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978-1-107-00131-2 - The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order

Edited by Mette Birkedal Bruun

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THE CISTERCIAN ORDER

This volume presents the composite character of the Cistercian Order in its unity and diversity, detailing the White Monks' history from the Middle Ages to the present day. It charts the geographical spread of the Order from Burgundy to the peripheries of medieval Europe, examining key topics such as convents, liturgy, art, agriculture, spiritual life and education, providing an insight into Bernard of Clairvaux's life, work and sense of self, as well as the lives of other key Cistercian figures. This *Companion* offers an accessible synthesis of contemporary scholarship on the Order's interaction with the extramural world and its participation in, and contribution to, the cultural, economic and political climate of medieval Europe and beyond. The discussion contributes to the history of religious orders, and will be useful to those studying the twelfth-century renaissance, the apostolic movement and the role of religious life in medieval society.

Mette Birkedal Bruun is Professor of Church History at the University of Copenhagen. She is the author of *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (2007), and the co-editor of *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages* (with Stephanie Glaser, 2008) and *Commonplace Culture in Western Europe in the Early Modern Period I* (with David Cowling, 2011).

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under the general title, *The Presence of God* (four volumes have appeared to date).

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Preface

The ambition behind this volume is double. It is to offer an up-to-date cross-disciplinary introduction to the Cistercian Order and to reflect the character and interests of current scholarship. The content is structured in three sections. The first treats, in three chapters, the history of the Order from its foundation until today. Then follow two thematic sections, the main focus of which is the medieval period. The first, 'Structure and materiality', deals with the Order's organisation, its material culture and agricultural production, and with the ever-present dynamic between unity and diversity. The second, 'Religious mentality', centres on authors and educators and on the ideas, texts, preaching and music which emerged from Cistercian monasteries. The chapters stand as individual essays on different aspects of the Order – and not necessarily in unison. In this sense this volume mirrors the composite nature of the Order, and of the research into it.

Sincere thanks are due to all of the authors for their brave and spirited response to the academic challenge, not to mention the severe word limit, and to Terryl N. Kinder and I. Gorevich as well as Laura Morris and Anna Lowe of Cambridge University Press.

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Abbreviations

AASS	Acta Sanctorum, ed. Société des Bollandistes (Antwerp, Paris, Brussels, 1643–1940)
ASOC	<i>Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis</i>
BHL	Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis, ed. Société des Bollandistes <i>et al.</i> (Brussels, 1898–1901 and later)
Canivez, Statuta	J.-M. Canivez (ed.), <i>Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis cisterciensis</i> , 8 vols. (Louvain, 1933–41)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis
CF	Cistercian Fathers Series
Choisselet/Vernet	D. Choisselet and P. Vernet (eds.), <i>Les ‘Ecclesiastica officia’ cisterciens du XIIème siècle. Texte latin selon les manuscrits étudiés de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114</i> , La documentation cistercienne 22 (Reiningue, 1989)
COCR	<i>Collectanea ordinis cistercensium reformatorum</i>
CS	Cistercian Studies Series
CSQ	<i>Cistercian Studies Quarterly</i>
Ep	<i>Epistola</i>
McGinn, Growth	B. McGinn, <i>The Presence of God</i> , vol. II, <i>The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century</i> (New York, 1994)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1846–95)
RB	<i>Regula Benedicti</i> / Rule of Benedict
RTAM	<i>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</i>
S	Sermon
SBOp	<i>Sancti Bernardi opera</i> , ed. J. Leclercq, H.M. Rochais and C.H. Talbot, 8 vols. (Rome, 1957–77)
SCh	Sources chrétiennes
VP	<i>Vita Prima</i>
Waddell, Lay	C. Waddell (ed.), <i>Cistercian Lay Brothers: Twelfth-Century Usages with Related Texts</i> , Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta 10 (Brecht, 2000)

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Waddell, <i>Statutes</i>	C. Waddell (ed.), <i>Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter</i> , Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta 12 (Brecht, 2002)
Works by Aelred of Rievaulx <i>Spec</i>	<i>Speculum caritatis</i>
Works by Bernard of Clairvaux <i>Ann</i>	<i>Sermo in annuntiatione domini</i>
<i>Apo</i>	<i>Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem</i>
<i>Asspt</i>	<i>Sermo in assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis</i>
<i>Csi</i>	<i>De consideratione</i>
<i>Ded</i>	<i>Sermo in dedicatione ecclesiae</i>
<i>Dil</i>	<i>De diligendo Deo</i>
<i>Div</i>	<i>Sermo de diversis</i>
<i>Gra</i>	<i>De gratia et libero arbitrio</i>
<i>Humb</i>	<i>Sermo in obitu domni Humberti</i>
<i>Miss</i>	<i>Homilia super 'Missus est' in laudibus virginis matris</i>
<i>Nat</i>	<i>Sermo in nativitate domini</i>
<i>Pre</i>	<i>De praecepto et dispensatione</i>
<i>QH</i>	<i>Sermo super psalmum 'Qui habitat'</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sermo super Cantica canticorum</i>
<i>Sent</i>	<i>Sententiae</i>
<i>V Mal</i>	<i>Vita sancti Malachiae</i>
<i>V Nat</i>	<i>Sermo in vigilia nativitatis domini</i>
Works by William of Saint Thierry <i>Aenig</i>	<i>Aenigma fidei</i>
<i>Cant</i>	<i>Expositio super Cantica canticorum</i>
<i>Contemp</i>	<i>De contemplando Deo</i>
<i>Ep frat</i>	<i>Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei</i>
<i>Med</i>	<i>Meditativae orationes</i>
<i>Nat am</i>	<i>De natura et dignitate amoris</i>
<i>Nat corp</i>	<i>De natura corporis et animae</i>
<i>Spec</i>	<i>Speculum fidei</i>

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Introduction: withdrawal and engagement

METTE BIRKEDAL BRUUN AND

EMILIA JAMROZIAK

How are we to comprehend the Cistercian Order? How do we examine and represent a phenomenon which has existed for over 900 years and spread across the world, which has built monumental architecture and produced a wide array of texts, tilled land and cultivated minds, seen schisms and sought concord? How do we grasp the basic tenor, the fluctuations, the varied responses to widely different conditions within one overall scholarly framework?

An influential trend in Cistercian scholarship has viewed the history of the White Monks as a tug-of-war between 'ideals' and 'reality'. The assumption is that the Order was founded on a set of ideals, crystallised in twelfth-century legislation and foundation narratives: lofty aspirations – whether for isolation from the world and its ways, for repudiation of tithes, ownership of serfs and other allegedly corrupting practices or for harmony and uniformity within the Order and its communities. The reality is, then, all those factors which cause appropriation, modulation and abolition of these ideals, synchronically as well as diachronically: local conditions, extramural powers, pragmatism or the impact of individual figures. Louis Lekai, seminally, set the dichotomy as a motto for his momentous *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* (1977) and, in a definitive article, employed the collision between ideals and reality as a key to the dating of the Cistercian decline: the Order's fourteenth-century fall from its initial ideals, pushed by the overpowering force of reality.¹ Seen in this light, ideals become synonymous with 'true Cistercianness' in the shape of unanimity, strictness and absence of ambiguity, whereas reality stands for distortion, deviation and equivocation.

Recent scholarship has challenged Lekai's dichotomy. There is a growing sense that its robust segregation produces a fragmented understanding of the Cistercian history and culture.² But much remains to be done if we want to understand the complexity of the Order, its history and its relation to society without losing sight of its fundamental ideas: