

PHILLIP C. ADAMO, *New Monks in Old Habits: The Formation of the Caulite Monastic Order, 1193–1267*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2014. Pp. xv, 260; 17 black-and-white figures. \$85. ISBN: 978-0-88844-189-8.
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Five cartularies and a custumal—the resources available for the history of the Caulite order are more than enough to excite envy in historians of other small monastic initiatives of the twelfth century. Adamo's account of the early years of this monastic grouping is the first study to appear in English and is a welcome addition to the bibliography of medieval monastic history.

Towards the end of the great period of monastic experiment in the eleventh and twelfth centuries Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre, wrote a commentary on the monks of his time, describing and categorizing them: cenobites and hermits; Benedictines and canons; Cistercians, Carthusians, Grandmontines, Tironensians; military orders, hospitals, and friars. It is as a result of Jacques' observations that most modern historians are aware of the Caulite or Valliscaulian order, founded in 1193 at Val-des-Choux (modern Val-des-Choues, dép. Côte d'Or, cant. Recey-sur-Ource, comm. Essarois) in northern Burgundy, some 12 km from Châtillon-sur-Seine. Eventually around thirty communities were affiliated to it, located mainly in Burgundy and Champagne, with outliers in Normandy, the Netherlands, and Scotland, and it was to survive as an independent order until 1764.

Adamo is confronted with a problem familiar to historians of the smaller monastic groupings of the twelfth century, namely that there has been a received narrative that is difficult to shake off; he describes the “closed systems” of earlier historians, who were content to repeat the work of their predecessors. He is firm and forensic in his treatment, however, disentangling the career of Brother Guiard, a priest who had become a *conversus* at the Carthusian community of Lugny and then, attracted to a stricter life, had taken up a mission to bring order to the hermits of the forest around Lugny. Guiard's approach might be described as “fusion monasticism,” for he took organizational structures from the Cistercians and linked them to the Carthusian practice that he knew well.

Caulite communities were secluded and made up of no more than twenty members, thirteen of whom were choir monks and seven lay brothers, living under the direction of a prior. They adopted a rigorous interpretation of monastic poverty, based on hermit practice, and chose to live on rents. By not owning property the Caulites could manage with fewer *conversi*, since their labor was not needed to work the lands and administer the property, and the *conversi* could enjoy a richer religious experience, living in closer association with the choir monks than their Cistercian or Carthusian counterparts. Not many resources were needed to found a Caulite community, and its members were personally ascetic, so they attracted attention and patrons. Like the Tironensians nearly a hundred years before, they spread with remarkable rapidity, even as far as Scotland, but the momentum was not to be maintained and the last Caulite house was founded in 1267.

The author's first chapter deals authoritatively with sources and is supplemented by more technical material in an appendix. Chapter 2 reconstructs the career of the spiritual founder, while chapter 3 deals with the issues of lay patronage and protection. The Caulite ideal of remaining outside the entanglements of social and economic networks forms the core of the book, and chapter 4 is subtitled “Economic Relations and Social Realities.” Here the author describes the gradual retreat from the rigor of that ideal, beginning, Adamo detects, in the opening years of the thirteenth century and moving towards active

property acquisition by the Caulites in the second half of the century. Individual Caulite foundations are covered in chapter 5 and the customary in chapter 6. There is a detailed study of the monastery at Val-des-Choux in chapter 7, followed by an epilogue, taking the narrative to the end of the order.

There are some fascinating parallels in this study: the canon Vitalis of Mortain as president of the hermit assembly at Dompierre and the subsequent establishment of the order of Savigny; the support given by the counts of Champagne to the Cistercians, which mirrors the protection extended to the Caulites by the dukes of Burgundy; the gradual retreat from manual labor by the Tironensians and their adoption of land-management techniques common to other monastic groupings, which parallels the Caulites' move into what might be described as the monastic mainstream by accepting and dealing in landed property. More background and comparison of this kind might have added to the study. Saint Louis himself made a Caulite foundation, but the event is treated in a paragraph in chapter 5, when it would have been interesting to have placed it in the context of Louis' other patronage. Similarly there could have been some reflections on Pope Innocent III's pronouncements on monastic orders at the fourth Lateran Council a decade after his confirmation of the Caulite order.

This is a thoroughly researched and well-presented book. Although the Valliscaulians are not a high-profile order, such is the skill and clarity with which the material has been deployed, it could easily provide an introductory case study for monastic history in the twelfth century. As the author remarks at the beginning of his work, "the history of a small thing can tell us something about the history of bigger things."

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