Far From the Heart: The Social, Political, and Ecclesiastical Milieu of the Early Abbots of La Chaise-Dieu, 1052-1184

Maureen M. O'Brien

Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations

Part of the History of Religion Commons, Medieval History Commons, and the Medieval Studies Commons

Recommended Citation


This Dissertation-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
Far From the Heart: The Social, Political, and Ecclesiastical Milieu of the Early Abbots of La Chaise-Dieu, 1052-1184

by

Maureen M. O’Brien

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of History

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 2006
This study examines the institutional development of the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, whose evolution depended upon its community of monks, its patrons, and its response to the demands placed upon it by the society at large and the Church in general. It examines these factors as they were managed by its first eight abbots by tracing the development of their personal, social, political, and ecclesiastical networks in an effort to identify how those interactions took place and why they took the forms they did. This analysis rests on the examination of charters that were drawn up by the abbey and by its secular and ecclesiastical advocates as well as on papal bulls generated in response to the abbey’s needs and requests. This study follows three guiding principles that build on and contrast with existing studies: 1) its focus on one particular foundation and its dependents; 2) its focus on the era of eleventh and twelfth century monastic reform; and 3) its geographical focus on a monastic community in southern France. The examination of external monastic relationships has until now been undertaken by scholars who focused primarily on communities in northern France. By shifting the geographical focal point south, to the Auvergne, this study provides an important point for comparative analysis.

This study offers a new perspective from which to evaluate the history of
medieval monastic reform movements. La Chaise-Dieu, in contrast to northern monastic communities, initially depended for its survival upon local support and local protection primarily from strong episcopal advocates—themselves products of unique southern geopolitical conditions. As the community grew in size and influence, and established new foundations in other locations, its relationships with its benefactors changed. La Chaise-Dieu began to attract the attention of more diverse advocates, but the bishops in the Massif Central, who had assumed comital powers in the absence of any secular rulers of substance, remained its most important allies throughout this period.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My most gracious thanks to all of those whom I am indebted can hardly be expressed in a simple list of names. For all of those mentioned here, there are many more who stand behind them. I wish to thank the staff at the Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire in Le Puy, France. They were incredibly helpful in making documents available to me. I thank the Department of History and the Graduate College at Western Michigan University for funding my research while in France. I am indebted to Dr. Marion Gray and Candy List both for their continued support and encouragement and for their efforts to make departmental resources available to me.

I wish to thank my committee for their careful reading and thoughtful comments on earlier drafts: thanks to Professors Larry Simon and George Beech, Brother Thomas Sullivan, and most especially my chair, Professor E. Rozanne Elder. To Professor Elder especially, thank you. She first introduced me to the Casadéens, offered encouragement, criticism, and moral support throughout this project. I would never have made it this far without her. Many other scholars have offered advice and assistance along the way, including Father Hugh Feiss, and two gentlemen scholars to whom I am also indebted but will never be able to thank, Professors Otto Gründler and Tom Amos.

My thanks too to my family, especially my parents Frank and Mary O’Brien, who have supported me throughout this long process; thanks to my friends, especially Dr. Michael Martin, Bridget Fountain, and Pat Hanavan who have encouraged me and assisted me in innumerable ways. And finally, merci infiniment à mon mari, Michel Tchang.

Maureen M. O’Brien
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.................................................................................................................. ii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS........................................................................................................ vi

LIST OF MAPS AND TABLE........................................................................................................ vii

INTRODUCTION.......................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION................................................................................................... 2

The Question: Nobility and the Church.................................................................................. 3

The Auvergne: A Geopolitical Overview.............................................................................. 8

The Casadéens: Auvergnat Expansion—Within and Beyond........................................... 17

The Sources: Unpublished and Published Documents, and Studies.......................... 23

PART ONE: THE FOUNDATION............................................................................................ 32

CHAPTER II: ROBERT OF TURLANDE (1052-1067)................................................... 33

Robert’s Career....................................................................................................................... 37

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors.............................................................................................. 51

Conclusions............................................................................................................................ 62

PART TWO: EXPANSION BEYOND THE MASSIF CENTRAL........................................ 66

CHAPTER III: DURAND (1067-1078)................................................................................. 67

Durand’s Career...................................................................................................................... 72

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactor................................................................................................. 79

Conclusions............................................................................................................................ 86
# Table of Contents—Continued

**PART THREE: FRANCE AND BEYOND INTO SPAIN AND ITALY**          90

**CHAPTER IV: SEGUIN OF ESCOTAY (1078-1094)**                             91

Seuin’s Career ............................................................................................................ 94

Marbod of Rennes’s *Vita Roberti* ........................................................................... 107

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors .................................................................................. 112

Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 124

**CHAPTER V: PONS OF TOURNON (1094-1102)** ........................................ 126

Pons’ Career ................................................................................................................. 129

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors .................................................................................. 140

Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 142

**PART FOUR: FRANCE AND BEYOND INTO SWITZERLAND**........................... 144

**CHAPTER VI: AIMERIC (1102-1111)** .......................................................... 145

Aimeric’s Career ........................................................................................................... 146

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors .................................................................................. 159

Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 159

**CHAPTER VII: STEPHEN OF MERCOEUR (1111-1146)** .................................. 162

Stephen’s Career ........................................................................................................... 164

Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 189

**CHAPTER VIII: JORDAN OF MONTBOISSIER (1146-1157)** ......................... 193

Jordan’s Career .............................................................................................................. 198

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors .................................................................................. 206
Table of Contents—Continued

PART FOUR

Conclusions........................................................................................................... 207
CONCLUSION........................................................................................................ 209
CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION............................................................................... 210
La Chaise-Dieu’s Geopolitical Landscape.......................................................... 210
External Relationships....................................................................................... 213
Final Analysis..................................................................................................... 222
Contributions..................................................................................................... 229

BIBLIOGRAPHY................................................................................................... 232
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


AA.SS. = Acta sanctorum

AA.SS. OSB = Acta sanctorum ordinis s. Benedicti

A.H. = Archives Haute-Loire La Chaise-Dieu

BN = Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris


G. I. = (Grand) Inventaire général du Chartrier (AH 1)

Jaffé = Regesta pontificum romanorum

Marbod = Vita beati Roberti, ed. and trans. Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Firenze: Giunti, 1995)

MGH = Monumenta Germaniae historica

MGH SS = Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores

MPA = Monumenta pontificia Arverniae

PL = Patologiae cursus completus, Series latina.

Potthast = Resgesta pontificum romanorum

PP = Pancarte of La Chaise-Dieu (BN Mss fr. 7434), reprint in Gaussin, Le Rayonnement de la Chaise-Dieu

Ralph = “S. Adeelmi Vita” in España Sagrada, ed. H. Flórez, vol. 27 (Madrid: M. F. Rodriguez, 1747-): 841-66

RHGF = Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France
LIST OF MAPS AND TABLE

MAPS

1. Auvergne in the 11th Century—Castles................................................................. 12
2. Foundations: Stages One and Two......................................................................... 18
3. Foundations: Stages Three and Four—France/Spain/Switzerland....................... 20
4. Foundations: Stages Three and Four—Italy........................................................... 21

TABLE

1: Bull of Pope Eugene III (1146)............................................................................... 167
INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1052 by the Auvergnat noble Robert of Turlande, the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu was declared “a mirror of monastic reverence for our time and an example in parts of Gaul”\(^1\) by Pope Lucius II in 1144. Yet this once great monastic house remains relatively unknown except to a small group of monastic history specialists. This is unfortunate, as examining the experience of this abbey in the high Livradois forest in the Auvergne and its expansion throughout the Massif Central of France, and indeed across continental Europe, can contribute not only to our knowledge about medieval France and reformed monasticism in general, but can also help to clarify how monks and their secular and ecclesiastical neighbors interacted.

This study examines the institutional development of the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, whose evolution depended upon its community of monks, its patrons, and its response to the demands placed upon it by the society at large and the Church in general. It examines these factors as they were managed by its abbots by tracing the development of the personal, social, political, and ecclesiastical networks formed by the first eight abbots in an effort to identify how those interactions took place and

---

why they took the forms they did.

The Question: Nobility and the Church

Historians have long recognized that there were close ties, even blood ties, between “those who fight” and “those who pray”; Aloys Schulte demonstrated this in his 1910 study about the German aristocracy and the Church in the Middle Ages. More recently scholars have acknowledged that it is no longer necessary to argue that laymen played an important role in monastic reform, because this point has already been well established; they have moved on to consider how and why these relationships took the forms they did. Leading the way are American scholars using

---


3 Constance Brittain Bouchard has been most critical of scholars who have plundered extant documentation of these very relationships either to write histories of the church or histories of the nobility as if the two were unrelated. *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987): 23-25. See also Constance B. Bouchard, “Community: Society and the Church in Medieval France” *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 1036. John Howe has produced a valuable synthesis of recent international research that highlights the positive role that many nobles played in ecclesiastical reform. See “The Nobility’s Reform of the Medieval Church” *American Historical Review* 93 (1988): 317-339.
French sources. Barbara Rosenwein, in her 1989 *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny’s Property, 909-1049*, focused primarily on the role of property exchanges and the social ties they created between Cluny and its aristocratic neighbors. Constance Bouchard was among the first scholars to examine these relationships outside of the Cluniac context. Her *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (1987) is a regional synthesis of the Burgundian church. Thomas Head, in his 1990 *Hagiography and the Cult of the Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200*, attempts to explain differences in patronage by looking at political, social, and pietistic changes, especially as they are reflected in the lives of saints.

Sharon Farmer’s 1991 *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* examines how the canons of Saint-Martin and the monks of Marmoutier, even though their churches were close to each other, sought the protection of quite different advocates.

Bouchard’s conclusions regarding the immediacy and intimacy of relationships between medieval nobles and clerics set the stage for subsequent scholars to focus more specifically on the forms these interactions took. Of

---


particular interest is a 1991 comparative article by Barbara Rosenwein, Thomas Head, and Sharon Farmer, “Monks and Their Enemies: A Comparative Approach”, in which the authors examine the techniques employed by the monks of Cluny, Fleury, and Marmoutier to settle disputes. These authors demonstrate that how each community responded to their secular and ecclesiastical neighbors was driven primarily, and often decisively, by their local political milieu. At Cluny, in a region where the counts of Mâcon were weak and the king was distant, the monks encouraged compromise. At Fleury, in the Orléanais, the monks could rely soundly on royal protection. At Marmoutier, in the archdiocese of Tours where the monks had to deal both with a strong ecclesiastical presence in the archbishop and with a strong secular presence in the count of Anjou, monks often turned to the papacy.

French scholars too have dealt with various aspects of this topic. Their work also demonstrates that how monks dealt with their ecclesiastical and lay neighbors depended wholly on local situations. Jean-François Lemarignier gives emphasis to this in his article, “Le monachisme et l’encadrement religieux des campagnes du royaume de France situées au nord de la Loire, de la fin X à XI siècle,” in which he discusses steps taken by Abbot Abbo of Fleury (988-1004) to strengthen the official powers of the king, and thus his royal charters of immunity, in order to defend his abbey against the bishop and castellans. Olivier Guillot and Edmond Martène have

---

both examined the role the pope played in Anjou to mitigate the rocky relationships
between the monks and their neighbors. 12

Collectively, what the work of Bouchard, Rosenwein, Head, Farmer,
Lemarignier, Guillot, and Martène, among others, demonstrates is that the
relationships between the nobility and the Church were variant and depended
primarily on local political situations. This highlights the need for additional regional
studies. While each of these scholars has focused primarily on religious
communities located in northern France, this study shifts the geographical focus to
central and southern France, to the Midi, particularly to the experience of the abbey of
La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne.

The geographical location of any given monastery was as important to its
development as were its spiritual ideals. At the time La Chaise-Dieu was founded in
1052, the Midi had, as it was to continue to retain, many characteristics that set it

12 Olivier Guillot, Le comte d’Anjou et son entourage au XIIe siècle, 2 vols. (Paris: A.
& J. Picard , 1972): esp. vol. 1, 177-78, and vol. 2, 25 and 142; Edmond Martène,
Histoire de l’abbaye de Marmoutier, 2 vols. (Tours, 1874-75): esp. vol. 1, 502-504, 560-
63.
apart from northern France, not the least of which was its lack of any overall political cohesion.\textsuperscript{13} Contemporary chroniclers, all from the north, recognized that the Auvergne was difficult to control.\textsuperscript{14} The mountainous terrain of the Massif Central, the heart of which is located in the Auvergne, made any attempt at cohesion difficult, if not impossible through the twelfth century. While the terrain did not hinder conquest, it did prolong resistance as is evident in the Carolingian conquest of the Midi in the second half of the eighth century.\textsuperscript{15}

The political situation in the Auvergne worsened in the century before La Chaise-Dieu’s foundation, as what little political authority the Carolingians were able to wield there collapsed into destructive anarchy. Here, as people sought some semblance of stability in the midst of private wars, the symbol they turned to was the Church and the distant Pope in Rome.\textsuperscript{16} Monasteries whose lands and very existence were threatened by ambitious and often ruthless local secular lords solicited papal protection. Before the mid-eleventh century there was, however, little papal interest in the Midi beyond the issuance of charters, thus the burden of protection most often fell to the local bishops—themselves products of unique southern geopolitical


conditions—who had assumed comital powers. This, clearly, was not Orléanais, Touraine, or Burgundy.

The geopolitical distinctiveness of the Auvergne affected how La Chaise-Dieu’s abbots responded both spiritually and practically to personal motives, political pressures, economic fluxes, and environmental and geographical variations. A study of La Chaise-Dieu, then, can offer an important parallel and contrast to the work of Bouchard, Rosenwein, Head, Farmer, Lemarignier, Guillot, and Martène by presenting a new regional perspective from which to evaluate the history of medieval monastic reform movements within their religious and political milieux.

The Auvergne: A Geopolitical Overview

La Chaise-Dieu is located in the high Livradois forest in the Massif Central of the Auvergne. The Livradois plateau covers roughly 460 square miles and ranges in altitude between 2600 and 3300 feet. The Allier river valley runs north and south along the western edge of the Livradois, through the center of the Auvergne. This was the primary “road” of communication for the region.

__________________________


19 The principle north-south trade route, however, was the Rhone river valley, which
times, the Livradois had remained sparsely populated and had served as a refuge from invasion during the early Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{20} At the beginning of the eleventh century, the Livradois still had a limited and diffused population and was described by contemporaries as “a vast desert.”\textsuperscript{21} Even as the Midi as a whole was on the threshold of an economic rival by the mid-eleventh century, certain less developed areas, such as the Livradois, did not share in the “advanced level of socioeconomic life.”\textsuperscript{22}

**The Auvergnat Lords: Count, Viscounts, and Castellans**

The Auvergne had been part of the Aquitaine since Roman times. The Romans divided the Aquitaine into two administrative zones: *Aquitania Prima*, the capital of which was Bourges (included territories that would become the Berry, the Auvergne, the Velay, the Gévaudan, and the Rouergue); and *Aquitania Secunda*, the provided the most direct route linking northern and southern Europe. See Archibald R. Lewis, “The Rhone Valley Route and Traffic between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe, 300-1200” in *Medieval Society in Southern France and Catalonia*, XV, 1ff. Cf. Archibald R. Lewis, “Patterns of Economic Development in Southern France, 1050-1271 A.D.” in *Medieval Society in Southern France and Catalonia*, XIII, 58.

\textsuperscript{20} The Auvergne gets its name from the *Arverni*, whose leader, Vercingetorix, defied Julius Caesar, but was ultimately defeated by the Roman general. See René Rigodon, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, 3\textsuperscript{rd} edition (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963): 38.

\textsuperscript{21} Hugh of Flavigny described the region as *Vasta erat heremus*, “it was a vast wasteland” (Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronica* in *M.G.H., scriptores*, vol. 8, 113). The scribe of King Henry I’s charter described it as *in heremo*, “in a wasteland” (A. H. 4.1). And Marbod of Rennes, the biographer of La Chaise-Dieu’s founder, Robert of Turlande, described the region as *sterilitate solutidinis*, “barren solitude” (Marbod, I.7.1). The modern historian Pierre Charbonnier has described the region as *ingrate*, “ungrateful.” See his *Histoire de l'Auvergne des origines à nos jours: Haute et Basse-Auvergne, Bourbonnais et Velay* (Clermont-Ferrand: De Borée, 1999): 179.

\textsuperscript{22} Lewis, “Patterns of Economic Development”, 60.
capital of which was Bordeaux. These divisions survived Germanic invasions within the Church with both Bourges and Bordeaux becoming the centers of vast archdioceses. Frankish rule in the sixth and seventh centuries was never very secure, and although Carolingians had greater success establishing control there, their control too gradually waned in light of Viking invasions in the ninth century. The tenth century witnessed almost fifty years of struggle before the counts of Poitou assumed the ducal title in 965 and created a new dynasty based in Poitou. Centuries of disorder, however, fashioned local independence. Even after 965, the duke’s inability to establish a cohesive territorial state favored the independence of local nobles in the Auvergne where the mountainous geography likewise favored the fragmentation of rule. By the beginning of the eleventh century, the Auvergne had slipped from the duke’s realm of influence and was all but independent even though it was still, geographically speaking, part of the Aquitaine.

The Auvergne itself had been without a count since 930. The region, in the absence of any cohesive political structure, was violently disputed and political power drifted into the hands of numerous aristocratic castellans. By 987, Guy, the


25 Charbonnier, “L'Auvergne politique”, 1-2. Violence was prevalent throughout the region. Even so, the castellans often fell into what Charbonnier called a “balance of terror.” That is, each lord with his own castle ruled his lands with little external interference. See also Charbonnier, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, 155-157.
viscount of Clermont, had taken the title of count of Auvergne. The new count, however, was strong only where he had direct control over the lands; elsewhere, local castellan families began to exercise as many comital rights as they could with little regard for administrative frontiers.26 The count of Auvergne had little recourse; his power was too recent and too limited. From the tenth through the thirteenth century, the region would have no powerful lord of its own who was able to create a long-term cohesive territorial state; it remained politically fragmented even as stronger neighbors vied for superiority there.27 Given conditions as they were, however, the count remained the most powerful lord in the region and, in the 1120s, established his principle city at Montferrand, just outside the episcopal city of Clermont.

The county of Auvergne—much smaller than today’s département—was roughly equivalent in size to the diocese of Clermont (almost 7,000 square miles); the count, however, had direct control over only one sixth of it; the castellans managed the reminder of it.28 Based on the amount of land each family held, those families can be divided into three tiers from largest to smallest (Map 1): 1) Mercoeur, La Tour, and Carlat; 2) Polignac, Baffie, Thiers, and Montboissier; and 3) Meymont, Montgacon, and Beaumont.29

---

29 These families are be discussed when, and if, they come into contact with La Chaise-Dieu. See Gaussin, *L’Abbaye*, 74ff; Lewis, *Development of Southern French*, 260.
1. Auvergne in the 11th Century—Castles
These families, along with that of the count himself, made up La Chaise-Dieu’s local political environment. Some of the families, as we will see in the chapters to come, had a greater impact on the abbey than others. Of these, the Mercoeur and Montboissier, both of which had a fundamental impact on the abbey by supplying it with abbots, deserve mention here.

The Mercoeurs were an old Auvergnat family, who dominated the Brivadois, and the southernmost Auvergne and Velay, including the region’s principle cities of Brioude and Le Puy.30 These lords, regionally very powerful, had little interest in letting the count strengthen his position. Christian Lauranson-Rosaz, a specialist in the history of the Auvergne, has suggested that one reason for this family’s strength was its high number of religious vocations.31 They produced bishops of Le Puy and Clermont, diocesan provosts, deans, and canons, and abbots of Saint-Chaffre, Cluny, La Chaise-Dieu.

The Montboissiers were among the Auvergnat nobles, socially equal to the Mercoeurs, but politically less powerful.32 The influence they exercised through the


31 L’Auvergne et ses Marges, 134. Lauranson-Rosaz has identified eight children or grandchildren of Beraud and Gerberge—parents of Odilo of Cluny—who had taken up the religious life.

32 Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 156. See Fournier, Le Peuplement rural, 599. Charbonnier, without citing any evidence, goes on to say that the Montboissier were so generous to La Chaise-Dieu that their possessions were tangled (see Charbonnier, Histoire de l’Auvergne, 177). I have not located any evidence to support his claim.
Church, however, was substantial. The Montboissiers too had a strikingly high number of religious vocations. During the twelfth century, members of this family had entered the service of the Church and all of them went on to hold high positions, including bishopric of Le Puy and archbishopric of Lyon, as well as abbacy of Cluny, of La Chaise-Dieu, of Manglieu, and of Vézelay.

The correlation between these families’ religious vocations is especially compelling when coupled with their regional prominence. Their clerical bent suggests several things. First, those families with a predisposition for the clerical life were able to avoid many “fatal feudal” crises. As more children entered the religious life, the family had to worry less about inheritance. Second, in the politically fragmented Auvergne, the clerical life proved to be a means to advance the family’s stability and prestige. In these ways, regional lords, such as the Mercoeurs and Montboissiers, certainly benefited from such a widespread familial clerical presence.

The Auvergnat Ecclesiastics: Bishops and Monks

La Chaise-Dieu is located in the diocese of Clermont. The church of Clermont had been founded by the fourth century and its bishop dominated the city throughout the Middle Ages. The city survived near total destruction in the eighth

33 Members of the Polignac and Baffie families also held high ecclesiastical offices in the Auvergne during his period: Stephen V of Polignac, bishop of Clermont (c. 1050-1073); William of Baffie, bishop of Clermont (1095-1101); and Stephen III of Polignac, bishop of Le Puy (1073-1081).

34 Lauranson-Rosaz, L’Auvergne et ses Marges, 134.

35 Poitrineau, ed., Le Diocèse de Clermont, 13. The bishop’s authority over the city was greatly enhanced in 1030 when Count William abandoned diverse rights to the see of Clermont (44). Even so, the twelfth century was marked by continued conflicts between the count and bishop for both control of Clermont and the province (51).
century and repeated pillaging in the ninth to emerge as a center of power in the
ten.

By the end of the eleventh century, the bishop of Clermont was in a position
to wield his authority over the region, and there survives at least one example of a
bishop leading troops against recalcitrant nobles.

The bishop of Clermont provided steady and strong authority in the region, and proved able to keep the count, who
had attempted on several occasions to displace him from Clermont, at bay.

The monasteries in the Auvergne suffered many of the same ravages as did

36 Pepin the Short all but destroyed the city in 761. The Normans pillaged the city in 854 and 916. A new cathedral was built in the 940s.


38 Charbonnier, “L'Auvergne politique”, 2-3. Four persons could lay claim to superior authority in the Auvergne: the king, the duke of Aquitaine, the count of Auvergne, and the bishop of Clermont. The king and the duke only began to regain influence in the region in the 1120s. The count’s authority, as discussed above, was too limited. The bishop of Clermont was in the best position to exert his authority over the local lords.

39 The bishop of Clermont had been allied with the king of France since at least the 1030s when King Henry I intervened on behalf of the bishop when the count usurped part of Clermont. See Etienne Baluze, Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne: justifiée par chartres, titres, histoires anciennes, & autres preuves authentiques, II (Paris: A. Dezallier, 1708): 48. The king intervened again on behalf of the bishop of Clermont against the count in the 1120s. As the count’s and the bishop’s powers evolved at the beginning of the eleventh century, they generally favored the bishop. See Charbonnier, Histoire de l'Auvergne, 169.
the church of Clermont during the eighth and ninth centuries, only to become, practically, late in the tenth century functionaries of the local nobility.\textsuperscript{40} By the beginning of the eleventh century, the Auvergne had its share of monastic houses, one, according to legend, dating back to the third century.\textsuperscript{41} The Cluniacs had several houses in the region, including Saint-Flour, but they were still relatively few in number.\textsuperscript{42} Count Gerald of Aurillac had founded the abbey of Aurillac in the late ninth century,\textsuperscript{43} and the canons of Brioude had been established well before the beginning of the eighth century.\textsuperscript{44} The high Auvergnat lands, particularly the Livradois, however, remained void of monastic foundations.\textsuperscript{45} No one before Robert of Turlande had established a monastic community in the higher altitudes of the region.

\textsuperscript{40} Lewis, \textit{Development of Southern French}, 317; Rigodon, \textit{Histoire de l'Auvergne}, 45.

\textsuperscript{41} Saint-Allyre, near Clermont, was supposedly founded by that town’s first bishop, Saint Austremonius.

\textsuperscript{42} Saint-Allyre and Saint-Chaffre followed Cluniac observances but were not submitted to Cluny. Both Thiers and Saint-Flour were dependent on Cluny. La Chaise-Dieu’s presence in the Auvergne would both limit Cluny’s expansion in the region and limit the installation there of newer orders, such as the Cistercians and the Carthusians. See \textit{Le Diocèse de Clermont}, 49-50. See also Lewis, \textit{Development of Southern French}, 243.


\textsuperscript{44} Little is known about the early years of chapter of Saint-Julien at Brioude. The community was first founded to keep watch over the tomb of Saint-Julien (a fourth-century Christian martyr) and to protect pilgrims. Muslims burned it in the mid-eighth century. Louis the Pious approved the restoration of the community in 825 (Gaussin, \textit{L’Abbaye}, 96-97).

\textsuperscript{45} Gaussin, \textit{L’Abbaye}, 58-59.
At the beginning of the eleventh century the Livradois plateau seemed a perfect place for someone seeking solitude. Yet when the founder of La Chaise-Dieu Robert of Turlande died in 1067 there existed already a grouping of fourteen foundations around the motherhouse. These foundations could be found in at least five dioceses (Map 2): Clermont, Limoges, Le Puy, Vienne, and Auxerre. Conventual priories included Le Port-Dieu, Bulhon, Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue, and Andryes; simple priories included Allanche, Fournols, Luzillat, Maringues, Saint-Denis, Saint-Dier, Saint-Germain-l’Herm, Saint-Victor, and Vignonet. There was also one community of women, Comps, founded between 1050 and 1066, about the same time as the foundation of the first Cluniac monastery for women at Marcigny (1061). By the end of the twelfth century this group of fourteen houses had expanded to include a congregation of hundreds of abbeys, priories, and small cells spread across the land of modern France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland.46

The process by which this isolated monastery developed into an important congregation, rivaling Cluny itself, can be traced in four stages.47 These stages, while artificial, highlight La Chaise-Dieu’s continued regional appeal and its ever-growing circle of appeal across the Midi and its eastern and western borders. The initial stage (Map 2) corresponds to the abbacy of Saint Robert, the years in which the foundation was firmly established within the Auvergne. Chapter II is dedicated to stage one and begins with an examination the life of Robert of Turlande prior to his foundation of La Chaise-Dieu. For this we have to rely primarily on his Vita as

46 This study focuses only on those communities donated to La Chaise-Dieu itself.
written some thirty years after his death by Marbod of Rennes.\textsuperscript{48} Marbod described Robert as a man committed to both God and neighbor, and as someone who found complete contentment in neither the contemplative life nor the active life. While in retreat at his hermitage in the high Livradois forest in the Auvergne, Robert, by his reputation, drew both the devout and the curious. Such was his appeal that he decided, after consulting with his uncle, the bishop of Clermont, to transform his hermitage into an abbey. The second half of Chapter II focuses on the abbey’s first benefactors.

Stage two of La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion is marked by its spread beyond the borders of the Massif Central with the foundation of new conventual priories in the diocese of Saintes (Sainte-Gemme) and Grenoble (Saint-Robert of Cornillon). This expansion (Map 2) took place during the abbacy of Durand (1067-1078), the second abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. Durand found himself in charge of an abbey still very much in its infancy. Chapter III examines how Durand sought to secure the spiritual and temporal well being of La Chaise-Dieu following the death of its founder and inspiration. This was a potentially difficult period of transition. Durand relied on the saintly reputation of Robert both to retain the abbey’s initial benefactors and to draw new, even distant, supporters.

Stage three carried the Casadéen congregation over the Pyrenees into the kingdom of León-Castile and over the Alps into Tuscany (Maps 3 and 4). This stage also saw the foundation in the Midi of conventual priories in the dioceses of Poitiers (Parthenay-le-Vieux) and Arles (Beaucaire); and the reform of the abbeys in the

3. Foundations: Stages Three and Four—France/Spain/Switzerland
Legend

△ Dioecese
▲ Archdiocese
♦ Casadéen community

4. Foundations: Stages Three and Four—Italy
dioceses of Reims (Saint-Nicaise of Reims), Vienne (Saint-André-le-Bas), Cahors (Saint-Théobard), Albi (Gaillac), Périgueux (Brantôme), and Nîmes (Saint-Baudile). Chapter IV examines La Chaise-Dieu’s considerable expansion during the abbacy of Seguin of Escotay (1078-1094). Seguin’s was a very active abbacy. His personal network of friendships, especially those created before he became abbot, put him into contact with some of the foremost ecclesiastical leaders of his day. Under his stewardship, the Casadéens emerged as a clear alternative to the Cluniacs. Chapter V follows Pons of Tournon (1094-1102), Seguin’s successor, as he is left to assess and to consolidate La Chaise-Dieu’s recent expansion, as the abbey began to face its first real challenges in disputes with neighboring religious communities.

La Chaise-Dieu expanded into the Jura during stage four and continued to establish new communities and reform older ones from León-Castile to Tuscany (Maps 3 and 4). In the Midi, La Chaise-Dieu founded communities in the dioceses of Lyon (Savigneux), Clermont (Montferrand, Jaligny, Saint-Genés-les-Monges, and Saint-Julien-la-Geneste), and Saintes (Trizay); and reformed communities in the dioceses of Agen (Sainte-Livrade), Besançon (Faverney), and Clermont (Chanteuges). Even as La Chaise-Dieu witnessed continued expansion, the abbots had to struggle increasingly in their efforts to protect the abbey’s interests. We see this in Chapter VI as Abbot Aimeric (1102-1111) dedicated a good portion of his abbacy to the defense of his abbey’s dependencies. Chapter VII chronicles La Chaise-Dieu’s most impressive period of expansion, which took place during the abbacy of Stephen (1111-1146). In Chapter VIII, we see Stephen’s successor, Jordan of Montboissier (1146-1157), dedicate his efforts to consolidating newly acquired possessions, while defending his abbacy’s supremacy over long-held dependencies.
These were no simple tasks as the Casadéen congregation had experienced unprecedented growth during Stephen’s abbacy.

Throughout La Chaise-Dieu’s initial period of expansion, from its foundation through 1157, the abbots managed to negotiate their local social-political and religious milieux in such a way that left them with negligible rivals, either secular or ecclesiastic, close to home. This all changed during the second half of the twelfth century when the abbots’ abilities to advance La Chaise-Dieu’s causes within the Auvergne with little external hindrance faded with increasing rapidity as they had to face not only challenges to their control over the abbey’s dependencies, but had to concern themselves more and more with mere survival in particularly volatile times.49

The Sources: Unpublished and Published Documents, and Studies

Considering the significant loss of documents, in particular the cartulary of La Chaise-Dieu, there is always some uncertainty about the details one obtains from extant documentation. A caution: the conclusions drawn in this study about the relationships between La Chaise-Dieu and its secular and ecclesiastical leaders rest on the chance survival of source materials. That said, these sources, when taken together, do present a relatively clear picture of these relationships, which is unlikely to be altered significantly by the discovery of new documents.

49 A crisis of succession followed the departure of Count Robert III of Auvergne for crusade in 1147. This land dispute degenerated into open conflict after Robert III’s death and completely destabilized conditions in the Auvergne, which had already been, according to Peter the Venerable, in a lamentable state ever since Robert III had departed for the Holy Land. See The Letters of Peter the Venerable, ed. Giles Constable (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967): no. 171, 405.
Unpublished Documents

The principle archive for La Chaise-Dieu is the Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire in Le Puy, France. The documents related to La Chaise-Dieu were moved to the archive in 1791 and the *Inventaire sommaire des Archives départementales antérieures a 1790: série 1 H: Abbaye de La Chaise-Dieu* was published in 1943.\(^{50}\) For the period under discussion here these records are not particularly extensive, roughly three-dozen documents survive. In this situation, we regret all the more the loss of a cartulary for La Chaise-Dieu. Unpublished episcopal records for Clermont and Le Puy are equally limited. I have yet to locate any for Le Puy and those available for Clermont number fewer than thirty for the period discussed here.\(^{51}\)

Published Documents

The most important collection of printed documents relating to La Chaise-Dieu is the *Monumenta pontificia Arverniae*.\(^{52}\) This is a sizable collection of papal documents related to the Auvergne dating from the ninth through the twelfth centuries. Fortunately, as we will see, the abbots of La Chaise-Dieu systematically

\(^{50}\) *Inventaire sommaire des Archives départementales antérieures a 1790: série 1 H: Abbaye de La Chaise-Dieu* (Le Puy: Imprimerie La Haute-Loire, 1943). See also Soulingeas, *Guide des Archives de la Haute-Loire*, 129ff. There are scattered archival records for later Casadéen history.

\(^{51}\) Those documents related particularly to the careers of the abbots of La Chaise-Dieu who went on to become bishops of Clermont number only a couple dozen. See *Inventaire de toutes les Chartes antérieures au XIII siècle qui se trouvent dans les différents fonds d’archives du dépôt de la préfecture du Puy-du-Dôme* (Clermont-Ferrand: Impr. de F. Thibaud, 1855.

\(^{52}\) *Monumenta pontificia Arverniae, decurrentibus IXo, Xo, XIxo soeculis. Correspondance diplomatique des papes concernant l’Auvergne depuis le pontificat de Nicolas ler jusqu’a celui d’Innocent III (IXe, Xe, XIe, XIIe siecles)*, ed. Chaix de Lavarene (Clermont-Ferrand: Impr. F. Thibaud, 1880).
secured papal recognition of their rights, privileges, and new foundations. Nearly one
hundred fifty bulls and letters survive related to La Chaise-Dieu.

For the foundational period of the abbey (1043-1067) the regional cartularies
of Conches, Saint-Flour, Brioude, and Sauxillanges have proven useful in
identifying members of the founder’s family. Marbod of Rennes’s *Vita Roberti* is
also useful for both what it tells us about the founder of La Chaise-Dieu, and what we
can infer from it about the abbey’s needs and concerns some thirty years after the
death of its founder. Bernard’s *Liber tripartitus de miraculis sancti Roberti.*

Distinctio secunda, which dates to 1160, is filled mostly with stories of miracles and
other legends which had developed over the century following Robert’s death, but it
is one of our main sources for Raymond of Toulouse’s interactions with the abbey.
Other sources remain scattered. In lieu of any Auvergnat chronicle, we find only
occasional references to the political and ecclesiastical conditions in the region in
other narrative sources. Hugh of Flavigny’s chronicle is particularly helpful for
ecclesiastical history.

__________________________________________________________

54 *Cartulaire du Prieuré de Saint-Flour*, ed. Marcellin Boudet (Monaco: Imprimerie
de Monaco, 1902).
55 *Cartulaire de Brioude (Liber de Honoribus St-Juliano Collatis)*, ed. Henri Doniol
(Clermont-Ferrand: Académie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts, 1863).
56 *Cartulaire de Sauxillanges*, ed. Henri Doniol (Clermont-Ferrand: F. de Thibaud, 1864).
57 Thomas Head maintains that churchmen defined sanctity within the context of
their dealings with the wider society. See his *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orleans, 800-1200* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).
59 See Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronica*, 288-502. Hugh was a monk who lived in
Verdun and died by the middle of the twelfth century. He is useful for ecclesiastical
history, especially for the year between 1002 and 1112. For this period, he
see of Clermont in the *Chronicon Sancti Petri Vivi Senonensis* (or *Chronique de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sen*). 60

**Studies of La Chaise-Dieu** 61

There are four mid-seventeenth-century histories of La Chaise-Dieu: François Gardon’s *Histoire de la Chaise-Dieu*, 62 Victor Tiolier’s *Histoire Générale de la Congrégation de Saint-Robert de la Chaise-Dieu*, 63 Simon Genoux’s *Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu*, 64 and Claude Estiennot’s *Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae*. 65 The first three authors were monks of La Chaise-Dieu at one time or another, the last was an assistant to Jean Mabillon. 66 These consistently identifies the new abbots of La Chaise-Dieu and records such events as the council of Clermont in 1095.

60 See *Chronique de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens*, 144. This chronicle was begun c. 1108. It chronicles the period from 660 through 1290 and is particularly useful for the period 1096 through 1124.


62 Published as *Histoire de l’Abbeye de la Chaize-Dieu* (Marseille: Laffitte Reprints, 1981, originally, 1912).

63 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. français, 18681.

64 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. latin, 12818.

65 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. latin, 12745.

66 Pierre-Roger Gaussin discusses these authors in more detail in his *L’Abbaye de la*
works are important as each author had access to the *chartrier* at La Chaise-Dieu and bear witness to materials now lost. On the basis of their treatment of events for which other materials survive, it is possible to refer to their works, but always with caution, as collaborative materials do not always survive.

Modern studies concerning La Chaise-Dieu fall into two basic categories: those that examine the artistic attributes of the fourteenth-century abbatial church reconstructed under the direction of Casadéen Pope Clement VI; and those that examine the abbey’s history. The latter concern us here. Pierre-Roger Gaussin (1922-1999) has done the most extensive research on the history of La Chaise-Dieu. He focused primarily on chronicling the history and the structure of the

---


68 There are a number of more specialized articles related to La Chaise-Dieu available. See George Beech’s “Queen Mathilda of England (1066-83) and the Abbey of La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 27 (1993): 350-74; and “A Previously Unknown Epitaph of St. Robert of Turlande, Founder of La Chaise-Dieu” *Revue Mabillon Nouvelle* série 5 (1994): 29-35. See also, H. E. J. Cowdrey’s “Pope Gregory VII and La Chaise-Dieu” in *Maisons de Dieu et Hommes*

In his works, Gaussin examines the considerable cohesiveness and

---

centralization of this congregation by focusing on La Chaise-Dieu’s relationships with its dependents, concentrating primarily upon the later development of La Chaise-Dieu and its congregation.\textsuperscript{73} His stress on the uniformity and cohesion within the Casadéen congregation was necessary to demonstrate that the Casadéens were in fact an Order.\textsuperscript{74}

Gaussin’s work forms the foundation of the present work. But while Gaussin focused on the internal structure of the congregation itself, this study focuses on the institutional development of La Chaise-Dieu, from its foundation through its steady expansion until 1157, as managed by its abbots and their relationships with the abbey’s external benefactors. Gaussin made no attempt to place La Chaise-Dieu in its religious and political milieux as is the goal of this study. Those sources used by Gaussin to chart La Chaise-Dieu’s internal cohesion also registered the abbey’s external relationships.

Gauging La Chaise-Dieu’s importance and defining its role in history has been difficult because of the characteristics of eleventh and twelfth-century monastic reform movements and the way these reforms have been treated by modern historians. In hindsight, La Chaise-Dieu can be fitted neatly into the category of a typical reforming monastery, obliterating its uniqueness. Giles Constable has given emphasis to this point most recently in his \textit{The Reformation of the Twelfth Century},

\textsuperscript{73} One particular reason why he focused on the later development was because the extant documents not consumed by fires in 1574 and 1695 lent themselves more readily to this type of study, i.e., simply more records, which deal with the internal goings-on of La Chaise-Dieu, survive for the later period. See Jacotin des Rosières, \textit{Procès-verbal de l’incendie de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu en 1574} (Le Puy: Impr. R. Marchessou, 1904).

\textsuperscript{74} In the twelfth century beyond uniformity, it was hard to define an order with any precision (see Constable, \textit{Reformation}, 174).
where he argues that while there was an increasing acceptance among contemporaries of various forms of religious life in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there was little clear distinction between religious observances and orders.\(^{75}\) Constable’s argument that “new institutions are almost as rare as new religions” may be accurate, but it can also be misleading. Reform monastic history long suffered under the guise of “crisis”;\(^ {76}\) Constable’s paradigm shift threatens to consign and confine this topic, once again, to a restrictive standard under which distinctiveness evaporates.

Ideals, liturgies, customs all may suggest continuity and similarity, but exceptionality begins with the individuals involved. Constable even admits, “Some of the most interesting differences between the old and new houses . . . and between the various types of new houses, were in their relations with the outside world.”\(^ {77}\) Contemporary secular and ecclesiastical leaders made choices between monastic communities when choosing which ones to patronize. What the monks were doing inside their monasteries may not, as Constable maintains, have differed significantly, but how these communities were perceived by the outside world most certainly differed, often times dramatically. This singular point suggests a new approach to the examination of the history of La Chaise-Dieu: an examination the abbey’s

\(^{75}\) Constable, *Reformation*, 169.

\(^{76}\) John van Engen was not the first to point out flaws in the “crisis” theory, though he was the most thorough. See his “The ‘Crisis of Cenobitism’ Reconsidered. Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050-1150,” *Speculum* 61, no. 2 (1986): 269-304. In this historiographical essay, van Engen challenges the “assumed reality” of the crisis in the majority of historical studies. After tracing the development of the debate, van Engen endeavored to distinguish between the various ways historians have used the term “crisis” to define this period of monastic history (272-3). Van Engen concluded that “a term without firm support in the sources and liable to so many misconceptions is probably best avoided altogether” (274).

\(^{77}\) Constable, *Reformation*, 209.
relationships with the outside world. The nature of extant documentation—records of interactions between the abbey and its benefactors—supports this approach.

The principle aim of this study is to present the case of La Chaise-Dieu. By examining La Chaise-Dieu’s experience in the high Livradois forest of the Auvergne where there was no particularly strong lord or noble presence throughout the period under discussion, we can broaden the scope of the inquiry already undertaken by such scholars as Constance Bouchard, Barbara Rosenwein, Thomas Head, Sharon Farmer, Jean-François Lemarignier, Olivier Guillot, and Edmond Martène. Moreover, we can broaden our consideration of how monasteries differed or resembled each other when conducting their external relationships, and how differing political and religious milieux affected said relationships.
PART ONE: THE FOUNDATION
CHAPTER II: ROBERT OF TURLANDE (1052-1067)

“The monk”, as described by Henrietta Leyser, “was a spiritual warrior, fighting not only for the salvation of his soul but also for the prosperity of society.”¹ During the ninth and tenth centuries it was a fight the monks shared with their benefactors, and this mutual struggle often created close bonds between them.² By the mid-eleventh century the prayers for “prosperity” of the preceding centuries began to bear fruit; population growth, new land settlement, growing towns, renewal of trade, all began to have dramatic effects across Europe, affecting too the nature of the relationship between monks and their benefactors.³ These changes, however, manifested themselves at different rates, and often had direct bearing on the actions undertaken by those, like Robert of Turlande, who had been inspired by the emerging spiritual renewal. We must, then, turn our attention to Robert’s home, the Auvergne, what became the heart of Casadéen monasticism.

At the time Robert set out for his hermitage on the Livradois plateau (1043), the Midi as a whole enjoyed a civilization generally similar in character, yet one quite different than those of principalities located in northern France. Its most distinct characteristics included: 1) an insistence that land be allodial; 2) the control of

---

property, political power, and the Church by local castellan families; 3) an incipient feudalism linked to land usage, not to personal loyalty; and 4) the arbitration of disputes by informal tribunals in the absence of any overarching judicial system. These characteristics, again, consistent in general across the Midi, persisted as well in the century following the foundation of La Chaise-Dieu. La Chaise-Dieu’s foundation and the expansion of the Casadéen congregation across the Midi and into León-Castile to the west and Tuscany to the east must be understood within the context of these characteristics.

By the beginning of the eleventh century, when other duchies and counties in northern France, and even other areas of the Midi, were beginning to enjoy increasing political stability and a growing economy, commercial growth was only beginning in the Auvergne; most of the region remained agricultural. Moreover, the Auvergne was beyond the limits of real control by its overlord, the duke of Aquitaine, and clung to its non-feudal family structure. Surrounded by bellicose castellans and lacking the security a count of substance could provide, the Auvergnat bishops defended themselves. By the eleventh century, they had assumed comital powers, collected vassals, and dispensed justice; they, in most places, provided the oldest continuous form of government in the region.

---


5 Lewis, Development of Southern French, 387-379.

6 Bishop Peter Roux of Clermont (1105-1111) is a good example, see Chronique de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens, 144. Lewis, Development of Southern French, 288, 329, 260, 360; Charbonnier, “L’Auvergne politique”, 2-3; Aubrun, “Le diocèse de Clermont”, 25; and Dunbabin, France in the Making, 219. David Foote, in his study of the Italian bishopric of Orvieto, has identified the important role the bishops there played as arbiters
In response to ongoing violence and endemic warfare, these bishops convened some of the earliest known “peace” councils—church tribunals meant to fashion new strategies to protect their resources, rights, and lives. Evidence of this can be found in the actions taken by the bishops of Clermont, especially Stephen II, as early as the 940s. As Christian Lauranson-Rosaz notes, “These clerics had a dual interest since, as unarmed lords, they were victims of this violence. Still, as lords of justice, clerics had much to gain from the new developments.” Episcopal proclamations detailing peace obligations which sought to limit the bloodshed and destruction of property precipitated by private wars, were bold moves by bishops in a region in which neither king nor count could maintain peace and stability.

The bishops’ actions must be understood too within the context of relationships between regional families and the Church in the Auvergne at the beginning of the eleventh century. Local nobles were independent magnates. They ruled their local region by virtue of their strength, made manifest by their castles.


7 Grand Cartulaire de Saint-Julien de Brioude, essai de reconstruction, eds. Anne Marie and Marcel Boudet (Clermont-Ferrand: De Bussac, 1935): no. CCCXXXV. Stephen’s actions seem particularly bold. Archibald Lewis maintained that Stephen had not been acting as a churchman when he called his tribunals, thus protected by royal immunity, but presented himself as the “embodiment of public authority” [Lewis’s emphasis] in the Auvergne, thus replacing secular government. See Lewis, Development of Southern French, 216-17. Bishop Stephen III of Clermont was likely assassinated in 1013. See Poitrineau, ed., Le Diocèse de Clermont, 39.

They also, most often, dominated their local Church. This situation came about as local noble families realized that their secular subordinates tended to transform property they had given them into allodium. Thus noble families began to give such property to abbeys and churches rather than to secular underlings because it was far more difficult for them to alienate their benefactors. Under this system, the Church—in particular bishops and abbots—became the source of real power and authority in the Midi as ecclesiastical lands were far easier to consolidate and there was no problem of generational inheritance as with secular lands. Thus, so long as this system of close collaboration and mutual respect between secular nobles and the Church persisted, the Church thrived. Abbeys and churches accumulated large domains. When secular domination of the Church became the rule between 975 and 1050, however, the Church was in danger of being completely absorbed into the family system.  

By the beginning of the eleventh century the Church in the Midi was well on its way to becoming a subsidiary of noble society. Secular domination of the Church by noble families, however, was one thing; ruthless control by castellans, a developing trend, was something else. The Church, as witnessed in the actions of the bishops of Clermont already in the late tenth century, reacted to this militarism by calling councils that attempted to restrict the castellans’ disruptive behavior. By 1050 the Church was making spotty progress in the Midi against the rising militarism. The Auvergne, however, remained “so disorderly that the Peace of God still needed to be enforced there through the eleventh century.”

---


Turlande was born, the world in which he sought to live a life professed to God.

Robert’s Career

The family Turlande took its name from a castle built on the right bank of the Truyère in the canton of Pierrefort (Map 1).11 Our earliest knowledge about the Turlandes comes from the cartulary of Conques, in particular Charter 421 dated between 1007 and 1010. From this cartulary we learn that a couple named Gerald (II) and Raingarde, Robert’s parents, had at least four sons: Gerald (III), who become lord of Turlande in 1024, Deusdet, William, and Pons.12 Father and sons supported the monastic community of Conques; while both Gerald III and Pons extended their benefactions beyond the abbey of Conques. They also had dealings with the community at Saint-Flour situated in the canton of Saint-Flour (on the north-east border of the canton of Pierrefort) in the department of Cantal (Map 1).13

Robert himself does not appear in the charters until after his entry into the community of canons at Brioude (c. 1018), the same chapter which his uncle, Odilo

---

11 J. B. Bouillet, Nobiliaire d’Auvergne, vol. 6 (Clermont-Ferrand: Perol, 1846): 422-423. The canton of Pierrefort is in the Département Cantal (15).

12 The birth order unknown; Gerald III was certainly the oldest; Robert, born c. 1000, was likely the youngest (he does not appear in these charters). Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Conques, Charter 421: “Ego . . . Geraldus et uxor mea Raingardis concambiaxionem facimus de rebus nostris cum alicos homines, videlicet cum Begoni episcopo et cum Arlaldo abbate et cum Matfredo et cum rectores Sancti Salvatoris Conchas, manso uni in Scabrinio, ubi Constancius visus est manere, cum omni integritate . . .” See also, Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Conques, Charter 15. Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Conques, Charter 342: “Geraldus filio Raingardis.” This charter is dated between 996 and 1004. Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Conques, Charter 38: “Ego Geraldus de Turlanda dono sancto Salvatori et sanctae Fidi de Conchas . . . hoc est ecclesia Sancti Amancii . . .”

