of Anjou, Blois, and Poitou were deeply involved in the affairs of both the monastery and its patron group. These magnates used their influence and lordship to maintain stability in a region within which the laity felt safe to commit resources to form bonds with the monastic heart of the Saumurois.

To explore this argument, it is first necessary to demonstrate the power of comital administration as a force for stability. It will then be shown how this regional

leadership created a stage for communal donation (acts of patronage involving multiple parties) as well as a role for women as directors of family patronage. It will further be demonstrated that the use of quitclaims strengthened relationships rather than exploited the monastery, and also connected claimants to past generations of kin. This analysis will show the ways in which kinship units practiced inheritance and group donation between parentes, and how the monks’ relationship with those of servile status differed from interactions with donor families. By exploring case studies pertaining to these issues, we will be better positioned to understand the foundational qualities of the social community in the Saumurois. Before these points are explored, however, one must understand the historiographical context which has shaped the study of eleventh-century French social history.

In 1978, Georges Duby argued that a significant socio-political change occurred in eleventh-century France. He termed this change a “révolution féodale.” Duby noted that, by the 1020s, French charters displayed a shift in feudal vocabulary. With this observation, he concluded that the early eleventh century inaugurated a deterioration of royal and comital authority. The resulting vacuum produced an atmosphere in which the lords of castles went unchecked and “the populace became the sole object of their pillaging.” With the barriers between public and private power dismantled, the

132 Duby, *The Three Orders*, 168-70. In earlier chapters Duby depicted the idealized perceptions medieval clergy men used to categorize their society. In the chapter entitled, “Feudal Revolution,” he claimed to use charters to “quit... the abode of a supposed tripartition in conformity with the divine will—to explore the terrain of what I shall refrain from calling the ‘real,’ but rather of the tangible aspects of existence,” 167. To do this Duby relied heavily on charters and their vocabulary. He argued that, “‘Feudal’ society is revealed to us by the renovation of this vocabulary,” 170.
133 Duby, *The Three Orders*, 173. Duby further described them as “Small independent garrisons, these troops were absolutely uncontrolled... power had disintegrated; it could only be effectively exercised
castellans and their milites used the ban (bannum) to subject peasants under a “new seigniory.” In this narrative, the “knights were oppression incarnate.” Duby’s interpretation consisted of two components. The first was the political chaos that developed out of absent central control and the second was the economic anarchy that came with the milites’ exploitative lordship.

Building on Duby’s conclusions, Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel claimed that one can extrapolate the identification of such social change far outside the range of analysis conducted by Duby himself. Preferring the term “mutation féodale,” these authors gathered evidence from their respective regions of expertise and argued that a new feudal lexicon in documentary sources—developing between 990 and 1040—indicated a “feudal crisis.” The great casualties of this upheaval were comital power, public justice, Adalbero of Laon’s and Gerald of Cambrai’s idealizations of a tripartite social order, peasant independence, and allodial property. For Poly and Bournazel the result of this rapid transition was clear:

At the end of the eleventh century, from Catalonia to Flanders, the feudal system is fully set up with its own rules all in place... There are good reasons for its complexity. The tangle of feudo-vassalic bonds is not a sign of the decadence of the structure but is its essential condition, extant from the

within the boundaries of the castellany; this explains why the names of castellans and their associated knights replaced those of counts and bishops at the bottom of royal diplomas after 1028.”

Duby, The Three Orders, 175-6, 183.
Duby, The Three Orders, 173-5.
Poly and Bournazel, The Feudal Transformation, 162.
The eleventh-century bishops, Adalbero of Laon and Gerald of Cambrai, were early exponents of a tripartite conceptualization of society.
outset. It is indeed from this system that the truly feudal principalities, as opposed to the still Carolingian type of principality arose. It took root at the end of the tenth century in a situation of constant warring between the old principalities—wars principally undertaken by the great castellans of the marches.\textsuperscript{139}

Their perspective on the eleventh century conditioned their analysis of a host of developments such as the proliferation of castles, the tripartite social division scheme, the Peace and Truce of God, and the emergence of a noble class. The introduction of, and alteration of, words such as \textit{bannum, miles, militita, caballarius, fefum, colonus, and servus} formed the core evidence which the authors presented in favor of eleventh-century social reorganization. These scholars’ interpretation was widely accepted by the French historical community in the 1980s and early 1990s.

In 1992, Thomas Head and Richard Landes published an edited volume of essays, \textit{The Peace of God}.\textsuperscript{140} In this collection, French, German, British, and American scholars weighed in on the role of violence and public power in the eleventh century. Contributors to the edition, such as Head, Landes, Christain Lauranson-Rosaz, André Debord, and Robert Moore reinforced the conclusions of Duby, Poly, and Bournazel. The collection, however, also published early challenges to this master narrative. In her essay on vocabulary relating to the Peace, Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier argued that historians had too often used words and phrases such as \textit{raptores, pervasores, usurpatores, oppressors ecclesiarum et pauperum} as evidence of oppressive lordships. Instead of signaling

\textsuperscript{139} Poly and Bournazel, \textit{The Feudal Transformation}, 73-4. This quotation is an example of Poly and Bournazel’s dismissal of regional variations. They admitted that some cases were unique, but this did not deter them from making sweeping generalizations.

anarchy, this lexicon was actually part of a foundational ecclesiastical vocabulary stemming from the early Middle Ages. She further asserted that the Peace was an effort to limit claims of laymen on Church property rather than an indication of castellan abuse.141 Hans-Werner Goetz also presented a thesis which opposed the mainstream interpretation. Goetz argued that the Peace was neither anti-seigneurial nor an effort to escape from anarchy. Instead, the movement was linked to the Gregorian reforms. It was intended as a clarification of and a return to traditional practice.142 The work of Magnou-Nortier and Goetz indicated a nascent opposition to the mutationiste paradigm. By the close of the 1990s, French and Anglo-American scholarship had also challenged the narrative of radical social change. In this new push against the mutation féodale, Dominique Barthelemy stood out as the most vocal opponent of Poly’s and Bournaud’s interpretations.

Barthelemy opposed the mutationiste thesis. Like Magnou-Nortier, he posited that rather than evincing social transformation, the proliferation of a new lexicon within the chronicle and charter sources demonstrates a mere shift in terminology.143 Barthelemy

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143 Dominique Barthelemy, “La Mutation Féodale A-t-elle Eu Lieu ? (note Critique),” Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations 47, no. 3 (1992): 773. “Que la convention “privée,” en rupture apparente avec la loi, fleurisse au XIe siècle, c’est à mon sens un fait purement documentaire.” See also, Dominique Barthelemy, The Serf, the Knight, and the Historian, trans. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1-11. In this work, Barthelemy argued that those favoring societal change, such as Duby, Bonnassie, Poly, Bournaud, and Bisson, were scholars who worked on the south of France. These historians, researching the south, where the documentary evidence is far more pronounced, extrapolated what they believed to be evidence for societal change to the whole of France as well as Spain and Italy. Drawing on his background on the Vendôme, Barthelemy argued that the paradigm noted for the south did not work in the north of France. For his work on the Vendôme, see La société dans le comté de Vendôme de l’an mil au XIVe siècle (France: Fayard, 1993).
argued that the Peace of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries signaled declining comital violence in the tenth century rather than castellan chaos in the eleventh. Instead of attempting to distance itself from the castellans, the Church (specifically monasteries) sought to forge deeper relationships with lordly families which would discourage enmity. The debate between these two camps came to a head in Past & Present between 1994 and 1997.

Almost a decade earlier, and overlapping the end of the debate in Past & Present, social historians too explored monastic relationships with the castellan families highlighted by the mutationiste paradigm. Constance Bouchard cited Burundian examples of the depth of lay enthusiasm for connections with monastic houses. Unlike the mutationistes who did not emphasize the role of patronage as a formative social aspect of aristocratic culture. Bouchard, by reincorporating aristocratic donations into the debate, offered a new interpretation of the knightly class as a pious and constructive element in Burgundian society. She argued that sincere religious devotion (rather than pure political or economic interests) had motivated castellan families to donate to monasteries. At the same time, regular houses sometimes valued these relationships more than the property symbolizing them. She further argued that eleventh-century monastic reform efforts

145 Barthélemy, “The ‘Feudal Revolution’,” 202. He cited Fulk Nerra’s pattern of abuse followed by reconciliation as an example of the Church freely sanctioning violent behavior by its willingness to allow donations and reparations to be made in compensation.
147 Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister, 239.
only were possible with the support of aristocratic families.\textsuperscript{148} Bouchard’s argument complemented Barthélemy’s objection to the definition of lordship as inherently “predatory.”\textsuperscript{149} Citing Bouchard’s work, Timothy Reuter also stressed the social importance of lay patronage. The Church was a legitimizing force and, through their gifts, aristocratic families forged ties which could stabilize an emerging family’s reputation among its peers.\textsuperscript{150} Indeed, in response to Reuter’s conclusion (and indirectly those of Bouchard and Robert Fossier, as well) Thomas Bisson ceded that “the less desperate castellans and knights lost no time in assuming the respectable adornments of piety and memory.”\textsuperscript{151} Bisson’s broader conclusions, however, varied significantly from Bouchard’s thesis for the aristocracy’s role in late eleventh-century reform. He argued that, “the reformers were angry as never before about the encroachment of patrimonial lordship on the exercise of clerical office.”\textsuperscript{152}

Over the course of these debates, charters served as an invaluable source for exploring social interaction. While sources from the Mâconnais, Catalonia, Burgundy, the Vendôme, Flanders, and other regions were brought to bear on the question of social

\textsuperscript{148} Bouchard, \textit{Sword, Miter, and Cloister}, 248. She argued that, “To some extent the changes in the monastic reform movement from the early eleventh century to the late twelfth century can be correlated with the changing structure of the noble class and the changing needs of the noble families that made gifts to monasteries and provided their members.” The twelfth-century orders like the Cistercians were successful because the families emerging in the eleventh century secured their social status in the early twelfth century and were increasingly donating in an effort to mimic the practices of older, more established, families. See pg. 250, 251.

\textsuperscript{149} Barthélemy, “The ‘Feudal Revolution’,” 202.

\textsuperscript{150} Reuter, “The ‘Feudal Revolution’, “ 186. “The legitimacy possessed by the church needs stressing, because in their dealings with the new classes showed just how much they themselves sought and found legitimacy in their relations with it; the despoilers of the church were also its benefactors... what they built was visible and traditional enough: no sooner did the castellans and seigneurs come on the scene than they began to invest in the preservation of their own memoria, just like their elders and betters.”

\textsuperscript{151} Bisson, “The ‘Feudal Revolution’: Reply,” 216. For Bisson’s citation of Fossier, see note 23.

\textsuperscript{152} Bisson, “The ‘Feudal Revolution’: Reply,” 218. See also, pg. 224. Bisson claimed there was “evidence of a critical restructuring of power... It coincided with even more conspicuous religious and economic movements that would one day overtake and transform the harsh and conflicted realities of vastly multiplied lordships.”
change, the numerous charter and cartulary sources from Saint-Florent were almost never mentioned in this discussion. Case studies from this monastery’s earliest cartulary, the Livre Noir, used to explore the socio-political circumstances of the Saumurois under Angevin and Blésois comital administration, make it clear that the Saumurois does not support the notion of dramatic social change at the outset of the eleventh century. To explain, we must first challenge the idea that a rising and uncontrollable castellan class was operating at the expense of comital administration.

Violence and displays of power

The mutationistes argued that the major political shift in the tenth century was not the transition from Carolingian to Capetian power, but rather the shift from royal power to that of “territorial princes.” It was also assumed that these princes (counts, bishops, and viscounts) were, in turn, overwhelmed by an “explosive phenomenon,” a process of encastrellation at the expense of “old aristocracies.” Bisson has been the most recent proponent of this interpretation, arguing that the rise of every castellany saw the inauguration of a new lordship. If this hypothesis were correct, then one would see the collapse of comital control of new lordships based on adulterine castles. Bisson argued that the spread of castles moved from the south to the north. The Loire valley saw this

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154 See also, Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, 14-5. Cautiously borrowing “Lemarignier’s two-tiered model of structural change,” Barton noted that Maine (just north of Anjou) experienced a tenth-century rise of territorial princes and a subsequent rise of castellan lords usurping comital prerogatives by the 1030s. In accepting this political progression, Barton was careful to distance himself from the social implications of the mutationiste paradigm.

occurrence primarily around 1030. Castles certainly did arise in the region at this time, but their creation was largely directed by comital powers—particularly in Anjou. In comparison to Maine, the Mâconnais and Catalonia, the central Loire never saw the collapse of tenth-century forms of comital administration. The only contest in the eleventh-century Loire was over which count would control which lands. Comital agents and castellans were capable of abuse and violence, but as the dynastic troubles of the ninth and tenth-centuries demonstrate, such struggles were nothing new in Frankish politics. From the closing years of the reign of Louis the Pious, factions using public power within the Frankish regnum had struggled for dominance. As had been the case in the Carolingian world and in the tenth century, a count’s judgment was a manifestation of public authority. He was the administrator of a pagus. Inter-comital warfare, therefore, should be viewed as competition for the right to extend lawful authority over particular lands. The lords of the Loire did not dispute that Fulk ‘Nerra’ or Odo II were fonts of public power. That in the charters we see the authority of these men used as a consistent recourse for justice demonstrates this point. The contention was over where

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156 Bisson, The Crisis of the Twelfth-Century, 41.
157 Bachrach, Fulk Nerra, 94-5. In the first two decades of his rule, Fulk used comital resources to build defensive fortresses.
158 Barthelemy, “The ‘Feudal Revolution’,” 200-1
159 Bisson, The Crisis of the Twelfth Century, 29. Maintenance of public order was facilitated by preserving notions of “old power.” This old power was public power.
160 Barton, Lordship in the County of Maine, 53.
161 John France, Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades, 1000-1300 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 4-5. “Throughout our period the primary form of wealth was land, and everywhere, its ownership on any scale gave quasi-governmental powers.” France argued that royal government in the eleventh century was virtually non-existent. In its place were territorial powers which became governmental units in their own right through the expansion of and competition between mouvances. Principalities often incorporated elements of royal authority into their administrations. Based on these principles, the terms “private warfare,” and “robber-barons” which are used by historians were concepts that would not have been current in medieval society.
the geographic borders of the power of each should end. The counts of Anjou and Blois, in the early eleventh century, were able to stabilize and redirect the attention of their men through an adept understanding of political and social structures. They displayed the same level of control as had their forbears in the previous century.

