

Ex quibus unus fuit Odorannus:
Community and Self in an Eleventh-Century Monastery (Saint Pierre-le-Vif, Sens)
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INTRODUCTION

For the year 1015 in his chronicle, the monk Odorannus (c. 985–c. 1046), of the abbey of Saint Pierre-le-Vif in Sens, noted the death of the abbot Rainard.¹ Odorannus briefly described the efforts of this abbot in reestablishing the prestige of Saint Pierre-le-Vif, which had experienced losses over the tenth century. One of Rainard’s notable accomplishments, Odorannus explained, was teaching the liberal arts to the abbey’s monks. In the earliest manuscript that preserves the chronicle, an interlinear gloss by the word “monks” states “one of whom was Odorannus” (*ex quibus unus fuit Odorannus*).² The modern editors of Odorannus’ works have judged the manuscript to be an autograph, contending that the body of the text, as well as most of its glosses and marginalia, are in Odorannus’ own hand.³ This claim means that some time after he wrote the original draft of the chronicle, Odorannus added the interlinear gloss during the revision process, apparently considering it worthwhile to identify himself as a particular figure among this anonymous group of learned monks, thereby designating a self in its community.

¹ Odorannus of Sens, *Capitulum II*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier, et al. (Paris, 1972), 98–101. Odorannus included a table of contents for his works and generally referred to each by their chapter number. To refer to the various texts within the compilation, I use these chapter titles. All translations mine. I have translated chiefly from the French translation provided by the editors, with frequent reference to the original Latin for vocabulary.

² *Ibid.*, 100–1. The editors have reproduced the glosses and marginalia from the manuscript.

³ Robert-Henri Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” in Odorannus, *Opera omnia*, 29–36. The manuscript, *Vat. Reg. lat.* 577, consists of 100 folios including only Odorannus’ works, with some later notations on blank pages toward the end of the manuscript. For the contents in order, see the Appendix below. The first part of the manuscript is missing, beginning partway through Odorannus’ prologue to his collected works. I discuss the fragmentary nature of Odorannus’ prologue in Chapter Three, page 58 n. 6. A close palaeographical examination of the handwriting of each text brought the modern editors to their recognition of Odorannus’ hand. Regarding the interlinear glosses in particular, the editors suggest (p. 35), by comparing the handwriting of these additions to that of the main text, that it is “extrêmement vraisemblable d’attribuer à Odorannus lui-même la rédaction de ces glosses qui constituent un éclaircissement ou une explication du texte.” The editors specify whenever the glosses are in a different hand. The autograph nature of the manuscript is not a chief concern of the present essay, but where these questions arise, I follow the editors’ argument that Odorannus’ works do appear in his own hand. One exception is *Capitulum XII* of his collection, whose script the modern editors (pp. 35–6) show to be different. I refer to this exception again in Chapter Three, page 63.

Odorannus' chronicle is one of several of his texts which he himself compiled in his old age and presented in 1045 to his abbot for use by the monks of Saint Pierre-le-Vif. The compilation includes a biography of the alleged royal Merovingian foundress of the monastery, Theudechild; the chronicle for the years 675 to 1032; and various letters and texts regarding canon law, Biblical exegesis, episcopal ordination, liturgy, pastoral care, and the theory and practice of music.⁴ Odorannus wrote a prologue, a table of contents, and preface for these works, and included a brief concluding statement after the last text. He composed the life of Theudechild apparently upon request from his king and with the encouragement of his archbishop.⁵ In one of the letters, Odorannus referred to another text of his authorship, a "lamentation" regarding accusations which his fellow monks brought against him in the 1020s.⁶ This "lamentation" is no longer extant, but the fact that Odorannus deliberately mentioned it as another of his works is suggestive of the authorial self-consciousness which characterizes his literary corpus.⁷

Odorannus' compilation demonstrates that he had a distinctive relationship both with his fellow monks and with his wider community. The "lamentation" is just one example of several references he made to circumstances in his life which necessarily set him apart from his brethren. As an accomplished monk, Odorannus was singled out on some occasions in a positive way, even by the king himself, but also in a negative way, spending a brief period in exile from his monastery, seemingly due to his possible involvement in heresy.⁸ Perhaps because of such

⁴ The musical component includes a tonary. For a description, see Michel Huglo, *Les Tonaires: Inventaire, Analyse, Comparaison* (Paris, 1971), 326–28.

⁵ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1.

⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum XIII*, 264–65. He calls the work "my lamentation" (*lamentatio mea*).

⁷ See page 42 below.

⁸ The circumstances surrounding Odorannus' exile are discussed in Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 11–16. For his involvement in heresy, see Bautier, "L'hérésie d'Orléans et le mouvement intellectuel au début du XIe siècle: documents et hypothèses," in idem, *Recherches sur l'histoire de la France médiévale: des Mérovingiens aux premiers Capétiens* (Hampshire, 1991), VIII (82–84). These issues are examined in greater detail in Chapter Two of this essay.

distinctions, parts of the compilation are quite autobiographical in nature. Odorannus' life circumstances cannot be established with certainty, however, because the little information we have about him and his social sphere is essentially that which he himself provided. Arguably the most historically interesting aspect of the compilation is the extent to which it speaks, directly or indirectly, of Odorannus' own monastic experience and of his roles in the larger community, especially considering the politically charged milieu in which he wrote and compiled his works.

In the same year that Odorannus dated the death of Rainard, he also recorded the seizure of Sens by Robert the Pious (r. 996–1031), the second Capetian king of France.⁹ Saint Pierre-le-Vif was just outside the city walls of Sens, which was one of many contested areas in which Robert and his successor Henry I (r. 1031–1060) attempted to assert their royal power over prominent counts and bishops. Because the Sens nobles had among them sympathizers to the old Carolingian regime, Capetian influence there would grant the new dynasty much-needed support. Such authority would also provide an important foothold toward jurisdiction in Burgundy. Saint Pierre-le-Vif itself was embroiled in these royal politics, with one of its abbots, Ingo (d. 1025), being an appointee and relative of King Robert. Though Robert had gained Sens from Count Rainard II in 1015, the city again came into question in the early years of Henry's reign, when Queen Constance and her relative Count Odo II of Blois worked to wrest control of the region for Odo and his powerful principality. In his chronicle and some of his other writings, Odorannus referred specifically to many of these political actors. At times, he reported that he himself was directly involved with them, especially with Robert the Pious, who commissioned Odorannus to build a reliquary for the remains of Saint Savinian, the first bishop of Sens.¹⁰ The specific historical

⁹ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 98–9.

¹⁰ Odorannus describes these dealings at length in the latter part of his chronicle, *Capitulum II*, 100–13.

circumstances of Sens and Odorannus' part in its politics are discussed in greater detail in the first chapter of this essay. It is sufficient to note here that the ongoing and various conflicts and claims over Sens are characteristic of the political uncertainty of early eleventh-century France.

While lay political communities were being newly defined, monastic communities were concomitantly engaged in the definition and protection of their identity in the areas being shaped around them. Accordingly, historical studies of monasticism in this period have focused overwhelmingly upon the relationship between monasteries and the lay world. Monastic prosperity and exemption from external control, most famously in the case of Cluny, have been at the centre of this scholarship.¹¹ Studies concerned with monasticism in the eleventh century often favour the decades after 1050, in light of the so-called “crisis of cenobitism,” which was a reevaluation of traditional monastic practices, leading to reform efforts and the promulgation of new orders. In an important examination of these developments, John Van Engen provided a helpful synthesis of the issues and scholarship concerning the religious life from 850 to 1050, the centuries preceding the “crisis.” He characterized monasticism in this period by its “Benedictine outlook,” which completely reconciled worldly concerns with the piety of the inner monastery (despite the fact that such ties often gave rise to seemingly impious wealth). Nurturing and defending the monastery was considered a laudable pursuit.¹² Odorannus, writing works for and about Saint Pierre-le-Vif, and closely engaged with some of the chief political actors of his time, provides a vivid example of the kaleidoscopic “Benedictine outlook” described by Van Engen, demonstrating that even a cloistered monk could play diverse roles in this complex environment.

¹¹ See, for example, Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980–1198* (Ithaca, 1987); Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1982); eadem, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, 1989).

¹² John Van Engen, “The ‘Crisis of Cenobitism’ Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050–1150,” *Speculum* 61 (1986): 285–302.

Due to the external preoccupations of monasteries in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, and the wealth of evidence that documents these activities, there have been relatively few scholarly examinations of social life within the cloister.¹³ What inward-looking studies there are, however, often focus upon the increasingly intricate liturgy and the rituals that emphasized a unified body joined in prayer,¹⁴ topics that reveal little about individual monks and their dynamic lives as pious members of society. Consequently, this uneven scholarly inquiry presents an opportunity to examine aspects of the inner life of a monastery as it sought to meet the traditional goals of monasticism outlined in the Benedictine *Rule* (mid-sixth century), a code which anticipates the basic human challenges of communal existence.¹⁵ Such difficulties are reflected in Odorannus' complex interactions with his monastic group. His fraught relationships with his brethren and with his broader community make his work a rich source for an inquiry into cenobitic life in this period.

Despite its apparent value, Odorannus' compilation has been largely overlooked by modern historians. While his works have been edited at times since the late sixteenth century, the complete contents of his autograph manuscript were not edited, translated, and annotated until 1972.¹⁶ Moreover, scholarly interest in his work has been somewhat limited to the geographical region of its provenance, with his name and writings—primarily the chronicle and the biography of Theudechild—appearing most frequently in older studies on the history of the modern

¹³ In evaluating monastic life, I wish to avoid overemphasizing the line between the inner and outer concerns of the monastery, as it was rarely a clear distinction. See Janet L. Nelson, "Medieval Monasticism," in Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson, eds., *The Medieval World* (London, 2001; reprint New York, 2003), 576–604, particularly 588.

¹⁴ See, for example, the essays in Susan Boynton and Isabelle Cochelin, eds., *From Dead of Night to End of Day: The Medieval Customs of Cluny* (Turnhout, 2005).

¹⁵ See, for example, Benedict, *Rule*, 4, 5, 6, 7, 65, trans. Terrence G. Kardong, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN, 1996), 80–168, 542–55. Despite the inevitable difficulties of a life lived among others, the *Rule* made clear that the cenobitic lifestyle was optimal for monks (*Rule*, 1, trans. Kardong, 34–5).

¹⁶ See n. 1 above. For previous editions and the manuscript history, see the editors' introduction at 36–40.

département of the Yonne.¹⁷ Historians in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, both in evaluating the evidentiary base for the history of early Capetian France and in establishing the history and historiography of Sens, were concerned with Odorannus mainly to assess the value of his chronicle as a historical source.¹⁸ Odorannus' biographical details were discussed in a number of studies, such as abbot Henri Bouvier's histories of Sens and Saint Pierre-le-Vif,¹⁹ and an earlier article by Augustin Challe.²⁰ These authors looked upon Odorannus sympathetically, as a glowing light of "génie universel"²¹ in an otherwise hazy period of regional history. Bouvier and Challe generally took what Odorannus wrote at face value. Other readers of Odorannus' work include musicologists, who have occasionally noted his modest contribution to music history.²² Still others have examined the manuscript record of Odorannus' works, illuminating the engagement that later readers had with his chronicle.²³ Largely thanks to the 1972 edition, Odorannus' compilation is continuously cited in modern studies of the eleventh century, yet no one has devoted a

¹⁷ It is telling that the version of Odorannus' works cited in studies pre-dating the 1972 edition was often that by Louis-Maximilien Duru in his *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne* (Auxerre, 1863), 2:385–446. Some scholars have been particularly concerned with the identification of Theudechild in the Sens tradition, and have thus examined the sources for Odorannus' biography of this legendary figure. I discuss Theudechild in Chapter One below. The best study is Maurice Prou, *Étude sur les chartes de fondation de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif. Le diplôme de Clovis et la charte de Théodechilde* (Sens, 1894).

¹⁸ See Augustin Fliche, "Les sources de l'historiographie sénonaise au XIe siècle," *Bulletin de la société archéologique de Sens* 24 (1909): 19–62; Ferdinand Lot, *Les derniers carolingiens: Lothaire, Louis V - Charles de Lorraine (954–991)* (Paris, 1891), 338–44; Gabriel Monod, "Études sur l'histoire de Hugues Capet," *Revue historique* 5 (1885): 255–56.

¹⁹ Henri Bouvier, *Histoire de l'église et de l'Ancien Archidiocèse de Sens* (Amiens, 1906), 1:354–83; idem, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens* (Auxerre, 1891), 79–92.

²⁰ Augustin Challe, "Odoranne, de Sens, écrivain et artiste du commencement du XIe siècle," *Bulletin des sciences historiques et naturelles de l'Yonne* 6 (1856): 275–316.

²¹ Bouvier, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 79.

²² See Henri Villetard, *Office de Saint Savinien et de Saint Potentien, premiers évêques de Sens* (Paris, 1956); idem, "Odoranne de Sens et son œuvre musicale," in *Comptes rendus, rapports et vœux du Congrès Parisien et Régional de Chant liturgique et de Musique d'église* (Paris, 1912), 61–8. See also Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 56–64.

²³ Fabrice Delivré, "Les chroniques de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif au miroir de la primatie sénonais: enquête sur les manuscrits d'Odorannus, du Pseudo-Clarius et de Geoffroy de Courlon," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 163 (2005): 481–503; Elisabeth van Houts, "André Duchesne et son édition de la Chronique d'Odorannus de Sens," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 41 (1979): 203–8. The autograph nature of the earliest manuscript does not seem to have attracted attention, with Odorannus' name absent from two scholarly overviews of such texts: Paul Lehmann, "Autographe und originale namhafter lateinsicher Schriftsteller des Mittelalters," in idem, *Deutsches Erforschung des Mittelalters: Ausgewählte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze* (Stuttgart, 1959), 1:359–81; Hartmut Hoffmann, "Autographa des früheren Mittelalters," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 57 (2001): 1–62.

significant historical investigation to it. For the most part, the works within the compilation have been sporadically mined for information by modern scholars, but not analyzed for their own sake and on their own terms.²⁴ This is especially true of scholarship in English, where Odorannus remains virtually unexamined.

Those few who have commented upon Odorannus portray him as a remarkable, dynamic, capable, even self-conscious character. By and large, they have taken a special interest in the personal nature of Odorannus' work, particularly in the final part of his chronicle, in which Odorannus moved from laconic entries to detailed descriptions of the miraculous circumstances surrounding his commission from Robert the Pious.²⁵ What these scholars have neglected to consider, however, is the tension which is inherent in this very distinctiveness, given Odorannus' humble status as a "mere" monk. After all, he was a cenobitic religious, living among fellow monks, ideally in relative anonymity, in order to pray for the world and achieve salvation. Odorannus' characteristics that are evident in the compilation, ranging from his outstanding talent to his proclivity for notoriety, become highly charged when set alongside the monastic goal of perfection through communal means.

The central issue that this essay addresses, therefore, is the dynamic relationship between the self and the community, as discerned through a reading of Odorannus' compilation. It is an

²⁴ One exception is Jacques Dubois, "Au temps des premiers capétiens les moines en pleine expansion affirment leurs libertés," in Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier and Pierre Desportes, eds., *Pouvoirs et libertés au temps des premiers capétiens* (Paris, 1992), 196–214, who cites the latter part of the chronicle as one of a number of sources which demonstrate the "freedoms" of monks in the early years of the Capetian dynasty. Unfortunately, Dubois merely quotes a large portion of the chronicle (at 201–5), but does not follow up with any close interpretation of the text.

²⁵ Van Houts, "André Duchesne," 203, notes that this part of the chronicle is "en grande partie autobiographique," and that it holds "une valeur historique importante, vu la relation personnelle entre Odorannus et le roi de France et vu son rapport des activités autour de reliquaire"; Jean Richard, "Travaux et recherches. Instruments: les chartes haut-marnaises du XIII^e S. Textes latins et langue vernaculaire. Les œuvres d'Odorannus de Sens. Bibliographie et généalogie," *Annales de Bourgogne* 46 (1974/5): 182, calls Odorannus "un des esprits les plus intéressants de son époque." Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 68, note this personal aspect: "Nous avons ainsi, tracé par lui-même, un portrait très vivant et pouvons nous représenter ce que fut le caractère de ce moine." They conclude that the second part of the chronicle, containing Odorannus' personal memories, is the most important section (49).

attempt to highlight the complexity of the monastic experience, which is often considered to be a stable and normative aspect of medieval Christian society. One side of this issue is the question of what a monk's perceived community or communities might have been. Another side is what role the individual monk played in these networks, and in what capacities the self became noticeably distinguished from the community. In short, I consider the possibility that the self/community relationship might not have remained constant over the course of a monk's experience in the monastery. I argue that the roles available to Odorannus as a prominent eleventh-century monk gave rise to the distinction of the self in its community, but that it was this same monastic identity which paradoxically imbued such distinction with tension. Odorannus was a monk, but also a highly self-concerned writer. Aspects of his collected compositions reflect the very human preoccupation with leaving behind a record of one's accomplishments and hardships. The special roles Odorannus came to play as a monk make his temporal gains and trials as a man all the more problematic and striking for us as readers of his compilation.

My question has its background in scholarship concerned with the notion of the medieval "individual," which is traditionally focused only on the late eleventh and twelfth century. In the broadest sense, this scholarship seeks to determine what—or how—medieval people thought of themselves. Many scholars have explored this question in depth, especially since Colin Morris' claim that the late eleventh and twelfth century in Western Europe was a period to which can be attributed the "discovery of the individual."²⁶ His conclusions have been revised, most significantly by Caroline Walker Bynum, who underscored the importance of looking at the models by which certain people in the period from 1050 to 1200 attempted to define themselves. Bynum's new

²⁶ Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (New York, 1972).

perspective affirmed the necessity of looking at the community surrounding the self.²⁷ In another important discussion of this debate, John Benton noted, among several observations, that the “questions of interiority” in the twelfth century were in fact firmly rooted in the contemplative nature of earlier monastic life.²⁸

After years of revision of the “individual” debate, scholars are keenly aware of the methodological difficulties it poses. The most pressing issue remains the danger of projecting modern preoccupations with individualism into the Middle Ages.²⁹ The pursuit has not been abandoned, however, and recent scholarship has produced exciting studies of the central Middle Ages which look for the medieval individual in new ways, often widening its focus somewhat from the cathedral schools of the twelfth century to include the monasteries of the eleventh.³⁰

A reading of Odorannus’ compilation reminds us that the methods of representation which medieval people most commonly used, or by which they were portrayed, typically did not lend themselves to rendering individuals as distinctive.³¹ While Odorannus’ writings contain frequent instances of self-reference, use of the first person, and personal opinions, there is no outright commentary by Odorannus on himself as a particular character in his interior and

²⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, “Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?” in eadem, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), 82–109. Also, more recently, Bynum and Susan R. Kramer, “Revisiting the Twelfth-Century Individual: The Inner Self and the Christian Community,” in Gert Melville and Markus Shürer, eds., *Das Eigene und das Ganze: Zum Individuellen im Mittelalterlichen Religiosentum* (Münster, 2002), 57–85.

²⁸ John F. Benton, “Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality,” in Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1982), 282–83.

²⁹ This difficulty has been articulated many times. See Dominique Iogna-Prat, “Introduction générale: la question de l’individu à l’épreuve du moyen âge,” in Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak and Dominique Iogna-Prat, eds., *L’Individu au Moyen Âge: Individuation et individualisation avant la modernité* (Paris, 2005), 7–29.

³⁰ See, for example, Sébastien Barret, “L’individu en action: Quelques réflexions autour des coutumes et statuts clunisiens (XIe–XIIIe siècles),” in *Das Eigene und das Ganze*, 531–62; Jennifer A. Harris, “Peter Damian and the Architecture of the Self,” in *Das Eigene und das Ganze*, 131–57; Ellen Joyce, “Scribal Performance and Identity in the Autobiographical Visions of Otloh of St. Emmeram (d. 1067),” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005): 95–106, adapted from her dissertation, “Visions, Reading and Identity in the Monastic Culture of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Otloh of St Emmeram and Guibert of Nogent” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2001).

