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Raphaëla AVERKORN, *Adel und Kirche in der Grafschaft Armagnac. Das cluniacensische Priorat Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Mont 1036–1130*, Bochum (Winkler Verlag) 1997, 439 p. (Europa in der Geschichte, 1).

This book is a history of the monastic house of Saint-Jean de Saint-Mont in Gascony (county of Armagnac) in the 11th and early 12th centuries. Founded in 1036 by a local nobleman, Saint-Mont became one of the leading religious centers in its region by 1100, receiving visits of the leading clerical figures of the day as well as pilgrims passing through on the way to Santiago in Galicia. Although scholars from the 17th century on, mainly from the region, have written on various aspects of its history, this book is the first large scale monograph on the subject as a whole. Not that contemporary sources are lacking; on the contrary two cartularies, both begun during this time, provide detailed information on the period in question but both are in private hands and the current owners have denied access to them other than to have permitted the making of microfilms now in the IRHT in Paris. Earlier printed editions are either incomplete or faulty.

After describing these cartularies (Chapt. 2), the author's (R. A.) objective here is to survey the history of Saint-Mont (Chapt. 3), beginning with its foundation, and paying particular attention to its conversion into a Cluniac prior in the 1050's, then continuing with an examination of the period of expansion later in the 11th century, and concluding with the onset of stagnation and decline in the early 12th century. One of the merits of this book is R. A.'s broad conception of monastic history as something which encompasses more than just the house's interior life. Thus she is concerned to discuss closely the relations between the monks of Saint-Mont and the dominant political authorities in the region, the counts of Armagnac. One of these, Bernard of Tumapaler, played a vital role in the priory's success. But her interest extends as well to the regional aristocracy and knightly class and leads her to take account of all the noble families maintaining relations with Saint-Mont and to measure the degree of their support for its welfare through their landed donations. Her careful scrutiny of the Saint-Mont charters enables her to determine that most of the monks came indeed from these local and regional families, some as youthful *oblats*, others as *conversi* late in their lives, others finally in receiving burial in the monastic cemetery. Members of the same families also benefited economically from the priory's presence in being able to borrow money in times of need, and the monks also contributed to economic development in the region through their attention to farming, the planting of vineyards, and horse breeding. This long section of her book (Chapt. 4, p. 89–198) thus documents the high degree to which Saint-Mont was a monastic community thoroughly anchored in the surrounding region, and exercising a powerful influence over the lives of its inhabitants. The author has chosen to present her data on the aristocracy in the form of brief notices on the 117 different families she has been able to document, from the upper nobility to lesser men of unknown status. In effect she has created a prosopographical register (each family is named in the Table of Contents) which should be of no small utility to future historians of the medieval Gascon aristocracy.

A counterpart to her treatment of the priory and the aristocracy is a chapter (5) on the relations between Saint-Mont and the other representatives of the church in Armagnac and Gascony. This includes first the archbishops of Auch, then neighboring bishops in Agen, Toulouse, etc., and for the most important prelates R. A. gives brief biographical summaries in prosopographical fashion. Her summary on Archbishop William of Auch (1068–1096) leads her to conclude that the enthusiastic support given by this cleric, himself from Cluny, was a significant factor in the emergence of Saint-Mont as a center for Cluniac reform in Gascony in the later 11th century.

Her primary interest in Saint-Mont in its regional setting has not obscured R. A.'s vision of the larger picture. The priory's membership in the vast network of Cluniac houses at the time inevitably brought it into contact with people, currents, and influences from the wider ecclesiastical world of the day, above all exposing it to the international atmosphere and

concerns of its mother house at Cluny. One of R. A.'s principle objectives in this book is to correct what she sees as earlier tendencies to dismiss Saint-Mont as a remote dependency of little consequence in the affairs of the Order as a whole. By documenting the frequency and vigor of Abbot Hugh's (1049–1109) visits and personal interventions in the priory's affairs she makes an impressive case for Saint-Mont (along with Moissac the earliest foundation in Gascony) having been an important member of the Order and a »significant center of Cluniac Spirituality« in that province (327). Other gauges of Saint-Mont's influence reaching beyond the provincial frontiers were the visits of pilgrims on the Santiago de Compostella route, the visits of papal legates, and foreign princes (the Dukes of Aquitaine), and the priory's links with Reconquest Spain.

The author devotes two chapters to the internal life of the priory, the first of which (Chapt. 6) studies the composition of the monastic community. Her list of priors (presented again in prosopographical form) makes basic corrections in what has previously been available. In addition she lists the monks who figure in the charters – 19 is the largest number known by name during the twenty or so years (1060's–1080's) when Ademar was prior. A second chapter (8) is given over to a history and analysis of the priory's landed endowments resulting from aristocratic donations. Finally a brief treatment of parish churches acquired (over 40) and dependant sub-priories (14).

Appendices of many different kinds occupy over 50 pages of this book and include, 1, genealogical tables, 2, Latin texts of seven documents essential for the origins and early history of the priory, 3, a valuable concordance of charters published in earlier partial editions, and lists of, 4, dependencies and parish churches held, 5, donors of land, 6, those who pledged land as security for loans, 7, individual donations, 8, names of dependant tenants given in charters, 9, vineyards, and 10, revenues owed to the priory. A bibliography of original sources and modern literature precedes three maps and indices of persons and places which close the volume.

I find this an estimable piece of monastic history, noteworthy for the author's comprehensive conception of what belongs in a work of this kind, and for her insistence on basing her conclusions on the original sources. In the process she has made evident the inadequacies and shortcomings of earlier scholarship and has made a persuasive case for the historical importance of a previously neglected dependency in the Cluniac Order. That the author has succeeded in her objectives comes at least in part from her membership in one of the outstanding groups of monastic historians of the present day. For this is a work of the Munster school which has distinguished itself for three decades now in recasting and rewriting the history of early medieval monasticism, and particularly that of Cluny.

Historians of Gascony and the county of Armagnac will find this work indispensable for future research in this period. A minor criticism: the maps fall short of the quality of the rest of the book. A suggestion for the future. In light of what R. A. has here written about Saint-Mont, one aspect of the history of this monastic house which was not part of her propos but which calls for study is the priory's intellectual life. It would be interesting to learn whether this monastic community produced any writers, and if so, on what subjects, and whether any of their manuscripts survive today. It would also be interesting to know where Saint-Mont fits in the artistic perspective (architecture and sculpture) of the romanesque style in southwestern France.

George BEECH, Kalamazoo