The Loire valley during the first forty years of the eleventh century was certainly troubled by warfare. The principal combatants were the houses of Anjou (under Fulk ‘Nerra’ and Geoffrey ‘Martel’) and Blois (under Odo I and Odo II). With major military operations underway, violence was certainly part of the Loire political scene. This warfare, ironically, demonstrates the stability of the castellan system and the ability of the counts to control and redirect the warlike impulses of their dependents. The ability to organize large armies and successfully execute logistical challenges, like sieges and encastellation programs, required strong central authority and oversight. Because of the logistical restrictions of a limited war season, armies and labor for military construction (mostly through bidamnum) had to be raised quickly and be provided with supplies.163  

While, as in any society, there was room for corruption, historians have placed too much emphasis on such abuses.164 More important than misdirected power, is the manner in which corruption was addressed, the identification of those seen as having the authority and ability to resolve conflict, and consistent implementation of punishment and mediation. The comital charters in the Livre Noir for the year 1011 illustrate this element

were expressions of public power in which modern distinctions of secular and sacred were not stressed. The Livre Noir and Saint-Florent’s charters are evidence that the condition described by Jordan is applicable to the eleventh-century Saumurois.

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164 Particularly those in the mutationiste camp.
of control and a preference for mediation as a primary tactic in both political and social disputes.\textsuperscript{165}

In the winter of 1011, Fulk ‘Nerra’ returned from his second pilgrimage to Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{166} Upon reaching Angers, he was confronted with complaints that the monastery of Saint-Florent had been mistreated in his absence.\textsuperscript{167} Fulk had left his half-brother, Maurice, in charge of the county while he was abroad.\textsuperscript{168} As steward, Maurice had lost territory and been unable to curb castellan ambitions or the machinations of Abbot Robert of Saint-Florent.\textsuperscript{169} The situation, especially as it pertained to the monastery’s rights, was complex. Not only had Fulk been absent, but his chief rival, Odo II had also been away from the Loire valley, prosecuting a war against Normandy. Thus effective central power had largely been absent during much of the opening decade of the eleventh-century. These problems, however, do not necessarily indicate endemic castellan violence so much as display a particular set of events. What occurred in this comital void resulted from hostilities lingering from the previous decade.

In the 990s, Saint-Florent had suffered at the hands of both sides of the war between Anjou and Blois. This was largely owed to the house’s location on the border of Anjou and extensions of Blésois power (in the form of fortresses/\textit{castrui}). Indeed, it was

\textsuperscript{165} Bisson, \textit{The Crisis of the Twelfth-Century}, 23. Bisson argued that “the real problem was that lay power proved vulnerable to tenaciously self-serving or injurious impulses.” The examples of comital justice in the \textit{Livre Noir} demonstrate that comital courts operated as a controlling force. Thus, while some lords certainly did abuse the Church, those wronged did have recourse to justice through secular courts.

\textsuperscript{166} By his death in 1040, Fulk completed a total of four pilgrimages to Jerusalem, always stopping in Rome.

\textsuperscript{167} For Maurice’s tenure, see Bachrach, “The First Capetian-Blésois Axis,” in \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 62-87. Fulk’s half-brother, Maurice, was left in charge of the county while the count was abroad. As steward, Maurice had lost territory, and there was significant abuse.

\textsuperscript{168} That Fulk felt comfortable to leave for extended trips on four separate occasions further demonstrates that there was confidence that the administration provided by the comital government was strong enough for the count himself to leave with minimal loss. Bachrach noted that each of Fulk’s pilgrimages coordinated with specific political circumstances. See, Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 253.

\textsuperscript{169} Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 83.
located within the walls of the strategic castrum, Saumur, held by Odo II’s bellicose castellan, Gelduin. In the course of fighting between the Angevins and Gelduin, both sides had usurped the monks’ property and right to exact justice. The monastery, under Abbot Robert, had not remained neutral. The abbey sided with Gelduin against Count Fulk. The abbot worked to subvert the Angevins diplomatically, while Gelduin conducted a military campaign to block Fulk from moving east.  

In the midst of this war, much of the abuse directed toward Saint-Florent resulted from actions taken by Robert. Of course the abbot’s partisanship arose from the necessity of maintaining Blésois support for the monastery (the counts of Blois had been the house’s patrons since the mid-tenth century). This family’s protection was both traditional and vital to the monks’ security. By actively undermining the Angevins, however, Robert created powerful enemies. His partnership with Gelduin was also ill-fated as the castellan often proved unpredictable. When Fulk left for the Holy Land and Odo waged war in the north, Robert and the monks had been left to their own defenses and were surrounded by castellans hovering over a still very active warzone. It should be recognized that the exploitation of Saint-Florent in this period was not the norm for a monastery in the Loire, but rather the result of a particular political circumstance brought on by protracted warfare. The monks entered the conflict, and found themselves surrounded by castellans mobilized for war. After nearly twenty years

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172 Ziezulewicz, “Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-de-Saumur,” 291-3.
of heightened tensions within the Saumurois, the monastery’s lands had been damaged, and further coercion was to be expected.\footnote{Indeed, Saint-Florent was not free of warfare until the Angevins took Saumur in 1026.}

The very fact that lords took advantage of the count’s absence demonstrates that comital power was ordinarily effective in the community of the Saumurois. The decades of strife and the restoration of order by Fulk suggest that only with the count abroad could lords abuse neighbors with limited consequences. The absence of the count provided an opportunity for abuse; Fulk’s reversal of “\textit{malae consuetudines}”\footnote{For a discussion of \textit{malae consuetudines}, see Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier, \textit{Pouvoirs et libertés au temps des premiers Capétiens} (Herault, 1992).} after his return from Jerusalem illustrates that comital authority was enough to diffuse the instability (though in this instance, Fulk’s help hinged on whether Abbot Robert was willing to cooperate and compromise).\footnote{For this phrase in context, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v.} From the resolutions of 1011, one may infer that the presence of a charismatic count facilitated order. As we will see, the charter evidence supports this hypothesis.

Upon Fulk’s return to Anjou, Abbot Robert was involved in a series of cases submitted to the count’s court. Three of these were recorded in a grouping within the \textit{Livre Noir}.\footnote{BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v, 26v-27v, and 28r-v.} Bachrach argued that because the second of these documents depicts Robert as recognizing Fulk as his lord and transferring the chapter into the Angevin orbit of influence, the abbot was able to defend himself at court.\footnote{Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 97-99. For the charter referenced by Bachrach see, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v-27v. “Nos autem eius petitioni assensum praebentes, ut pote seniori nostro, concessimus iam praeidicto Drogoni ecclesiam iam dictam et molinum situm in pago Andegavo in villa quae dicitus Distriacus.”} In this interpretation, peace was established through compromise. Bachrach, however, only considered the political circumstances, and did not take into account the social context of the aforementioned
charters. This perspective potentially skews the evidence in favor of castellan chaos.\textsuperscript{178} Recent scholarship has shown that eleventh-century aristocrats were not mindless killers—though they valued the use of arms. Their eagerness for monastic patronage and general religious devotion points to a nuanced mentality and multifaceted warrior class.\textsuperscript{179} In the course of his lifetime, Fulk went on four pilgrimages and founded a monastery, Belli Locus, while still endowing several others (including Saint-Florent).\textsuperscript{180} His three rulings in 1011 show that he was not an opponent of monasticism.

The first case Fulk addressed was Abbot Robert’s report that Saint-Florent had experienced widespread abuse at the hands of the count’s \textit{fideles}. Fulk, therefore, made a \textit{decretum} on behalf of the brothers:

It was therefore pleasing to me to make this notice before our \textit{fideles}, that any perversions and evil customs (\textit{malas consuetudines}) made in the land of Saint-Florent might be reversed and concerning this matter they [Fulk’s \textit{fideles}] made a solemn oath to him and to God that no one for any reason may steal anything. Men may neither damage nor inflict harm on the whole of the abbey of Saint-Florent.\textsuperscript{181}

\textsuperscript{178} Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 97-99.
\textsuperscript{180} Placed in the context of the count’s religious expression, the name Belli Locus may appear ironic. In 992, Fulk defeated Conan of Rennes at Conquereuil. Conquereuil was one of many places designated for trial by battle (\textit{Judicium Dei}). Bachrach argued that because Fulk felt guilt for the lives lost in the contest, he wished to establish a monastery on the battlefield. The political circumstances, however, prohibited this. Fulk, therefore, founded his new house on another ‘place of battle’ just south of Tours. He chose Belli Locus as the name of the abbey. See Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 101-2.
\textsuperscript{181} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v. “Placuit ergo michi facere hanc notitiam coram fidelibus nostris ut remitteret unus quisque perversiones et malas consuetudines faciebant in terra Sancti Florentii et sponseionem de hac re fecerunt deo et michi, ut neque pro ulla occasione aliquid tollant. Neque homines affligant, neque calumniae inferant in toto abbatia Sancti Florentii.” For original, see AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 no. 4. Based on Marc Saché’s dating, it is possible that this charter could have been made between 987 and 1011.
Though it is true that Robert’s value as a counterbalance to Blésois authority at Saumur influenced Fulk’s decisions, the pursuit of stability was still a worthy cause, as it facilitated effective comital administration. How Fulk deployed his authority in response to Robert’s requests provides great insight into how the Saumurois community reacted to regional figures of power. Local lords were confident that they had recourse to traditional comital justice and the count’s power was respected, as it had been in the tenth century.  

Fulk was certainly willing to issue such decrees exhibiting comital policy, but he was also ready to adjudicate particular cases. Local aristocrats expected protocols of justice to be followed by their lord and Fulk’s deployment of judicial authority in two particular cases reveals that he well understood how to respond to their expectations. In the cases of 1011, Fulk called upon his fideles to give counsel and enacted a policy of making judgments establishing compromises. A particular case involved property in the villa called Distré (Distriacus).  

In the previous generation, the brothers of Saint-Florent granted the parish church of Magniacum and a nearby mill in Distré to a man named Roho. Upon Roho’s death (sometime during Maurice’s guardianship of the county), Abbot Robert refused to cede the properties to Roho’s son Drogo (an important vassallus of Fulk). In 1011, Drogo complained to the count, who ordered Robert to transfer the property. In Bachrach’s  

\[182\] Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, 31, 116. Barton presented evidence that by 958 the counts of Anjou and Blois viewed their power as derived from God. He also indicated that the counts of Anjou were careful to consult the lords of their lands when meting out justice.  

\[183\] BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 26v-27v. The Latin spelling for Distré varies between Distriacus and Districtus.  

\[184\] BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v-27v. These properties were in the villa known as Distriacus.  

\[185\] Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra*, 97-9. Bachrach argues that the property was withheld from Drogo while the count was abroad. For a description of Drogo’s connection to Fulk and the use of the word, vassallus, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v-27v.
interpretation of this charter, Robert had little choice but to capitulate to the ruling as he was becoming politically isolated.\textsuperscript{186} By assisting his \textit{vassallus}, Fulk was able to secure Distré—which was a principal border region between Anjou, Poitou, and the Mauges.\textsuperscript{187} Yet, were the motives behind Drogo’s complaint and Fulk’s judgment purely \textit{realpolitik}? Furthermore, if Robert was under such pressure from Fulk, why then were the terms so balanced?

It may have occurred to the count to rule against the monks in order to placate Drogo and guarantee his future faithfulness. Fulk, however, found a balanced resolution. He weighed the interests of both parties and forged a compromise. The monks were to grant the properties to Drogo for life (rather than being transferred to his heirs as Drogo may have wanted). Upon the latter’s death the church and mill would return to the abbey. Finally, every year on the feast day of Saint Florent (May 9) Drogo was to pay a fee/rent.\textsuperscript{188} Fulk, thereby, ensured that his man would be positioned in Distré, while also keeping the monks on friendly terms. Bachrach saw this exchange as the humbling of Abbot Robert. In some ways it was, but more importantly it was an execution of exemplary justice within the bounds of the traditional powers of tenth-century counts.