³¹ See Nancy Partner, “The Hidden Self: Psychoanalysis and the Textual Unconscious,” in eadem, ed., *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), 42–64.

exterior world—remarks of the sort that one finds in sources traditionally used by scholars examining the notion of the “individual” or the “self.”³² This essay, however, does not necessarily seek to demonstrate what Odorannus thought of himself or the concept of a “self,” nor does it attempt to determine his personality. Rather, it examines the roles for the self within its community as apparent in Odorannus’ compositions and, given certain expectations and goals of monasticism in the eleventh century, the possible implications of these roles. David Gary Shaw emphasizes that observing the multitude of interactions of one historical subject, a “social self,” is an effective way to understand society on a broader scale. Shaw calls for examinations of “how the social and the self [...] work together,” which “requires focusing on how the individual helps to make up the society which simultaneously forms him or her.”³³ This essay proceeds with a focus on that interplay between self and society.

Inevitable issues of representation exist in my examination of Odorannus’ writings. The questions and conclusions put forth in this essay are fundamentally shaped by the highly privileged group of texts from which they derive, texts which necessarily reflect Odorannus’ extensive erudition, his place in the minority group of the clergy, and his personal dealings with prominent figures of the day. Moreover, it was Odorannus himself who compiled the works. He was likely a rarity even within his own monastery. Consequently, the unique nature of Odorannus’ compilation and the very fact that it survives for us today means that it cannot be used as an accurate mirror of its context. On the other hand, it should not necessarily be understood as

³² For obvious reasons, the favourite type of source for this pursuit is autobiography. An example of the use of autobiography, as well as a cogent look at the “individual” question, is Michael Clanchy, “Documenting the Self: Abelard and the Individual in History,” *Historical Research* 76 (2003): 293–309. See also Jay Rubenstein, “Biography and Autobiography in the Middle Ages,” in *Writing Medieval History*, 22–41.

³³ David Gary Shaw, “Social Selves in Medieval England: The Worshipful Ferrour and Kempe,” in *Writing Medieval History*, 5. See also Shaw’s monograph, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York, 2005).

an exception that proves a rule. By contemplating certain aspects of Odorannus' lived experience—inasmuch as they can be inferred from his texts—I do not wish to suggest either that Odorannus was entirely different from others or that all monks were exactly like him. Rather, I hope to underscore the advantage of looking closely at the writing of a particular author to appreciate the intricacy of a specific social context and the historical complexity of a single life.

Thus far, I have favoured the term “self” over “individual,” though both are used in this essay. In doing so, I partly follow Shaw’s use of the “social self” terminology, emphasizing external definition and interpersonal interactions. Shaw suggested that this concept allows us to think about “the way people actually are in a room, in a group, in a conflict, in a world inevitably beside other people or thinking about them.”³⁴ The term “self” in this usage seems thus a more inclusive and general term, since being one among others is a fundamental aspect of human existence. Referring to a person as a “self” does not require that person necessarily to have recognized himself or herself as distinct, a recognition which the term “individual” sometimes implies. To a certain extent, however, the terms are interchangeable in their basic function of referring to one person instead of to a “group” or “community,” however much those latter terms act in conjunction with, and are themselves defined by, “self” and “individual.”

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³⁴ Shaw, “Social Selves,” 4.

The first chapter of this essay, “Constructing the Community,” discusses the communities that are formulated in Odorannus’ written work, that is, in terms of networks that surround and define the self. The chapter focuses in particular upon his historical works, the chronicle and the biography of Theudechild, and highlights the aspects of Odorannus’ work that display his actions in defining and celebrating his own monastery. Chapter One demonstrates that, in his writing, Odorannus entwined his own experiences and authorial activity with the history of Saint Pierre-le-Vif’s prosperity.

In the second chapter, “Negotiating the Self,” I explore certain aspects of Odorannus’ texts that portray tensions which arose between himself and his social environment. This includes an examination chiefly of Odorannus’ letters. Particularly important in this regard is his exile from the monastery. Chapter Two’s primary focus is on those instances in which the monastic self became distinguished from its monastic community. It shows that Odorannus adopted certain self-conscious authorial strategies to engage with this environment in which he both experienced and instigated discord.

The third chapter, “Approaching Death,” assesses how the notions of self and community may have changed over a monk’s lifetime. While this chapter refers to specific parts of Odorannus’ writings, it also attempts to view his compilation as a whole, and what it meant to leave written work behind in one’s old age. Chapter Three involves a discussion of the ritual recognition of aging, sickness, and dying in the monastery in a broader context of the eleventh-century liturgical emphasis on yearly commemoration of the dead. The chapter explores how old age could be a period to renegotiate what one’s self has been—and will be—in one’s community.

CHAPTER ONE - *Constructing the Community*

Upon introducing his works in the prologue to his compilation, Odorannus reminded his abbot Ermenaldus that they must teach others how to live well, before the temporal world should meet its inevitable demise.¹ He thus intended his collected writings to be instructive for those around him. The first two texts in this compilation which sought to affect the present are, in fact, works about the past. These historical writings are the biography of Theudechild and Odorannus' chronicle of Saint Pierre-le-Vif, both of which look to the obscure past to influence current concerns. This chapter explores Odorannus' attention to the story of his abbey's development, a "historical turn" which reveals a concerted effort at Saint Pierre-le-Vif in the early eleventh century in defining and defending the community's place in a changing world.² I seek to demonstrate the creative and personal role Odorannus played in formulating an identity for his community, whether by handling the monastery's archives, interpreting political events, or relating his own experiences with the reliquary which he built for the remains of Saint Savinian. In a conventionally humble voice, Odorannus nonetheless asserted himself as an author of—and an important character in—the history of his monastery.

In his influential study of the purposes of remembering and forgetting during the central Middle Ages, Patrick Geary has argued that monks engaged with archival material in a careful "winnowing and restructuring process" that sought to shape future notions of the past according to

¹ Odorannus, *Prologus*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier, et al. (Paris, 1972), 70–1.

² This community effort demonstrates a focus on the past and present. To be sure, the future—in terms of the judgment of God—was also a chief concern in the late tenth and early eleventh century, a concern which is reflected in modern scholarship on this period. See, for example, the essays in Richard Landes, et al., eds., *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050* (Oxford, 2003); and, more generally, Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1992). Because I focus on Odorannus' past and present here, I leave aside these notions of the future.

the concerns of a troubled present.³ As an author, Odorannus was taking part in this process of creativity within tense environments. Saint Pierre-le-Vif had experienced invasions by the Normans and Hungarians in the late ninth and tenth century, as well as subsequent plunder by lay and ecclesiastical authorities. Though a number of abbots and bishops worked successfully towards the monastery's restoration,⁴ political struggles for Sens in 1015 and again in the 1030s created some uncertainty for this newly rejuvenated spiritual centre. Similar insecurities prompted many clerics like Odorannus to consider the history of their institutions in relation to the turmoil of the present day. This chapter is about the ways in which Odorannus took a personal role in these efforts to reveal and form a useful past.

Illustrious Origins for Saint Pierre-le-Vif

The tenuous material stability which Saint Pierre-le-Vif seems to have achieved by Odorannus' time prompted the monastery to "remember" (i.e., create) an origin story to celebrate and protect its new, prosperous place in a highly unstable world. Odorannus' resourceful engagement with his monastery's foundation legend may well be an example of what Amy Remensnyder has termed the "imaginative memory" with which monks constructed tales of origin in order to legitimize and defend their institutional interests and identities.⁵

The monastery's origin narrative appears in Odorannus' compilation in the form of a short biography, which identified the house's founder as Theudechild, a daughter of King Clovis

³ Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), 114.

⁴ A good summary of the invasions and subsequent restoration effort at Saint Pierre-le-Vif up to the time of the abbot Rainard is John Ottaway, "Traditions architecturales dans le nord de la France pendant le premier millénaire," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 23 (1980): 163–66.

⁵ Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, 1995). See also eadem, "Croyance et communauté: la mémoire des origines des abbayes bénédictines," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Age* 115 (2003): 141–54.

himself.⁶ Making use of the donation document or “testament” of Theudechild, Odorannus verified that the princess bestowed land upon the monastery. He quoted in full two poems of praise by the Merovingian court poet Venantius Fortunatus (c. 540–605), both addressed to a “Queen Theudechild.” Odorannus concluded by also quoting a brief epitaph from an inscription at Saint Pierre-le-Vif affirming Theudechild’s donation to the monastery. The origin story made clear that Theudechild had desired to establish a community for monks under a rule and an abbot, thereby creating a holy place for her burial.⁷

While Odorannus’ foundation narrative seems typical, its claims become controversial in light of the princess’ uncertain identity. In fact, there is no record that Clovis had a daughter named Theudechild. Fortunatus had written the celebratory verses for a different Merovingian noblewoman of the same name.⁸ Modern commentators have skirted around the issue of whether Odorannus actually believed that both poems related to his monastery’s founder, or if he chose them despite their inconsistency in order to add weight to the foundation narrative.⁹ Though this question gives rise to conjecture, it appears that either Odorannus or the monks who shaped the archive before him had appropriated certain texts for the purpose of establishing the monastery’s

⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum I*, 76–83.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 78–9. On the importance of burial at the monastery as a factor in noble gifts to it, see Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980–1198* (Ithaca, 1987), 192–95.

⁸ Venantius Fortunatus was from Ravenna and became a poet at the royal court in Merovingian Gaul, as well as serving as bishop of Poitiers. For a translation of his Theudechild poems, see *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems*, ed. and trans. Judith George (Liverpool, 1995), 8 and 38–9. George’s biographical note on Theudechild shows that the obscure woman to whom Fortunatus addressed his poems may have been the daughter of Clovis’ son, the Merovingian noble Theoderic I, and Suavegotta (131). For Odorannus’ citation of the poems and Theudechild’s identity, see Robert-Henri Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” in Odorannus, *Opera omnia*, 43–4; Maurice Prou, *Étude sur les chartes de fondation de l’abbaye de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif. Le diplôme de Clovis et la charte de Théodechilde* (Sens, 1894), 30–2.

⁹ Some scholars maintained that Odorannus believed what his sources told him. See, for example, Henri Bouvier, *Histoire de l’abbaye de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens* (Auxerre, 1891), 18. See also Joseph Perrin, “Le martyrium de saint Savinien, premier évêque de Sens,” *Bulletin de la société archéologique de Sens* 31 (1917): 135, who says that Odorannus used the poems “en pleine connaissance de cause.” The modern compilation editors suggest that Odorannus used Fortunatus’ writings “en guise de pièces justificatives” (“Introduction,” 43). Prou, *Étude sur les chartes*, 32, noted that the poems had probably been set aside already at Saint Pierre-le-Vif as relating to the founder, and that we should not imagine Odorannus having selected them himself from a collection of Fortunatus’ works.

communal past and its present identity. Remensnyder's work shows that many monasteries similarly looked to the early Frankish past for their origins. Clovis was a favourite personage to help satisfy such needs, being remembered as glorious both for his political power over the Franks and for his famous conversion to Christianity.¹⁰ By identifying Clovis' "daughter" as the pious founder of Saint Pierre-le-Vif, Odorannus was affirming a legend which endowed his monastery with lofty, recognizable claims to temporal and spiritual greatness.

It so happens that the donation document itself, which formed the basis for Odorannus' biography of Theudechild, bears the same ambiguity as the princess' identity. Odorannus noted that Theudechild gave her land in Francia and Aquitaine to the monastery, and that anyone so inclined could verify her donation by reading the actual charter in the monastery's archives.¹¹ By referring directly to his textual evidence, Odorannus urged his audience to give credence to the abbey's material claims. However, as Maurice Prou argued convincingly over a century ago, Theudechild's charter was probably a creation of the later tenth century, written under the auspices of Archbishop Anastasius of Sens between 967 and 976, when the monastery was reaffirming its land holdings after invasion.¹² It seems that the essential source which legitimized the monastery's property was as dubious as the identity of the donor of the lands themselves. Prou's conclusions suggest that Odorannus was not the actual forger of the text; rather, he used the donation document in an instance of selective, creative engagement with archival material.

¹⁰ Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*, 118. Odorannus refers to Clovis' baptism to show the king's greatness and to highlight the subsequent foundation of the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul in Paris by Queen Clothild (*Capitulum I*, 76–7).

¹¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum I*, 78–9. The modern editors discuss the importance of this affirmation to Saint Pierre-le-Vif's land claims in Mauriac in the Auvergne (*Capitulum I*, 79 n. 3). There is a reference to these lands in the twelfth-century *Chronique de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens, dite de Clarius. Chronicon Sancti Petri Vivi Senonensis*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier and Monique Gilles (Paris, 1979), 52–3. The text of the "testament" is translated by Henri Bouvier as an appendix in his *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 201–3.

¹² Prou, *Étude sur les chartes*, 44.

As evidence to help defend and support property claims, the false testament of Theudechild follows the mainstream of clerical forgeries in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹³ A Benedictine monastery's land holdings were central to its influence and identity.¹⁴ The primary purpose of origin stories was not only to underscore the pious intentions behind a monastery's foundation, but also to demonstrate and actively defend the abbey's material prosperity.¹⁵ Remensnyder has demonstrated that origin legends and external conflict usually went hand in hand. A monastery's struggle could be with laypeople, bishops, or powerful religious communities.¹⁶ This theme of confrontation is evident in the epitaph that Odorannus cited. After noting that Theudechild endowed the monastery with her riches, the epitaph stated that in death the princess prayed for misfortune to befall anyone who might encroach upon the abbey's property.¹⁷ The message is quite clear: Theudechild's piety was perpetually working to deter anyone from disturbing the princess' alleged donation.

One might readily question the extent of Odorannus' naïveté in making use of legend and a spurious source to assert the privileges of his monastic community.¹⁸ His modern editors make no definitive statement about his belief in the origin legend, but they do endow him with a considerable measure of authorial agency when they suggest that he used texts by "juxtaposing

¹³ Giles Constable, "Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages," *Archiv für Diplomatik* 29 (1983): 8.

¹⁴ On monastic property, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, 1989).

¹⁵ See John Van Engen, "The 'Crisis of Cenobitism' Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050–1150," *Speculum* 61 (1986): 288.

¹⁶ Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*, 215–88. See also Remensnyder, "Croyance et communauté," 151, where she reminds us that the monks within an abbey could themselves be an audience for its foundation legends' threats.

¹⁷ Odorannus, *Capitulum I*, 82–3.

¹⁸ Most of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commentators emphasize that Odorannus truly believed the legend. See, for example, Perrin, "Le martyrium de saint Savinien," 127–28. See also Abbé Blondel, "La vérité sur les chartes de fondation de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif," *Bulletin de la société archéologique de Sens* 18 (1897): 189, who hotly refutes Prou's findings, preferring to trust the testament and Odorannus' affirmation of its claims.

them with great skill.”¹⁹ Given Odorannus’ deliberate intertextual references not only to the presence of the testament in the monastery’s archive, but also to “several works which we possess” (*opuscula ... quae apud nos habentur*) by Fortunatus,²⁰ I would argue that Odorannus was justifying his use of the community’s archival material as a basis for his claims.²¹ Yet, despite this apparent defensiveness, it would probably be misleading to view the biography of Theudechild as just another useful text for the monastery’s prosperity. As Remensnyder reminds us, monks could recognize the legendary element to their monastery’s origin story and still believe profoundly that it was true.²² The foundation legend was an important part of the monastery’s memory and identity as a holy institution.

Since Robert the Pious himself asked Odorannus to pen the biography of Theudechild,²³ one must consider not only the legendary circumstances of the abbey’s foundation, but also the community’s role in the eleventh century. Odorannus’ biography of Theudechild, who was both pious and generous, neatly demonstrates what John Van Engen has termed a “Benedictine mentality” prevalent in the years 850 to 1050, in which spiritual and material wealth worked together as monasteries interacted with lay society.²⁴ Placed at the beginning of his compilation (recall that Odorannus was both author and compiler of his works), the biography immediately demonstrated that Odorannus’ œuvre was working for the divine and temporal good of Saint

¹⁹ Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 42.

²⁰ Odorannus, *Capitulum I*, 78–9.

²¹ For an example of the process by which an author emphasizes his own personal role in his writing by identifying his sources, see Ellen Joyce, “Speaking of Spiritual Matters: Visions and the Rhetoric of Reform in the *Liber visionum* of Otloh of St Emmeram,” in Alison I. Beach, ed., *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany* (Turnhout, 2007), 75. On intertextuality and the *auctoritas* of medieval archivists, see Patrick J. Geary, “Medieval Archivists as Authors: Social Memory and Archival Memory,” in Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, eds., *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory* (Ann Arbor, 2005), 106–13.

²² Remensnyder, “Croyance et communauté,” 154.

²³ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1.

²⁴ Van Engen, “Crisis of Cenobitism,” 285–302.

Pierre-le-Vif. Therefore, we should not be surprised that Odorannus wrote of its lofty claims of relation to Clovis, or of its land holdings in Francia and Aquitaine; these attributes were no less than a reformed monastery deserved. Indeed, it was because of the right order which monasteries symbolized that patrons took care to enrich these institutions in the first place.

Miraculous History, Communal and Personal

Odorannus' chronicle appears after the biography of Theudechild in the compilation. The modern editors have divided the chronicle into two sections. The first, documenting the years 675 to 1015, is based largely upon outside sources.²⁵ Entries in this section are usually two to three lines long, recording well-known events in Francia. Naturally, Odorannus paid particular attention to Sens, documenting donations of privileges to Saint Pierre-le-Vif and other occurrences that were important to the monastery's development. He notably included canons from the synod of Ponthion in 876 for their relevance to the so-called "primacy" of the archbishop of Sens,²⁶ but in general this section is what one would expect from a typical monastic chronicle.

A significant change in form occurs, however, in the second section covering the years 1015 to 1032, which is based entirely upon Odorannus' personal reminiscence about his involvement in the events surrounding the translation of Saint Savinian's relics.²⁷ After the entry for 1031, the chronicle ceases even to feature the traditional year-and-description format.

Odorannus detailed the circumstances leading to the commission he received from the king and

²⁵ Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 45–8.

²⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 88–91. Primacy meant that the pope would give a certain archbishop considerable administrative authority over a specific place. Odorannus' chronicle has frequently been read solely for its engagement with the primacy issue. See Augustin Fliche, "La primatie des Gaules depuis l'époque carolingienne jusqu'à la querelle des investitures (876–1121)," *Revue historique* 173 (1934): 329–42. See also Fabrice Delivré, "Les chroniques de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif au miroir de la primatie sénonais," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 163 (2005): 481–503.

²⁷ Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 48–50.

queen to build a new, ornate reliquary for Savinian's remains. He also described the translation ceremony for the relics from their tomb to the new reliquary, and recorded certain miracles which occurred before and after the ritual. Odorannus' expression of intent for creating his compilation demonstrates that he considered this hagiographical section of the chronicle to be particularly important. In his Prologue, he wrote:

... wanting to relate, following the years of our Lord, at which times and by what people the said abbey has been endowed with saints' relics, I have sketched, in a spirit of the greatest humility, the story of the miracles which I saw fulfilled, among others, at the time of the translation of Saint Savinian.²⁸

Here, Odorannus affirmed himself as an eyewitness to the miracles which he would humbly record about Savinian, thus demonstrating his authorial role as a character in his own narrative. The internal shift in the chronicle from laconic entries by a seemingly anonymous author to this personalized, descriptive section becomes especially meaningful when one considers Odorannus' creativity in constructing Saint Pierre-le-Vif's identity; the post-1015 section allows his particular voice to emerge in the history of his community. Though I refer below to parts of the chronicle before 1015, I focus mainly upon the later portion, because it illustrates best how Odorannus went about "constructing the community" in his role as chronicler.