13 Cartulaire du Prieuré de Saint-Flour, Charter 6, Charter 34, and Charter 35.
of Mercoeur, by 1018 abbot of Cluny, had been a member. Only tradition gives any hints as to Robert’s existence before this, reporting that shortly after his birth, he was taken to the castle of Reilhac in Brivadois, where his family very likely held lands;\textsuperscript{14} certainly his brother William came to hold lands in this region.\textsuperscript{15} In one of the most significant charters in the Brioude cartulary, number 67, which dates to around 1020, Gerald III, not yet lord of Turlande, gives the canons of Saint-Julien at Brioude a farmhouse to help support his “brother Robert,” who by that time was most certainly at Brioude, if not yet a canon.\textsuperscript{16}

Only one source, however, survives that discusses Robert’s initial spiritual endeavors: Marbod of Rennes’ \textit{Vita beati Roberti}.\textsuperscript{17} Marbod of Rennes (c. 1035-}

\textsuperscript{14} Genoux, \textit{Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu}, 15. Compare with, Marbod, I.2.8-10.


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Cartulaire de Brioude}, Charter 67: “ego Geraldus cedo Deo sanctoque Juliano aliquid de rebus proprietatis meae, pro anima mea et pro anima genitois mei, ac genitrices meae, ac vivorum et defunctorum parentum meorum . . . Sunt autem ipsae res in comitatu Arvernico, in vicaria Brivatensi, in villa quae dicitur juxta ecclesiam de Molimart, mansum unum qui cognominatur Mas Broidenc, et in villa quae dicitur Jauriag multones duos, porcum unum, et mansionem unam, in tali convenientia ut Rotbertus frater meus reddat unam refectionem senioribus pro obitum meo . . . affirmatore Rotberto, Ugone, Bertranno; et in Rialiago multones sex, porcos sex, agones sex, de civada sextarios sex, gallinas sex, in tali convenientia ut Stephanus de Calaires sepeliatur pro hoc.”

\textsuperscript{17} A discussion of Marbod and the reason why he was chosen to write this \textit{Vita} will follow in Chapter IV. For basic work on Marbod’s life and writings, see Léon Ernault, \textit{Marbode, évêque de Rennes, sa vie et ses oeuvres} (Rennes: H. Caillère, 1890); Max Manitius, \textit{Geschichte der lateinischen Litteratur des Mittelalters}, vol. 3 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1931): 719-30; and F. J. E. Raby, \textit{A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages}, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957): 329-37. Unfortunately, Marbod has
1123) was an important and prolific writer. He was born at Angers and studied at the cathedral school where he later became master and chancellor, and then archdeacon; by 1096 he was bishop of Rennes. When commissioned by the monks of La Chaise-Dieu to write a new Life for their saintly founder,\(^\text{18}\) Marbod was already a well-known author. Marbod wrote his *Vita Roberti* in two books. The first contains a prologue and an account of the life and miracles of the saint. The second book includes a prologue, a spirited defense of Robert’s spiritual choices, and stories about miracles he worked after his death.\(^\text{19}\) Marbod made use of a no longer extant life of the saint whose author is identified in Bernard of La Chaise-Dieu’s *Threefold Book of the Miracles of Saint Robert* (1160) as Gerald of Laveine.\(^\text{20}\)

---


\(^{19}\) Book two is discussed below, see 107ff.

While it is easy to classify Marbod as one of the premier scholars and writers of his era, one must bear in mind that what he wrote, some thirty years after the fact, was not meant to be an exact recounting of what actually happened. Like all works of hagiography, it sets the actions within a frame of reference; it assumes a certain repertory of associations and responses on the part of its audience; and it provides meaningful shape to Robert’s raw experience—that is, it seeks to amplify the divine intention of even the most mundane acts. This, however, does not negate the Vita’s historical importance. Here we will focus on what the Vita tells us about Robert’s life in conjunction with other near contemporary sources; in a later chapter we will examine how this Vita responded to criticisms being levied at the Casadéens some thirty years after Robert’s death.

Marbod suggested that Robert was descended from the family of Gerald of Aurillac, the premier saint of the region.\(^{21}\) Marcellin Boudet, however, through detailed study of regional cartularies from Conches, Saint-Flour, Brioude, and Sauxillanges, determined that Robert’s true lineage was that of Turlande (paternal) and Montclard (maternal).\(^{22}\) Marbod mentions little else about Robert’s childhood prior to his becoming a canon at Brioude. While at Brioude, Robert was ordained as

\(^{21}\) Marbod, I.2.1: “*creditur a beati Geraldi aureliacensis stirpe.*” Here, describing Robert’s father, Marbod reveals a shadow of doubt with his use of “*creditur*”, literally, “it is believed or supposed.” We come to know Gerald through the *vita* written by Odo of Cluny, a contemporary of the saint. See Odo of Cluny, *Vita Geraldi Auriliacensis*, in *Patrologia Latina* 133:639-704. See also Lewis, “Count Gerald of Aurillac”, 41ff; and Charbonnier, *Histoire de l’Auvergne*, 158-160.

a priest and constructed an almshouse in the village. He also served as the community’s treasurer.

Marbod compares Robert’s acts of charity to those of Saint Martin of Tours, who too lived as a hermit, and notes, however, that Robert, “burning with the love of contemplation”, decided to leave Saint-Julien in order “to have time for God alone.” Robert’s initial attempt to pursue the monastic life was spurred by his desire for solitude. Robert went initially not to a solitary place, but to Cluny, “moved by its fame for holiness and discipline.” In view of the criticism leveled at Cluny by the “crisis of cenobitism” advocates, it should be pointed out that there is no sign in Marbod’s Vita Roberti of any aversion toward the Cluniac tradition or toward

---

23 Marbod, I.3.1 and I.4.5. See Guillaume Michel Chabrol, Coutumes générales et locales de la province d’Auvergne, IV (Riom: Martin Dégouette, 1784): 136. Here it is noted that Robert had opened a hospital for the poor and pilgrims.

24 Henry I identifies Robert as a canon and treasurer in his 1052 diploma confirming La Chaise-Dieu as an abbey: “Rotbertus, Brivatensis canonicus et thesaurarius” (A.H. 4.1). See also Genoux, Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 17.


26 Marbod, I.5.6: “Inter hec contemplationis amore flagrabat, us qui semper bonis melior, melioribus optima vellet adiungere. Gustaverat velut in trasitu quam suavis est Dominus et totis medullis cordis desiderabat vacare soli Deo, ut quasi prelibatam dulcedinem pleno gurette mentis hauriret.”

Cluny itself. Marbod, given a reason, was hardly one to pass up an opportunity to criticize. That Cluny was Robert’s first choice when he sought a contemplative life might not seem surprising to moderns, but in the eleventh century monastic communities tended to draw members locally, and Cluny was quite a distant choice. It was over one hundred miles northeast of Brioude over rough Auvergnat terrain. Robert had other choices closer to home; he did not need to choose Cluny in distant Burgundy. As mentioned above, Robert’s family had made donations to Conches and to Saint-Flour, both well-established and nearby monastic communities. Why, then, did he choose Cluny? Marbod claims it was Cluny’s “holiness and discipline” that attracted Robert, yet, this would not have been its only appeal. Robert’s uncle, Odilo of Mercoeur, was abbot of Cluny at the time. It seems reasonable to ask if Robert would have made the distant choice had this not been the case.

Marbod gives the impression that Robert attempted a clandestine departure for Cluny, not that he ever actually arrived there. His family’s dismay at the news of his departure foiled his plans. There is little reason to question Marbod’s description of this moment in Robert’s life, but it seems possible—even probable, in light of later events—that Robert did indeed arrive at Cluny, only to be frustrated with the liturgical lifestyle he found there. Torn between his concern for the poor and his

---


29 Boudet relates Robert to Odilo through Robert’s paternal grandmother who would be Odilo’s sister (“Saint Robert de Turland, fondateur de La Chaise-Dieu”, 107); Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 98.
desire to commit himself to the service of God, he may have felt pulled to one at Brioude, and the other at Cluny, but a balance he could not secure at either.

Why would Marbod, quick to criticize, forego yet another opportunity to fault Cluny if he had indeed detected any flaw in the community’s monastic observances? Instead of doing so, Marbod explains Robert’s return to Brioude as a sacrifice made for the sake of the poor there, even though this was a decision that made him terribly ill. Evidently, Cluny’s wealth and spiritual degeneration alleged by “crisis of cenobitism” proponents were not the driving forces behind Robert’s decision to return to “the world” or later to withdraw to solitude.

When Robert did finally depart Brioude for good, he first undertook a pilgrimage to Rome to seek guidance in his future endeavors. Marbod does not delve into the details of Robert’s trip, but mentions only that Robert, upon his return from Rome, “awaited unhesitatingly in faith for what he had asked.” A later chronicler of La Chaise-Dieu, Dom Simon Genoux (1609-1667), however, adds that Robert, before returning home, not only met with Pope Benedict IX but also visited Monte-Cassino, where he studied the Rule of Saint Benedict. Pierre-Roger Gaussin, citing Genoux, concludes that Robert “went to Monte-Cassino ‘to study the Rule of Saint Benedict and to recover the healthy monastic traditions’ [because] Robert had

---

30 Marbod, I.6.2-6.
31 Marbod, I.6.7-8: “Erubuit vir sanctus, et propositum suum non magis impeditum quam manifestatum dolens, ex mentis egritudine morbum incurrit. Unde cum cepisset convalescere, intelligens se Dei voluntate a loco quo intenderat revocatum, quia forte alibi plus posset proficere, temptavit si vel inter suos implere posset optatum.”
32 Marbod, I.6.11.
33 Genoux, Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 19.
estimated that the abbeys he knew had left the ‘healthy’ tradition and had moved away from the spirit of the Rule.”

Gaussin either accepted the “crisis of cenobitism” theory, or accepted Genoux’s estimation that the situation left Robert with no examples of the “healthy” tradition closer to home. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that Robert found Auvergnat abbeys “unhealthy.” Considering Robert’s personal devotion to the poor, it may be inferred that he, at most, found them wanting in regard to their service to the poor.

Robert’s trip renewed his desire to dedicate himself to God and likely exposed him to alternative forms of monasticism inspired by oriental eremiticism. We might even speculate that during this trip Robert came to realize that monastic institutions within the Auvergne had fallen too deeply under the influence of local families, becoming repositories for their wealth and regional manifestations of their authority, and had thus compromised their spiritual ideals. Whatever happened, his Italian expedition clearly had a significant effect on Robert, for it was upon returning to his home in the Auvergne that he resolved to undertake the eremitical life.

Two former soldiers joined Robert in the remote isolation of the high Livradois forest; both had been in the service of Robert’s father and brother. The

---

34 Gaussin, *L’Abbaye*, 100.


first, Stephen of Chaliers,\(^{38}\) was a longtime, devoted companion of Robert. His recognized devotion is evident already in charter number 67 (c. 1020) of the Brioude cartulary, in which Gerald III of Turlande, Robert’s brother, made gifts to the canons to support Stephen’s burial.\(^{39}\) The second companion, Dalmatius, whom Stephen had recruited *ad suos*, had also been in the service of Robert’s family, although nothing more is known about him.\(^{40}\)

The three would-be hermits established their new home on land that belonged to the Beaumonts, minor lords even by Auvergne’s standards. The land was held by two brothers, both churchmen, Rostagnus and Albert: the former, a canon at Notre-Dame of Le Puy-en-Velay; and the latter, the abbot of Saint-Pierre-La-Tour.\(^{41}\)

Albert of Beaumont, keenly mindful of the difficulties that Robert and his companions faced, sent several loads of provisions to the new hermits in their

---

37 Marbod, I.6.11.

38 Chaliers was located just southeast of Saint-Flour.

39 *Cartulaire de Brioude*, Charter 67: “... et in Rialiago multones sex, porcos sex, agonos sex, de civada sextarios sex, gallinas sex, in tali convenientia ut Stephanus de Calaires sepeliatur pro hoc.” Gerald III’s gift was meant to support Stephen’s burial. See also Genoux, *Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu*, 20.

40 Marbod, I.8.2.

41 While Marbod identified these brothers by name, he did not supply an affiliation beyond their location in Le Puy. He does, however, mention that Albert was an abbot and later became a disciple of Robert’s, while Rostagnus was a canon. Dom François Gardon (c. 1587-1642), the earliest of the seventeenth-century chroniclers of La Chaise-Dieu also mentions that Albert was an abbot, and Rostagnus a canon (Gardon, *Historie de l’Abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu*, 3). Dom Genoux (c. 1609-1667) further identifies the two brothers as abbot of Saint-Pierre-La-Tour and canon of Notre-Dame de Le Puy (*Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu*, 23). Saint-Pierre-La-Tour was a Benedictine abbey founded in 908 and was located in the diocese of Le Puy. Cottineau, *Répertoire Topo-bibliographique des Abbayes*, vol. 2, 2378. On the Beaumonts, see Lauranson-Rosaz, *L’Auvergne et ses Marges*, 103, 105-106.
seclusion.\textsuperscript{42} Robert seems to have had little difficulty securing rights to this land.\textsuperscript{43} Later tradition has this land transfer confirmed by the knight Austremond, who held the land in fief.\textsuperscript{44} Stephen of Mercoeur, bishop of Le Puy (1031-52), may have also facilitated this transfer. Stephen, like Robert, was a nephew of Odilo of Cluny. From his earliest days in retreat, Robert found his most important support coming from churchmen rather than secular lords.

It was in this “wasteland” that Robert struck a balance between his active life (exhibited in Brioude) and contemplative life (manifested in his attempt to join Cluny). While Robert and his disciples followed a strict regimen of prayer, fasting, and work in their solitude,\textsuperscript{45} Robert never neglected the needs of the poor. To emphasize this point, Marbod tells us that one day, while the others continued to work, Robert was praying alone. Hearing a voice seeking alms, he quickly stood up, went to their hut, and gave all that he could find to the supplicant. When the others returned from their work, they found no food. One of Robert’s companions complained. But Robert chided him, citing the words of Christ, “do not be concerned about yourselves, saying what will we eat or what will we drink. For your Father knows that you need these things.”\textsuperscript{46} Here we get a sense of Robert’s personal

\textsuperscript{42} Marbod, I.13.5.
\textsuperscript{44} Gardon, Historie de l’Abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 3: “Ceste donation fut confirmée par tous les voisins, nommément par un chevalier nommé Austremond, que tenoit en fief la terre où estoit construite la chapelle de laquelle nous avons cy devant parlé desdits chanoines.”
\textsuperscript{45} Marbod, I.12.1-6.
\textsuperscript{46} Marbod, I.13.1-3: “Quadam die profectis ad laborem fratribus, cum solus in ecclesia substitisset, ubi illi mos erat cotidianas et continuas lacrimas cum precibus
commitment to charitable activities. Robert desired to pursue a contemplative life, but he identified with the poor personally and his passion to serve them drew him continually back to the active life.

Robert’s charitable activities inevitably entailed contacts with lay people. Marbod makes it clear that Robert’s hope for a life of complete isolation repeatedly faded in the light of his fellow human beings’ need. How could he place his own spiritual desires above the needs of those around him? Now, as leader of the group, Robert no longer had to choose between the active and the contemplative life. He had the freedom to pray, to preach, and to work in the world. Even in a place where he himself could set the standards for balance between the active and contemplative, Robert found a solution difficult. He fell into what was for him a more natural state, that of the monk-apostle.

Robert’s attempt at isolation in the spirit of the desert monks failed almost from the outset. Robert saw in the Livradois a region isolated and remote, a land and a people on the very margins of Christendom. What he found was that beggars were omnipresent, and, as his fame spread, it was not only the needy who sought him out. Through his distinctive combination of monastic life, preaching, and charity, Robert

---


47 Marbod, I.17.5.

48 This mixed active and contemplative life came to be known as *vita biformis* in the thirteenth century. See Constable, *Reformation*, 290.
very soon drew both the devout and the curious.

Making frequent use of . . . talks, he not only instructed his comrades, but also softened the earlier ferocity of the inhabitants, so that gradually eliminating their brutish habits, he was making men out of wild beasts. . . . He raised up the eyes of their minds to recognize the creator of all. Enumerating the labors and dangers of earthly life, he easily convinced them that apart from the creator there is no peace for souls. Thus, it happened that some soldiers abandoned their military life to become members in his holy band and there handed themselves over in to the service Christ in perpetuity. Moreover, some of the clerical order, instructed by his teaching, preferred the solitary and poor life to the comforts of their home. As the number of his disciples grew so did their religious observance, which was elicited not only by the strict discipline, but also by the perfection of charity.49

Such was his growing fame, that “When many pledged to serve Christ only under his leadership, and the multitude of those asking to do so was large, both the desolation of the place and the variety of interests seemed to make it impossible for so many to dwell there together,”50 Robert, although he had been a canon, followed the advice of his uncle, Bishop Rencon, and adopted the Rule of Saint Benedict.

49 Marbod, I.14.1-4: “His et talibus frequenter utens sermonibus, non solum socios instruebat, sed et incolarum mitigabat pristinam feritatem, paulatimque eos bruis moribus exuens tamquam de feris homines faciebat, maiori certe miraculo quam si, ut apud fabulas invenitur, humana corpora transmutaret in feras. Erigebat eorum mentis oculos ad agnoscendum omnium creatorem, et quod preter ipsum nulla sit animarum quies, enumeratis mundane vite laboribus ac periculis, facile convincebat. Ita factum est ut nonulli, cingulum militiae deponentes et sancto eius adherentes contubernio, Christi se servitio ibidem in perpetuum manciparent. Sed et de clericali ordine quidam, eius edocti mangisterio, vitam solitariam et egenam domesticis deliciis pretulerunt. Crescete igitur numero discipularum crevit et religionis observantia, quam non tantum extorquebat censure districtio, quantum offerebat perfectio caritatis.”

50 Marbod, I.17.4: “Sed cum plerique Christo servire nonnisi sub ipsius ducatu proponerent et non parva esset competentium multiplicitudo, multorum autem cohabitationem tam loci vastitas quam studiorum diversitas excludere videretur, ortum est novum ex necessitate consilium, famulantibus divine dispensationi rerum etiam difficulatibus, ut ibi scilicet construeretur monasterium, in quo, velut ovili dominico, sub regulari et
Benedict’s Rule, however, was not the only or even the obvious choice. There seems to have been, according to Casadéen legend, some disagreement among Robert’s followers regarding this decision. According to the twelfth-century hagiographer, the Casadéen monk Bernard, some of the monks preferred the canonical life, others the eremitical, and only after angelic intervention was the Rule finally chosen.51

In 1050 Robert easily secured the solemn endorsement of the diocesan bishop; Bishop Rencon of Clermont approved the work of his nephew and encouraged him to persevere.52 He declared himself the protector of the new monastery and confirmed the name that had been given to the place: Casa Dei.53 Rencon also entrusted several area churches to the monks: Luzillat, Maringues, Fournols, Saint-Dier, and Saint-Denis (Map 2). He himself consecrated the church they had restored at La Chaise-Dieu.54

Among the first secular benefactors of the new monastery were the families

---

52 Marbod, I.17.5. Genoux, Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 42.
53 The name, according to Marbod (I.15.5, 7), had been prophesied by a demon that Robert expelled: “(5) She had barely entered the church where the saint was praying, when the enemy who possessed her rebelled and began to hurl threats and insults at him from his horrible sounding mouth: ‘Robert, Robert of Casa dei, why do you, a stranger, try to force us from our residence? . . . (7) The devil foresaw that a place called by the new name of Casa dei would be founded there and that the relics of the saints whose names he recited would be brought there.” The abandoned chapel where Robert and his companions first settled was dedicated to Saints Vitalis and Agricola as was the cathedral in Clermont. By 1052, the site was already being called Casa Dei. See Pope Leo IX, “Leo episcopus, servus servorum Dei, ecclesiae beatorum martyrum Vitalis et Agricolae quae dicitur Casa Dei . . .” (MPA, no. XVII, 34); and King Henry I, “. . . ecclesiam in pago Arvernensi in heremo scitam et a Deo honoribus ampliatam, Casam Dei nominatam . . .” (“Privilegium Henrici I Francorum regis pro Casae-Dei Monasterio” PL 151:1031).
54 Genoux, Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 42.
Turland, Mercoeur, and Baffie; they eagerly and voluntarily provided estates and money.” La Chaise-Dieu achieved in a short time such distinction that Robert found it necessary to petition the king and the pope to elevate his monastery to abbatial status, thus enhancing its stability “with the sanction of higher authority and fitting privileges.” The economic success of Robert’s reform program in its early years probably surprised no one more than the reformer himself. Pope Leo IX, in a bull dated 2 May 1052, placed La Chaise-Dieu under the protection of the Holy See and enjoined all secular lords, from emperor to viscount, from seizing the church or its goods. Later that same year, Henry I confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s status as an abbey and also secured all the previous donations made to it up to that day.


56 Marbod, I.17.4.

57 Marbod, I.18.2.

58 MPA, no. XVII, 34-37: “Praecipientes igitur vice sancti apostolorum principis, praecipimus cuivis, quamvis impares vices tamen gerimus, ut nullus imperator, rex sive dux aut vice-comes, seu qualiscumque aliquid ecclesiasticum potestate praeditus, videlicet archiepiscopus vel episcopus, seu quilibet vicedominus audiet praefatum invadere ecclesiast vel ejus diripere bona, quae nunc vel aliquid in tempore juste possidet vel est possessura.” See also Marbod, I.18.2; Philippus Jaffé, Regesta Pontificum Romanorum (Lipsiae, 1885; Graz: Akademische Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1956), 4270; and Leo IX, Epistola 67, PL, 143.686-7. Sometime between 1061 and 1073, Pope Alexander II also issued privileges for the abbey, see MPA, no. XXIII, 45; J. von Pflugk-Harttung, Iter italicum (Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 1881): 195, no. 151.

Marbod provides our best and almost only glimpse into Robert’s character. The founder of La Chaise-Dieu had aspired to and hoped for a life dedicated entirely to God, but could never turn his back on those who needed help. Marbod wrote, “he rightly knew that it would be at the peril of his soul if out of concern for his own quiet he turned his back on the salvation of so many.” 60 Robert spent his remaining days in the monastery he had built, living the life of a monk-apostle which had evaded him both at Brioude and at Cluny. Robert’s success can be counted in the “souls of a large multitude of secular people” whom he had gained “by the word of his preaching, the example of his life, and the intercession of his prayers” and in the extensive gifts donated to support his work. 61 “Previously he had desired a solitary life with few companions and commanded that no money or possessions be accepted from anyone. However, when he had received these things . . . he did not want to seem ungrateful for the heavenly benefactions.” 62

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors

Robert of Turlande had set out to live a life of seclusion, poverty, charity, and humility, but the growth of La Chaise-Dieu changed the character of the community,

more on royal monastic exemptions see J. F. Lemarignier, “Le monachisme et l’encadrement religieux des campagnes du royaume de France situées au nord de la Loire, de la fin X à XI siècle,” in Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche della “Societas Christiana” dei secoli XI-XII: Diocesi, pievi e parrocchie (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1977): 363ff. Abbot Abbo of Fleury (988-1004) was particular active in strengthening the official powers of the king in order to enhance the strength of royal charters of immunity so they could not simply be cast aside by bishops or castellans.  

60 Marbod, I.17.5. 
61 Marbod, I.18.7.
even within his own lifetime. From the time King Henry I recognized and secured several large donations in 1052, until Robert’s death fifteen years later, La Chaise-Dieu amassed a large estate that came with unquestionable seigneurial and public powers, including the rights to judge and punish.

Between 1050 and 1067, Robert worked tirelessly within the Massif Central, most noticeably in the diocese of Clermont, to restore old and to establish new churches, many of which became small Casadéen priories: in the northwest, Bulhon, Maringues, Saint-Dier, and Saint-Germain-l’Herm; and in the West, Saint-Victor in the Monts-Dore, Allanche in Cézallier, and Vignonet in Artense (Map 2). Most of these new foundations had only two or three monks in residence and almost all of them were located in the high Livradois.

One of Robert’s most notable foundations was a monastery for women. Around 1050 Radulphe of Lugeac, a knight, donated the church of Saint-Andrew of Comps to La Chaise-Dieu. Here, sometime between 1052 and 1058, Robert

---

62 Marbod, I.17.6.

63 Those confirmed: the church of Saint-André; the church of Saint-Germain; the churches and domains of Fournols and Beaupommier; the chapel at the chateau Bulhon; the village and three churches at Luzillat; two churches and half the domain at Saint-Denis-Combarnazat; the chapel at the chateau of Montgacon; two churches at Saint-Victor; the church of Saint-Dier; and the church of Notre-Dame with the domain of Sauzac.

64 Henry I’s charter confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s seigneurly in several regions. See discussion below. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 116, 546.


66 See also Bruno Phalip, Seigneurs et bâtisseurs: le château et l’habitat seigneurial en Haute-Auvergne et Brivadois entre le XIe et le XVe siècle (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2000): 40.
established a monastery for women.67

Were these gifts of land and new foundations ultimately signs that a need for this biform monasticism existed? While it remains impossible to gauge heavenly rewards, it is possible, at least in part, to appraise the earthly success. Monastic reform movements that gained wealth and property often fell away from their founding ideals, however, if the salvation of souls is the goal of monastic life, then neither wealth nor ideals are sure signs of success; moreover, to question the success or failure of monastic reforms in these terms is impossible. Perhaps what can be judged is the ability of these reforming movements to secure their future, which lay not only in the apostolic ideals of their founder, but also in the spiritual and temporal bonds which their successors were able to forge with secular and ecclesiastical advocates both near and far. This will be the scale used here to evaluate La Chaise-Dieu.

Several points should be immediately striking. First, those individuals most active in the foundation of La Chaise-Dieu were all local churchmen: Robert himself, the Beaumont brothers, the bishops of Clermont and Le Puy. There was no great Auvergnat lord to initiate, authorize, or patronize the foundation of the monastery. Another striking point is that King Henry I, in 1052, granted a charter of protection to an abbey that was not located in his seigneury. This certainly seems to

67 Gallia Christiana, II, Instrumenta, col. 107, indicates that the wife and daughter of Gausbert of Breuil entered the community in 1058. The archival documents regarding this community were not inventoried as of 1983. See Yves Soulingeas, Guide des Archives de la Haute-Loire (Le Puy: Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire, 1983): 137. I have not examined these documents; this could be a very rich source for a future study.
be an anomaly. Archibald Lewis has done a careful study of the decline of royal authority in the Midi. He maintains that the end of Louis the Pious’s reign saw the beginning of seven decades of decline and that by 950 all royal authority had disappeared in the lands south of Poitou and Burgundy.68 After 950 more and more abbeys in the Midi began to seek out papal protection as the northern monarchs were no longer able to wield any real authority there as local families, powerful enough to ignore the royal government, took over real de facto power.69

A clue to understanding why King Henry I issued this charter can be found in the charter of protection itself. In it Henry refers to the bishop of Clermont, Rencon, as “our most beloved and intimate friend.”70 This hardly seems a formulaic address as Bishop Rencon’s epitaph too insisted that he was always a friend of King Henry.71 The origin of this relationship dated to at least 1034, when Henry I came to the assistance of Bishop Rencon after the count of the Auvergne had usurped part of the city of Clermont from him.72 No evidence survives to explain the origins of this friendship between Bishop Rencon and King Henry. The bishops of Clermont had long wielded worldly authority in the region and when this authority was usurped by the count of Auvergne, Bishop Rencon likely felt that King Henry could offer some form of material support without challenging his own regional sway. King Henry,

68 See Lewis, “Civil War, Invasion, and the Breakdown of Royal Authority”, in Development of Southern French, 92-113.
69 Lewis, Development of Southern French, 248-249.
70 “Privilegium Henrici I Francorum regis pro Casae-Dei Monasterio” PL 151:1031-32: “dilectissimo et familiarissimo nostro.”
71 Gallia Christiana, II, col. 260: “et Henrici regis sibi semper amici.”
many ways, was for Bishop Rencon, the ideal secular ally. It seems natural then that Bishop Rencon should send his nephew Robert to King Henry in 1052.

King Henry’s charter of 1052 approved Robert’s appeal to raise his monastery to an abbey, and also affirmed the close relationship already established between the bishop of Clermont and the new abbey. This is evident in two stipulations he added to the charter: the first, that the bishop of Clermont was required to ratify abbatial elections; and the second, that the abbot, with two or three monks, was to go to the cathedral in Clermont each year on the feast of the Assumption, 15 August, to celebrate the solemnity with the canons and to donate to them three pounds of incense. As, at the moment this agreement was made, both abbot and bishop were blood relatives and on friendly terms, these stipulations hardly seemed problematic (although they will later prove to be points of contention). The arrangement gave the monks, secluded as they were, a powerful and local ally in the bishop of Clermont. At this time in the abbey’s history, these royal stipulations were, in many ways, vital for its survival.

The king also confirmed all gifts previously donated to the monastery. The charter lists them in some detail: the church of Saint-Andrew of Comps with its dependencies; that of Saint-Germain, with the territory of Runiaco and the borough; the territory of Fournols along with the church and seigneur; the church of Beaupommier with the seigneur; the chapel of the castle of Bulhon; three churches and the borough in Luzillat; two churches and half a seigneur in Saint-Denis; the

---

73 “Privilegium Henrici I Francorum regis pro Casae-Dei Monasterio” PL 151:1031-
chapel of Montgacon; Saint-Victor with two churches; the church of Saint-Dier with the territory of Boissonnelle; in Lyon, Valfleury with the church of Sainte-Marie and the seigneury; and many other goods and properties not mentioned by name. In nine short years since Robert and his two companions had set out for a life of solitude, both their ranks and their wealth had certainly swelled.

The detail found in this charter suggests that it was written, at least in part, by someone in the bishop’s entourage and then presented to the king for assent. If so, the charter of La Chaise-Dieu followed the pattern by which a high proportion of charters issued by Robert II, Henry I, and Philip I were written by recipients. This common practice served the interest of the patrons of the new house who sought to have their rights defined in a privilege issued by a “lofty” authority. In this case the patron with the most to gain from royal endorsement was the bishop of Clermont whose rights over the abbey were “embodied” in Henry I’s charter, although there is no evidence to suggest that Bishop Rencon’s actions were particularly self-serving.

Given the decline of royal authority in the Midi, particularly in the Auvergne, Bishop Rencon was likely more concerned with the freedoms granted by the king’s privileges than worried about their defense. What evidence we possess suggests that as the regional lord substance, the bishop of Clermont took it upon himself to support his nephew’s endeavors and to protect the new abbey from neighboring castellans.

32: “libramque incensi in censum persolvat.”  
74 Henry I, A.H. 4.1: “et etiam quamplura predia villarum, terrarum cultarum et inclutarum, silvarum, vinearum, aqurum, pascuorum.”  
75 Dunbabin, France in the Making, 137.  
76 Constable, Reformation, 241-242.
who might seek to encroach upon or usurp La Chaise-Dieu’s growing patrimony. The regional Church was in the best position to offer La Chaise-Dieu practical support.

The charter’s witness list also demonstrates the prominent role of the regional Church. In his fundamental study of early Capetian charters, *Le gouvernement royal aux premiers temps capétiens (987-1108)*, J. F. Lemarignier concluded that the Capetian kings found themselves surrounded by persons of an increasingly lower social caste and that their charters were increasingly being issued to a smaller geographical area. Lemarignier maintained that royal authority reached its lowest ebb in the half century that ended in 1077, a period that coincided closely with the reign of Henry I. If these conclusions are true, the witnesses to La Chaise-Dieu’s charter seem especially impressive: the king’s brother, the dukes of Burgundy, Aquitaine, and Normandy, four archbishops, and seven bishops. Of them all, only the duke of Aquitaine, the distant overlord of the Auvergne, whose powers were as limited there as the king’s, had any remote connection with the region. What this witness list reemphasizes is that the king was involving himself in affairs beyond his immediate


78 Witnesses include: Aimon, archbishop of Bourges (1030-1070); Arnulph, archbishop of Tours; Adovert, bishop of Chartres; Eudes, king’s brother (1013-1056); Rencon, bishop of Clermont (c. 1028-1052); Robert, duke of Burgundy (1011-1076); Erbert, bishop of Auxerre; William, duke of Aquitaine (1025-1086); Hugo, archbishop of Reims; Isembard, bishop of Orléans; Elmun, bishop of Autun; William, duke of Normandy (c. 1027-1087); Mainard, archbishop of Sens; Eyscelin, bishop of Paris; Widon, bishop of Châlon-sur-Saône; Radulph, count; Theobald, count; and Raynaud, chamberlain.

79 Duke William VII came to power in his minority and his regents Geoffrey Martel
sphere of influence. In addition, while Henry ordered the bishop of Clermont and
other bishops of his kingdom to sign the charter, the only other bishop to sign who
held any sway in the Auvergne, other than Rencon of Clermont, was the archbishop
of Bourges, Aimon of Bourbon (1030-1070), who had, not unlike the bishop of
Clermont, been required to assume temporal powers in the absence of any secular
lord of note.

The bishop of Clermont’s role as La Chaise-Dieu’s first ecclesiastical
advocate is clear. The archbishop of Bourges’ potential role, however, deserves
additional attention. The upper Berry, like the Auvergne, was largely a land of
independent castellans with no noteworthy count. As in the case of the bishops of the
Auvergne, the only local figures in the upper Berry to exercise authority were the
archbishops of Bourges, and none did so more effectively than Aimon of Bourbon.
He initiated one of the most radical expressions of the Peace of God movement, a
“Peace militia,” when he demanded—beyond the usual obligations of not attacking
ecclesiastical land, churchmen, and peasants—that all men over the age of fifteen be
required to fight against violators of the peace and vow to apprehend such violators
by force. Aimon was not afraid to act, and he demonstrated this when he used his

80 “Privilegium Henrici I Francorum regis pro Casae-Dei Monasterio” PL 151:1031-32: “Hoc autem preceptum ut validiori astipulatione nitatur, anulo nostro
subterfirmavimus, et aruernensi episcopo et ceteris nostri regni episcopis auctorizare
mandauimus.”

81 Andrew of Fleury, Miracula s. Benedicti, edited in Eugène de Certain, Les
miracles de Saint Benoît écrits par Adrevald, Aimoin, André, Raoul Tortaire et Hugues
de Sainte Marie moines de Fleury (Paris: Chez Mme ve J. Renouard, 1858): 5.1-4. Not
all historians agree that Aimon’s militia was part of the Peace movement, but rather was a
“feudal quarrel of the classic type,” which saw bishop and count at odds (Guy Devailly,
peace armies against the count of Déols in 1038 because he refused to adhere to the peace. “The bishop sought to force [the count] to join in the pact common to all, and [the bishop] would not delay in making an armed attack.” Aimon’s ability to raise an army and move against a local lord demonstrates the extent to which he could wield power in the Berry. Archbishop Aimon of Bourges and Bishop Rencon of Clermont were the witnesses of greatest regional substance in the royal charter to La Chaise-Dieu. Both were keenly aware of the potential dangers the Church faced as local secular lords threatened appropriation of ecclesiastical lands; both acted to counter such actions whenever necessary.

The bishop of Clermont took pains to increase the protection of the new abbey in 1052 when he sought out and received papal protection. Pope Leo IX, secure in the dignity and primacy of the papal office, had every interest in expanding his influence, particularly in the Midi where any overarching secular authority failed to develop. The pope was able to fill the vacuum left by the decline of royal authority

---

*Le Berry du Xe siècle au milieu du XIIe. Étude politique, religieuse, sociale et économique* [Paris: Mouton, 1973]: 142-148. Regardless, what Aimon’s actions demonstrate is his ability to raise and lead troops against his secular neighbor.


84 MPA, no. XVII, 34-37

85 The papacy underwent an abrupt reform in 1049 when Emperor Henry III installed Pope Leo IX. Leo acted zealously against simony and began to issue
and the inability of regional *princips* to form territorial principalities. Leo IX, already in 1050, was producing special papal bulls to guard local abbeys from encroachment and usurpations. Leo stopped short of granting La Chaise-Dieu the exempt status enjoyed by Cluny, which likely reflects too the close association between the abbey and the bishop of Clermont; he did, however, prohibit both secular and ecclesiastical lords from seizing the church or plundering its goods. Here too, as in the case of King Henry I’s charter of protection, we might well question the effectiveness of papal authority in the Midi. But it seems that Bishop Rencon thought both distant figures provided, at least symbolically, the best defense against the local count and castellans.

These prudent, if not essential, royal and papal declarations of protection for La Chaise-Dieu followed years of material support from regional families and churchmen. The support of regional families such as the Turlande, Beaumont, Mercoeur, and Baffie, and the backing of Robert’s episcopal uncle in Clermont and two successive Mercoeur bishops in Le Puy meant that Robert could focus unmolested on the management of his abbey and its growing number of dependents.


86 See Lewis, *Development of Southern French*, 328, 335. See also Bouchard, “Forging Papal Authority”, 3.

87 Pius Bonifacius Gams, *Series episcoporum Ecclesiae Catholicae* (Graz:
small proprietors who likely sought to place themselves under the abbey’s mild
seigneurial control.\textsuperscript{88} Of these one was Raoul “Sparrow.”\textsuperscript{89} Upon Raoul’s entry
into La Chaise-Dieu sometime before 1060, he donated all his goods and lands to La
Chaise-Dieu, providing lands for many Casadéen foundations: the church of
Allanche (by 1067, a priory); the land on which Le Port-Dieu would be founded (by
1060); the church Chapelle-Fulcher (later, by 1067, the priory of Chapelle-St-Robert)
in the diocese of Limoges; and the church Saint-Christophe-Cambes (by 1067, a
priory) in the diocese of Agen. Another lord, Artaud of Argental, in 1062 gave to La
Chaise-Dieu the church of Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue, located in the diocese of Vienne.
This church would become a conventual priory, and then served as a regional center
of administration over those churches donated by Artaud to the abbey: in Vienne, the
churches of Argental, Borough-Argental, and Vanosc; in Le Puy, Riotord; and in
Lyon, Saint-Genest-Malifaux.\textsuperscript{90}

Of particular interest are the donations made by the reform-minded bishops,
Audebert of Roche, bishop of Viviers (1052-1067), and Geoffroy of Champallemend,
bishop of Auxerre (1052-1076). Audebert donated the church of Saint-Julien of

\textsuperscript{88} See Lewis, \textit{Development of Southern French}, 255, 283.
\textsuperscript{89} PP 40r. See Gaussin, \textit{L'Abbaye}, 114.
\textsuperscript{90} Cartulaire du prieure de Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue (Forez) dependant de l'abbaye de
hominibus quod ego Artaldus de Argentavo cum sensilio et voluntate Fiae, uxoris mae, et
omnia militum de Argentau, pro redemptione animae meae et omnium parentum
meorum, dono ecclesiam Sancti Salvatoris, cum appenditiis et omnibus adjacentiis suis
atque cum omni territorio quod ibi est, Domino Deo et monasterio Casae Dei et
monachis ibidem Deo servientibus, tam praesentibus quam futuris, in manu domni
Roberti, ejusdem loci abbatis, liberam et sine omni retinentia, ad habendum, tenendum et
Orcival, which became a Casadéen priory by 1067. Geoffroy, who was the son of the viscount of Nevers, donated in 1067 the monastery of Andryes to the Auvergnat abbey. These donations demonstrate that within the lifetime of La Chaise-Dieu’s founder, the abbey was beginning to garner the attention of and support from a growing number churchmen.

Conclusions

Why was the founder of La Chaise-Dieu able not only to garner such notable support from across the Massif Central, but also begin to see his abbey’s appeal spread beyond its borders? Clearly, one should not underestimate Robert’s own saintly reputation when attempting to gauge his early success. The chronicler Geoffroy of Vigeois wrote: “In this century three men made themselves famous by their holiness: the first was Odilo abbot of Cluny [Robert’s uncle], the other Gautier of Lesterps [in the Limousin], and finally Robert, who built La Chaise-Dieu.”

Within the Massif Central, Robert of Turlande undoubtedly became a figure of moral authority in a relatively short period of time. That Robert II, count of the Auvergne and of Rouergue, only invited Stephen of Mercoeur, bishop of Le Puy, and Robert, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu to confirm his 1059 donation of four farmhouses to...
the abbey of Conches is a testament to the abbot’s growing stature.\textsuperscript{94} Robert of Turlande’s position in the Massif Central can also be evaluated by the rapid growth of the Casadéen network during his lifetime; it expanded within only fifteen years from a single monastery to seven major priories, among which was one monastery, Le Port-Dieu, and a monastery for women at Comps. Smaller priories numbered twenty-seven in the Livradois, five in the remainder of the Auvergne, one in the Limousin, one in Agenais, one in Lyon, and one in Vivaris.\textsuperscript{95} At the time of Robert’s death, Marbod claims that La Chaise-Dieu had some three hundred monks and that Robert had restored almost fifty churches, numbers that hardly seem unreasonable.


\textsuperscript{95} Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 115.

\textsuperscript{96} Marbod, 1.18.7: "Nam preter seculium non modicam multitudinem, quorum animas verbo predicationis sue viteque exemplo, orationum etiam suffragiis est luratur, ex quibus ad trecentos ferme monachos acquisivit; preter ecclesias circiter quinquaginta, post diuturnam desolationem ad Dei servitium reparatas, illud constat esse precipuum, quod unice simplicitatis ac caritatis sue formam transfudit in discipulos et eidem loco,

Robert and his monks brought a Christianity revitalized to a region still unaffected by the Gregorian Reform and as yet marginalized from spiritual renewal. Robert’s particular charisma, as monk-apostle, found a ready audience in the rustic inhabitants of the Auvergne. At his death on 17 April 1067, a surge of pilgrims
sought to venerate his body at La Chaise-Dieu. These people did not come to see a man who had withdrawn into solitude and isolation; they came for the man who had humbly served the people, most notably the poor.

Robert remains a significant figure in the history of the monastic and ecclesiastical renewal of the eleventh century, foremost as the founder of La Chaise-Dieu, but also as a reformer who attempted to integrate the active life (love of neighbor) and the contemplative life (love of God). Robert’s efforts manifested themselves in his devotion to the poor, and the poor responded most readily to him. Yet, the pope and the king, bishops and nobles, canons and soldiers, too, were able to find something appealing in Robert’s words and actions. The rapid accrual of new disciples from every social class testifies to the appeal of his modified form of Benedictine monasticism.

Laymen, especially secular benefactors, likely took scant note of Robert’s nuanced efforts to introduce a new form of monastic life; more likely, they saw the Casadéen monks as they had seen monks for centuries, as a source, albeit new, of suffrages. The close association developed between monks and secular benefactors during the tenth century proved to be a pattern of relationships difficult to escape; but even as Robert and his monks were pulled into this pattern, it is clear some things were beginning to change.

Because there was no great Auvergnat lord to initiate, authorize, and patronize the foundation of the monastery, the bishop and minor lords took over that role in La

---

Marbod II.11.1.

Chaise-Dieu’s case. The secular nobles, however, seemed unable to offer the abbey noteworthy protection. For this, the bishop of Clermont sought both the distant king and pope to confirm its independence. Locally, however, Robert of Turlande found his most important support coming from churchmen rather than secular lords. That the driving force behind the abbey’s foundation and expansion was not a regional secular magnate, but a collection of churchmen alone distinguishes La Chaise-Dieu from most of its monastic counterparts and allowed the monks to be somewhat impervious to regional aristocratic demands. As times and geo-political situations changed, however, this left the abbey open to potential exploitation by whoever could muster enough force.

Robert’s successors were able to avoid this potential problem for most of the abbey’s history partly out of sheer luck—regional lords, more often than not, were favorably inclined toward La Chaise-Dieu—and by following the example of their founder, who had established a network advocates at whose core was the regional ecclesiastical aristocracy. The geo-political atmosphere of the Auvergne inclined Robert to rely most readily upon ecclesiastical leaders, the bishops, even as he accepted donations from secular leaders. Robert initially relied upon his maternal uncle, Rencon, bishop of Clermont, to navigate the upper echelons of the secular and ecclesiastical aristocracy, gaining access, through him, to both king and pope. It was not long, however, before Robert could have confidence in his own notable reputation, able to establish networks of patronage and support on his own; thus, before his death, he had established La Chaise-Dieu as not only a spiritual center but also an economic and political power within the Massif Central.
PART TWO: EXPANSION BEYOND THE MASSIF CENTRAL
CHAPTER III: DURAND (1067-1078)

The monks of La Chaise-Dieu, at the moment of their founding abbot’s death, faced a critical moment. Robert had long been the driving force behind the community and his personal network of advocates had given his abbey the support it needed to survive and prosper. Robert, having survived three of his abbey’s most important initial advocates, King Henry I, Pope Leo IX, and Bishop Rencon, certainly understood the difficulties that might ensue upon his death. The most pressing issue was the question of succession. This was not unique to La Chaise-Dieu and Robert seems to have followed the example of Cluny, where it was common for an aging abbot to designate his successor.1 Robert’s choice was vital to the future of his abbey. To lead the monks along the path he had laid out, the man Robert picked would have to continue his work of developing the internal spirituality of the community, serving the poor and afflicted, and promoting the external affiliations with secular and ecclesiastical leaders to gain their support for the community while making sure that these same leaders did not intrude in the abbey’s affairs. The monk

---

he chose for this job was one of his disciples, Durand, a former priest of Clermont.2

The period immediately following the death of Robert was particularly challenging for his successor. Robert had established personal ties with the abbey’s neighbors and benefactors. There was no guarantee, however, that donations made to him would be honored after his death. Threats to La Chaise-Dieu could have come from its earliest benefactors, lapsed donors, or donors’ families. Local castellans who found undefended lands belonging to abbeys and cathedral churches very tempting were prone to encroach upon, if not usurp, these ecclesiastical lands. What evidence we possess does not point to any particular threat, but militant conditions in the Midi at the time of Robert’s death left La Chaise-Dieu’s lands vulnerable.

To guard against his abbey’s potentially greedy neighbors Robert, with the backing of both king and pope, had been able to rely initially on the bishop of Clermont, then on his own notable reputation. By the time Durand became abbot, everything had changed; there was a new king, new pope, new bishop, and now a new abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. Royal authority was not particularly effective in the Midi, thus royal activity in the Auvergne waned.3 Papal interest in the Midi remained high and papal support of the Auvergnat church continued;4 yet a distant pope could not play a very important day-to-day role in the Midi. Thus, once again, we must address the local scene to understand how La Chaise-Dieu survived this period of transition.

With a distant overlord and locally rapacious castellans, the Auvergnat bishops needed to retain, or at least consolidate, their regional power. This proved to

---

3 See above, 54.
4 See above, 7, 60.
be a difficult task. While the bishops of Clermont had made tenuous progress against
disruptive families and had achieved some success in protecting ecclesiastical lands
from usurpations and encroachment, such progress hinged on the bishop’s character
and his strength of will in withstanding the pressures put upon him by local families.
Moreover, those victories produced by the Peace of God had done nothing to address
the heart of the problem—the prevailing role local families played in the Church.\(^5\)
The Gregorian Reform would soon begin to do this by combating simony and lay
investiture, but for the entirety of his abbacy Durand had to deal with two successive
simonist bishops at Clermont: Stephen V of Polignac (c. 1050-1073); and William of
Chamalières (1073-1076).

Stephen V of Polignac, who has been described by one modern historian as “a
man of war more than a prelate,”\(^6\) was particularly disruptive in the Midi. The
viscounts of Polignac had a castle near Le Puy well placed to check, when necessary,
the authority of the bishop, with whom they had a continuing power struggle.\(^7\) This
castle too was in a position to menace La Chaise-Dieu, although the evidence we
have for incursions date to the second half of the twelfth century, when Héracle of
Polignac began penetrating La Chaise-Dieu’s monastic lands to plunder its goods.\(^8\)


\(^6\) Aubrun, “Le diocèse de Clermont”, 24. See Gaussin, *L’Abbaye*, 84; and
Lauranson-Rosaz, *L’Auvergne et ses Marges*, 117, 129. See also Hugh of Flavigny,
*Chronica*, 413: “Celebravit concilium apud Clarumentem in quo Stephano arvernensi
episco, podiensis sedis invasore quia pro ambitione male sedem suam deseruitat,
Willelmo quoque symoniaco in invasore sedis arvernensis deposito, consecratus est
praefatus abbas Duramnus.”

\(^7\) Lauranson-Rosaz, *L’Auvergne et ses Marges*, 103, 129. See also Lewis,
*Development of Southern French*, 117.

\(^8\) *Historiae Francorum Scriptores Coaetanei*, eds. Franciscus Duchesne and
Nothing survives to attest to any particular episcopal interference from Bishop Stephen in La Chaise-Dieu’s affairs, and we can infer that he, as it was incumbent upon him to do, dutifully ratified Durand’s election. This does not mean he was not a threat.