The final case brought before Fulk in 1011 concerned exactions from the parish church of Saint-Georges-Chatelaison.\textsuperscript{189} Apparently, a \textit{fidelis} of the count named Albericus served as the monks’ “\textit{advocatus},” and during Maurice’s tenure he had taken advantage of the lay dependents of Saint-Florent:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{186} Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 97-9.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Bachrach, \textit{Fulk Nerra}, 97-9.
\item \textsuperscript{188} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v-27v. “Ut quam diu praedictus Drogo advixerit teneat sub institutione census annuatim reddendum inmissa Sancti Florentii quae est VI, nonus Mai. Et contra vero dedit nobis ad partes Sancti Florentii praedictus drogo alodum nobilia cum nomine, cum terris quae illic succensum adiacent alodo.”
\item \textsuperscript{189} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v.
\end{itemize}
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Robert, the abbot of Saint-Florent came to us [Count Fulk] with his monks protesting that men under his power are unjustly being oppressed by a certain *fidelis* of ours by the name of Albericus, by the pretext of new exactions and customs, and unjust laws (*iniustasque leges*), which from the times of our predecessors were never in that power or [even] heard [of]. Moreover, that the power on account of the honor of the holiest of martyrs, Georgius, [who] was living in great veneration from our predecessors, so that no *advocatus* there may presume to bring in some exaction, nor to be able to make some profit for himself.  

Before responding to Robert’s plea, Fulk consulted his men as was expected: “*diligentius cum nostris fidelibus inquirentes.*” In the above passage, Fulk recognized that the oppression was unjust. He declared that Robert’s complaint was just and summoned Albericus’ wife, son, and *fideles* to appear publicly at court—Albericus himself had evidently died before 1011. For the welfare of Albericus’ soul the “*malas consuetudines*” were removed. Fulk further ordered the family to travel to Saint-Florent to make amends to the monks before everyone (“*et ibi coram omnibus*”).

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190 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v. “quam adiit nos abbas Sancti Florentii Rotbertus nomine cum suis monachis reclamans se suae que potestantis homines iusti opprimi a quodam fidelii nostro Alberico nomine occasione commendissiae nouas exactiones et consuetudines iniustasque leges, quae temporibus praedecessorum nostrorum nunquam in illa potestate vel audita fuerunt. Illa autem potestas ob honorum sanctissimi martyris Georgii in tanta veneratione a praedecessoribus nostri est habita, ut nullus ibi advocatus aliquam exactionem inferre praeumeret, nec sibi quaestum aliquae ad quirere, sed omni tempore pro dei amore et salute anime suae saluam faceret.” *Opprimi* is a present passive infinitive. I rendered it as “being oppressed.” The phrase, “Illa autem potestas ob honorum sanctissimi martyris Georgii in tanta veneratione a praedecessoribus nostri est habita,” rendered literally reads, “Moreover, that power on the honor of the holiest of martyrs, Georgius, was living in such veneration from our predecessors.”

191 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v.

192 Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra*, 98. Bachrach hypothesized that Albericus had died before the case was heard.

193 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v. “ibique coram nobis ad esse iussimus mulierem praefati Alberici et filius ac fideles, sua dentes eis ut pro anima senioris sui. quae nobis pro hac causa videbat in magno periculo esse illas malas consuetudines dimitterent…”

194 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v. “… et ibi coram omnibus…”
In his description of this series of entries in the *Livre Noir*, Bachrach listed this charter as the second in the series, with Drogo’s case being the final mediation the count oversaw in 1011. Bachrach’s ordering was incorrect. The series in the *Livre Noir* was organized with the *decretum* occurring on 26v, the arbitration for Drogo on 26v-27v, and the removal of Albericus’ exactions on 28v. The entries include no information which would suggest that the dispute between Drogo and Abbot Robert took place after Fulk’s judgment on the parish church of Saint-Georges-Chatelaison. Bachrach’s organization depicts the year’s judgments ending with what he viewed as the submission of Abbot Robert and the removal of land from the abbey. He also placed undue emphasis on Robert’s elimination as an enemy combatant. But the organization found in the cartulary does not depict the count as overly adversarial to the monks.

Just as Drogo’s case illustrates that Fulk backed the claim of a *fidelis* at the expense of the abbey, Albericus’ case shows that Fulk was willing and capable of supporting the monks’ cause to the disadvantage of his own supporters. Beyond merely removing the exactions, Fulk ordered Albericus’ family and *fideles* publicly to seek forgiveness from the monks through a public display. Though war ravaged the Loire in 1011, Fulk heard cases in the presence of his *fideles* and on two out of three occasions sided with the monks. This evidence shows him as a lord wielding official authority. Fulk balanced his ambitions with his duties. Within a single year, he neutralized Abbot Robert

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195 Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra*, 98.

196 The entry does not indicate whether Albericus’ son was a minor or mature in 1011. One could argue that the age of the son is important because of possible repercussions for Fulk’s settlement in favor of Saint-Florent. If Albericus’ son was a minor, the count may have felt more confident that his censure of the family would not carry an adverse effect on his own position among his supporters. Fulk’s castigation, however, was not limited to Albericus’ wife and son. The family’s *fideles* were also summoned to appear at the comital court. Fulk’s ruling, therefore, affected more than one nuclear family. I argue that this wider accountability provided a commensurate level of danger for the count as would have been the case if the son was of age.
as an enemy while treating the saint’s property fairly. The count did not consider or treat as a unit the political machinations of Robert and the interests of his house. This style of comital mediation was not a strategy used in this case alone. Other examples from this region demonstrate that counts carried out what was traditional and expected by both the aristocratic families and monastic houses in the Loire valley.

Fulk Nerra’s contemporaries also heard claims brought by the monks of Saint-Florent. The castellan Gelduin of Saumur, whom we met above, was a fidelis of Odo II of Blois and one of the principal enemies of the monks. Sometime between 996 and 1011, Count Odo issued a charter mediating a dispute between Saint-Florent and the “miles” Gelduin. The contention between the parties involved judicial jurisdiction and rights to profits from fines at Distré (Districtus). This was the same villa for which Drogo had sought the assistance of Fulk. Two cases—likely contemporaneous—were addressed in similar ways. These two charters indicate the expectation that comital justice would result from compromise. The particulars of this case will be helpful in further exploring the similarities between Fulk’s and Odo’s judgments.

Led by Abbot Robert, the monks sought Count Odo’s mediation. The brothers pleaded that Gelduin had usurped Saint-Florent’s judicial prerogatives at Distré. The count’s arbitration demonstrates two points. First, as count, Odo’s authority to judge the case was respected. Second, comital structures and oversight of officials were complex and nuanced. As with Fulk, we see the lord’s interest in the maintenance of balance. In

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197 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 27v-28r.
198 Within the context of this charter, miles appears synonymous with the term castellan. The heading on BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 27v-28r, describes Gelduin as “miles de Salmuro.”
199 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 27v-28r. The Latin spelling for Distré varies between Distriacus and Districtus.
200 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 26v-27r.
this particular case, Odo weighed the judicial, political, and economic interests of the parties before making his decision.

In answer to the monk’s charges Odo stipulated, “that Gelduin may take up no power concerning any matter in Distré, unless it concerns theft, rapine, arson, homicide, or assault; that no emissary of Gelduin may take up any power of Saint-Florent without our provost for any justice that needs to be done.” 201 In curtailing the scope of the castellan’s authority, Odo was defining the limits of the castellan’s power, and clarifying the function of Gelduin’s position at Saumur. Beyond this, Odo seems to have felt that the situation was volatile and needed to be supervised outside normal court proceedings. He therefore sent a provost, named Colibert (Colibertus), to monitor the situation at Distré. This comital missus was to act in concert with the missus of Gelduin when hearing cases in the villa. 202 The settlement established checks on the power of each of these agents. It also provided a clarification of who would receive the profits of justice and fairs.

Gelduin’s loss in this settlement was substantial. The presence of Odo’s provost negated his ability to act independently of comital oversight. The severity of Gelduin’s situation was not due to Odo’s having acted outside his bounds—indeed, the use of a missus dispatched from a lawful court was reminiscent of Carolingian practice. It was because Gelduin was a repeat offender. The castellan had habitually abused Saint-Florent for his own gain, and Odo II’s father, Odo I, had ruled against him in 978 in a dispute

201 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 27v-28r. “hoc est ut nichil accipiat Gelduinus de omni re Districtum, nisi de furto, de raptu, de incendio, de homicidio vel asaltu potestatem. ut nullius missus Gelduini ingrediatur in omni potestate Sancti Florentii sine nostro preaposto pro ulla iustitia facienda.”
202 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 27v-28r.
brought forward by the monks.\textsuperscript{203} While this troubled the castellan greatly, one must be careful not to see Gelduin’s punishment as overly oppressive. Gelduin’s prerogatives to exact justice were not removed, but more clearly defined and relegated to the proper jurisdictions afforded to a man in his position. In seeking to achieve a balanced ruling on the case, Odo took a risk. The count could not forget the importance of this aggressive lord as a bulwark against Angevin incursions on the Touraine. Humbling Gelduin entailed a great risk. Odo must have known that the open hostility of this castellan could mean the loss of Saumur to Fulk. It is, therefore, striking that the count proceeded to limit Gelduin’s authority. This move ultimately speaks to the role of comital power in the Blésois lands of the Loire. Like Fulk, Odo’s approach toward justice was an effort to placate all parties with compromises. Moreover, this judicial policy was made intentionally conspicuous. How one mediated disputes reflected one’s character and demonstrated that one was capable of carrying out the expectations of one’s office. As we noted above, the phrasing of these charters emphasizes the visibility of comital judgment and that justice was being fulfilled. Fulk described his court, “quite diligently with our \textit{fideles} scrutinizing” and the sentences passed on those required to make amends, “there before everyone.”\textsuperscript{204} Such visibility was an essential element of lawful rule.

Thus far, this analysis has focused on the political and judicial aspects of comital lordship in the Loire valley. These same examples also provide valuable insight into how social interactions within the Loire were affected by such developments. The most meaningful impact of structured and dependable leadership was the stability it provided.

\textsuperscript{203} AD Maine-et-Loire, H 1840 n.1. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 12r-v.
\textsuperscript{204} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v: “diligentius cum nostris fidelibus inquirentes.” BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, fol. 28v: “ibi que coram nobis ad esse iussimus mulierem praefati Alberici et filius ac fideles, sua dentes eis ut pro anima senioris sui. quae nobis pro hac causa videbat in magno periculo esse illas malas consuetudines dimitterent.”
the region, and this conditioned how the families and regular houses of the valley
interacted with one another. To illustrate this point most effectively let us examine how
princely leadership provided a safe environment for various families and religious
establishments in the region—one in which they might direct their resources to monastic
patronage.

Guided Patronage: Countess Agnes’s Program at Fossas

In 1030, the marriage of Agnes of Burgundy (d. 1068) and Duke William V of
Aquitaine ended with the latter’s death. Two years later, the widowed duchess made a
marriage alliance with Geoffrey II ‘Martel’ of Anjou (d. 1060). The new couple never
had children, but Agnes moved to Angers with her two sons and daughter by William. In
1039, her son Peter-William inherited Aquitaine as William VII ‘Aigret.’ With her son
still too young to administer the duchy, Agnes returned to Poitou as regent. During the
five years of her tenure, the same nuclear family held the governments of both Anjou and
Aquitaine and the region between the counties enjoyed a newfound peace. Agnes
displayed a concerted political presence in both principalities at this time. In describing
the role of the countess, Isabelle Soulard Berger rightly referred to Agnes as “le symbole
de la paix.”

The aristocracy of these principalities recognized the advantage of this
peaceful unity—especially since there was a history of Angevin incursion into northern
Poitou. In 1033, Geoffrey ‘Martel’ had defeated Duke William VI (d. 1038) at Mont
Couër. With the new marriage alliance, the border was pacified and local families
diverted attention and resources away from military preparation to social and religious
activity. Because of the political stability, the border monasteries enjoyed vigorous

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patronage. Agnes’ independent governance at Poitou carried particular significance for the monks at Saint-Florent.

Countess Agnes was known to be a great patron of both monks and of nuns.\textsuperscript{206} Evidence from the \textit{Livre Noir} suggests that Agnes chose favored houses in both Poitou and Anjou. Beyond this, she viewed her gifts to these communities as mutable. Between 1040 and 1043, while ruling Aquitaine on behalf of her son, Agnes redirected properties she had given to the Poitevin women’s monastery of Saint-Croix to Saint-Florent in Anjou. In addition to her personal program of patronage, she encouraged her sons, husband, and border families to patronize the communities she had taken under her guardianship. She led an effort to transfer various properties, held by multiple lords, to Saint-Florent. The impact of this campaign was that Saint-Florent’s holdings stretched southwestward and the nuns at Saint-Croix acquired liquid assets from the monks taking possession of their property. In addition to the economic profits of Agnes’s direct patronage, both houses enjoyed developed relationships with the families of northern Poitou and southern Anjou. In this three year period, Agnes and her kin set an example for smaller aristocratic families.\textsuperscript{207} Local lords sought to emulate their betters by patronizing the same houses as the comital family.