Given that the most fully developed part of the chronicle details the translation of Savinian's body from its tomb to a reliquary, it is clear that Odorannus deemed reverence for these holy remains to be a key factor in the health of his community. Relics were crucial features of medieval piety, especially in the central Middle Ages, when communities began to seek and venerate relics with increasing fervour and to produce texts which corresponded to these growing

²⁸ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70-1: "Deinde per annos Domini demonstrare volens quibus temporibus et a quibus personis sit sanctorum pignoribus idem locus ditatus, intentione humillima perstrinxi, inter cetera ea quae in translatione sancti Saviniani vidi fieri miracula."

cults.²⁹ Sens itself had become an illustrious pilgrim centre, thanks to the apparent relic “discoveries” made there by the archbishop Leotheric,³⁰ wondrous events which may have prompted Saint Pierre-le-Vif’s renewed attention to its own shrine. The monastery possessed the relics of Saint Savinian and his companion, Potentian, episcopal martyrs whose supposed mission to Gaul may have taken place as early as the third century.³¹ Odorannus recorded that in 847 the archbishop Wenilo had initially brought their bodies, among others, to the basilica in Sens.³² The centrality of Savinian and Potentian to Odorannus’ chronicle reflects their importance to Saint Pierre-le-Vif’s identity during a time of great change.

King Robert the Pious directed expense and ornament toward these holy bones. In the chronicle, Odorannus introduced the king by his attentiveness to ecclesiastical reconstruction efforts, particularly the rich decoration of relics.³³ Robert’s posthumous epithet demonstrates that the king had a positive effect upon the clerics who wrote about him. A biography of Robert, written by the monk Helgaud (d. 1048) at Fleury in the 1030s, is the most prominent representation of Robert’s nearly monkish piety and of his extensive care of monks.³⁴ Like Helgaud, Odorannus associated the king’s devotion with material generosity. In light of this aspect

²⁹ See Sharon Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* (Ithaca, 1991); Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990), 3–27; Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge, 1990). See also Thomas Head and Richard Landes, eds., *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, 1992).

³⁰ A contemporary account is Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, ed. and trans. John France (Oxford, 1989), 126–29. On relic discoveries at Sens, see also Henri Bouvier, *Histoire de l’église et de l’Ancien Archidiocèse de Sens* (Amiens, 1906), 1:356–58; Ottaway, “Traditions architecturales,” 164; Claire Wheeler Solt, “Romanesque French Reliquaries,” *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 9 (1987): 187.

³¹ See Augustin Fliche, *Les vies de saint Savinien, premier évêque de Sens* (Paris, 1912), 37–51.

³² Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 86–7. See also Fliche, *Les vies de saint Savinien*, 16.

³³ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–1.

³⁴ Helgaud of Fleury, *Vie de Robert le Pieux. Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti Pii*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier and Gillette Labory (Paris, 1965). Historians invariably note Robert’s favourable representation by monks. With particular respect to Helgaud’s work, see, for example, Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980), 183–84; Blaise Dufal, “Royauté capétienne et idéologie bénédictine dans la *Vie de Robert le Pieux* par Helgaud de Fleury,” *Paris et Ile-de-France. Mémoires* 57 (2006): 7–46; Sarah Hamilton, “A New Model for Royal Penance? Helgaud of Fleury’s *Life of Robert the Pious*,” *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997): 189–200.

of Robert's kingship, Jacques Dubois included Odorannus in an article highlighting the close ties between the early Capetians and monasteries, emphasizing the "liberty" which this relationship allowed for monks.³⁵ Because Odorannus is generally overlooked by modern scholars, it is certainly helpful that Dubois connected him to the context of monastic development around the millennium, but "liberty" may be too simple a term to describe this royal-monastic relationship. Any freedom for the monastery seems to have come with the burden of political patronage.

As noted above in the Introduction, King Robert appointed his relative Ingo to the abbatial seat at Saint Pierre-le-Vif.³⁶ Robert had also assigned Ingo to Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint Martin at Massay. Andrew Lewis has demonstrated that Ingo's respective abbatial placements appear to have been key strategic moves on the king's part in reclaiming royal control in Burgundy.³⁷ In the same year that Ingo succeeded Abbot Rainard of Saint Pierre-le-Vif, Archbishop Leotheric and King Robert allied for control of Sens against the troublesome count Rainard II, the brother-in-law of Otto-William, duke of Burgundy. Eventually reaching an agreement, the king and count decided that the latter would maintain his position as count of Sens until death, at which time authority would pass to the king. As Ingo's secretary, Odorannus was linked to a patronage network that had helped to bring Burgundy into Capetian control.³⁸

Robert was protective of Sens and Saint Pierre-le-Vif for reasons other than Burgundy. As Laurent Theis has termed it, the monastery was "one of the bastions of Capetian legitimacy, and

³⁵ Jacques Dubois, "Au temps des premiers capétiens les moines en pleine expansion affirment leurs libertés," in Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier and Pierre Desportes, eds., *Pouvoirs et libertés au temps des premiers capétiens* (Paris, 1992), 196–214. Dubois quotes in full the section of the chronicle concerning the reliquary commission (201–5).

³⁶ Ingo and Robert had been classmates under the scholar Gerbert (946–1003) at Reims.

³⁷ Andrew W. Lewis, "The Identification of Abbot Ingo (Ob. 1025), Cousin of King Robert the Pious," *Revue bénédictine* 101 (1991): 316–21. See also Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 9–10.

³⁸ Close to the end of the compilation is a letter from Ingo, penned by Odorannus (*Capitulum XI*, 254–56). See Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 10; and my Epilogue below, page 77.

one of the spearheads of royal propaganda.”³⁹ Having a strong royal presence at Saint Pierre-le-Vif would combat the resistance to Capetian legitimacy which existed in Sens. Odorannus was sympathetic to Robert and his father Hugh in a way that set him apart from his contemporaries.⁴⁰ For the year 982 (actually 987), Odorannus wrote that the Carolingian Louis V died, “after he had given the kingdom to the duke Hugh” (*donato regno Hugoni duci*), and that Robert was ordained king.⁴¹ By Odorannus’ account, the Capetian accession was valid, since Louis V actually handed his rights to Hugh Capet. The royal title was not usurped, but transferred from a dying dynasty.

It is unsurprising that Odorannus would endorse the rule of his great patron, Robert.⁴² Monastic chronicles, like foundation legends, always sought to celebrate the various relationships which had brought the community to its position of social importance.⁴³ For example, Odorannus interpreted the career of archbishop Seguin of Sens (977–99) specifically in terms of its positive effect upon Saint Pierre-le-Vif. Odorannus listed the archbishop’s many efforts in the reconstruction of Sens. Furthermore, he recorded that Seguin had reserved the most important seat at clerical assemblies for the abbot Rainard, securing him a measure of authority over

³⁹ Laurent Theis, *Robert le Pieux: le roi de l’an mil* (Paris, 1999), 145.

⁴⁰ The key text for anti-Capetian sentiment in Sens is the so-called *Historia Francorum Senonensis*, apparently from the archbishop Seguin’s chapter circle. See Robert-Henri Bautier, “L’avènement d’Hugues Capet et le sacre de Robert le Pieux,” in Michel Parisse and Xavier Barral I Altet, eds., *Le roi de France et son royaume autour de l’an mil* (Paris, 1992), 32; Joachim Ehlers, “La monarchie capétienne et la genèse de la nation française,” in *Pouvoirs et libertés au temps des premiers capétiens*, 73–4; Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 150–51. For Odorannus’ intermittent engagement with this source until 1015 in the chronicle, a topic which preoccupied some earlier scholarship, see Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 45–6; Augustin Fliche, “Les sources de l’historiographie sénonaise au XIe siècle,” *Bulletin de la société archéologique de Sens* 24 (1909): 19–62; Ferdinand Lot, *Les derniers carolingiens: Lothaire, Louis V - Charles de Lorraine (954–991)* (Paris, 1891), 343.

⁴¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 96–7. See Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 47. Lot entitled this description of Hugh’s accession a “prétendue cession du royaume”; *Les derniers carolingiens*, 380.

⁴² See Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 47; Dufal, “Royauté capétienne,” 28; Augustin Fliche, “Séguin, archevêque de Sens, primat des gaules et de Germanie,” *Bulletin de la société archéologique de Sens* 24 (1909): 172.

⁴³ On the elastic medieval genre of the chronicle, see David Dumville, “What Is a Chronicle?” in Erik Kooper, ed., *The Medieval Chronicle II. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle* (Amsterdam, 2002), 16–17; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Theory into Practice: Reading Medieval Chronicles,” in Erik Kooper, ed., *The Medieval Chronicle. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle* (Amsterdam, 1999), 1–12.

neighbouring abbots.⁴⁴ Such a lofty dispensation would have placed Saint Pierre-le-Vif in a powerful position. Augustin Fliche, writing a century ago, was suspicious of this alleged privilege, noting that Odorannus' project was always to emphasize the importance of his own monastery.⁴⁵ Odorannus' reference to this questionable episcopal favour demonstrates that he saw Seguin and Rainard as working in harmony to elevate Saint Pierre-le-Vif's diocesan influence. Rainard had also added to the abbey's prestige by educating the monks and filling the monastery with riches.⁴⁶ Both abbot and archbishop were actively contributing to the prosperity of Saint Pierre-le-Vif.

The first time he referred to himself in the chronicle, Odorannus also conveyed his own status as a contributor to the monastery. He noted his period of exile from the abbey—apparently due to accusations brought against him by his brethren—in order to introduce his positive role in the community.⁴⁷ For the year 1023, he wrote:

... the monk Odorannus, after he had made the crucifix and the well of the monastery, suffered, for the punishment of his sins, the intrigues of deceitful brothers; with the help of God, he barely escaped death; after he had spent some time at Saint Denis, he returned with the greatest honour to his own monastery.⁴⁸

By describing the event of his return to Saint Pierre-le-Vif at the beginning of his narrative of the movement of Savinian's remains to a new reliquary, Odorannus intimately linked personal experience with the story of his monastery's development. He emerges as a character without whom the abbey's history would be incomplete. The monk connected his glorious homecoming to circumstances of material prosperity for Saint Pierre-le-Vif, and as such, a parallel arises in the text between his personal wellbeing and that of his institution. Such correspondence between

⁴⁴ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 96–9. Odorannus also mentions here that Rainard was Seguin's nephew.

⁴⁵ Fliche, "Séguin," 160.

⁴⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 98–101.

⁴⁷ Odorannus' separation from his monastery will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two below.

⁴⁸ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–1: "Odorannus monachus, postquam crucifixum et puteum monasterii fecit, peccatis suis promerentibus, insidias a falsis fratribus perpressus, Deo propicio vix mortem evasit. Qui apud Sanctum Dionisium aliquantisper commoratus, cum maxime honore proprii sedibus est redditus."

corporate and personal concerns persists throughout the latter part of the chronicle, with Odorannus weaving his individual experience into his community's identity and history.⁴⁹ Like the abbey, he had suffered at the hands of enemies, but overcame adversity.

To commence retelling the blessed events which followed his redemptive return, Odorannus provided a rare interpretation of a crisis in the royal marriage. In 1003, King Robert was married to Constance of Arles, but appears to have maintained a relationship with his previous wife, Bertha of Blois, whom he had repudiated due to what clerics deemed too close a tie of kinship. During the central Middle Ages, increasingly stringent ecclesiastical notions of what constituted consanguinity made it difficult for nobles like Robert the Pious to enter into marriages acceptable to the clergy.⁵⁰ In 1010, Robert journeyed to Rome to see the pope, apparently seeking to renew his earlier union with Bertha. Odorannus wrote that this previously rejected wife followed Robert south, seeking to recover her former royal position.⁵¹ Were Bertha's hopes to be fulfilled, the present queen Constance would be cast aside. Unfortunately for Robert and Bertha, they did not receive the papal sanction they sought.

Odorannus used this situation to draw Saint Savinian into the story as an active character for the first time. He described an anxious Constance sleeping at Theil, near Sens, where she had stayed while Robert went to Rome. In a dream, she saw a luminous, white-haired man dressed in priest's clothes and carrying a staff. He revealed himself as Savinian, telling the queen that God would relieve her profound sadness. The next morning, Constance proceeded to ask nearby

⁴⁹ See Remensnyder, "Croyance et communauté," 153–54, who notes that a monk who was constructing his abbey's past was also engaging with his personal past, as the two were very closely linked.

⁵⁰ Constance B. Bouchard, "Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Speculum* 56 (1981): 268–87. On Robert and Constance's marriage, see also Christian Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux (996–1031)* (Paris, 1885; reprint Geneva, 1974), 46–60.

⁵¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–1: "Quod ut Berta regina, dudum causa consanguinitatis a rege repudiate, comperit, prosecuta est eum, sperans se, faventibus ad hoc quibusdam aulicis regis, jussu apostolico restitutam toro regio."

churchmen about Savinian's identity. She learned from Theoderic of Saint Pierre-le-Vif⁵² that he had been a martyr and the first bishop of Sens. Theoderic assured her of a speedy response if she should pray to the saint. She went to Saint Pierre-le-Vif, prayed tearfully before Savinian, and became joyful, just as the saint had promised. True to Theoderic's pledge, the king returned only three days later with renewed love for Constance, and reasserted her authority over the royal possessions. The queen promptly responded to Savinian's miraculous intercession by commissioning a new reliquary to replace his lead tomb. Here, Odorannus enters into the actions of his royal patrons. Robert summoned Odorannus, "a monk of the said place [namely, Saint Pierre-le-Vif], who seemed to him capable of executing such a work" (*eiusdem loci monachum qui ad hoc opus perficiendum videbatur idoneus*).⁵³ The monk, by the renown of his own artistry, gained the privileged opportunity of commemorating this important miracle, thanks to Constance's faithful generosity.

After Robert's death, when Odorannus was composing the chronicle, the widowed Constance allied herself with Odo II of Blois, the great opponent of the early Capetians, a contentious political move that made Odorannus' favourable representation of the queen somewhat controversial. Odo fought against Henry I (r. 1031–60), Robert and Constance's son, in late 1032, and the young king fled. In 1034, however, Henry retaliated with help from Anjou.⁵⁴ Ermenaldus, the abbot of Saint Pierre-le-Vif, beseeched Henry in the midst of this destructive

⁵² Theoderic was a monk of Saint Pierre-le-Vif who became bishop of Orléans around the year 1010; Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 102 n. 1.

⁵³ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–3. Most studies dealing with marriage and Capetian France summarize or reference this episode, seemingly the only interpretation of how the marriage of Robert and Constance was renewed. See, for example, Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York, 1983), 81, 83–4; Jean-Hervé Foulon, "Stratégies politiques, fondation monastique et recours à Rome vers l'an Mil: le cas de Beaulieu-lès-Loches," *Revue historique* 307 (2005): 259–60; Pfister, *Études*, 69; Theis, *Robert le Pieux*, 145–46.

⁵⁴ See J. Dhondt, "Une crise de pouvoir capétien, 1032–1034," in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia in memoriam Jan Frederik Niermeyer* (Groningen, 1967), 137–48; Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 25–6.

reconquest to remember the kindness which his father Robert had previously shown to the monastery.⁵⁵ Consequently, the abbey was spared, Sens returned under royal control, and Henry appointed a man named Gilduin to the archiepiscopal see instead of Mainard, a candidate who had been elected from the family of the counts of Sens.⁵⁶ Writing in the 1030s, Odorannus would have had to consider the tension which Constance's name probably incited due to her active role in producing these troubles.

In fact, other clerical sources did represent Constance rather negatively. Bishop Fulbert of Chartres, for example, told a fellow ecclesiastic in 1027 that he would attend Henry's consecration as king were it not for "the savagery of his mother, who is quite trustworthy when she promises evil."⁵⁷ There is a striking difference between this account and Odorannus' depiction of Constance. To the latter, she is a kind patron, a pious believer in Saint Savinian, and the rightful queen.⁵⁸ Modern historians often understate Odorannus' benevolent characterization of the queen, considering it nothing more than a product of the monk's desire to emphasize her generous patronage.⁵⁹ Odorannus was indeed writing with the queen's material gifts to his monastery in mind, but his munificence toward the otherwise unpopular Constance also highlights his creativity in constructing a network of Saint Pierre-le-Vif's supporters. He may have tried to deflect the upsetting events posterior to the miracle in order to maintain the sanctity of

⁵⁵ Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 26; Bouvier, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 90–1; Bouvier, *Histoire de l'église*, 389.

⁵⁶ Odorannus was the personal tutor of Gilduin, who seems to have been disliked even at Saint Pierre-le-Vif; Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 25–8. Among Odorannus' works are formula speeches for episcopal election and ordination, probably for Mainard.

⁵⁷ Fulbert of Chartres, *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres*, ed. and trans. Frederick Behrends (Oxford, 1976), 222–23. For an analysis of Constance's career and her reception by clerics, see Penelope Ann Adair, "Constance of Arles: A Study in Duty and Frustration," in Kathleen Nolan, ed., *Capetian Women* (New York, 2003), 9–26.

⁵⁸ There seems to have been at least a small cohort of clerics from various dioceses who supported the queen, probably due to the unpopularity of Robert's marriage to Bertha. See Bautier et al., "Introduction," 16.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 64.

Constance's patronage, and by extension, to avoid sullyng his own work and the monastery's glory it sought to promote.

In Odorannus' narrative, the dream miracle that underscored the queen's faith led to an event as important as the monastery's original foundation: the formal translation of the relics of Savinian from tomb to ornate reliquary.⁶⁰ The process which Odorannus described was one relatively widespread in his world. In the central Middle Ages, many ecclesiastics and laymen revisited tombs and moved their contents to more accessible and ornate places of rest.⁶¹ Odorannus' particular translation story began when Robert called upon Leotheric to move Savinian's body to its new reliquary. The king himself then came to Saint Pierre-le-Vif and carried the reliquary to its new resting place "on his own shoulders" (*propriis scapulis*).⁶² The textual episode emphasizes the formal, ritual aspect of the ceremony.⁶³ By describing Robert's kingly presence and impressive physical interaction with the relics, Odorannus demonstrated how important an event this was for the abbey. In an environment that so valued saintly patronage, the

⁶⁰ On the importance of dream images in effecting building projects, see Carolyn M. Carty, "The Role of Medieval Dream Images in Authenticating Ecclesiastical Construction," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 62 (1999): 45–90.

⁶¹ See Solt, "Romanesque French Reliquaries."

⁶² Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 108–11. There are parallel examples of a king carrying relics on his shoulders. Helgaud, *Vie de Robert le Pieux*, 110–11, provides another instance of Robert doing this. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*, 138–39, has observed a late ninth- or early tenth-century text that described a King Pippin of Aquitaine carrying relics on his shoulders, thereby endowing him with a certain priestly authority. This text was apparently edited, possibly in the later eleventh or twelfth century, designating this king as Pippin the Short himself. There is also a record of the Carolingian king Charles the Bald having carried relics on his shoulders in Nithard, *Histories*, in Bernhard Walter Scholz, trans., *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Ann Arbor, 1970), 158. The episode in Nithard's text was probably an interpolation from the tenth or eleventh century; see Baudouin de Gaiffier, "Le calendrier d'Héric d'Auxerre du manuscrit de Melk 412," *Analecta Bollandiana* 77 (1959): 401–3. See also Philippe Buc, "Text and Ritual in Ninth-Century Political Culture, Rome, 864," in Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary, eds., *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* (Cambridge, 2002), 124.

⁶³ The translation of a saint could become a liturgical celebration, serving to re-authenticate the relics and re-legitimize their initial translation. In general, see Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994), 194–218. In the manuscript containing Odorannus' works, there is a notated office of Saint Savinian and Potentian (fols. 91–4). Henri Villetard, in his edition of its music, concluded that it was a later addition to the manuscript and not written by Odorannus; Villetard, *Office de Saint Savinien et de Saint Potentien, premiers évêques de Sens* (Paris, 1956). See also Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 30, 40. By using the compilation manuscript in this way to write down the office, monks who followed Odorannus at Saint Pierre-le-Vif seem indeed to have connected his chronicle to a ritual celebration of the saint whose miracles Odorannus described.

presence of holy remains in a lavish new reliquary bearing royal endorsement at Saint Pierre-le-Vif would be valuable for anyone who might come into contact with the monastery.