In 1073 Stephen abandoned the see of Clermont for the see of Le Puy, which was closer to his familial lands. This behavior demonstrates what he was capable of doing. He forcibly seized the see of Le Puy, claiming that he was protecting it from simony. Stephen’s claim may not have been without merit. The bishop he replaced was Peter of Mercoeur (1053-1073) who had followed his uncle Stephen of Mercoeur (1031-1053) to the episcopal see. Yet to replace a Mercoeur, whose familial lands lay at some distant, with a Polignac, whose familial lands lay close at hand, also smacked of simony. Stephen certainly recognized this and in order to avoid censure he traveled to Rome to have his episcopacy officially recognized. There, however, Pope Gregory VII secured from him a promise that he would relinquish the see and assist in the election of a new bishop. When Stephen returned north he

---


10 See S. Gregorii Operum, pars 1, Registrum, lib. 1, Epistola LXXX; and Epistola LXXX. Ad Ancienses (Anno 1074) PL 148.352-353: “Gregorius episcopus, servus servorum Dei, Aniciensi clero et populo salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Stephanus electus vester ea qua debuit apostolicam sedem humilitate requisivit, et manum suam manui nostrae dando se Romanae Ecclesiae obediturum promisit, ac per hoc gratiam ejus, quam ante visus fuerat perdidisse, recuperavit. Quem quia Ecclesiam vestram prudenter defendisse, et Simoniacum Stephanum et invasorem studio suo expulisse probavimus, regimen totius episcopatus vestri sibi commissimus, eo tenore ut, quousque ad nos redeat, de pontificali officio se non intromittat, sed qucumque voluerit episcoporum religiosorum patriae vestae, ea quae ad episcopale officium pertinent, facere commoneat. Vos itaque apostolica auctoritate admonemus ut sibi debitam in omnibus reverentiam exhibeatis, et ad defensionem Ecclesiae vestae adjutorium vestrum fideliter impendatis: quatenus, expulsa simoniacae haeresis de medio vestrum omni contagione, legalem pontificem habeatis, et puram Christo Domino nostro, et beatae
conveniently forgot his promise and was excommunicated by the papal legate, Bishop Hugh of Die, at a council of Clermont in 1076. Stephen, in response, resorted to arms to maintain his position as bishop. The following year, Gregory VII also excommunicated Stephen at the Third Council of Rome and notified the canons of Le Puy of his action. The pope made it clear to the canons that he had released them from their oaths to Stephen and ordered them not to obey him anymore. He further enjoined them to elect a new bishop.11

William of Chamalières (1073-1076), Stephen’s “devoted henchman,” was chosen to fill the see of Clermont.12 He too was deposed for simony and was excommunicated by Bishop Hugh at Clermont in 1076. It is not surprising then that by 1077, the problems plaguing the Auvergnat church had gained the attention of Pope Gregory VII.13 To settle the affair and to return order to the diocese, Pope Gregory ordered Bishop Hugh to convene a synod and invited Abbot Hugh of Cluny to serve as his advisor. This proposed meeting took place 26 August in Clermont

* Mariae genitrici ejus, servitutem impendatis.*

11 MPA, no. XXXIV, 59-61: “Gregorius episcopus, servus servorum Dei, Aniciensis canonices. Notum est vobis qualiter Stephanus, Aniciensis Ecclesiae invasor et simoniacus, especto sacramento, quod nobis super corpus sancti Petre de liberatione ejusdem Ecclesiae fecerat, eam occupare et tyrannical oppressione affligere non cessat. Unde scire vos volumes quia, sicut confrater noster Hugo, Diensis episcopus, cui vices nostras in Galliarum partibus agendas commisimus, illum excommunicavit, sic et nos excommunicavimus, et a gremio sanctae Ecclesiae separavimus. Quapropter apostolica auctoritate praecipimus vobis ut, colla vestra de sub jugo ejus excutientes, ne illi adhaerentes, diabolo cujus ipse membrum factus est, serviatis, sed ab illo sicut ab excommunicato oportet caveatis, et de excommunicatione quam incurristis, coram praedicto Diensi episcope, satisfacientes, ipsius consilio pastorem vobis secundum Dominum eligatis. Quod si feceritis, ab omni sacramento et obligatione quam praefato simoniaco contra Dominum fecistis, ex parte sancti Petre vos absolvimus. Si vero etiam nunc nostrae salutari jussioni recalcitrare praesumpseritis, pari vos anathemate condemnatos sciatis.”


where, once again, both Stephen and William were deposed and a new bishop was
named.14

Our lack of evidence regarding Durand’s relationships with these two
bishops allows us only to speculate about their nature; at best we can say that Stephen
dutifully ratified Durand’s election, then left the abbey alone. There is no evidence to
suggest that the actions of these simonist bishops were particularly detrimental to La
Chaise-Dieu. One the other hand, nothing survives to suggest that the bishops were
particularly supportive either. What we can say is that Durand found noteworthy
support elsewhere.

Durand’s Career

Very little is known about Durand’s life prior to his service as abbot of La
Chaise-Dieu. Simon Genoux has suggested that Durand was a native of Clermont
and was already a priest when he joined Robert at La Chaise-Dieu.15 It seems
reasonable to assume then that he knew, or at least knew of, Bishop Rencon and thus
had learned through him of his nephew’s activities in the Livradois forest. One can

14 MPA, no. XXXV, 62: “Volumus etiam ut fratrem nostrum Hugonem venerabilem
Cluniacensem abbatem tecum synodo interesse ex nostra parte convitare rogoendo et
multum instando procures, cum propter alia multa, tum maxime ut causa Arvernensis
Ecclesiae competenti et firma determinatione cum Dei et illius adjutorio finiatur.” See
also Hugh of Flavigny, Chronica, 413: “Invigilabat enim idem sollicitus gregi sibi
credito, et legationis sibi creditae sollicitas servans excubias, primum concilium
celebravit apud Ansam, secundum apud Clarummontem, in quo Stephano Arvernensi
episcopo, Podiensis sedis invasore, quia pro ambitione male sedem suam desuerat,
Willelmo quoque symoniaco et invasore sedis Arvernensis deposito, conscratus est
praefatus abbas Durannus Arvernorum episcopus, peracto decennio regiminis sui in loco
Casae Dei, qui etiam post biennium petitione et voluntate fratrum curam regiminis Sigino
dereliquit Tertium Divioni.”

15 Genoux, Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 43. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye,
120.
imagine Durand among the devout clerics who had been drawn at an early stage to La Chaise-Dieu by Robert’s reputation. Moreover, we can assume, as Robert’s handpicked successor, that he was a dedicated disciple, holding Robert’s full confidence.

As abbot Durand wasted little time discharging the duties incumbent on him. His first order of business was to ensure the community’s spiritual and temporal wellbeing. Abbot Durand, having experienced the droves of pilgrims who sought to venerate Robert’s body after his death, understood the spiritual clout his now deceased abbot represented. He quickly charged Gerald of Laveigne, another disciple of Robert, with the duty of writing the abbot-founder’s *Vita*. Gerald wrote his account of Robert’s life and miracles—the original now lost—shortly after his abbot’s death, and in 1069 he argued successfully in Rome for Robert’s canonization before Pope Alexander II and the cardinals. The pope decreed (1070) that the anniversary of Robert’s death be observed as the feast day of a confessor and that his name be inscribed in the “album of saints.”

---

16 Bernard, *Liber tripartitus*, 329: “Gerardus denique cognomen de Venna, quae viculus est in Arvernia, non longe a Budilione Castro situs, discipulus et Capellanus beati Roberti, vitam et miracula eius descripsit, sicque Roman peregrin domnum apostolicum adiit, eique totam rei gestae sanctitatem sigillatum et diligenter aperuit. Quibus auditis, dominus Papa et omnis cardinalium coetus gratias Deo exsolvunt, et etiam de sede apostolica surgens pro sanctitate et reverentia, Gallias in quibus beatus Robertus florebat benedixit, et ut dies eius transitus, festivus et sollemnis in ordine sanctorum confessorum deinceps haberetur, auctoritate apostolica instituit. A limine itaque beati Petri laetus rediens Gerardus Casam-Dei, conventuque facto praecipuum est, ut per singula loca Casae-Dei ubique terrarum festivitas beati magistri digne et laudabiliter corem Deo et hominibus celebraretur, quod cum omnes gratissime accepissent, rediit ad locum quisque sibi commissum.”

See also MPA, no. XXV, 46, n. 3: “Densatis omnibus et serio examinatis, summus Pontifex, brevi apostolico, anno MLXX, dato sancivit ut Robertus, Casae Dei abbas, albo sanctorum inscriberetur, diesque festus ejusdem ageretur die XXIV aprilis qua sepultus est.”
Durand, having secured the spiritual dignity of the abbot-founder, turned his attention to temporal matters. First and foremost he needed to protect his new, and increasingly wealthy, abbey from potentially covetous neighbors who witnessed the blossoming of the “desert.” Durand obtained from Pope Alexander II confirmation of the abbey’s possessions and privileges, and from Count Robert II of the Auvergne, a charter of protection. Beyond this Durand likely spent time overseeing the completion of the monastic buildings and seeing to his community’s daily needs. One can imagine that these growing needs created pressures on Durand to seek continued, if not additional, material support.

Durand was fortunate. Families who had been drawn to La Chaise-Dieu by Robert’s saintly reputation continued their support. As we will see below, these families included the Turlande, Mercoeur, and Baffie. New benefactors also appeared. Support flowed from ecclesiastical and secular lords in the dioceses of Le Puy, Mende, Viviers, and Valence. The region’s most prominent figures also began

---

There are discrepancies between the two accounts, most notably the date designated for the observation of the feast day: Bernard claims April 17 ("eius transitus"), while Estiennot identifies April 24 ("sepultus est"). For more on these dates see J. van der Straeten, “Saint Robert de la Chaise-Dieu; sa canonization, sa date de fête”, Analecta Bollandiana 82 (1964) 37-56, in which he questions the validity of speaking of a canonization before 1351. Nevertheless, Robert’s cult developed quickly and spread rapidly. Popes Gregory VII and Urban II referred to him with due honor. Gregory’s privilege in 1080 referred to the monastery as the “monasterium sancti Roberti” (Quellen und Forschungen zum Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen Papst Gregors VII., 1: Quellen : Urkunden. Regesten. Facsimilia, edited by L. Santifaller, Studi e Testi, 190 (Vaticcan City, 1957): 210-12, no. 181; see also MPA, no. XXVIII, 50-53). While in 1095, Urban II referred to Robert as a source of merits: “beati Roberti meritis” (Urban II, Epistola 149: Privilegium pro monasterio Casae-Dei, PL 151.424-5).

18 Jaffé, 4720. See also MPA, no. XXIII, 45.
to take notice of the abbey. During Durand’s abbacy La Chaise-Dieu received its first
documented patronage from Count Robert II of Auvergne (1064-1096) and Duke
William VIII of Aquitaine (1058-1086).

Duke William extended an invitation to Durand and the monks of La Chaise-
Dieu to establish a community at Sainte-Gemme in the swampy Saintonge.20 This
came as Durand’s abbatial career was reaching its zenith and La Chaise-Dieu’s
reputation as a center of reform was beginning to spread. Not only were new
foundations made, like Sainte-Gemme, but as early as 1069 we see the first Casadéen
monk being called to another community to introduce reforms. Renaud, a disciple of
Robert of Turlande, became abbot of Saint-Cyprien of Poitiers in that year.21 Such
activities most certainly captured the attention of papal legate Hugh of Die who, after
deposing the simonist William of Chamalières, appointed Abbot Durand as bishop of
Clermont.22

Bishop Durand initially retained his abbatial office. Clearly, the task before
him was daunting: restoring order to a diocese tainted by simony for nearly thirty
years. Conjecture alone suggests that Durand may have felt that by remaining abbot,
he could enlist his monastery in serving some purpose, unknown today, in his new

20 Sainte-Gemme is located in the Charente-Maritime (17) département.
21 Gallia Christiana, II, col. 1232-34.
22 See Hugh of Flavigny, Chronica, 413: “Celebravit concilium apud Clarumentem
in quo Stephano arvernense episco, podiensis sedis invasore quia pro ambitione male
sedem suam deseruitat, Willelmo quoque symoniaco in invasore sedis arvernense
deposito, consecratus est praefatus abbas Durannus.” See also “Altera S. Adeelmi
Vita” in España Sagrada, ed. H. Flórez, vol. 27 (Madrid, 1747-): 852: “Eodem praeterea
tempore Arvernense Ecclesia sine Pastore manebat, nam uno ut supra diximus
ex gentibus culpis sublato, altero solicii Ecclesiae Clerici diligenter quaerabant.
Cumque inter suos tali officio dignum neminem reperirent, sacrae memoriae Duranum
tunc Casae-Dei Abbatem elegerunt . . .”
endeavor. This ambiguous situation lasted two years, perhaps because the monks
grew weary of interloping canons from Clermont interfering in their business.
Whatever the case, evidence for reasons why he resigned his abbacy in 1078 does not
survive.\(^\text{23}\) Regardless of any conflicts between monks and canons that this
arrangement may have provoked, when Durand resigned as abbot, he left behind a
community that was self-assured and a recognized center of reform.\(^\text{24}\)

Durand’s tenure as bishop of Clermont was long—nearly eighteen years. He
accepted and reformed a see that had long suffered mismanagement.\(^\text{25}\) Still, we lack
extant documentation to follow what must have been a very active episcopacy.\(^\text{26}\)
His greatest efforts were likely focused on Pope Urban II’s visit to his diocese for a
council planned for November 1095, but by that time, his episcopacy (as his life) was
nearing its end. Without a doubt, Bishop Durand’s lasting legacy must be his
preparatory services rendered for the 1095 council in Clermont, best known for its
stimulus of the First Crusade.

\(^\text{23}\) Durand’s abbatial successor apparently complained to Pope Gregory VII about the
canons, to which the pope replied: “\textit{Et qui intelleximus Arverneses clericos quasdam}
consuetudines in monasterio vestro sibi vindicare, videlicet praesentialiter se abbatis
intermiscere electionis, et in quibusdam festivitatibus locum et societatem cum fratribus
in dormitorio, necnon in choro, contra regularem disciplinam et quietam monasticam,
exigere . . .}.” (MPA, no. XXVIII, 52).

\(^\text{24}\) Hugh of Flavigny, \textit{Chronica}, 413: “... consecratus est praefatus abbas Durannus
Arvernorum episcopus, peracto decennio regiminis sui in loco Casae Dei, qui etiam post
biennum petitione et volunate fratrum curam regiminis Seguino dereliquit.”

\(^\text{25}\) Abbé G. Régis Cregut, \textit{Le concile de Clermont en 1095 et la première croisade},
(Clermont-Ferrand: L. Bellet, 1895): 63-64.

\(^\text{26}\) I have located limited documents related to Durand’s episcopacy. He appears
in nine documents inventoried in \textit{Inventaire de toutes les Chartes anterieures au XIIIe}
siècle, qui se trouvent dans les différents fonds d’archives de depot de la Préfecture
du Puy-de-Dôme. Clermont-Ferrand: Imprimerie de Ferdinand Thibaude, 1855, see
pages 54-70. In these he is listed amongst the witnesses to various acts directed
toward the church of Clermont and its canons.
Durand worked incessantly preparing his city and his diocese for the pope’s arrival. Durand’s long career in the Auvergne and his steadfast support of the Gregorian Reform served Urban well. Urban sought legitimacy and support; he found them in the heart of the Auvergne. Durand mobilized the Auvergnat church, calling on abbots, priors, and canons alike. All were involved in the preparations; Durand left nothing to chance. He planned every aspect from food and lodging to technical decisions concerning the order of the meetings and the ceremony to be followed. Everything was ready for the pope’s arrival and for the opening of the council on 18 November 1095. In anticipation of his arrival, Bishop Durand went to join the pope at Souvigny on 13 November. But Durand did not live to see the fruits of his labor. He died on the opening night of the council; apparently the strain of all the preparations had been too much for him. When Urban heard the news that Durand had fallen ill, he hurried to his side. There he found Bishop Hugh of Grenoble, Abbot Pons of La Chaise-Dieu, and Abbot Jarenton of Saint-Benigne of Dijon, and several other of Durand’s former disciples. An eyewitness, Baudric,

27 Pope Urban II could count on ecclesiastical and monastic support in the Auvergne. At this time, a former monk of La Chaise-Dieu was the archbishop of Bourges, Aldebert of Montmorillon (1092-1097); Durand was bishop of Clermont; Pons of Tournon (1094-1102) was abbot of La Chaise-Dieu.

28 Concerning technical issues, Urban sent a papal liaison to work with Durand. This man was Abbot Henry of Mazzara in Sicily. See Abbé G.-Regis Cregut, *Le concile de Clermont en 1095 et la première croisade* (Clermont-Ferrand: L. Bellet, 1895): 83.

29 In a bull, dated 13 November 1095, placing Souvigny under papal protection, Urban mentions: “praesente confratre nostro, venerabili Durantio, Arvernensi episcopo” (MPA, no. XLVII, 74).


31 Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronica*, 474: “Adveniente igitur papa, visitatus ab eo, et
abbot of Bourgueil, transmitted his impressions of these events in this epitaph:

Here lies the venerable bishop named Durand,
Whose affable life was entrusted to God.
According to God’s highest grace,
A distinguished funeral, nearly a parade, was arranged for him.
Pope Urban, having called a general synod,
Inspired two hundred fathers at the ceremony.
On the thirteenth day before December,
The brilliant light of this propitious life was taken from him.
The Auvergne people revere his ashes and
Have in him a patron of great protection.\(^\text{32}\)

Durand was laid to rest at Clermont in the chapel of Saint-Nicolas. In his place,
Urban II immediately elected William of Baffie, who then joined the council as
bishop of Clermont.\(^\text{33}\) This choice certainly favored the monks of La Chaise-Dieu,

\(^\text{32}\) Text located in Cregut, *Le concile de Clermont*, 89. Cregut identifies no other source for this text.

\(^\text{33}\) Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronica*, 474: “Et sic antequam concilium inciperetur, toto orbe ad eius exequias occurrente, ab ipso papa et episcopis terrae est mandatum cum gloria, et sedem eius Willemus de Bafia aedepus est laude cleri et populi, praecepto eiusdem apostolici.” It should be noted that he was not consecrated until the following year at the council of Tours (Cregut, *Le concile de Clermont*, 91).
who had had a close relationship with the now Bishop William since the 1070s.\textsuperscript{34}

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors

Fortunately the death of the founder had not interrupted the flow of donations to the monastery. Those families who had initially been drawn to the fledgling community and its saintly founder continued their support throughout this important transitional period. Not only did Robert’s brother Gerald III of Turlande continue to support the abbey,\textsuperscript{35} but other regional families continued to make such significant donations in this period—most notably in oblations—that the future of the community was assured. The first of these families, the Mercoeurs, were longtime supporters of La Chaise-Dieu and must certainly be considered among the most dominant lords in the Auvergne, particularly in the southern regions. Their “gift” was the oblation of their son, Stephen of Mercoeur. This young Mercoeur would come to play a prominent role in the history of this abbey as its seventh abbot.

Other local lords, particularly in the Velay (Map 1), offered donations to La Chaise-Dieu. William of Baffie, before becoming bishop of Clermont, gave the monks the church of Usson, where his family is known to have had a castle.\textsuperscript{36} In

\textsuperscript{34} Note below his donation of the church of Usson.

\textsuperscript{35} He donated the church of Saint-Georges where a priory was then established by 1116. Genoux, \textit{Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu}, 45.

\textsuperscript{36} Donation dates c. 1077; became a priory, located in the diocese of Le Puy. See Estiennnot, \textit{Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae}, 10; and \textit{Cartulaire de Sauxillanges}, 958. William of Baffie, a canon of Lyon before he became bishop of Clermont, came from a castellan family in the Livradois, lands just northeast of La Chaise-Dieu. He was the son of Dalmas, lord of Baffie, and Rotberge of La Tour, daughter of Géraud I, lord of La Tour (see Cregut, \textit{Le concile de Clermont}, 90; Gaussin, \textit{L’Abbaye}, 80-81).
1071 Dragument of Chapteuil, whose castle was near Mont Meygal in the heart of the Velay, founded the Casadéen priory of Saint-Pierre-Eynac in the diocese of Le Puy for the redemption of his sins and the salvation of his own and his parents’ souls. It is possible to see in these donations and in the election of William of Baffie as bishop of Clermont, an attempt to loosen, if not break, the Polignac hold on the Church in the Velay. Neither the lords of Baffie nor the castellans of Chapteuil would have had much interest in seeing the Polignacs extend their influence. One way to counter them was to support an ecclesiastical institution such as La Chaise-Dieu that seemed independent of the familial system; that is, not under the direct influence of any particular family.

La Chaise-Dieu was also gaining new ground, literally, in more distant regions of the Midi yet untouched by its reforming spirit. Within the diocese of Mende, nearly fifty miles south of La Chaise-Dieu, the Casadéens accepted the church of Saint-Symphorien and the chapel of the castle of Chambon from a certain Soffroy. Guigue Silvius, bishop of Viviers, donated the church of Vesseaux, where a conventual priory was established by 1137. Also in the Vivarais, the lord of Tournon gave La Chaise-Dieu the church of Rochepaule in the diocese of Valence where a conventual priory was founded by 1093. More importantly, he placed his

---


38 Gardon, Histoire de la Chaise-Die, 377. This gift was confirmed in 1145 by Bishop William III of Mende. Saint-Symphorien was already a priory by 1145 (see A. H. 154.1). Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 121.

39 Located nearly eighty-seven miles from La Chaise-Dieu. Gardon, Histoire de la Chaise-Die, 15. See also PP 26r. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 122.

40 Located sixty-five miles from La-Chaise-Dieu. Gardon, Histoire de la Chaise-
son Pons in community. This same Pons later became the fifth abbot of La Chaise-Dieu.

La Chaise-Dieu’s core appeal, however, remained to the Auvergne. Count Robert II of the Auvergne (1064-1096), as he sought to consolidate his hold on the region, provided the monks notable local secular support during Durand’s abbacy. Robert was an ambitious man who, through marriage, had managed to unite the counties of Auvergne, Rouergue, and Gévaudan under his rule. This union boded well for the count’s future sway in the region. The count’s closest rival, however, had long been the bishop of Clermont, who was, at the moment, from the family Polignac. An independent bishop was problematic; a simonist bishop from a rival family was dangerous. Count Robert needed allies. He sought to bolster his position with an alliance with one of the most powerful families from the north, the counts of Valois, by arranging to betroth his daughter to Count Simon of Crépy, count of Valois (1048-1082). This union never took place.

The father of the intended bridegroom, Ralph IV of Crépy (1055-74), was an extremely powerful man who had begun his career as a vehement opponent of King Henry I and ended his career as an advisor to King Philip I. Through marriages, inheritance, and sometimes bold usurpations, Ralph had amassed a large estate. Initially it seemed as if Simon, following in his father’s ambitious footsteps, was going to defend his territory while planning his marriage to the count of Auvergne’s

---

Dieu, 37; Genoux, Histoire de l’abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 97; Estiennot, Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae, 20; Gallia Christiana, II, col. 331. The lords of Tournon were related to the lords of Polignac (See Christian-Rosaz, “Le Velay et la Croisade”, 52, n. 70).

41 Dunbabin, France in the Making, 214.

42 Dunbabin, France in the Making, 215-16.
daughter. But it became clear he had other interests when he entered in 1077 the abbey of Saint-Oyend in the Jura shortly before the proposed marriage was to take place. At this same time, his intended bride, Judith, sought refuge at Saint-Andrew of Comps, Robert of La Chaise-Dieu’s community for women. This double withdrawal from the world surprised contemporaries. Simon’s lands were quickly divided as he had designated, with La Chaise-Dieu receiving property enough to support three Casadéen priories in the distant diocese of Soissons.

Count Robert II made a sizeable gift to the Casadéen monastery of Comps upon the entry of his daughter there. La Chaise-Dieu itself also benefited from her entry into the Casadéen congregation. Two of Judith’s kinsmen followed her into the Casadéen congregation by taking vows at La Chaise-Dieu. They were Audebert, who later became abbot of Bourg-Dieu at Déols (1087-92) and then archbishop of Bourges (1092-97), and his brother Garnier of Montmorillon, whom Orderic Vitalis

43 Also known as Saint-Claude or Abbaye de Condat.
45 Vita s. Simonis, 735. See also, Vita beati Simonis, PL 156.1214CD; Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France, vol. 14, 37-40.
identified as a “famous knight” and who died a monk of La Chaise-Dieu after forty years in community.

While La Chaise-Dieu’s core appeal remained to the Auvergne as demonstrated above, under Abbot Durand’s guidance La Chaise-Dieu continued to garner gifts from an increasingly broad range of benefactors from outside the Auvergne. These included, most notably for the first time, William VIII, count of Poitiers and duke of Aquitaine, who, in 1074, invited Casadéen monks into his lands to establish a community at Sainte-Gemme in the Saintonge. Included with this invitation was all the land the monks needed in the area surrounding the cell and, in the forest of Baronnez (or Baconnais), rights to wood, and pasture for their cattle. Durand immediately sent monks to the site.

century to 1969.


51 Vita beati Simonis, PL 156.1214CD. See also Estiennot, Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae, 80-82.


53 See Baudrit, Sainte-Gemme, 229-30: “Nous savons que la Chaise-Dieu fut fondée en l’an de l’incarnation du Seigneur MXLVI. Nous savons également de source sûre que le bienheureux Robert, notre seigneur, maître et père, a rejoint les bienheureux
As the duke of Aquitaine, William VIII was overlord of the Auvergne. This did not, however, guarantee his patronage of La Chaise-Dieu, nor can his gift be regarded as usual. The dukes of Aquitaine, as we have seen, were far more likely to play a nominal than an active role in the Auvergne, cut off as it was from their Potivian holdings by the Massif Central. One would have expected the largesse of William VIII to have been directed to Cluny. The dukes of Aquitaine, including William VIII himself, had a well established tradition of supporting that Burgundian community; moreover, William VIII was related to Abbot Hugh through his third marriage.

William VIII’s reputation as a noted campaigner for the Church, especially in Spain, and his support of reform-minded ecclesiastics are well established; this may help clarify why he singled out La Chaise-Dieu when he sought to establish a monastic community at Sainte-Gemme. He was an advocate of Church reform or at least Church opposition to the abuses of the growing ranks of castellans who


54 See above, 9.

distrusted centralized authority and clung to their non-feudal family structure of allodium.  William saw the dangers the new militarism presented and sought to cooperate with the Church in the Aquitaine. This, in the Auvergne, would normally have meant supporting the see of Clermont, but once again, the see was in the hands of a simonist, a member of the Polignac family whose authority he sought to weaken. Although unstated, William VIII’s patronage of La Chaise-Dieu was likely linked to his attempts to consolidate his authority and reputation within the Aquitaine by expanding his range of monastic advocacy to patronize the most notable monastery on the outskirts of his domain, especially because it did not seem linked to any potentially rival family.

When William VIII entrusted to Abbot Durand the responsibility of creating a community in his forest of Baronnez, moreover, one could imagine that the duke must have hoped that Durand would be worthy of the reputation his predecessor, known as founder in more or less hostile land of many rural priories. We might wonder if, upon witnessing King Henry I’s charter in 1052 in which the king confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s status as an abbey, William’s attention had been drawn to his distant lands in the Auvergne and to the abbey which Robert had established there, and he then followed the subsequent success of the Auvergnat abbey. The forest of Baronnez was rugged; and William VIII, perhaps inspired by stories about a holy man who had cultivated stability in the uncultivated Auvergne, sought to infuse the Baronnez with the same stability by inviting the Casadéen monks to establish a monastic community there.

While Durand proved worthy of his predecessor, La Chaise-Dieu did began to

take on characteristics of older, traditional monastic institutions during his abbacy. Those traditional characteristics should not be seen as a failure of Casadéen ideals, as the monks were now being driven more by the needs and desires of the abbey’s patrons than by choices made by the community. One example of this is the abbey’s first documented acceptance of child oblates. The acceptance of oblates does not in itself demonstrate a weakening of resolve. The oblation of Stephen of Mercoeur and Pons of Tournon demonstrate the marked interest regional lords had in La Chaise-Dieu. What these oblations may also demonstrate is Abbot Durand’s decision to strengthen ties with friendly neighbors at a time when the episcopal see of Clermont was in the hands of the Polignacs, whose castles were positioned so as to threaten his abbey.

Conclusions

Durand, in many ways, had to face challenges his former abbot-founder could never have imagined. As abbot of La Chaise-Dieu he could not have helped but be aware of the changing religious and political milieux in the world around him. By 1067 when Robert died and he himself was named abbot, the see of Clermont had already been in the hands of the simonist Stephen V of Polignac for fifteen years; Philip I had been king only for eight years and was still trying to consolidate his power; and the Church reforms of Gregory VII were still six years in the future. Durand, from the beginning of his abbacy, realized he had to capitalize on the reputation of his most significant advocate, his recently and dearly departed abbot-founder. Durand understood the power of Robert’s charisma and understood too his importance to the people of the Auvergne. One of Durand’s first acts as abbot was to
secure recognition of Robert’s spiritual authenticity by seeing to his canonization.

Durand was going to need all the help he could get. He faced a very difficult period of transition. While he could continue to count on papal support for his abbey’s endeavors, episcopal support from Clermont was tenuous at best. Fortunately those local families who had originally supported Robert’s efforts continued to make significant donations; and these donations were augmented by those of a growing circle of individuals, secular and ecclesiastical, across the Auvergne and beyond.

Thanks in no small part to Durand’s leadership, both spiritually and worldly, La Chaise-Dieu did not merely survive the death of its saintly-founder; it continued to prosper. The second abbot of La Chaise-Dieu managed his abbey’s established network of support while cultivating new support. At the base of this support we can point with one hand to Robert’s saintly reputation and La Chaise-Dieu’s monastic spiritual reform as directed by Durand, but with the other hand we must point to the possible motives of the abbey’s new and established benefactors.

It is no surprise that those families who had initially supported La Chaise-Dieu continued to do so. What we do have to question are reasons for the abbey’s broadening circle of support. Beginning close to home, what we have observed is an influx of donations from minor noble families in the Velay. Any speculations regarding these donations must hinge on the Polignac bishop of Clermont. Regional families must have recognized a clear choice between the Polignacs and the bishopric of Clermont, and the Mercoeurs and the bishopric of Le Puy. Neither the lords of Baffie nor the castellans of Chapteuil, both with lands in the Velay, the Polignac stronghold, were likely to support Polignac expansion; their donations to La Chaise-
Dieu should be seen in this light. The donations of Count Robert II of the Auvergne and Duke William VIII of Aquitaine to the abbey may also be seen in this light. Both, particularly William, supported Church reform in light of the region’s increasingly militaristic castellans, who sought to usurp ecclesiastical land, and thus, in turn, resist the duke’s and count’s attempts to consolidate their authority over the region.

As bishop of Clermont, Stephen V of Polignac was not an anomaly. Regional bishops had long had close ties to regional families. Bishops, even La Chaise-Dieu’s first advocate Rencon, were still most often products of a “family-run” Church. Even if they were anti-militaristic and active in the Peace movement, they were a long way from the spirit of the Gregorian Reform, which sought a Church free from military domination, lay investiture, and simony. While the Church was certainly making progress in the Midi already by the mid-eleventh century, sustained success against the more subtle forms of family control would come only later.\(^\text{57}\)

Durand’s reform-minded abbacy must have stood in stark contrast to Stephen’s militaristic episcopacy. On the surface, benefactors of La Chaise-Dieu may have been drawn to the abbey’s spirituality, below the surface they had to be wary of the linkage between the see of Clermont and the lords of Polignac. Whether or not La Chaise-Dieu’s advocates were conscious of it or not, when they chose to invite Casadéen monks onto their lands, they were supporting not only monastic, but also ecclesiastical, reform. Durand’s actions in his eleven years as abbot of La Chaise-Dieu did not go unnoticed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Latin Church. When the Church hierarchy sought to reform the see of Clermont the man chosen to

\(^{57}\) Lewis, *Development of Southern France*, 325.
reverse damage done was Abbot Durand.

As abbot, Durand had shepherded La Chaise-Dieu through its first period of transition while broadening its network of support. As bishop, Durand could assist his successor, Seguin of Escotay, as he transformed La Chaise-Dieu and its expanding number of dependents into a veritable and unified congregation.
PART THREE: FRANCE AND BEYOND INTO SPAIN AND ITALY
CHAPTER IV: SEGUIN OF ESCOTAY (1078-1094)

La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion and success through the abbacy of Durand are characterized by their localism. Durand, while beginning to draw the attention of more distant advocates, functioned with a mindset that was still very attentive to conditions closest to home. Durand’s immediate successors, however, would shepherd the abbey through its first major expansion, which would see its influence spread north to Reims, west to Castile, and east to Tuscany. This, and all subsequent expansion, must be examined within the context of the Gregorian Reform.

Abbot Durand’s appointment in 1076 as bishop of Clermont and the appointment by 1077 of Adhemar of Monteil (d. 1098) as bishop of Le Puy\(^1\) marked the arrival of the Gregorian Reform in the Auvergne. The Gregorian vision for the moral reform of the clergy—a vision that sought to end lay investiture and simony—struck at the very roots of the “family-run” Church in the Midi, which the Peace movement did nothing to address.\(^2\) Pope Gregory VII’s efforts to reform the French church fell primarily to his legate Bishop Hugh of Die, who most vigorously pursued reform between 1076 and 1080.\(^3\)

---

2. See above, 88.
Hugh of Die, newly elected in 1073, spent part of that year at the Lateran palace where he had close contact with Pope Gregory VII, and was inspired by his reforming ideals. Gregory’s resistance to lay investiture and simony became particularly focused after the events that took place at Canossa in 1077, and waned after 1080 as he became more and more occupied with Emperor Henry IV. This period corresponds closely to Hugh of Die’s reforming activities in France.

Pope Gregory VII strongly encouraged the activities of papal legates in France and saw in them a strong and centralized means through which the Church could respond quickly and decisively to local issues. The pope relied most heavily on Hugh of Die, who was in a far better position to address issues within France itself. In matters of reform, we might characterize Pope Gregory’s and Bishop Hugh’s relationship as ‘good cop, bad cop.’ Hugh’s rigor and severity in France stood in stark contrast to Gregory’s moderation and reconciliation in Rome. Gregory, however, pushed Hugh to show no weakness in his efforts to eliminate simony and lay investiture. Hugh, quick to coerce and to punish, obliged, using whatever means necessary.

It would only be a matter of time before the simonist activities of Stephen of Polignac and William of Chamalières at Clermont and Le Puy would come to the attention of Pope Gregory VII and Bishop Hugh of Die. Stephen had served as bishop of Clermont for twenty years, but in 1073 left the see Clermont for that of Le Puy. Had Stephen stayed put, Hugh likely would have left him alone. Stephen’s efforts to expel the current bishop of Le Puy, whom he claimed was a simoniac and

\[4\] Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 419.

\[5\] The pope had neither the time nor the knowledge to respond and needed the legate’s help. See Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 355-57, 361, 419.
an invader of the see, backfired. Both he and his hand-picked replacement at Clermont were excommunicated, and the man chosen in 1076 by Bishop Hugh of Die to take over the see of Clermont was the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, Durand. Hugh’s choice of Durand speaks volumes and demonstrates that the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu had managed to shield his abbey from any hint of lay intervention. La Chaise-Dieu was primed for expansion and on the brink of becoming a veritable congregation.

The year 1078 marks the beginning of a remarkable transformation. This was the year in which Durand resigned his abbacy. The next abbot would enjoy the support of both the Roman church, in Hugh of Die, and of the Auvergnat church, in Bishop Durand. The struggles for simple survival would no longer weigh so heavily in the decision making process of the abbot. The stage had been set for the expansion we will witness during the abbacy of Seguin of Escotay. Yet, when Durand stepped down, Seguin was not immediately elected abbot. Another man, an austere, model monk, was elected. This third abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, Adelelmus, ruled only briefly in 1078 before resigning his post in an attempt to return to the contemplative life.

We do not speak here of Adelelmus as his impact on the abbey as its abbot was

---

6 See above, 70.

7 At this time there was only one order recognized by both contemporaries and modern scholars, the Cluniacs. A monastic “congregation” is a suitable substitute for discussing the Casadéens. In this sense, a congregation would be a grouping of monasteries around a motherhouse whose abbot is considered the general superior over the entire group.

8 There are two extant vitae of Saint Adelelmus. The principal Vita of Adelelmus is an early twelfth-century work by a monk of La Chaise-Dieu named Ralph (Rodulfus). He identifies himself, noting that he had been sent to Burgos by his abbot Aimeric (1102-1111): “Cum in Hispaniam a beatae memoriae venerando Almerico Casae-Dei Abbate ego Rodulfus Monachorum minimus apud Burgos missus venissem . . .” (841). A longer version is found in España Sagrada, ed. H. Flórez, vol. 27 (Madrid: M. F. Rodriguez, 1747-): 841-66=Ralph; there is an abbreviation of it: ibid., 832-41=Abb. Ralph. See also, AA.SS., January 3, De s. Adelelmo, sive Elesme, abbate, Burgos in Hispania, 671-
negligible, and his only contact with an external advocate is legendary. His greatest contributions to the Auvergnat abbey would come as prior of the distant, dependent monastery of San Juan Bautista of Burgos, and his crucial role in the Casadéen expansion into the kingdom of León-Castile will be discussed below.

Seguin’s Career

Adelelmus appointed his successor, Seguin, before departing for Castile. Seguin was born at the castle of Escotay—near the town of Montbrison, roughly thirty miles northeast of La Chaise-Dieu. Like other noble youths he joined the chapter of Saint-Jean of Lyon. While Seguin’s days at Lyon have long since faded

---

9 Scholarly studies about Adelelmus’ life at La Chaise-Dieu are scarce. One topic that has drawn scholarly attention is Adelelmus’ “healing” of the queen of England, which queen is the main point of debate. Most recently, George Beech has undertaken to clarify this unusual event in his article, “Queen Mathilda of England (1066-1083) and the Abbey of La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne,” Frühmittelalterliche Studien 27 (1993): 350-74. Through Beech’s work, it is possible to say with some confidence, although no proof survives, that, in return for some spiritual guidance, Matilda donated clerical vestments to La Chaise-Dieu and endowed a new dormitory for the monks. It may initially seem strange that the queen of England should come to know the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, but here again Beech is able to shed some light. As he points out, it is possible that she came to know about La Chaise-Dieu from her husband who had been present at the foundation of the abbey in 1052 (1 H 4.1: “S. Willelmi Normanorum ducis”; see also Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911-1066), ed. M. Fauroux (Caen: Caron, 1961): no. 127, 297-299).


10 Bernard, Liber tripartitus, 227: “In abbatiali autem cura Casae-Dei Seguinus vir illustris Lugdunensi castro Escostaiaico appellet, oriundus, Deo et hominibus amabilis Duranto successit . . .”

11 Hugh of Flavigny, Chronica, 443: “Hoc etiam anno, qui erat ab incarnatione Domini 1078, regimen praelationis apud Casam Dei Siguinus quondam Lugdunensis...
from memory, his time there prepared him for his tenure as abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. Lyon had been a very powerful chapter\(^{12}\) and Seguin developed several associations while there that would later prove significant. Most important among these was his association with Hugh, the future bishop of Die and papal legate.\(^{13}\) Little else can be said about Seguin’s time in Lyon.

Seguin’s commitment to the ideals of the reformed papacy is first demonstrated in his association with Abbot Reginald of Saint-Cyprien with whom he acted against the suspect Eucharistic teachings of Berengar of Tours (c. 999-1088).\(^{14}\) We find, regarding his matter, a letter from Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, responding to a letter from Abbot Reginald and Seguin (and Reginald’s nephew Henry of Ingla), which charged the schismatic Berengar with continued blasphemies. From this letter, we can assume that sometime between 1073 and 1078 Seguin was already a monk of La Chaise-Dieu.\(^{15}\)

The first unquestionable date in Seguin’s life is his election as abbot of La Chaise-Dieu in 1078. Seguin came to La Chaise-Dieu well trained and the monks

---


\(^{13}\) Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 128.


\(^{15}\) The editors of Lanfranc’s letters date this letter roughly to just after the synod of Poitiers (January 1075) where Berengar’s teachings were condemned. See Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, edited and translated by H. Clover and M. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979): 142-51, no. 46.
there quickly recognized his administrative abilities. They were in need of an abbot who would lead their community in this time of growth. Their former abbot, Adelelmus, was either ill equipped or unwilling to undertake this responsibility. Seguin, given his association with the Hugh of Die, seemed particularly well suited to his new position.

La Chaise-Dieu’s association with the papal legate only grew after 1076 when he named Durand bishop of Clermont, particularly after Hugh’s fellow former canon of Lyon, Seguin, became abbot of the Auvergnat abbey. We get the first hint of the closeness of their relation when, in 1079, following Bishop Hugh’s council at Toulouse, Seguin is entrusted with the reform of two very old abbeys in the Rouergue: Saint-Michel of Gaillac, founded in the diocese of Albi c. 560; and Saint-Théodard, founded in the diocese of Cahors in the eighth century (Map 3). The choice of La Chaise-Dieu to take over the reform of these monasteries is somewhat surprising considering that the reforming movement had begun in that region under the direction of Cluny as early as 1048 when the monastery received Moissac in that year and Daurade in 1077. Moissac flourished and even supplied the episcopal see of Toulouse with a bishop. This seemed definitively to ensure the Cluniac influence in the area. La Chaise-Dieu was seemingly out of the picture as its influence had yet to spread this far south into the Rouergue. That La Chaise-Dieu should, within two years, find itself in possession of two notable abbeys in the Rouergue, where the

---

Cluniac presence had been well established, will be discussed further below, but that Hugh of Die and Raymond of Saint-Gilles, the future count of Toulouse, had a hand in it is clear.

La Chaise-Dieu’s relationship with the count of Toulouse was its first long-term association with a secular lord of substance. Seguin likely first met Raymond when the count traveled in 1079 to La Chaise-Dieu and, in a ceremony at the shrine of Saint Robert, “took homage to the blessed Robert, received back his sword from the altar, and declared that he would have and hold the county of Toulouse from none other than Saint Robert, if God would deign to give it to him.”

Raymond’s new heavenly overlord lent weight to his territorial claims without infringing upon his “earthly independence,” and the ceremony marked the beginning of Raymond’s lifetime of devotion to the Auvergnat saint.

This relationship, however, could have provoked conflict as the attention once bestowed by the counts of Toulouse on Cluny now fell on La Chaise-Dieu. This, as discussed further below, was particularly true in the case of the abbey of Saint-Gaillac where a Cluniac had first been nominated to become abbot.

Seguin likely realized that papal recognition of these newly submitted abbeys would help him avoid conflict. He thus joined the group that accompanied Hugh of Die to the synod of

---


Rome in 1080. Included in this group was the new bishop of Grenoble, Hugh of Châteauneuf, who would later spend a year as a monk at La Chaise-Dieu.

On 27 March 1080, Seguin obtained a bull that addressed all his monastery’s current needs. In it, Pope Gregory VII confirmed the dependence of the abbeys of Gaillac and Saint-Théodard on La Chaise-Dieu; the pope also responded to Abbot Seguin’s apparent complaints about the canons of Clermont. Clermont and La Chaise-Dieu had been closely linked originally, as La Chaise-Dieu’s founder was the nephew of the then-bishop of Clermont who had been the abbey’s first ecclesiastical advocate. Between 1076 and 1078, when Durand was both bishop of Clermont and abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, one can imagine that the affairs of the two became intermixed, with the tendency to benefit Clermont. According to the pope’s response to Seguin’s claims, the canons seem to have infringed on privileges due the monks, from seats in the choir to places in the dormitory. “In short, they had invaded the regular places.” Moreover, they even went as far as to claim a role in the abbey’s elections. Pope Gregory VII defended the abbey’s autonomy and admonished the

---

24 Discussed below.
25 Jaffé, 5159; MPA, no. XXVIII, 50-53.
26 MPA, no. XXVIII, 53.
28 MPA, no. XXVIII, 52: “et quia intelleximus Arvernenses clericos quasdam consuetudines in monasterio vestro sibi vindicare, videlicet praesentialiter se abbatis intermiscere electione, et in quibusdam festivitatibus locum et societatem cum fratribus in dormitorio, necnon in choro, contra regularem disciplinam et quietem monasticum, exigere; admonemus et apostolica auctoritate interdicimus, ut deinceps ac in perpetuum ipsi ab hac omnino cessent inquietudine, et his ulterius exigendi nullam habeant licentiam vel facultatem, sed secundum illam securitatem et quietem, permittatur monasterium illud Domino servire, quam ante nostrisque temporibus haec sancta apostolica sedes, cujus licet indigni curam gerimus, Cluniacensi monasterio aliisque
canons severely. He also granted the monks the same privileges held by Cluny. While he does not mention it explicitly, this should have included exemption from episcopal jurisdiction.  

Seguin’s voyage to Rome had another benefit. In addition to the bull, Seguin received a pontifical donation. Gregory VII submitted to him the abbey of Saint-Peter of Frassinoro in Modena (Map 4), founded in 1071 by the countess of Tuscany, Mathilda, and her mother Beatrice, widow of Duke Godefroy of Lorraine. This was a significant monastery. Mathilda and Beatrice, who abandoned all their rights, had endowed the abbey with a dozen villages, including the land, churches, and castles. It became a small monastic principality unto itself. The abbey remained quite independent and had received from Pope Gregory VII apostolic protection and exemptions in 1077.

Seguin made the return trip to France with Hugh of Die, who continued on to the councils of Bordeaux and Saintes. Seguin himself did not attend Bordeaux. Instead, to ensure the reform of the newly submitted abbeys, he went to Gaillac, then to Saint-Théodard. Along the way, he set up two priories in the diocese of Cahors (Map 3): one at Montredon and another at Lavergne whose church had been given

---

29 For more on the origins monastic exemptions see J. F. Lemarignier, L' exemption monastique et les origines de la reforme gregorienne (Dijon: Impr. Bernigaud et Privat, 1951).

30 The details of this donation are discussed below. Donation published by Girolamo Tiraboschi, Memorie storiche modenesi, vol. 2 (1793-1794): 52-53; see Gaussin, Rayonnement, 336.


32 See Gaussin, L’ Abbaye, 133.

33 Genoux, Histoire de l’ abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 54.
to La Chaise-Dieu by the Valon family.\textsuperscript{34} While in Périgueux, still in 1080, Count Hélie and Bishop William of Montbéron submitted the abbey of Brantôme to Seguin.\textsuperscript{35} This once rich abbey, founded by Charlemagne, had fallen into a state of disarray. With the consent of Bishop William, who had already had some personal contact with at least one monk from La Chaise-Dieu, the Auvergnat abbey was charged with its reform.\textsuperscript{36}

From Brantôme Seguin made his way to the council at Saintes (January 1081), which was chaired by Hugh of Die. While taking part in these proceedings, Seguin took the opportunity to visit the priory of Sainte-Gemme.\textsuperscript{37} There he was a witness


A fragment of the charter survives see \textit{Gallia Christiana}, vol. 2, col. 1490-91: “\textit{Ego Hélias, comes Petrocoriensium, gehennales poenas abhorrescens, electis Dei me optans sociari, monasterium S. Petri, apostolorum principis, Sancti Innocentis Sicharii, quod nuncupatur Brantosma, quod modo mea ignavia minime regulariter degit, sedabusione habitantium monachorum fere ad nihilum redactum est, sub meo jure retinere timui, ac vitiis eorum favere; ideoque consilio domini Guillelmi de Monte-Berulpho Petagor. Sedis episcopi ac cleri ipsius . . . Coetera desiderantur.”

\textsuperscript{36} Guinamond, a monk from La Chaise-Dieu, had carved and decorated the tomb of Saint Front under the direction of Bishop William in 1077 (Waquet, “Le Comte Bernard de Périgord”, 30).

\textsuperscript{37} Sainte-Gemme had recently been donated to La Chaise-Dieu by William VIII (c.
to the donation of the monastery of Saint-Eutrope of Saintes by the duke of Aquitaine, William VIII, to the abbot of Cluny, Hugh, who was also present. The same charter also records the attendance of Abbot Reginald of Saint-Cyprien, an old friend of Seguin, and of the monk Guy of La Chaise-Dieu, brother of Count William I of Nevers.

Donations, large and small, from across France followed when Seguin finally returned to La Chaise-Dieu. In the Aquitaine (Map 3), Robert Pons submitted to La Chaise-Dieu the church of Thézac in the diocese of Saintes along with property enough to support the foundation of a priory for three monks there (1084). The largesse of the lords of Parthenay made possible the foundation of the conventual priory of Parthenay-le-Vieux in Poitou. Closer to home, in the Limousin, the Casadéen monks of Port-Dieu founded the priory of Pigerolles on land given by the

---

1073). Other donations in the region followed William’s. Sometime between 1078 and 1086, Gautier, a forester, donated to Abbot Seguin all his possessions near Salles (today, Marennes). William VIII had approved this donation. French translation of this donation found in Baudrit, Sainte-Gemme, 231. Another donation followed from Hugh of Doué between 1083 and 1086. This was confirmed by William VIII and by the bishop of Saintes, Remulfe (1083-1104). See Baudrit, Sainte-Gemme, 231. Duke William IX continued to support Sainte-Gemme with donations in 1091 and 1098. See Baudrit, Sainte-Gemme, 232-235.


39 See above.

40 Remember that in 1067 Geoffroy of Champallemend, son of the viscount of Nevers, donated the monastery of Andryes to La Chaise-Dieu. See above, 62.


42 Tablettes Historiques de Velay, vol. 8, 15: “... cella duorum monachorum cum priore tercio.” The word “cella” generally designates a small monastery of six monks.

bishop of Limoges, Guy (1073-1086), to La Chaise-Dieu;\(^4^4\) and in the diocese of Le Puy, Bishop Adhemar donated the church of Usson to the abbey.\(^4^5\) The Casadéens continued to expand in the province of Vienne when in 1090 the archbishop of Vienne, Guy of Burgundy (the future pope, Calixtus II, 1119-1124) donated the churches of Saint-Appolinard, Saint-Julien-en-Goye, and Saint-Julien-Molin-Molette.\(^4^6\) The knight Guillien of Bocsozel also founded the Casadéen cell of Mottier in the diocese of Vienne at the foot of his castle; he then retired to it.\(^4^7\) Between 1088 and 1094 his sons gave this new priory several churches with the approval of the archbishop of Vienne.\(^4^8\)

La Chaise-Dieu’s reputation during Seguin’s abbacy drew not only gifts and pilgrims, but also clerics seeking retreat. The best known of these was Hugh of Châteauneuf, bishop of Grenoble, who had been a companion of Seguin to Rome in 1080. Hugh’s withdrawal to La Chaise-Dieu had been prompted by a moment of discouragement over feudal entanglements in his diocese.\(^4^9\) Hugh’s retreat lasted

\(^{4^4}\) PP 41r. See H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire topographique, archéologique et historique de la Creuse* (Limoges, 1902); and Gaussin, *L’Abbaye*, 138.

\(^{4^5}\) *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, III, 260; “In nomine, etc. Ego Ademarus Aniciensis episcopus, dono ecclesiam de Uciono beato Roberto, et abbati Seguino, et monachis Casae-Dei prasentibus atque futuris . . .”

\(^{4^6}\) *Cartulaire de Saint-Sauveur*, no. 7.

\(^{4^7}\) Located in the département of Isère.


\(^{4^9}\) *Cartulaires de Saint-Hugues*, ed. Jules Marion (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1869): charter 16, 93-94. The author of his *Vita*, moreover, claims that he chose La Chaise-Dieu because he could find there, more than elsewhere, the love of poverty and humility: “Contemplans itaque suam vel aetatem, vel morum imperfectionem (in quam praecipue usque ad mortem mentis oculos intentos et ipse habuit et alios habere persuasit) et suscepit pondus officii, necum dubus post consecrationem expletis annis, contemptis omnibus, Casae Dei ordinis Cluniacensis, factus est monachus: quippe majus tunc paupertatis et humilitatis studium visebatur” (*Vita Hugo Episcopus*)
only one year before Pope Gregory VII recalled him in 1083 to his office in Grenoble.\textsuperscript{50}

Hugh’s stay at La Chaise-Dieu would not be the last time he and Seguin would join forces; both played important roles in the foundation of the Carthusians.\textsuperscript{51} In 1084, canon Bruno of Reims,\textsuperscript{52} originally from Cologne, arrived in the diocese of Grenoble with some companions, seeking a solitary place to which to withdraw. Hugh thought at once about the “desert” of Chartreuse, a mountainous place, barren and cold, fourteen miles north of Grenoble. The bishop held some rights in the region, as did the monks of La Chaise-Dieu. La Chaise-Dieu held the priories of Saint-Robert of Cornillon\textsuperscript{53} in the southern Chartreuse and Miribel-les-Echelles\textsuperscript{54} in the north, both in the diocese of Grenoble. On 9 December 1084, Hugh placed the newly installed hermits under his protection and confirmed that the various local lords, including Seguin, had granted this “desert” to Bruno and had given up their

\textsuperscript{50} Gallia Christiania, XVI, col. 230-231. See also Guigo, \textit{Vita sancti Hugonis Gratianopolitanus, episcopi}, PL 153:761-784. Hugh’s biographer was Prior Guigo I of La Grande Chartreuse.


\textsuperscript{52} Bruno had been the chancellor of the church of Reims when Manasses succeeded to the see. In his account of the council of Autun (September, 1077) Hugh of Flavigny claimed that Manasses had usurped the church of Reims through simony (Hugh of Flavigny, \textit{Chronica}, 415). Bruno had been among the clerks of Reims who brought charges against Manasses.

\textsuperscript{53} Pilot de Thorey, \textit{Les prieurés de l‘ancien diocèse de Grenoble} (Grenoble, 1883): 343-344.

Bruno’s retreat was briefly interrupted beginning in 1088 when his former pupil, Otho of Ostia, became Pope Urban II. Not long afterwards, Urban called his former master “for the service of the apostolic See.” This was a serious blow to the young community. Convinced that it would not survive without him, Bruno, accompanied by Bishop Hugh, went to La Chaise-Dieu in 1086 to give over his foundation to Seguin. Bruno must have believed that the religious house nearest to the Carthusian spirit was this great abbey of the Auvergne. Nevertheless, the monks of La Chaise-Dieu were not masters of Chartreuse for long. By 1090, the pope, at Bruno’s request, ordered Seguin to return the foundation and its goods.

55 See Recueil des plus anciens actes de la Chartreuse (1086-1196), ed. Bernard Bligny (Grenoble, 1958): charter 1, 1-8: “Gratia sanctae et individuae Trinitatis misericorditer nostrae salutis admoniti, recordati sumus humanae statum conditionis et vitae fragilis lapsus inevitabiles, quam sine termino ducimus in peccatis; bonum itaque judicavimus nos peccati servos de manu mortis redimere, temporalia pro caelestibus mutare, aeternam hereditatem pretio periturae possessionis comparare, ne duplici contritione conteramur, et presentis vitae miseries laborum et dolorum initium sumamus. Itaque magistro Brunoni, et his qui cum eo venerunt fratribus, ut Deo vacarent, ad inhabitandum solitudinem quaerentibus, ipsis eorumque successoribus in aeternam possessionem spaciosam heremum concessimus: ego Humbertus de Mirebel, una cum Oddone fratre meo et caeteris qui juris aliquid habebant in praedicto loco. Hii vero sunt Hugo de Tulvone . . . similiter et dominus abbas Siguinus de Casa Dei cum suorum fratrum conventu, quidquid ibi juris habere videbantur, supradictis concesserunt fratribus.” Bligny dates this to the year 1086. See also Annales Ordinis Cartusiensis ab anno 1084 ad annum 1429, ed. Charles Le Couteulx, vol. 1 (Monstrolii: Typis Cartusiae S. Mariae de Pratis, 1887): 9-10.

56 MPA, no. XXXVII, 63-64: “ad sedis apostolicae servitium.”


58 Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 135.

59 MPA, no. XXXVIII, 63-64: “Urbanus episcopus, servus servorum Dei, carissimo filio Seguino, abbati Casae-Dei et omni congregationi salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Eos, qui ob Ecclesiae Romanae obedientiam laboribus fatigantur, Romanae quoque Ecclesiae ope digum est relevari. Quia ergo nos ad sedis apostolicae servitium Brunonem, carissimum filium, evocavimus, ipso ad nos perveniente, ut ejus
On 17 September 1090, Seguin delivered a charter releasing the monastery of Chartreuse completely. Hugh of Die, who by then was the archbishop of Lyon, and Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, witnessed this act. There does not seem to have been any hard feelings between the two communities as the monks of Chartreuse gave Seguin the title of “second father and tutor of the Carthusian order.”

La Chaise-Dieu became one of the foremost monastic reform centers of its time during the abbacy of Seguin. Its position was bolstered again and again. From now on, churchmen of the eleventh and twelfth centuries would turn to the Casadéen abbey as center of reform and so deliver to it monasteries and priories for this purpose. Such was the case when Archbishop Renaud of Bellay called upon the abbey in 1090 to reform the abbey of Saint-Nicaise in Reims. This abbey had fallen under the influence of the recalcitrant archbishop, Manasses (1070-1080), who

---

60 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XVII, 431: “Ego frater Siguinus, abbas Casae-Dei, notum fieri volo praesentibus et futuris, quod frater Bruno a D. papa Urbano Romam evocatus, videns loci destitutionem, fratribus recedentibus propter absentiam ejus, dedit locum Cartusiae nobis, et congregatio nobis commissae. . .” The original charter is located in the Arch. Isère, 4H.2. See also Bligny, Rec. actes Chartreuse, IV, 12.


62 Jeannine Cossé-Dulin has attempted to clarify the series of events that led the archbishop to submit Saint-Nicaise to La Chaise-Dieu, see Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims, ed. Jeannine Cossé-Durlin (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1991): 38-41.
had plundered the abbey to his own benefit and to the benefit of other monastic houses that he saw fit. Hugh of Die was fundamental to Manasses’s removal.⁶³ After Manasses removal from the see, however, conditions at Saint-Nicaise did not improve; seems the abbey had fallen under the lackadaisical influence of the Cluniac abbey of Saint-Remi. Manasses’s successor, Archbishop Renaud of Bellay, had the difficult task of bringing order back to his diocese, which included the reform of Saint-Nicaise. By 1090, Saint-Nicaise “had fallen to such a degree of misery that one was not able to find there even one man to direct it, or even people ready to accept the Rule.”⁶⁴ It was at this moment that he turned to La Chaise-Dieu,⁶⁵ perhaps fearing to reinforce Cluny’s influence in the region at the expense of own. La Chaise-Dieu likely appeared as a safer choice and one that would ensure the reform of the monastery without infringing upon the archbishop authority.

Even as monks from La Chaise-Dieu worked to reform the monastery, Saint-Nicaise was never definitely a dependent. The monks of Saint-Nicaise retained the right to elect their own abbot while needing only confirmation of their choice from the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. The archbishop, too, reserved some rights to himself, including the ability to intervene in abbatial elections with little interference from the Auvergnat abbey.⁶⁶

⁶³ Hugh of Die had been charged with the duty of dealing with Archbishop Manasses. See Cowdrey, Pope Gregory VII, 375ff, for more on Hugh’s actions against the archbishop, whom Cowdrey described as presenting “Gregory with the most prolonged, severe, and intractable problems that he encountered among the archbishops of France.”

⁶⁴ Gallia Christiania, IX, col. 207. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 137.

⁶⁵ It is not clear if Abbot Seguin went to reform Saint-Nicaise himself or not. A “Seguin” certainly went to participate in the abbey’s reform. See Cossé-Dulin, Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise, 38.

⁶⁶ See Guillaume Marlot, Metropolensis Remensis Historia (Insulis, 1666): I, 623.
As Abbot Seguin’s abbey undertook the reform of Saint-Nicaise, his abbacy was nearing its end. During his tenure, he had acquired six abbeys: Gaillac, Saint-Théodard, Frassinoro, Brantôme, Saint-Nicaise, and Saint-Baudile of Nîmes (Map 3). As La Chaise-Dieu drew pilgrims, it also began to expand its influence by continuing to provide monks to communities and episcopal sees: Reginald had become abbot of Saint-Cyprien at Poitiers; Jarenton had become abbot of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon; and Durand had become the bishop of Clermont. Others monk-reformers included Pierre of Pontgibaud, abbot of Saint-Allyre near Clermont; and Audebert of Montmorillon who had become abbot of Déols in 1087, then archbishop of Bourges in 1092. Thus, in 1092, the diocesan bishop and the archbishop were both former monks of La Chaise-Dieu!

Marbod of Rennes’s *Vita Roberti*

Criticisms of La Chaise-Dieu, following its recent success during Seguin’s

---

67 A. H. 179; see *Tablettes Historiques de Velay*, vol. 8, 14. Nîmes would initially be reduced to a priory, but would return to its former influence. See Leon Menard, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique et littéraire de la ville de Nîmes* (Nîmes: Lacour, 1874): vol. 2, 99; and vol. 3, 10-11.

68 Mission of 1084. Jarenton, son of Araldus and Agnes of Vienne, had been brought up under Hugh of Cluny, left when he came of age—giving himself to worldly pleasures—and then became a monk of La Chaise-Dieu in 1074. He twice served as Gregory VII’s legate. See Cowdrey, “Pope Gregory VII and La Chaise-Dieu”, 31. See also *Chronicon S. Huberti Andeginensis*, MGH SS, VIII, 413 and 605. Jarenton had also apparently taken part in liberating Pope Gregory VII from the castle of Saint-Ange in 1084 (*Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. 4 [Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1881]: 526).


70 Gardon, *Historie de l’Abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu*, 251; *Gallia Christiania*, II, col. 44-45. Audebert had been a companion of Judith of Auvergne, daughter of Count Robert II, before she renounced the world (and her marriage to Simon of Crépy) and joined the Casadéen community at Comps. See Chapter III, 82.
abbacy, were perhaps inevitable. Criticisms, as we will see, seem to have manifested themselves in denunciations of Robert of Turlande’s choice to leave the contemplative life for the active. Seguin, however, was resolute in his desire to protect Robert’s memory and to reaffirm the viability of his monastery’s spiritual reforms, namely the reconciliation of the active life with the contemplative through the practice of charity. To do this, Seguin commissioned Marbod of Rennes, a master rhetorician, to write a new *Vita* for the abbey’s founder. Behind his request was the desire not only to reassert the sanctity of the abbot-founder, but also to defend his memory. Marbod agreed and wrote the two books of Robert's *Vita*; over half of the second book was devoted completely to defending the saint.

The second book, written some time after the first, includes a prologue, a spirited defense of Robert’s spiritual choices, and then more miracles stories. Marbod dedicated the second book to *Seguinus* (Seguin of Escotay). In it he responds to detractors who claim that Robert reversed the proper “order of holiness” when he gave up the higher, contemplative life to embrace the lower, active life. Marbod, who does not mention who Robert’s detractors were, mounted a spirited defense.

---


72 Marbod, II.Prologue.1: “I composed an earlier book in a simple style about the life of Blessed Robert. I hope I was as effective as I was willing. You . . . frequently ask or rather, under the guise of making a request, very strongly order and compel that I add to the earlier book the following work.” See Marbodo di Rennes, *Vita beati Roberti*, xvii-xix.
Before I tell of the miracles of the saint, it does not seem irrelevant to me to
counter the blasphemies of some people on whose foreheads and in whose
sacriligious mouths one sees without any doubt the sign of the dragon and
the beast. For it is written of him that ‘he will open his mouth in
blasphemies toward God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and
those who dwell in heaven.’ Thus, those who vainly try to slander this holy
man surely show themselves to be of the number of that beast. They say (I
am not reluctant to explain, as before judges, their crafty and evil intent that
must be refuted): ‘This new holy man overturns for us the ancient order of
holiness. For while all the others, who with love faithfully maintain hope
for higher things, arrange in their hearts ways of going higher and always
undertake to go from the lower to the higher, only this man, although he
had first put his foot on the summit, afterwards gradually slipped down to
lower things.\footnote{Marbod, II.Prologue.1-5.}

By the twelfth century, in the western monastic tradition, the active life (love of
neighbor) came to mean service of neighbor in activities like preaching and corporal
works of mercy. The contemplative life (love of God) was the life of prayer, not just
solitary contemplation but also liturgical prayer. Contemplation was deemed a higher
form of endeavor, and more prestige was often attached it.\footnote{Constable, \textit{Reformation}, 53, 116.} Thus, it was okay to
transfer from a lower (more active) life to a higher (more contemplative) life. Robert,
according to his critics, had done the opposite.

While Marbod did not identify who Robert’s critics were, Antontella
Degl’Innocenti hypothesized that the critics may have been monks of the Cluniac
observance who emphasized liturgical prayer, thus the ‘higher’ life.\footnote{Antonella Degl’Innocenti, \textit{L’opera agiografica di Marbod di Rennes} (Spoleto:
Centro italiano di studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 1990): 186, 195.} La Chaise-
Dieu’s Cluniac neighbors may have had more practical concerns as well. Under
Seguin’s direction, La Chaise-Dieu had become an important monastic center with the same papal privileges as Cluny\textsuperscript{76} and a growing congregation of affiliated monasteries in regions once sole fodder for the Cluniacs.\textsuperscript{77} Cluny was beginning to feel the competitive impact of the home grown Auvergnat abbey.

Other possible, perhaps more plausible, critics were canons who resented Robert’s adopting the \textit{Rule of Benedict}. Robert had been a canon, left to become a hermit, and then took up the monastic life while continuing to do many of the same tasks he had done as a canon. Canons of the Seguin’s era might well have been far more sensitive to the developing distinction between the “active” (canon) and “contemplative” (monk) ways of life; certainly, during the twelfth century, regular canons were often the strongest critics of monks.\textsuperscript{78} Given the timing of Marbod’s writing, criticism was likely coming from canons, particularly of Clermont. The canons in Clermont now had serious cause for a rivalry with the monks of La Chaise-Dieu. The canons had had to sit by, as their bishop had been the former abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, while the abbey expanded its regional influence. Moreover, we can imagine that the canons of Clermont might well have been responding to the sting of papal censure for having invaded the “regular” places of La Chaise-Dieu.

Marbod had little difficulty responding to Robert’s critics who had objected that Robert had gone from a more active (therefore less perfect life) to a more contemplative life (therefore more perfect), and then reverted to a more active life,

\textsuperscript{76} Pope Gregory VII granted these in 1080. See MPA, no. XXVIII, 50-53.
\textsuperscript{77} During Seguin’s abbacy alone, La Chaise-Dieu had acquired six abbeys: Gaillac, Saint-Théodard, Frassinaro, Brantôme, Saint-Nicaise, and Saint-Baudile of Nîmes. These do not include the other smaller communities or those founded in León-Castile.
\textsuperscript{78} Constable, \textit{Reformation}, 55, 228.
and by this final step had returned to something less perfect. Marbod argued that the love of neighbor (the active life) was not incompatible with the love of God (the contemplative life); it was, in fact, vital.

For to sum up briefly, if the all-consuming love of God, in which the summit of contemplative life consists, devours and extinguishes brotherly love, which is the principal concern of the active life, then the former is itself extinguished and no trace of love remains. 79

Robert did not create a new rule of holiness; he was, according to Marbod, following in the footsteps of Jesus 80 and the saints of old. 81

It becomes clear when considering the content and style of Marbod's second book of his Vita Roberti that this work is more than a standard saint's life. It is a pedagogical tract arguing to a sophisticated audience the virtuous nature of combining the active life with the contemplative life and whose theme of caritas is found on every page.

You think that the ancient rule of holiness is that one first engage in active labor through which charity, out of solicitous compassion, supplies neighbors with what they need. Then, moving to higher things by new advances in virtue, one victoriously obtains the summit of contemplative sweetness, in which one enjoys the boundless love of God alone. When one has arrived there, one thinks it wrong to be concerned about lesser things. What has been said in jest about someone can fittingly be said of this person also: he looks at the doors of heaven, caring no more about men. Thus, like a new authority and expert you divide the two lives of the church assigning each limits, and so confused by a mental error you claim they are not mixed, so that whoever once attains the higher is to be condemned if he returns to

79 Marbod, II.4.6.
80 Marbod, II.5-6.
81 Marbod, II.6.2.
the lesser. So, who has loved God fully cannot love his brother also.\textsuperscript{82}

Seguin was not so interested in establishing the sanctity of his abbot-founder, for this had been secured much earlier, nor was he seeking to use this revised \textit{Vita} to expand Robert's cult, for Marbod's prolix style in the second book suggests a highly educated audience, and the complexity of the language and of the literary allusions make it seem unlikely that it was ever read aloud to the general populace, or if it were, that they fully understood it. Seguin was, however, set on protecting his saintly founder's memory and reaffirming the viability of his monastery’s spiritual reforms, namely the reconciliation of the active life with the contemplative through the ideal of \textit{caritas}. For this reason, Seguin required the assistance of someone who held similar opinions and who was well trained in the art of persuasion, namely rhetoric. He found that person when he commissioned Marbod of Rennes.

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors

We have yet to discuss one of the Casadéen’s most important benefactors, King Alfonso VI of León-Castile. The reason for this is that he did not support La Chaise-Dieu directly, but founded and established important Casadéen communities in the kingdom of León-Castile under the direction of Adelelmus, the former abbot of La Chaise-Dieu.

That an eccentric holy man, former abbot of the distant abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, should capture the attention of the queen of León-Castile, let alone that of King Alfonso VI himself, seems unlikely. But this is exactly what happened shortly after

\textsuperscript{82} Marbod, II.3.10-12.
the Council of Burgos in 1081, when the indigenous Mozarabic liturgical rites were replaced with the Roman rites. Who was this monk? Why was he invited to the kingdom of León-Castile by its queen? Why would this monk, the abbot of one of the fastest growing abbeys in France, give up his title and position for a life of contemplation only later to choose a life of service under the king of León-Castile at whose request he established a monastery and hospital to support pilgrimages?

Adelelmus, formerly the novice master of La Chaise-Dieu, was elected abbot in 1078. He had shown—both before and after this date—a great aptitude for practicing extreme austerity. Born in Loudun, Poitou, to noble parents, this one time soldier, sought a new life dedicated to a greater purpose. Upon the death of his parents, Adelelmus liquidated his goods and set out on pilgrimage to Rome. His route passed through the heart of the Auvergne where, at Issoire, he happened upon the founder of La Chaise-Dieu. During this meeting, Robert encouraged Adelelmus to join his community. Adelelmus did not immediately do so. He continued his

83 Adelelmus’ biography described his barefoot pilgrimage to Rome (Abb. Ralph, cap. 1, 834).
84 Abb. Ralph, cap. 1, 833; Ralph, cap. 2, 842. Loudun is located in the northernmost region of Poitou, on the modern border between the départements of Vienne and Indre-et-Loire.
85 His biography describes that Adelelmus had been devoted to the sick and pilgrims even while still a soldier. See, Abb. Ralph, cap. 1, 833.
86 That Adelelmus’ route passed through the heart of the Auvergne serves as a reminder that travelers did not avoid crossing the Massif Central. The rugged terrain undoubtedly made wheeled travel almost impossible, but animal caravans could pass comparatively with ease. This is particularly true of the Aillier river valley along which Issoire is located. See Charbonnier, “L’Auvergne politique”, 4.
87 Ralph, cap. 3, 845 “cunque sic Roman iturus, vicum quemdam Yquodorum [Isiodorum] nominee pertransiret, Sanctum Robertum Casae-Dei Abbatem, totius virum sanctitatis, ibi reperit. Qui postquam Dei hominis animum cognovit, tali peregrinatione postposita, ut secum in eremo Casae-Dei remaneret admonuit. Qui tunc ei non acquievit, sed voto completo quod voverat orationis gratia Apostolorum Petri & Pauli sancta visere
pilgrimage, but upon its completion he returned to La Chaise-Dieu where he became a monk, a priest, novice master, and eventually abbot.  

It was during the abbacy of Durand that Adelelmus first served as sub-deacon and then deacon of the community. His dedication to the offices he held is reflected in his refusal to perform his duties once he learned that the ordaining bishop, William of Clermont, had been placed under interdict for simony by the pope. According to his biographer, he continued to refuse to exercise his orders until they had been made good by Bishop Durand, who also ordained him priest. 

Why Adelelmus would leave his community is unclear. It is possible that La Chaise-Dieu’s very growth was drawing the community away from its eremitical roots, which he had found so appealing, and made life there too dispiriting. Perhaps

loca, se reversurum, habitumque monachalem suscepturum promisit.” See also the abbreviated life chapter 4, page 834: “Sic quipped unus mendicus & nudis pedibus iter arripiens, apud Arvernos in quoddam Benedictinae familiae Coenobium quod Isiodorense nominatur pervenit, quo verabilem P. N. Robertum Casae-Dei meritissimum Abbatem invenit, a quo benigne susceptus, slutari animae, & corpori accomodo pastus epulo, locus & fortis omnia sui cordis secreta patefecit Abbati. Qui Adelelmum licet primo detinere decreverat, postmodum solvit, ut votum de visitandis Romanae urbis Sanctorum tumulis, a peregrinante milite emissum persolveretur: hac conditione pactata, ut quantotius post peregrinationem Adelelmus in Casae-Dei Coenobium repedere curasset, quo religionis Monasticae habitum, ut illius expetebat devotio, quieta voluntate reciperet.”

88 Ralph, cap. 6, 835. See also, AA.SS., January, 3, De s. Adelelmo, sive Elesme, abbate, Burgos in Hispania, 671-675.

89 We recall William of Chamalières from the last chapter. He was the simonist bishop replaced by Abbot Durand as bishop of Clermont.

90 Ralph, caps. 6 and 8, 850-851, 852-54: “Cum vir tantus velut lampas ardentissima sydereo mitescet jubare, & nondum Ecclesiastici misterii officium susciperet, quia se semper ad hoc opus indignum reputaverat, Abbate suo cogente vinqve etiam inferente, ut Deo dignus dignior esset, Diaconi arcem suscepit. Porro statem resonatum est quod Episcopus qui eum ordinarat, quia simoniacus esset, ab Antistite Romano quibusdam ut creditur veridicis eum accusantibus interdictus fuit: quare vir doctus Adelelmus officio sumpto, id est in subdiaconatus & diaconatus, noluit fungi” (850-851).
the La Chaise-Dieu of Robert of Turlande had offered a more balanced life between the active and contemplative, where Adelelmus had been able, even in conjunction with his growing responsibilities under Durand, to satisfy his need for asceticism. A balanced life may be available to a monk, but for an abbot it must have been difficult to realize. Adelelmus may, then, have found Queen Constance of Burgundy’s invitation a means of leading a more congenial way of life. Then again, perhaps, the timing of her invitation just happened to coincide with Adelelmus’ desire to return to a more balanced life of contemplation and service.91

Adelelmus’ biographer, Raoul, gives a description of how Constance of Burgundy, wife of Alfonso VI, convinced her husband to invite Adelelmus to their court in Castile. Raoul boasts how Adelelmus’ fame, sanctitatis fana, had crossed the Alps and sea, had penetrated islands, and had even become common knowledge in the distant lands of Hispania. Queen Constance ardently desired to meet the holy man and sent him a long letter requesting venias ad nos, “come to us.”92

By the time Adelelmus received from Constance of Burgundy a letter referring to the diversity of rites and imploring him to come to instruct the church, he had already resigned his position as abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. Before leaving to join

---

91 Ralph, cap. 9, 854-55: “Videns denique vir venerabilis, de actuali ad contemplativam, quam de contemplativa ad actualum vitam reverti sanctius esse, onus sibi impositum nimis expavit, ut qui primum soli Deo vacabat, nunc ei de terrenis etiam cogitandum erat, coepit meditari qualiter Deum non offendens tantum onus relinqueret, ut Deo iterum liberius cacaret. . . .”

the court of the queen, he secured permission from his abbot, Seguin of Escotay.\textsuperscript{93} While he was invited to assist in the reform of church, Adelelmus, according to his biographer, did much more when he assisted Alfonso VI in battle as the king besieged Toledo in 1085. Adelelmus was able to rally the cornered troops by quoting from Psalm 19: “Some rely on chariots, others on horses, but we on the name of the Lord our God.”\textsuperscript{94} As a reward for his services, Alfonso VI had built for him in Burgos a chapel, a hospital to serve pilgrims to Compostela, and a conventual priory. Upon their completion, Alfonso donated them to La Chaise-Dieu and to Adelelmus.\textsuperscript{95} Two charters survive and both are dated 3 November 1091. In the first, Alfonso grants to La Chaise-Dieu the monastery of San Juan Bautista.\textsuperscript{96} In the second, he donates the chapel of San Juan Evangelista,\textsuperscript{97} where the poor and pilgrims would be buried. It is

\textsuperscript{93} See Ralph, cap. 13, 859: “Dei famulus Abbatis sui consensu, sine quo modicum quid vix faciebat, nescientibus ceteris ne ejus impedirent egressum, ingressus in Hispaniam desideratus, ad Regem, Reginamque pervenit.”

\textsuperscript{94} Adelelmus is given credit for leading the Alfonso’s reluctant army across the River Tagus, thus ensuring victory (Ralph, cap. 13, esp. 860). Vulgate Psalm 19:8; New American Bible, Psalm 20:8, “Hi in curribus, et hi in equis, nos autem in nomine Domini invocabimus.” Cf. Abb. Ralph, cap. 15, 839.

\textsuperscript{95} See Documentación del Monasterio de San Juan de Burgos (1091-1400), ed. F. Javier Peña Pérez (Burgos: Ediciones J. M. Garrido, 1983), documents 1 and 2.

\textsuperscript{96} Documentación, 4: “ego, Adefonsus, imperator, una cum consensus conungi mee, regina Constancia, euenit michi karo animo et propria uolumptate ut facerem cartulam donationis, sicut et facio propter remedium anime mee et parentum meorum, domino Deo et Sanct Rodberti de illa Kasa Deo de quod monasterium Sancti Iohannis . . . simul concedo illo uno molino . . . et illo forno . . . Hec omnia concedo Sancto Rodberti et domno Adalelmo propter remissionem peccatorum meorum . . .”

\textsuperscript{97} Documentación, 6-7: “Igitur, in Dei nomine, ego Aldefonsus, imperator, vna cum consensus coniugi mee, regina Constancia, euenit mihi karo animo et propria volumtate ut facerem cartulam donationis, et facio propter remedium anime mee et parentum meorum, domino Deo et Sancto Roberte de Casa Dei et uobis, domnpo Adelelmo, de illa mea capella quam ego edificauui in honorem Sancti Iohannis Evangeliste, ut pauperes et peregrini ibidem sepelirentur; et est in introitu de Burgis, circa monasterium Sancte Iohannis Babtiste, quod ego similiter edificauui . . .”
difficult to imagine that Adelelmus would have left one ‘active’ abbacy in the Auvergne only to accept a similar position in Castile or to spearhead Rome’s enforcement of the abolition of the Mozarabic rites. The Castilian monarchs had to know better than to make such demands on the holy monk and they seem to have acknowledged his humble religious qualities. Queen Constance demonstrates this in her letter of initiation to Adelelmus in which she complains that even those who frequently hear divine teachings, continue to avoid good works; that the mountains are a barrier between them and other remote faithful; and that apostolic teachings rarely ever breach such impediments—which meant her subjects practiced a variety of rites. Furthermore, it seemed as if they lacked any good example of how to live properly and needed individuals who were able to teach others. She implored him, *precor ne differas*, “I beg that you not delay.”  

Clearly, Adelelmus was not expected to assume the serious work of reform thus far discharged by monks of Cluny. Alfonso VI had his Gregorian taskforce; what he needed was someone who could offer simple humanitarian-charitable activity, someone from a tradition that mingled the active with the contemplative, someone proven holy through the performance of miracles, someone like Adelelmus. The situation must have been likewise quite appealing for Adelelmus. Alfonso’s erection of a new monastery, along with the additional gifts of support and immunity, guaranteed Adelelmus the opportunity to undertake charity

---

98 Ralph, cap. 12, 858.
100 In her letter, Constance writes: “*Et visis in te Dei miraculis, sicut audivimus, tui exemplo vitam suam hactenus corruptam nostrates corrigant, et qui fuerint desinant esse . . .*” (Ralph, cap. 12, 858). See also Lauranson-Rosaz, “Le Velay et la Croisade”, 36-37.
and to give alms. Living in relative solitude and isolation, compared to his life at La Chaise-Dieu, Adelelmus could live the life he found most heartening. After dividing his days between serving pilgrims, managing his priory, and prayer, Adelelmus finished his life at Burgos in 1097. The priory of San Juan continued to accept donations throughout the period being studied here.

Seguin, from what evidence survives, was not particularly occupied with this expansion into the kingdom of Leòn-Castile. He was, however, likely keenly aware that when he became abbot, almost thirty years after the abbey’s foundation, he would have to face a new generation of local lords. We can imagine these lords beginning to regard the once deserted Livrados forest with covetous eyes. These lords could easily have taken renewed interest in lands that now flourished under the care of the monks. To protect his abbey’s interests, Seguin sought to maintain the alliances, both ecclesiastical and secular, established by his predecessors. What is most striking about the beginning of Seguin’s abbacy, however, was the abbey’s new association with Raymond of Saint-Gilles, future count of Toulouse, and papal legate, Hugh of Die.

Abbot Seguin should be credited with fostering a close relationship with

---

101 Alfonse VI would make at least one more gift to San Juan on 11 October 1104, see Documentación, 11-12.
102 Gardon, Histoire de la Chaise-Dieu, 21.
103 Documentación, 9: “In cuitis nomine ego, Theresa Diez, filia Diago Albaret, cum sorore mea Stephania, divina nos inspirante clementia . . . Nos itaque supra nominated damus et concedimus Deo et monasterio Sancti Iohannis de Burgis omnique congregacioni illius loci et uobis, domnpo Stephano, eiusdem priori, illud nostrum monasterium, pernominationat Sanctum Adrianum . . .”
104 Gaussin, citing no evidence, maintained that this was in fact the case, which forced Seguin to defend his abbey through excommunication, interdict, and use of arms (L’Abbaye, 129).
Raymond of Saint-Gilles. This was the abbey’s most prominent lay benefactor whose devotion to the abbey’s saintly founder proved mutually beneficial. Yet, Raymond’s status in Rome before 1079 was somewhat precarious. Raymond had twice been excommunicated in 1076 by Pope Gregory VII for marrying a closely-consanguinious relative. Raymond reconciled with the pope and thereafter became one of the papacy’s most important secular allies.

The abbey’s relationship with Raymond proved instantly beneficial to the abbey. In that same year, 1079, La Chaise-Dieu became the head of a congregation when it took over the reform of two very old abbeys: Saint-Michel of Gaillac and Saint-Théodard. The choice of La Chaise-Dieu, however, was not a simple one. Here it is best to turn attention to the council of Toulouse in 1079. The first abbey in question was Saint-Michel of Gaillac. Several monks from Gaillac who attended the council of Toulouse from Gaillac nominated a professed Cluniac monk from Moissac as their abbot. Nevertheless, local custom recognized the rights of the counts, descendants of the founder, to control the abbatial election. This being the case, the noble brothers, William and Raymond, chose to ignore the recommendations of the monks in favor of the Casadéen candidate suggested by the new bishop of Albi, William II, who had been chosen to replace the simonist Frotardus. Gaillac was given to La Chaise-Dieu. In a similar move, the bishop of Cahors, Stephen (also

---


newly elected), recommended that the abbey of Saint-Théodard be handed over to La Chaise-Dieu. 109

The choice of La Chaise-Dieu to reform these abbeys highlights the Auvergnat abbey’s growing, and recognized, status as a center of reform in line with the Gregorian vision. It also highlights two sets of important relationships: first, La Chaise-Dieu and Raymond of Saint-Gilles; the second, La Chaise-Dieu and reform-minded bishops.

More than his brother, Raymond of Saint-Gilles took a special interest in the Auvergnat abbey. One can guess that with the death of the archbishop of Narbonne in 1079—who had been his close confidant—Raymond was in search of an ecclesiastical advocate to help him in his efforts to unify the region under his rule. 110 During this period, the house of Toulouse was a great power, dominating the landscape of the Midi; yet the land itself was still divided between the counts of Toulouse and the counts of Rouergue. The last count of Rouergue, Hugh, left his daughter Bertha to succeed him. 111 She married Robert II, count of Auvergne. After her death in 1066, Robert preserved the rights to Rouergue only through his daughter Judith; and this claim all but disappeared when she entered the cloister at Comps in 1077. 112 The Rouergue was Raymond’s by 1079. 113

---

109 This gift is confirmed in 1080 by Pope Gregory VII, see MPA, no. XXVIII, 53: “Specialiter et nominatim confirmamus praefato monasterio vestro abbatiam Galliacensem, in honorem sancti Michaelis consecratam, et abbatiam sancti Theodardi sitam in territorio Cathurcensi, cum monibus pertinentiis suis.”


111 Hill and Hill, Raymond IV, 8. Robert and Bertha were cousins.

112 See above, 82.

113 Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 131-32. John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill, in Raymond IV de Saint-Gilles, connect the intercession of Saint Robert to the heritage of Toulouse (19) while reporting the conflict between Raymond and the count of Auvergne
Raymond’s support of the Auvergnat abbey continued throughout Seguin’s abbacy as is evidenced in his donation of the monastery of Saint-Baudile of Nîmes and the cell of Beaucaire (1084), and his visit to La Chaise-Dieu one last time toward the end of his life (c. 1095), when he made another pilgrimage to pay homage at the tomb of Saint Robert before setting out on Crusade. He even took with him a relic from Saint Robert, which he ordered to be returned to the abbey upon his death. Bishop Herbert of Tripoli, Raymond’s chaplain, sent the relic back to La Chaise-Dieu after the count died in 1105 in Syria.

in connection with Rouergue (8-9). Raymond appears victorious in 1079, but the authors do not say how. They are not able to reconcile the succession of the Rouergue and the affection of Raymond toward La Chaise-Dieu. The transfer of the southern abbeys is the explanatory key according to Gaussin. A gap in the information here makes this turn of events difficult to explain. That Raymond was able to secure the Rouergue is not surprising. That Raymond had developed an affection for La Chaise-Dieu is not surprising. What is difficult to reconcile is La Chaise-Dieu’s role, if any, in the succession of the Rouergue. Count Robert II had granted a charter of protection to Abbot Durand (which Seguin renewed) and had made a substantial donation to Saint-Andrew of Comps when his daughter entered the community there in 1077. Would these acts not have inclined La Chaise-Dieu to act on his behalf when his claims to the Rouergue were challenged? Considering, however, Raymond’s continued affection for La Chaise-Dieu and barring further evidence, Gaussin’s conclusion seems reasonable though still conjecture. Also on this point see Lauranson-Rosaz, “Le Velay et le croisade”, 55. Lauranson-Rosaz suggests that even though the counts of Toulouse and Auvergne had several ruff confrontations regarding the inheritance of Rouergue that their common devotion for Saint Robert of Turlande helped to mitigate the situation. We might speculate too what role Hugh of Die had in these affairs.


116 Bernard, Liber tripartitus, 330: “Ipso igitur Comite ex hoc mundo educto, ille Tripolitanus Episcopus, quem Comes ipse, quoad vixit, carum semper habuerat ad seculrum B. Roberti reliquias Sanctorum, quas habuit, ut jussisset, cum aliiis pluribus ornamentis, magnisque divitiis Casam-Dei transmisit.”
Seguin’s relationship with his abbey’s most important secular benefactor to date grew out of his commitment to Pope Gregory’s vision for the church. Gregory, thanks to his legate, Hugh of Die, was hardly blind to Seguin’s efforts. Gregory’s confidence in the Auvergnat abbey was demonstrated when he entrusted in 1080 the politically vital abbey of Saint-Peter of Frassinoro to Seguin and La Chaise-Dieu. In normal times, one could image that Frassinoro, locally powerful, would be of little importance in international affairs. Its strategic position, however, not far from Canossa, drew Pope Gregory VII’s attention to it. Undoubtedly worried about the abbey’s continued allegiance in the face of imperial pressure, Pope Gregory VII turned the abbey over to La Chaise-Dieu.117

When Henry IV crossed the Alps during the spring of 1080 in route to Rome, Abbot Pons, who had been appointed abbot by the pope in 1078,118 abandoned his abbey, thus apparently incurring Abbot Seguin indignation. In 1083, Pons presented his case directly to the archbishop of Lyon, Hugh of Die,119 who seemed inclined to rule in his favor.120 Likely influenced by Abbot Seguin, however, Hugh ruled against Pons and excommunicated him. Pons found greater mercy from Bishop Anselm of Lucca,121 another of Pope Gregory VII’s legates.122 Hugh of Flavigny

118 Hugh of Flavigny, Chronica, 443: “Hoc etiam anno, qui erat ab incarnatione Domini 1078, regimen praelationis apud Casam Dei Siguinus . . . Sub quo ordinatus est abbas Fraxinensis ecclesiae Pontius . . . qui post aliquot annos infestatione Heinrici dicti regis abbaciam dimisit, quesita a domno Anselmo Lucensi episcopo licentia.” See also, Beyssac, Seguin d’Escotay, 10.
119 Fliche, L’Europe Occidentale, 418. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 136.
120 Jaffé, 5246: “Hugoni archipiscopo Lugdunensi praecepit, ut cui abbati interdixerit numere administrando, in eum misericordia utatur iudicet que inter eum et Casae Dei abbatem (Seguinum)”.
121 Hugh of Die and Anselm of Lucca were close friends, see Cowdrey, Pope
provides the text of a letter from Bishop Anselm, reproaching Pons for his lack of fortitude for wishing to resign his post in the face of pressure from Henry IV. Pons, according to Anselm, owed his position to Abbot Seguin and Archbishop Hugh. Anselm goes further, reminding Pons that Pope Gregory had entrusted Frassinoro to La Chaise-Dieu. The abbey of Frassinoro, so long as the fights between the pope and the emperor prevailed, would unceasingly face imperial advances, thus repeatedly drawing both the attention of the pope in Rome and the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, as we will the later chapters.

La Chaise-Dieu’s relationships with reform-minded bishops went far beyond Pope Gregory VII and his papal legates Hugh of Die and Anselm of Lucca, far beyond too the bishops of Albi and Cahors in the Rouergue. The abbey also reformed communities at the behest of the bishops of Périgueux, Limoges, Vienne, and Reims. When we look closely at La Chaise-Dieu’s record of monastic reform during Seguin’s abbacy, we see bishops submitted seventy percent of monastic communities reformed by the Auvergnat abbey. Most of these bishops had been installed during Pope

\[\text{Gregory VII, 356. Most likely around this same time, Bishop Anselm granted to Abbot Seguin the church of Saint-Cyr. On 5 December 1107, Pope Paschal II confirmed: “Sancti Quirici ecclesiam in Lucana urbis, suburbis sitam, sicut a bona memoria Anselmo, Lucano episcopo, tradita est, vestro in perpetuum monasterio possidendum” (MPA, no. LXX, 131). For further readings on Anselm see Kathleen G. Cushing, Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: The Canonistic Work of Anslem of Lucca (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).}\]

\[\text{122 Hugh of Flavigny, Chronica, 443.}\]

\[\text{123 Hugh of Flavigny, Chronica, 443-444. Nothing survives to suggest that Pope Gregory VII in fact subjected Frassinoro to La Chaise-Dieu accept this letter reproduced by Hugh of Flavigny. Pope Paschal II’s bull of 1107 to La Chaise-Dieu promised, however, that “in monasterio etiam Fraxinorense, quod ab egregia comitissa Mathilda vel ejus parentibus aedificatum est, et beato Petro oblatum est, abbas semper per vestram sollicitudinem ordinetur”. That is, “in the monastery of Frassinoro which was built by the excellent Countess Matilda and her family and offered to Saint Peter, the abbot will always be appointed by your care” (MPA, no. LXX, 129).}\]
Gregory VII’s papacy, all but one of them were located in the Midi, and none of them had a previous record of support for La Chaise-Dieu. Seguin’s record leaves little doubt that La Chaise-Dieu had become an important center of reform within the Midi.

Conclusions

Seguin of Escotay’s seventeen years as abbot was filled with activity. In fact, he died while visiting the dependent priory of Vignonet on 15 July 1094. What is most striking about his tenure is his skillful management of temporal affairs. He was a man of faith, ambitious for his abbey. He had made Robert’s foundation one of the most important abbeys in France, known (and supported) from Tuscany to Castile.

Seguin’s personal network of friendships, especially those created before he became abbot, put him into contact with some of the foremost ecclesiastical leaders of his day. Certainly his own influence and charisma had to be considerable to allow him the ability to function in such company. Under his stewardship between 1078 and 1094, the Casadéens emerged as a clear alternative to the Cluniacs; Cluny had begun to feel La Chaise-Dieu encroach on its dominion in Castile, Toulouse, and Reims, to name a few. The Auvergnat abbey’s expansion could not have passed without notice. Pope Gregory VII granted La Chaise-Dieu privileges equal to those of Cluny, and he regarded it as having special distinction among monastic communities and valued the example it set to surrounding churches. The reforming zeal it radiated, the monastic and ecclesiastical offices its abbots and monks held, and its network of friends, are all considerations that disposed Gregory VII in its


\[125\] MPA, no. XXVIII, 50-53.
favor.  

Very powerful secular lords had also been drawn to La Chaise-Dieu in the years following Durand’s acceptance of the episcopal see of Clermont. Durand himself had garnered the first documented donation from the duke of Aquitaine, but Seguin likewise developed meaningful associations, if for different reasons, with both the king of León-Castile and the count of Toulouse. All of these associations, secular and ecclesiastical alike, would become much more meaningful to Seguin’s successor who would be the first Casadéen abbot to face serious challenges.

126 Yet to assume that Gregory VII had any detailed knowledge about the goings-on at the Auvergnat abbey would be to go too far. This is made clear in a letter sent to his legate Archbishop Hugh of Lyons (MPA, no. XXXII, 58-59). In it, he raised the appeal of an unnamed abbot who failed to appear before the legate when summoned to settle a dispute with Abbot Seguin. Hugh had placed the abbot under interdict, who then proceeded to plead his case before the pope. Since Gregory had no idea what the disagreement was about, he refused to judge the case and sent it back to Hugh, whom he encouraged to show mercy toward the abbot and to lift the interdict. While this letter clearly demonstrates the pope’s lack of any detailed knowledge about the affairs of La Chaise-Dieu, it exhibits one more example of Archbishop Hugh’s actions to support it.
La Chaise-Dieu, during the abbacy of Seguin, had entered into a whole new phase of its development, as had history itself. Seguin had loosened the abbey’s initial dependence upon the bishop of Clermont and had managed regional ties while cultivating widespread support from ecclesiastical and secular lords supportive of Pope Gregory VII’s vision of church reform. La Chaise-Dieu’s days of innocence lay behind it; it was now attracting strong secular and ecclesiastical benefactors, and rivaling Cluny. Seguin had been able to guide his community through this dramatic period of expansion while defending its autonomy and distinctiveness. His successor, Pons of Tournon, one of the abbey’s first child oblates, would see the Auvergne and the diocese of Clermont become the focal point of ecclesiastical attention as Christendom stood on the brink of the First Crusade.

The seeds for what drew Christendom’s attention to the Auvergne in 1095 had been planted almost a century earlier during the staging of the first peace movements there. The Peace of God movement had developed in the Auvergne, and the Auvergnat episcopal leadership had been fundamental from the beginning. By the 1040s, however, the peace movement had undergone profound changes. While the Peace of God’s primary goal had been to protect the unarmed (especially the clergy),

1 See Chapter II above for discussions on the contributions of Stephen II, bishop of Clermont (35), and Aimon of Bourbon, archbishop of Bourges (58-59).
the more recent Truce of God sought to outlaw all fighting on certain days. The first Truce was declared at the council of Elne in 1027. The canons of the council of Narbonne (1054) went still further, suggesting that any Christian who killed another Christian “doubtless sheds the blood of Christ.”

Young men from the Midi, trained for the profession of arms, proved excellent recruits for the Christian knighthood and Pope Urban II’s 1095 call to take up arms against the “infidel” for two main reasons. First, they were frustrated by growing Church legislation against fighting; and second, perhaps even more importantly, they needed money. Landed estates were by custom divided equally among all direct heirs. Inheritances fragmented and their value often became meaningless.

The Christian knight found the anticipation of battle against Christ’s enemies attractive. While the Truce had discouraged killing one’s Christian neighbor, it had encouraged battle in defense of Christendom. When in 1095 Urban II exhorted his audience to undertake the defense of their Christian brethren in the East, his first canon renewed the Truce of God. Scholars have long recognized the link between the Peace and Truce movements and the First Crusade. Jean Dunbabin has even

---

2 Thomas Head and Richard Landes, in their “Introduction” to The Peace of God, give a concise discussion on the Peace’s transformation into the Truce (7-9).


4 Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum, 827.


argued that “Urban II [himself], [when] launching the First Crusade at Clermont in 1095, presented it as a natural evolution of the peace movement: warriors were to forget their petty feuds and squabbles in a campaign to promote the interests of Holy Church.”

The call to arms alone, however, did not occupy Urban’s thoughts; he also sought legitimacy and support. He found them both in the heart of the Auvergne. Bishop Durand’s long career in the Auvergne—as both abbot of La Chaise-Dieu and bishop of Clermont—and his steadfast support of the Gregorian Reform, had served Urban well. This made the see of Clermont an attractive location to deliver his message. Urban II was able to find in the Auvergne both his ecclesiastical and military leaders for the crusade: Adhemar of Monteil, bishop of Le Puy; and Raymond of Saint Gilles, count of Toulouse—both benefactors of La Chaise-Dieu.

---


8 Dunbabin, France in the Making, 290.


10 Urban could count on ecclesiastical and monastic support in the Auvergne. At this time, the archbishop of Bourges, Aldebert of Montmorillon, was a former monk of La Chaise-Dieu; Durand was bishop of Clermont; Pons of Tournon, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu.

11 Adhemar and Raymond were not strangers. They had been acquainted since at least 1087 when Raymond witnessed a charter by which Adhemar donated the church of Usson to La Chaise-Dieu Histoire générale de Languedoc, vol. 3, 260; “In nomine, etc. Ego Ademarus Aniciensis episcopus, dono ecclesiam de Ucione beato Roberto, et abbati Seguino, et monachis Casae-Dei prasentibus atque futuris . . .” See above, 101.
Pons’ Career

Seguin chose Pons of Tournon to succeed him.12 The family Tournon was an old and illustrious knightly family, which took its name from the town of Tournon on the banks of the Rhone where they are known to have a castle since at least the tenth century.13 Pons’ training for his new position as abbot differed notably from his predecessors. He was not a former canon. Pons entered the monastery as a child oblate during the abbacy of Durand; he was a *nutritus*, a monk who had grown up in the monastery.14 It is unclear when, exactly, he entered the monastery or how old he was at the time of his oblation. Since Durand had resigned his abbacy in 1078, Pons had been in community for at least sixteen years before becoming abbot himself. It seems reasonable to assume then that he was at least in his thirties when he was elected to the abbatial office. The loss of La Chaise-Dieu’s customary is especially regrettable here. One can only guess at the life Pons lived as a child oblate.

Pons’ first order of business upon his installation as abbot was to seek papal confirmation of his abbey’s goods, rights, and privileges. Pons went to Italy where in March 1095 he attended the council of Piacenza.15 Pons did not receive a bull at that time even though one historian has suggested the reason why Urban II chose Clermont was because of Pons’ presence at the pope’s side during the council.16

---

13 See Jean-Baptiste Bouillet, *Nobiliaire d’Auvergne*, vol. 6 (Clermont-Ferrand: Perol, 1846): 392-94. See above, 80.
15 MPA, no. XLV and no. XLVI, 72ff; see also *Beati Urbani II papae vita*, PL 151:157.
Pons returned to France where the pope would be celebrating the solemnity of August 15 in Le Puy. From Le Puy, Pons returned to his abbey where he awaited the arrival of Pope Urban II, who was due there on August 18 to consecrate the abbey church.