Agnes’ objectives were two-fold. By choosing establishments in both principalities, the countess reinforced her already considerable ties to the regional

\textsuperscript{206} Soulard Berger, “Agnès de Bourgogne, duchesse d’Aquitaine puis comtesse d’Anjou,” 51. “Femme politique certes, Mais Agnès est aussi une femme de son temps et à ce titre elle participe au grand mouvement de fondation et dotation d’égilises ou d’abbayes qui marque le XIe siècle.”

\textsuperscript{207} Soulard Berger, “Agnès de Bourgogne, duchesse d’Aquitaine puis comtesse d’Anjou,” 47. Agnes brought a network of Poitevin allies to her second marriage. These connections were maintained and strengthened during the Angevin war against her stepson William VI between 1032 and 1039. By the 1040s, Agnes was unchallenged in her new position and enjoyed great influence over the aristocracy of Poitou.
aristocracies of Poitou and Anjou. She furthermore pursued a policy of balanced patronage. The countess did not give Saint-Florent land at the expense of Saint-Croix. She was careful to provide for both institutions and encouraged others to donate to both as well. Agnes, thereby, reinforced her personal connection to these monasteries while—through annual payments between the houses—her efforts brought the monks and the nuns closer together. An examination of these donations reveals that the great magnates possessing the means to support multiple houses reallocated gifts and nurtured new socio-economic policies for the benefit of their patronized communities. At the same time, it was possible for aristocrats of more modest means to participate side-by-side with their comital lords. By examining the specifics of the directed interaction between Saint-Florent and Saint-Croix, it will be seen that the exchanges of 1040-1043 were economically and socially beneficial to all parties.

For this three year period, the Livre Noir records five separate charters involving properties and rents from the lands around Saint-Croix being redistributed to the brothers of Saint-Florent.\(^{208}\) Some confusion exists as to the exact order of these transactions. The dating scheme is based largely on context.\(^{209}\) Most of the transactions concerned a specific villa called Fossas (see Map). In her opening charter, Agnes located the villa: "I hand over to the monastery of Saint-Florent... situated in the pagus Anjou... land of my ownership located in the pagus Poitou in the vicaria Metulinse of the abbey of Saint-Croix, this is the villa which was formerly called Bettronus, but in truth, now it is known

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\(^{208}\) BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 41r-v (1), 41v-42r (2), 42r-43r (3), 43r (4), 43r-v (5), 43v-44v (6) 44v-45r (7). 
\(^{209}\) Sache, Inventaire Sommaire. For entries that do not stipulate a date I deferred to Saché’s conclusions on the dating of particular charters.
as Fossas.”

In this charter, Agnes further explained that she took the properties within the *villa* from the possession of the nuns and gave them to Saint-Florent. In return, she bound the monks to pay the nuns three *solidi* per year. This arrangement was repeated in another charter. In that entry, the abbess of Saint-Croix, Petronilla, restated the agreement. Owing to the importance of their new acquisition, the brothers of Saint-Florent likely sought to validate the transfer further by acquiring a charter directly from the abbess, which complemented the one issued by Agnes. The initial exchange, however, did not alienate the whole of the *villa*. Much of the estates had originally belonged to the countess. These properties were given to the nuns before their eventual reallocation to Saint-Florent. For a complete transfer of the *villa*, Agnes needed to secure its many allods.

In Fossas, the parish church of Saint-Radegundis (from Roca) was in lay hands. Agnes wanted to purchase the church to further her program of pious donations, but its ownership was unclear—as the church was a fief. Matters were further complicated by a local dispute as to who held the church from whom. To complete a sale, the countess first needed to mediate the situation. Agnes issued a charter declaring that a man named Berlaius did not hold Saint-Radegundis from another man known as Geoffrey (Gosfridus). Instead, she clarified that a certain Bernard (Bernardus) held it from a lord

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210 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 41r-v. “trado monasterio Sancti Florentii... sito in pago Andegauensi... terram proprietatis meae sitam in pago Pictauo in vicaria Metulinse de abbatia Sanctae Crucis, hoc est villam quae ab antiquis vocabatur Bettronus, nunc vero Fossas nuncupatur.”
211 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 41r-v. “ea videlicet ratione, ut annis singulis praefati monachi in eodem monasterio sancti Florentii consistentes, censum persoluant a solidi trebus supradictis sanctimonialibus.”
212 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 42r-43r.
213 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 42r-43r.
called Goscelin (Goscelinus).\textsuperscript{214} With the dispute resolved, Agnes revealed that she had bought the church from Bernard in two separate sales. Following this, she insured that all four men acknowledged the legitimacy of her purchases. The countess then donated the whole parish church to Saint-Florent.\textsuperscript{215} Sale and personal donation however, were not the only methods Agnes used. Perhaps her most effective tool was her personal influence on her fideles.

This influence was potent well after her retirement from Poitiers. In 1044, Agnes handed direct control of Aquitaine to her son Peter-William. This transfer of power, however, did not mean the end of her program of cross-border patronage. In fact, the case was quite the opposite. Agnes urged both of her sons to continue her work at Fossas. Part of this effort was intended to encourage local aristocrats to donate and offer their protection over their gifts. This policy is well exhibited in a donation by a local landholder named Constantine (Constantinus) of Melio.\textsuperscript{216} In a charter written in the Livre Noir, this lord began by stating that his lordship within Fossas was held from Duke Peter-William. He further stipulated that he gave his gift with the consent of the duke, his brother Geoffrey, and Countess Agnes.\textsuperscript{217} Constantine’s donation further incorporated portions of the villa into Saint-Florent’s patrimony. He was also careful to mention that

\textsuperscript{214} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 41v-42r.  “Hanc denique ecclesiam debeatæ Radegundis sanctimonialibus antiquitus de Roca Gosfridus necnon ab eo in feuo tenet Berlaius. A quo etiam Goscelinus, ad postremum vero et in feuo et in dominio tenebat Bernardus.”

\textsuperscript{215} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 41v-42r.

\textsuperscript{216} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 43r-v. The rubric states, “Remissio vicarie de Fossas, a domino Constantino milite de Melio facta.” Though Constantine is a name suggesting an ecclesiastic, this rubric suggests a secular lord.

\textsuperscript{217} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 43r-v.  “Ego Constantinus Metulensis vicarius divinis ad [ab] horationibus commonitus, totam vicariam quam in villa quadam antiquitur Betnorum nunc vero Fossas nuncupata infra pagum Pictavum consistente de meo seniore Aquitanico duce Willelmo hactenus tenere visus sum; per consilium et voluntatem eiusdem senioris mei Willelmi atque fratris eius Gosfridi, necnon praedarissimae dominæ meae matris eorum Agnae comitissæ pro redemptione animarum parentum meorum...”
the dependence of men on the land being donated would also be transferred to the monks.218

Through these donations to the brothers, Saint-Florent was invited into the lay community at Fossas. The monks’ inclusion did not signal the exclusion of the nuns or of those laymen selling or donating land. The sisters of Saint-Croix retained rights at Fossas and were financially bound to Saint-Florent by receiving yearly rents. The program forged a lasting friendship between the monks and nuns. Lay lords such as Berlaius, Geoffrey, Bernard, and Goscelin had their status in the community clarified through their relationship with the monks. At the same time, donors, such as Constantine, formed a spiritual connection with the brothers through their gifts. Thus the exchanges at Fossas during and after Agnes’ tenure were socially constructive.

Saint-Florent became a neighbor to both Saint-Croix and the lay families at Fossas, while in turn, these new friends became associated with the monks’ social base in the broader Saumurois. The addition of new donor families to the monastery’s familia signaled the expansion of the monks’ network of patronage. Through their gifts, Poitevin families entered into the same spiritual relationship with the saint as had their Angevin counterparts. Both groups became part of the collective memory which the monks associated with their property. Their groupings in the Livre Noir prove this. By organizing properties geographically (see Chapter 2), the monks collected a list of lands connected to donor families. This foundational group of patrons and their lands formed the basis of the monks’ broader social network (those donors with whom the brothers interacted in both property transfer and liturgical commemorations). In regards to Agnes’

218 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 43r-v.
program at Fossas, we see an extended social and spiritual community unrestricted by political boundaries.

The solidification of this patron group was an expression of comital power. In her work on thirteenth-century patronage, Erin Jordan has argued that because medieval people accepted the inseparability of the secular and the sacred, there was a “connection between power and patronage,” by which donations could serve as expressions of authority. This interpretation is applicable to Agnes’ program. Her endeavors broadcasted her authority as a countess, and the involvement of a larger community in these activities stood as a recognition of the legitimacy of her position. The success of the effort at Fossas was owed to the Countess Agnes’ deployment of her power in a manner which displayed legitimate use of comital authority.

Agnes stood out as the orchestrator of her family’s policies at Fossas. Save for one of her son’s documents, possibly drawn up in her absence, she appears as a witness to every Fossas entry in the Livre Noir for which the scribe-author(s) included a witness list. Indeed, in their personal charters both Abbess Petronilla and Constantine acknowledged Agnes as their lord. Because Agnes and her kin were deeply involved in

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220 Peter-William issued the charter in 1054. See BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 44v-45r. While continuing to hand over the nuns’ land at Fossas, the duke further reminded all that three solidi per year are to be paid by Saint-Florent to Saint-Croix.
221 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 42r-43r, “…domina nostra Agnes comitissa.” 43r-v. “…dominae meae matris eorum Agnae comitissae…” That her fideles recognized Agnes as their lord in documents (regardless of whether her husband was included or not) indicates that female lordship was readily accepted in mid-eleventh-century Anjou and Poitou. Her situation mirrors that of female lords in France well into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Kimberly LoPrete, Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord, c.1067-1113 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007). Agnes’ program reinforces recent arguments challenging the model provided by Georges Duby which argued that female agency collapsed with the rise of primogeniture in the twelfth century. This new group of historians rejected Duby’s thesis. They, instead, argued for the continuity of women as respected holders of power and lordship. For this broader discussion, see Georges Duby, The Chivalrous Society, trans. Cynthia Postan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, “The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100,” in Women and Power in the Middle Ages, eds. Mary Erler Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens: The
the affairs of the villa, the local magnates continually reaffirmed them as major leaders and patrons at Fossas. Agnes’s program of patronage and adept balancing of the interests of Saint-Florent, Saint-Croix, and the lay lords in the villa shows that the patronage patterns of magnates and that of less powerful lords were not disconnected. They were, rather, complementary. Support for an eleventh-century degradation of ducal and comital power is absent from these documents. Agnes’ program is instead evidence that the regional princes were bound to the lesser aristocracy to such a degree that their personal involvement at the villa-level was strong enough to direct the peaceful social landscape of local communities. Counts and countesses were respected and trusted to arbitrate contentions such as that between Berlaius, Geoffrey, Bernard, and Goscelin. The personal example and guidance of a lord, like Countess Agnes, served to facilitate locally derived donations as well as bind a community together for the care of two regular houses.

Agnes was certainly the leading force in her family’s patronage at Fossas. While she was quite capable of acting unilaterally, she often sought to include her children and husband in her acts.222 Both her male children witnessed her personal charters and her eldest son issued his own. Agnes’s husband, however, also witnessed these diplomas. In his own dealings, Count Geoffrey often mediated the disputes of Saint-Florent. As will be discussed below, his relationship with the abbey was occasionally strained. Geoffrey did not, however, navigate these complexities alone. As his wife—and a ruler in her own right at Poitiers—Agnes came to Angers fully qualified and ready to participate in her

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husband’s court. In doing so, she well positioned herself to protect the interests of her favorite houses. An example of her effectiveness in this role is evident in a case concerning the monastery of Saint-Aubin—a community long endowed by the Angevins. Between 1044 and 1049, Abbot Frederick of Saint-Florent and Abbot Walterius of Saint-Aubin disputed rights to tithes and burial fees at the parish at Chiriacus (see Map). On account of “antiquam consuetudinem,” Frederick demanded a third of the tithes and the whole cemetery of Saint-Elerius. In his role as judge, Geoffrey continued the policy of balanced justice, which his father had favored. He decided that Saint-Florent would have their third of the tithes, Saint-Aubin would retain the remainder, and the two houses would split the cemetery. In the course of the negotiations, it appears that Agnes advocated for Saint-Florent.