In his chronicle, as the reliquary's fashioner, Odorannus became a privileged witness to the miracles which surrounded the relic translation. After Constance's initial dream, there were three miracles which, Odorannus wrote, "we have seen with our eyes and, in part, touched with our hands" (*oculis nostris vidimus et ex parte manibus contrectavimus*).⁶⁴ The first occurred while Odorannus was journeying to Dreux in order to acquire gold from Robert and Constance for the commissioned reliquary. The miracle took the form of a wandering star that realigned with its proper course, signifying to the servants accompanying Odorannus that they would successfully complete their journey. Upon Odorannus' return to Saint Pierre-le-Vif, he recalled, the small amount of gold that Constance had personally entrusted to him became, miraculously, significantly weightier. Odorannus and the other witnesses immediately understood divinity at work in this second wonder.⁶⁵ An aged, blind layman was the recipient of the third miracle. He came to the abbey church several days before the translation ceremony and encountered Odorannus working alone on the reliquary. Upon being admitted by Odorannus, the old man prayed at the saint's shrine. Some days later, after the translation ceremony, while the king was at dinner with the assembly, the blind man came before everyone, announcing that he could see anew.⁶⁶ In each miracle, Odorannus is a privileged witness, whose actions are preconditions to the wondrous events. Had he not journeyed to Dreux, acquired gold, and shown the old man to

⁶⁴ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 104–5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 104–7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 108–11.

Savinian's shrine, none of the marvels would have been possible.⁶⁷ The authorial strategy of emphasizing one's own credibility as a witness was a way to validate miracles.⁶⁸ By this same tactic, Odorannus also showed the importance of his own experiences in making his audience understand Savinian's greatness.

Because Odorannus had such an active role in the story that sought to glorify his saint, his chronicle exhibits moments of his personal intercourse with others throughout the events of Savinian's translation. After the ceremony, King Robert retired to the church for solitary prayer.

An emotional encounter ensued when Odorannus drew near:

The king, seeing him from far away, with a calm hand signal, gestured to him to approach. "Tell me," he said. "What was Saint Potentian for Saint Savinian?" The brother humbly answered him that he had been his companion in the toils of travel, his successor in honour and his colleague in martyrdom. Then the king began to lament and to beat his breast, because he had separated the relics from one another.⁶⁹

In this scene, Odorannus is again a privileged interlocutor. He appears as an advisor and friend to the king, due to his knowledge of the history of Savinian and Potentian's saintly companionship. Moreover, he was a witness as Robert increased his faithfulness toward Saint Pierre-le-Vif's martyrs. After beating his breast, Robert vowed to commission a reliquary for Potentian as well, but died before this second project commenced.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Odorannus, by answering the

⁶⁷ Another instance of personal experience in miracle stories is the case of Bernard of Angers, the cleric who wrote a portion of the miracle collection of Saint Foy at Conques. See Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago, 1999), 43, analyzing Bernard's self insertion as a character in the miracles, often becoming the "person for whom events take place." For the full discussion, see 39–45. See also *The Book of Sainte Foy*, trans. Pamela Sheingorn (Philadelphia, 1995).

⁶⁸ See Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 1000–1215* (London, 1982), 209.

⁶⁹ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 110–1: "quem aspiciens, eminus tranquilla manu innuit ut accederet propius; cui: 'Enarra mihi', inquit, 'sanctus Potentianus sancto Saviniano quid fuerit'. At ille quod socius ejus in itineris labore et successor in honore et college martirii fuerit humiliter intulit. Tunc rex graviter coepit conqueri et pugnus pectus tondere eo quod eos ab invicem separasset corpore."

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

king's query, was crucial to securing what would have been further illustrious patronage. In a brief poem following this episode, Odorannus joined his own salvation to that of the late king, praying to God and Savinian for his own soul and for Robert's simultaneously.⁷¹ The king and the monk were equal here under God's mercy and the martyr's patronage.

The Reliquary as a Memorial of Royal Patronage and of Odorannus' Artistry

It was the reliquary that allowed for this personal connection between goldsmith and king. Both as an entity in itself and as a major feature of the chronicle, this work of art also seems to have played a vital role in Odorannus' relationship with the monastery. His modern editors, working from a seventeenth-century sketch and description of the reliquary, have done much to illuminate the treasure, which was apparently lost during the French Revolution. The reliquary was remarkably large for its time, with precious stones on the anterior face, depicting Robert and Constance. On the lid were scenes of the life and passion of Savinian. It was inscribed with rhymed verse about the saint as well as the king and queen's patronage.⁷² Odorannus' handiwork was a casket reliquary, or *châsse*. Though evidence of reliquaries in the central Middle Ages is scarce, it seems that the casket was the most common reliquary type.⁷³ Such containers were heavy, usually made of oak and covered with precious metals and gems.⁷⁴

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 16–25. There is a reproduction of the actual sketch made in 1650 by Dom Cotron in Jean Hubert, "Introïbo ad altare," *Revue de l'art* 24 (1974): 16. See also Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1992), 162, where Koziol engages the compilation editors' suggestion (Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 22–3) that the images of Constance and Robert indicate Ottonian influence.

⁷³ Less common was the body reliquary, like that of Saint Foy at Conques. See Solt, "Romanesque French Reliquaries," 171, 187; and for her description of Odorannus' reliquary, 193–94. The Savinian reliquary is one of only ten literary references to this type of reliquary, which Solt found for the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

Reliquaries were not merely passive celebrations of holy remains. Ecclesiastics could employ them in the same way that they might employ a foundation narrative: to defend property claims or to legitimize the community's holy identity.⁷⁵ Due to a lack of evidence, we cannot assess the quotidian functions of Savinian's particular reliquary. However, it is worthwhile to consider what the bejewelled box might have meant for the monastery's collective memory. Remensnyder has observed a relationship between reliquaries and "imaginative memory," arguing that these containers were creative interpretations of their relics, subject to re-evaluation over time as supplicants prayed before their patron saints.⁷⁶ Those who would look upon Saint Pierre-le-Vif's treasure would see the images from Savinian's life alongside the images of the royal patrons, showing the piety of both parties. One was meant to recognize the patronage and artistry which had brought Savinian to his present glorious state, where he could be venerated by many. Indeed, relic shrines defined communities, bringing diverse people together in a common devotional pursuit.⁷⁷ The reliquary was thus a visually active symbol of Savinian's community of believers past, present, and future.

Furthermore, Odorannus wrote the chronicle after he had fabricated the reliquary. We should not privilege the text, but consider it as one more product of a burgeoning communal identity.⁷⁸ The reliquary was meaningful for Odorannus himself, as his preoccupation with it in the chronicle suggests.⁷⁹ Odorannus was both the goldsmith who fabricated it and the author who

⁷⁵ See, for example, Thomas Head, "Art and Artifice in Ottonian Trier," *Gesta* 36 (1997): 65–82.

⁷⁶ Amy G. Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory," *Speculum* 71 (1996): 884–906.

⁷⁷ Geary, *Living With the Dead*, 171. See also Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure," 904; Ward, *Miracles*, 35–6.

⁷⁸ See Head, "Art and Artifice"; Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure," 906.

⁷⁹ See Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 10.

detailed the circumstances of its production. Referring to himself in an episode after Leotheric had opened Savinian's tomb and retired to dinner with the assembly, Odorannus wrote:

The brother [Odorannus], however, with the judgment and discretion of someone to whom the execution of the whole of the work had been entrusted, had stayed in the chancel of the monastery, and was filling in the silver figurines, which he was preparing to place on the lid of the reliquary, with wax softened by heat.⁸⁰

Here, Odorannus represented himself as a careful artist, working alone in the church. The process of melting and setting was probably painstaking, but as a monk at his intricate labour Odorannus likely felt spiritually obligated to create a sublime final product. This brief glimpse into the material fabrication of the reliquary emphasizes the solitary, spiritual element of a monk's manual work.⁸¹ Given that Odorannus provided almost no other practical details, Lynn White included him among other Benedictines who he claims were subject to "social conditioning" as monks, which trained them to be modest about their work.⁸² Indeed, the Benedictine *Rule* portrays abject humility as fundamental to a monk's success and pride as his greatest obstacle.⁸³ A chapter in the *Rule* is devoted specifically to skilled workers, warning that if they take excessive pride in their talents, they should lose the privilege of doing the work which they prize.⁸⁴ Odorannus needed to describe his golden contribution in a spirit of monastic humility.

With the reliquary, Odorannus memorialized the patronage for his monastery's spiritual and material prosperity, but his subsequent textual description of this process served to memorialize the monk himself. In an overview of Odorannus' works, Franz Brunhölzl warns that

⁸⁰ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 108–9: "Fratre vero, sub cuius arbitrio et providentia tocius operis fabrica constabat, in choro monasterii residente et imagines argenti, quod cooperculo capse superponi disposuerat, cera molli refovente."

⁸¹ See Jacques Dubois, "Le travail des moines au Moyen Age," in idem, *Aspects de la vie monastique en France au Moyen Age* (Hampshire, 1993), II (80–1); Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York, 1982), 18.

⁸² Lynn White Jr., "Medieval Engineering and the Sociology of Knowledge," *Pacific Historical Review* 44 (1975): 5.

⁸³ Benedict, *Rule*, 7, trans. Terrence G. Kardong, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, 1996), 132–35.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 57, trans. Kardong, 457.

we should not let Odorannus' deflection and modest self portrayal mask his wish to commemorate his artistic work.⁸⁵ There were, however, issues with this memorialization of oneself in the monastic milieu. A principle for Benedictine monks was that they forget themselves and their personal memory.⁸⁶ At least in the chronicle, Odorannus seems to have suspended this ideal, for he clearly believed his alleged experiences were important to the development of Saint Pierre-le-Vif. Furthermore, his creativity with the foundation legend, and his interpretation of events according to how they had helped the monastery, suggest that he was truly dedicated to his institution.

One will recall, however, that in the midst of writing his monastery's success story, Odorannus took care to mention the deceitful brothers who had forced him into exile from that same monastery in the 1020s.⁸⁷ In remembering constructively for his community, he also made sure that contemporaries and future readers would not forget his individual struggles. It is to these struggles that we should now turn.

⁸⁵ Franz Brunhölzl, *Histoire de la littérature latine du Moyen Age*, trans. Henri Rochais (Turnhout, 1990), 203.

⁸⁶ See Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992), 130–36, 155–68. I was directed to this work by Remensnyder, "Croyance et communauté," 153.

⁸⁷ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–1. See page 24 above.

CHAPTER TWO - *Negotiating the Self*

In order to consider the fraught interactions between Odorannus and the people around him, I now depart from his historical works to consider his letters, which make up the majority of his compilation. Odorannus was a prominent member of his monastic community at Saint Pierre-le-Vif, but this same distinction caused him to experience—and apparently to incite—social discord. The crucial moment of this disunity was when he was forced to leave his monastery in 1023, ostensibly due to accusations which his fellow monks had brought against him. Odorannus spent two years at the monastery of Saint Denis before the abbot Ingo recalled him to Saint Pierre-le-Vif.¹ This period of exile was a key aspect of the tension between Odorannus' self-conscious authorial identity and his communal, monastic identity. The friction in Odorannus' social interactions is evident in certain rhetorical strategies that appear in his letters, such as self-victimization, indirection, expressions of affection, and accusation of critics as “envious” or even heretical. Odorannus wrote to a partisan audience comprised of both friends and detractors. He had both to anticipate hostility and attempt to secure or maintain the good graces of sympathetic readers. This chapter demonstrates that the circumstances of disunity, which Odorannus simultaneously experienced and created, prompted him to formulate his own authorial self, a process which sometimes put him at variance with his status as a cenobitic monk.

It is no secret to readers of Odorannus' compilation that the monk's affective personality and notable erudition occasionally had him at odds with his community. To a certain extent, therefore, this chapter merely problematizes what modern commentators have long known about

¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum III*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier, et al. (Paris, 1972), 116–17.

Odorannus. Certain studies prior to the 1972 edition of the compilation used the same words that Odorannus himself employed (which I discuss below) to refer to the monk's troubles. For example, Augustin Challe wrote in 1856 that Odorannus' prominence under the illustrious abbacy of Rainard turned "envious men and enemies" against him. Challe characterized the monks who accused Odorannus by their "ignorance and blindness."² Similarly, a century later, Henri Villetard wrote that Odorannus' "knowledge, his talents, his reputation aroused intense jealousies," and that "fortunately, he had the prudence to flee [Saint Pierre-le-Vif]."³ Challe, Villetard, and others⁴ used Odorannus' words as accurate descriptions of reality, taking his texts at face value. Because the modern compilation editors had the difficult task of contextualizing Odorannus' works, there was little room in their introduction for an exploration of the historical significance of his rhetorical choices. Since that 1972 edition, however, scholars have often cited Odorannus in studies concerning the development of heresy in the central Middle Ages, now paying greater attention to his literary strategies. For example, Guy Lobrichon referred briefly to Odorannus as a "polemicist," who used language deliberately and self-consciously to defend himself in an environment of doctrinal and political controversy.⁵ I have not, however, encountered any close investigation of Odorannus' letters as artifacts of the intellectual context of the early eleventh century. Nor have

² Augustin Challe, "Odoranne, de Sens, écrivain et artiste du commencement du XI^e siècle," *Bulletin des sciences historiques et naturelles de l'Yonne* 6 (1856): 294.

³ Henri Villetard, *Office de Saint Savinien et de Saint Potentien, premiers évêques de Sens* (Paris, 1956), 32.

⁴ Congregation of Saint Maur, "Odoranne, moine de S. Pierre le Vif," in *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris, 1867), 7:356–59; Louis-Maximilien Duru, *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne* (Auxerre, 1863), 2:385–86; Henri Bouvier, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens* (Auxerre, 1891), 79–92; idem, *Histoire de l'église et de l'Ancien Archidiocèse de Sens* (Amiens, 1906), 1:379–82.

⁵ Guy Lobrichon, "The Chiaroscuro of Heresy: Early Eleventh-Century Aquitaine as Seen from Auxerre," in Thomas Head and Richard Landes, eds., *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, 1992), 90. This shift in approach is, of course, a product of the "linguistic turn" in historical analysis. I recognize that, by focusing on "rhetorical/literary strategies," I am engaging in an examination that has been very much informed by this analytical shift. For a helpful explanation of the ways in which the linguistic turn has affected how medievalists view their sources, see Robert M. Stein, "Literary Criticism and the Evidence for History," in Nancy Partner, ed., *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), 67–87. I refer to the older (pre-"linguistic turn") studies partly for a historiographical frame of reference, partly because of the scarcity of more recent examinations.

scholars problematized the traces of fraternal discord apparent in Odorannus' texts in terms of monastic social life. The following remarks attempt to combine these aspects of his experience in order to show Odorannus' significance for our understanding of his context.

A Context of Persecution

Odorannus recorded his exile under the year 1023 in his chronicle of Saint Pierre-le-Vif, stating that he “suffered, for the punishment of his sins, the intrigues of false brothers; with the help of God, he barely escaped death” (*insidias a falsis fratribus perpessus, Deo propicio vix mortem evasit*).⁶ His striking language emphasizes the seriousness and violence of banishment from the monastery. Jane Sayers has suggested that not only social dissension, but actual physical violence was a reality of medieval cloistered life as communities attempted to maintain order.⁷ When Odorannus stated that he “barely escaped death,” therefore, it is not outside the realm of possibility that Saint Pierre-le-Vif had truly become socially and physically dangerous to him. Despite the aggressiveness that medieval exile could include, its primary goal was to achieve greater peace in the community. In the Middle Ages, many leaders and groups, ecclesiastical and lay, employed exile as a tool of “social punishment, correction, or coercion.”⁸ In a monastery, the renewed obedience which was required for an expelled monk to return was part of the greater hierarchical ordering of the cloister as an institution that could bring men closer to God.⁹ In short,

⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–1.

⁷ Jane Sayers, “Violence in the Medieval Cloister,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41 (1990): 533–42.

⁸ Laura Napran, “Introduction: Exile in Context,” in Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts, eds., *Exile in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2004), 1. For an example of the various political uses of exile in the Carolingian world, see Steven A. Stofferahn, “A New Majesty: Paschasius Radbertus, Exile, and the Masters’ Honor,” in David Blanks, et al., eds., *Medieval Monks and Their World: Ideas and Realities* (Leiden, 2006), 49–69.

⁹ See Ludo J. R. Milis, “Topsy-Turvy Morality: Obedience as a Regulator of Social Behavior,” in Jean-Marie Duvosquel and Erik Thoen, eds., *Peasants and Townspeople in Medieval Europe: Studia in Honorem Adriaan Verhulst* (Ghent, 1995), 651–61.

banishment from one's community was serious, if not terribly unusual. Odorannus' own separation from his monastery figures prominently in his compilation, indicating that such expulsion could cause a deeply-felt rift.

The circumstances which brought Odorannus from Sens to Saint Denis in 1023 are not entirely clear. Odorannus' modern editors suggest two main reasons why he left Saint Pierre-le-Vif. On the one hand, the combative politics in Sens may have forced him to shun his own milieu. The city was divided between the archbishop Leotheric, who was a supporter of King Robert the Pious (r. 996–1031), and Count Rainard II, a rival to royal power. Odorannus was himself an ally of the king, so he may have left Sens due to the threatening animosity of Rainard's contingent outside the cloister walls.¹⁰ On the other hand, the monk's own references to his exile suggest that it was trouble within the abbey—namely the conspiratorial activity of his own brethren—that drove him away. Moreover, in one of his letters, likely written soon before his departure, Odorannus told his correspondents Ayrfredus, an ecclesiastic of the cathedral school at Orléans and abbot of Saint Avitus, and Hugh, archdeacon of Sens, that he had been accused of heresy. He stated, “moved by envy, separating themselves from the truth, [my critics] accuse me of having spoken wrongly of God” (*invidia stimulante a veritate desipientes, quod de Deo male sentiens*).¹¹ In light of this reference, the modern editors of the letter note that Odorannus' banishment occurred concurrent with the trial of heretical clerics at Orléans in December, 1022. This environment of persecution may have become an occasion for Odorannus' “envious” brethren to damage the name of their prominent fellow monk and have him removed from the abbey.¹²

¹⁰ Robert-Henri Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” in Odorannus, *Opera omnia*, 13.

¹¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum XIII*, 264–65.

¹² Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 14–16.

Modern historiography heralds the trial of 1022 as one of the first instances of the organized persecution of heretics in medieval Europe. Robert-Henri Bautier's influential study of the events at Orléans demonstrated their complex political background; the trial was driven by rival factions and their partialities toward specific ecclesiastical candidates.¹³ The main targets were canons from the cathedral chapter in Orléans who seem to have rejected the validity of the sacraments. Robert the Pious and Queen Constance presided at the trial with several church dignitaries, one of whom was Leotheric, the archbishop of Sens. The council ended with several clerics being burned to death.¹⁴ Bautier showed that Odorannus was closely connected to this controversy, suggesting that his correspondent Ayrfredus was a part of the scandal as a churchman at Orléans. Moreover, Odorannus' critics had apparently charged him with heretical beliefs at Saint Pierre-le-Vif. While it is hardly certain that Odorannus was a member of the heretical circle at Orléans, he nonetheless had ties to a divisive and potentially unorthodox milieu.¹⁵

Noting Odorannus' social proximity to the Orléans affair, Heinrich Fichtenau observed that "the public atmosphere seems to have become highly charged, which under certain circumstances could prove dangerous to anyone espousing unusual doctrines."¹⁶ Odorannus was keenly aware of the hazards close around him. After all, he claimed that his own brethren had

¹³ Robert-Henri Bautier, "L'hérésie d'Orléans et le mouvement intellectuel au début du XI^e siècle: documents et hypothèses," in idem, *Recherches sur l'histoire de la France médiévale: Des Mérovingiens aux premiers Capétiens* (Hampshire, 1991) VIII (63–88).