Pons still had yet to obtain papal confirmation of his abbey’s goods and privileges. One would have expected that Urban’s visit to La Chaise-Dieu on such a special occasion would have been a perfect opportunity to draft such a bull. It did not happen. Pope Urban’s visit to La Chaise-Dieu to celebrate the consecration of the abbey church, what was likely a grand event, with bishops from across France in attendance, was not entirely without its disheartening moments. Pons’ predecessor, Seguin, had already had to face verbal criticism levied at their founder’s spiritual choices, charges to which he had found it necessary to respond. Pons, however, had to face more than spiritual criticism. There may well have been earlier instances of the abbey treading on the rights of its neighbors, but here we have the first documented example, and it was dropped at Pons’ feet upon the pope’s arrival.

Abbess Florence of Blesle, having learned of the arrival of Pope Urban II in the Auvergne, took this opportunity to beseech his support directly against the monks of La Chaise-Dieu. She claimed that the monastery of Saint-Peter of Blesle,

---

17 MPA, no. XLVI, 72-74, n. 1.
18 Jaffé, 5571. See Gaufridus, prior Vosiensis, Chronicon in Repertorium Fontium Historiae Medii Aevi, vol. 4 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1976): 648. Others present at the consecration: Daibert, archbishop of Pisa; John, bishop of Porto (Portugal); Hugh, archbishop of Lyon; Audebert, archbishop of Bourges; Amat, archbishop of Bordeaux; Durand, bishop of Clermont; Hugh, bishop of Grenoble; Giraud, bishop of Cahors (MPA, 71).
19 Ibid.
20 See above, 107.
21 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XX, 434-436. For more on Blesle see Fournier, Le
founded by Ermengarde, wife of Count Bernard of Poitiers, had been placed under
the immediate protection of the Holy See and had since enjoyed many years of peace.
This peace had been broken, however, when monks from La Chaise-Dieu seized two
churches belonging to it: Saint-Stephen and Saint-Leo. Moreover, the monks, she
charged, then proceeded to remove the relic of Saint Leo from the latter. Had the
monks been alone in these actions, Abbess Florence could have sought justice and
recompense locally, but they were not.

The monks of La Chaise-Dieu had little to worry about concerning their
actions because they were supported both by the regional lord, Stephen of Mercoeur,
and the bishop of Clermont, Durand. Any local appeals for restitution on behalf of
the nuns would have fallen on deaf ears even though, as Abbess Florence explained in
her appeal to Pope Urban II, the provost at Clermont had established, in fact, that the
church of Saint Stephen (at least) belonged to the monastery of Saint-Peter of Blesle.
This, apparently, was a waste of her time too. With the support of Bishop Durand,
the monks held the church with men-at-arms. Florence had no other course of

Peuplement rural en Basse-Auvergne, 555-557.

22 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XX, 436: “Statium ut Roma, caput nostrum et
defensio nostra, inquietari et perturbari coepit, insurrexerunt monachi Casae-Dei, et
ecclesiam Sancti Stephani protomartyris et Sancti Leonis, papae urbis Romae, quem
Romani, quia Carolus imperator elegit eum, excaecaverunt, corpus cujus, ut
credimus, ibi re quisescit, manu ac violentia cujusdem potenti Stephani Mercoriensis,
nobis contradicentibus, abstulerunt, et auxilio domini Durandi, Claromentensis
episco pi, ipsum tenuerunt, quatum vivit supradictus Stephanus.” See also Bruno
Phalip, Seigneurs et bâtisseurs: le château et l'habitat seigneurial en Haute-Auvergne
et Brivadois entre le Xle et le XVe siècle (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses universitaires
Blaise-Pascal, 2000): 40.

23 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XX, 436: “Ipsi tamen monachi, adhuc rebelles, rectum
quod firmaverunt per septem milites tenent, et excommunicatione episcopi illam
ecclesiam desitutum et absque ministerio factunt esse ministrum etiam ejus in modum
sacrilegi extra ecclesiam. Ideoque suppliciter et benigne rogamus et obsecramus ut
consuetudinem quam tui antecessores fecerunt, facias, et ecclesiam quam amaverunt
action remaining; she entreated the pope to return “cherished” freedom to the church. Pope Urban II, on 18 August 1095, the same day he had consecrated the abbey church of La Chaise-Dieu, issued a bull placing the abbey of Blesle under the protection of the Apostolic See and threatening serious sanctions against anyone who sought to interfere there. This threat was, of course, aimed directly at the Casadéens and delivered on their doorstep. There was little for Pons to do—given he had yet to receive papal confirmation of his abbey’s good and privileges—other than to follow the pope’s directive.

Pons did not play host to Pope Urban II long. The pope continued his tour, leaving behind the Auvergnat church, under the direction of Bishop Durand, to complete preparations for the council at Clermont to be held in November. Pons finally received confirmation of his abbey’s goods on September 7.

---

atque monasterium nostrum cum omnibus rebus suis ab invasione et ereptione supradictorum monachorum eripias, et nos a servitute omnium aliorum protegas et defendas.” See also Aubrun, “Le diocèse de Clermont”, 29; and Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 143.

24 MPA, no. XLIV, 69, n.1.

25 MPA, no. XLIV, 69-71: “Tuis igitur, dilecta filia in Christo Florentia, precibus annunes, B. Petri de Blazilia monasterium in Arvernsi comitatu situm cui, Deo auctore, praesides, et Romanae Ecclesiae traditum, sub jure et protectione apostolica suscipimus, quemadmodum a praedecessoribus nostris constat esse susceptum. . . . Si quis sane in crastinum archiepiscopus, imperator, aut rex, aut princeps, aut dux, aut comes, aut vicecomes, judex, aut quaelibet ecclesiastica vel saecularis persona, sciens hujus privilegii paginam, contra eam venire tentaverit, secundo tertiove commonitus, si non satisfactione congrua emendaverit, potestatis honorisque sui dignitate careat, reumque se vivino judicio existere de perpetrata iniquitate cognoscat, atque a sacratissimo corpore et sanguine Dei ac Domini nostri Jesu Christi alienus fiat, et in extremo examine districtae ultioni subjaceat.”

26 MPA, no. XLVI, 72-74, esp. 73: “Vos igitur in speciales Romanae Ecclesiae filios suscipientes, eo vos sedis apostolicae patrocinio per decreti praesentis paginam communimus, et in legitimum sempiternum statuimus ut de coetero nulli archiepiscopo vel episcopo liceat super vestrum coenobium vel abbatem excommunicationis vel interdictionis manum extendere, sed in beati Petri et ejus vicariorum manu semper quieti ac liberi, per omnipotentis Dei gratiam, maneatis. . . . Praeterea possessiones omnes,
in a bull issued from Saint-Gilles, renewed the apostolic protection of La Chaise-Dieu
granted fifteen years earlier by Gregory VII. He confirmed all of the abbey’s
possessions and prohibited archbishops and bishops from placing the monastery
under interdict or excommunicating any of its members.\(^{27}\) He considered La Chaise-
Dieu a dependent of Saint Peter\(^ {28}\) — apparently his earlier rebuff of the abbey had few
long-lasting effects. We are left to speculate why Pope Urban was so long in
confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s position. Did he, as a former Cluniac monk, harbor
some resentment toward the Auvergnat abbey’s rapid growth, which impinged on
Cluny? Was it just a coincidence that his bull, when finally issued, originated from
Saint-Gilles, the home of Count Raymond of Toulouse, the protector of La Chaise-
Dieu?\(^ {29}\) Perhaps, Urban was just too preoccupied with problems in Rome and his
upcoming council in Clermont.

Between September and November, Pons was most likely occupied with
assisting his former abbot, Bishop Durand, prepare for Pope Urban’s council. We can

\(^ {27}\) MPA, no. XLVI, 72-74, esp. 73: “\textit{Vos igitur in speciales Romanae Ecclesiae
filios suscipientes, eo vos sedis apostolicae patrocinio per decreti praesentis paginam
communimus, et in legitimum sempiternum statuimus ut de coetero nulli archiepiscopo
vel episcopo liceat super vestrum coenobium vel abbatem excommunicationis vel
interdictionis manum extendere, sed in beati Petri et ejus vicariorum manu semper quieti
ac liberi, per omnipotentis Dei gratiam, maneatis. \ldots Praeterea possessiones omnes,
quas hodie juste possidere videbimini, sicut in privilegii nostri serie continetur, vobis
vestrisque successoribus perpetuo habendos apostolica auctoritate firmamus \ldots}”

\(^ {28}\) MPA, no. XLVI, 73: “\ldots vos enim pro religionis vestsrae praerogativa quietos
omnino persistere et tanquam pupillam oculi nostris custodiri volumus. \textit{Haec omnia, ut in
perpetuum firma et inconcussa intermerata permaneat, Dei omnipotentis Patris et Filii et
sancti Spiritus judicio et postestate sancimus.”}

\(^ {29}\) R. Crozet, “\textit{Le Voyage d’Urbain II et ses négociations avec le clergé de France}”
\textit{Revue Historique} CLXXIX (1937): 271-310. See also R. Crozet, “\textit{Le Voyage d’Urbain II
imagine Pons was particularly shaken by the death of Durand at the outset of the council. When Urban had heard the news that Durand had fallen ill, he hurried to his side where he found Abbot Pons among others. Durand’s death, however sad, did not bring halt to the business at hand.

The council of Clermont did not have a singular purpose, i.e., the call to arms. Urban had other ecclesiastical business to address. For one thing, he had a potential rivalry brewing between Cluny and La Chaise-Dieu. La Chaise-Dieu’s sudden expansion into areas where Cluny had yet to meet any serious competition—for example, in Castile, Toulouse, Reims, and Lyon—likely strained relations between the two abbeys. Pope Urban, perhaps with the backing of Count Raymond, sought to put a halt to this before it began. As we can observe, the arranged accord between the two houses, negotiated by the Aldebert of Montmorillon, archbishop of Bourges and a former monk of La Chaise-Dieu, and Hugh of Die, archbishop of Lyon, under the authority for the pope, does not specify any particular causes of the conflict, but is clear there was some sort of tension. What appears in the accord is an exchange between the two houses. Cluny gave La Chaise-Dieu the priory of

30 Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronica*, 474: “Adveniente igitur papa, visitatus ab eo, et absolutus, cum iam extremum spiritum traheret, nocte sequenti spiritum Creatori reddidit, lotus et curatus summa filiorum, id est abbatis Divionensis, abbatis Casae Dei, episcopi Gratianopolitani et aliorum diligentia.”

31 R. Crozet quotes from the Cartulary of Saint Sernin of Toulouse in his “Le Voyage d’Urbain II et ses négociations avec le clergé de France”, 272: “Factum est cum in partes Gallie pro negotiis ecclesiasticis venissemus.”


Castillon and the church of Chaméane. La Chaise, in return, yielded to Cluny the monastery of Bort and seven churches. This agreement endeavored to prevent future conflicts by specifying that the first abbey that acquired a church or some other possession would enjoy it without dispute from the other. Furthermore, monks from each monastery would be allowed to visit the other, but any transfer would be subject to both abbots’ approval.34

Once this matter was concluded, all parties could return to the business of the moment, the Crusade. Pons’ and La Chaise-Dieu’s role in this seems to be one primarily of support. The monks lodged, on occasion, the pope and his entourage; and Pons had participated in the preparatory meeting at Piacenza, then at Clermont.35 The monks certainly provided spiritual support for those taking up the Cross. Their friend and patron Raymond of Toulouse undertook a final pilgrimage to the

34 A.H. 40.1: “Cetera vero omnia que, eo die in quo hec concordia facta est, aliquam investitura tam fratres Cluniaci quam fratres Casedei tenebant, finierunt sibi in perpetua pace, nec sibi ad invicem ea deinceps calumniabantur. Convernerunt etiam inter se ut quaecumque de cetero terre vel possessiones sibi darentur ab illis qui eas aliquam investitura tenerent, fratres illi qui inde quaecumque donum susceperint eas sibi sine calunua et questione aliorum habeant. In ecclesiis vero adquirendis quicumque eorum primum partem adipisci dono ejus qui eis investitus est poterit, tnenbit eam in pace, nec quilibet alterius congregationis vim aut calumniam inferre poterit, nec adquirendi vel edificandi ecclesiam in ipsa parrochia licentiam vel facultatem habebit. Clericorum autem vel militum quisquis in extremis positus cuicumque loco eorum sese ad sepeliendum destinaverit, ibi sine calunna sepelietur, et quaecumque dederit, locus ipse in pace retinebit, etiam si se vel sua prius alteri partis devoverit, excepto quod si aliqua aliis cum investitura primum dedit, non licebit ea nisi ipsis qui inde investiti fuerant habere. Cupientium venire ad monasticum ordinem et habitum, nulli susciendi aditus quocumque ire velit ab altero prohibebitur, etiam si se ei primum devoverit, et si qua tunc largitas fuerit, locus ipse quem ingreditur in pace possidebit, exceptis his que cum investitura aliiis primum contulit. Suscepti ad habitum transire ab uno ad alterum monasterium non poterunt, nisi forte cum licentia abbatis sui.”

35 Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum, vol. 20, col. 801ff, for “Concilium Placentinum” and “Concilium Claromontanum.” See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 141.
Auvergnat abbey to pray for Saint Robert’s protection as he took up the cross, and he carried with him, like a relic, the cup of the saint. On this occasion, the count made a new donation to the abbey. He gave La Chaise-Dieu the churches of Beaucaire in the diocese of Arles, and to ensure the survival of the monks there, Raymond gave them the revenue from the taxes and tithes raised in the city. La Chaise-Dieu’s affiliation with the house of Toulouse grew from there. A Casadéen monk, Herbert, prior of Priveza in the Rouergue, accompanied Count Raymond to the Holy Land and was installed as the bishop of Tripoli. Likewise, Abbot Pons’ brother, Gilbert of Tournon, went on Crusade with Raymond.

---

36 Bernard, Liber tripartitus, 330: “Ipso igitur Comite ex hoc mundo educto, ille Tripolitanus Episcopus, quem Comes ipse, quod vixit, carum semper habuerat ad sepulcrum B. Roberti reliquias Sanctorum, quas habuit, ut jussisset, cum aliis pluribus ornamentis, magnisque divitis Casam-Dei transmisit.” After Raymond’s death in Syria in 1105, his chaplain, Bishop Herbert of Tripoli (a former monk of La Chaise-Dieu), sent the relic back to La Chaise-Dieu (Bernard, Liber tripartitus, 332). See also, Lauranson-Rosaz, “Le Velay et la croisade”, 56.


39 Diocese of Rodez.


41 Bouillet, Nobiliaire d’Auvergne, vol. 6, 392-94.
It is not surprising that La Chaise-Dieu continued to accept churches and priories for reform, and continued to found new communities throughout Pons’ abbacy. All was not well, however. The rapid success of the abbey had led, sometimes, to encroachments on the rights of others. Its seizure of certain churches belonging to the abbey of Blesle has been discussed above. Similar disputes began not only with other monasteries but also with bishops whose authority was likely threatened by the development of this exempt abbey.

The first of such conflicts found La Chaise-Dieu in opposition to the bishop of Nîmes. The priory of Saint-Baudile, a dependent of La Chaise-Dieu, had received from the viscountess Ermengarde the chapels of Saint-Martin and Saint-Peter near the castle of Arenas, and those of Saint-Stephen, Saint-Thomas, and Saint-Vincent in the town of Nîmes. 42 This impinged on the rights of the bishop of Nîmes as they had been defined by the Council of Melfi in 1089.43 A compromise was reached on 6 January 1100; in it, La Chaise-Dieu agreed to relinquish all the chapels to Bishop Raymond, while in return the bishop would give the nunnery of Saint-Sauveur-de-la-Font in Nîmes to La Chaise-Dieu and would ratify the gifts of both it and Saint-Baudile.44

---

42 Donated to La Chaise-Dieu by Count Raymond of Toulouse and Viscountess Ermengarde in 1084 (see A. H. 179.1).

43 Histoire de conciles, ed. Karl Hefele, vol. 1 (Paris: A. Le Clère, 1907): 344, col. 5: "No layman should, without permission of the bishop or the pope, give to a monastery or a canonicate its tithes, or church, or, in general, anything that belongs to another church" (Council of Melfi, 10 September 1089). See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 143.

44 A.H. 179.2, published in Tablettes Historiques de Velay, vol. 8, 20: “Diffinivit namque et guirpivit predictus abbas Poncius Raimundo Nemausensi episcopo et clericis ejus et eorum successoribus eacclesias intra eandem urbam fundatas, videlicet capellas Sancti Martini et Sancti Petri que sunt in castello quod dicitur Arenas, et capellam Sancti Thome que est in muro civitatis et aliam Sancti Stephani que est juxta Capitolium, et capellam Sancti Vincencii cum omnibus illis que capellani tenebant et habebant sive
The onset of criticisms and conflicts over disputed dependencies seems to have had little overall effect on La Chaise-Dieu’s reputation. On at least two separate occasions during Pons’ abbacy, La Chaise-Dieu was sought out, or at least recommended, to help restore order to communities. At the council of Nîmes in 1096, Humbald, bishop of Auxerre, denounced Abbot Guibert of Saint-Germain of Auxerre and charged him with “serious offences.” Pope Urban II, recognizing Guibert’s guilt, wanted to restore discipline in the monastery and so recommended that the new abbot be drawn from Cluny, Marmoutier, or La Chaise-Dieu—all three with particularly close ties to the papacy.

Later during Pons’ abbacy (1099), the archbishop of Vienne, sought to restore the former discipline to the abbey of Saint-André-le-Bas, which, he claimed, had fallen into a state of neglect and depravity. He decided to yield the monastery to

---

*homines per eos ipsa die qua Petrus Guidonis, prior Sancti Baudilii, recepit eas ab Ermengarde, vicecomitissa, et filio ejus Bernardo, vicecomite, et propter hanc diffinicionem et guirpitionem predictus episcopus Raimundus et clerici ejus laudaverunt predicto abbati Ponceio et successoribus ejus abbachiam Sancti Baudilii, salva reverentia et obedientia episcopali et monasterii monacharum Sancti Salvatoris fundatum infra muros civitatis . . .” Witnesses: Robert, abbot of Notre-Dame of Grasse (*Crassensi*), and his brother Stephen, a monk; Maurice, prior of La Chaise-Dieu; Peter Guidon, prior of St-Baudile (January 6, 1100; “anno ab Incarnatione Domini M. XC. VIIII, anno primo Pascalis pape, VIII idus januarii”).

45 MPA, 101, n.1.

46 MPA, no. LVIII, 101; see Mabillon, *Annales Benedicti*, vol. 5, 568; and Gallia *Christiana*, vol. 12, col. 366. Bishop Humbald chose a replacement from Cluny, Hugh of Montaigut, the nephew of Hugh of Cluny. See also Farmer’s *Communities of Saint Martin*; and Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 144.

47 MPA, no. XXV, 442: “Ego Guido, per gratiam Dei Vienensium archipiscopus, gravissimum animadvertens de neglectibus commissorum pastoribus immine periculum, et copiosus beatitudinis provenire praemium, si salubria eis et recta providerint, cum desiderarem beati Andreae apostolic abbatiam quondam religiosam ac multa dignitate praediam, infra moenia urbis Viennae sitam, omni penitus monastica disciplina inhabitantium pravitate desolatam et temporalibus beneficiis prorsus attenuatam . . .”
La Chaise-Dieu for reform. The archbishop did, however, reserve some rights there. This is quite similar to the situation, as we recall, at Saint-Nicaise. The archbishop placed Saint-André under the direction of La Chaise-Dieu with the stipulation that the abbey could not be reduced to a priory. He did, however, indicate that the abbot there would always owe obedience to the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. If it would ever become necessary to depose the abbot of Saint-André, the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu could only do this in consultation with the archbishop. This was the case immediately. The discipline at Saint-André was in such grave condition that it became necessary to depose the abbot. The monks there elected a new abbot after consulting with Pons of La Chaise-Dieu, who received an oath of obedience from the newly elected official. The monks of Saint-André then owed their obedience to their abbot, but would follow the monastic customs of La Chaise-Dieu.

Pons demonstrated a spirit of compromise in his leadership of La Chaise-Dieu. This neither hampered La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion nor lessened his own notable reputation however. He was elected, in 1102, bishop of the see of Le Puy, which had remained vacant since Adhémar of Monteil had died of the plague in

---

48 See above, 105-106.

49 See Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 144. Abbot Stephen of La Chaise-Dieu, as we will see, would have problems with this stipulation when in 1117 it became necessary to depose the abbot of Saint-André again.

50 MPA, no. XXV, 442: “Ille vero, quem abbas Casae-Dei in abbatem sancti Andraee de suis et consilio fratrum Casae-Dei elegerit, cum ab archiepiscopo consecratus fuerit, omnem obedientiam et reverentiam, sicut ipse ante electionem persolvere solebat abbatii Casae-Dei, cum omni humilitate exhibeat.”

51 MPA, no. XXV, 443: “Illi vero qui impraesentiarum in abbati Sancti Andreae monachi sunt, aut in futuro iibi ad conversionem venerint, consecrati ab abbate ejusdem loci obedientiam sibi promittant, sed professionem, secundem morem monasticum, abbatiae quae Casae-Dei dicitur, facient.”
Antioch on 1 August 1098.\textsuperscript{52} This was likely a difficult assignment for Pons as local lords, in particular the Polignacs, had had most of four years to encroach on the rights of the church.\textsuperscript{53}

It is quite difficult to access Pons’ episcopal tenure. His initially duty required him to bring order back to the diocese. It is easy to speculate that the greatest challenge to his authority came from the Polignacs, but this does not seem to have been the case all the time. In a charter dated December 1105 we see Bishop Pons supporting the viscount of Polignac’s donation of the church of Bains to the abbey of Conques.\textsuperscript{54}

Pons, child oblate, abbot, and bishop, died in 1112.\textsuperscript{55} He was buried in the Casadéen cell of Rochepaule, which his family had given to La Chaise-Dieu at the time of his oblation. His tomb remained there until its destruction during the Wars of Religion.\textsuperscript{56}

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors

La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion during Pons’ abbacy was limited and linked primarily to the abbey’s two most important advocates: Raymond, count of Toulouse; and Hugh of Die, archbishop of Lyon. He maintained the abbey’s close

\textsuperscript{52} Hugh of Flavigny, \textit{Chronica}, 502: “\textit{Anno ab inc. Dom. 1102. ordinatus est in episcopum Aniciensem Pontius Casae Dei abbas, et abbatiam Casae Dei procurandam suscepit Aymericus.”} For Adhémar, see Hill and Hill, \textit{Raymond IV}, 97.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Histoire Générale du Languedoc}, vol. 4, 402. See also Gaussin, \textit{L’Abbaye}, 145.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Histoire Générale de Languedoc}, vol. 8, 797.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Histoire Générale du Languedoc}, vol. 4, 402-3. Pons-Maurice of Montboissier (uncle of Peter the Venerable and Jordan, the eight abbot of La Chaise-Dieu) succeeded him as bishop.

\textsuperscript{56} Concerning the burial in Rochepaule see Gardon, \textit{Histoire de l’Abbaye de la Chaize-Dieu}, 7; and Estiennot, \textit{Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae}, 20.
relationships with Count Raymond of Toulouse and had garnered from him still another donation before he set out for the Holy Land. Other donations from the Languedoc followed. The bishop of Maguelonne, Godefroy, gave the church of Saint Vincent in Jonquières (diocese of Arles) to La Chaise-Dieu after the count of Mauguio had surrendered his rights to it.57

Raymond’s gifts, and those from his *mouvance*, were not the only support La Chaise-Dieu received during the abbacy of Pons; nor was Raymond the only crusader to support the Auvergnat abbey. William III of Forez’s departure on crusade also benefited La Chaise-Dieu. He held the church of Moingt, which he wanted to give back to the church. He relinquished it into the “prudent and devout hand” (*in manu prudentis et religiosi*) of the archbishop Lyon, Hugh of Die, who in turn granted it to Abbot Pons (10 December 1096).58 This marked the beginning of a considerable Casadéen expansion into the diocese of Lyon. In the region of the Forez, the monks founded the conventual priory of Savigneux near the city of Montbrison. In the region surrounding Lyon itself they established a priory at Pouilly. In Dombes, they founded the cell of Montfavrey and the priory of Saint-Trivier.59

57 A.H. 174.1. Others giving up rights to this church included, Béranger, bishop of Agde; Peter, count of Mauguio; the viscounts of Béziers, Peter Brémond, Raymond Pelet, Raymond Béranger of Mireval, Raymond of Olmet. The foundation of the priories of Lieussac and Pézenas most likely date back to this time as well. They are listed as dependents in the act dated to 1116, A.H. 174.2-8, in which Gautier, bishop of Maguelonne, confirmed the gift of Saint Vincent Jonquières made by his predecessor. See also *Tablettes Historiques de Velay*, vol. 8, 29.

58 A.H. 142.1-3: “*Dominus autem Hugo . . . dedit eam monasterio casae dei in manu Poncii abbatis quarti casae dei*”. This gift was confirmed by William III of Baffie, bishop of Clermont and abbot of Saint-Irene, and Béraud of Châtillon, bishop of Macon and archdeacon of Lyon (among others) in the presence of Guigo, abbot of Ile-Barbe. See also Gaussin, *L’Abbaye*, 142.

59 A.H. 142. The priories of Savigneux, Pouilly, and Saint-Trivier are known about by 1116.
Despite the abbey’s rather meager expansion during Pons’ abbacy, it is clear that bishops still considered it a center of reform. This was demonstrated on several occasions. Monks from La Chaise-Dieu had, at the request of the diocesan bishop, assisted in the reform Saint-André-le-Bas in the diocese of Vienne, and Pope Urban II had recommended La Chaise-Dieu as an appropriate source for a new abbot to restore discipline to the community of Saint-Germain of Auxerre.

Conclusions

Pons’ seems to have had a less active abbatial career than that of his predecessor, but then his abbacy was only half as long, followed by a ten-year episcopate. Pons, from what can be pieced together, led a life dedicated to the advancement of his abbey, even if, on occasion, this meant retreat. The beginning of his abbacy, like those of his predecessors, was spent securing the rights and possessions of his abbey. What documents do survive give no sense of urgency in his actions. While we know Pons attended the council of Piacenza in March 1095, it was 7 September 1095 before Pope Urban II actually renewed the apostolic protection of La Chaise-Dieu granted fifteen years earlier by Gregory VII. Even as Urban took action against the abbey’s encroachment on the rights of another community, he continued to consider it a center of reform and discipline.

With Urban II in the Auvergne at the outset of Pons’ career, many of this abbot’s initial activities were focused in papal supporting roles. He housed Urban’s entourage; he assisted Bishop Durand, his former mentor and abbot, in his preparation of the council to be held in Clermont, and he participated in that council where he was able to renew contact with many ecclesiastics with close ties to La Chaise-Dieu. Under Pons’ direction, the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu supported the crusading efforts
of their patron, Raymond of Toulouse, and other regional knights.

It was only after this initial flurry of activity that Pons was able to step back and take stock in his abbey’s affairs. While his abbey’s expansion, viewed aggressive by some onlookers, had begun to draw criticism, Pons dealt with each situation, utilizing his abbey’s strengths while understanding its weaknesses. La Chaise-Dieu was not just a regional abbey, nor had it been for some time. Pons had the ability to negotiate with southern bishops, while continuing to cultivate many long-standing relationships—particularly with Archbishop Hugh of Die.

There is no hint of urgency in Pons’ abbacy. Then again, he knew his abbey well; it was active and well-established. Moreover, he could rely on a deep-rooted network of benefactors and advocates. While we do not sense the same vibrancy in Pons’ abbacy as we did in Seguin’s, we should not rush to underestimate his stature in the Church. Pons did not need to travel as widely as his predecessor had; the ecclesiastical world was in his backyard. And with the death of, probably, one of the most important bishops in the region, Adhemar of Monteil, Pons, who had proven himself as a negotiator, was chosen to fill his see, which had been vacant for years.

Pons’ abbatial successor would be left in a very comfortable position. Most of the pressing conflicts had already been settled and the new abbot would have the support of his former abbot, now the bishop of Le Puy. The new abbot, however, would have to face a changing political atmosphere in the region.
PART FOUR: FRANCE AND BEYOND INTO SWITZERLAND
Aimeric, unlike his predecessor, had to face his abbatial duties without the abbey’s most important secular advocate, Raymond of Toulouse. Raymond’s departure (along with that of Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy) for the Holy Land in 1095 had left a power vacuum in the Midi. Raymond’s successors were capable men, but they were often challenged in their efforts at consolidation by threats coming from the house of Barcelona, and none of them took the same interest in La Chaise-Dieu as had Raymond. Raymond’s death in 1105 meant that La Chaise-Dieu had lost forever its most important and powerful secular ally.

The effects of this dangerous comital void could be felt almost immediately in the Auvergne, where secular political stability had long remained elusive. Witnesses to this are the actions taken by the newly installed bishop of Clermont, Peter Roux. By 1105 Bishop Peter was actively engaged in leading troops against local nobles in response to their abusive behavior. Such was the case when the bishop led troops against knights holding prisoner the abbot of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif of Sens. Evidence of other abuse of the clergy can be found in Bishop Peter’s letter, written sometime

---

3 *Chronique de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens*: 144: “Contigit autem ut eo tempore episcopus Clarimontensis, vir religiosus, nomine Petrus, congregatio maximo exercitu circa Aureltacense coenobium, ut mos est episcoporum prefate urbis, hotes quaereret, qui nonquam desunt Sanctae Aecclesiae.”
between 1105 and 1111, to Pope Pascal II, in which he described another incident that had taken place in his diocese. A knight had taken refuge in a church belonging to La Chaise-Dieu and fortified it against attack. Then, the following day—the feast of the Circumcision (January 1), a day of peace according to the Truce of God—the knight and his followers burned the church, plundered its ornaments, and kidnapped one of the priests, who was horribly mutilated. Bishop Peter concluded his letter by asking the pope to rule against the unnamed authors of this crime. The bishop of Clermont could not afford to allow belligerent knights to wreck his diocese; he had to act.

**Aimeric’s Career**

Unlike the first four successors of Saint Robert, all monks of La Chaise-Dieu itself, the sixth abbot was prior of the Casadéen priory of Andryes in Burgundy, nearly two hundred miles north before becoming abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. No other

---


5 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXVI, 444: “Miles quid satis malus et multis irretitus offensionibus, queso ipse de loco sue habitacionis violenter expulerant, ecclesiam quammdam ad Casam-Dei pertinentem munierat, ut et ibi se tuertur, et eos impugnando posset inde resistere. Isti vero, priusquam mihi res innotesceret, vel aliqua mihi proclamatio fieret, in zelo justicie, sed capitali odio quod mecum dicebantur habere, in crastino Circumcisionis Dominice quo treuga nostra servatur, cimiterium violantes, ecclesiam combusserunt, sacras vester et ornamenta sanctuarii, supellectilemque commorantis ibidem monachi diripuerunt, presbiterumque qui nichil commiserat, sacris vestibus indutum de post altare traxerunt et in captionem ducunt diu tenuerunt, et, capto predicto milite, alios ex his qui cum eo errant, in ipso ecclesie aditu, decollaverunt, aliosuos minibus aut pedibus amputates vel oculis evulsis reliquerunt, sequenti die reversi, orribili et nefanda crudelitate mactando laniaverunt.”

evidence survives concerning his origins. If, as one historian asserts, he was a native of Clermont, then from his earliest days he would have known of the great abbey that lay to the south, but the course by which he became prior of Andryes then abbot of La Chaise-Dieu is lost to us.

Details too concerning Aimeric’s career as abbot remain little known. Assuredly attacks on clergy coupled with threats of future similar incidents, had to heighten Aimeric’s awareness of the precariousness of his abbey’s situation. What first marks Aimeric’s abbacy is La Chaise-Dieu’s continued pontifical protection. Aimeric met with Pope Pascal II in Lyon in 1106 at the dedication of the abbey church of Saint-Martin of Ainay. The pope, fully informed by both bishop and abbot about the conditions in the Auvergne, confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s privileges as had popes Gregory VII and Urban II. He not only repeated what his predecessors had declared, that the Auvergnat abbey depended only on the Apostolic See, but also added that these privileges extended to all its dependencies. This was a significant departure from the bulls of both Gregory VII and Urban II. This *privilegium commune* was the first official recognition of La Chaise-Dieu’s and its dependents’ development into a single entity.

Pope Pascal likewise confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of the

---

8 See MPA, 118, n. 3. See also Gaussin, *L'Abbaye*, 145.
9 A. H. 315.1; published MPA no. LXIV, 119; also *Tablettes Historiques de Velay*, vol. 8, 24-26. See also Jaffé, 6114: “Ea propter, fili Aimerice in Christo karissime, tuis tuorumque fratrum justis desideriis et petitionibus annuentes, cenobium Casedei cui, Deo auctore, presidere dinosceris, secundum predecessorum nostrorum statuta in apostolice sedis gremio specialiter confoventes, tam caput quam membra cetera presentis decreti auctoritate munimus. Omnia enim que eidem cenobio a predecessoribus nostris apostolice memorie Gregorio VII et Urbano II concessa sunt . . .”
monastery of Saint André-le-Bas in the diocese of Vienne,\(^\text{10}\) the church of Saint-Trivier in the diocese of Lyon,\(^\text{11}\) the cell of Bessan in the diocese of Agde,\(^\text{12}\) and other goods that belonged, or would belong, to the abbey. Pope Pascal declared that upon the death of the abbot, the monks alone would be able to elect his successor.\(^\text{13}\) The pope—in return for these freedoms and as a sign of La Chaise-Dieu’s dependency on Rome—required a yearly tax to be paid to the Lateran palace, a custom that was becoming more widespread.\(^\text{14}\) “In sign of the freedom granted by the Roman Church, you will pay one bezant each year to the Lateran palace.”\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{10}\) A.H. 315.1: “Confirmamus etiam vobis monasterium Sancti Andree Vienne situm, quod a confratre Guidone, Viennsi archiepiscopo, vobis constat esse concessum . . .” This monastery had been founded in the sixth century by Duke Ancemond and his wife. In the ninth century, it became a dependant of the church of Vienne. See discussion concerning its transfer to La Chaise-Dieu, 138-39.

\(^\text{11}\) A.H. 315.1: “Confirmamus . . . ecclesiam quoque Sancti Treverii, quam venerabilis memorie Hugo, Lugdunensis archigpiscopus, consentiente communi capitulo, vestro cenobio contulit . . .” Saint-Trivier, according to Pascal, had been donated by Archbishop Hugh of Lyon.

\(^\text{12}\) A.H. 315.1: “Confirmamus . . . iterum cellam de Beciano, a confratre nostro Bernardo, episcoopo Agatensi, concessam”. The cell of Bessan had initially been given to the monastery of Saint-Tibéry. The monks of La Chaise-Dieu, however, claimed that Gontaine, bishop of Agde, had donated it to them. They insisted, then, that Bishop Bernard III, who governed the church, return it to their possession. Bernard yielded to their claims. This bull recognizes this transfer. The cell was later returned to Saint-Tibéry (1139) after La Chaise-Dieu’s claim proved false; even so, it continued to be a source of contention between the two monasteries for a long time. See Gaussin, Rayonnement, 431.

\(^\text{13}\) A.H. 315.1: “Obeunte te, nunc ejus loci abbate, vel tuorum quolibet successorum, nullus ibi quilibet subreptionis astutia vel violentia preponatur, nisi quem fratres communi consensu vel fratrum pars consilii sanioris, secundum Deum et beati Benedicti regulam elegerint.”

\(^\text{14}\) Constable, Reformation, 242.

\(^\text{15}\) A.H. 315.1: “Ad indicium autem perceive a Romana ecclesia libertatis, bizantium unum quotannis Laternensi palatio persolvetis.” A bezant was a gold coin. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 146.
Pope Pascal II, in December of 1107, issued a second bull in which he re-confirmed the submission of a number of communities. He instructed that the abbots of Frassinoro, Brantôme, Gaillac, and Saint-Théodard should, among others, continue to be named (or confirmed) by La Chaise-Dieu’s abbot. Pascal also confirmed the possession of the church of Saint-Cyr of Lucca, and of the priory of Saint-Baudile, and he entrusted to Aimeric the administration of two distant monasteries: San Marino of Pavia and Saint-Peter of Môtiers in Val-de-Travers (Maps 3 and 4).

With Saint-Peter of Môtiers, in the diocese of Lausanne, La Chaise-Dieu’s influence spread into modern-day Switzerland. The community at Môtiers had formally belonged to the Cluniac abbey of Payerne. One might guess

---

16 MPA, no. LXX, 128ff; see also Jaffé, 6176.
17 The abbey of Frassinoro had been founded in 1071 by Countess Mathilda and submitted to La Chaise-Dieu in 1080 by Pope Gregory VII. See above, 99.
18 The abbey of Brantôme had been founded in 769 by Charlemagne, and had been subjected to La Chaise-Dieu in 1080 by Count Hélie and Bishop William of Montbéron. See above, 100.
19 Both Gaillac and Saint-Théodard had been turned over to La Chaise-Dieu in 1079 following the council of Toulouse. See above, 96.
20 Donated to La Chaise-Dieu by Bishop Anselm of Lucca. See above, 122-23, n. 121.
21 Donated to La Chaise-Dieu by Raymond of Toulouse in 1084. See above, 121.
22 Founded in the eighth century by Astolph (or Astaufl), king of the Lombards. In 976 Emperor Otto II gave it to the bishop of Pavie. By 1107 it had declined, perhaps even abandoned. See Gaussin, Rayonnement, 333-34; see also MPA, 120.
23 This is among the first extant mentions of Val-de-Travers. The priory was founded between 909 and 1032. See Louis de Charrière, Le dynastes de Grandson jusqu'au XIIIe siècle: avec pièces justificatives, répertoire et tableaux généalogiques (Lausanne : Georges Bridel, 1866); Paul Vouga, Éssai sur les origines des habitants du Val-de-Travers (Neuchâtel: Attinger frères, 1906). See also Hugues Jéquier, Le Val-de-Travers: Des Origines au XIVe Siècle (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1962); Eric-André Klauser, Le Prieuré Saint-Pierre de Môtiers (Hauterive, Switzerland: Editions Gilles Attinger, 1990); and Frühe Klöster, die Benediktiner und Benediktinerinnen in der Schweiz (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1986): vol. 1, 7; vol. 3, 1062-1063.
that there was some political motive behind this change of alliance. The abbey of Payerne had been affiliated with Emperor Henry IV. La Chaise-Dieu was more sympathetic to Pope Pascal II.24

The only other records for the abbacy of Aimeric, aside from these two bulls from Pope Pascal, attest to conflicts with other religious communities. The first conflict involved the monastery Sainte-Marie of Gourdaignes (or Goudargues) in the diocese of Uzès. This was a long running dispute between the monks of La Chaise-Dieu and those of Aniane. The monastery of Gourdaignes was old. Louis the Pious had given it to the monastery of Aniane in 815. In the eleventh century (1065), Raymond, count of Rodez, submitted it to Abbot Hugh of Cluny. It has been suggested that this was one of the communities exchanged between Cluny and La Chaise-Dieu at the council of Clermont in 1095,25 although it is not among the institutions listed in the charter.26

When the monks of Aniane reasserted their claim to Gourdaignes, Pope Pascal II got involved. In July of 1107, Pope Pascal charged Richard, bishop of Albano; Gerard, bishop of Angoulême; Albert, bishop of Avignon; Eustache, bishop of Valence; Galtier, bishop of Maguelonne; the cardinal-priests Risus, Landulfe, and Divizoni; and the cardinal-deacons John, Hugh, and Berard, with settling the disagreement.27 The referees decided in favor of the abbey of Aniane.28 They

25 MPA, 126, n. 1.
26 For the text of the charter see A.H. 40.1. See above, 134-35.
27 MPA, no. XXVII, 445-446: “Chartam recordationis ad memoriam retinendam in futuris temporibus scribere curamus de lite, quam habuerunt abbas et monachi Sancti Salvatoris de Aniana contra abbatem et monachos Casae-Dei de quadam ecclesias Sanctae Mariae sita in loco qui Gordanica nuncupatur. Post proclamacionem autem factam ante domnum apostolicum Paschalem II, dati sunt ab eo judices, qui causam
decided, after further investigation, that the monks of Aniane had had the monastery of Gourdaignes before the monks of La Chaise-Dieu had driven them out. With this knowledge, Pope Pascal II determined that the monastery should be returned to Aniane; however, he did also recognize that La Chaise-Dieu probably did still have some legitimate claim to Gourdaignes too.²⁹ Pope Pascal’s lukewarm decision hardly put an end to this particular disagreement.

Nearly six years later, in a bull dated 1113, Pope Pascal II revisited this dispute.³⁰ Pascal instructed the bishops of Avignon, Valence, and Die to reexamine this disagreement over Gourdaignes.³¹ Once again, they found in favor of Aniane,³²

---

²⁸ MPA, no. LXVIII, 126; see also MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXVII, 445-446; and Gallia Christiana, vol. 13, col. 297-298.

²⁹ MPA, no. XXVII, 446: “... omnes, visis rationibus partium et instrumentis, ex rationibus praedictorum abbatis et monachorum Casae-Dei et ex scripturis illorum instrumentorum cognoverunt prenominatos Anianenses abbatem et monachos ecclesiam supraddictam, de qua lis furat, prius possedisse, eosque expulsos fuisse a praedictis monachis Casae-Dei, et ideo praenominati judices communi consilio judicaverunt ut restitutio praescriptae ecclesiae canonice et plenarie daretur Anianensibus abbati et monachis jam saepe dictis; quod judicium postquam ante praedictum Romanum pontificem relatum est, ad effectum perducere non distulit, sed praefatum abbatem Casae-Dei cum cereo quem tenebat in manu sua refutare fecit, et ipsemet pap, susceppta eadem refutatione, illico Anianensem abbatem et monaschos cum eodem cereo et quodam lapide revestivit, salvo tamen jure Casae-Dei, si quod ibi habere videbitur.”

³⁰ MPA, no. LXXII, 133-136. Aimeric was now bishop of Clermont, and Stephen of Mercoeur, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu.

³¹ MPA, no. LXXII, 134: “Eapropter, opportunum duximus, dum in Galliarum partibus moraremur, controversiam illam quae inter Casae Dei monasterium et Anianense coenobium, super cella de Gordianico agebatur, venerabilibus fratribus Arberto Avenionense, Eustachio Valentino, Hismioni Diensi, episcopis...”

³² MPA, no. LXXII, 135: “Nos ergo supraddictorum fratribum quos in hoc negotio nostri vicejudices dedimus, litterarum praesentium decreto judicium confirmamus, et
but even this did not put an end to La Chaise-Dieu’s claims. In a bull dated 1114, Pope Pascal II, for a third time, assured Abbot Peter of Aniane that the monastery of Gourdaignes belonged to his abbey.\footnote{Gallia Christiana, vol. 6, col. 838; see also MPA, no. LXXII, 136: “Neque sic tamen conquieverunt Casadenses, quos iterum atque tertio de jure quod sibi vindicabant, cella Anianensis asseria, depulit Paschalis altera bulla data Petro, v Kalendas Decembris, Pontificatus anno XVI, hic est 1114.”} This dispute continued to drag on until—as we will see in the next chapter—Pope Honorius II ruled in Aniane’s favor, threatening excommunication on those who would dare to challenge Aniane’s possession of Gourdaignes (26 April 1127).\footnote{Jaffé, 6388, 6409, 6687, 6714, 7290, 7291. See Histoire Générale du Languedoc, vol. 3, 573, 640, 688-690; vol. 4, 866-867. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 150.}

La Chaise-Dieu’s disagreement with Aniane was not the only one to surface during Aimeric’s abbacy. The second conflict occurred when Peter II, bishop of Poitiers, who had already given the church of Saint-Félix of Sillards to La Chaise-Dieu in 1091, gave, in 1109, the three churches of Jazeneuil to the Auvergnat abbey.\footnote{A.H. 184.1; published in Tablettes Historiques de Velay, vol. 8, 195: “Hac itaque pie devotionis sollicitudine excitatus, animadverti ecclesias Sancte Marie, et Sancti Macuti, et Sancte Genovefe virginis, que in villa que Jasendium dicitur sunt, ab inhonestis possessoribus obtineri et irreligiose tractare. Juste igitur dispensationis zelo cupiens ab ecclesia Dei omnem inhonestatem et injusticiam extirpare et religionis cultum in ea inserere et semper in melius promovere, dedi et concessi predictas ecclesias de Jazenolio ecclesie Chase Dei in manu venerabilis fratris nostri Aimerici abbatis, ut sicut priores possessores iniquitati ad iniquitatem se ipsos exhibuerunt, ita et monachi Chase Dei eorum successores justicie in sanctificationem intenti, divinum serciciun juste et religiose ibi perpetuo celebrant.” See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 146.} The abbot of Saint-Maixent, Geoffrey, however, protested this transfer, producing a donation made of these same churches to his abbey in 1069 by the lord of Lasignan.\footnote{A.H. 184.2, published in Tablettes Historiques de Velay, vol. 8, 196-197; see also...} Charged by Pope Pascal II to investigate these claims, the bishop of...
Angoulême, Gerard, found in La Chaise-Dieu’s favor in 1111.\textsuperscript{37}

Aimeric, as the head of the Casadéen congregation, also acted on behalf of his dependent communities when need arose. One such case arose when the prior of Aix, Hugh, and several monks from Cluny challenged the Casadéen priory of Sainte-Gemme’s possession of the church of Saint-Hilaire of Hiers.\textsuperscript{38} The monks from Cluny took the case to the Bishop Peter of Saintes. They claimed that Saint-Hilaire belonged to them and that the Casadéen monks had violently stolen it. Bishop Peter called both sides together. Aimeric attended the meeting, and there again the monks from Cluny claimed that they had had the church first. The Casadéens did not bother to address this point; they pointed instead to the concord made between the two monasteries in 1095,\textsuperscript{39} noting that at that time, Saint-Hilaire was listed among the Casadéen possessions. Bishop Peter, hearing both sides, asked the representatives from La Chaise-Dieu to chose one of their monks who would swear on the Gospels the veracity of this assertion. Abbot Aimeric indicated one of the oldest monks from Sainte-Gemme, named Létier. Apparently, after he placed his hand upon the Gospels and started to swear, the monks from Cluny withdrew themselves, saying that they


\textsuperscript{37} A.H. 184.2: “\textit{Nos, inquam, judicavimus illum narrationem ad probationem non valere, et ideo abbatem Sancti Maxencii et monacos ejus successores ab hac querela adversus monasterium Case Dei debere cessare. Abbati vero Case Dei et monasterio ejus ac suis successoribus diffinitive predictas ecclesias adjudicavimus ut nullam deinceps ab abbatibus vel monachis Sancti Maxencii inqui\textit{c}etationem vel calumpniam sustineant.””

\textsuperscript{38} Baudrit, \textit{Sainte-Gemme}, 236-38.

\textsuperscript{39} See above, 134-35.
did not want to hear the end of the oath. The bishop, then, without waiting, allotted the church to Aimeric and his successors.

After ten years as abbot, Aimeric replaced, in 1111, Peter Roux as bishop of Clermont. Two former abbots of La Chaise-Dieu now held neighboring episcopal sees—Pons at Le Puy, and Aimeric at Clermont. While Pons died the following year, Aimeric remained in his position for nearly forty years, a period during which the abbey itself enjoyed the long abbacy of Stephen of Mercoeur (1111-1146). Aimeric was a generous patron of his former abbey. He donated the churches of Auzon and of Saint-Julien of Jaude in Clermont. He also helped the abbey secure three more important acquisitions: the church of Sainte-Livrade, the cell of Montferrand in 1136, and the abbey of Chanteuges in 1137. La Chaise-Dieu likely acquired the monastery of Jaligny at this time too from Aimeric.

Aimeric faced some very serious challenges in his tenure as bishop of Clermont. Since the first days of the Peace and Truce of God, the bishops of the Auvergne, and in particular the bishops of Clermont, had always found ways to consolidate their regional power relatively unchallenged. This all changed during Aimeric’s episcopate. Count William VI of the Auvergne took advantage of dissension within the clergy there and drove Aimeric out of the episcopal city in 1120 and became master of the city. Aimeric appealed to the king of France, Louis

---

40 I have located limited documents related to Aimeric’s episcopacy. He appears in six documents inventoried in Inventaire de toutes les Chartes antérieures au XIIIe siècle, qui se trouvent dans les différents fonds d’archives de dépôt de la Préfecture du Puy-de-Dôme (Clermont-Ferrand: Imprimerie de Ferdinand Thibaude, 1855): 81-89.

41 These will be discussed in the following chapter. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 147.

42 Suger, The Deeds of Louis the Fat (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of
VI. In 1122 Louis VI took a large army to Clermont. The king laid siege to Clermont and when the defenses failed, he was able to present terms to the count who had to return the city to the bishop. Within five years, 1126, the peace was broken and Louis VI gathered a still larger army and returned to the Auvergne again. This time the king attacked the count’s castle of Montferrand. Abbot Suger does not report on how this particular affair ended, leaving us to speculate that it did not end entirely favorable. We do know that the bishop was able to return to the city and that following these setbacks in his attempt to seize control of Clermont, Count William, instead, established a fortified burg at Montferrand two miles northeast of Clermont.