Agnes did not always appear in Geoffrey’s charters during their marriage. In this exchange, however, her involvement is described as, “hoc in Andegava civitate in praesentia domni Goffridi comitis ac uxoriseius Agnetis.” Since Saint-Aubin was a favored monastery of the Angevins, Agnes may have intervened for the benefit of the house she patronized: Saint-Florent. Her presence insured that the interests of both houses would be balanced at the comital court. Such intervention indicates that Agnes exercised a substantial influence on the administrations of both Anjou and Poitou during her political career. She was the count’s wife and the mother of the Duke of Aquitaine. She had also had personal experience in administering a court in her own right. Agnes

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224 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 32r-v.
225 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 32r-v.
226 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 32r-v.
had worked tirelessly to provide for the abbey at Fossas, so it seems likely that she would have had continuing interest in its welfare.\textsuperscript{227}

As a patron, the countess was capable of defending the interests of her favored institutions. The significance of this to Saint-Florent is that it facilitated the patronage of local families. The lead Agnes took at Fossas inspired broader donations and inter-regional social cohesion. The laity’s willingness to follow the countess’ example would have been reinforced by her ability to defend the communities to which she urged families to alienate property. Donors wanted to be confident of an enduring relationship.

Through the events at Fossas and Angers, it is clear that when the circumstances of warfare were removed from the local environment, strong comital leadership was a powerfully constructive social force. Moreover, Agnes’ career demonstrates the important role women played as patrons of Saint-Florent. The countess was merely the most prominent of the female patrons at this time. Women from humble aristocratic families showed their devotion to the local saint in ways similar to Agnes. Indeed, women were often the leading force in the patronage of their families.

Female directed patron families

In describing the early community in the tenth-century Saumurois, we have seen how the complementary examples of Sufficia and Ermentrude suggested that strong female leadership in the Saumurois was common at all socio-economic levels. Agnes’ case, in the mid-eleventh century, stands as evidence of the power of high aristocratic women. Just as in the tenth century, however, eleventh-century women of humbler

\textsuperscript{227} Amy Livingstone, “Aristocratic Women in the Chartrain,” in Aristocratic Women in Medieval France, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 62. “Aristocratic women were in many cases both the patrons and defenders of the church—a powerful and important role which both the church and their families recognized and supported. Clearly, such women stood firmly in the center of kin and lord-vassal bonds that structured aristocratic society.”
aristocratic families also thrived in leadership roles. The case of Odila’s family provides a revealing example.

The *Livre Noir* contains a series of five entries recording a wealthy local family’s multi-generational donations to Saint-Florent. At some point in the first half of the eleventh century, a widow named Odila held the parish church of Rou (see Map) as an allod. Odila sold half the church and three quarters of the arable land (in her possession) for the combined price of sixteen *denarii*. In the cartulary, this sale immediately followed another made by the same widow. Here, Odila revealed that she had previously bought property from the monks. In this transaction, Odila stated, “I relinquished to them [the monks] all the wealth which I decided to purchase from them with many more of my other benefices, that they may hold whatever I presented or sold without any contradiction.” She gave this gift so that her unnamed son could take the habit at the monastery. The sale and gifts made on these two occasions had lasting repercussions on the future relationship between Odila’s family and the brothers of Saint-Florent.

After her death, Odila’s *parentes* appeared in an entry in which they sold the other half of Rou to the monks. The half of the parish church Odila had retained was divided evenly among her descendants. By the time of the fourth entry in this series, two males

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228 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 32v-33r (1), 33r (2), 33r (3), 33v (4), 33v-34r (5). The entries are grouped under the heading ECCL(ESI)A DE ROU. This series was initially part of a pancarte, AD Maine-et-Loire, H 2189. The order of 4 and 5 are reversed in the pancarte. See Chapter 2.
229 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 32v-33r. “...de alodo meo...” for the church of Rou, “de villa quae dicitur Rou... ecclesiam infra villam illam sitam.”
230 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33r. “reliqui eis censum omnem quem ab eis sumere decrveram cum aliquibus pluribus aliorum meorum beneficorum, quod cun(m)que eis exhibui vel vendidi sine ullo contradictu ut teneant.”
231 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33v.
and one female each held a third of the remaining half of the church.232 They were listed as Isembert (Isembertus), Fulk de Posterna, and Leutgard.233 That Leutgard was given an equal share of the inheritance, and appears as a principal donor in the exchange, indicates that the family continued to influence by the female leadership inaugurated by Odila.234 As in other areas of the Loire, Leutgard’s marriage did not limit her ability to participate in her family’s patronage of Saint-Florent, nor did it bar her from an equal portion of the Odilae patrimony.235 Leutgard’s place in her family, however, remains uncertain. The exact relationship of the three family leaders to Odila and their connections with one another were not specified. The pancarte’s scribe-author merely described them as “Odilae parentes.”236

The fact that these individuals inherited commensurate shares without further complications (we do not see a situation in which multiple lines of Odila’s family held uneven shares of the patrimony) suggests that it is possible that Isembert, Fulk, and Leutgard were siblings or first cousins. Perhaps they were Odila’s children. If this supposition is correct, then the equal partition of Rou is evidence that families such as Odila’s practiced partible-cognatic inheritance in the Saumurois during the eleventh century—a hypothesis confirmed by Amy Livingstone in her work on the aristocracy of

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232 Note that this is the fourth out of five entries in the *Livre Noir*, but the last entry in the pancarte original, see AD Maine-et-Loire, H 2189. See also, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33v. It is unclear as to which organization matches the actual chronology of the exchanges. See Chapter 2.
233 Leutgard is a third declension feminine noun.
234 This equal division of inheritance and female inclusion in family decisions concerning property stands in contrast to Duby’s marginalization of women in inheritance practices. See Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, 72.
236 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33v.
the Loire during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Beyond this, the fourth/final transaction in this series illustrates that the family made careful and collective decisions when alienating familial property. Though the three held shares independently from one another, unilateral action, regardless of gender, was not favored.

Acting in concert, the siblings sold the remainder of the parish to the monks. As with the previous sale, the property was released for sixteen denarii. This entry, however, contains multiple related transactions. The family, remembering Odila’s first exchange, opened negotiations with an understanding of the relative value of Rou. Their forbearer acquired sixteen denarii for the land and this was the price they expected for the remainder of the church. By calculating the return from the sale, they established the value of their assets and decided to use them to resolve immediate familial concerns. At the same time as Rou was sold, Fulk’s son, Hugh, paid four additional denarii to enter Saint-Florent, “societatem suam capiens,” and another relative named Theuconus gave another four denarii for his own soul “ad finem suum.” In this way, the family together received sixteen denarii, but then spent half of their gains making a relative a monk and providing for the welfare of another. It is likely that the Odilae came to the monastery


238 Livingstone, “Kith and Kin,” 430. Patrilineage was characterized by limitations on female agency. In cases from Blois-Chartres, Livingstone demonstrated that females acting in concert with their brothers indicate that family decisions concerning property involved female and male relatives on equal footing. That the Odilae acted in unison regardless of gender, suggests that the Saumurois conformed to broader practices in other areas of the Loire.

239 BNF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33r. Niermeyer, J.F., Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 975. Niermeyer cited Marchegay-Mabille Chron. D’Anjou, 333. Marchegay and Mabille noted a charter from Saint-Florent in 1115 in which societas (-tatem) was defined as membership into a monastic community. An unnamed son of Odila had entered Saint-Florent during Odila’ lifetime. If Isembert, Fulk, and Leutgard were also children of Odila, then Hugh—following the example of his uncle—would have reinforced the tradition of the family’s presence within the walls of Saint-Florent.
with these two desires in mind, and saw the sale of the remainder of Rou as the opportunity to fulfill them.

This was a shrewd decision in which family members worked in concert, regardless of gender, and utilized separate shares of the patrimony successfully to accomplish familial goals through collective and equal action. The case additionally tells us that families in the region knew that properties could be relied on to produce liquidity. It is possible that Odila’s original exchange was made with this strategy in mind. The matron likely intended that the whole of the parish church would eventually be given to Saint-Florent. By delaying what was an imminent transfer of the entire church, Odila may have seen that the sale of only half of Rou would secure close relations between her descendents and the monks. The monastery’s incomplete ownership would have ensured that the possibility for sale of the remainder to the monks would remain a reliable source of income for her kin. Thus, Odila guaranteed that her family would form a multi-generational connection with the monks. This charter, as the family’s final appearance in the Livre Noir, indicates the point at which this resource was tapped. The actions of the Odilaecertainly demonstrate the discerning nature of patron families; but what other features may be gleaned from the Odila transactions?

The context provided in these charters is vital to understanding what the family sought to achieve by their last act in the cartulary. The way Odila and her kin disposed of their property, the relative monetary value of the transactions, and the terms associated with the individuals in the family, all indicate that they were likely members of a group of wealthy, but locally based, families. In an effort to understand the role of female

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240 Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister, 150. “Individual families—the group of relatives who held the same property, inherited (usually) in the male line—tended to support the same churches over the generations.”
agency in family patronage, the Odilae offer a complementary example of a lesser aristocratic family acting similarly to a leader, such as Countess Agnes. Indeed, the transactions provide clues to the status of this family.

Odila was a widow, and though her husband was not mentioned, the pair's ownership of the local parish suggests that the couple was a leader in the community of Rou. Additionally, Odila’s personal history of using her assets to gain money from the monks suggests that she was likely a shrewd property manager, and was mindful to strike a balance between the spiritual value of her patronage and her practical needs. We may therefore suppose that, upon her donation of half the parish church, she would have maintained other properties. The way Odila disposed of these properties, however, indicates the local limits of the Odilae.

Wealthier families could afford to donate land, rents, or churches, but Odila and her kin predominantly sold their estates. The scribe-authors of these charters were careful to separate sales, mortgages, rents, and donations. In cases of sale, the monks stipulated the exact prices. In the last of the four entries the monks calculated how many denarii had been paid out and how many they had taken in from related, but separate transactions. The brothers recorded this information in a total, “Ita reddimus ad hos VIII denari.”

By comparing the context of Odila’s sales and those of her relatives, we can see that the Odilae could afford to act as patrons to the monks, but were likely financially restricted in what they could afford to give. Terminology also provides an indication of the family’s socio-economic status. Leutdgard was described as, “Leutdegardi uxor fabri

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241 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33r.
nomine Deodati."^{242} The word faber can mean smith or craftsman. It is likely that Leutgdard married an important man from the community, but not a lord.

This marriage, taken with the policy of sale-based patronage, further suggests that Odilae were well-to-do members of the Saumurois, but not among the great leaders of the Loire valley. In striving to form religious connections to the monks, this family executed a strategic donation policy whereby they balanced the maintenance of their material and spiritual assets. It was a family which saw cooperative use of property as the securest way of furthering its members’ collective interests. In this way, not only were the Odilae forging a deeper social relationship with the monks, but also an internal social connection between the constituent members of their kin-group. Ultimately, this link was a connection which stressed the value, and occasional primacy, of its female members. The Odilae example provides insight into how a family sought to reinforce a gift given in a previous generation. The *Livre Noir*, however, also relates instances of attempts to recover land and rights given by deceased family members.

The Parish of Saint-Georges-Chatelaison: The meaning of quitclaims and the condition of *rustici*

During the abbacy of Sigo, Saint-Florent engaged in several disputes pertaining to its parish of Saint-Georges-Chatelaison (see Map). Much of the evidence pertaining to these cases was recorded in the *Livre Noir*. By examining these documents, we can comment on two important elements of the social composition of the Saumurois community. The cartulary evidence allows examples from Saint-Florent to be added to the important debates on the nature of extended donor relationships across generations as

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^{242} BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 33v.
well as that of the condition of dependence in eleventh-century France. Before examining particular cases, let us make some observations of the political conditions at Saint-Georges.

Saint-Georges was a parish owned by Saint-Florent, and the monks administered this holding through a resident provost. Its proximity to the castrum Vihiers (a little over a dozen miles west of Saumur – see Map) also meant that it and its inhabitants were influenced by the holder of this important fortress. The circumstances of this locality changed substantially upon the death of Count Geoffrey ‘Martel,’ in 1060. The deceased count had willed Anjou to his nephew Geoffrey ‘the Bearded.’ For his inheritance, the younger nephew, Fulk ‘Réchin,’ acquired Vihiers. Fulk was one of the most important secular lords in the environs of Saint-Georges. In addition to Fulk, the viscount, Aimericus, was also influential. It was at their courts where Saint-Florent defended its property and jurisdiction concerning Saint-Georges. Challenges to donations which the monks had received were at the center of these cases.

Both Barbara Rosenwein and Constance Bouchard have explored the social meaning of families’ disputes of previous donations. Working with examples from Burgundy, Bouchard showed that, following initial gifts, subsequent generations often challenged the monks’ ownership of donated property. This was also a practice noted by Rosenwein. Historians have often taken the terms calumnia or werpitio as evidence of refutations. These words’ usage in the sources was not consistent. For example, werpitio does not appear in the Livre Noir. To aid in compiling multiple examples from various charters and cartularies, Rosenwein used the word quitclaim as a representative term for the practice of refutations. Quitclaim will be used in the present examination.
Both Bouchard and Rosenwein observed varying objectives in prosecuting a quitclaim. For her part, Bouchard recognized economic incentives. When monks faced a challenge, they frequently offered a settlement. Not only were such payments intended to protect tenure of property, but they were also an effort to preserve relationships with families which bore a long history of patronage. Aristocrats realized that this strategy and the prospect of a settlement sometimes motivated a reassertion of claims. Using an anthropological approach, Rosenwein argued that quitclaims were ritualized social gestures which brought a kin-group closer to a saint by means of reconciliation. Indeed, she observed that at Cluny a quitclaim often prefaced subsequent donations. Both historians noted, however, that a quitclaim was not the end of a relationship, but a practice which brought patrons closer to monasteries. The evidence in the Livre Noir demonstrates that the patron community of Saint-Florent was motivated both by economic incentives as well as a desire to grow closer to Saint Florent. Furthermore, there is no indication that these objectives were mutually exclusive.