¹⁴ Much has been written about the Orléans affair. See R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, second ed. (Oxford, 2007), 14–15; Michael Frassetto, "The Heresy at Orléans in 1022 in the Writings of Contemporary Churchmen," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 49 (2005): 1–17; Karen Sullivan, *Truth and the Heretic: Crises of Knowledge in Medieval French Literature* (Chicago, 2005), 56–7 n. 34, for a helpful treatment of the sources and scholarship. See also Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), 88–240 for the complete discussion of his influential argument that the "textual community" characterized both reform and heresy prevalent in the eleventh century. The textual community meant that "literacy influenced group organization" (89). See pages 106–20 for his particular discussion of the Orléans affair.

¹⁵ Bautier, "L'hérésie d'Orléans," 82–4, and Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 16.

¹⁶ Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages, 1000–1200*, trans. Denise A. Kaiser (University Park, 1998), 33.

been the enemies who had falsely accused him and forced him to leave the monastery. He had reached a climactic moment of struggle with his community, which prompted him to doubt the value of living with others as a studious monk. In the letter to Ayrfredus and Hugh, Odorannus expressed this disillusion, saying that if he were a wandering monk or a cowherd,

... maybe then no one would envy me, no one would slander me. But since, abiding in my monastery, I desire to discover the truth of subtle things by means of diligent research, [...] I face the malicious gossip and the insults of envious men; and as if my spirit were rising up from the deep precipice where I have been plunged, I am bound to respond to their slander.¹⁷

It was quite a serious statement for Odorannus to consider the life of a wandering monk (*girovagus*) more peaceful and just than his own life within the cloister. The Benedictine *Rule* had stated that these wanderers were the worst kind of monks, as they defied the ideal stability of a cenobitic community.¹⁸ A ninth-century commentary on the *Rule* claimed that a gyrovague was “a rover, a wanderer, one who goes around the cells and houses of others.”¹⁹ Odorannus, however, seems to have considered the quiet of his monastery to be far more inconstant than even the uncertain environment of the outside world. He claimed only to have been studying carefully in the noble monastic pursuit of discerning truth, but that others had turned against him due to their own wrong-headedness. Odorannus portrayed himself to be completely dejected and, as the brunt of gossip, ostracized and alone. His banishment from Saint Pierre-le-Vif was thus an outgrowth of the social banishment he had already experienced within the cloister. The tension between corporate and individual identity would have been exacerbated in exile; as Willemien Otten

¹⁷ Odorannus, *Capitulum XIII*, 264–65: “[...] fortassis nemo invideret, nemo detraheret. Quia vero in cœnobio residens, subtilium rerum [...] investigare diligenter veritatem cupio, maledicta et opprobria ab emulis sustineo, erecta quasi ex quodam praecipiti mente profundo, eorum respondere detractiōni compellor.”

¹⁸ Benedict, *Rule*, 1, trans. Terrence G. Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN, 1996), 34–5. On the key importance of stability in monastic rules, see Adalbert de Vogüé, “‘To Persevere in the Monastery Unto Death’ (Stability in St. Benedict and Others),” *Word and Spirit* 16 (1994): 125–58.

¹⁹ Smaragdus of Saint Mihiel, *Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict*, trans. David Barry (Kalamazoo, 2007), 122.

reminds us, this strain was an integral part of the process by which members of monastic groups negotiated their identities in relation to those around them.²⁰ Odorannus' exclusion from Saint Pierre-le-Vif clearly prompted him to consider the adversity that was possible in the cloister. He appears to have struggled as a community member separated from his fellow monks at the abbey.

As his polemical letter to Ayrfredus and Hugh demonstrates, it seems this process of negotiation turned Odorannus himself into an active member of the persecuting public. In response to the allegations that he had been fostering a heretical belief in the immateriality of God,²¹ Odorannus accused his detractors of believing the equally heretical opposite. He said that they had been “injected with the mortal poison of the anthropomorphites” (*mortiferum antropomorfitarum virus inferrent*).²² He never named his critics, but made it clear that they, rather than he, were the ones guilty of unorthodox belief.²³

The particular claim of anthropomorphism was quite unusual. Phyllis Jestice noted that in accusing his adversaries in this way, Odorannus was oddly in alignment with Jewish belief, which denied any corporeality to God's being.²⁴ Odorannus' complete recrimination cannot be evaluated, however, because the letter survives only as a fragment that ends in the middle of a supportive citation.²⁵ Through a close study of the manuscript around this abrupt break, the modern editors suggest that the letter must have been added by one of Odorannus' students after his death in

²⁰ Willemien Otten, “The Bible and the Self in Medieval Autobiography: Otloh of St. Emmeram (1010–1070) and Peter Abelard (1079–1142),” in David E. Aune and John McCarthy, eds., *The Whole and Divided Self* (New York, 1997), 130–57.

²¹ See page 38 above.

²² Odorannus, *Capitulum XIII*, 264–65. See also Bautier, “L'hérésie d'Orléans,” 83–4.

²³ It is in this context that Lobrichon referred to Odorannus as a polemicist accusing others in an indirect manner; “Chiaroscuro of Heresy,” 90, 94.

²⁴ Phyllis G. Jestice, “A Great Jewish Conspiracy? Worsening Jewish-Christian Relations and the Destruction of the Holy Sepulcher,” in Michael Frassetto, ed., *Christian Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Middle Ages: A Casebook* (New York, 2007), 36. See also Meir Bar Ilan, “The Hand of God: A Chapter in Rabbinic Anthropomorphism,” in Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, ed., *Rashi, 1040–1990: Hommage à Emphraïm E. Urbach* (Paris, 1993), 321–35.

²⁵ Odorannus claimed that this citation came from Augustine, but the modern compilation editors were unable to locate the reference; Odorannus, *Capitulum XIII*, 264 n. 3.

1046.²⁶ Moreover, in this letter, Odorannus referred to another of his texts, a *lamentatio* (no longer extant), in which he had already defended himself against slander; therefore, he told Ayrfredus and Hugh, he was reluctant to do it again.²⁷ When compiling his works in 1045, Odorannus omitted both the letter to Ayrfredus and Hugh and the defensive *lamentatio* he referenced within it. While there may have been a host of reasons for this omission, is it possible that he did not want to preserve texts that suggested his tenuous relationship with orthodoxy? Perhaps in later years he thought that the accusations of anthropomorphism were damning to himself rather than to his erstwhile detractors.

In such an accusatory environment, a key aspect of Odorannus' writing activity was defending his authorial reputation as a respectable monk. The notion of good and bad repute is not merely a modern construct, but was a recurrent issue in medieval social life. Reputation, or *fama*, was a vital way in which people understood each other in contexts varying from the literary to the legal.²⁸ David Gary Shaw has underscored the importance of shaping a reputation—which often meant protecting one's good name against slander—as a fundamental occupation of the “social self” in the Middle Ages.²⁹ While Odorannus did not use the word *fama* in his writing, he did employ the term *honor* (another important word related to one's reputation³⁰) in two separate

²⁶ Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 54–5.

²⁷ Odorannus, *Capitulum XIII*, 264–65, and page 2 n. 6 above.

²⁸ See the collected essays in Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, eds., *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 2003).

²⁹ David Gary Shaw, “Social Selves in Medieval England: The Worshipful Ferrour and Kempe,” in *Writing Medieval History*, 14–15: “At every point, the pursuit of a certain kind of social identity [...] is an attempt to secure a certain image, a certain social self. This means that you defend that image against slanders, against the opinions of others”; idem, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York, 2005), 18, 124–26, 129–32.

³⁰ On honour, see Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions*, 31–3, 44–5.

texts to describe his return to Saint Pierre-le-Vif after exile.³¹ He deliberately sought to defend his good name in the opinions of readers. In the following remarks, when I call upon the notion of reputation, I refer specifically to Odorannus' defensive authorial interactions with those whom he imagined would encounter his work.

Envious Detractors and Charitable Friends

A fraught context shaped how Odorannus conceptualized his audience and the reception of his texts. Walter Ong has argued that writers always “create” their audience in a fictionalizing process; a writer will imagine and anticipate a certain type of audience and craft his or her writing accordingly.³² With Ong's suggestions in mind, I underscore that Odorannus' portrayals of his audience were not mere descriptions of a preexisting readership, but instead, that he wrote to an audience that he himself shaped according to the purposes of his compositions. Odorannus could adapt this anticipated readership based on his authorial intentions. This is not to suggest that he was writing to imaginary people (even though most of the correspondents are in fact unknown outside Odorannus' compilation). Rather, in preemptively characterizing his readers and their relationships to him, Odorannus was imagining the ways in which his audience would receive his works and was formulating an authorial self in the process.³³

³¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum II* (Chronicle), 100–1: “cum maxime honore propriis sedibus est redditus”; *Capitulum III* (Letter to Abbot William of Saint Denis), 116–17: “Postquam vero a donno Ingone abbate divinitate propicia arcersiri merui, muneratum me diversis donis cum maximo honore propriis locis reddidisti.”

³² Walter J. Ong, “The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction,” *PMLA* 90 (1975): 9–21.

³³ On the “public reception” of texts as related to authorial intention, see the admonitory remarks by Patrick J. Geary, “Frühmittelalterliche Historiographie: Zusammenfassung,” in Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter, eds., *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1994), 541: “If we posit a unique public reception, we fail to recognize that we create this publicum and its outlook, expectations, and interpretations no less surely than we create the intentions of putative authors.” I proceed with the recognition that much of what we say about authorial intention and audience is supposition. However, I do not seek to “create the publicum” myself, but rather, to consider how Odorannus anticipated and conceived his audience.

Soon after his return to Saint Pierre-le-Vif, probably in 1025, Odorannus wrote a letter to Abbot William of Saint Denis in which he expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome he had received there.³⁴ The letter had a dual purpose of thanking William for his hospitality, and of providing a collection of canon law texts, which were to aid William in his ministry as abbot. Odorannus began by emphasizing the importance of “apostolic charity” (*caritas apostolus*), which required unconditional love for God and neighbour.³⁵ As a monk who had been banished, Odorannus likely gained an especial appreciation of this ideal Christian quality. His relief from the social stress of Saint Pierre-le-Vif may have been the charitable warmth of Saint Denis:

... when, by the cunning of my enemies, almost the entire universe joined forces against me to the extent that, under the influence of envy, all audience was refused me, I hardly had the grace to reach the threshold of the benevolent Denis when you deigned to receive me much more honourably than befitted by smallness, and to admit me into the community itself, with the accord of all the brothers, not as a visitor, but as a citizen; not as a guest, but as a member of the house.³⁶

The sense here is the same as in the letter to Ayrfredus and Hugh: it was paradoxically within his home monastery that Odorannus had felt alone. At Saint Pierre-le-Vif, Odorannus allegedly suffered the wicked plots of “enemies” and could speak to no one, but his experience at Saint Denis was one of harmony in the community. He was once again a brother; not a wandering monk, but a “member of the house.” There is an implicit contrast between expulsion and welcome. Odorannus’ separation from Saint Pierre-le-Vif was a significant rupture in the ideally stable and quiet life of a monk, so these poetical expressions of his kindly reception at Saint Denis

³⁴ The modern editors suggest that this William—otherwise unknown as an abbot of Saint Denis—may have been the well-known reforming abbot, William of Volpiano (962–1031), and that Saint Denis was one of many abbeys that were under his guidance; “Introduction,” 12 n. 1.

³⁵ Odorannus, *Capitulum III*, 114–15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 116–17: “Nam cum invidorum astutia universus pene orbis contra me conspirasset in tantum ut cupiditate prevalente audientia mihi denegaretur, mox ut limina almi Dionisii adtingere merui, honorabiliter ultra quam pusillitatem meam decebat suscipere et in ipsa congregatione unacum voluntate omnium fratrum me non ut inquilinum et ospitem sed ut civem et domesticum dignatus es deputare.”

probably arose not only from his obvious purpose of being rhetorically emphatic, but also from the intensity of his experience.

Odorannus expressed discontent in his letter to William by citing canonical authority on the particular issue of false accusations within ecclesiastical orders. He also dealt with the problem of the reconciliation of priests. Odorannus explained this choice of subject matter by referring to the “negligence of priests and the greed of those who are responsible for managing public affairs” (*negligentia sacerdotum et cupiditate rei publice curam gerentium*), vices that were causing the widespread occurrence of “frequent conspiracies and perjuries” (*frequentes conspirationes et pejuria circumquaque*) among churchmen.³⁷ The world of priests and monks had become, for Odorannus, discordant in a way that undermined the holy traditions of canon law. An example of one of the canons cited is a stipulation from the Council of Chalcedon in 451 calling for the punishment of any clerics or monks who might be “discovered conspiring or preparing an attack against their pastors or their brothers” (*clerici vel monachi reperti fuerint conjurantes vel conspirantes aut insidias ponentes pastoribus vel fratribus*).³⁸ The subject matter of this canon was not coincidental given Odorannus’ claim that the “intrigues” of his brethren had driven him from his monastery. His modern editors call this letter “a work of circumstance” in which Odorannus used the canons as evidence to legitimize his return to Saint Pierre-le-Vif, not necessarily as objects for exegesis.³⁹ The small collection for William is thus a specific example of the creative

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 116–17.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 120–21.

³⁹ Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 50–1; also Franz Brunhölzl, *Histoire de la littérature latine du Moyen Âge*, trans. Henri Rochais (Turnhout, 1990), 204, who writes that the letter “était manifestement destinée à justifier en droit et après coup.” See also Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York, 1982), 191–235, arguing for a “monastic theology” which, unlike the scholastic method, caused monks to base their study specifically on personal experience. I am inclined to view Odorannus’ letter to William in this way. Because he viewed himself as being falsely accused, his study of canon law bent towards his own experience.

eleventh-century trend of making use of texts to address a potentially hostile audience. Recall, from Chapter One, Odorannus' citation of princess Theudechild's epitaph in his origin story for Saint Pierre-le-Vif. He referred to it in order to deter threats from those who might encroach upon the monastery's property.⁴⁰ In the case of the canonical collection for Abbot William, the hostile audience was comprised of Odorannus' contemporary accusers. Odorannus could deflect the objections of these critics by referencing other texts, namely, canons.

The letter to William demonstrates that Odorannus expressed his concerns both directly, through forthright address, and indirectly, through quotation of well-established authorities. Citation and indirection were favourite maneuvers for medieval scholars in deflecting authorial responsibility.⁴¹ Odorannus was self-conscious and purposeful in applying this rhetorical strategy. An example appears in the fourth text in his compilation, a letter to the monk Evrardus in response to three theological questions. Odorannus prefaced one of his responses, concerning the origin of the soul, by writing:

... in order not to furnish any occasions of murmuring for those who bear envy toward me and who amuse themselves personally in speaking wrongfully of me, I will offer [this response] by taking shelter, successively, under the names of the authors whom I shall cite.⁴²

Odorannus went on to reference Gregory the Great and Isidore of Seville, and he included a lengthy excerpt (extensively glossed) from the *Apotheosis*, a theological poem by the fourth-

⁴⁰ Chapter One, page 17.

⁴¹ For an examination of the method of indirection, not by letter-writers, but by cartulary writers, see Patrick Geary, "Medieval Archivists as Authors: Social Memory and Archival Memory," in Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, eds., *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory* (Ann Arbor, 2005), 106–13. Paul Dutton has noted certain "strategies of indirection" by which authors of dream literature in the Carolingian period would remove themselves from their narratives, which often contained criticism of political authorities, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, 1994), 77, and *passim*. See also Dutton, "Whispering Secrets to a Dark Age," in idem, *Charlemagne's Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (New York, 2004), 129–50.

⁴² Odorannus, *Capitulum IV*, 136–39: "ne, modum epistule excedens, emulis qui, dum mihi detrahunt, semetipsos illudunt, susurrandi occasionem prebeam, prescriptis auctorum nominibus separatim subnectam."

century Christian writer Prudentius.⁴³ Odorannus was clearly mindful of the possibility that a partisan readership—an “envious” audience—might be dissatisfied with his responses to Evrardus. He therefore called upon respected theologians in the Latin Christian tradition to lighten his burden of authorial accountability. Odorannus’ forthright presentation of this method of citation was a way of anticipating objections to his work, which he considered certain to arise. Indeed, he claimed that the audience was already antagonistic, regardless of their reactions.

Odorannus’ judgment of others as “envious” is an important manifestation of his self-consciousness. By means of this characterization of his enemies, Odorannus was himself shaping his authorial reputation as a persecuted monk in an adverse social setting. He used this description both for the conspiring brethren whose plots, so Odorannus wrote, were the reason for his expulsion, and also to characterize the potential readers who might take issue with his response to Evrardus. Moreover, he applied this rhetorical strategy in the prologue and preface to his compilation, in which he acknowledged envy as a threat not to his person, but to his texts. He wrote in his prologue that he hoped his works might be useful to those who could read them “without being tormented by envy” (*absque scrupulo invidiae*),⁴⁴ and in his preface explained that he had compiled his writings “so that they might not perish by chance due to the malice of envious men” (*ne forte invidorum astu presentia opuscula deperirent*).⁴⁵

Though these defensive proclamations are important indicators of the way Odorannus viewed his audience, it was by no means unusual for medieval authors to defend their work by ascribing the sin of envy to their critics. Bridget Balint has demonstrated that this practice was especially prevalent in the later eleventh and twelfth century, partly due to new exposure to

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 138–47.

⁴⁴ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1.

⁴⁵ Odorannus, *Incipit argumentum hujus operis*, 74–5.

Ovidian vocabulary, partly because the intellectual climate increasingly demanded the protection of one's own reputation against detractors.⁴⁶ Perhaps the best-known purveyor of this rhetorical strategy was Peter Abelard (1079–1142), the highly controversial ecclesiastic and autobiographer. Abelard's engagement with *invidia* was but one of his many self-conscious and highly defensive authorial acts that have made him a recurring focal point of scholarly examinations of the self in medieval Europe. Balint writes: "So many writers, most of whom were far less provoking in their behavior than Abelard was, accused their critics of envy that it became a commonplace of contemporary intellectual discourse."⁴⁷ It is notable that, while Odorannus was a product of the turn of the millennium, he may also be considered among these later writers who were increasingly concerned with their reputations as authors.

Envy appears in writings contemporary to Odorannus, often functioning in the same self-conscious way as in his work. One example is the case of Guido of Arezzo (c. 991–1033), a prominent monk, who was expelled from his monastery apparently because of the innovative method he had devised for teaching music there. In exile, he wrote to his fellow monk Michael, who was in a similar situation: "Thus you see me banished in a distant land, and yourself suffocated by the bonds of the envious so that you cannot even breathe."⁴⁸ It was because of their

⁴⁶ Bridget K. Balint, "Envy in the Intellectual Discourse of the High Middle Ages," in Richard Newhauser, ed., *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals* (Leiden, 2007), 41–55. See also Frederick Tupper, "The Envy Theme in Prologues and Epilogues," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 16 (1917): 551–72; John F. Benton, "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality," in Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1982), 272, who notes that countless medieval authors "ascribe their misfortunes, not to their own weaknesses, but to the envy of their rivals."

⁴⁷ Balint, "Envy," 42. For Abelard's engagement with envy, see Michael Clanchy, "Documenting the Self: Abelard and the Individual in History," *Historical Research* 76 (2003): 294; Constant J. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard: Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France* (New York, 1999), 33–4, 93–4; Sarah Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), 66–72.

⁴⁸ Guido of Arezzo, *Epistola ad Michahalem*, in *Guido d'Arezzo's Regule Rithmice, Prologus in antiphonarium, and Epistola ad Michahalem*, ed. and trans. Dolores Pesce (Ottawa, 1999), 440–41. Henri Villetard noted the parallel between Odorannus and Guido in "Odoranne de Sens et son œuvre musicale," in *Comptes rendus, rapports et vœux du*

valuable work that “envious” monks had turned against them. The same was true of Rodulfus Glaber (985–1047), who blamed the destruction of his work at Saint Germain of Auxerre on a fellow monk, who had influenced the brethren with “the venom of his envy” for Rodulfus’ skill in making stone inscriptions.⁴⁹ For ecclesiastics who viewed themselves as being persecuted by other monks, accusing opponents of envy seems to have been a preferred way to explain this adversity.

