



## New Monks in Old Habits

Medieval monasticism was not uniform and monolithic. Even after the ninth-century adoption of the Rule of Benedict as the standard for most monasteries throughout the Carolingian Empire, there was wide variation in its practice. The eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, a time of especially great religious ferment, saw the growth of a number of movements seeking to reform monastic practice, to make it more ascetic, more “true” to the *Regula Benedicti*. In the early thirteenth century, the Franciscan and Dominican Friars were the agents of reform, and many historians see the Friars as a watershed in the history of religious life in the Middle Ages. Yet when Francis of Assisi was only eleven years old, when the creation of the Franciscan life was barely an idea, monasticism in Burgundy experienced another reform. This was the foundation of the Caulite Order.

The Caulites founded their first monastery in 1193, roughly a century after the advent of the Cistercians, barely two decades before the advent of the Franciscans. The order, also referred to as the Valliscaulians, was named for the site of this first monastery in Val-des-Choux or “valley of cabbages,” located in the Châtillon forest, some twelve kilometers southeast of the town of Châtillon-sur-Seine in northwest Burgundy. The most important benefactor of the order was Odo III, duke of Burgundy. The order’s spiritual founder was a certain Viard, sometimes called Guy or Guido, who, according to eighteenth-century *mémoires* of the order, was a former Carthusian lay brother. The Caulite Order received papal approval in 1205. It expanded in the first half of the thirteenth century, growing to some seventeen houses in France (mostly Burgundy), three in Scotland, one in what is today the Netherlands – some historians have even suggested Spain and Portugal – and founding its last monastery in 1267. The order lasted almost six centuries, but reduced numbers (both of monks and properties) forced the Caulites in 1764 to unite with, and be governed by, the Cistercian abbey of Sept-Fons, in the Bourbonnais region of France. They experienced a brief revival in the late eighteenth century, but then disappeared, in the wake of the French Revolution.

The Caulites were innovators in monastic practice: they expanded throughout a broad region in western Europe, and counted among their benefactors important noble families of their day. Yet they remain obscure in the historiography of medieval monasticism. It is time for this state of affairs to change.



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*New Monks in Old Habits*

*The Formation of the Caulite Monastic Order,  
1193–1267*

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*For all the monks who have been in my life*



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## Abbreviations

- AD Archives départementales  
AN Archives nationales  
BM Bibliothèque municipale  
BnF Bibliothèque nationale de France  
EO *Ecclesiastica officia*, cited from *Les Ecclesiastica officia cisterciens du XIIIème siècle: texte latin selon les manuscrits édités de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114, version française, annexe liturgique, notes, index et tables*, ed. Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet (Reiningue, France: Documentation cistercienne, 1989).
- Folz Robert Folz, “Le monastère du Val des Choux au premier siècle de son histoire,” *Bulletin philologique et historique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1960): 91–115.
- Gallia christiana* *Gallia christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa*, ed. Denis de Sainte-Marthe et al., 3rd ed., 16 vols. (Paris, 1715–1865).
- Honorius III (1224) Honorius III’s bull of 13 April 1224 (“idibus Aprilis pontificatus nostri anno octavo”). Moulins, AD de l’Allier, H 222 contains the original charter created for Val-des-Choux. Published in *Regesta Honorii papae III*, ed. Pietro Pressutti, 2 vols. (Rome: The Vatican, 1888–1895), no. 4936.
- Innocent III (1205) Innocent III’s bull of 11 February 1205 (“quarto idus Februarii, pontificatus nostri anno septimo”). Moulins, AD de l’Allier, H 222 contains the original charter created for Val-des-Choux. Published in *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, ed. Othmar Hageneder et al., 12 vols. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1964–2001), 7.7: 218; August Potthast, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1874), 1: 2410; and *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–1882), 215: 532.
- Innocent III (1210) Innocent III’s bull of 10 May 1210 (“sexto idus Maii, pontificatus nostri anno tertio decimo”). Moulins, AD de l’Allier, H 222 contains the original charter created for Val-des-Choux. Published in OCVC, 142–143.
- Jacques de Vitry Jacques de Vitry, *Historia occidentalis*, cited from *The “Historia*