Bouchard’s observations of Burgundian economic motivations are largely mirrored in the cases reported in the Livre Noir, but the socio-political circumstances in the Loire made particular cases unique. In Burgundy, Bouchard argued that the decline of comital courts rendered legal recourse for disputes unavailable. As noted above, the Loire valley was characterized by strong comital and viscomital leadership in the eleventh century. The examples from Saint-Georges were largely settled in the courts of powerful aristocrats or viscounts. A dispute over the property Frescengagius between

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243 Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister, 210, 218-19.
244 Rosenwein, To Be a Neighbor of Saint-Peter, 53-55.
245 Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister, 212-5. In place of comital resolution, each party relied upon the support of three amici. One of these would be selected as a mediator. A compromise based placitum was usually reached. This form of resolution was effective enough to prevent the reopening of cases.
1055 and 1060 indicates that there were similar inclinations toward economic exploitation in both Burgundian and Saumurois quitclaims.

The monks accused a certain miles, Adelemus from the castrum Doado, of pressing a false claim to the property of Frescengagius and a vineyard within the parish of Saint-Georges. The miles was persuaded to abandon his claim and the brothers paid a settlement (munus) of one hundred solidi. After Adelemus’ death, his son Geoffrey (Gutfridus) re-asserted his father’s claim. In response, Abbot Sigo deputized Provost Mainardus and two monks to travel to the court of Viscount Aimericus. There, Aimericus arranged a settlement. He instructed the monks to pay Geoffrey sixty-five solidi for renunciation of his claim and another sixty-five to Aimericus for the privilege of his court.

In this exchange, Geoffrey took advantage of a quitclaim to make a profit. He likely recognized that his case was weak, but saw a financial opportunity. He inherited his father’s claim to Frescengagius and readily exploited it. As in other regions, the alienation of property in the Saumurois did not sever a gift’s connection to its donors. The monks’ subsequent action confirms Geoffrey’s economic motivation. Mainardus moved to neutralize the threat from this family. The provost secured not only Geoffrey’s abandonment of the family’s claim, but also that of his wife Beatrice and his sons William (Willelmus) and Oliver (Oliverus). From this example, one may reasonably infer

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246 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 30r- v.
247 In a later entry, BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 30v-31r, Mainardus appeared as prior under Abbots Frederick and Sigo. In BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 30r-v, the two monks were named Aurannus and Lisiardus.
that there was concern for repeated abuse over generations. This document also shows
that the settlement of a quitclaim was not necessarily the end of a dispute.²⁴⁹

While the case of Frescengagius illustrates the opportunism of certain families,
such opportunists coexisted with those who used quitclaims or the threat of quitclaims in
the constructive manner which Rosenwein described. Many aristocrats in the Saumurois
experienced a close and productive relationship with Saint Florent. Indeed, the intensity
of this association was sometimes enough to prevent quitclaims from ever occurring.
Between 1060 and 1062 (only a few years after Geoffrey’s quitclaim over Frescengagius)
a woman named Gricia/Graecia obtained property claimed by the monks. In a charter
issued in her name and using the first person, Gricia acknowledged the land came into her
possession through nefarious means and out of fear of God and Saint Florent:

Because I, Gricia, wholesomely weighing with the fear of God, the land,
which Girardus held by the wicked domination of a trick (artis), not by
reason of law, having been unjustly removed from the monks of Saint-
Florent, with these men [the monks] protesting and [counter]claiming.
When, indeed, by the will of God it came to me in hand. I relinquish [it]
with every claim removed (omni calumnia absolutam) which it is owed to
be returned to God and to Saint Florent, lest with despoilers unjustly
seizing I, possessing this, may become a partner of their condemnations.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, 212-5. Bouchard argued that mediated disputes rarely resulted in
reopened cases.
²⁵⁰ BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 31r. For the original charter see AD Maine-et-Loire, H 2114. “Quod ego
Gricia cum timore dei salubriter pensans, terram quam Girardus artis maleviolenta dominatione non iuris
ratione monachis Sancti Florentii iniuste abstractam, ipsisque reclamantibus et calumniabantibus tenuit,
quando quidem deo volente miichi in manum venit. Ipsam cum omnibus obsequis quae reddere debet deo et
Sancto Florentio omni calumnia absolutam relinquo, ne cum raptoribus iniuste possidentibus possidens,
damnationis eorum particeps fiam.”
The value or use of the property, nor the economic gain of a future quitclaim, was enough to risk the enmity of Saint Florent. In this transaction, Gricia was not compensated or given anything. She appeared at chapter with her sons, retainers, and the man to whom she had granted the property—a certain Roscelinus. She dropped all lay rights to the property. There was great social significance to Gricia’s decision.

Gricia’s actions affected both her heirs and patron network. We know little else of her status or wealth, but it is likely that this alienation and the lack of compensation may have unnerved Graecia’s sons. The removal of property and income from the family holdings may have jeopardized their economic security. More importantly, the land she surrendered was the foundation of her relationship with her own dependent, Roscelinus—“Roscelino qui mea manu illam terram tenuerat.”\(^{251}\) It must be remembered that the exchange of property affected not only relationships between laymen and clerics, but also those between laymen themselves. Gricia, therefore, took a risk. Her choice, however, exemplifies the intensity of secular connections to Saint Florent.

Beyond their relevance to quitclaims, such examples display the broad range of lay motivations and attitudes toward relationships with Saint Florent, in the Saumurois. The situation was complex, but both cases depict a deepening of lay ties with the saint. Geoffrey’s opportunism at Frescengagius brought him financial gain. Beyond this, however, Geoffrey communicated to the monks that he and his family were connected to previous gifts made by kin. It was a reminder that this connection could not be easily severed. In contrast, Gricia’s desire to remain in the saint’s good graces outweighed her economic and political interests.

\(^{251}\) BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 31r.
The aristocracy, however, was not the only lay group to forge connections to the saint and his monks. At the same time as the monks defended themselves from men like Geoffrey at Frescengagius, they struggled to address the growing problem of bidamnum exactions within the parish of Saint-Georges-Chatelaison. Bidamnum was the principal duty imposed upon the peasantry in the parish of Saint-Georges. This custom obliged all men of a defined area (the parish in this case) to “proceed to the ramparts of the... castrum to be replenished with wood; and there for eight days to remain.” In 1040, Geoffrey ‘Martel’ succeeded his father as count. The monks of Saint-Florent took advantage of the transition of power and came to him complaining of “evil customs.” In a charter, Geoffrey provided assurances to Abbot Frederick that the abuse would be curbed and clarified the lawful limitations of bidamnum. The issue of bidamnum, however, did not end in 1040, nor did Geoffrey take the promised steps to end the manipulation of this obligation.

Geoffrey ‘Martel’ died twenty years later. When Geoffrey ‘the Bearded’ came to power in 1060, the new count’s younger brother, Fulk, took control of Vihiers (see map).

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252 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 29v-30r, “Hoc bidamnum tale erat ut omnis qui in hac possessione terram tenebant, aut ipsi aut laetai corum ad praedicti castri aggeres relevandos in uno quoque anno cum palis pergerent. Ibique per octo dies morarentur.”

253 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 28v-29r, “In quo placito reclamavit sese abbass Fredericussive Sancti Florentii monachi de malis consuetudinibus quae in quadam potestate Sancti Florentii scilicet in parraechia Sancti Georgii occasione comendisiac contra rectum missae fuerant.”

254 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 28v-29r, “Homines de potestate Sancti Georgii octo dies in bidamnum cum pala faciant. Mansoarii decem denarem de friscinga, Bordarii quinque denarem reddant, de uno quoque arpenno vineae, dimidius modius reddatur. Eo die quo vinagium reddiderint servientibus illud colligentibus unam denaratam panis et alteram carnis et unum sextarium devino (vel) musto tribuant. Similiter statutum est ut vicarum ipsam potestatem propter rectum faciendum non nisi pro quattuor causis intrent id est sanguine pro rapto, pro incendio, pro furto. Si de his causis rectum facere habuerint et comedere in villa voluerint apud ipsum de quo rectum facerint comedant et quicquid manducaverint suis Districtis computent.”
It was at this castrum that the monks pleaded their case. The new abbot, Sigo, traveled to Vihiers to meet Fulk. The monks finally obtained a resolution and a charter was drawn up to commemorate the promises made by Fulk and confirmed by his brother. The document begins by clarifying what Geoffrey ‘Martel’ had agreed two decades prior. Geoffrey and Fulk admitted their forbearer’s neglect and rectified the situation. As compensation, they gave two hundred solidi to Saint-Florent.

Parallel to this settlement, the monks struggled to obtain and preserve the freedom of six rustici from Maiaci in the parish of Saint-Georges. As seen above, Viscount Aimericus was quick to make a profit when provost Mainardus had appeared at his court. From the extant documents, this opportunism was the norm for his interaction with Saint-Florent. It was reported that around 1060, Aimericus claimed that the aforementioned six rustici were unfree. The monastery held jurisdiction over the Saint-Georges and had deputized a provost to act as administrator. It also appears that Aimericus, as viscount, claimed secular jurisdiction over the people in this area. When this dispute broke out, the provost, Girard (Girardus), came to the defense of the six men and paid Aimericus five solidi to acknowledge their freedom. Aimericus accepted payment and the rustici were untroubled until Girard was replaced with the monk, Aurannus. The new provost immediately reasserted their dependence. This move forced Aurannus to provide

255 BnF nov. acq. lat. 1930, 29v-30r. In relationship to this charter, Barton suggested that the term malae consuetudines should be understood as “harassment,” “intimidation,” or “persecution.” See Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, 137.

256 BnF nov. acq. lat. 1930, 29v-30r, “Post quam vero iam dictum castrum in Fulconis huius devenit dominus Sigo Abbas persuadens illi et quanta inustitia bidamnum illud fuerit ex actum et quanta humanitate postea ab eis avunculo intermissum, obtinuit tandem ab eo multis praecibis annuente fratre ipsius, quae tenus pro sua parentumque salute sancto Florentio hoc concederet. Brevi igitur adventit, humilique devotione donum super ipsius sancti altare posuit. Cui fratris altari huic deseruientes pro tanto ergo congratulantes beneficio ducentos solidi dederunt, et quod maius est in suarum precum et Clemosynarum soci etatem susceperunt. Unde quidam ex militibus ipsius testes existunt, qui geste rei inter fuerunt, quibus id est fratris eandem societatem contulerunt.”
Aimericus with another ten *solidi* for which, “soon he converted the charge which was brought in with Aurannus, in peace, because on account of this he had ten *solidi* from him (Aurannus), and he pronounced them to be perpetually free from all customs.”\(^{257}\) The common element seen in these examples is the debate over the status of the inhabitants of the parish of Saint-Georges. More particularly, they concern these individuals’ freedom and what forms of exaction were lawful for secular lords to demand of them, as such.

In all cases, the monks acted to protect their dependents from secular customs. What is significant about this example is its consistency with others in the *Livre Noir*, and the fact that it indicates that the monastery had a socio-economic reckoning of *rustici*. It was not that the abbey freed peasants from dependence. It was a clarification of to whom they owed dependence—in this instance, exclusively Saint-Florent. This relationship encouraged the brothers to intervene in disputes to claim those living under the abbey’s jurisdiction. At court, the monks stressed that these *rustici* were their own dependents and, therefore, out of the reach of lay lords. The social relationship between lords and *rustici* is important to the goals of this study because scholars have argued that the lower aristocracy was often brought from or related to the wealthy peasantry.\(^{258}\)

The documents do not provide enough information to allow us to form an adequate synthesis, but the cases to which they refer did not occur in a vacuum. Charters describing similar events to those at Aimericus’ court abound in the eleventh century. In

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\(^{257}\) BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 30v-31r, “Sed mox calumniam quam inferebat cum Auranno in pacem mutavit, quia pro hoc de illo decem solidi habuit, et comendatis in perpetuum ab omni consuetudine liberos esse damavit.”

the debates over the *mutationiste* thesis, case studies focusing on these relationships have often been used to comment on the social relevance of dependence and as to whether unfree status was something new or a lingering legacy of the Carolingian world. Therefore, these issues as well as the cases in the *Livre Noir* have become entangled in the broader debates about possible eleventh-century social metamorphosis.