Invidere means “to envy,” but also “to look upon with an evil eye,” a nuance which underscores the point that those who accused their critics of *invidia* were aware of the presence of an audience; of portraying themselves as innocent under hostile observation.⁵⁰ Rodulfus Glaber emphasized the visual danger of envying someone when he reported that his enemy lost his eyesight as a punishment for this sin.⁵¹ Accusing someone of envy brought the focus simultaneously onto oneself (the envied) and on the audience (the envious person or people). Sarah Spence has contended that “while envy is unequivocally a vice, being envied carries with it a valence of virtue.”⁵² I would suggest that in shaping his fictive, hypothetical audience as envious, Odorannus was asserting his innocence and the virtue of his work in the face of whatever objection might be brought against him or his compilation. Any criticisms his accusers might put forth would be necessarily unjust, sinful, and by extension, utterly invalid.

Congrès Parisien et Régional de Chant liturgique et de Musique d’église (Paris, 1912), 63, and in *Office de Saint Savinien*, 32.

⁴⁹ Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, ed. and trans. John France, (Oxford, 1989), 226–27.

⁵⁰ Note that the root verb of *invidere* is *videre*, “to see.” On envy and its “visual” aspect, see Balint, “Envy,” 43; F. N. M. Diekstra, “The Art of Denunciation: Medieval Moralists on Envy and Detraction,” in Richard Newhauser, ed., *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Toronto, 2005), 445–46; Matthew Shoaf, “The Heart, the Eyes and Medieval Envy,” *Micrologus: Natura, Scienze e Società Medievali* 11 (2003): 213–28; Mireille Vincent-Cassy, “L’envie au Moyen Age,” *Annales E. S. C.* (1980): 253–71. See also Vasiliki Limberis, “The Eyes Infected by Evil: Basil of Caesarea’s Homily, *On Envy*,” *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991): 163–84, which shows that envy could be associated with the notion of the “evil eye” in a Greek-language context also. Envy had not always been a cardinal sin. On its antique and medieval development, see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, MI, 1952).

⁵¹ Rodulfus Glaber, *Histories*, 228–29.

⁵² Spence, *Texts and the Self*, 71.

Odorannus took care to distinguish between the envy of his detractors and the charity of those who were kind to him, or who would be a benevolent audience for his work.⁵³ Securing friends seems to have been as important in the maneuvers of authorial self defence as condemning enemies. In his letter to Evrardus in which he referenced envious critics, Odorannus expressed his hope that Evrardus would not disagree like the others: “may [my opinion] not move against me your affection, which is very sweet to me” (*dulcissimam mihi caritatem tuam non moveat*).⁵⁴ Having already established that he had detractors, Odorannus called upon Evrardus as a friend to ensure a sympathetic reading of his work. By doing so, he presumed two audiences: one was comprised of critical, “envious” readers, and the other was a “charitable” audience of friends. A parallel example of this process is evident in a letter written by Goswin of Mainz in the 1060s to his student Walcher. After noting the presence of an audience of envious slanderers, Goswin remarked: “whatever I have said in these polemics that is excellent, elegant, amiable, applies to you; and whatever is harsh, abrasive, biting, to my detractors.”⁵⁵ This is a striking example of the writer’s anticipation of a divergent readership. Such focus on audience always refers back to the individual writer, which is evident in Odorannus’ description of his own authorial intent in the preface to his compilation. He left (*reliquit*) his works, he explained, “for the love of charity” (*amore caritatis*).⁵⁶ With his compositions, he hoped to nurture the foundational Christian virtue of charity, which he had so admired in Abbot William’s hospitality, and which he sought as an abiding characteristic of the friendly audience for his texts.

⁵³ On the medieval *invidia/caritas* binary, see Spence, *Texts and the Self*, 69.

⁵⁴ Odorannus, *Capitulum IV*, 138–39.

⁵⁵ Goswin of Mainz, “The Letter of Goswin of Mainz to His Student Walcher (ca. 1065),” in C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), 354.

⁵⁶ Odorannus, *Incipit argumentum*, 74–5.

Historians usually assign the golden age of “friendship” in the Middle Ages to the late eleventh and twelfth century. By contrast, the period from about 850 to 1050 has been called the “eclipse” of friendship in the monastic milieu, with community harmony rather than personal intimacy being the chief focus of relationships.⁵⁷ It is difficult to place Odorannus’ effusive expressions of friendship under the shadow of this alleged eclipse. Take, for example, a vivid letter he wrote to the monk Robert, explaining musical tones:

May friendship truly be the association of souls, oh reverent brother; the perfect charity of your soul, which is sweeter to me than the sweetest honey, attests to it; that which not only was unashamed of me in the persecution that I recently suffered, but which, moreover, has made the ever-rigorous Judge benevolent on my behalf—so I hope—by often pouring forth tears from the deepest recesses of your pious heart.⁵⁸

Here, Odorannus linked friendship to his banishment from Saint Pierre-le-Vif. He saw his ideal friend as being completely charitable, to the extent that this friend would remain faithful and commiserate with him throughout his time of trial. Robert did not become ashamed, but prayed rather for the salvation of Odorannus’ soul. What one can read between the lines of this passage are not only the praiseworthy traits of a true *amicus*, but also the appreciation for Robert’s friendship that Odorannus gained due to his exile.⁵⁹ Certainly he felt the need for intercession on his behalf, as this was a daily commonplace contributing to the stability of monastic life. The more striking pronouncement is his gratitude that Robert had not become ashamed of him in his

⁵⁷ Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350–1250* (Kalamazoo, 1988), 135. McGuire contends that over the eleventh century friendship gradually became “a major theme of monastic life” (227), reaching its height not among the traditional Benedictine monks, but among the Cistercians.

⁵⁸ Odorannus, *Capitulum V*, 150–51: “Quod vere amicitia sit animorum societas, testator, reverende frater, dulcior mihi melle dulcissimo, perfectissima tui animi caritas, quae me in tribulatione nuper posito non solum non erubuit, verum etiam ex pii cordis intimo lacrymas sepe fundendo et frequenter supernae majestati hostiam laudis immolando, semper tremendum iudicem, ut spero, mihi placatum reddidit.”

⁵⁹ See Brian Briggs, “*Expulsio, Proscriptio, Exilium*: Exile and Friendship in the Writings of Osbert of Clare,” in *Exile in the Middle Ages*, 140, demonstrating that exile caused Osbert of St. Clare (d. c. 1158) to appreciate friendship, and that exile could even become an occasion for friendship.

disgrace. It is evident that Odorannus viewed his banishment from Saint Pierre-le-Vif as a serious threat to his name. By means of such affective words to Robert, he may have intended to reaffirm a much-needed social bond after having experienced a time of personal trial with his community.

The Shared Nature of Letters as a Condition of Self and Community

The fact that Odorannus had friends in other monastic communities demonstrates a certain breadth of the social network that attached him to people outside Saint Pierre-le-Vif. The letter to Abbot William of Saint Denis suggests that this was especially the case after Odorannus' period of exile. Letters were very closely linked to medieval notions of friendship, a relationship that became a major aspect of Latin epistolography in the early eleventh century, with the development of the cathedral schools.⁶⁰ The friendship in medieval letters was not, however, an impartial manifestation of interpersonal intimacy. It also displayed an important social and even a political bond that could denote mutual responsibilities as much as a personal relationship.⁶¹ This is not to say that we should exclude any real emotion from Odorannus' articulations of friendship, but in many ways these expressions were as much rhetorical tools as were the accusations of his detractors.⁶² He sought the friendly bonds which would help his tenuous social situation.

Odorannus' consciousness of an audience was necessarily conditioned by the public nature of monastic letters. Jean Leclercq and Giles Constable among others have emphasized that the

⁶⁰ McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 187. See also Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (New York, 1972), 96–107, who shows the link between friendship and the letter form, and that developing friendships was an integral part of “discovering” one’s identity.

⁶¹ See Julian Haseldine, “Epistolography,” in F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg, eds., *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, D.C., 1996), 652. More generally, see, for example, Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2004).

⁶² The modern historiographical question of the relationship between emotion and rhetoric is contentious. For a recent, interesting example of how historians can analyze emotions, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2006), as well as a review of this book by Geoffrey Koziol in *Medieval Review* (2006), <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.baj9928.0801.004>>, accessed March 20, 2009.

medieval reception of letters was shared; consequently, authors wrote mindful of how their letters might be received by a given community and, later, preserved and collected.⁶³ By and large, therefore, medieval epistolographers directed their writing not only to whatever Robert, Evrardus, or William they might be addressing, but also to a broader readership. In Odorannus' letter to Robert on musical tones, he showed his concern for the open reception of his writing, noting the possibility that his work might "fall among the hands of my enviers" (*devenerit in emulorum manibus*), and that these hostile readers might "mock it in public" (*publice subsannaverint*).⁶⁴ Robert was a monk like Odorannus, so this "public" may have been the brethren within Robert's own monastery. Such cloistered communities were part of the context of persecution that seems to have shaped Odorannus' defensiveness. Virginia Burrus has argued that, in the charged environment of late antiquity in which Christians negotiated heresy and orthodoxy, the epistolary debate between Saints Jerome and Augustine was affected by the public circulation of each of their letters. Burrus termed this self-conscious writing the "performance of orthodoxy," given that both Augustine and Jerome were trying to defend their own rectitude in doctrinal matters, almost, so Augustine suggested, as actors performing for an audience.⁶⁵ The instability of the early eleventh century was somewhat parallel to the world of doctrinal controversy in which Jerome and Augustine "performed." For Odorannus as well, there was a fine line between orthodoxy and heresy, and this balance seems paradoxically to have been most precarious within the monastery

⁶³ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, 178; Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (Turnhout, 1976), 11; idem, "Monastic Letter Writing in the Middle Ages," *Filologia mediolatina: rivista della fondazione ezio franceschini* 11 (2004): 22. See also Haseldine, "Epistolography," 650. More generally on letters, see Carol Dana Lanham, "Writing Instruction from Late Antiquity to the Twelfth Century," in James J. Murphy, ed., *A Short History of Writing Instruction from Ancient Greece to Modern America*, second ed. (Mahwah, NJ, 2001), 110–17.

⁶⁴ Odorannus, *Capitulum V*, 200–1.

⁶⁵ Virginia Burrus, "'In the Theater of This Life': The Performance of Orthodoxy in Late Antiquity," in William E. Klingshirm and Mark Vessey, eds., *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 80–96.

itself. After all, it had been Odorannus' Benedictine brothers—the very people with whom he would ideally have lived in peace—who had apparently accused him. Odorannus wrote with an understanding that his letters would come under the gaze of a scrutinizing audience.

Using a variety of rhetorical strategies in his correspondence, Odorannus formulated an audience, which was an effort in asserting his own authorial name. As I noted above, the fact that the letter fragment to Ayrfredus and Hugh was added by one of Odorannus' disciples probably indicates that Odorannus had deliberately excluded it from his compilation.⁶⁶ He may have viewed it as potentially damaging to his posthumous reputation.⁶⁷ The letter was an ideal form for the pursuit of defending one's name, since it called for the use of the first person, a conversant tone, and personal attitudes.⁶⁸ Odorannus' modern editors, concluding their introduction, note the author's "personal intervention" throughout his collection as he expressed his opinions.⁶⁹ In doing so, Odorannus was identifying closely with his audience of charitable friends and envious detractors. The defence of his own concerns through the preemptive characterization of his audience became a personalized interaction between self and community.

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⁶⁶ Cf. Mary Garrison, "Send More Socks': On Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters," in Marco Mostert, ed., *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), 77: "texts and collections were vulnerable to selection and omission at every stage of recopying."

⁶⁷ Cf. pages 41–2 above. The collections of Jerome and Augustine's letters each assert the superior rectitude of their respective authors, suggesting a partisan outlook on the part of the compilers. See Ralph Hennings, "The Correspondence Between Augustine and Jerome," *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993): 303–10.

⁶⁸ It is often by reading letters that modern scholars attempt to approach medieval persons as individuals. See Benton, "Consciousness of Self," 265–66; Clanchy, "Documenting the Self," 293. See also Constable, *Letters and Letter Collections*, 33, on the increase of letters and letter collections in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when such texts and collections "took on a more personal and self-revelatory tone" and, in some cases, "an autobiographical character."

⁶⁹ Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 68.

In the estimation of his modern editors, Odorannus, though extremely self-conscious, was always a faithful monk.⁷⁰ While I agree with this judgment, I would suggest that the tension between his role as an author and his status as a devout Benedictine should not be understated. His letters include frequent and fervent—if conventional—calls for prayer from his correspondents. One of his letters was addressed to monks at Saint Germain of Auxerre. In closing, he wrote:

I beseech your holiness, beloved brothers, so that, having pity on me, you may remember me—I who struggle in the pitching tides of this age—by dint of the oars of your prayers, so that I might be worthy, with God’s grace, to reach eternal salvation.⁷¹

While Odorannus again took care to portray himself as a hapless victim of the world’s inconstancy, he expressed the necessity of prayerful, steady brethren who could help him attain salvation. He was keenly aware that the purpose of his earthly life was to reach Heaven, and he trusted the devotion of his fellow cenobites to bring this about. At the same time, the social tensions he experienced with monks roiled these “pitching tides” in Odorannus’ world. As his career made manifest, monks could be both salutary and deleterious for one another.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 68–9.

⁷¹ Odorannus, *Capitulum VI*, 210–11: “His ita dispositis, humili mente deposco sanctitatem vestram, amantissimi fratres, ut, mei miserendo, orationum vestrarum remigiis me in salo hujus labentis evi laborantem sustentetis, quatinus pervenire merear, auctore Deo, ad portum æternæ salutis.” Note a similar call for prayer in a letter of the controversial tenth-century cleric Rather of Verona, *The Complete Works of Rather of Verona*, trans. Peter L. D. Reid (Binghamton, NY, 1991), 216: “I pray that the anchor of your prayers may hold me, wretchedly tossing among the shoals of this world, while you expect me to founder from my incapacity; only let not God’s pity disdain to hear the sighs of a sinner.”

CHAPTER THREE - *Approaching Death*

What did it mean to grow old and die in a monastery? After all, monks spent their lives pondering death. This did not mean that medieval monasteries were places for unduly morbid thoughts. Rather, it meant that death was the most important spiritual consideration for a Christian, for it was only in the final separation from earthly life that one could truly begin to live in the presence of God. In a way, then, Christians who were living were always supposed to be close to death.¹ But a human life is a complex process characterized by change—even the apparently immutable life of a monk. Not every monk would have come to the same understanding of death and salvation. One’s earthly concerns were not necessarily dissolved because death was at hand, but may even have become more immediate in senescence than they otherwise would have been.

In the waning years of a life full of a variety of experience, Odorannus collected some of his works and presented them to his abbot. In this chapter, I situate Odorannus’ compilation within the context of its initial assembly; the works were gathered together when their author was somewhat decrepit and weary, but also at a time when liturgists (Odorannus among them) were emphasizing the importance of yearly communal prayer for the dead. While aging may have been physically onerous, monasteries in this period sought to care for the dying and to liturgically remember their lives. In such a commemorative environment, monks who were approaching death could be sure that they would not be forgotten. Odorannus’ very act of compilation suggests his near-death, temporal desire to be remembered. Thus, in the case of this monk of Sens, aging

¹ On the Christian notion in the Middle Ages that all living people were merely travelers in a “strange” world, see Gerhart B. Ladner, “*Homo viator*: Mediaeval Ideas on Alienation and Order,” *Speculum* 42 (1967): 233–59.

and dying should not be cast in an eternal, idealized monastic mold, but understood as a poignant time of change for Odorannus' relationship both with his earthly community and with his own history as an author.

Aging and Approaching Death in a Monastery

While Odorannus' works were written at various times, he compiled them in 1045, late in life. The brief preface at the beginning of his compilation, as well as the "warning to the reader" (*ammonitio lectoris*) that concludes it, describe the author-compiler in terms of his infirmity and age. In the preface, Odorannus wrote: "Beginning to convalesce from a long and very grave malady of the feet, Odorannus, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord, 1045, nearly sixty years old, has gathered in one body the present works."² Intending the reader to identify him as the author and compiler of his writings, Odorannus referred specifically to his age and physical condition, complaining of bodily discomfort and characterizing himself by ill-health. Again, at the end of his compilation, Odorannus wrote in a short poem that, though his "spirit surely [was] full of vigour" (*vigente ingenio*), his eye was "already weakening and his small joints growing cold" (*caligante oculo et frigescente articulo*).³ He restated what was written in the preface: "Odorannus, a monk nearing sixty years old, wrote up this present book" (*Hunc ... Librum Odorannus / Pæne*

² Odorannus, *Incipit argumentum hujus operis*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier, et al. (Paris, 1972), 74–5: "Convalescens aliquantulum a diutino et gravissimo pedum incommodo, Odorannus, Incarnationis dominicae anno I.XL.V, etatis vero suae fere LXmo [...] presentia opuscula [...] in uno corpore collegit." Joseph Perrin, "Le martyrium de saint Savinien, premier évêque de Sens," *Bulletin de la société archéologique de Sens* 31 (1917): 134, noted the "personal accent" in this preface of Odorannus as an old monk demonstrating confidence in his œuvre. The age of sixty was generally considered "old age" in the Middle Ages. See Shulamith Shahar, "Who Were Old in the Middle Ages?" *The Society for the Social History of Medicine* 6 (1993): 313–41.

³ Odorannus, *Finis hujus operis et ammonitio lectoris*, 266–67. By *articulo*, Odorannus probably referred to the joints of his writing hand. I have translated it as "small joints," but it could also be translated as "fingers".

sexagenarius / Exaravit monachus).⁴ Clearly the physical aspects of age were a chief concern for Odorannus as an author. He associated his decrepit state with his act of compilation: the future reader should be quite aware that the author-compiler had been a weary old man.

Odorannus seems to have understood old age not merely as a way of describing himself, but as one stage of life along a broader trajectory of spiritual and physical change.⁵ In his prologue, he quoted a lengthy passage from Ecclesiastes on youth and old age. Before examining this excerpt, it is important to note that the first part of the manuscript containing Odorannus' writings is missing,⁶ leaving only a fraction of the prologue to his compilation extant. This fragment begins in the midst of the quotation from Ecclesiastes. The biblical passage urges youths to remember God before their life comes to a close. It provides a lengthy list of earthly things and their inevitable transience, and concludes by referring to the time when "dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The emphasis of this section of the Old Testament is that youths should enjoy the world, because life will change (for the worse) and death will grow nearer. The delights of early life, however, should in no way prevent youths from recognizing God's imminent judgment (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

Odorannus included several glosses on the Ecclesiastes passage that demonstrate his understanding of the admonition to youths in terms of physical age.⁷ As the modern editors have

⁴ *Ibid.* See also Odorannus, *Capitulum X*, 250–51, a letter to the archbishop Gilduin in which Odorannus referred to himself as "stifled by the very great infirmity of his body" (*maxima corporis invalidudine detentus*).

⁵ For conceptions of the life cycle during the Middle Ages, see Elizabeth Sears, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle* (Princeton, 1986).

⁶ See Fabrice Delivré, "Les chroniques de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif au miroir de la primatie sénonais: enquête sur les manuscrits d'Odorannus, du Pseudo-Clarius et de Geoffroy de Courlon," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 163 (2005): 487–89, who suggests that Odorannus' chronicle was one of three texts brought into a Renaissance debate on the primacy of the archbishops of Sens, and that a later account of the translation of Savinian and Potentian had been added to the manuscript of Odorannus' works, but subsequently removed, presumably along with part of Odorannus' writing.