---

43 E. Teilhard, *Montferrand avant sa charte de commune* (Clermont: Mém. de l’Acad. de Clermont, 1882): 321-340. See also Suger, *Louis the Fat*, 133-137. While the Auvergne was held still by the duke of Aquitaine, the bishop was subject to the king.

44 Suger, *Louis the Fat*, 133: “[W]hen verbal threats and letters sent under his majesty’s seal were not enough to make the tyrant reform . . . the king assembled a force of knights and set a huge host of the French into motion against the disobedient Auvergne.” See Charbonnier, *Histoire de l’Auvergne*, 182.

45 Suger, *Louis the Fat*, 135: “But five years had hardly passed before peace was again broken by the capricious treachery of the counts of the Auvergne . . . [so] the king assembled an even greater host than the first one and once more headed for the land of the Auvergne.” See Charbonnier, *Histoire de l’Auvergne*, 182.

46 Suger, *Louis the Fat*, 135: “[The king] brought up the host against the unfinished castle of Montferrand, which stood facing the city; the knights who had to defend the castle found themselves in dread of this awesome army of the French, which was so different from theirs.”

47 In 1145 Louis VII confirmed the treaty concluded between Aimeric and the count of Auvergne (see MPA, 190). This treaty was interesting because it gave the inhabitants of each town their own rights in the other town. See Charbonnier, *Histoire de l’Auvergne*, 183.
The count of Auvergne was not Bishop Aimeric’s only problem. He repeatedly found himself entangled in disputes over the rights to various churches, and, more often than not, found himself on the losing end. Pope Honorius II sent a bull to Aimeric, ordering him to return to Erbert, the abbot of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif of Sens, the church of Vercias, among others, that the bishop of Clermont had claimed.\textsuperscript{48} The first long-running and contentious dispute, however, came with Cluny. In a bull dated 1124 from Calixtus II to Aimeric, we see the pope pressing Aimeric to settle disputes with both Cluny and his own clergy concerning several churches in the Auvergne.\textsuperscript{49} Some years later, in 1131, Bishop Aimeric declared that the contentions that existed between himself and Peter, abbot of Cluny, had completely ceased.\textsuperscript{50} Aimeric mentioned that the abbot and some monks of Cluny had spent the feast of Saint-Matthew (21 September) in Clermont and that there, in the presence of the chapter of Clermont, they yielded the churches that they had

\textsuperscript{48} This bull dates between 1124 and 1130. See MPA, no. CII, 178: “\textit{Honorius episcopus, servus servorum Dei, venerabili fratri A., Claromontensi episcopo, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Filius noster Erb..., abbas Sancti Petri Senonensis, quod eum de ecclesias de Vercias contra justitiam spoliasti, et alias etiam ecclesias ad suum monasterium pertinentes abstulisti. Unde mandamus tibi ut ablata ei restituere non omittas.}”

\textsuperscript{49} MPA, no. XCVII, 174, n. 2. Other arbiters included the bishops of Viviers, Agen, Limoges, and Périgueux, and the abbots of Saint-Martial, Saint-Eparque, and Aurillac. See also \textit{Inventaire de toutes les Chartes antérieures au XIII siècle qui se trouvent dans les différents fonds d’archives du dépôt de la préfecture du Puy-du-Dôme} (Clermont-Ferrand, 1855): 87-88.

\textsuperscript{50} Aimeric had annexed a couple of churches belonging to the Cluniac monastery of Saint-Flour. The bishop, when reproached, admitted his error and returned the property. MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXVIII, 470: “\textit{Ego Aymericus, Dei gratia Arvernorum episcopus, notum facio omnibus tam praesentibus quam futuris graves et diuturnas discordias, que inter me et abbatem Cluniacensem domnum Petrum, ac canonicos Claromontensis et monachos, propter quasdam ecclesias, olim fuerant, taliter Deo auxiliante extinctas fuisse.”} See Aubrun, “Le diocèse de Clermont”, 26.
Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny since 1122 and a native of the Auvergne, was an active and interested participant in the affairs of the region. Four of five brothers entered the religious life, including Peter and his brother Jordan. Jordan had entered La Chaise-Dieu during the abbacy of Aimeric and later became abbot of La Chaise-Dieu in 1146. So we should not be too surprised when we read in Celestine II’s bull dated 6 November 1143 that he was tolerating the behavior of Bishop Aimeric of Clermont for the abbot of Cluny’s sake. What sort of relationship Peter had with Aimeric, or whether Peter acted actively on Aimeric’s behalf in this situation with Celestine is unclear. They would certainly have had contact with each other as bishop and abbot since at least 1124, while it is even more likely that they were at least familiar with each other following Jordan’s, Peter’s brother, entrance into La Chaise-Dieu at the turn of the century. And we know from above that the abbot of Cluny visited Clermont in 1131. Whatever charity there might have been between Aimeric and Peter the Venerable seems, however, to have dissipated between 1146 and 1150. In a letter addressed to Pope Eugene III, Peter lashed out at

51 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXVIII, 470: “Nam, Claromonti, in festivitate beati Matthaei apostolic, tam nos, quam praedictus abbas Petrus et multi priorum et fratrum Cluniacensium convenientes, praesente et laudante toto capitulo nostro, omnes ecclesias illas vel partes ecclesiarum, de quibus adversus eos questi fueramu, eis perpetuo possidendas concessimus . . .”

52 MPA, no. CXXI, 201: “Nos autem Cluniacense monasterium tanquam B. Petri proprium, more praedecessorum nostrorum diligere volumes et fovere, et suam ei justitiam conservare. Quod autem Claromontensis episcopus praeterita B. Lucae festivitate a praedecessore nostro bonae memoriae pap Innocentio evocatus non venit, nec canonicam excusationem praetendit, pro vestra dilectione ad praesens aequanimiter toleramus.” Aimeric had not responded to a directive of Innocent II. See MPA, no. CXX, 200.
Aimeric. 53

In comparison to Abbot Suger’s description of Aimeric in the 1120s, as “a man of upright life and a splendid defender of the church,” 54 Peter the Venerable’s characterization of the bishop may seem overly harsh but it is not, perhaps, entirely without merit. While evidence concerning Aimeric’s episcopate is scarce, what does survive hints at his obstinacy: he had been entangled in various disputes, ignored papal summons, and, in the case that seems to have provoked Peter, intercepted papal directives against himself. 55 Peter questioned how, in view of his negligence and willfulness, he could be considered a bishop if, except for taking the oath of office, he never fulfilled any responsibilities of the office. 56 Aimeric, according to Peter, could offer little proof of his vigilance over the flock entrusted to him. In fact, all laymen—barons to townspeople—had spoken in one voice only to complain about their bishop. 57 Even when approached to render his justice, Aimeric was just as likely to


54 Suger, Louis the Fat, 133.

55 In letter no. 171, Peter is responding to a copy of a bull from Pope Eugene (now lost) that the bishop of Clermont had confiscated. From Peter’s response we can piece together that it had been addressed to both Peter and Gerald of Cher, the bishop of Limoges. They had been instructed to approach Aimeric on three points: 1) to release a knight he had held captive for two years; 2) to settle the dispute with the castle of Auzon; and 3) to discuss, but not settle, various other points. The two canons of Saint-Julien of Brioude who had procured the bull presented not to Peter or Gerald, but to Aimeric, who apparently kept it. Peter is able to respond to it after seeing a copy that the canons had made (Peter the Venerable, Letters, 212).

56 Peter the Venerable, Letters, no. 171: “Quomodo enim sacerdos dici potest, qui exceptis sacramentis pontificalibus, de pontificis officio ex quo episcopari coepit, pene nichil impleuit?”

57 Peter the Venerable, Letters, no. 171: “Impugnat assidue alter alterum, acuunt pene uniuersi in mutuam caedem gladios, conspirat frater in fratris interitum, castrorum
ignore his duties as he was to sell his services.\textsuperscript{58} Thus, Peter complained, the bishop remained unmoved among endless business, blind to the wolves perpetrating innumerable offences against the sheep entrusted to him.\textsuperscript{59} Aimeric died in 1150 after a long episcopate.\textsuperscript{60}

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors

Aimeric’s abbacy would seem to have been spent primarily consolidating La Chaise-Dieu’s rights and possessions. Expansion was meager, only two new (and distant) communities: one at Môtiers, and another Pavia. Both communities were submitted to the Auvergnat abbey by Pope Pascal II as the result of his continuing efforts to combat lay investiture.

Conclusions

Whether Peter the Venerable’s tirade against Aimeric should be considered his epitaph deserves further consideration. Like that of Pons before him, Aimeric’s abbacy was relatively short, only nine years. His abbatial career, however, did have a promising start. Pope Pascal II had extended his protection not only to La Chaise-Dieu but also to all of its dependents (1106). In the following year, the pope also

\footnotesize{
\textsuperscript{58} Peter the Venerable, \textit{Letters}, no. 171: “\textit{Si ab eo de malefactoribus iustitia aecclesastica exigitur, aut negatur, aut uenditur.”}

\textsuperscript{59} Peter the Venerable, \textit{Letters}, no. 171: “\textit{Manet ociosus inter negotia infinita, uidensque non lupum tantum, sed lupos innumeros in sibi commissas oues irrentes.”}

}
authorized the extension the Casadéen realm of influence further into Italy and, for the first time, into what is now Switzerland. The rest of Aimeric’s career, based on what evidence survives, was characterized by disputes, first the long-running disagreement with the abbey of Aniane, and another with Abbot Geoffrey of Saint-Maixent. But ecclesiastical disputes were not the only threats to La Chaise-Dieu during Aimeric’s abbacy.

Aimeric’s episcopate started as promising as had his abbacy. He donated two churches to his former abbey and helped his it secure four more notable donations. He acted as a mediator between the monks of Saint-Chaffre and the canons of Saint-Bonnet. By the 1120s, however, his troubles began. His secular foe, Count William VI of Auvergne, managed to push him out of Clermont at least once during their rivalry for regional supremacy. This prompted Aimeric—who had witnessed unspeakable violence waged against at least one of his churches and clergy—to seek assistance from King Louis VI. This regional conflict was a hallmark of Auvergnat political affairs throughout Aimeric’s episcopate. The Auvergne, once beyond royal intercession, now began to reap regular and timely royal intervention.

We are left with two images of Aimeric’s episcopate. Was Aimeric, as Abbot Suger had described him, “a splendid defender of the church”? Or was Peter the Venerable’s characterization of him, as “blind to the wolves perpetrating innumerable offences against the sheep entrusted to him”, more accurate? Both images likely hint at the truth. Over such a long episcopacy, almost forty years, Aimeric had

---

61 See above.
62 MPA, no. XCVII, 174, n. 1.
63 Suger, *Louis the Fat*, 133
64 Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, no. 171.
defend his church in Clermont against the aggressions of the count of Auvergne and sought out a motivated secular advocate in Louis VI to help bring peace to a region where it had broken down since the departure in 1095 of Raymond of Toulouse for the Holy Land. Aimeric’s successor as abbot, Stephen, would benefit from his presence at Clermont as he guided La Chaise-Dieu through its most extensive period of expansion.
CHAPTER VII: STEPHEN OF MERCOEUR (1111-1146)

The seventh abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, Stephen of Mercoeur, witnessed the beginnings of open conflict for suzerainty in the Auvergne. Geo-political conditions in the Auvergne and its surrounding areas underwent such dramatic changes that by the second half of the twelfth century real authority over the region had shifted from Capetian to Plantagenet control, neither of which had, at the beginning of the century, any notable presence there. The roots of this change, discussed below, lay in the first serious conflict between the bishop of Clermont and the count of Auvergne in the 1120s, and the departure of Count Robert III in 1147 for crusade. It was within this climate that Peter the Venerable declared the Auvergne bereft of king, prince, and law.¹

Bishops and local families had long held considerable regional power. This pattern of local control played out especially in the diocese of Clermont where local families held sway over the countryside while bishops firmly presided over the urban center, Clermont. The prestige of the prelates was considerable since they had long succeeded in ruling under the pretence of being protectors of peace and order, and Auvergnat bishops were particularly aggressive in their efforts to secure their regional authority, even to the point of leading troops against disruptive nobles.²

¹ Peter the Venerable, Letters, no. 171, 405: “sine rege, sine principe . . . sine lege”
² See above, 145-46.
The power of the counts of Auvergne was never very strong. They were, however, for a short time in the 1120s, able to challenge the bishop’s authority and even able to drive him from the episcopal city of Clermont. King Louis VI twice intervened on behalf of the bishop of Clermont against the count. The duke of Aquitaine, the traditional overlord of the Auvergne, now too, sought to consolidate his authority in the Auvergne, a region, which until now, seemed lost to him. William X, duke of Aquitaine, protested Louis VI’s direct intervention on behalf of the bishop of Clermont. He claimed that Louis VI’s proper course of action would have been to appeal to him.

Conflict over the Auvergne escalated during the second half of the twelfth century following the departure of Count Robert III of Auvergne in 1147 for crusade. He left his lands in trust to his brother, William the “Old” (William VIII), as his son, William the “Young” (William VII), was still a minor. After Robert died, William VIII refused to turn the land over to William VII, claiming that as the oldest member of the family he had the right to inherit. This land dispute degenerated into open conflict, worsening conditions in the Auvergne, which had already been, according to Peter the Venerable, in a lamentable state since the departure of Robert III.

The crisis of succession in the Auvergne brought new complications to the relationship between the king of France and the duke of Aquitaine, who, since 1152,

---

3 See above, 154-55.
4 Suger, Louis the Fat, 137: “The count holds the Auvergne from me, which I in turn hold from you [Louis VI]. And if he as done anything wrong, I must deliver him to your court for trial when you command it. We have never stood in the way of this . . .”
5 See Gaussin’s detailed discussion of these events in L’Abbaye, 166ff. See also Charbonnier, Histoire de l’Auvergne, 184-85.
6 Peter the Venerable, Letters, no. 171, 405.
was the king of England. William VII sought assistance from the overlord of the Auvergne, the duke of Aquitaine, Henry II. William VIII, in turn, made his appeal to the king of France, Louis VII. The divided Auvergne thereafter became a field over which the sovereigns of France and England clashed. Both Louis VII and Henry II actively sought to support their respective combatants and each traveled to the region for this purpose.

Always there, then, behind the squabbles between the local lords was the tug-of-war between the Capetians and Plantagenets. When Philip-Augustus succeeded Louis VII, he carried on the dispute over the Auvergne with Henry II, Richard, and John in succession. Not until 4 July 1189, with the treaty of Azay, did Henry II give up his claims to the Auvergne, which Richard the Lionhearted ratified on July 22 when he became king.7

Stephen’s Career

Stephen of Mercoeur had been offered c. 1073 by his family as an oblate to La Chaise-Dieu.8 The Mercoeurs were particularly strong in southern Auvergne and had established a long tradition of ecclesiastical munificence.9 They had also, as one of La Chaise-Dieu’s earliest supports, established a long tradition of support for the Auvergnat abbey. Their commitment to the regional church is also demonstrated in that members of the family had, throughout this period, held notable ecclesiastical

---

8 See above, 79.
9 The family’s earliest known ancestor was Ithier, whose will of 926/7, left to Saint-Julien of Brioude, one hundred seven manses (Lauranson-Rosaz, L’Auvergne et ses Marges, 134).
positions across the region; they produced bishops of Le Puy and Clermont, abbots of Saint-Chaffre and Cluny, provosts, deans, and canons. This noteworthy ecclesiastical presence not only helped the family to boost its local prestige through its service to the church, but it also helped the family avoid the fragmentation of their secular powers and wealth by limiting the number of heirs.

Stephen’s election as abbot was the first time that La Chaise-Dieu had taken as its leader a member of a family of this grand stature. His familial pedigree set the tone for his impressive abbacy, which lasted thirty five years. The length of Stephen’s abbacy, coupled with the amount of expansion the congregation experienced during it, make a chronological examination of his life somewhat difficult to manage. The format used thus far to discuss the careers of the abbots and their relationships with their benefactors will be replaced in Stephen’s case with a topical approach.

Papal Support

La Chaise-Dieu continued to profit from pontifical protection throughout Stephen’s abbacy. This was no simple task in era that saw eight successive popes and at least five anti-popes. Rome was in turmoil, in fact, I. S. Robinson has described the diocese in the period from 1073-1198 as “the most turbulent and ungovernable in western Christendom.” Stephen’s first opportunity to meet with the pope came close to home when Pope Gelasius II (1118-1119) took refuge at Cluny. The pope’s untimely death there on 29 January, however, thwarted Stephen’s attempt to secure a

---

10 See above, 13.
bull protecting his abbey’s privileges and possessions. Stephen had to wait for this another three months, until 28 April 1119, after the election of Pope Calixtus II (1119-1124), formerly Archbishop Guy of Vienne.12  

The papacy faced serious challenges in Rome throughout Stephen’s abbacy. Investitures and schisms plagued the papal see, weakening its stability. Stephen, however, seemed committed to securing “legitimate” papal privileges and his allegiance to Innocent II (1130-1143), who had been chased from Rome by the anti-pope Anacletus II, as the rightful heir to the throne of Saint Peter boded well for the future of his abbey. Innocent II, once back in Rome, dispatched several bulls in favor of La Chaise-Dieu.13  

Pope Lucius II (1144-1145), a former regular canon and an advocate of the Premonstratensians, renewed pontifical protection of La Chaise-Dieu in 1144, adding this description: “the monastery of Saint Robert Casa-Dei is a mirror of monastic reverence for our time and an example in parts of Gaul.”14 Lucius II’s declaration of La Chaise-Dieu as a monastic “mirror” and “example” (speculum and documentum)

---

12 MPA, no. LXXX, 146: “Proinde, fili in Christo carissime, Stephane, tuis petitionibus annuentes, venerabile Casae Dei monasterium cui, Deo auctore, praesides, ad exemplar praecedessorum nostrorum sanctae memoriae Urbani secundi et Paschalis secundi pontificum, protectione Sedis Apostolicae specialiter confovemus, et tam caput quam membtra coetera praesentis decreti auctoritate munimus.” As archbishop he had donated several churches to La Chaise-Dieu. See above, 102.  

13 Innocent II confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s rights to the monasteries of Saint-Baudile (A.H. 179.3), Lansac, Beaucaire, and Saint-Trivier on 31 July 1132 (MPA, no. CVI, 184-85); he confirmed the donation of the abbey of Favernay made to La Chaise-Dieu by Ansericus, archbishop of Besançon on 13 June 1133 (MPA, no. CVII, 185); and he wrote the abbot of the newly submitted abbey of Saint-Sixte of Piacenza that upon the death of the abbot, if a monk from their own was not found worthy to be abbot, then they would have to choose from among the monks of La Chaise-Dieu (MPA, no. CVIII, 186).  

14 MPA, no. CXXII, 202; see also Gallia Christiania, II, col. 334: “monasterium sancti Roberti Casae Dei, religionis monasticae modernis temporibus speculum et in Galliarum partibus documentum.”
speaks volumes in an era that witnessed the “rivalry” between Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable, and the expansion of the newly formed canonical order of the Premonstratensians (1120).

Abbot Stephen, only a few weeks before his death, received his final papal bull from Pope Eugene III (1145-1153) confirming all his abbey’s possessions and specifically named twenty six dependencies (Map 3 and 4), some recently acquired (Table 1).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montepeloso (1139)</td>
<td>Basilicata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainte-Livrade (1117)</td>
<td>Diocese of Agen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaucaire (1095)</td>
<td>Diocese of Arles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Robert of Andryes (1067)</td>
<td>Diocese of Auxerre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sepeaux (by 1146)</td>
<td>Diocese of Auxerre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulhon (by 1052)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luzillat (by 1052)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Dier (by 1067)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Robert of Montferrand (1120)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessons (by 1146)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boissonnelle (by 1146)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaligny (1136?)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanteuges (1137)</td>
<td>Diocese of Clermont</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 MPA, no. CXXX, 207.
Regional Expansion

While Pope Eugene III’s bull enumerated both newly acquired priories and those long affiliated with La Chaise-Dieu, what we observe when we begin to look at this list is that the Casadéens were continuing to expand their influence beyond the Auvergne. A region-by-region analysis of this growth will give us a better understanding of where and from whom La Chaise-Dieu was drawing its support.

The heart of the Casadéens’ presence continued to beat in the Auvergne.
Local expansion was facilitated early during the abbacy of Stephen when Aimeric, as bishop of Clermont, donated in 1117 two churches in Clermont to his former community: Saint-Laurent of Auzon and Saint-Julien of Jaude. Outside of Clermont, in the burg of Montferrand, Count William VI—in spite of his conflict with Bishop Aimeric—donated in 1120 to La Chaise-Dieu a church dedicated to Saint-Robert, the surrounding buildings, and enough land to create a cemetery where all the inhabitants of the city could be buried for free. Stephen placed six monks there under a prior. In 1136, Bishop Aimeric also gave these monks the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Montferrand. Nearby, in the diocese of Mende, Bishop William III of Mende, gave in 1145 to La Chaise-Dieu most of the churches between the rivers Allier, Truyère, and Bès, an area subject primarily to the Mercoeurs (Maps 1 and 3). All fifteen were transformed into priories.

---

16 MPA, no. CXXVII, 204; Estiennot, *Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae*, 865; Gaussin, *Rayonnement*, 411.


18 See above, 154-55.

19 See Gaussin, *L’Abbaye*, 148. See also Charbonnier, *Histoire de l’Auvergne*, 183. There is some question whether William VI donated the churches to La Chaise-Dieu directly as suggested by Baluze, *Histoire généalogique de la maison d’Auvergne*, vol. 1, 58; vol. 2, 62) or if he first gave the churches to Pope Calixtus II who then donated them to La Chaise-Dieu, see MPA, no. XCVIII, 175.

20 There were three churches in Montferrand. The church of Saint-Robert was the only to become a priory (MPA, no. XCVIII, 175, n. 2). Pope Innocent II confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of Saint-Robert of Montferrand sometime before 1143 (MPA, no. CXVI, 198).

21 A.H. 363.1-2. See also A.H. 83.1-42, which mentions the abbey producing the act in which Bishop Aimeric donated this church to La Chaise-Dieu in 1136 and the bull from Pope Eugene III that confirmed it (12 March 1150). Pope Lucius II, following Innocent II’s example, confirmed (27 May 1144) the donation of Montferrand to La Chaise-Dieu (MPA, no. CXXIII, 202).

22 A.H. 154.1, published in *Tablettes Historiques de Velay*, vol. 8, 210-211:
Abbot Stephen also saw the Casadéens firmly established in the Forez in the diocese of Lyon. They already had several dispersed priories there: Savigneux (by 1116), Montfavrey (by 1116), Valfleury (by 1052), Pouilly (by 1116), and Saint-Trivier (by 1105). The monks, however, had come into conflict with the canons of Lyon concerning the possession of various other churches. For this reason, Stephen went to Lyon at the beginning of his abbacy. An agreement was reached between La Chaise-Dieu and the canons of Lyon by 1116. The chapter recognized the rights of La Chaise-Dieu over twenty four churches in exchange for which the monks of La Chaise-Dieu would provide each year a solemn meal to the members of the chapter of Lyon.

The Casadéens expanded their presence in the Languedoc in 1116. The

“Guillelmus Mimatensis episcopus venerabili Stephano abbati Case Dei et omnibus fratribus . . . in presentia domini ac venerabilis Petri Bituricensis archiepiscopi pacem fecimus, et ecclesias quas a predecessoribus nostris vel a nobis dinceps acquisitas in perpetuum habendas et possidendas vobis et successoribus vestris cum omnibus ad ecclesias pertinentibus, salvo jure episcopali, concedimus . . .” He goes on to mention the churches. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 148.

Those that became priories were: St-Magne of Termes; St-Robert of La Villedieu; Saint-Jacques of Brion; Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Thoras; Notre-Dame of Grandvals; Saint-Pierre Monistrol of Allier; St-Denis; St-Léger of Malizieu; St-Préjet of Allier; Arcomie; Saint-Julien of Lafage; Panouze; Prunières; Saint-Christophe; Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux.

A.H. 139.1: “Opere pretium est presentibus elementis perenni memorie tradere diffinitionem que facta est inter canonicos majoris Lugdunensis ecclesie et Stephanum Case Dei abbatem de ecclesia Sancti Treverii et de ecclesia Chalanni et de ecclesia Campis et de ecclesia Moranandi et de capellanis Montis Brusonis et de ecclesiis Modonii, de quibus non modica inter eos controversia versebatur.” See Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 148-49.

A.H. 139.1: “monachi Case Dei singulis annis supradictos canonicos . . . pro supradicitis ecclesiis solemniter in refectorio procurent.” The churches were: Saint-Trivier, Chalamont, Saint-Nizier-le-Désert, Samans, Trevoges, Amareins, and Cesseins in Dombes; Montbrison, Moingt, Champ, Mornand, La Boulaine, Boisy, Craintilleux, Saint-Médard, Saint-Denis, Aveyzieux, L’Hôpital-sur-Rochefort, Saint-Laurent-Rochefort, Rochefort, Saint-Didier, Crémeaux, and Boisset in Forez; and finally, Saint-Laurent-lès-Mâcon.
bishop of Maguelonne, Gautier, whose predecessor had given the church of Saint-Vincent of Jonquières to La Chaise-Dieu, gave the churches of Poussan and Thoron to La Chaise-Dieu.\(^26\) In the Dordogne, the bishops of Périgueux continued their patronage of La Chaise-Dieu. The first bishop of Périgueux to make a donation to La Chaise-Dieu was William of Montbéron, who in 1080 had submitted the abbey of Brantôme for reform.\(^27\) Bishop William of Auberoche then gave in 1115 the church of Chalard, near Ribérac, to La Chaise-Dieu, under the condition that the monks would donate annually the income from one wax book to the cathedral of Périgueux.\(^28\) The monks established a priory there.

Abbot Stephen was equally successful in the Jura region.\(^29\) The most dominating monastic presence in this region to date had been the Cluniac house of Romainmôtier,\(^30\) a long time rival of the lords of Grandson\(^31\) who systematically

\(^{26}\) A.H. 174.2-8: “Propterea, venerabilis frater Stephane, tuis tuorumque fratrum precibus annuentes, commendamus et donamus tibi et tuo monasterio ecclesiam Sancti Vincentii de Juncheris quam asseris tibi datam a beate et honorabilis memorie viro domino Godefredo, antecessore nostro. Adjungimus etiam tibi et donamus ecclesiam Sancti Petri de Porciano et ecclesiam de Taurone, ut tu et successores tui abbates et monachi monasterii Case Dei istas tres ecclesias ad honorem et servicium Dei in eternum teneant et disponant cum omnibus que ad eas pertinent terris, decimis, oblationibus et sepulturis.”

\(^{27}\) See above, 100.

\(^{28}\) Gallia Christiania, II, col. 333. See Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 150.

\(^{29}\) Attinger, Dictionnaire Historique et Biographique de la Suisse, vol. 3, 530.


supported non-Cluniac houses, most notably those of Premonstratensian canons and Casadéen monks. Ebal I of Grandson (c. 1085-c. 1135) had founded the abbey of Lac-de-Joux in 1126 and installed there Premonstratensian canons. While sometime between 1132 and 1158, Bartholomew II of Grandson, before leaving on crusade, founded the conventual priory of Saint-Jean of Grandson under the direction of the Casadéens at Val-de-Travers. The lords of Grandson continued their patronage of Val-de-Travers granting several parish churches and dependent priories. For the lords of Grandson, the presence of the Casadéens in the region gave a clear alternative to the Cluniac influence wielded through Romainmôtier.

La Chaise-Dieu’s regional expansion demonstrates that Stephen was able to continue to expand Casadéen influence into regions where before they had little. It also demonstrates that those most likely to install Casadéens within the Midi were regional bishops, while outside of the Midi, support was more likely to come from lay

32 The bishop of Lausanne, Girard, and Emperor Henry V had also stepped in to defend Romainmôtier’s rights against Ebal I. Ebal I accepted the emperor’s ruling, and had granted Romainmôtier due rights, but it was during these debates that he founded Lac-de-Joux and subjected it to the abbey of Saint Martin of Laon. See M. L. de Charrière, *Les dynastes de Grandson Jusqu’au XIIIe Siècle avec pièces justificatives* (Lausanne: Georges Bridel Éditeur, 1866): 34-40.


34 *PP 54v. La visite églises du diocèse de Lausanne en 1416-1417* (Lausanne: G. Bridel & cie, 1921): there were the churches of Concise, Saint-Maurice, Fiez, Giez, Vugelles, and Montagny.

territorial rulers.

**Major Expansion**

Perhaps more significant than the receipt of these scattered churches and priories was the acquisition of five well-established religious communities: Chanteuges in the Auvergne, Sainte-Livrade in Agen, Faverney in Burgundy, Saint-Sixte of Piacenza, and Montepeloso in the Basilicata. The abbey of Chanteuges, in the diocese of Clermont, (Map 3) had been founded in the first half of the tenth century by the provost of Brioude who entrusted it to some Benedictine monks. He endowed it well and thereafter the abbey was prosperous until the beginning of the twelfth century when the lords of Digons took it. The sanctuary was plundered and the church fortified. No one, according to its abbot, Raymond, could be found there in the service of God. It had become “den of thieves and murders.” On April 14, three days before the feast of Saint Robert, Abbot Raymond turned the abbey’s pastoral stick over to Bishop Aimeric who in turn entrusted it to La Chaise-Dieu so

---


37 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XL, 474: “... ego Raimundus, quondam Cantojolensis abbas, videns temporibus meis Cantojolense monasterium ad tantam destructionem pervenisse, ut, spoliato sanctuario et castellificata ecclesia, nullus ibi serviens Deo reperiretur, sed receptaculum esset praelonum et homicidarum, in capitulum Casae-Dei, tertia die prius festum beati Roberti veni, et curam et administrationem Cantajolensis abbatiae in manu A., Claromontensis episcopi, cum virga deposui, et Casae-Dei in prioratum perpetuo possidendum firma fide, bona voluntate, consensu etiam et concessione Cantojolensis fratrum attribui, ut per fratres Casae-Dei locus ille restitueretur et servitium Dei redintegraretur.”
that the monks there could restore and renew Chanteuges to its former service to God. This transference was followed in 1137 by several acts of recognition: the canons of Brioude, the bishop and chapter of Clermont, and Archbishop Alberic of Bourges all gave their approval. Abbot Stephen took possession of Chanteuges and established there a conventual priory. At this same time La Chaise-Dieu also took over Chanteuges’ dependent priories: in the diocese of Clermont, Langeac, Chaliers, Mallet, and Morle; in the diocese of Mende, Brion and Saint-Symphorien. Chanteuges and its dependents all lay deep within the territory of the Mercoeours, who were likely pleased that they had been turned over to La Chaise-Dieu and lent, we can imagine, their assistance in cleaning out the “den.” Surprising (or perhaps not), some forty years later, the canons of Brioude would stake a claim to Chanteuges.

A somewhat more unusual transference occurred in 1117 when the canons at Sainte-Livrade decided to give themselves and the church of Sainte-Livrade to La

38 Abbot Raymond testified to their confirmation (MPA, “Appendice”, no. XL, 474). A.H. 256.1. The canons of Brioude do not seem to have given up their rights so readily. Sometime before 1143, Pope Innocent II confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of Chanteuges (MPA, no. CXV, 197-98). Cf. MPA, “Appendice”, no. LXIII, 511: “Abbas et fratres de Casa Dei, licet confiterentur praedictas praestationes Cantajolenses Brivatensibus aliusquas solvisse, tamen dicebant esa indebitas et sine consilio et consensu conventus Casae Dei fuisse impositis et solutas, ita quod ad eorum querimoniam dominus Innocentius papa . . . postmodum dominus Eugenius et dominus Alexander papa qui nunc praest, litteris suis praecipiendo inhibuerunt ne ab eis exigerentus.” Likewise, Pope Lucius II, in 1144, confirmed Chanteuges union with La Chaise-Dieu (MPA, no. CXXIV, 203; Gallia Christiania, II, col. 438); and sometime between 1145 and 1153, Pope Eugene III confirmed Innocent II findings, that La Chaise-Dieu did not owe Brioude any royalty on the monastery of Chanteuges (MPA, no. CXLIV, 229).
39 Abbot Raymond testified to their confirmation (MPA, “Appendice”, no. XL, 474). A.H. 256.2.
40 Gallia Christiania, II, Instrumenta, col. 82.
41 Gaussin, Rayonnement, 363.
42 Cardinal Hyacinthe would take up this dispute over Chanteuges in 1175. See MPA, “Appendice”, no. LXIII, 508-13.
The timing of this decision suggests that the canons, who were prebendaries, were being pressured to reform. This meant, as proposed by the Gregorian Reform, adopting the Rule of Saint Augustine and taking a vow of poverty, thus forfeiting their stipends. That this was likely case is supported by the allowance made for the canons. Those canons who desired to embrace the regular life were allowed to do so, while the others would remain at Sainte-Livrade, enjoying their stipends until their death. Provoked, perhaps, by Bishop Aldebert of Agen’s slowness to embrace this transfer, Abbot Stephen went to Agen in 1119 where he obtained the approval of Pope Calixtus II who was there. It was not until the council of Clermont (1120), at the request of Bishop Aimeric, however, that Aldebert finally decided to grant his approval. The duke of Aquitaine (and count of Agenais) William IX approved the transfer in 1122 and relinquished all of his rights on the church. The collegiate church of Sainte-Livrade, upon which a dozen churches depended, became a conventual priory.

---

44 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXIII, 458: “... concedimus et donamus ecclesiam Sanctae Liberatae cum omnibus pertinentiis suis beato Roberto et abbati Stephano et monachis Casae-Dei praesentibus atque futuris, ut eam habeant, regant atque possideant jure perpetuo.” See also Gallia Christiania, II, Instrumenta, col. 106-107


46 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXIII, 458-59: “Cum ipsis autem tali foedere jungimus, si cui canonici rium ad regularis vitae disciplinam converti placuerit, benigne recipiatur: qui vero noulurent, sanctae fraternitatis afféctione a monachis diligentur, et quotidiana dibi praebenda solitis temporibus honestissime praebatur, et breve uniuscujusque defuncti Casae-Dei per monachos deferatur ...”

47 MPA, no. LXXXIX, 167-168; see also Jaffé, 6713: “Nos igitur hanc praedicti episcopi concessionem, tanquam per nos factam Apostolicæ Sedis auctorite fīrmamus, et saepe dictam beatae Liberatae ecclesiam, in tua tuorumque successorum tuitione ac dispositione per omnia perpetua stabilitate manere decernimus.”

48 Estiennot, Antiquitates in dioecesi Claromontensi Benedictinae, 23.

49 A.H. 23.1.

50 Gaussin, Rayonnement, 443-44.
The third religious community received during the abbacy of Stephen was in the diocese of Besançon. The abbey Saint-Peter of Faverney for nuns had been founded in the first half of the eighth century (747), but by the twelfth century, the bishop of Besançon had found it to be in a deplorable state. Bernard of Clairvaux had offered in 1132 to help the abbess of Faverney to reform the monastery, but it seems to no avail. The archbishop of Besançon, Anseric, and the count of Burgundy, Raynald III, nephew of Pope Calixtus II, ultimately decided to replace the nuns with Casadéen monks. Pope Innocent II confirmed this transfer in 1133.

This was not the first time that Casadéen monks had replaced nuns. In a dispute that lasted more than fifteen years, the monks of La Chaise-Dieu finally took possession of the Italian abbey of Saint-Sixte of Piacenza. Two centuries since its foundation, the abbey had fallen into a state of relaxation under the direction of its abbess, Febronia. Countess Mathilda of Tuscany sought to introduce reform there. With the assent of Pope Pascal II, the nuns were replaced in 1112 by monks from La

51 *Gallia Christiania*, XV, col. 197. The abbey was located in Burgundy, near the border with the kingdom of France.

52 A.H. 27.1-2, published in *Tablettes Historiques de Velay*, vol. 8, 205; and MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXIV, 460: “Quapropter illam nobilem Favernacetam ecclesiam, quae antiquis temporibus religione sanctimonialium florerat, visitavimus, ut ejus desolationi aliquod suffragium praebemus.”


54 See Bouchard’s discussion of Raynald III’s relationship with the bishop of Besançon. Raynal was particularly active in the diocese of Besançon where he also gave the house of Cherlieu, canons regular, to Clairvaux (*Sword, Mitre, Cloister*, 156-58.

55 MPA, no. CVII, 185: “Proinde, dilecti in Domino filii, vestris precibus inclinati, Favernacense monasterium a venerabili fratre nostro Anserico, Bisunitino archiepiscopo, vobis communi consilio et assensu canonico suorum concessum apostolica auctoritate firmamus et praesentis scripti pagina roboramus.”

56 Founded c. 870 by Ingelberge, wife of Emperor Louis II.
Chaise-Dieu. Pierre-Roger Gaussin has also suggested that Countess Mathilda and Pope Pascal II feared the situation brewing at the abbey. Under the direction of Abbess Febronia, who had taken the emperor’s side, the abbey, which held significant strategic positions along the Po, was likely to fall under imperial control. Gaussin maintains that the pope removed the nuns and replaced them with monks from La Chaise-Dieu in order to prevent this from happening.

It was not an easy transition. The first Casadéen abbot, Odo, encountered great difficulties. Abbess Febronia, taking advantage of the troubled situation in Italy following the successive deaths of Countess Mathilda in 1115 and Pope Pascal in 1119, reinstated herself in the abbey, even securing permission from Pope Calixtus II who knew little about the current situation (c. 1119). Stephen, however, refused to accept such an act. He explained the situation to the new pope who then revoked his mandate in favor of Febronia, excommunicated her, and ordered Odo and his monks restored. Febronia proved obstinate, however, and was excommunicated again in 1124 by Pope Honorius II. Nevertheless, not until 1129 could the

---

57 MPA, no. LXXIV, 136, n. 4: “Papa Paschalis religionis intuitu, sanctimoniales feminas, quarum fama non bona erat, de eodem monasterio emisit, et viros Casae Dei, videlicet monachos ad reformandam religionem in eamdem ecclesiam introduxit.”

58 Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 152. See also P. F. Kehr, Italia pontificia, vol. 5, 487-89.

59 Odo was a former monk of Frassinoro, which had been given to La Chaise-Dieu in 1080 by Pope Gregory VII.

60 While Calixtus II was in France, Febronia wrote to him and persuaded him to reinstate her and her nuns to Saint-Sixte. The pope authorized her return to the abbey. Assisted by powerful allies, Febronia returned to Saint-Sixte, driving Odo and his monks out (see MPA, no. XCV, 173, n. 2).

61 MPA, no. XCVI, 173, n. 4.

Casadéens finally take full possession of the abbey.\(^{63}\)

The final major donation to La Chaise-Dieu during the abbacy of Stephen came from Roger II of Sicily, brother-in-law of Count Raymond of Toulouse.\(^{64}\) Roger had been named in 1130 king of Sicily by the anti-pope Anacletus.\(^{65}\) Rebellion followed. Roger II nearly destroyed the city of Montepeloso where one rebel, Tancred of Conversano, had taken refuge.\(^{66}\) The cathedral and an abbey church survived, both of which Roger II donated in 1133 to La Chaise-Dieu. Papal ratification of this was slow in coming as Roger had been excommunicated by the legitimate pope, Innocent II. The pope, however, fell into Roger’s hands in 1139 and was forced to confirm his royal title. Confirmation of the cession of the Montepeloso churches to La Chaise-Dieu followed before the pope’s death in 1143.\(^{67}\) This was reconfirmed in a bull from Lucius III in 1184.\(^{68}\)

The acquisition of these five established communities taken together with the

\(^{63}\) MPA, no. XCVI, 173, n. 4. See also Kehr, *Italia pontificia*, vol. 5, 494. On 14 July 1133, Pope Innocent II wrote Abbot Odo of Saint-Sixte that upon the death of the abbot, if a monk from their own was not found worthy to be abbot, then they would have to choose from among the monks of La Chaise-Dieu. MPA, no. CVIII, 186: “*Quod si persona in eodem monasterio ad abbatiae administrationem talis non fuerit, de Casae Dei coenobio eligatur . . .*”


\(^{65}\) Houben, *Roger II*, 60-63.

\(^{66}\) Houben, *Roger II*, 63.

\(^{67}\) This is mentioned in a bull from Pope Lucius III to Abbot Lantelme of La Chaise-Dieu dated 12 April 1184. MPA, no. CCIV, 330; cf. MPA, no. CXVIII, 198-99: “*ecclesiam Santae Mariae Novae Montispoilosi cum ecclesia Sanctae Mariae Veteris et alis eccesis, possessionibus et alii pertinentii suis, sicut ea vobis bonae memoriae Rogerius, rex Siciliae, de piae recordationis Innocentii pontificis, praedecessoris nostri, assensu in ordine prioratu habenda concessit . . .*”

\(^{68}\) As above, MPA, no. CCIV, 330; see also Jaffé, 15.011.
numerous regional donations discussed above constitute a collective image of La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion during Stephen’s abbacy against which it is difficult to argue. It represents a genuine aspect of the diversification of Casadéen advocacy at the height of the abbey’s influence. When examined more closely, however, an important pattern appears: within the Midi, support came primarily from ecclesiastical leaders; outside of the Midi, support came most often from secular rulers.

Failed Expansion

Stephen’s abbacy was not without its challenges and setbacks, which included the loss of disputed communities and challenges by dependent communities to his authority. We have two examples of Stephen’s doggedness in defending La Chaise-Dieu’s claims. In the first example, we return to the long-standing dispute between La Chaise-Dieu and Aniane. Pope Pascal II revisited this dispute in a bull dated 1113. In it, Pascal instructed the bishops of Avignon, Valence, and Die to examine the controversy between La Chaise-Dieu and Aniane concerning Gourdaignes. Once again, they found in favor of Aniane. But this did not seem to put an end to La Chaise-Dieu’s claims to Gourdaignes as in 1114, Pope Pascal II, for a third time,

69 See above, 150-51.
70 MPA, no. LXXII, 133-36.
71 MPA, no. LXXII, 134: “Eapropter, opportunum duximus, dum in Galliarum partibus moraremur, controversiam illam quae inter Casae Dei monasterium et Anianense coenobium, super cella de Gordianico agebatur, venerabilibus fratibus Arberto Avenionense, Eustachio Valentino, Hismioni Diensi, episcopis . . .”
72 MPA, no. LXXII, 135: “Nos ergo supractorum fratrum quos in hoc negotio nostri vicejudices dedimus, litterarum praeentium decreto judicium confirmamus, et supractdam cellam de Gordianico tibi, carissime Petre, abbac praeidcti Anianensis monasterii, tuisque successoribus firmam et quietam in perpetuum manere sancimus . . .”
had to assure Abbot Peter of Aniane that the monastery of Gourdaignes belonged to
his abbey. 73

Pope Calixtus II also addressed La Chaise-Dieu’s on-going challenge to
Aniane’s possession of the monastery of Gourdaignes four times between April and
July 1119. In April, Calixtus II ordered still another meeting between the two
communities to bring an end to the dispute. 74 By July, having examined the reasons
which the monks of La Chaise-Dieu put forward as their rights on the monastery of
Gourdaignes, Calixtus ordered the Auvergnat abbey to give up its claims. 75 Later
that same July, the archbishop of Arles, Aton, added his voice to the dispute, siding
with La Chaise-Dieu. Archbishop Aton maintained that Gourdaignes belonged to
him and that La Chaise-Dieu held rights to it under the terms of an annual rent. 76 At
the council of Toulouse (1119) Calixtus II ordered the cardinals and bishops
assembled there to meet and to declare a verdict on the competing claims to

73 Gallia Christiana, VI, col. 838; see also MPA, no. LXXIII, 136: “Neque sic
tamen conquieverunt Casadenses, quos iterum atque tertio de jure quod sibi vindicabant,
cella Anianensibus asseria, depulit Paschalis altera bulla data Petro, v Kalendas
Decembris, Pontificatus anno XVI, hic est 1114.”

74 MPA, no. LXXIX, 145-46: “Fratres Casae Dei querelem suam super cellam de
Gordanico adhuc repetere non desistunt. Quamobrem, fraternitati vestrae per praesentia
scripta praecipimus ut, in proximis octavis Pentecostes, vos omnino ad causae hujus
actionem paratos nostro conspectui praecipimus, quantenus querelam tanto tempore
agitatum judiciali tandem sententia, praestante Domino, terminetis.”

75 MPA, no. LXXXV, 161: cf. MPA, no. LXXXVIII, 163-64: “Nos, ut nulla eis
adversus Apostolicam Sedem relinqueretur occasio, eorum [monachorum Casae Dei]
scripta et rationes perscrutati sumus, et nihil roboris, nihil in eis momenti reperientes,
fratribus ipsis desistere ab hac deinceps inquietatione praecipimus.” He does not list
any of the reasons.

76 MPA, no. LXXVII, 162; cf. MPA, no. LXXXVIII, 164: “Hoc frater noster Ato,
Arelatensis archiepiscopus, audiens, et ipse clamare coepit dicens Arelatensem
Ecclesiam injuste suis possessionibus spoliatam, quoniam praedicta cella de Gordanicis
cum rebus suis ad jus Arelatensis Ecclesiae pertinebat, et per eam monachi Casae Dei
locum illum sub censu annuo detinuerant.”
sovereignty over Gourdaignes which divided the archbishop of Arles and the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu on the one hand, and the abbey of Aniane on the other. The council fathers, after examining the evidence, again ruled in Aniane’s favor. In a bull dated 15 July 1119, Pope Calixtus II informed the archbishop Arles and the monks of La Chaise-Dieu of the council’s decision, recounted each stage of the dispute’s evolution since April, and, finally, anathematized those who challenged the decision.

The dispute seems to have come to an end following Calixtus II’s decree and threat, but his was not the last word on the topic. Seven years afterwards (1127), Pope Honorius II (1124-1130) declared himself willing to support any excommunications enjoined by his legate, Gautier, bishop of Maguelonne, against any, including Abbot Stephen, who would challenge Aniane’s possession of Gourdaignes. Clearly the pope had grown tired of the monks of La Chaise-Dieu’s obstinacy. Not another word has survived concerning this dispute. Likely, bereft

---

77 MPA, no. LXXXVIII, 164: “... praecepimus ut in partes secederent, et controversiam ipsam judicio canonico definirent...” Cf. MPA, no. LXXXVII, 162.

78 MPA, no. LXXXVIII, 165: “Praedictam cellam de Gordanicis Arelatensis archiepiscopus in manu nostra, per virgam, quam gestabat, in conspectu totius concilii refutavit. Nos vero tam tibi, fili in Christo carissime Ponti, et per te Anianensi monasterio, per eamdem virgam protinus restituentes, tam Arelatensi Ecclesiae, quam et monasterio Casae Dei, perpetuum super eadem cella silentium sub anathematis obligatione indiximus...”


80 MPA, no. CIV, 179: “Verrum nec sic repressa fuit Casae Dei monachorum pervicacia, quae romanos pontifices Callistum et Honorium II fatigavit; adeo ut Galterius, Magalonensis episcopus et Apostolicae Sedis legatus, excommunicationis sententiam in refractarios vibravit, quam Honorius ipse datis ad Stephanum Casae Dei abbatem litteris confirmavit.”
of any other recourse, and not wanting to risk excommunication, Stephen finally stopped pressing his abbey’s claims.

Stephen showed similar stubbornness in defending La Chaise-Dieu’s claim to the church at Bessan in the diocese of Agde. In this case, both La Chaise-Dieu and the abbey of Saint-Tibéry claimed that the bishop of Agde had donated the church to their respective abbeys. In a letter from Pope Innocent II to his legate Hugh, the archbishop of Rouen, written sometime between 1133 and 1134, the pope instructed Hugh to examine and to resolve the disagreement which existed between the two abbeys, even though the archbishop of Narbonne, Arnaud, had, already in 1129, instructed La Chaise-Dieu, apparently to no avail, to return the Bessan to Saint-Tibéry.