Scholars have agreed that dependence and exactions on peasant communities were prevalent in eleventh-century France. As in other regions of France, peasants in the Saumurois were classified as either free or unfree. Indeed this was the issue over which Sigo and Aimericus disputed in regard to the *rustici* at Maiaci. That one case, in particular, should not lead us to think that the social relationship between Saint-Florent and the six men whom they claimed was defined by a monastic mindset in favor of liberation. Rather, the disagreement pertained to Aimericus’ *vicaria* (an area of seigneurial jurisdiction, the extension of his *bannum* to make exactions). 259 It was in Saint-Florent’s interests to ensure that men within the parish of Saint-Georges remain under the monastery’s lordship. The parish was administered by the monks and labor, tithes, and rents were a source of revenue. In this sense, the abbey was a lord exacting its own customs. 260 The defense of the six *rustici* a Maiaci was an attempt to maintain a monopoly on *bannum* within this parish. All cases related to Saint-Georges reinforce this pattern. As was shown above, the principal exaction on the *rustici* of the parish was *bidamnum*. The military purpose of this exaction suggests that it was a seigneurial (and usually lay) obligation. That for over two decades this particular *bannalité* dominated Saint-Florent’s interaction with Count Geoffrey ‘Martel,’ Count Geoffrey ‘the Bearded,’

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Fulk ‘Réchin,’ and Viscount Aimericus indicates that it was a major threat to the monks’ income.

The negotiations over *bidamnum* provide a window into the relationship between the monastery and the *rustici* within its immediate environs. Unlike the monks’ relationship with their aristocratic patrons, the interaction with the *rustici* was one based firmly on lordship. Peasant communities were subject to monastic fees, and were administered by a provost. They were sources of income, which the monks did not wish to be depleted by secular exactions. Can we say, however, that this incident was novel in the eleventh century? The evidence suggests that we cannot.

Poly and Bournazel argued that the rise of the castellan system and collapse of comital courts enabled *bannum* and seigneurial exaction. For them and other *mutationistes*, the collapse of the *pagi* administration and the advent of private courts at the expense of public power defined the beginning of the eleventh century. This transition of power fundamentally altered the social circumstance of small landholders who lost their allods to new predatory lords.\(^{261}\) It must be remembered that this sudden collapse of public power and comital control of castellans did not occur in the lands of the Loire. As this chapter has sought to illustrate, the judicial strength and administrative ability of comital lords such as Fulk ‘Nerra’ of Anjou, Odo II of Blois, and Countess Agnes speak against the *mutationiste* paradigm. In contrast to those favoring sudden change, the evidence found in the *Livre Noir*, reinforces Dominique Barthélemy’s argument against a *mutation féodale*.

In his initial challenge of the *mutationiste* paradigm, Barthélemy argued that evidence of eleventh-century predatory violence was not so much a change in real circumstance, but rather a documentary shift.\(^{262}\) In regards to the question of a new form of dependence, Barthélemy used Marmoutier’s “Book of Serfs,” (a house which had a profound reforming effect on Saint-Florent during the tenure of Abbots Frederic and Sigo—both of whom came from Marmoutier). The disputes over *bidamnum* at Saint-Georges took place between 1040 and 1060. This is also the timeframe in which Barthélemy examined Marmoutier’s evidence. Barthélemy concluded that the servile condition in the Loire was traditional, highly ritualized, and in some cases voluntary. At Marmoutier, dependent status often provided professional stability and even defense.\(^{263}\)

This evidence suggests that the cases from Saint-Georges must be seen in a different light. That lordship defined the *rusticus*-abbot relationship cannot be doubted, but it was a lordship which protected peasants from secular exactions—especially that of *bidamnum*. In this way, the monastery’s relationship with its peasant dependents was symbiotic. The brothers’ source of labor and income was secured and the *rusticus* was freed from secular customs.

The cases found in the *Livre Noir* mirror those found in Marmoutier’s documents. These two houses were among the most prominent abbeys of the Loire valley. This indicates a mutual consistency of their relationships with *rustici*. Particular cases in the *Livre Noir* were not isolated incidents. They represent a regional pattern. The status of


\(^{263}\) Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight and the Historian*, 68-136. At Marmoutier a would-be-serf submitted, sometimes willingly, by placing four *denarii* on his head and offering these to his new lord, the abbot. The motivation for this action was often economic and often out of piety toward the saint, see 54-58.
peasant dependents, along with traditional comital power, cooperative patronage, and strong female agency all stand as indicators of social stability. The evidence from the Loire reinforces Barthélemy’s challenge of the *mutation féodale*. 
CHAPTER 4

Family Patronage: Kinship, Inheritance and the *Laudatio Parentum* in the Saumurois

Late in August of 1089, a man named Geoffrey placed a black knife on the altar of Saint Florent, thereby symbolizing the renunciation of his personal claims to property alienated by his family. The concession to which Geoffrey gave his blessing was a high profile exchange which concluded what had grown into a community-wide event. The summer’s negotiations and gatherings as a precursor to the gift drew families from across the countryside.

Sometime earlier, Geoffrey’s father (also called Geoffrey) had stood before the chapter of Saint-Florent in order to finalize a gift to the monks. This “*miles*” came to abandon the secular life and join the brothers in their service to God and to the saint. The conversion was important because Geoffrey ‘the elder’ was a community leader in the Saumurois. His own father, Fulchard (Fulchardus), had served Count Fulk as seneschal, and Geoffrey’s acceptance of the habit drew the attention of the power holders of the Loire valley. In attendance were those men who owed service to Geoffrey and over half a dozen secular lords and representatives from the household of Count Fulk ‘Réchin.’ The most important persons present, however, were those whom the monks feared might challenge the gift.

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264 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3228 n. 1.
265 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3228 n. 1. The monks wrote both transactions into the same charter either at or sometime after Geoffrey ‘the younger’s’ confirmation. Count Fulk ‘Réchin’ made his cross at the bottom of the charter. It is possible, therefore, that he was present for the confirmation but unclear as to whether he was present for Geoffrey ‘the elder’s’ entry into Saint-Florent.
266 AD Maine-et-Loire, H 3228 n. 1. The second transaction of the charter states, “*Ego Goffredus, Goffredi filii Fulchardi filius comitis Fulconis dapifer...*” This would make Geoffrey ‘the elder’s’ father, Fulchard, the *dapifer* (seneschal/steward) of a Count Fulk ‘Réchin.’
Accompanying the *conversus* was Geoffrey’s wife Amelina, his sons, and his daughters. Both he and the monks desired the consent of the *miles’* wife and children, because with Geoffrey’s entry into the abbey, the family also released a great deal of property and various rights to the monks. What was at stake was a church in the villa of Rest, tithes, tolls, customs, and houses which were considered family property. Therefore, with the blessing of those to whom he was related, Geoffrey ‘the elder’ became a monk of Saint-Florent.

The charter detailing Geoffrey’s case describes the role of his family, “Moreover, in order that this, my donation and concession might continue as sacrosanct, with my wife Amelina being present, and with my sons and likewise my daughters consenting.”

The scribe-author’s use of a subjunctive, purpose clause must be stressed. This construction indicates that the security of Geoffrey’s gift was contingent on the blessing of his family. He could not act unilaterally because both male and female family members could potentially disrupt the security of his gift. In this example, we see in illustration of what some historians have called the *laudatio parentum*—a term not easily defined.

In 1988, Stephen White argued that through the examination of instances of the *laudatio parentum*, secular rituals and kinship patterns were visible in charters from the Loire valley between 1050 and 1150. According to White, the *laudatio* was not a legal

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268 White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, 1. ‘*Laudatio parentum*’ is a term historians use to indicate the approval of the kin of a charter’s principal donor. It was not a set legal term employed in charters. Wording indicating the acquiescence of family members varied greatly. Here the term will be used to indicate a practice rather than a reference to the exact language of charters.
practice, nor was it uniformly employed in charters. It was a multipurpose social norm.\(^{269}\)

In its basic sense, the *laudatio* was a broadcast of the approval of those persons who, through their relationship with the principal and the gift itself, might later challenge the donation. On a superficial level, the incorporation of the *laudatio* into a charter was a “precautionary practice.”\(^{270}\) White, however, saw a deeper significance for the *laudatio parentum*.

The *laudatio* was an expression of the norms of interaction between the laity and regular clergy, as well as within kin-groups. Defining expressions of kinship, therefore, is crucial to understanding the relationships exhibited in statements of the *laudatio parentum*. While important, this task is not straightforward. Charters often hold ambiguous details which require inference and occasional speculation.\(^{271}\) White presented case studies taken from the charters of his selected monasteries. These examples led White to assert that “consenting kin groups” existed in stages on a temporal development cycle, which was relative to the donor.\(^{272}\) Thus, for White, kinship was a fluid concept which depended on the principal’s perspective.

White’s observations have merit but they must be qualified because of the limitations imposed by his research methods. He gathered a body of charter sources for analysis and examined five Loire monasteries which he believed formed a unit because they shared a unique set of circumstances. He narrowed his selection for analysis using

\(^{269}\) White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, 84.

\(^{270}\) White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, 68.

\(^{271}\) White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, 103-107. White defined four categories of kin-relationships: “1. Full or truncated conjugal families, including married couples. 2. Conjugal families extended in one of several different ways so as to include affines, siblings, or other types of relatives. 3. Groups made up of one or more siblings, sometimes accompanied by a spouse or donor’s mother. 4. Groups in which the donor is joined by a sibling or a sibling’s offspring.”

\(^{272}\) White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, 105.
particular criteria which were: the houses acknowledged Angevin lordship, they were founded or re-founded in the late tenth century, they saw large scale donations from lay donors, and experienced a slight economic downturn in the late twelfth century. The monasteries White included under these ‘unique’ circumstances were: Saint-Aubin of Angers, Marmoutier, Saint-Mary of Noyers, La Trinité of Vendôme, and Saint-Vincent of Le Mans. The characteristics White used in selecting these five monasteries, however, were not unique to these monasteries. In fact, many of the houses in the Loire met White’s criteria. Saint-Florent of Saumur fit all the necessary requirements for inclusion into White’s list. Nonetheless, this abbey was omitted in his study. Saint-Florent would have been valuable for White’s purposes because, as we have seen above, it left a rich corpus of charter and cartulary evidence and interacted with its donor community in much the same fashion.

The house’s exclusion was partly because of how White gathered his sources. Because he was attempting to compare many houses, he relied heavily on evidence from published cartularies. Saint-Florent’s absence resulted from its cartularies’ lack of published editions. Through exploring a series of examples, the objective of the present study is to compare the Livre Noir and select charters with White’s conclusions concerning the laudatio. In more clearly understanding the role of kinship as a catalyst for broader social cohesion, one will be better poised to draw conclusions concerning how relationships within kin-groups were affected by material concern for a family’s patrimony and norms of group action. Aristocrats cared deeply for their spiritual welfare while they gave equal forethought to the financial consequences of monastic patronage.

273 White, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints, 117.
To marry these dual concerns, families encouraged group-based decisions concerning property. It should be emphasized that this was not limited to the bonds of blood ties. The laudatio in the Saumurois stands as a testimony of the prevalence of intra- and interfamilial cooperation. Let us begin by exploring examples of the laudatio in the Saumurois.

The policy of monastic patronage pursued by the Odilae, demonstrates the potential of strategic group-based donation. The family’s efforts were more than a mere acquiescence of the gift by one constituent member. Their gifts exhibited a collective effort on behalf of family interests. The donor community of the Saumurois, however, produced many more examples of traditional formations of the laudatio parentum.

Between 1030 and 1040, one of Saint-Florent’s vicarii, named Gunterius le Voyer, approached the monks to make a gift “to God and Saint-Florent.”274 The vicarius alienated allodial land in the parish of Saint-Georgius (in Anjou). Gunterius, however, did not simply hand over the alod. The donor pondered other considerations which might potentially jeopardize the security of his gift. Gunterius, thereby, sought the confirmation of particular individuals. The vicarius was selective. He obtained the recognition of his wife and sons, with special emphasis placed on a particular son. This group likely did not consist of every member of Gunterius’ kinship group, but rather privileged a selection of those whose patrimony would be affected by Gunterius’ gift. Gunterius effectively defined those persons whose blessing and counsel he required in patronizing Saint-Florent. This reliance and trust was essential in guarding against the threat of quitclaims.

274 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 29r-v. “deo sanctoque Florentio.” In the Saumurois, it was common to make a donation to Saint Florent, rather than to the monks of Saint-Florent. This is an important distinction for two reasons. On a practical level it implies that the donation was given to the chapter’s mensa conventualis (historians can therefore gain an indication of to what uses they expected their gift to be put). On a spiritual level it indicates how patrons conceived of their gifts and what they might expect in return.
As was seen in the cases of Drogo and Adelemus (see Chapter 3), claims against property donations did occur and were sometimes successful. Such examples were visible to the community and reminded donors of potential threats to their generosity. Thus, in the charter, Gunterius qualified his gift using the phrase, “with me making my donation with (my) wife and sons... and certainly by the authority of my son (granting) this same donation perpetually.” This phrase is an expression of what is usually called the *laudatio parentum*. In addition to his *parentes*, Gunterius guarded against the possible claim of a certain Letardus who was renting the land in question. Reinforcing the confirmations, a penalty of two hundred *solidi* was included to ward off any who might challenge the gift. The scribe-author of the charter listed only those individuals who were named by Gunterius’ statement of the *laudatio*. The silence of the charter in regards to other kin indicates that when the *vicarius* gave the donation, he made particular decisions of inclusion and exclusion.