⁷ Recall that the modern editors consider this manuscript, including its glosses and marginalia, to be an autograph; Robert-Henri Bautier, et al., "Introduction," in Odorannus, *Opera omnia*, 29–36, and my Introduction, page 1.

observed through an examination of these interlinear notes, Odorannus read the verses “as a physiological description of old age,” drawing comparisons between the earthly things in the passage and the bodily aspects of aging.⁸ For example, he added a note about feet swelling with subcutaneous humour (*humore subcutaneo tumescunt sive incrassantur pedes*).⁹ It is evident that this aging monk was keenly aware of the burdensome physical changes that accompanied senescence. With his interlinear glosses, he connected these corporeal alterations to the more abstract, worldly transformations one would encounter in departing from youth.

Monasteries acknowledged physical human development, but seniority rather than biological age was the important factor in the hierarchy of obedience and the division of roles that monks observed. The Benedictine *Rule* addresses the issue of rank at several points. Chapter 63 outlines the protocol for how junior and senior monks should treat each other. Juniors owe respect and obedience to the more experienced monks, and the seniors are to be loving toward their newer brethren.¹⁰ Observing the responsibility and respect allotted to senior monks at Cluny, Isabelle Cochelin has argued that up to the turn of the twelfth century seniority was seen “as a significant indication of the religious value of an individual.”¹¹ Benedictine social organization thus favoured seniority as the signal of a monk’s developing position within his community.

⁸ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1 n. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁰ Benedict, *Rule*, 63, trans. Terrence G. Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, (Collegeville, MN, 1996), 515. Chapter 71 pertains directly to obedience, 580–81.

¹¹ Isabelle Cochelin, “Étude sur les hiérarchies monastiques: le prestige de l’ancienneté et son éclipse à Cluny au XIe siècle,” *Revue Mabillon* 72 (2000): 35. See also Sébastien Barret, “L’individu en action: Quelques réflexions autour des coutumes et statuts clunisiens (XIe–XIIIe siècles),” in Gert Melville and Markus Shürer, eds., *Das Eigene und das Ganze: Zum Individuellen im Mittelalterlichen Religiosentum* (Münster, 2002), 547–48.

At the same time, chronological old age naturally continued to exist behind the cloister walls as a personalizing feature among monks.¹² The distinction of age could pertain to physical differences, but also to certain merits of character that came with time. Chapter 37 of the *Rule* stipulates that alimentary indulgences should be granted to children and the elderly, due to their physical fragility.¹³ Furthermore, a “wise old monk” is to take up the office of porter for the monastery. He would be able to greet people properly due to his experience, and to remain stable in the position because of his age.¹⁴ A ninth-century commentary on the *Rule* emphasized “that it is not the age of the body that must be looked for in the porter, but that which comes from wisdom and understanding.”¹⁵ What was important about a monk’s age in his various roles in the monastery seems primarily to have been a moral superiority that had developed over the years.

One instance in Odorannus’ collected writings demonstrates such respect for hierarchical difference among monks. In his letter to Evrardus, Odorannus took care to note that the latter monk preceded him “by age and merit” (*ætate et merito*) and referred to him as his “reverend father” (*reverende pater*).¹⁶ Their hierarchical relationship, structured in terms of seniority, factored into Odorannus’ rhetorical choice of how to address his correspondent. By the time he himself was an older monk compiling his works, Odorannus would have gradually reached an altered position in the inner workings of the monastery. Having been at Saint Pierre-le-Vif longer perhaps than many of the brethren, he was probably well known not only because of his

¹² Adalbert de Vogüé explained the parallel between seniority and natural old age as a balance between idealism and realism for monks, *Reading Saint Benedict: Reflections on the Rule*, trans. Colette Friedlander (Kalamazoo, 1994), 296.

¹³ Benedict, *Rule*, 37, trans. Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 309. Also on the *Rule*’s handling of old age, see Shulamith Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages: ‘Winter clothes us in shadow and pain.’* trans. Yael Lotan (London, 1997), 103–5.

¹⁴ Benedict, *Rule*, 66, trans. Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 556.

¹⁵ Smaragdus of Saint Mihiel, *Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict*, trans. David Barry (Kalamazoo, 2007), 516.

¹⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum IV*, 134–35. The title of “reverend father” was stipulated in Benedict, *Rule*, 63, trans. Kardong, 515, as the proper way for junior monks to refer to their seniors.

prominence, talent and occasional notoriety, but also because he was in a position worthy of respect in the monastic hierarchy.

We have seen in the first two chapters of this essay that Odorannus experienced and accomplished much in his lifetime. I would suggest that his decrepitude and awareness of death's approach offered an occasion for thinking back upon his years.¹⁷ Recall, for example, the final section of Odorannus' chronicle for Saint Pierre-le-Vif, in which the monk's reflections on Robert the Pious' reign and on Saint Savinian's glory took a somewhat autobiographical turn. Odorannus sought to memorialize his own role in the community's history by underscoring his construction of the reliquary of Savinian and his witnessing of several miracles that surrounded the translation of saintly relics.¹⁸ Odorannus' inclusion of this work as he compiled his writings in 1045 likely offered him an opportunity to remember these events once more. Given the complexity of Odorannus' experience that may be inferred from his texts, and the references to age and death in his prologue and preface, it seems that he approached the end of life with his own concerns close in mind. Clearly, Georges Minois' suggestion that "[m]onks were not born; they did not die; they subsisted eternally, because they were no longer individuals, they were a community"¹⁹ is a generalization that is wide of the mark; Odorannus' old age and approach to death prompted reflection that was distinctly personal.

¹⁷ For a discussion of old age in medieval sources that emphasizes the reminiscent aspect of senescence, see Juanita Feros Ruys, "Medieval Latin Meditations on Old Age: Rhetoric, Autobiography, and Experience," in Albrecht Classen, ed., *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic* (Berlin, 2007), 171–200.

¹⁸ Odorannus, *Capitulum II*, 100–13. Cf. Chapter One. A striking comparative example of late-life reminiscence is evident in the fifth book of Rodulfus Glaber's *Five Books of the Histories*, ed. and trans. John France (Oxford, 1989), 216–53, especially 216–29, in which this troubled monk moved from scattered descriptions of the world in the preceding books to a highly personal account of visitations from the devil, spurring himself and others to self-examination in the face of death. See Dennis M. Kratz, "Monsters and Monstrous Visions: The Art of Rodulfus Glaber's *Historiarum Libri Quinque*," in Michael W. Herren, et al., eds., *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century* (Turnhout, 2002), 1:508–19.

¹⁹ Georges Minois, *History of Old Age: From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, trans. Sarah Hanbury Tenison (Cambridge, 1989), 166.

Odorannus' biblical reference to youth and old age also serves to illustrate the edifying purpose of his writing and his act of compilation. Quoting Ecclesiastes to demonstrate the transience of temporal things, he stressed the urgency of living well—while it was still possible—in order to gain salvation. He expressed to Ermenaldus the necessity of helping one's neighbour to attain eternal life, “not only by showing him our good actions, but also by our writings and our discourse” (*non solum bonorum actuum exhibitione, verum etiam scriptis et dictis*).²⁰ Here, Odorannus implicitly affirmed the moral rectitude of all his writing, asserting the value of his work as instructive for readers who, like all Christians, were seeking salvation. An important part of this lifelong quest for God was age, because by meditating on the transition from youth to maturity, one could better understand the fleeting nature of this world and the imminent approach of death. As David Gary Shaw has observed, death was “a kind of narrative pivot—a great, sure fact upon which men and women could concentrate their minds, and sometimes convert them, giving themselves more fully to the Christian life and its powerful moral narratives.”²¹ If Odorannus' collected writings could stimulate his readers to ponder death in such a way, then these works were indeed worth compiling.

Confraternity and Liturgical Commemoration of the Dead

Before moving into a discussion of the ritual surrounding dying, I wish to reiterate the seemingly obvious connection between old age and death. Certainly a monk could die at any time in his life, but it was most likely that a monk nearing death would be an infirm, old man, as

²⁰ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1.

²¹ David Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York, 2005), 2. For the metaphorical use of old age in another discursive circumstance, see Paul Edward Dutton, “A World Grown Old With Poets and Kings,” in idem, *Charlemagne's Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (New York, 2004), 151–67.

Odorannus described himself to be. As the Benedictine *Rule* instructed its followers, “[k]eep your eye on death every day.”²² This stipulation of disciplining one’s conscience would necessarily have been more of a reality for a sixty-year-old monk with sore feet.

As a liturgist, Odorannus understood and even suggested the ways death should be treated and commemorated in the monastery. The key liturgical treatise in his compilation proposed the formation of a confraternity, whose function would be to witness the sickness and dying of an individual member and to commemorate his death in the years to come. It should be stated that, while this work is attributed to Odorannus, it appears in the manuscript in a different hand. The modern compilation editors do not, however, doubt its authorship. Here, I follow the editors’ assumptions and consider Odorannus to be its author.²³ The prayer group proposed in this act of confraternity was to include monks, priests, and laypeople from the province of Sens, “joined by the bond of charity” (*conecti vinculo karitatis*) to the congregation of monks at Saint Pierre-le-Vif.²⁴ Odorannus suggested that if any member of the confraternity should become sick, the abbot and brothers would take great pains to visit him. On the occasion of the invalid’s death, seven masses were to be said “for the salvation of his soul” (*pro salute animae*).²⁵ In addition, the office would be sung in the monastic assembly for the deceased member of the confraternity. This charitable social network would hardly cease its attentions when someone died: one of the network’s chief functions would be to commemorate that death each year, the day after the feast of All Saint’s Day. This day of memorial prayer would include almsgiving and a charitable meal for

²² Benedict, *Rule*, 4, trans. Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 81.

²³ Bautier, et al., “Introduction,” 32, 54–5. Because both the treatise and its entry in the table of contents are in a different hand, one cannot say definitively if Odorannus wanted this work in his compilation or if it was later written into the manuscript containing his works. I proceed with the assumption that he was the author, though perhaps not the compiler, of this text.

²⁴ Odorannus, *Capitulum XII*, 260–61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the whole association.²⁶ Odorannus made it clear that the names of the departed were to be written down for a sub-deacon to read aloud at the altar, “so that this exhortation may have perpetual vigour” (*ut haec exortatio perpete vigeat*).²⁷ He thus emphasized the importance of written memory for the abiding recurrence of the feast. In short, the proposal sought to bring the brotherly love of the monastery to a wider spectrum of people, building up a community of individual members around the threefold process of sickness, death, and entry into salvation. Saint Pierre-le-Vif would, therefore, be a community that actively celebrated the most crucial moments in the life of a Christian.

Odorannus’ text corresponds to a wider context of liturgical development which featured a particular sensitivity to death. The formal feast of All Souls’ Day, the day after All Saints upon which Odorannus suggested prayers for the departed, was inaugurated in the early eleventh century under the auspices of Abbot Odilo of Cluny (994–1048). All Souls’ Day began around the year 1030, and it became a well known, widely practiced day of commemoration, one that continues to exist. This was but one of many developments by which Cluny was shaping the liturgical environment of the central Middle Ages.²⁸ Cluny had gained renown for its particularly lengthy and elaborate “liturgical day,” with monks spending a great deal of time chanting together

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ The compilation editors note the significance of this treatise for liturgical history, placing it within the context of Cluniac development: “Introduction,” 56, and Odorannus, *Capitulum XII*, 260–61 n. 2. The literature on Cluny’s liturgy is extensive. For the purposes of this chapter, I have generally restricted my references to those studies that are specifically about the Cluniac rituals surrounding dying, death, and commemoration in a confraternal context. On the establishment of All Souls’ Day as a feast, see Giles Constable, “Commemoration and Confraternity at Cluny During the Abbacy of Peter the Venerable,” in idem, *Cluny from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries* (Hampshire, 2000), X (254); Megan McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1994), 75–7; John Van Engen, “The ‘Crisis of Cenobitism’ Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050–1150,” *Speculum* 61 (1986): 293. Jacques Le Goff has argued that All Souls’ Day was a key “milestone” toward the establishment of the doctrine of purgatory, in his study *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1984), 125–27. Also on the commemoration of the dead at Cluny, see Joachim Wollasch, “Les obituaires, témoins de la vie clunisienne,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 22 (1979): 139–71.

in nearly constant prayer.²⁹ In the mid-tenth century, the influence of Cluny under Abbot Odo had reached Saint Pierre-le-Vif.³⁰ The liturgical treatise in Odorannus' compilation was likely influenced by innovations of Cluny from the tenth century, but also by this early eleventh-century establishment of a day on which all the dead would be commemorated. Odorannus was therefore taking part in a development particular to the eleventh century that sought the maintenance of vital bonds between people on this earth in a confraternal capacity and those who had already died. These changes in prayer ensured the enduring commemoration of an individual member of the community.

The ritual surrounding a monk's sickness and dying was chiefly a shared experience³¹; it was crucial that other confraternity members be present. Odorannus' liturgical treatise highlighted this key communal moment in one's life. If for any reason a brother could not visit an ailing member of the confraternity, it was important that he "pay him the consolation of fraternal charity" (*solatium fraternae karitatis illi persolvat*).³² Dying seems to have been a stage at which the caring presence of others was more immediately important than at other moments in one's life. As Frederick Paxton has emphasized for the early Middle Ages, death rituals were, above all else, rites of passage. The purpose of the actions involved was to assist the dying member with his separation from the earthly community and to see him well on his way to the heavenly

²⁹ See Irven M. Resnick, "Peter Damian on Cluny, Liturgy and Penance," *Journal of Religious History* 15 (1988): 61–75; Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1982), 93–8.

³⁰ See Henri Bouvier, *Histoire de l'église et de l'Ancien Archidiocèse de Sens* (Amiens, 1906), 1:311.

³¹ See Philippe Ariès, "The Reversal of Death: Changes in Attitudes Toward Death in Western Societies," *American Quarterly* 26 (1974): 539–40, emphasizing the public nature of pre-modern death. I have read Ariès' sometimes problematic conclusions with caution. One of the reasons his suggestions are troubling is his insistence on the public/private divide. He co-edited (with Georges Duby) a four-volume series on this topic, *A History of Private Life* (Cambridge, MA, 1987–91). See Janet Nelson's highly critical review of the ancient and medieval part of the series, "The Problematic in the Private," *Social History* 15 (1990): 355–64.

³² Odorannus, *Capitulum XII*, 262–63.

community.³³ With several people literally standing around the dying person, the process of bodily separation would have been striking; the members of the confraternity that Odorannus proposed would be witnesses to grave illness and, possibly, death. At the point in one's life when individual bodily and religious concerns were at their most prominent, the presence of the community was meant to allay these anxieties. Conversely, this important communal presence at one's death meant that the collective focus would be on one particular person in his decisive spiritual moment.³⁴ An aging monk who recognized the inevitability of his death would have taken part in these rituals. He would likely have understood and have come to appreciate the significance of a charitable communal presence in the face of death.

Prayer confraternities were social organizations geared toward strengthening those vital collective ties that would nurture a "good death," not only for monks, but for lay donors, family members, and others. Membership in a confraternity fostered an important social bond with the church. For laypeople and ecclesiastics alike, this alliance meant being part of a community that would be responsible for prayers upon one's death. Having one's name in the necrologies or obituaries would ensure this long-lasting commemoration, as Odorannus took care to note. Megan McLaughlin has observed that such prayers for the dead were "associative": they connected people in tangible ways. She emphasizes that, while putting a particular person's name in a necrology

³³ Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1990). See also idem, "Death by Customary at Eleventh-Century Cluny," in Susan Boynton and Isabelle Cochelin, eds., *From Dead of Night to End of Day: The Medieval Customs of Cluny* (Turnhout, 2005), 297–318. The abbey of Farfa had elaborate and well-documented customs for how the end of a monk's life was to be treated. See Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125* (Ithaca, 2006), 135–43.

³⁴ Induction into the monastery, in its emphasis on the idea of transition into a new life, was a ritual that similarly featured a balance between being communal and focusing on an individual member. See George Klawitter, "Dramatic Elements in Early Monastic Induction Ceremonies," in Clifford Davidson and John H. Stroupe, eds., *Drama in the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays*, second series (New York, 1991), 43–60.

brought focus upon the individual, the point was “to record [it] *among* other names.”³⁵ A confraternity member was therefore remembered by his personal identification, but was only one of many. Even in death, it was important to be around fellow people and to be remembered alongside others. Moreover, the confraternity itself, though a group, was a particular network among many like it. Confraternities therefore suggest a certain individuality, but at the communal rather than the personal level.

An ideal monastic death would see the dying monk surrounded by his brethren, and this death would be commemorated by intercessory prayers said by the monastic assembly. At the end of Odorannus’ proposal, there is a brief outline for how these prayers should occur. After the monks genuflected, they were to beseech heavenly pardon for the sins of the deceased. One of three programmatic formulas that Odorannus provided states: “We beseech you, all powerful and merciful Lord, grant pardon to all the faithful departed, and your indulgence to those living, so that by means of your largesse, we may each of us be worthy of achieving eternal life.”³⁶ This prayer emphasized the essential bond between the dying person and his community. Though one might be far from physical death, the new life that accompanied death was a constant concern in daily prayers. Both the dying person and the living community were in need of divine pardon. An example of prayerful concern for a deceased monk appears in a letter from the abbot Gauzlin of Fleury (1004–30) to a fellow abbot named Oliba. Gauzlin wrote in emotive language, expressing

³⁵ McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints*, 101. To my knowledge, McLaughlin is also the only author, with the obvious exception of Odorannus’ editors and the few others who have commented directly on Odorannus, who makes reference to Odorannus’ act of confraternity; *Consorting with Saints*, 89 n. 131. On the written records for prayers for the dead, see Dominique Iogna-Prat, “Les morts dans la comptabilité céleste des Clunisiens de l’an Mil,” in idem and Jean-Charles Picard, eds., *Religion et culture autour de l’an mil: royaume capétien et Lotharingie* (Paris, 1990), 55–69; Armando Petrucci, *Writing the Dead: Death and Writing Strategies in the Western Tradition*, trans. Michael Sullivan (Stanford, 1998), 44–53; Wollasch, “Les obituaires.”

³⁶ Odorannus, *Capitulum XII*, 262–63: “Præsta, quesumus, omnipotens et misericors Dominus, cunctis fidelibus defunctis veniam, viventibus indulgentiam, ut, te largiente, pariter ad vitam pervenire mereamur æternam.”

his community's grief over the passing of Bernard, a monk of Oliba's house: "May the death of your brother not afflict you," implored Gauzlin, "since you know that for all mortals this hour has been fixed in an irrevocable fashion" (*Nec vos fratris moestificet resolutio cum sciatis mortalibus hanc esse positam inrevocabilem oram*). Gauzlin also assured Oliba that his own community had already prayed for Bernard "just as for one of our brothers" (*veluti fratri nostro*).³⁷ Bernard's death was not an occasion for misery, since it was an inevitable stage of every man's life under God. Gauzlin's letter demonstrates the bonds of prayer that could join two ecclesiastical communities. As a subject for conventual prayer, Bernard was just as much a member of Gauzlin's monastic family as he was for that of Oliba. Prayers for the dead had the capacity to bring individuals, living and dead, into a wider social network. Dying thus signified one juncture in the relationship between self and community.

Perhaps because of the special social moment that death represents, scholars often consider medieval conceptions of death and intercession when attempting to approach the subjectivity of historical persons. Philippe Ariès structured his arguments about death along an axis of progression of individual self-consciousness. He claimed that in the central to late Middle Ages, the end of one's life became a "death of the self," or "one's own death," with emphasis moving away from the strictly communal concerns of death in earlier periods.³⁸ Although these contentions are somewhat too general and occasionally disdainful of early medieval thought, the broader idea of increasingly self-focused death seems to remain in scholarship on the central

³⁷ Appendix 2 in André de Fleury, *Vie de Gauzlin, abbé de Fleury. Vita Gauzlini Abbatis Floriacensis Monasterii*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier and Gillette Labory (Paris, 1969), 176–79. Translation mine.

³⁸ Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore, 1974), 27–52; idem, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York, 1981), 95–293. See also idem, "Reversal of Death."