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- Martène, *Voyage* Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand, *Voyage littéraire de deux religieux Bénédictins de la congrégation de Saint Maur* (Paris: Delaulne, 1717).
- Mignard Prosper Mignard, “Histoire des Principales Fondations Religieuses du Baillage de la Montagne,” and “Grand prieuré de Trappistes du Val-des-Choux,” *Mémoires de la commission des antiquités du département de la Côte-d’Or* 6 (1861–1864): 213–219, 411–475.
- OCVC *Ordinale Conventus Vallis Caulium: The Rule of the Monastic Order of the Val des Choux in Burgundy*, ed. Walter De Gray Birch (London and New York: Longman, Green, and Co., 1900).
- Peincedé Dijon, AD de la Côte d’Or, Jean-Baptiste Peincedé, *Inventaire de la chambre des comptes de Bourgogne* (unpublished manuscript from the end of the 18th century), 36 vols.
- Petit, *Histoire* Ernest Petit, *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne de la race capétienne*, 9 vols. (Dijon: Darantiere, 1885–1905).
- Petit, “Vausse” Ernest Petit, “Vausse, prieuré de Saint-Denis ou Notre Dame de Vaulce,” *Bulletin de la société des sciences de l’Yonne* 13 (1859): 48–91.
- RB *Regula Benedicti*, cited from *Benedict’s Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, ed. Terrence G. Kardong (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996).
- UC *Usus conversorum*, cited from *Cistercian Lay Brothers: Twelfth-Century Usages with Related Texts*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, Cîteaux: *Commentarii cistercienses*; *Studia et Documenta* 10 (Brecht, Belgium; Cîteaux: *Commentarii cistercienses*, 2000).

# Chronology

- c. 1080 Bruno of Cologne founds the Carthusian Order
- 1098 Robert of Molesme founds Cîteaux
- 1172 Gautier, bishop of Langres, founds the Carthusian monastery of Lugny
- 1192 Odo III becomes duke of Burgundy
- 1193 Viard enters the church at Val-des-Choux; foundation of the Caulite Order
- 1202–1204 Fourth Crusade
- 1205 Pope Innocent III confirms the Caulite Order
- 1205–24 Range of dates for the Caulite adoption of the Rule of Benedict
- 1209–29 Albigensian Crusade
- 1209 Innocent III approves the Franciscan Order
- 1212 Theodoric of Horn founds the Caulite priory of Sankt-Elisabeth’s-Thal
- 1213–21 Fifth Crusade
- 1214 Hervé de Donzy founds the Caulite priory of Épeau
- 1214–22 Range of dates for the foundation of the Caulite priory of Reveillon
- 1214–1300 Range of dates for the foundation of the Caulite priory of Beaulieu
- 1215 Fourth Lateran Council
- 1216 William of Mont-Saint-Jean founds the Caulite priory of Val-Croissant; Gauthier of Vignory founds the Caulite priory of Genevroye
- 1218 Odo III dies
- 1219 Anseric V founds the Caulite priory of Vausse; Simon of Châteauvillain founds the Caulite priory of Vauclair
- c. 1222 Thibaut IV, count of Champagne and Brie and well-known trouvère, founds the Caulite priory of Clairlieu
- 1224 Pope Honorius III allows Caulites to mitigate their practice; the Caulites adopt the Cistercian *Ecclesiastica officia*; John of Montréal and his wife, Nicholette of Magny, found the Caulite priory of Petit-Saint-Lieu
- c.1224 Jacques de Vitry visits Val-des-Choux
- 1228–1229 Sixth Crusade

- 1229 Hugh of La Fauche founds the Caulite priory of Rémonvaux
- 1230 Alexander II, king of Scotland, founds the Caulite priories of Pluscarden and Beaulieu; Duncan MacDougal founds the Caulite priory of Ardoch
- 1234–1270 Range of dates for Thibaut IV, king of Navarre's, foundation of the Caulite priory of Beaupré
- 1237 Gauthier of Sully and his wife Oda, and son William found the Caulite priory of Val-Saint-Benoît
- 1245–1250 Seventh Crusade
- c. 1248 Hugh IV, duke of Burgundy, founds the Caulite priory of Val-Duc
- 1249 John of Toucy founds the Caulite priory of Plein-Marchais
- 1255 Louis IX, king of France, founds the Caulite priory of Royal Pré
- c. 1260 John of Châteauevillain founds the Caulite priory of Uchon
- 1267 Thibaut V, count of Champagne, founds the Caulite priory of Val-Dieu