White argued that by stipulating those who were included in the *laudatio parentum*, medieval donors drew boundaries within their kin-groups. This action privileged the principal’s relationship with an exclusive group of kin (in the Saumurois, this generally meant the donor’s nuclear family—possibly supplemented by a cousin, uncle, or nephew). White went as far as to assert that this selection process created a hierarchy within the kin group. However, one should not conclude that the boundaries set by the *laudatio* were static. In fact, they were quite mutable; with the circumstances of a particular case dictating which assenting relatives or individuals were required. The

275 For the example involving Drogo, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 26v-27v. For the example detailing Adelemus’ case, see BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 30r-v.
276 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 29r-v. “...me faciente donationem meam cum uxorci et filiis multi ex populo Sancti Georgii...Auctorita verum et filii mei simul hoc donum perpetualiter.”
277 White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, 111.
appearance of Letardus illustrates that the relationships individuals held with property could be equally important as those between kin. The charter’s scribe-author provided no evidence that Letardus was part of Gunterius’ kinship group. The presence of Letardus suggests that the practical and economic connection to the land in question mattered alongside ties of kinship—indeed, they were inter-related. The inclusion of such persons, therefore, indicates that the boundaries of the group defined by the laudatio were malleable enough to allow a non-family member, like Letardus, into the supposedly exclusive kin-group defined in this laudatio.

This interpretation of the laudatio parentum weighs the material costs of inclusion versus exclusion. Gunterius’ case illustrates the primacy of whose concern for potential claims from both within and without Gunterius’ kinship group. This is an interpretation White disfavored. He argued that physical wealth was not the incentive for associated donation. Instead, the spiritual benefit of including one’s kin was the prime motivation for incorporation.278 The sharing of prayers derived from the gift, therefore, was both a motivator for inclusion in the laudatio, as well as one’s desire to be included. Sometimes the evidence, however, does not suggest that worldly and spiritual concerns were mutually exclusive. In fact, physical and religious incentives reinforced one another, or required balancing. While piety in the Saumurois was an integral part of the social landscape and an inspiration for monastic patronage, aristocratic families such as the Odilae, that of Gunterius, and others were equally mindful of the importance of temporal concerns. The goal was balance, and to achieve this objective the laudatio was invaluable in managing the interests of all of one’s kin or dependents.

278 White, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints, 121.
The importance of securing the *laudatio parentum* is exemplified in cases in which it was absent. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the miles, Constantine of Melio, was a lord whom Countess Agnes recruited for her program at Fossas. His donation complemented those of others at Fossas and stands as evidence of cooperative patronage between various families. At the same time, however, Constantine either acted impulsively, or faced disagreement within his own kin-group. To participate in Agnes’ program, this lord proceeded without the *laudatio parentum*. Lacking the approval of his kin, Constantine was forced to rely on other strategies to defend his gift. To strengthen his donation and prevent risk of encroachment, Constantine appealed for the support of his lord, Count William, the count’s brother Geoffrey and “of other noble men (*aliorum nobilium virorum)*.” He additionally placed a heavy fine of ten pounds of gold on anyone who infringed on his donation. This appeal to the magnates of Poitou, the exorbitant financial penalty attached to violators of the agreement, and the repeated clarification that his heirs no longer held rights to the land were all attempts to provide powerful deterrents against challenges—which might have resulted from his lack of familial support. Furthermore, no relatives were mentioned in the witness list, while both high ecclesiastic and secular lords, including most of the comital family of Poitou, exerted a powerful presence. Nevertheless, in this atmosphere of unease between this miles and his kin, Constantine was still concerned for their spiritual welfare.

In his charter, Constantine stated that he acted “for the redemption of the souls of my parentum or [also] for the absolution and remission of the sins of my soul.” One could argue that this was merely another deterrent to prevent his kin from challenging the

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279 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 43r-v.
280 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 43r-v, “pro redemptione animarum parentum meorum sive pro meae anime absolutione peccatorum quoque remissione,”
gift. If they were to do so, they would be working against their own spiritual well-being.

If this example appeared in isolation then interpretation would seem to conform to the overall tone of Constantine’s charter. The broader cases discussed in the *Livre Noir*, however, demonstrate that collective action was the norm in the Loire valley. Cooperative patronage was practiced both within families (as seen with the Odilae and many cases of the *laudatio parentum*) and between families of differing social status (as seen in the program at Fossas). Constantine was likely conflicted. He wanted to give a gift both out of piety and eagerness to participate in the ventures of his lords. At the same time he likely felt an allegiance to his kin. Acting without their consent was disheartening. Making the donation on their behalf may have been an effort to balance his interests within his kin-group with those of the broader community. Constantine’s donation does not demonstrate that, in an effort to act unilaterally, Constantine strove to break free of the influence of his *parentes*. Rather, his strife arose from his desire to participate in two collective actions at once. Given his circumstances, however, this was not possible.

The reason for Constantine’s lack of support may have been internal conflict arising from particular family dynamics and the state of his kin’s property. This hypothesis fits a broader pattern exhibited in the sources. The internal relationships within families often affected the manner in which property was utilized, donated, sold, and inherited. As with other families throughout the Loire valley, those of the Saumurois did not fall under strict forms of kinship. Instead, there was, as Amy Livingstone has explained for the Chartrain, a “wide spectrum of kinship and inheritance patterns” which
varied depending on circumstances and developments within families. By considering the characteristics of the donor families examined above, one may see that Saint-Florent’s records reveal a patron group largely in keeping with those explored by historians of the Loire.

While White’s side argument that material concerns were separate from expressions of piety is not confirmed by Saint-Florent’s evidence, the patron group around Saumur does fit patterns White observed in the cartularies of Saint-Florent’s monastic neighbors. This matter further confirms that cooperation and mutual support were defining qualities of the social landscape of the Saumurois. The example of Geoffrey ‘the elder’s’ charter is an apt summary of the manner in which the community expressed itself. Geoffrey appeared at the chapter with his closest kin, where both his male and female relatives played equal roles. Representatives of the other powerful families of the local community also provided him with support.

This gathering at the monastery in 1089 was an expression of community, with the neighborhood monastery serving as both its physical and symbolic center. Saint-Florent was a stage on which relationships between persons and families were acted. The cooperative effort seen here worked to ensure and recognize Geoffrey’s entrance into Saint-Florent. At the head of the community was Geoffrey ‘the elder’s’ lord, Count Fulk ‘Réchin.’ The miles’ charter, as with many other eleventh-century transactions, demonstrates the positive guiding influence and involvement of comital authority in social activity. Rather than an unlawful or oppressing force, Fulk ‘Réchin’ and his comital bureaucracy stood as guarantors of this transitional moment in the life of the

count’s *fidelis*. It is likely that Geoffrey’s conversion was a moment of great religious intimacy. This does not mean, however, that it was private—or that Geoffrey even wished it so. The event was communal and the great families of the Saumurois and the count stood by Geoffrey to show their support for his transition to a new spiritual role within the Saumurois community.
CONCLUSION

Early in the twelfth century, during the twilight of his career, the venerable William of Dol met with the members of a prominent Saumurois family. Over the last four decades of his abbacy, William had overseen the dramatic expansion of his house’s holdings. In the wake of the Norman Conquest, the abbot’s ties with the Normans’ Breton allies secured English properties, while Saint-Florent solidified its presence in the Italian peninsula. To facilitate the monastery’s growth, the abbot had worked with the brothers to develop innovative managerial practices, such as the *Livre Noir* (see Chapter 2). The family gathered before William, however, did not hail from the recently acquired foreign lands. The members of this family were lords who had been reared in the shadow of this monastic empire. They were members of a local community—one which had guarded and supported the abbey of Saint-Florent long before its rise onto the international stage.

At the family’s head was Roinard (Roornardus). Roinard appeared before William to concede property he held at his powerbase at Chavais (*de Chavero*—see Map). This holding was just over four miles west of Saumur. Roinard, however, did not come alone, nor merely on his own behalf. His wife, Sarrazine (Sarracena), and his sons, Gosselin-Roinard (Goscelinus Roornardus) and Peter (Petrus) joined him. The sons also brought their wives. The party gathered to give properties for the salvation of Roinard’s parents. Two generations sought the favor of Saint Florent on behalf of their valued forbearers.

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282 BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930, 140r. Issued between 1100-1118—the latter date of this range being William of Dol’s date of death.
There was nothing novel about the transaction made that day. The generosity of Roinard’s family exemplified a foundational practice which had served as a norm in the Saumurois for nearly a century and a half. Neither wars nor the monastery’s economic circumstances had threatened this expression of communal solidarity. Indeed, the eleventh-century political leaders and reformers had strengthened the community’s identity. The *Livre Noir* most clearly displays this solidarity.

Though *historiae* such as the *HSF* carry great potential for understanding the experience of the monks of this period, it is the transactions in the *Livre Noir* and the charter corpus which exemplify the aristocratic character of the Saumurois. As was seen in the discussion of the *Livre Noir’s* organization (see Chapter 2), Saint-Florent’s scribe-authors communicated a well-defined reckoning of the abbey’s place in the Loire valley. By collecting exchanges into geographically based groupings, the brothers expressed their common understanding of the Saumurois’ borders. For the monks, Saint-Florent was the center of this region.

As the cartulary was a reconstruction of memory one might suggest that the primacy of the abbey was a product of a monastic worldview. However, the charters’ physical existence and the frequent reoccurrence of persons over the course of many transactions indicate that the monks’ interpretation of their role in the community overlapped with that of their lay patrons. The aristocracy of the region did view the monastery as a symbol of unity. Donations to Saint Florent were pious and economic expressions of attitudes which many families held in common. These families’ mutual devotion to the same saint, and their appearance as witnesses to one another’s gifts
brought them into frequent contact. In this way, patronage was a vehicle for social cohesion.

The *Livre Noir* also shows how the counts and countesses of the Loire maintained social unity. Saint-Florent was a crossroads for the laity and the religious. As a meeting ground, however, it required protection. This social juncture was guarded by traditional forms of centralized power. Through their authority and legal judgments, the counts and viscounts of Anjou, Blois, and Poitou had long held together a milieu in which a patron community thrived. While authority figures acted as arbiters, they were joined by and led their *fideles* in cooperative expressions of piety.

Saint-Florent was certainly a focal point. It did not, however, exist in a vacuum. The abbey willingly shared its patrons with other houses, such as Saint-Croix. The magnates of the Loire, such as Countess Agnes, encouraged these connections for the mutual benefit of all parties. In general, the cases Saint-Florent argued at comital courts were fairly adjudicated. A great emphasis was consistently placed on conspicuous compromise, cooperation, and traditional displays of power.

How then do these qualities of the Saumurois fit into a broader understanding of the medieval world? The lords of this region would have found the idea of a societal rupture around 1000 puzzling. There was indeed warfare in this period but it was not because of some social transformation. Rather it was the result of a particular political circumstance. The hostile actions were directed by the counts of the Loire, and when resolution was found, these same lords worked to curb the inevitable abuses which were a staple of medieval military tactics. Indeed, recognition of this point is one of the key
values of incorporating underutilized evidence, such as the *Livre Noir*, into broader debates of central medieval social history.

The *Livre Noir*, however, details only the beginning of Saint-Florent’s presence in the Loire valley. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the abbey continued to play a leading role in the region. At this time, however, the monastery also administered estates across western Europe. Simultaneously, the house projected its political presence beyond the Loire. Future research using the three later cartularies of the monastery, might explore how the established Saumurois community reacted to the influx of external influence. Of equal importance, studies of how Saint-Florent reacted to the rise of popular twelfth-century monastic movements such as the Cistercians might reveal whether there were conflicting interests among its donor community. What this thesis hopes to provide is a foundation.

The tenth and eleventh centuries constituted an era when Saint-Florent helped to form a communal identity for the Saumurois. Aggressive lordships do not characterize this formative period. Rather, the events of these centuries depict the formation of a new community bound together by institutions and practices based on ninth and tenth-century continuity and tradition. As we saw in the beginning of this study, the experience of the widow Sufficia and her children was one of a minor family working to forge a closer relationship to Saint Florent through patronage. This generosity ultimately had much in common with the sentiments Roinard’s family displayed over a century later. By integrating these examples of continuity, historians might ‘recover the Saumurois’ and thereby better understand the place of this community within the broader scope of medieval French history.
APPENDIX: Figures

Fig. 1 (Foliation of BnF nouv. acq. lat. 1930)
Based on description from the BnF Archives et Manuscrits:

A gathering between 8 and 9 is missing. It would likely be a regular gathering of eight.

7 gatherings of 8 fols. (1-56) → 1 gathering of 3 fols. (57-59)

5 gatherings of 8 fols. (60-99) → 1 gathering of 3 fols. (100-102)

4 gatherings of 8 fols. (103-134) → 1 gathering of 7 fols. (135-141) half sheet
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Map

“The Saumurois.” 47° 11’ 24.46” N 0° 03’14.01” E elevation 227ft. Eye alt. 69.96 mi.
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