Middle Ages.³⁹ While I am dissatisfied with any sharp divisions that scholars might impose between communal and individual concerns in relation to death, I view the proposed death rituals for Saint Pierre-le-Vif as indicative of strong communal bonds, rather than demonstrative of any inward-focused distinction of a dying monk from his group.

On the other hand, not all monks were the same, and this generalization can be applied to any period of the Middle Ages. Death would have been a different experience depending on a monk's character, stage in life, and position within his social sphere. As the first two chapters of this essay have highlighted, Odorannus had a prominent role in his community, a role that was both celebrated and controversial. I would suggest that for Odorannus the approach to salvation had much to do with his own life and experiences. The liturgical commemoration of the dead meant that each year he would be remembered among his fellow monks and other confraternity members. At the end of one of his letters, Odorannus inserted his name into a brief outline for prayer. He wrote: "From the gates of hell, Lord, deliver his soul. LET US PRAY: Lord, deliver the soul of your servant Odorannus from all the chains of his sins, so that, in the glory of the resurrection, he may live resurrected among your saints."⁴⁰ Unlike most of the requests for prayer that concluded his letters, this final statement was distinctly written as a responsorial supplication. It portrays Odorannus' sensitivity to the workings of communal prayer for the absolution of an individual monk. He wanted others to remember him in prayer in an organized fashion.

³⁹ With attention to individual prayers for the dead, see Le Goff, *Birth of Purgatory*, 125, 233; Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), 305, contending that notions of death and salvation became more "lonely" in the twelfth century. Cf. Brian Patrick McGuire, "Aelred's Attachments: Individual Growth in Community Life," in *Das Eigene und das Ganze*, 455, who notes Constable's contention, but emphasizes the communal aspect of salvation for the Cistercian abbot Aelred. See also Sharon Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* (Ithaca, 1991), 119–23.

⁴⁰ Odorannus, *Capitulum IV*, 148–49: "A porta inferi, erue, Domine, animam ejus. OREMUS: Solve, Domine, animam famuli tui Odoranni ab omni vinculo delictorum ut in resurrectionis gloria inter sanctos tuos resuscitatus respiret."

A Posthumous Textual Presence at Saint Pierre-le-Vif

It seems that Odorannus sought commemoration not only through the liturgy, but also through the reception of his texts. Perhaps by leaving writings for posterity, Odorannus hoped to ensure not only that he would be remembered, but also that he would be remembered in a particular way when monks included his name among so many others in prayer. Through the act of compilation, Odorannus engaged in a task of text preservation that was typically reserved to an author's disciples.⁴¹ It is therefore important to consider the personal choice that led to the conservation of these works. I wish to present Odorannus' act of compilation as an example of what Michael Clanchy has termed "documenting the self." Clanchy observes that keeping one's letters was the most familiar way to engage in this process by which an authorial "self" would be retained for posterity.⁴² Odorannus' collection also served to "document the self," for by gathering his works together Odorannus ensured that they would be remembered under his specific authorial name. For a better understanding of his principles of preservation, it is worth revisiting his "warning to the reader," cited above, in full. He wrote:

By the grace and disposition of the Creator, with his spirit surely full of vigour, but his eye already weakening, and his limbs growing cold, Odorannus, a monk nearing sixty years old, wrote up this present book. You who read it, pray for him.⁴³

⁴¹ For some interesting comments on notions of authorship and contexts of a particular author's texts being preserved in the Middle Ages, see E. P. Goldschmidt, *Medieval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print* (London, 1943), 86–121.

⁴² Michael Clanchy, "Documenting the Self: Abelard and the Individual in History," *Historical Research* 76 (2003): 293.

⁴³ Odorannus, *Finis hujus operis*, 266–67: "Auctore et gubernatore Deo / Hunc, licet vigente ingenio, / Tamen jam caligante oculo / Et frigescente articulo, / Librum Odorannus / Pœne sexagenarius / Exaravit monachus. / Vos qui legitis, / Orate pro eo."

Odorannus proffered his collected works to future readers with a request for prayer on his behalf. Knowing something now of the practical aspects of liturgical commemoration, we can understand Odorannus' appeal as a reference to those important prayers that monks would say for each other in life and after death. This was not an idle request, but one that would be fulfilled in the liturgical seasons of Saint Pierre-le-Vif's monks. The brothers who would pray for Odorannus' soul after he died were the same studious monks who (he presumed) would be reading his collected writings. It seems that Odorannus wanted to ensure that he would not be forgotten by his community.

The act of compiling one's own works is a curious one: for the modern reader, it raises the question of authorial self-consciousness in trying to preserve one's own texts. The preservation of letters and other texts in the Middle Ages was a very deliberate process. It was no trivial undertaking to collect one's own writings to ensure that future readers would have access to them.⁴⁴ Odorannus would have had to consider which of his texts would be most useful to others, and what things he wished especially to be preserved (and forgotten). Above all, the governing organizational principle for his compilation was the fact that he himself had written the texts collected therein.⁴⁵

The process of assembling one's works also seems to reveal for us a somewhat autobiographical moment for an author reconsidering his works. A much more prominent and problematic example of this procedure is Augustine's *Retractationes*.⁴⁶ Augustine (354–430) did

⁴⁴ See Mary Garrison, "'Send More Socks': On Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters," in Marco Mostert, ed., *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), 74–5.

⁴⁵ I have not observed any striking pattern or logic behind the internal organization of Odorannus' works. They are neither chronologically nor thematically grouped. It is, however, probably significant that he began his compilation with the life of Theudechild and the chronicle for Saint Pierre-le-Vif. This placement affirmed his compilation as a work whose aim was the good of his own monastery. Moreover, it suggests that Odorannus identified himself and his work with Saint Pierre-le-Vif. His particular abbey in Sens was a crucial aspect of his authorial identity. See Chapter One, pages 18–19.

⁴⁶ Augustine, *The Retractions*, trans. Mary Inez Bogan (Washington, D.C., 1968).

not compile his works, but around the year 427 he looked back upon his writings to reassess their content according to his current state of mind. As Meredith Eller notes, while Augustine's "*Confessiones* is the personal history of the soul of a transformed sinner; the *Retractationes* is a critical summary of the growth of his thought as revealed in his writings."⁴⁷ I do not wish to draw an artificial comparison between the highly self-conscious project of revision that Augustine undertook and Odorannus' act of compilation. The essential idea, however, of giving credence to one's own authorship by recognizing its history is the same—Odorannus noted that the works he had collected were "among numerous writings that I have written at various times" (*ex multis quae diversis temporibus peregi*).⁴⁸ Might we also view Odorannus' interlinear glosses on his autograph manuscript as modest reconsiderations of his writing? He returned to his texts sometime after writing them to add these notes between the lines, clarifying and emphasizing meaning, or adding new thoughts altogether.⁴⁹ As an aging monk, Odorannus had a history of writing to look back upon, and he seems to have wanted to create a legacy that would remain at Saint Pierre-le-Vif.⁵⁰ His compilation process was one last authorial act of asserting himself as a prominent member of his community.

As I discussed above, Odorannus expressed a hope not only to be useful to Abbot Ermenaldus and to any monastic students who would read his works, but also that his writings and actions could provide a good example for others in living well so that they might attain

⁴⁷ Meredith F. Eller, "The 'Retractationes' of Saint Augustine," *Church History* 18 (1949): 183. See also Allan D. Fitzgerald, "*Retractationes*," in idem, ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 723–24.

⁴⁸ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1.

⁴⁹ Cf. Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 35, and my Introduction, page 1.

⁵⁰ See Ruys, "Medieval Latin Meditations on Old Age," 183: the "sense of leaving for posterity a record of one's thoughts and achievements is generally considered a mark of what is termed 'late style,' which typically informs works written or composed toward the end of the author's life: it is a marker of individuality that has often been thought to have postdated the Renaissance."

salvation.⁵¹ Caroline Walker Bynum, in her important reconsideration of the modern debate about the “discovery of the individual” from 1050 to 1200, observed that instruction by example and word had a certain currency among the writings of twelfth-century ecclesiastics. These writers thus offered themselves as models for others.⁵² While I tend toward viewing Odorannus’ compilation less as a tool for self-fashioning than as a commemoration of his own accomplishments, the didactic purpose he outlined in his prologue demonstrates that he saw a certain edifying value in his own works. During his lifetime, he had taught others in a wide variety of subjects. His stated intention for the compilation suggests that he hoped to instruct even after his death through his writings. By gathering them together himself and by making explicit his intention in the introductory notes to the collection, he ensured that his particular name would be attached to any edification that his writings might effect.

With his compilation, and in the liturgy, Odorannus sought to maintain a posthumous presence at Saint Pierre-le-Vif. Death did not mean that he would be severed from his community, especially since he would have left a textual legacy behind. Patrick Geary’s study of the relationship between the dead and the living in the Middle Ages has demonstrated that the links between these two ‘societies’ were strong and vital. The dead were close at hand for medieval people in many ways.⁵³ For Odorannus, the movement from physical life to death partly meant that he would be present for his disciples and fellow monks in the form of texts, instead of in person. The preface to his works made this particularly clear by means of a corporeal metaphor. Odorannus wrote that he had “gathered in one body the present works” (*presentia opuscula ... in*

⁵¹ Odorannus, *Prologus*, 70–1.

⁵² Caroline Walker Bynum, “Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?” in eadem, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), 97.

⁵³ Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994).

uno corpore collegit), and concluded his preface by describing the spatial qualities of a physical form, writing that “if a body lacks one or the other of these elements, it is not a solid body” (*quicquid vero uno utrum alio caret, illud corpus solidum non est*).⁵⁴ It seems that each of the writings Odorannus chose to leave behind were essential parts of this larger *corpus* that he had carefully constructed. It was a physical entity that would remain in the abbey. When readers opened the manuscript containing his writings, they would be sure to encounter the introductory words that stressed the authorship and purpose of the collection. Future students, poring over Odorannus’ musical writings, his comments on canon law, or his historical work, would read the monk’s own name inserted at certain instances in the texts, and they would learn that this author had been a dynamic member of his community, at times in conflict, at times celebrated. While Odorannus was a distinctive monk out of many in his abbey, so too was Saint Pierre-le-Vif a distinctive monastic community in the midst of others. Odorannus left his works behind in order to document himself for posterity, but also to celebrate and enrich his monastery. As an author whose works would be read, and as a monk whose name would be said aloud in prayer, Odorannus, the individual, would not be forgotten. He would be tangibly present at his special community of Saint Pierre-le-Vif.

⁵⁴ Odorannus, *Incipit argumentum*, 74–5. The modern editors show that this is a wordplay between the two uses of *corpus*, 75 n. 1.

EPILOGUE

In the above chapters, I have had to exclude much of the specific, technical content of Odorannus' compositions. I made the choice partly because the inclusion of that content was beyond the immediate scope of my questions of the monk's work, partly because Odorannus was much more erudite than myself; his expertise ranged from metalwork to music theory. As Marjorie Chibnall rightly stated of Odorannus and the academic team who produced the 1972 edition of his compilation, "[i]t is indicative of the wide range of early eleventh-century monastic culture that four modern scholars have combined their skills to edit his works."¹ Had I attempted an investigation that drew from each aspect of Odorannus' learning, none of these aspects would have received satisfactory attention. In short, his collection demands a great deal of further study.

One especially prominent feature of Odorannus' intellectual monastic experience was music, about which this essay has thus far remained silent. His compilation includes a tonary, which is a booklet listing and commenting upon the melodies used during the liturgy,² as well as a letter with illustrations to the monks of Saint Germain of Auxerre on the construction and function of the monochord, a rudimentary single-stringed instrument used to achieve proper vocal pitch.³ These two didactic compositions demonstrate that Odorannus, as a music theorist and practitioner, employed his knowledge in order to help other monks understand the musicality of the chants they regularly performed. This was a vital pursuit, for in the central Middle Ages, with the legacy of Carolingian liturgical reforms and the influence of an increasingly intricate Cluniac

¹ Marjorie Chibnall, Review of Odorannus of Sens, *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier, et al. (Paris, 1972), in *American Historical Review* 79 (1974): 774.

² Odorannus, *Capitulum V*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier, et al. (Paris, 1972), 150–201.

³ Odorannus, *Capitulum VI*, 202–25. See the editors' glossary of musical terms; *Opera omnia*, 276.

liturgy, communal song constituted a significant portion of a Benedictine monk's day. As such, a brief consideration of the musical component of cenobitic life may bring something to bear upon my conclusions, and may also serve to extend our perception of Odorannus' world beyond the slight glimpse I have attempted to provide thus far. The following remarks are not an analysis of Odorannus' writings on music,⁴ but reflections upon the ways in which the daily monastic experience of singing as a group must have factored into a monk's notions of how a community should function.

In some of Odorannus' compositions, the language of musical harmony, namely *concordia* and *discordia*, enters into his discourse on communal life, alternately peaceful and hostile. Karl Morrison considered this connection between musical language and communal relations in a fascinating study of self-knowledge during the Carolingian Renaissance. He argued that the early medieval notion of "concord," that is, of voices blending together in monody, provided a way of understanding commonality and difference between people.⁵ The meaning of concord was "unison, not unity," because "[d]istinctions were essential to concord."⁶ Discord was its binary opposite, denoting not those vocal differences that could be reconciled in a single melody, but "confusion, characteristic of Satan and his works."⁷ Consequently, discord was to be doggedly avoided by monks. With its emphasis on melodious unity as well as the distinctions between individual voices, it is clear why communal singing might have been an accessible conceptual field

⁴ This has been the work of the modern editors of his compilation and others. See Robert-Henri Bautier, et al., "Introduction," in Odorannus, *Opera omnia*, 56–64, and the extensive notes for Odorannus, *Capitulum V* and *Capitulum VI*, 150–225.

⁵ Karl F. Morrison, "Know Thyself: Music in the Carolingian Renaissance," in *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell'alto medioevo occidentale*, Settimane di Studio 39, pt. 1 (Spoleto, 1992), 369–479. Morrison describes monody as "many voices in one sonority" (387). For other medieval metaphors about monastic community life, see Giles Constable, "Medieval Latin Metaphors," *Viator* 38 (2007): 6–7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 380–81.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 380.

in the Middle Ages for considering how people could function “harmoniously” together. Indeed, the vocabulary of “discord” and “concord” remains familiar in modern discourse about dynamic social interactions.

In Odorannus’ compilation, the concord/discord binary appears in an exhortation, penned by Odorannus, from Abbot Ingo to the unruly monks of Saint Martin at Massay.⁸ Ingo had maintained an absent leadership at Saint Martin, the monastery in his care before King Robert the Pious appointed him abbot of Saint Pierre-le-Vif.⁹ The letter is quite simple: it urged the community of monks at Massay to turn their focus from temporal aggravations toward eternal salvation. The monks were to avoid deception (*finctio*), conspiracy (*conspiratio*), and scandal (*scandalum*), in favour of the peace that was fundamental to communal monastic living. Through his secretary Odorannus, Ingo declared: “May this truth, proven and believed up to our time by the wisest men, escape none of you; that is to say, that by concord, things of small importance become greater, [but] by discord, the greatest things fall to pieces.”¹⁰ Concord would therefore be a constructive condition for the monks to nurture amongst themselves. Discord would topple the structure of peaceful cenobitic life. The implication of Ingo’s exhortation is that if the monastic community should fail as an earthly manifestation of God’s charity, so too would any hopes for everlasting life quickly die away.

Odorannus’ writings clearly demonstrate that, from time to time, certain monks could be “off key.” The music theorist himself claimed to have been the object of conspiracy, one of the very crimes against concord that was vehemently decried in Ingo’s exhortation to the monks of

⁸ Odorannus, *Capitulum XI*, 254–57.

⁹ See Chapter One above, page 22.

¹⁰ Odorannus, *Capitulum XI*, 256–57: “Illud autem neminem nostrum fugiat, a doctissimis viris usque ad nostram aetatem probatum et creditum quia per concordiam parve res crescunt, per discordiam vero maxime dilabuntur.”

Massay. Aspects of Odorannus' experience—as they appear in his writing—highlight the fact that his was not just another voice in the choir. Both he and those around him could initiate discord; however, this does not necessitate that they never returned to the melody. Odorannus was indeed a controversial thinker and an exile, but he was also a celebrated constructor of his community's identity, chronicling its history and crafting the treasure of Savinian's reliquary by his skill as a goldsmith. Eventually, he became the aged, weary compiler of his own writings. Odorannus recognized his status as a distinctive voice and, in his textual output, sought to memorialize his special contributions to Saint Pierre-le-Vif as well as the trials he had encountered there. As a self-conscious author, he was aware not only of the people surrounding him, namely, his fellow monks and the associates of the monastery, but also how they had shaped his experience, and how, in future generations, new voices would speak his name. Just as with a monophonic chant, in which each particular voice had to achieve the same pitch, a good monastic community had to include men who could regularize their personal differences to form a pious and prosperous brotherhood.

APPENDIX

The contents of Vatican *Reg. lat. 577*, the manuscript containing Odorannus' works.¹

Fol. 1r. – 2r.	Prologue	<i>Prologus</i>
Fol. 2r. – 3r.	Table of Contents	<i>Incipiunt capitula</i>
Fol. 3v.	Blank	
Fol. 4r. – v.	Preface	<i>Incipit argumentum hujus operis</i>
Fol. 5r. – 10v.	Life of Theudechild	<i>Capitulum I</i>
Fol. 10v. – 32r.	Chronicle	<i>Capitulum II</i>
Fol. 32v. – 46v.	Letter of Abbot William of Saint Denis	<i>Capitulum III</i>
Fol. 46v. – 58v.	Letter to the monk Evrardus on three theological questions	<i>Capitulum IV</i>
Fol. 58v. – 71v.	Letter to the monk Robert regarding musical tones (includes a tonary)	<i>Capitulum V</i>
Fol. 72r. – 80v.	Letter to the monks of Saint Germain of Auxerre regarding the monochord	<i>Capitulum VI</i>
Fol. 80v. – 85r.	Letter to the monk Arembertus on miscellaneous religious questions	<i>Capitulum VII</i>
Fol. 85v. – 86r.	Speech for episcopal election in Sens	<i>Capitulum VIII</i>
Fol. 86r. – 87r.	Sermon for episcopal ordination in Sens	<i>Capitulum IX</i>
Fol. 87r. – 88r.	Letter to Archbishop Gilduin of Sens	<i>Capitulum X</i>
Fol. 88r. – 89r.	Exhortation from Abbot Ingo to the monks of Saint Martin at Massay	<i>Capitulum XI</i>
Fol. 89r. – 90v.	Proposal for a confraternity	<i>Capitulum XII</i>
Fol. 91r.	Letter to Ayrfredus and Hugh	<i>Capitulum XIII</i>
Fol. 91v. – 94r.	Notated Office of Saint Savinian (later addition) ²	
Fol. 94v.	Blank	
Fol. 95r.	Conclusion and warning to the reader	<i>Finis hujus operis et ammonitio lectoris</i>
Fol. 95v. – 96r.	Epitaphs for seven Senonais ecclesiastical authority figures ³	
Fol. 97v. – Fol. 100r.	Diverse later notations, including neumes ⁴	

¹ I have reproduced and simplified the list provided in Robert-Henri Bautier, et al., "Introduction," in Odorannus of Sens, *Opera omnia* (Paris, 1972), 30–1. The English titles I provide here reflect how I refer to Odorannus' works throughout the essay; the Latin titles are those included in the manuscript.

² The modern editors suggest that the folios containing *Capitulum XIII* and the Office of Saint Savinian were inserted after Odorannus' death in between *Capitulum XII* and the *Finis hujus operis et ammonitio lectoris*, Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 54–5.

³ Because these epitaphs appear to be contemporary to the assembly of Odorannus' collected works and in the same hand as the rest of the compilation, the modern editors suggest that these too were written by Odorannus; Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 30, 36. The epitaphs are not referenced in this essay.

⁴ For a detailed list of these later additions, see Bautier, et al., "Introduction," 30–1.

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