Archbishop Hugh of Rouen convened a synod on 3 November 1134 in Montpellier to settle the dispute. In attendance were the archbishops of Arles and Narbonne; the bishops of Agde and of Orange; and the abbot of Saint-Gilles. Archbishop Hugh had ordered the abbots of Saint-Tibéry and La Chaise-Dieu to appear before him. Abbot Stephen did not attend. Abbot Ademar of Saint-Tibéry produced the deed of the gift made by the bishop of Agde, Beranger, and also

---

81 Donated by 1106, see above, 148.
82 Histoire Générale de Languedoc, vol. 3, 688; Jaffé, 6114; see also Gaussin, l’Abbaye, 150.
83 This letter in mentioned in a letter from the archbishop of Rouen to the pope in which he describes his decision. See MPA, 187, n. 1; cf. Histoire Générale de Languedoc, vol. 3, 688.
84 See MPA, 187, n. 1. Bishop Arnaud had come to this conclusion in liaison with Adelbert, bishop of Agde; Jean, bishop of Nîmes; Peter, bishop of Lodève; and Raimond, bishop of Maguelonne.
85 MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXV, 464: “Abbas vero Casae-Dei . . . nec ipse venit, nec pro se responsales misit . . .”
produced four witnesses who testified that the monastery of Saint-Tibéry had held the church of Bessan a long time before the monks of La Chaise-Dieu occupied it.\textsuperscript{86} Archbishop Hugh, in liaison with the archbishops and bishops present at Montpellier, approved the restitution of the church of Bessan to the abbey of Saint-Tibéry, and ensured its perpetual possession.\textsuperscript{87} Archbishop Hugh reported all this to Pope Innocent II.\textsuperscript{88}

This did not, however, put an end to the dispute.\textsuperscript{89} Apparently, the absent Stephen did not forewear. Sometime between 1135 and 1139, Pope Innocent II instructed his legate, Cardinal Guy, to examine and to resolve this argument.\textsuperscript{90} In accordance with his instructions, Cardinal Guy, in 1139, convened a synod in the diocese of Uzès. Those in attendance included William, archbishop of Arles; Peter, bishop of Nice; Raymond, bishop of Agde; William, bishop of Nîmes; Jaucerand

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{86} MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXV, 464: “\textit{Ad haec tu, Ademare abbas, protulisti instrumentum donationis factae de ecclesia de Beciano ecclesiae Sancti Tiberii, et praedecessori tuo Deodato: quod instrumentum a Berengario bonae memoriae Agathensi episcope factum, et annis Dominicae incarnationis, et testibus idoneis roboratum existit. Et tu consequenter produxisti quatuor testes viros antiquos, asserentes se vidisse, quia ecclesia Sancti Tiberii possedit quiete per multos annos ecclesiam de Beciano, antequam monachi de Casa Dei intrassent in eam. Tunc illi canonice examinati juraverunt super Evangelia Dei, et hoc se vidisse, et hoc verum esse.”}
  \item \textsuperscript{87} MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXV, 465: “\textit{approbamus et approbatam vice apostolica, quam super hoc negotio gerimus, confirmamus et pro canonica donatione a Berengario Agathensi episcope facta, et legittima possessione subsecuta, tibi tuisque successoribus et monasterio Sancti Tiberii, cui praeides, praeefatam ecclesiam de Beciano cum decimis et omnibus jure ad eam perlinentibus, omni deinceps quaestione sopita, perpetuo possidendam adjudicamus.”}
  \item \textsuperscript{88} MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXVI, 465-467: “\textit{Universali papae Innocentio domino et patri suo Hugo, Rotomagensis sacerdos, devotam et debitam reverentiam. Praecepto vertro diem dedimus et locum statuimus abbatii Casae-Dei et abbatii Sancti Tyberii pro controversia inter eos dirimenda super ecclesia de Beciano, videlicet III Nonas november, apud Montempessulanum . . .}”
  \item \textsuperscript{89} See Gauassin, \textit{l’Abbaye}, 386-87.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} A.H. 305.1, published MPA, no. CX, 187-88.
\end{itemize}
bishop of Viviers; Evrard, bishop of Uzès; Peter, abbot of Saint-Gilles; and John, abbot of the Casadéen abbey of Saint-Allyre in the diocese of Clermont. The synod concluded that La Chaise-Dieu should leave the church of Bessan in possession of Saint-Tibéry, but offered La Chaise-Dieu, in an effort to restore harmony, the church of Saint-Martin of “Valentiniacis,” a dependent of Saint-Tibéry, and a revenue of fifteen sous, in particular solidos Melgoriensis, on the income of Bessan to be paid each year on the feast of Pentecost. Stephen’s persistence in this case, at least, seems to have won him an equitable compromise.

Challenges from Within

Stephen’s long abbacy was certainly accompanied by great expansion and it was not without its conflicts too. But for Stephen, his most serious, and potentially most damaging, challenges came in securing his authority over two of the abbeys newly subjugated to La Chaise-Dieu. The first of these was Saint-André-le-Bas in 

91 There had been a mint at Melgueil since at least 988. The Melgorian money was the most important currency for the Midi through the thirteenth century. See Peter Spufford, Handbook of Medieval Exchange (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1986): 137-38.

92 A.H. 22 and A.H. 305.1. MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXVII, 469: “diligenti efficacia laboravimus et assensu vestro et abbatis ac fratrum Casae-Dei, concordiam sic per Dei gratiam compositumus, ut scilicet, tu dilecte in Domino frater A. abbas, atque successores tui, et per vos praefatum Saincti Tiberii monasterium ecclesiam Beati Petri de Beciano cum decimis et omnibus aliis, quae ad eam pertinere noscuntur, libere et quiete de coetero jure habeatis, et abbas et monachi Casae-Dei tam præsentes quam futuri, ecclesiam Beati Martini de Valentinaciis, cum omnibus quae ad eam pertinent, quae utique juris erat monasterii Sancti Tiberii, concessione venerabilis viri R. episcopi et canonicorum Agathensium, et tua ac monachorum tuorum, deinceps libere et quiete omnino possideant. Per singulos autem annos, in solemnitate Pentecostes, XV solidos Melgoriensis monetae de bonis ecclesiae Beati Petri de Beciano vos et successores vestri abbati et monachis Casae-Dei, et eorum successoribus persolvetis; ita tamen quod in eadem ecclesia de Beciano monasterium Casae-Dei neque jus proprietatis, neque jus possessionis deinceps habeat, nec vos ipsam ecclesiam, vel quae ad illam pertinent ejusdem monasterii nomine possideatis.”
Vienne. In 1099, Guido, the archbishop of Vienne (1088-1119),\(^93\) had wanted to restore the former prosperity to the abbey of Saint-André-le-Bas, which, he claimed, had fallen into a state of neglect and depravity.\(^94\) The archbishop yielded the monastery to La Chaise-Dieu for reform. He indicated that the abbot there would always owe obedience to the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu; in fact, the charter specified that the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu would have the power to veto the monks’ choice, while the archbishop would retain his right to consecrate the new abbot.\(^95\) The discipline at Saint-André had fallen into a state of such grave condition by that time, in fact, that it was immediately necessary to depose its abbot. The monks of Saint-André, after consulting with Abbot Pons of La Chaise-Dieu, elected a new abbot, Peter-Humbert.\(^96\) The limits of their respective authority were unclear, however, as subsequent events illustrate.

Abbot Stephen and Archbishop Guy frequently admonished Peter-Humbert for not fulfilling his reforming duties to their satisfaction.\(^97\) They both worked to

---

\(^93\) By blood or by marriage, Guido was related to Emperor Henry V, Henry I of England, Louis VI of France, and Alfonso VII of Castile. He became Pope Calixtus II (1119-1124).

\(^94\) MPA, no. XXV, 442. See above, 138.

\(^95\) MPA, no. XXV, 442.

\(^96\) See MPA, no. XCI, 169.

\(^97\) Pope Calixtus II, formerly Archbishop Guy of Vienne, recalled the events in a letter to Peter, the archbishop of Vienne (1122). MPA, no. XCI, 169: “Coeterum, Petrus ille, praeter spem nostram, et religionem destructit et bona Ecclesie fere ad nihilum usque redigit, unde a nobis et a Casae Dei abate frequenter admonitus, neque mores suos corrigere, neque a monasterii voluit devastatione cessare. Nos autem, quia et locum ipsum occasione hac destrui assidue videamus et nulla in eo pro illa commissione religio augebatis, praecipio Domini praedecessoris nostri sanctae memoriae Parchalis papae, praedictum Petrum sine recuperationis spe deposuimus et monasterium in pristinam reduximus libertatem, in qua illud in posterum volumes permanere.” Cf. MPA, no. LXXVII, 144. See also Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-André-le-Bas de Vienne, 144-45, no. 198.
correct the situation, but Stephen exceeded his rights when, in 1117, he physically removed the deposed Peter-Humbert from his office and held in the cloister at La Chaise-Dieu.\textsuperscript{98} Pope Pascal II chided Stephen for exceeding his rights and ordered that Saint-André be returned to its former independence.\textsuperscript{99}

No one seemed to deny Stephen’s claims that Peter-Humbert was unfit for his duties; even the archbishop recognized that he was less than desirable, and, for reasons beyond insubordination, deposed him.\textsuperscript{100} While the two abbeys continued to be allies, the links between them began to wane. It seems clear that by 1120, La Chaise-Dieu had lost its oversight of Saint-André altogether, even though the monastery remained within the Casadéen congregation for years to come.\textsuperscript{101}

This particular episode demonstrates some of the difficulties the Casadéens had reforming newly dependent communities. Stephen still found it difficult to

\textsuperscript{98} MPA, no. LXXVI, 143: “Ecclesiasticorum personarum causae judicio magis sunt quam violentia pertractandae. Idcirco, abbatem monasterii Santi Andreae fraternitas tua non debuit sine judicio episcopali a monasterii praetazione subtrahere et in claustri vestri custodiam deportare.” See also Gallia Christiania., XVI, Instrumenta, col. 30; Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-André-le-Bas de Vienne, no. 202, 147-48. It seems as if the monks of Saint-André had complained about La Chaise-Dieu’s aggressiveness too. Pope Pascal II ordered Bishop Guy to look into the charges as leveled by Saint-André. See Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-André-le-Bas de Vienne, no. 201, 147: “Ex monasterio vestro Sancti Andree clamorem accepimus, quod abbatem ipsius loci abbas Case Dei in captionem posuerit, quod indignum videtur et ratione contrarium; tue igitur experientie presentia scripta dirigimus, ut abbate Case Dei super hoc adire debeas et causam diligenter inquirere, adhibito confratrum et coepiscoporum Gratianopolitani et Vivariensis (consilio). Et siquidem frater ille restituendus videbitur, restituatur; si vero tam vehemens causa fuerit ut removendus sit, canonice et regulariter removatur et alius subrogetur: non enim decet hujusmodi personas passim deici et sine judicio reprobari.”

\textsuperscript{99} MPA, no. XCI, 169.

\textsuperscript{100} Cartulaire de Saint-André-le-Bas, no. 201, 147.

\textsuperscript{101} Pope Adrien IV listed Saint-André among La Chaise-Dieu’s dependencies in 1157. MPA, no. CXLIX, 236. See also Gardon, Histoire de l’Abbaye de la Chaize-Dieu, 412.
exercise his rights as he interpreted them when temporal power belonged to the archbishop and nothing in canon law seems to have prohibited him from retaining certain ecclesiastical rights over abbeys in his diocese. La Chaise-Dieu had experienced a similar situation in Reims with the abbey of Saint-Nicaise. The abbots of La Chaise-Dieu were able to exercise greater control over such abbeys as Gaillac, Saint-Théodard, and Brantôme, which were donated by lay lords who were not, in contrast, allowed to keep any ecclesiastical rights.

The bond between Saint-André and La Chaise-Dieu weakened over time; at Frassinoro, however, the monks attempted a conscious break with the Auvergnat abbey. This abbey, since its foundation, had enjoyed a great deal of political and spiritual autonomy, which it found threatened when in 1078 Pope Gregory VII yielded supervision of it to Abbot Seguin of La Chaise-Dieu. But, as long as papal and imperial forces were at odds, we can imagine that La Chaise-Dieu’s governance of this strategically well-placed abbey, nearly five hundred miles away, had to be liminal at best. Missing any sort of regular oversight from the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, the monks of Frassinoro had to act, during repeated papal absences, independently while continuing to manage their rather large estate. It is not so surprising then, that, at the death of their abbot in 1144, the monks were quick to elect another without consulting the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu; they petitioned Pope Lucius II (1144-1145) for the privilege of a free election, which he seems to have

102 Frassinoro had been founded in 1070 by the countess of Tuscany, Mathilda. See above, 99, 122-23.

103 Pope Paschal II’s bull of 1107 had promised that the abbot of Frassinoro would always be appointed by the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu. MPA, no. LXX, 129.
granted. Abbot Stephen must have protested immediately, for the new pope, Eugene III (1145-1153), summoned representatives from both monasteries. The envoys from Frassinoro claimed that neither they (the monks) nor their monastery had been dependent to La Chaise-Dieu, and they claimed to have a bull from Pope Lucius II that apparently confirmed this. In response, the monks from La Chaise-Dieu produced the bull from Pope Pascal II and argued that the so-called bull from Lucius II was a fraud. After hearing both sides and examining the available documentation, Pope Eugene III rendered his decision in favor of La Chaise-Dieu. He confirmed Pascal II’s bull and revoked the privilege granted by Lucius II claiming it had been obtained surreptitiously. To avoid any further strife, the pope

---

104 Pope Eugene III makes mention of this. MPA, no. CXXVI, 203: “Praedecessor noster felicis memoriae, P.P. Lucius, eosdem Fracinorenses monachos super hoc in causam evocaverat……auctoritate cujusdam privilegii, quod a jam dicto praedecessore nostro P.P. Lucio ovinuerant, electionem ipsam confirmare nitebantur . . . .”

105 Pope Eugene III recounts all these events in his 30 May 1145 bull. MPA, no. CXXVIII, 204: “Quid de controversia, quae inter vos et Fraxinorense monasterium agebatur, a nobis statutum sit litterarum memoriae duximus commendandum.”

106 MPA, no. CXXVIII, 204-05: “Fraxinorenses vero monachi auctoritate cujusdam privilegii, quod a jam dicto pradecessore nostro, P. P. Lucio, obtinuerant, electionem ipsam confirmari nitebantur, in quo continebatur quod, obeunte Fraxinorensi abbate, fratres ejusdem loci regulariter eligendi sibi abbatem liberam haberent facultatem.”

107 MPA, no. CXXVIII, 205: “Praefatus vero prior et alii fratres Casae Dei respondebant privilegium illud subreptitium esse, cum in ipso contineret, ad exemplar praedecessorum nostrorum, et Fraxinorenses monachi nec ab ipso Paschali nec ab aliiqo successore illius aliud habent privilegium, et ipse Fraxinorensis abbas, qui ipsum privilegium obtinuit, ab eodem Lucio in causam super hoc manifeste vocatus sit.”

108 MPA, no. CXXVIII, 205-06: “Auditisque utriusque partis rationibus, et scriptis hinc inde diligenter inspecits, fratrum nostrorum communicato consilio, possessionem Fraxinorensis monasterii ablati Casae Dei adjudicavimus, ipsamque, juxta praefati praedecessoris nostri Paschalis privilegium, libere et integre ei restituiusim . . . . Decernimus etiam ut capitulum illud quod in privilegio ejusdem Lucii de libertate electionis abbatis positum est, quoniam subreptitium fuit, et ob id ipsum in causam revocatum, huic nostrae restitutioni vel justitiae monasterii Casae Dei nullum unquam praedjudicium faciat.”
confirmed the newly elected abbot of Frassinoro while ordering him to go to La Chaise-Dieu before the feast of Saint Martin (11 November) to swear obedience to Abbot Stephen. Problems with Frassinoro continued through at least the 1220s when we find a bull from Pope Honorius III confirming that the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu had the right to ratify the election of the abbot of Frassinoro.

Conclusions

Stephen of Mercoeur died on 29 March 1146. Considered a saint in the Auvergne, Stephen left behind a Casadéen congregation that had experienced more growth and spread its influence farther than it had since the abbacy of Seguin. What these two abbots had in common were lengthy terms in office. These long abbacies proved particularly beneficial, and Stephen’s was considerably longer than

109 MPA, no. CXXVIII, 206: “Quamvis tamen, seundum justitiam et nostram sententiam, praefata Fraxinorensium monachorum electio omnino cassare debet, nos tamen ex mansuetudine Sedis Apostolicae dispensantes ne monasterium ipsum hac occasione detrimentum pateretur, electionem ipsum Sedis Apostolicae auctoritate firmavimus, ipsumque in abbatem benediximus, decernentes et praecipientes ut, usque ad proximum festum beati Martini, idem Fraxinorensis abbas ad monasterium Casae Dei accedat, et abbatii obedientiam promittat, nec ista nostra dispensatio ullo unquam in tempore monasterio Casae Dei aliquod praedjudicium faciat, sed, juxta saepe dicti praedecessoris nostri Pascalis institutionem, semper in Fraxinorensi monasterio per abbatis Casae Dei sollicitudinem, semper in fraxinorensi monasterio per abbatis Casae Dei sollicitudinem abbas ordinetur.”

110 A.H. 180. Pope Eugene III had confirmed again Frassinoro’s dependence on La Chaise-Dieu in 1149 (MPA, no. CXXXVII, 218) Pope Adrian IV in 1157 (MPA, no. CXLIX, 236); Pope Alexander III in 1176 (MPA, no. CLXXXVIII, 305); and Lucius III in 1184 (MPA, no. CCIV, 328).

111 Both Gardon, (Histoire de l'Abbaye de la Chaize-Dieu, 51) and J. Branch (Vie des saints, vol. 1, 228) list 29 March, while 2 April appears in the Necrologe de Cornillon, vol. 2, 16.

that of any of his predecessors. Longer abbacies would not occur at La Chaise-Dieu until the late fourteenth century.\footnote{113} Under Abbot Stephen’s guidance, La Chaise-Dieu had supportive contact with over ten bishops and archbishops—three of whom were former monks of La Chaise-Dieu\footnote{114}—and had come into contact with at least eight more: from the archdiocese of Narbonne in the south, to the diocese of Laon in the north; from the archdiocese of Lyon in the east, to the diocese of Saintes in the west.

Stephen’s contacts within episcopal circles were widespread and consistent throughout his abbacy and these contacts were certainly among the most notable features of his term of office. What is more, in often-contested papal elections, he proved his steadfast support for the man deemed to be the legitimate heir of Saint Peter. This was no simple task in era that saw eight successive popes and at least five anti-popes. Stephen’s dedication is best demonstrated in his dealings with popes Pascal II, Calixtus II, and Honorius II concerning the reform of the abbey of Saint-Sixte of Piacenza in the midst of imperial-papal mêlées. When Pope Pascal II and Countess Mathilda of Tuscany suspected imperially inspired treachery on behalf of the abbess of Saint-Sixte, they endeavored to replace the nuns there with Casadéen monks (1112). Seventeen years of turmoil ensued before Stephen was able to secure Casadéen custody of this abbey, but he did prevail.

\footnote{113} The thirty seconded abbot, André Ayraud (1377-1420), and the thirty-third, Hugh Chauvigny of Blot (1420-1465).

\footnote{114} Former abbot Pons at Le Puy, former abbot Aimeric at Clermont, and former monk Peter at both Viviers (1125) and Lyon (1131). As archbishop of Lyon, Peter came into conflict with Bernard of Clairvaux over the election of the bishop of Langres (see Bernard, \textit{Letters}, no. 427; cf. Peter the Venerable, \textit{Letters}, no. 29, no. 64, no. 72. See also Giles Constable, “The Disputed Election at Langres in 1138” \textit{Traditio} 13 (1957): 119-52.
At each turn, with each challenge, Abbot Stephen stood by his abbey’s rights and privileges as he understood them, even to the brink of excommunication on at least one occasion. Clearly, Abbot Stephen had to rely heavily upon not only on his own notable charisma, but also, like his predecessors, he had to depend on the web of relationships within the ecclesiastical ranks, which the abbots of La Chaise-Dieu had long cultivated.

Perhaps less consistent, but equally widespread, was Abbot Stephen’s and the Casadéen congregation’s contact with regional lords. In at least two cases—at Chanteuges and Faverney—Stephen’s abbey was called upon to reform abbeys that had fallen prey to local lords. In the case of Faverney, Count Raynald II of Burgundy and Archbishop Anseric of Besançon supported Stephen in his efforts. In the Massif Central, Stephen garnered continued support from the count of the Auvergne, William VI, and his own noble family, the Mercoeurs. In modern Switzerland, the lords of Grandson turned to the Casadéens to counter the presence of their long-time rival, the Cluniac abbey of Romainmôtier. The dukes of Aquitaine continued their patronage of Sainte-Gemme. And finally, Roger II of Sicily, brother-in-law of Raymond of Toulouse, gave the churches of Montepeloso to La Chaise-Dieu.

Finally, one must return to Pope Lucius II’s description of La Chaise-Dieu in 1144: “monasterium sancti Roberti Casae Dei, religionis monasticae modernis temporibus speculum et in Galliarum partibus documentum.” La Chaise-Dieu’s extraordinary progress demanded respect. The Casadéen congregation’s rapid evolution reached its peak during the abbacy of Stephen—even though it would see continued on-going expansion, though certainly slower, through the thirteenth

115 MPA, no. CXXII, 202; see also Gallia Christiania, II, col. 334.
century. By 1070, shortly after the death of its founder, La Chaise-Dieu had expanded little beyond the Massif Central. By 1096 it could count among its subsidiaries communities as far away as Castile and Italy. Truly expansive progress, however, was not realized until 1144, by which time nearly eighty percent of its lifelong dependents had been secured.¹¹⁶

In many ways, Stephen of Mercoeur’s death left a void at La Chaise-Dieu unlike that of any other abbot save the founder himself. His successor would have to face increasing administrative duties while defending the Casadéen character in an era of heightened monastic enthusiasms of all kinds. Stephen had managed this by building upon his congregation’s long established bases of support and his familial connections. His successor would have to do the same.

¹¹⁶ Gaussin’s studies have focused primarily on the expansion and the internal cohesion of the Casadéen Congregation through the sixteenth century. See Gaussin’s, *L’Abbaye*, and his *Rayonnement*. 
CHAPTER VIII: JORDAN OF MONTBOISSIER (1146-1157)

To fill the great void left by Stephen of Mercoeur, the monks of La Chaise-Dieu turned to the person who had been his right-hand, the prior, Jordan of Montboissier. He had served as prior since at least 1141. As prior, Jordan would have gained considerable and valuable experience maintaining the inner discipline of the abbey, while managing it wholly when his abbot was away from home. This experience coupled with his familial associations, probably made him an appealing choice.

The name of Jordan of La Chaise-Dieu, or Jordan of Montboissier, may be recognized by very few. Monastic historians will likely recognize the name Montboissier, but they would attach it to another monastic icon, Peter of Montboissier, better known as Peter the Venerable. Thanks to the celebrated reputation of Jordan’s brother, we know more about his familial origins than any other Casadéen abbot from this era.

Our earliest knowledge about the Montboissier family comes from four sources: the twelfth-century chronicle of Geoffrey of Vigeois; the biography of

---

1 (Grand) Inventaire général du Chartrier (A.H. 1), 245: hereafter abbreviated G. I.
3 See Geoffroy de Vigeois, Chronicon Lemovicense, in Nova bibliotheca
Peter written by Radulf; the narrative *Historia Vizeliacensis* by Hugh of Poitiers; and various cartularies from monasteries that the family patronized, most importantly, that of Sauxillanges. From these we learn that Jordan was the son of Maurice of Montboissier who was one of at least four brothers. Maurice’s name appears on several documents in the cartulary of Sauxillanges; and elsewhere we see that the Montboissier family had shown special interest in the Casadéen cell of Saint-Dier, located at the foot of their castle Boissonelle (Mons Buxerius). Peter of Poitiers, Peter the Venerable’s secretary, tells us that Maurice participated in the First Crusade—particularly in the fighting around Antioch. Maurice’s name can again be found on several charters from Sauxillanges dated after his return. Most notable is charter 795, dated sometime around 1116. Here, “for the sake of his soul and his burial, with the consent of his wife and sons,” he gave an estate to Sauxillanges, witnessed by his wife Raingard and his son Peter. This particular document was

---


7 The earliest of these dates to between 1060 and 1073 (*Cartulaire de Sauxillanges*, no. 790).

8 *G. I.*, 245-84. Founded by 1052 in the diocese of Clermont.


10 According to Constable, this is the earliest documentary reference to Peter the Venerable (see *Cartulaire de Sauxillanges*, no. 795).
Maurice’s final known disposition before he took the monastic habit at Sauxillanges, where he soon afterwards died. Its necrology recorded: “January 23 full office and penitential chant in hoods for Maurice lord of Montboissier, father of the abbot of Cluny.”

Maurice’s wife, Raingard, seems to have been the spiritual example that their five sons followed. What little is known about her comes from the life of Peter the Venerable by Radulf and Peter’s Letter 53. Raingard had notable contact with at least two religious figures of substance other than her own sons: Hugh of Cluny and Robert of Arbrissel. Hugh had advised her to devote her son Peter to the monastic life and Robert of Arbrissel offered her spiritual advice. After the death

---

11 Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, no. 53, 159: “testamentum eo praesente compositum.” Peter the Venerable mentions, in Letter 53, being present when his father prepared his last testament.


13 For more on her see Paolo Lamma, “La madre di Pietro il Venerabile”, *Studium*, LIV (1958), reprinted in *Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*, LXXV (1963): 175-188.


15 Peter the Venerable wrote that Robert had inspired his mother to become a nun at Fontevrault, even though she ultimately entered Marcigny. See Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, no. 53, 158-59, 161. See also Constable, *Reformation*, 62.
of her husband, Raingard entered the Cluniac nunnery at Marcigny. The exact date of her entry can only be estimated—sometime after the death of Robert of Arbrissel (1117) and before the end of Hugh’s tenure as prior of Marcigny (1122). She spent the rest of her life there, serving for a time as cellarer, and died in 1135.

Maurice and Raingard seem to have had eight sons, whom Peter of Poitiers described:

Nor may you easily deny the illustriousness of their children,  
So distinguished are they, that Lord Maurice should acquire  
Heirs of such character and wealth,  
Eight brothers in all seem to have been born.  
While piety and virtue, similar to the father,  
Seemingly shine with wonderful brilliance in the seven remaining.

From this we know that, when Peter of Poitiers was writing, c. 1133, one of the brothers had already died. This might explain why Radulf, in his life of Peter the Venerable, mentioned that he had only six brothers, of whom four were clerics and two were laymen. Three of Jordan’s siblings had entered the service of the Church, and all of them went on to hold high positions. The most famous, of course, was

17 See Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, no. 52, 152-53: “Ancilla dei carnalis mater mea, spiritualis soror uestra, Marciniacensis monacha Raingardis post diutinam et optimam cum sanctis sororibus conversationem, secundum domini uoluntatem, vii kalendas Iulii commune debitum mortis in sancta confessione exsoluit.”  
18 Bibliotheca Cluniacensis, col. 614E (my translation):  
*Nec facile aduertas pulchra de coniuge natos, Tam sunt egregii, morumne an diuittiarum Fecerit haeredes senior Mauritius, atqui Vviret totus adhuc in fratribus otto uidetur. Cumque eadem pietas, uirtusque simillima patri In septem reliquis miro splendore nitescat*  
Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny since 1122. Two others had ties to Cluny. Armannus, or Armand, was prior of Cluny for a time, but finished his career as abbot of Manglieu in the Auvergne (in the region of Sauxillanges and Montboissier). The other brother with close ties to Cluny was Pontius, or Pons, who, in 1138, became abbot of Vézelay, where he died in 1161. A third brother, Heraclius, or Héracle was provost of Brioude and a canon of Lyon, where he became archbishop in 1153 (during Jordan’s abbacy). He died in 1163.

Jordan’s brothers who remained in the secular world were Eustace and Hugh. Eustace was a knight, according to Radulf, and by 1150 would have been Jordan’s only living brother in secular life. Hugh, a knight and likely the eldest son and head of the family after his father’s death, also remained in the world, but apparently died before 1150, when Peter referred to Eustace as his only living brother in secular life. Two of Hugh’s daughters, Margaret and Pontia, Jordan’s two nieces, were nuns at Marcigny, where his mother had earlier been a nun.

Jordan’s parents both died before they could witness the full ecclesiastical impact of their progeny. When Jordan became abbot of La Chaise-Dieu in 1146, his

20 Radulf, *Vita Petri Venerabilis*, 1200; see also Geoffrey de Vigeois, *Chronicon Lemovicense*, 301; and RHGF, vol. 12, 432.
21 See the chronicle of Vézelay in Labbè, *Nova bibliotheca*, vol. 1, 397; RHGF, vol. 12, 345.
24 Radulf described him so (*Vita Petri Venerabilis*, 1200).
26 Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, no. 185, 427ff.
siblings were already (or on their way to becoming) equally well placed: Peter, had been abbot of Cluny since 1122; Pontius, abbot of Vézelay since 1138; Armannus would become abbot of Manglieu in 1151; and Heraclius would become archbishop of Lyon in 1153. Even as these blood brothers took different routes to ecclesiastical leadership and ended up in different places, they remained in contact with each other and sought the support of each other when need arose.27

Jordan’s Career

Details regarding Jordan’s entry into La Chaise-Dieu do not survive. One historian has suggested Jordan’s oblation was accompanied with the gift of the ground of Echandelys,28 yet no extant documents support this supposition. It is likely that most of his brothers, like Peter in 1109 at age 17, started their religious vocations as teenagers. Jordan too probably entered around this same time; he was younger than Peter but older than Pontius. This would place his entry into La Chaise-Dieu during the abbacy of Aimeric.

In many ways, Jordan’s abbacy mirrors that of Pons of Tournon. Both followed on the heels of particularly industrious and active abbots; both learned the monastic life under the tutelage of one of the monastery’s most prominent spiritual and worldly guides. Again, like Pons, most of Jordan’s abbacy was marked not so much by expansion, but by consolidation. Stephen of Mercoeur’s activities left Jordan with his hands full. Both he and La Chaise-Dieu had to come to terms with all the recent acquisitions. What Jordan’s abbacy lacked in expansion, was more than

27 For example, Peter, Jordan, and Heraclius met at Vézelay when their brother Pontius was having difficulties there (see Constable, Letters, vol. 2, 268).
made up for with vigilance.

As Jordan began his tenure as the newly elected abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, however, he lost the assistance of his prior Bernard, who had recently been nominated and appointed bishop of Valence.29 This newly established advocate, however, proved of little immediate use to Jordan in his first major challenge; but another Casadéen monk, now bishop of Uzès, was able to assist his former abbey as problems once again flared up in the diocese of Nîmes.30

The bishop of Nîmes, Aldebert of Posquières, renewed challenges to La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of both Saint-Sauveur and Saint-Baudile; he went so far as to force his way into Saint-Baudile where he demanded that the monks swear obedience and allegiance to him.31 Upon hearing this news, Jordan appealed to Pope Eugene III who in turn named two judges in this case—the archbishop of Arles and the bishop of Viviers.32 These were both very bad choices as far as La Chaise-Dieu was concerned as both men were quite close to the bishop of Nîmes. The archbishop of Arles, Raymond of Montredon, was not only a former canon of Nîmes but was related to Bishop Aldebert; the bishop of Viviers, Peter, also had family ties to the

29 Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter 325, 400: “I have heard that in the church of Valence the prior of Chaise-Dieu has been elected by the choice of both the clergy and the people.” See Barbara Newman, The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098-1180 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

30 Pons of Tournon had also faced challenges from the bishop of Nîmes. See above, 137.


bishop of Nîmes. It had to be clear to Jordan, after the initial hearing of this case (which took place in Nîmes), that any judgment proposed by these men would be to his distinct disadvantage, and that it was unlikely that any other advocate of substance from the region would step forward to champion his case.

Jordan called upon his brother Peter to intervene with the pope. Peter responded by sending a letter to Pope Eugene III in the autumn of 1149 in which he pointed out that the archbishop of Arles was not the most unbiased of judges as he had been born in the diocese of Nîmes, had been an oblate and canon at Nîmes, and had always defended the church of Nîmes. This tactic proved effective as the pope assigned two new judges: the bishops of Uzès and of Lodève. These two bishops, certainly more sympathetic to La Chaise-Dieu, reexamined the matter, and, following the outcome of previous quarrels between these two litigants, decided in La Chaise-Dieu’s favor. Jordan confirmed the transfer of the chapels and churches formerly given by Pons of Tournon to the bishop of Nîmes, and he went further by reassigning the monastery of Saint-Sauveur to the bishop as well. The bishop, in exchange, recognized La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of Saint-Baudile, and freed it from episcopal jurisdiction. He also approved the donation of the church of Uchaud, previously

---

35 MPA, no. CXXXIV, 216. The bishop of Uzès, Raymond of Posquières, was also a relative of the bishop of Nîmes, but he was also a former Casadéen monk. Here is an interesting example of monastic familial ties out weighing familial blood ties.
granted to La Chaise-Dieu c. 1100; and he added the churches of Saint-Julien of Nîmes, Bezouce, Langlade, and Razil, from all of which he retained some portion of the tithes.

This matter being finally settled, Jordan departed for Rome with a letter of introduction from his brother Peter. Pope Eugene III confirmed in 1149 the submission of Sainte-Livrade to La Chaise-Dieu and threatened excommunication against any who would disturb this union. As we recall from the previous chapter, a majority of the members in this collegiate community had decided to give the church of Sainte-Livrade to La Chaise-Dieu in 1117. Abbot Stephen had obtained the approval for this transfer from Pope Calixtus II in 1119, and episcopal support, though slow, the following year. Although Pope Eugene does not identify any

36 See PP, 29v; Gaussin, Rayonnement, 429.
37 A.H. 179. The bishop claimed that it was normal for him to retain at least one-fourth of the tithes. See also Gaussin, L’Abbaye, 157.
39 A.H. 23.3, published by MPA, no. CXXXV, 217: “Proinde, dilecte in Domino fili, Jordane abbas, tuis justis postulationibus clementer annuimus, et praedecessoris nostri felicis memoriae Calixti II vestigiis inhaerentes, concessionem seu donationem ecclesiae B. Liberatae cum pertinentiis suis ab Hildeberto, Aginnensi episcopo, Beati Roberti monasterio cui, Deo auctore, praeesse dignosceris, per manus ejusdem praedecessoris nostri factum, et scripti sui patrocinio confirmatam tibi et per te antedito monasterio Sedis Apostolorum auctoritate firmamus, et eamdem ecclesiam in tua tuorumque successorum tuitione ac dispositione perpetua stabilitate permanere censemus, salvo nimium dioecesani episcopi jure, quod hactenus in eadem ecclesia visus est habuisse. Si quis igitur locum ipsum a monasterii vestri regimine ac dispositione subtrahere, et nostrae huic provisionem temere contraire praesumpterit, tentaverit, honoris et officii sui periculum patiatur, aut excommunicationis ultione plectatur, nisi praesumptionem suam digna satisfactione correxerit.”
40 See above, 174-75.
particular threat to La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of Sainte-Livrade, one can speculate that given the bishop’s initial slowness to support the original transfer of this community to the Casadéens coupled with the severest of the pope’s sanctions against those interfering in this union, that, some thirty years later, the monks of La Chaise-Dieu still did not feel wholly secure in its possession.

Another bull of Pope Eugene III in support of La Chaise-Dieu was aimed at the canons of Brioude who now, apparently, wanted to claim from La Chaise-Dieu some compensation for Chanteuges. The pope refused to give them any.41 The abbey of Chanteuges had had, at the time of its foundation, very close ties to the chapter of Brioude, although it was never its dependent.42 Pope Eugene III’s confirmation of the details concerning La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of this abbey appears to be in response to the first of many flare-ups in what would turn out to be a long-running dispute—some forty years after this, the canons of Brioude would again re-stake a claim to this monastery.43

Long held dependent abbeys also occupied Jordan’s thoughts. Pope Eugene III reconfirmed the dependency of San Marino of Pavia on La Chaise-Dieu, although there seemed to have been no difficulties related to this union at this time.44 More disconcerting were the actions undertaken by the monks at Brantôme, who presumed,

---

41 MPA, no. CXLIV, 229.
42 See above, 174-75.
43 Pope Adrien IV confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s possession on Chanteuges c. 1154 (MPA, no. CLVI, 249), while Cardinal Hyacinthe took up this dispute again in 1175. See MPA, “Appendice”, no. LXIII, 508-13.
44 A.H. 181.1, published in Tablettes Historiques de Velay, vol. 8, 26. This bull is in bad condition. Cf. MPA, no. CXXXVIII, 219: “Casae Dei itidem subjectum erat monasterium S. Marini in civitate Papiensi; ejusque ordinatio a Paschali II et Callisto II Casae Dei abbati commissa fuerat.”
contrary to their rights, to elect their own abbot. The pope did not depose their choice, but he did demand that the newly-elected abbot go to La Chaise-Dieu to swear obedience to the abbot. The pope also reminded the monks of Brantôme that their abbot was always to be selected by La Chaise-Dieu. Brantôme, along with Gaillac and Saint-Théodard, had always been one of the dependent abbeys most closely connected with and regulated by La Chaise-Dieu. That Brantôme now attempted to elect its own abbot without the sanction of the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, as the distant abbey of Frassinoro recently had done, must be viewed as a troubling trend, and as an indication of still more difficult times to come.

While not experiencing any surge in new donations, Jordan could, at least,

45 A.H. 182.3, published in Tabletes Historiques de Velay, vol. 8, 209-10: “Eapropter, dilecti in domino filii, concordiam que inter vos et fratres Brantosmensis monasterii super ordinacione ipsius cenobii per manum venerabilis fratr is nostri Gauf ridi Burdegalensis archiepiscopi facto est et scripti sui pagina roborata, aucotritate sedis apostolice confirmamus et perpetuis temporis (-ribus) ratam manere censemus, ut videlicet nullus deinceps in abbatem in ibi absque consilio et assensu abbatis monasterii Case Dei et de professis monachis ejusdem cenobii eligatur et ut in consulto abbate Case Dei, neque prior neque ceteri custodes ordinis in eodem loco constituantur, sed disciplina monastice ordinationis in corrigendis excessibus et in aliis que ad regulam beati Benedicti pertinent secundum consuetudines monasterii Case Dei integre conservetur, salvo nimirum in omnibus jure propritate in possessionibus et redditibus supradicte Brantosmensis ecclesie. Nulli ergo hominum fas sit eandem concordiam temere perturbare seu quibuslibet . . . eam infringere.” See Jaffé, 9374. We also know about this from Gottfried III, archbishop of Bordeaux. See Gallia christiana, II, col.1491-1492; cf., MPA, no. CXXXIX, 220: “Facta vero professione, cum bona voluntate et assensu abbatis et capituli ejusdem ecclesiae, ad regimen et administrationem Brantolmensis abbataie rediret; hoc modo, ut de caetero subjectus esset abbatii et Ecclesiae Casae Dei: obeunte autem illo, nullus deinceps in abbatem nisi cum consilio et assensu abbatis Casae Dei et de monachis professis ejusdem Ecclesiae elgeretur. . . . Statutum est etiam ut inconsulto abbatte Casae Dei, neque prior, neque caeteri custodes ordinis ibi constituantur, et ut disciplina monasticae ordinationis in corrigendis excessibus, et in aliis quae ad regulam Beati Benedicti pertinent, secundum consuetudinem Casae Dei ibidem ex integro conservetur.”

46 See above, 187-89.
count on continued papal support. On 12 March 1150, Pope Eugene III confirmed all of La Chaise-Dieu’s possessions. The year 1152 marked the hundredth anniversary of La Chaise-Dieu’s abbatial status. It also marked the beginning of a difficult era for the abbey, an era of struggle. During Jordan’s abbacy, the abbey began to find it more difficult to gain the support of the bishops unless they had been drawn from the community. La Chaise-Dieu was likewise finding it increasingly difficult to maintain obedience from their dependent monasteries—Frassinoro and Brantôme are representative of this—while finding papal protection no longer just a formality but a necessity.

At the end of 1157, Pope Andrian IV addressed a bull to Jordan confirming again all of the abbey’s dependent houses and renewing the protection of the Apostolic See. This is the last bull La Chaise-Dieu received during the period studied here and its detail reveals much about the current needs of the abbey. This is most evident in the long list of privileges the pope appended. He placed the abbey under papal protection, free from any archbishop or bishop. He gave the abbey the

---


48 At this time there were two Casadéen bishops: the ex-prior Bernard became the bishop of Valence in 1146 (Gallia Christiania, XVI, col. 307) and the bishop of Uzès was Raymond of Posquières, a former monk.

49 What survives is a seventeenth-century French translation in Gardon, Histoire de l'Abbaye de la Chaize-Dieu, 412, which is reprinted in MPA, no. CXLIX, 235-38. See also Jaffé, 10.315. Pope Alexander III’s bull of 1178 expands upon these in some detail. See MPA, no. CLXXXIX, 310-11.

50 Ibid.: “D’avantage nous vous prenons sous la protection de sauvegarde du St-Siège par ces présentes, afin qu’auquun archevesque ou evquesque noze rien entreprendre
right to celebrate the divine office during a general interdict, provided that the doors were closed, no bells were rung, and their voices were kept low; and, for the sacramental services of a bishop, the abbot could choose a diocesan bishop or any other bishop to perform these duties. Upon the death of the abbot, his replacement had to be chosen by the consent of the monks, not by any fraudulent or violent means. Monks were not allowed to leave the abbey, except to embrace a stricter rule, unless the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu approved their transfer. The pope’s final point concerned disobedient dependent abbots, whom the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu could punish at his own discretion, without the intervention of the bishop. Of these, the final two points speak specifically to problems creeping into the administration of the Casadéen congregation and to Jordan’s ever-growing need to secure papal backing. Finally, the pope declared that any, ecclesiastic or secular, who

---

51 Ibid.: “Que s’il advienne que quelque terre soit généralement interdite, qu’il vous soit loisible à huitclos de célébrer le divin office, chassant les excommuniés et interdits, et sans sonner les cloches et à voix basse, moyennant que vous n’ayez donné subiect à l’interdict, et pourrez recevoir le St-Cresme, le S. Huile et la Consécration des autels et esglises, et les ordres pour vos clerics qui debvront estre promus aux sacrés ordres, par votre evesque diocésain, moyennant qu’il soit catholique et joint de communion et de grâce avec le St-Siége de Rome, ou bien de tel autre evesque qu’il vous plaira.”

52 Ibid.: “Toy venant à mourir qui es aujourd’hui abbé dudit lieu ou quelqu’un de tes successeurs, que personne ny soit faict abbé par quelque fraude, astuce, subreption et violence que ce soit, hormis celuy lequel aura esté eleu du commun consentement de tous les religieux ou de la plus grando et saine partie d’iceux selon Dieu et selon la règle de Saint-Benoist, du monastère ou d’un autre éstranger.”

53 Ibid.: “Deffendons outre plus que personne des bons religieux, après avoir fait profession de votre monastère, ne puisse s’en aller d’iceluy sans la licence de son abbé, si ce n’est pour passer à une religion plus estroicte, et s’il s’en allait sans estre muny des vos lettres et patentes ordinaires, que personne ne soit si ozé de le retenir.”

54 Ibid.: Nous adjoutons de plus et ordonnons que si aucun des abbés, qui par autorité de Rome, relèvent de vous, viennent à estre désobéissants et rebelles, soient punis régulièrement et selon votre discrétion et non de l’evesque.”
would ignore these rights as he had laid out should be warned two or three times, and if they still held to their ways, they should be made aware of their guilt, striped of their dignity and power, and deprived of the body and blood of Christ, and, on the day of Judgment, made subject to the most rigorous vengeance.55

La Chaise-Dieu’s Benefactors

Jordan’s abbacy, like Aimeric’s, seems to have been spent primarily consolidating and defending La Chaise-Dieu’s rights and possessions. There is no surviving evidence that La Chaise-Dieu founded any new communities or received any new dependents for reform during Jordan’s abbacy. The lack of documented evidence for new donations does not, however, mean that the abbey did not acquire new possessions by other means. There are two cases in which the abbey received new churches. In the first case, the abbey received four churches as part of its agreement with the bishop of Nîmes, two of which, Bezouce and Langlade, became priories (Map 3). In the second case, the abbey acquired a parish as payment for a loan to a local lord. Sometime c. 1156, Lord Radulphus of Lugeac, the tithe-owner of the parish of Azerat, mortgaged part of parish to Jordan and La Chaise-Dieu in return for a loan. Unable to repay it, Lord Radulphus abandoned his claim to the parish, handing it over to Abbot Jordan.56

55 Ibid.: “Que si quelque personne ecclésiastique ou séculière que ce soit, après avoir eu connaissance de notre constitution, est si téméraire que d’y ozer contrevenir après avoir esté admonesté deux et trois fois, s’il ne corrige sa faute par deue satisfaction, qu’il soit privé de sa dignité, de son honueur et puissance, et qu’il connaisse qu’il est coulpable devant le divin Juge meme d’avoir perpétré iniquité, et soit privé du sacré corps et sang de Dieu, nostre Seigneur et Rédempteur Jésus-Christ, et au dernier jour du jugement soit subie à la très-estroicte et rigoureuse vengence.”

Conclusions

Jordan died on 24 November 1157, within a year of his brother Peter’s death (25 December 1156). He had been dedicated to consolidating newly acquired possessions, while defending his abbacy’s supremacy over long-held dependencies. These were no simple tasks. The Casadéen congregation had experienced unprecedented growth during Stephen of Mercoeur’s abbacy. Perhaps not surprising then is the absence of new donations during Jordan’s abbacy, thus contributing to its general low-key tone. Jordan may not have added to the growth of the congregation, but he did take many steps to secure and to protect its cohesiveness.

Jordan did this in part by taking advantage of his family ties by appealing to his brother Peter when need be; by utilizing well-positioned Casadéen monks; and by securing papal protection. A case that demonstrated each of these points was Bishop Aldebert’s challenge of La Chaise-Dieu’s possessions in the diocese of Nîmes. Here Jordan called upon his brother Peter the Venerable to intervene on his behalf. As a result, Pope Eugene III assigned two new bishops to judge the case, one a former monk of La Chaise-Dieu.

The most distressing trend, which became more apparent during Jordan’s abbacy, however, was the abbey’s ever-growing pursuit of papal support to facilitate Casadéen cohesiveness as dependent communities attempted to assert their independence. Stephen had faced this at Frassinoro; now Jordan did too at Brantôme. New dependencies too, during the second half of the century, would become increasingly more rare, and struggles to preserve what belonged to La Chaise-Dieu

---

quasdam partes ipsius decime in vadimonio et in pignore domino Jordano, abbati, et ceteris fratribus Case Dei. . . .”

would become more frequent. The geo-political shift that had taken place during Jordan’s abbacy had yet to trouble the Auvergnat abbey directly, but would affect the region for decades to come.58

58 See above, 162-64.
CONCLUSION
CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION

La Chaise-Dieu’s Geopolitical Landscape

La Chaise-Dieu’s geographical landscape dictated its local religious and political milieux and thus must be considered a primary factor in its development of external relationships with its benefactors as directed by its abbots. While the geography of the Massif Central thwarted attempts by regional princips to form territorial principalities, it contributed to the rise of the largely autonomous castellan class. The geography itself favored the fragmentation of power. The landscape fashioned pronounced natural sites where strong local lords could build their castles.

The Auvergne had long been part of the duchy of Aquitaine, but during the second half of the tenth century when there was no obvious duke, regional political power began to drift into the hands of the local nobility who exercised as many comital powers as they could within their own realms of influence as dictated, primarily, by the location of their castles. This situation was only aggravated by the fact that the title of count of Auvergne had only recently been adopted (987) by the viscounts of Clermont, who were in no position to wield power over their neighbors, as any claims they had on authority were too recent and, moreover, largely ignored by other regional families whose earthly power often matched their own. Violence was prevalent and warfare endemic, but the political milieu of the Auvergne during the
eleventh and twelfth centuries oftentimes settled into a “balance of terror.”

When Robert of Turlande and his companions set out to live a life of isolation, dedicated to the service of God, their choice of location was requisite to their success. The site they chose was particularly well placed physically, politically, and religiously on the high Livradois plateau. It was, they thought, isolated and remote. What began as a small gathering of hermits, however, rapidly evolved into a remarkable abbey. The abbey flourished, perhaps surprisingly, in this region where there was an insistence that land be alodial; where local castellan families controlled property, political power, and the church; where there was an incipient feudalism linked to land usage, not to personal loyalty; and where there was an arbitration of disputes by informal tribunals in the absence of any overarching judicial system.

The abbey had, by the death of its founder in 1067, developed such regional power that, armed simply “with the sanction of higher authority and fitting privileges,” it was capable of managing its own affairs without any overt intrusion by external lords, secular or ecclesiastical. Nevertheless, La Chaise-Dieu did rely on the material support of its neighbors. It, like every other monastic institution, was dependent on “the goodwill of the nobility,” but those individuals most active in the foundation of La Chaise-Dieu were all local churchmen, not secular principes. There were, of course, regional families that took a more active role in supporting the abbey—in particular the Turlande, Beaumont, Baffie, and Mercoeur—and these families, more than any others, provided the abbey critical support.

---

2 See above, 33-34.
3 Marbod, I.18.2. See above, 50.
4 Bouchard, Sword, Miter, and Cloister, 253, cf. 254.
Local secular leaders, however, were not the abbey’s only supporters or even its most important. The abbey’s episcopal neighbors, particularly at Clermont and, to a lesser extent, at Le Puy, proved invaluable to the abbey’s expansion. The bishops’ prominence as the masters of the only major cities in the region went virtually unchallenged. These bishops not only offered practical support to the abbey but also provided a buffer between La Chaise-Dieu and particularly bellicose nobles who directed their aggressions instead at the bishops. The bishops, themselves products of the region as they too had assumed comital powers and provided the oldest continuous government in the region, found themselves almost incessantly entangled in contentious affairs with their noble neighbors who built their primary fortifications virtually on the bishops’ doorstep. Thus the bishops of Clermont proved a distraction for the counts of Auvergne who established their fortified burg at Montferrand, and the bishops of Le Puy did likewise for the viscounts of Polignac whose principal castle lay just outside the episcopal city.\(^5\)

In the Auvergne, however, there was no great lord to initiate, support, or, even, exploit the foundation of La Chaise-Dieu. The local aristocracy left the abbey more or less unmolested until the second half of the twelfth century, while the local bishops at Clermont and Le Puy, sometimes former abbots of the abbey, were generally supportive of the it. Given such circumstances, the abbots could dedicate less attention to simple survival in a hostile environment and more on the business of

\(^5\) This situation was quite similar to that of Burgundy where, again, the bishops’ chief competitors were the counts who established their capitals in the same cities as the bishops and whose counties were roughly equivalent to the bishops’ dioceses. One reason for this convergence of secular and ecclesiastical power was that these administrative boundaries were descendants of Roman administrative units. See Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, 32.
reforming those lapsed communities entrusted to them or establishing new communities on sites where they had been invited. Soon the abbey’s prestige as a recognized center of reform spread, as did its influence. The abbey quickly began to draw the attention of distant secular and ecclesiastical leaders from the highest ranks in medieval society, from people who had the means to pick and choose. They picked La Chaise-Dieu, not only in the Auvergne where the Casadéen presence deterred the foundation and expansion of all other religious orders, but across the Midi and into Léon-Castile, Tuscany, and Jura—oftentimes in the strongholds of competing religious institutions.

So long as the “balance of terror” prevailed in the Auvergne, La Chaise-Dieu flourished. So long as the bishop of Clermont remained the most dominant regional leader, La Chaise-Dieu prospered; the moment, however, that these gave way in the second half of the twelfth century, when the county of Auvergne split, and the power of the bishop of Clermont waned, La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion faltered.

External Relationships

By recounting La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion from its humble beginnings through 1157, the period during which the abbey experienced its greatest growth, we have an opportunity to assess the abbey’s external relationships with secular and ecclesiastical leaders as developed and maintained by the first eight abbots. As presented in the Introduction and chronicled throughout the subsequent chapters, La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion, and thus its external contacts, can be traced in four stages of growth. These same four stages are utilized here in an effort to discern patterns of relationships between the abbots of La Chaise-Dieu and the abbey’s external advocates.
Stage One: Relations with Secular Leaders and Ecclesiastical Leaders

On 20 December 1052, King Henry I of France confirmed La Chaise-Dieu’s status as an abbey and also secured all the previous donations made to it up to that day. One must question the effectiveness on the local level of this seemingly impressive association with a distant king. This was not Orléanais where the king had real power to defend the abbey of Fleury. There is no evidence that Robert of Turlande maintained any sort of contact with the king, but then again this association was only made possible through Robert’s uncle, the bishop of Clermont, who had, in fact, maintained an ongoing relationship with the king. Bishop Rencon, likely more concerned with the freedoms granted by the king’s privileges than how to defend them, had certainly encouraged his nephew to seek out the king’s approval for his endeavors. Closer to home, Robert of Turlande could count on the scattered support from the lords of Mercoeur and Beaumont, and from castellans such as Gerald III of Turlande and Raoul of Lugeac. All of these families were in a position to offer the abbey material support, but none was in a position to initiate its foundation or to offer it noteworthy protection.

Like the royal charter first obtained by Robert, the abbey too received a bull from Pope Leo IX that “confirmed his project with apostolic decrees.” The pope placed La Chaise-Dieu under the protection of the Holy See and enjoined all secular

---

8 See above, 54-57.
9 MPA, no. XVII, 34-37. See above, 50.
lords, from emperor to viscount, from seizing the church or its goods. Here too, there is little reason to assume that the pope had any detailed knowledge about the goings-on at La Chaise-Dieu or to expect that the pope had any real authority to defend the privileges he granted. What was important was “[t]o enhance the stability of the new foundation with the sanction of higher authority and fitting privileges.”

With such “sanction,” Robert could appeal to his local ecclesiastical leader, his maternal uncle, Rencon, bishop of Clermont and dominant lord of the region. Bishop Rencon was in a position to monitor closely and to support the efforts of his nephew. The bishop’s declaration that he was the protector of the new monastery was not an empty gesture, especially when backed up by the abbey’s royal and papal privileges. Rencon, however, was not the abbey’s only source of clerical support. Within a relatively short amount of time, La Chaise-Dieu and its obviously growing reputation as a pious center of monastic observances had come to the attention of bishops of Viviers and Auxerre, both from outside the Massif Central and both reform-minded bishops.

What we can observe from this initial stage of the abbey’s development is that because regional authority was fragmented between relatively equal secular leaders who were able to provide little more than minor material support, Abbot Robert had to develop and maintain alternative means of support, in particular defensive support. For this he turned to the church, particularly to his uncle Rencon who, as bishop of Clermont, represented real comital authority in the region and whose

10 Marbod, I.18.2.
11 See above, 61-62.
12 Lauranson-Rosaz has observed that large donations from local nobles were extremely rare (L’Auvergne, 122).
authority was stiffened by both royal and papal charters.

Stage Two: Relations with Secular Leaders and Ecclesiastical Leaders

Abbot Durand’s association with local secular leaders continued initially in much the same fashion as they had been established by Robert. He managed his abbey’s established network of support, most notably from the Turlandes and Mercours, while cultivating new support locally, drawing donations from families such as the lords of Baffie and the castellans of Chapteuil; and from outside the Auvergne, including the lords Tournon. More importantly, we see Durand and La Chaise-Dieu drawing the first clear attention of both the count of the Auvergne and the duke of Aquitaine. La Chaise-Dieu’s closeness to the church of Clermont, however, likely waned during the episcopacies of the simonists Stephen V of Polignac (c. 1050-1073) and William of Chamalières (1073-1076), but Durand was able to cultivate continued episcopal support from outside his home diocese from bishop of Viviers.

What we can observe from this second stage of development is that Durand shepherded La Chaise-Dieu through its first period of transition by broadening its network of, primarily secular, support. Those families who had originally supported Robert’s efforts continued to make donations, and these donations were augmented by those of a growing circle of individuals. Of particular interest is that at the moment La Chaise-Dieu’s sway with the bishop of Clermont waned, its relationship

---

13 See above, 79-81.
14 See above, 82.
15 See above, 83-85.
16 See above, 80.
with regional nobles, from the castellans of Chapteuil to the duke of Aquitaine, waxed. We can also begin to observe a developing pattern in the abbey’s association with secular leaders, which is more apparent in the following stages, that while local secular leaders continued their support, more distant and more influential lords were beginning to take an increasing interest in the Auvergnat abbey.

Stage Three: Relations with Secular Leaders and Ecclesiastical Leaders

Abbots during this stage began to rely less upon local secular leaders, who, nevertheless, continued to support the abbey, and more upon very powerful secular lords from beyond the Massif Central who had been drawn to La Chaise-Dieu in the years following Durand’s acceptance of the episcopal see of Clermont. While Durand had garnered the first documented donation from the duke of Aquitaine, his successors would not only continue to foster this association but would also develop much more meaningful associations with the king and queen of Castile, and, particularly, with the count of Toulouse. La Chaise-Dieu also received its first

17 Stephen of Mercoeur supported the abbey in its seizure of two churches, Saint-Stephen and Saint-Leo (see above, 130-31). The abbey also received support regionally from new secular sources, including from William of Forez (see above, 141).

18 La Chaise-Dieu’s dependent priory of Sainte-Gemme in the diocese of Saintes continued to draw the attention and support of the duke of Aquitaine. Founded by Duke William VIII during the abbacy of Durand, his son, Duke William IX, continued to support of the priory with donations of land in 1091 and 1098.

19 Abbot Adelelmus’ biography gives a description of how Constance of Burgundy, wife of Alfonso VI, convinced her husband to invite Adelelmus to their court in Castile. This request initiated a long relationship between the court of Léon-Castile and the monk from La Chaise-Dieu and the communities founded in Léon-Castile as a result of this association. See above, 112-18.

20 Count Raymond of Toulouse had begun his association with La Chaise-Dieu as early as 1079, and he continued his friendship with the Auvergnat abbey throughout his life. See above, 119, 136.
dependent in Tuscany from its countess via Pope Gregory VII. These relationships are the most striking for the period even as the abbots accepted new donations from regional lords across France.

Abbot Seguin’s personal network of friendships, especially those created before he became abbot, put him into contact with some of the foremost ecclesiastical leaders of his day. Under his stewardship between 1078 and 1094, the Casadéens emerged as a clear alternative to Cluny. Pope Gregory VII granted La Chaise-Dieu privileges equal to those of Cluny, and Pope Urban II renewed those privileges on 7 September 1095. With Urban II in the Auvergne at the outset of Abbot Pons’ career, the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu was able to renew contact with many ecclesiastics with close ties to his abbey. By the end of this stage, the abbots had obtained donations of churches and communities for reform from at least eight different bishops and archbishops, and had established a very close, if not defining, friendships with Hugh of Die, archbishop of Lyon, and Hugh of Châteauneuf, bishop of Grenoble.

Abbatial relations with other ecclesiastical leaders were not, however, entirely

---

21 See above, 99.
22 These included Count Hélie of Périgueux, the lords of Parthenay in Poitou, William Freeland and Robert of Pons in the Aquitaine, and Guillien of Boscozel near Vienne.
23 MPA, no. XXVIII, 50-53. All though the pope did not specify it, the wording of the bull implies episcopal exemptions. See above, 98-99.
24 MPA, no. XLVI, 72-74. See above, 132-33.
25 The bishops of Lucca, Périgueux, and Limoges, and the archbishops of Vienne and Reims all supported Abbot Seguin. Abbot Pons drew support from the bishops of Clermont and Maguelonne, and the archbishop of Vienne as well.
26 See above, 95.
27 See above, 102-03.
trouble-free during this stage of the abbey’s development. The rapid success of the abbey had led sometimes to encroachments on the rights of others ecclesiastics. One of the more important outcomes of the council of Clermont was a charter of ‘brotherhood’ between La Chaise-Dieu and Cluny, which was meant to ease developing tensions. La Chaise-Dieu had also come into conflict with its ecclesiastical neighbors, for example, when monks from La Chaise-Dieu seized two churches from the abbey of Blesle, and when the Casadéen priory of Saint-Baudile received several chapels around Nîmes, impinging on the rights of the bishop of Nîmes as they had been defined by the Council of Melfi in 1089.

What we can observe from this third stage of development is that La Chaise-Dieu’s reputation as a center of reform had been firmly established, as is witnessed by its increasing network of secular and ecclesiastical advocates. The abbots continued to receive support from local secular leaders, but these relationships, beyond their friendship with lord Stephen of Mercoeur, were hardly critical. The abbots’ association with Count Raymond of Toulouse, however, was. He proved to be the abbey’s most significant secular advocate not only during this stage of the abbey’s development but for the entire period studied here.

We can likewise observe during this stage a blossoming of widespread episcopal support for the abbey, most a result of Pope Gregory VII’s reforming efforts through his legate Hugh of Die. This support was crucial to the abbey’s expansion, for the bishops and archbishops not only granted privileges but donated churches across the Midi where Casadéen priories were established, and submitted to

---

28 See above, 130-32.
29 See above, 137.
the Auvergnat abbey monastic communities for the purpose of reform.

Stage Four: Relations with Secular Leaders and Ecclesiastical Leaders

Abbatial relations with secular leaders during this stage reached their zenith, extending, for the first time, into modern Switzerland.30 The abbey drew donations and protection from the highest levels of the noble aristocracy from across continental Europe.31 After 1147, when Count Robert III of Auvergne departed for crusade, however, the nature of abbatial associations with secular leaders began to change as geopolitical conditions in the Auvergne grew increasingly hostile.

The split of the county of Auvergne had similar effects on abbatial associations with ecclesiastical leaders during this stage. Before this, the abbots of La Chaise-Dieu continued their support of the legitimate heir of Saint Peter who in turned continued to add to the abbey’s growing list of dependencies by recognizing newly submitted communities and by directing new communities to the abbey for reform. After 1147, however, the abbey needed the pope’s support, as is demonstrated by the abbots’ need to turn increasingly to the papacy for directives both to maintain harmony within the Casadéen congregation and to safeguard the abbey’s security.32

Before 1147, the abbots of La Chaise-Dieu benefited greatly from its

30 See above, 149, 172-73.
31 These included: Count William VI of Auvergne, the lords of Grandson, King Alfonso VII of Léon-Castile, Duke William IX of Aquitaine, Count Raynald III of Burgundy, Countess Mathilda of Tuscany, King Roger II of Sicily, and Count Raymond of Saint-Gilles.
32 The bulls of Pope Eugene III and Pope Andrian IV were caulked full of very specific lists of rights and privileges that aimed at protecting both the abbey’s possessions and its hegemony over its congregation. See above, 201-06.
relationships with bishops both near and far. For example, closer to home, the abbots enjoyed both the beneficence and the advocacy of the bishop of Clermont. Elsewhere, the bishop of Mende made a donation of fifteen churches (all of which became priories) to the abbey, the bishop of Agen donated a church, and the archbishop of Besançon directed the submission of the abbey of Faverney to La Chaise-Dieu for reform. After 1147, however, the accrual of new gifts and new submissions from bishops waned.

La Chaise-Dieu also experienced increasing conflicts with competing orders, and more successful challenges to its central authority from within the Casadéen congregation. The abbots dealt with renewed challenges both from the monks of Aniane and the canons of Brioude. They also experienced internal challenges to their authority by Frassinoro, and had to deal with various difficulties with Saint-André-le-Bas.

What we can observe from this fourth stage of development is that abbatial associations began to take a dramatic turn c. 1147, just at the moment when the so-called “balance of terror” was shaken by the division of the county of Auvergne. This turn of events is all the more dramatic when we recall that just three years prior, in

See above, 169.
Ibid.
See above, 176.
Abbot Jordan did receive four new churches from the bishop of Nîmes as part of a settlement concerning La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of both Saint-Sauveur and Saint-Baudile. See above, 199-201.
See above, 179-80.
See above, 202.
See above, 187-89.
See above, 184-86.
1144, Pope Lucius II had declared La Chaise-Dieu a “a mirror of monastic reverence for our time and an example in parts of Gaul.”⁴¹ Before 1147, La Chaise-Dieu’s extraordinary progress and reputation demanded respect. In the years following 1147, however, pressures brought on by regional political instability not only decelerated Casadéen expansion, prompting the abbots to focus increasing energy toward attempts to consolidate their hegemony over their dependencies, but prompted the abbots to turn progressively more and more to their foundational lines of support, both secular and ecclesiastical.

Final Analysis

Relations with Aristocratic Leaders

Probably the most identifiable characteristic of monasticism in general, and reformed monasticism in particular, is the relationship between secular aristocratic patrons and the monastery. In fact, it is defensible to argue as Constance Bouchard has that without the support of the nobility, monastic reform would not have been possible.⁴² Reforming efforts may well have needed lay support to succeed, but this support was also a source of difficulties. Monks, reform-minded or traditionalist, had, almost always, to compromise their spiritual ideals with worldly realities. This should not come as an immediate surprise as noble patronage of monastic houses was driven by the choices made by the patrons who had no reason to approach their patterns of associations with these new reform-minded communities any differently than they had those with monks in the past. This was particularly true, as

---

⁴¹ See above, 166.
⁴² Bouchard, Sword, 253, cf. 254.
demonstrated by Penelope D. Johnson, when secular leaders initiated the foundation of a monastic community.\textsuperscript{43} But what happened when there was no secular founder? Suddenly secular motives no longer necessitated compromise from the outset. This was the case at La Chaise-Dieu.

Robert of Turlande’s initial withdrawal into the high Livradois forest was driven by his own aspirations. He had no lay founder to set expectations for him. He was free to experiment, free to seek the balance between the active and contemplative lives that had until then eluded him. No doubt local nobles, including Robert’s own family, supported his incipient efforts financially, but, according to the evidence, that is as far as their influence went. Moreover, in the Auvergne there was no secular magnate who could, following the abbey’s foundation, seek to exploit it. The lack of a powerful overlord in the Auvergne when La Chaise-Dieu was founded meant that interest in it came from the beginning from the lower echelons of the nobility; this is in contrast to the pattern in northern France, particularly in Burgundy.\textsuperscript{44}

Constance Bouchard observed in Burgundy that the increasing frequency of gifts to support and to found new houses was a relatively new phenomenon in the eleventh century, especially among the lower nobility. She suggests that one reason may have been the increased number of viscounts and castellans who, gaining wealth and position, were now seeking to endow monastic communities in imitation of the


\textsuperscript{44} Bouchard, \textit{Sword, Miter, and Cloister}, 132; See also Jean-François Lemarignier, “Le monachisme et l’encadrement religieux des campagnes du royaume de France situées au nord de la Loire, de la fin du Xe à la fin du XIe siècle”, \textit{in Le istituzioni exxlesiasticie della “Societas Christiana” dei secoli: XI-XII: Diocesi, pievi e parrocchie}, Miscellanea del Centro di studi medioevali 8 (Milan, 1977): 358, 381-84.
established practice of the upper nobility. Auvergnat minor noble and castellan families, however, had no local example to imitate. The minor Auvergnat lords, with no higher example to mimic, autonomously supported La Chaise-Dieu from the beginning.

While Bouchard traces a gradual shift in monastic patronage from the upper echelons of the aristocracy to the lower over the centuries, La Chaise-Dieu experienced the opposite. Its foundational support had come from the lower echelons of the nobility and shifted over time to the upper. When, toward the end of the eleventh century, the abbey did draw the attention of the aristocracy in the upper echelons, suffrages were not the primary motivation, as Bouchard has maintained was the case in the Burgundy. These gifts can be ascribed to other, primarily political, motives. Count Raymond of Toulouse, who claimed the abbey’s saintly founder as his own overlord, definitely had more than suffrages on his mind. Raymond was in need of some higher authentication for this newly claimed rights as count of Toulouse. He turned to Saint Robert of La Chaise-Dieu.45

When Duke William VIII of Aquitaine invited Casadéen monks into his lands in 1074 and they established Sainte-Gemme,46 his motivations too were, most likely, more than pious. Although his motives were unstated, William VIII’s patronage of La Chaise-Dieu was likely linked to his attempts to consolidate his authority and reputation in the south. William VIII sought to bolster his presence there not only through military expeditions, as demonstrated in his participation in the reconquista, but by expanding his typical range of monastic advocacy by patronizing the most

45 See above, 97.
46 See 84-85.
notable monastery in his outer domain.

King Alfonso VI of León-Castile and his wife, Constance of Burgundy, sought out Adelelmus, former abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, as a man they hoped would become a spiritual beacon in their kingdom.\(^47\) They invited Adelelmus as someone who could offer humanitarian charity to the poor and pilgrims.

Countess Mathilda of Tuscany, an unswerving papal ally, also had more on her mind than simple suffrages. Her submission in 1070 of the abbey of Frassinoro to Pope Gregory VII, who then gave it to La Chaise-Dieu, must be seen in light of her continuing support of the pope, as should her submission of the abbey of Saint-Sixte of Piacenza in conjunction with Pope Pascal II to La Chaise-Dieu in 1112.\(^48\) Mathilda’s holdings in northern Italy were strategically important given the political and ecclesiastical disputes at that time, as they lay along the primary routes between Germany and Rome. With these communities in the hands of the Casadéens, both she and the pope could rest assured of their allegiance.

La Chaise-Dieu was most appealing to secular leaders who supported the papacy and the Gregorian reforms. Moreover, secular lords, particularly from the upper echelons in southern continental Europe, where lands were allodial and churches proprietary, found La Chaise-Dieu attractive. They could, by supporting an independent La Chaise-Dieu, enhance their own prestige in the region at the expense of the local minor nobility who clung to their own independence and who had attempted to consolidate their own power and authority through the local churches. There was no sustained interest in La Chaise-Dieu, by contrast, from lords in the

\(^{47}\) See above, 117.

\(^{48}\) See above, 99, 176-77.
Relations with Ecclesiastical Leaders

When Robert of Turlande and his initial companions settled in the high Livradois forest, they had no obvious means of temporal patronage. There was no great Auvergnat lord to initiate, authorize, or patronize the foundation of the abbey. And so, the geopolitical atmosphere of the Auvergne inclined Robert to rely most readily upon ecclesiastical leaders. Based on extant evidence, La Chaise-Dieu owes its greatness to ecclesiastics, particularly to regional bishops, not, as elsewhere, to noble endowments. La Chaise-Dieu’s was indebted to the aid of bishops who, more than any other group, initiated new Casadéen communities through the donation of churches, which became priories, and through the submission of established communities for reform.

Popes too were fundamental to the abbey’s survival. This is, in some ways, true of any monastic community. Papal privileges and exemptions were necessary to protect the abbey’s interests. Papal privileges and exemptions granted La Chaise-Dieu, however, were not immediately extraordinary. Pope Leo IX, in 1052, had been the first to place La Chaise-Dieu under the protection of the Holy See and to enjoin all secular lords from seizing the church or its goods. Subsequent popes followed his example. It was not until the abbacy of Seguin that the monastery began to attract the same type of papal recognition that Cluny had, including episcopal exemption. Pope Pascal II extended (1106), in a dramatic fashion, the privileges granted by popes

49 See above, 99.
Gregory VII and Urban II to all of La Chaise-Dieu’s dependents. Otherwise, papal bulls granted through the mid-twelfth century primarily provided recognition of La Chaise-Dieu’s dependencies and, perhaps more importantly, confirmation of its rights and privileges.

The political conditions in the Auvergne that had changed so dramatically in the middle of the twelfth century also affected La Chaise-Dieu’s relationship with the papacy. Papal privileges and apostolic protection became more than staples in the abbey’s arsenal; they became imperatives to the physical well being of an abbey that came under consistent serious threat for the first time. The most unmistakable manifestation of this occurred in 1162, when Pope Alexander III wrote to the archbishop of Bourges and instructed him to protect La Chaise-Dieu from all violence. The timing of this request corresponded to that moment when King Louis VII was pursuing the man whom he believed to be a pretender to the title of count of Auvergne, William VII, a particularly volatile time in the region. The popes stepped in not only to secure the safety of the abbey but also to help stabilize the Casadéen congregation’s cohesiveness as dependent communities grasped at opportunities to weaken or even to break their ties to the Auvergnat abbey.

“The importance of this episcopal support”, as Henrietta Leyser has observed, “cannot be overestimated.” Monastic scholars have indeed emphasized the

50 See above, 147.
51 MPA, no. CLXVI, 266-267.
52 Problems with dependents began during Stephen’s abbacy and grew increasingly severe. Problematic communities included Saint-André, Fraissinoro, and Brantôme. Of these Brantôme was probably the harbinger of things to come as it had long been among the dependent abbeys most closely connected and regulated by La Chaise-Dieu.
53 Leyser, Hermits, 81.
necessity of contact between the bishops and abbeys because of the sacramental services they provided. Scholars too have recognized that bishops participated in monastic reform. In northern France, however, it does not seem that the bishops acted quite as dramatically as they did in the Auvergne where, for most of the period under review here, they wielded real comital power.

The most prominent benefactors and patrons of La Chaise-Dieu were bishops. Beginning with the founder’s own uncle and continuing throughout this period in the abbey’s history, the regional bishops filled the void left by the absence of substantive secular advocates who supported northern reform. Reasons for this difference stem, again, primarily from the geopolitical landscape of the Auvergne. Bishops had long claimed comital roles—seeking peace and dispensing justice. Why would they not also embrace comital monastic patronage?

The bishop of Clermont provided the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu with its most critical initial support and protection. Almost from its foundation, however, La Chaise-Dieu began to draw the attention of other bishops, first from others within the region then from those at a distance, who sought to submit to the new abbey churches at which small priories could be established, or to submit other monastic communities to it for the purpose of reform.54 It was not long, moreover, before Casadéen abbots and monks alike were being called to episcopal service. La Chaise-Dieu’s rapid expansion, and its fame for stability and for promoting reform—both monastic and episcopal—only make sense when viewed within the geopolitical context of the Midi where land was allodial, where bishops held comital authority, and where support for

54 The bishops of Viviers and Auxerre both made notable donations to La Chaise-Dieu within a generation of its foundation.
Gregorian ideals was widespread.

La Chaise-Dieu’s expansion as managed by its abbots in the hundred years following its foundation and its record of external contact taken together constitute a collective image of a secular and ecclesiastical support system that represents a genuine aspect of diversification of support for the abbey, which, at its foundation, relied most heavily upon regional, episcopal support.

Contributions

This study has sought to present the first hundred years of the institutional development of La Chaise-Dieu and an analysis of La Chaise-Dieu’s external relationships, both secular and ecclesiastic, as managed by its first eight abbots. Prior to this study, the only book-length study of La Chaise-Dieu had been carried out by Pierre-Roger Gaussin, whose work traced the expansion of the Casadéén congregation and established its internal cohesiveness. He focused primarily on the later development of the congregation for which more sources survive to attest to the cohesiveness he sought to highlight. Gaussin did not dedicate a great deal of space to the analysis of La Chaise-Dieu’s external relationships with either its secular or ecclesiastical advocates/protagonists as has been the goal of this study.

The current study, the only book-length study of La Chaise-Dieu in English, builds on the research conducted by Gaussin by analyzing more closely the nature of the relationships between La Chaise-Dieu’s abbots and secular and ecclesiastical leaders, particularly in the Midi, as these relationships were fundamental to the abbey’s rapid expansion. Moreover, this study puts La Chaise-Dieu’s relationships into the context of modern monastic studies that examine how and why these
relationships took place the way they did. The principle aim of this study has been to present the case of La Chaise-Dieu. By examining La Chaise-Dieu’s experience in the high Livradois forest of the Auvergne where there was no particularly strong lord or noble presence throughout the period under discussion; thus, this study broadens the scope of the inquiry already undertaken by such scholars as Constance Bouchard, Barbara Rosenwein, Thomas Head, Sharon Farmer, Jean-François Lemarignier, Olivier Guillot, and Edmond Martène.

The goal of the present work has been to emphasize the distinctive qualities of time and place that produced and fostered the growth of La Chaise-Dieu, and shaped the external associations formed by its early abbots. This study concurs with others similar studies that monastic communities were intrinsically bound to the temporal world through the necessity of their relationships with secular and ecclesiastical leaders. External relationships were inescapable. However, how these relationships manifested themselves, as this and other studies have demonstrated, were ubiquitously variant given social, political, cultural, and religious regional differences. The geographical location of any given monastery was the fundamental element of the monastic environment, and was, as such, as important to its development as was its spiritual ideals.

One of the more important outcomes of this study, and a point that will require further study, has been the identification of the prominent role of regional bishops in the Midi, particularly in the Massif Central, in monastic patronage and advocacy. Scholars have identified the importance of bishops to monasteries, but have primarily attached this importance to the sacramental services they provided. Moreover, even when scholars do identify bishops as a source of monastic patronage,
the activities of bishops of noble birth, which most of them were, are generally
categorized under the same heading as noble patronage in general with little other
distinction. One gets the sense in the case of monastic patronage, only nobleness,
whether secular or ecclesiastical, mattered. In the case of La Chaise-Dieu, however,
the consistency of widespread episcopal patronage and advocacy, not only in quantity
but also in quality, is unmatched by all other sectors of society. The bishops, more
than their regional secular counterparts, were drawn to La Chaise-Dieu.

One direction I would like to continue with this study is to shift my focus for
further research from the experience of one particular abbey to the role regional
bishops as monastic patrons. I want to examine episcopal relationships with different
monastic communities across the Midi to see if La Chaise-Dieu's experience was
unique, or if the bishops filled not only the political void left by the aristocracy
through the first half of the twelfth century, but also assumed the principal role of
monastic advocacy more commonly exercised by the secular aristocracy in the north.

55 The work of both Constance Bouchard and John Howe are particularly
representative of this trend.
Primary Materials: Unpublished Documents

ARCHIVES DÉPARTEMENTALES DE LA HAUTE-LOIRE

Robert of Turlande (abbot, 1052-1067)

A.H. 4.1 (20 December 1052)
Diploma of King Henry I given at Vitry on 20 December 1052, authorizing the elevation of the church of La Chaise-Dieu to an abbey (copy from 20 June 1443 is a copy of one given by King Philip III in Paris, December 1275).

Durand (abbot, 1067-1078)

A.H. 210.2 (1 March 1071)
Foundational act of the priory of St-Pierre-Eynac on 1 March 1071 Draguinet of Chapteuil (copy from 17 December 1541, text in old French).

A.H. 269.1-2 (April 1078-December 1091)
Cartulary of the priory of Mazerat-Aurouze.

Seguin of Escotay (abbot, 1078-1094)

A.H. 179.1 (28 December 1084)
Raymond of St. Gilles, count of Rouergue, Ermengarde, vicountess of Nîmes, and Peter Hermangaud, bishop of Nîmes, give to Seguin of Escotay, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu the church of Saint-Baudile in Nîmes.

Pons of Tournon (abbot, 1094-1102)

A.H. 40.1 (1 December 1095)
Charter of fraternity between the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and that of Cluny, bearing exchange of various churches.

A.H. 142.1-3 (10 December 1096)
Gift by Hugh of Burgundy, archbishop of Lyon, to Pons, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, of the church of St Julien of Moingt, which William III,
count of Foréz, had relinquished to the archbishop. This gift was confirmed by William III of Baffie, bishop of Clermont and abbot of Saint-Irenee, and Béraud of Châtillon, bishop of Macon and archdeacon of Lyon (among others) in the presence of Guigo, abbot of Ile-Barbe.

A.H. 174.1 (1098)
Gift by Godefroy, bishop of Maguelonne, to La Chaise-Dieu of St Vincent of Jonquières after Count Peter of Mauguio had given up his rights to it. Béranger, bishop of Agde; Peter, count of Mauguio; the viscounts of Béziers, Peter Brémond, Raymond Pelet, Raymond Béranger of Mireval, Raymond of Olmet, and other nobles also give to the church of Jonquières the land 60 steps out from each side of the church.

A.H. 179.2 (6 January 1100)
Pons of Tournon, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, gives to Raymond, bishop of Nîmes, the chapels of St-Martin and of St-Peter, near the castle of Arènes. He also gives the chapels of St-Thomas, St-Etienne, and St-Vincent in town of Nîmes, which had been given to Peter Guiden, prior of St-Baudile, by Ermengarde, viscountess of Nîmes and her son Bernard. In exchange, the bishop ratifies the gift made to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu of the churches of St-Baudile and St-Sauveur.

Aimeric (abbot, 1102-1111)

A.H. 315.1 (4 February 1107)
Bull of Pope Pascal II, which confirms the privileges granted to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu by Pope Gregory VII and Pope Urban II and extends those privileges to all of La Chaise-Dieu’s dependents. He also confirms the donation of the monastery of St-Andre of Vienna to La Chaise-Dieu by Guidon, archbishop of Vienna, and of the church of St Trivier, by the archbishop of Lyon, and of the chapel of Bessan by the bishop of Agde.

A.H. 184.1 (1109)
Gift by Peter II, bishop of Poitiers, to Aimeric, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, and to his abbey, of the churches of St-Marie, St-Macou, and St-Genevieve all of which are located in Jazeneuil (c. 1109).

A.H. 184.2 (1111)
Gerard, bishop of Angouleme and papal legate, confirms the gift of the three churches in Jazeneuil (St-Genevieve, St-Marie and St-Macou) made by Peter, bishop of Poitiers, to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu.
This document carries the signatures of the aforesaid Gerard, bishop of Angoulême, of Peter, bishop of Poitiers, and Leotgard, archbishop of Bourges (1111).

Stephen of Mercoeur (abbot, 1111-1146)

A.H. 139.1 (7 January 1116)
A transaction by which the chapter cathedral of Lyon gives to Stephen, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, the property of various churches in the diocese of Lyon, with the requirement that the monks provide a solemn meal each year to the members of the aforesaid chapter.

A.H. 174.2-8 (July 1116)
Gautier, bishop of Maguelonne, confirms the donation made to abbey of La Chaise-Dieu by Godefroy, his predecessor, of the church of St Vincent of Jonquières. He also gives to the abbey the churches of St Peter of Poussan and that of St Sulpice of Thoron.

A.H. 23.1 (22 March 1122)
Abandonment by William, duke of Aquitaine, to Stephen of Mercoeur, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, of his rights on the church Saint-Livrade, given to the abbot in 1119 by Hildebert, bishop of Limoges, and Raoul, abbot of Saint-Junien.

A.H. 179.3 (7 January 1132)
Fragmented bull of Innocent II, given at Auxerre to Stephen of Mercoeur, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, the possession of the church of St-Baudile of Nîmes.

A.H. 83.1-42 (1136)
Transaction of a lawsuit (1540) between the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and François Magnien, director of Saint-Sulpice of Paris and prior of Montferrand, about various litigious questions. The abbey produced copies of the following acts: gift by Aimeric, bishop of Clermont, to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, of the church of Monterrand (1136); and a bull of the Pope Eugene III, confirming the preceding donation (March 12, 1150).

A.H. 363.1-2 (1136)
Gift by Aimeric, bishop of Clermont, to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, of the church of Montferrand (1136).

A.H. 23.2 (17 December 1136)
Gift by Raymond Bernard, bishop of Agen, of the church of “Elmat,” located in his diocese to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu.
A.H. 256.1 (12 March 1137)
Donation by the chapter St-Julien of Brioude of the monastery of Chanteuges to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu.

A.H. 256.2 (7 May 1137)
Confirmation by Alberic, archbishop of Bourges, of the donation of the monastery of Chanteuges made by the chapter of Brioude to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu.

A.H. 22 (1139)
Copy, from the seventeenth century, of a judgment from Guy, legate of the Holy See, conceding the property of the church Saint Martin to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and that of the church of Saint-Peter of Bessan to the monastery of Saint-Thibéry (1139).

A.H. 305.1 (1139)
Copy of a transaction passed between the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu and the monastery Saint-Thibéry about the property of the churches of St Martin and of Bessan, of which the first is allocated to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and the second to that of Saint-Thibéry.

A.H. 154.1 (29 August 1145)
A donation made by (or donations confirmed by, unclear) William III, bishop of Mende, to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, of the churches of Prunières, Altier, St-Peter-le-Vieux, St-Denis, St-Leger of Malzieu, Termes, Brion, Fournels, Monistrol of Allier, Douchanet (aka, Monistrol of Ailler), St-Préjet of Ailler, Villedieu, Panouze, St-Symphorien, St-Christophe of Allier, Estable, Florac, Arcomie, and Fare (aka, Prévenchéres) (Copy from April 29, 1507).

A.H. 334 (23 March 1149)
Donation by Alfonso VII of Spain to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and to St-Juan of Burgos, to Bernard, its prior, and to all its monks, of a town known as “Villam Victor in territorio Burgensi and rivo Cavie sitam.”

A.H. 27.1-2 (17 February 1251)
Gift by Anseric of Montreal, archbishop of Besançon, to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu of the church and village of Faverney, on which Renaud III, count of Burgundy, had abandoned of all his rights (copy from 14 February 1251).
Jordan of Montboissier (abbot, 1146-1157)

A.H. 23.3 (12 March 1150)
Bull of Pope Eugene III confirming the gift made to the La Chaise-Dieu by Hildebert, bishop of Agen, of the church Sainte-Livrade.

A.H. 182.3 (13 March 1150)
A bull from Pope Eugene III, which confirmed the agreement made between the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and the monastery of Brantôme, stipulating that the monks of Brantôme could not elect their abbot without the assent of the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu (copy from 3 March 1289).

A.H. 181.1 (15 March 1150)
Bull of Eugene III (in very bad condition), which seems to state that Pavia depends on La Chaise-Dieu.

A.H. 246 (1156)
Cartulary of the priory of Azerat (copy from eighteenth century; documents the years 1156 to 1726.

William of Torrent (abbot, 1168-1176)

A.H. 183 (5 January 1171)
Bull of Pope Alexander III directing the monks of Saint-Sixte of Piacenza to obey the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu and confirming a judgment pronounced against them by the abbot and the monks of the abbey.

A.H. 232.1 (March 1171)
Gift by Hugh, bishop of Rodéz, to the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu of the church of Sainte-Marie of Rocagel, subject to the requirement that the aforementioned abbey give a pound of white incense to the church of Rodéz each year on Easter Day.

Lantelme (abbot, 1179-1186)

A.H. 332.1 (13 April 1184)
Bull of Pope Lucius III directing the bishop of Langres to carry out justice for abbot of Faverney and to excommunicate Fulcon of Choiseul and his accomplices who have caused some damage to that monastery and have raided the villages of Andilly and of Pouilly.

A.H. 181.2 (21 November 1184)
Bull of Lucius III confirming the agreement made between the bishop of Pavia and the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu about the church of St-Sailor.

**MSS BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE**


**Primary Materials: Published Documents**

The documents cited in the *Monumenta pontificia Arverniae, decurrentibus IXo, Xo, XIo XIIo soeculis. Correspondance diplomatique des papes concernant l'Auvergne depuis le pontificat de Nicolas ler jusqu'a celui d'Innocent III (IXe, Xe, XIe, XIIe siecles)*, ed. Chaix de Lavarene. Clermont-Ferrand: Impr. F. Thibaud, 1880, are listed here first, chronologically by abbot.

Robert of Turlande (abbot, 1052-1067)

MPA, no. XIII, “Appendice”, 423 (1052)
Privileges granted by Henry I to La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. XVII, 34-37 (1052)
Bull of Pope Leo IX placing La Chaise-Dieu under papal protection.

Durand (abbot, 1067-1078)

MPA, no. XXIII, 45 (1061-73)
Bull of Pope Alexander II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s goods and privileges.

MPA, no. XXV, 46 (1070)
Bull of Pope Alexander II placing Robert of La Chaise-Dieu in the album of saints.
MPA, no. XXXV, 61-62 (1077)
Bull of Pope Gregory VII charging papal legate Hugh of Die to convene a synod to deal with the episcopal simonists at Le Puy and Clermont.

MPA, no. XXXIV, 59-61 (23 March 1077)
Bull of Gregory VII freeing the canons of Le Puy from their oaths to the simonist Bishop Stephen V of Polignac and commanding them to elect another bishop.

MPA, no. XLVII, 74-75 (13 November 1095)
Bull of Pope Urban II placing the monastery of Souvigny under papal protection.

Seguin of Escotay (abbot, 1078-1094)

MPA, no. XXVIII, 50-53 (1080)
Bull of Pope Gregory VII confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of Saint Michel of Galliac and Saint Théodard; and defending the abbey against the abusive actions of the canons of Clermont.

MPA, no. XXXII, 58-59 (1081)
Bull of Pope Gregory VII calling upon his legate Hugh of Lyons to settle a dispute between an unnamed abbot and Abbot Seguin.

MPA, no. XXXVII, 63-64 (1090)
Bull of Pope Urban II calling upon Abbot Seguin to return Chartreuse to Bruno.

MPA, “Appendice”, no. XVII, 431 (8 October 1090)
Abbot Seguin returns Chartreuse to Bruno.

Pons of Tournon (abbot, 1094-1102)

MPA, “Appendice”, no. XX, 436 (1095)
Letter from the abbess of Blesle to Pope Urban II complaining about the actions of the monks of La Chaise-Dieu when they seized the churches of Saint-Stephen and Saint-Leo.

MPA, no. XLIV, 69-71 (1095)
Bull of Pope Urban II placing the abbey of Blesle under papal protection.
Bull of Pope Urban II placing La Chaise-Dieu under the immediate jurisdiction of the Holy See and confirming the abbey's goods.

Bull of Pope Urban II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possessions and confirming that the abbey depends only on the Holy See.

Bull of Pope Urban II calling upon the reform of Saint-Germain of Auxerre and ordering that the abbot be drawn from Cluny, La Chaise-Dieu, or Marmoutier.

Charter of Guy, archbishop of Vienne, placing the abbey of Saint-André-le-Bas under La Chaise-Dieu for reform.

Letter from the abbot of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif of Sens to Pope Pascal II regarding various incidents that had taken place in his diocese.

Bull of Pope Pascal II extending papal protection to all of La Chaise-Dieu’s dependencies.

Bull of Pope Pascal II charging various bishops to settle the dispute between La Chaise-Dieu and Aniane regarding the monastery of Gourdaignes.

Bull of Pope Pascal II confirming that Gourdaignes belonged to Aniane.

Charter confirming that Gourdaignes belonged to Aniane.

Bull of Pope Pascal II confirming the submission of various communities to La Chaise-Dieu.

Bull of Pope Pascal II returning the monastery of Gourdaignes to the monastery of Aniane.
MPA, no. XCVII, 174 (1124)
  Bull of Pope Calixtus II calling upon Bishop Aimeric to settle disputes with Cluny.

MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXVIII, 470 (1131)
  Letter from Bishop Aimeric regarding the end of contentious affairs between himself and the abbot of Cluny.

MPA, no. CXXI, 201 (6 November 1143)
  Bull of Pope Celestine II calling upon Peter the Venerable to settle affairs with Bishop Aimeric.

MPA, no. CXX, 200 (1143)
  Bull of Pope Innocent II calling upon Bishop Aimeric to settle litigious affairs.

MPA, no. CII, 178 (1124-1130)
  Bull of Pope Honorius II calling upon Bishop Aimeric to return churches to the abbot of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif of Sens.

Stephen of Mercoeur (abbot, 1111-1146)

MPA, no. LXXII, 133-136 (12 April 1113)
  Bull of Pope Pascal II returning the monastery of Gourdaignes to the monastery of Aniane.

MPA, no. LXXIII, 136 (28 December 1114)
  Bull of Pope Pascal II stating again the monastery of Gourdaignes to the monastery of Aniane.

MPA, no. LXXIV, 136 (30 October 1115)
  Bull of Pope Pascal II confirming the replacement of the nuns of Saint-Sixte with monks from La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, “Appendice”, no. XXXIII, 458 (25 February 1117)
  Declaration of the canons of Sainte-Livrade that they want to submit their community to La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. LXXVI, 143 (1099-1118)
  Bull of Pope Pascal II commanding the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu to reinstate the abbot of Saint-André of Vienne whom he deposed without the approval of the bishop of Vienne.
MPA, no. LXXVII, 144 (1099-1118)
Bull of Pope Pascal II ordering the archbishop of Vienne to depose Peter Umbert, the abbot of Saint-André of Vienne, and restoring said monastery to its form independence.

MPA, no. LXXIX, 145-46 (15 April 1119)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II ordering the monks of Aniane to settle the dispute regarding the monastery of Gourdaignes with La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. LXXX, 146-48 (28 April 1119)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II renewing La Chaise-Dieu’s privileges and possessions.

MPA, no. LXXXV, 161 (June-July 1119)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II ordering the monks of La Chaise-Dieu to give up their claims to the monastery of Gourdaignes.

MPA, no. LXXXVII, 162 (June - 15 July 1119)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II ordering a canonical assessment at the council of Toulouse of the dispute between Aniane and La Chaise-Dieu regarding Gourdaignes.

MPA, no. LXXXVIII, 164 (15 July 1119)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II recounting his actions regarding Gourdaignes and enjoining the monks of La Chaise-Dieu from making further claims to it.

MPA, no. LXXXIX, 167-168 (15 July 1119)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II confirming that the bishop of Agen had given the church of Sainte-Livrade to La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. XCI, 169-70 (16 April 1122)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II stating that when he had been the archbishop of Vienne, he had removed the monks of La Chaise-Dieu from Saint-André-le-Bas and restored the latter to its former independence.

MPA, no. XCV, 173 (1119-1124)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II returning the nuns to Saint-Sixte.

MPA, no. XCVI, 173
Bull of Pope Calixtus II revoking his previous bull returning nuns to Saint-Sixte, and restoring the monastery to La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. XCVIII, 175 (1124)
Bull of Pope Calixtus II donating the churches of Montferrand to La Chaise-Dieu.
Bull of Pope Honorius II excommunicating the abbess of Saint-Sixte.

Bull of Pope Honorius II confirming he will excommunicate any who challenge the decisions concerning Goursaignes.

Archbishop of Besançon, finding the monastery of Faverney in a deplorable condition, replaces the nuns there with monks from La Chaise-Dieu.

Bull of Pope Innocent II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of several monasteries.

Bull of Pope Innocent II confirming the donation of the abbey of Favernay to La Chaise-Dieu.

Bull of Pope Innocent II confirming that Saint-Sixte depends upon La Chaise-Dieu.

Archbishop of Rouen, papal legate, declaring that Bessan belongs to Saint-Thibéry.

Archbishop of Rouen, papal legate, explaining to Pope Innocent II his decision regarding the church of Bessan.

Abbot of Chanteuges giving his monastery to Bishop Aimeric who then gives it to La Chaise-Dieu.

Papal legate declaring again that Bessan belongs to Saint-Thibéry.

Bull of Pope Innocent II ordering his legate to settle the dispute between La Chaise-Deiu Saint-Thibéry concerning the church of Bessan.
MPA, no. CXV, 197-98 (1130-1143)
Bull of Pope Innocent II confirming the dependence of the monastery of Chanteuges on La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. CXVI, 198 (1130-1143)
Bull of Pope Innocent II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of the monastery of Saint-Robert of Montferrand.

MPA, no. CXVIII, 198-99 (1139-1143)
Bull of Pope Innocent II confirming the donations of Roger, king of Sicily, to La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. CXXII, 202 (22 May 1144)
Bull of Pope Lucius II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s privileges and possessions.

MPA, no. CXXIII, 202 (27 May 1144)
Bull of Pope Lucius II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of the monastery of Montferrand.

MPA, no. CXXIV, 203 (1144)
Bull of Pope Lucius II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of the monastery of Chanteuges.

MPA, no. CXXVI, 203 (1144)
Bull of Pope Lucius II granting the monks Frassinoro the right to elect their own abbot.

MPA, no. CXXVII, 204 (1144)
Bull of Pope Lucius II stating that the church of Saint-Laurent of Auzon had been given by Bishop Aimeric in 1117 to La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. CXXVIII, 204-06 (30 May 1145)
Bull of Pope Eugene II it declaring that the monastery of Frassinoro depends on La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. CXXX, 207 (1 February 1146)
Bull of Pope Eugene II confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s privileges and possessions.

Jordan of Montboissier (abbot, 1146-1157)

MPA, no. CXXXIII, 215 (1148)
Bull of Pope Eugene III ordering the archbishop of Arles and the bishop of Viviers to examine the dispute between La Chaise-Dieu and
bishop of Nîmes regarding the priory Saint-Baudile.

MPA, no. CXXXIV, 216 (1148)
  Bull of Pope Eugene III ordering the bishop of Uzès and the bishop of Lodève to examine the dispute between La Chaise-Dieu and bishop of Nîmes regarding the priory Saint-Baudile.

MPA, no. CXXXV, 217 (11 March 1149)

MPA, no. CXXXVII, 218 (1149)
  Bull of Pope Eugene III confirming Frassinoro’s dependence, among others, on La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. CXXXVIII, 219 (15 March 1149)
  Bull of Pope Eugene III confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of San Marino of Pavia.

MPA, no. CXXXIX, 220 (1149)
  Bull of Pope Eugene III confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possession of Brantôme.

MPA, no. CXLIV, 229 (1145-1153)
  Bull of Pope Eugene III confirming Innocent II findings, that La Chaise-Dieu did not owe Brioude any royalty on the monastery of Chanteuges.

MPA, no. CXLIX, 235-38 (1157)
  Bull of Pope Adrian IV confirming Frassinoro’s dependence on La Chaise-Dieu.

MPA, no. CLVI, 249 (1154-1159)
  Bull of Pope Adrian IV confirming Chanteuges dependence on La Chaise-Dieu.

Others (post 1157)

MPA, “Appendice”, no. LXIII, 508-13 (1175)
  Cardinal Hyacinthe takes up this dispute over Chanteuges.

MPA, no. CLXXXVIII, 305 (1176)
  Bull of Pope Alexander III confirming Frassinoro’s dependence on La Chaise-Dieu.
Bull of Pope Alexander III confirming La Chaise-Dieu’s possessions, including Grandson.

Bull of Pope Lucius III confirming Frassinoro’s dependence on La Chaise-Dieu.


Cartulaire de Chamalières-sur-Loire en Velay, prieuré conventuel, dépendant de


Chronicon S. Huberti Andeginensis. In M.G.H., scriptores, vol. 8, 413ff.


“Epistola ad Roberto de Arbrisses.” In *Patrologia Latina*. 171:1480ff


Gregory VII. *Epistola LXXX*; and *Epistola LXXX. Ad Ancienses (Anno 1074.)*. In *Patrologia Latina*. 148.352-353:


Hugh of Poitiers, *Historia Vizeliacensis*. In *Spicilegium*, vol. 2. Paris: Montalant,
1723: 498ff.


Leo IX, _Epistola_ 67. In _Patrologia Latina_. 143.686-7


Mathieu, P. P. _Chartes de foundation du prieuré de Médagues_. Clermont: Mém.


Secondary Materials


---. *Cluny from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries*. Brookfield, USA: Ashgate,


Coulton, George Gordon. *Five Centuries of Religion*: vol. 1, *St. Bernard, His*


*Dictionnaire de Spiritualité.*  Paris: Beauchesne, 1937-.


Dunbabin, Jean.  *France in the Making, 843-1180.*  Oxford: Oxford University Press,


Fliche, Augustin. *La réforme grégorienne et la Réconquête chrétienne (1057-1123).*

---. *Le règne de Philippe 1er, roi de France (1060-1108).* Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1912.


Gaussin, Pierre-Roger. *Huit siècles d'histoire: l'abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu, 1043-


Inventaire de toutes les Chartes antérieures au XIIIe siècle, qui se trouvent dans les différents fonds d'archives de dépôt de la Préfecture du Puy-de-Dôme. Clermont-Ferrand: Imprimerie de Ferdinand Thibaude, 1855.


---. “Le Velay et la croisade.” In *Le Concile de Clermont de 1095 et l'Appel à la Croisade: Actes du Colloque Universitaire International de Clermont-Ferrand*


Martin, Daniel. *L'identité de l'Auvergne: mythe ou réalité historique: essai sur une*


Munro, D. C. “Did the Emperor Alexius I Ask for Aid at the Council of Piacenza?” *American Historical Review*, 27 (1922): 731-733.


Perroud, C. M. “Vienne et le Sermorens aux XIe-XIIe siècles.” *Bulletin mensuel de*


---. The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126. Princeton, N.


