Seeking knowledge and truth: The supernatural, heretics, and demons in the universal chronicle of Alberic of Trois-Fontaines († after 1252)

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Introduction

Founded in 1098, the Cistercian Order championed a return to radical observance of the Rule of Benedict. The reform was founded on simplicity and the monks' strict dedication to quiet contemplation and prayer. However, already in the twelfth century the Cistercians became increasingly entangled in a much more active – 'in the world' – way of life. Some of them accepted the office of bishop or papal legate, others led preaching missions against heretics or were involved with the crusades in various ways. Influential Cistercians, not least Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), became famous not (just) on account of their simple contemplative lives, but thanks to their fervent preaching against heretics out in the world as well. At the dawn of the thirteenth century, abbots and papal legates Henry of Clairvaux (*c*. 1136-1189) and Arnaud Amalric (†1225) even led armies against these threats to Mother Church. This paradox has attracted the attention of many historians; much research has been done to explain this development and to investigate how the White Monks themselves justified it.[1]

However, not all Cistercians went out into the world like this. The vast majority were simple monks who lived out their dedication to God from within the walls of their monasteries, as their founders had envisioned it. Although most of these 'stay-at-home monks' – pardon the pleonasm – have not left many traces for us to investigate, some have; and these are worthy of scholarly attention. Alberic of Trois-Fontaines († after 1252) was one of these Cistercians who, as far as we know, neither engaged in active preaching or sermon

[1] See Beverly Maine Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard* (Woodbridge 2001); also e.g. Michael Gervers, *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* (London 1992); William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095-1187* (Martlesham and Rochester 2008) esp. 86-119; Janet Burton and Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge 2011) esp. 189-202; Emilia Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe, 1090-1500* (London and New York 2013) esp. 77-81; Martha G. Newman, 'Foundation and Twelfth Century' in: Mette Birkedaal Bruun ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order* (Cambridge 2013) 25-37.

writing, nor participated in any crusade or took up an influential office. He did not write groundbreaking theological works or contributed significantly to Cistercian spirituality; he was not even an abbot. However, between 1227-1252 he did write a massive universal chronicle which presents a wealth of potential for investigating the worldviews and inner lives of those Cistercians who quietly lived and worked most of their lives from within the monastery's walls.

This thesis seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the chronicle, its author, and its intended goals. It will focus on Alberic's accounts of supernatural occurrences, a feature which has led some scholars to dismiss the chronicle as the work of a credulous monk who too easily believed miracle stories to be historical accounts. However, this dichotomy between 'miracle stories' and 'historical accounts' is anachronistic. Besides, any source can be valuable to historians if the right questions are asked. Therefore, I will not primarily address whether Alberic's information is factually correct or trustworthy, but rather *why* he deemed it worthy of inclusion in his reconstruction of world history. The way in which he compiled and presented his personal selection of notable events, especially supernatural occurrences, tells us much about his worldviews, priorities, and even his own personality, interests, and fears. Some of his reports on miracles have been discussed in earlier studies. However, systematic research on the weight and role of accounts of the supernatural within the chronicle as a whole is lacking. Allegations of gullibility insufficiently take into account Alberic's evident passion for uncovering and accumulating true historical knowledge, as well as the relative paucity of accounts of the supernatural. This remains obscured if only select (exceptional) passages are investigated.

Additionally, Alberic's reports on demonic activity have not yet been investigated in any depth, even though some of these are amongst the most detailed. This should be no surprise, as the demonic was considered an urgent threat to any monk. Although most

Cistercians (like Alberic) were not charismatic crusade preachers and could not measure up to the great spiritual thinkers and theologians of their time – let alone lead armies! – they too participated in daily spiritual warfare. They held down the fort on the home front, guarding their monasteries and souls against the influence of the Devil and his demons. Already in Late Antiquity monks were thought of as soldiers of Christ (*milites Christi*) par excellence – which also meant that they lived on a dangerous spiritual frontline.[2] The Cistercians applied this martial imagery to themselves. They were acutely aware that threats to orthodoxy were not just 'out there', but loomed from within as well.[3] An instant of weakness could cause even a monk to stumble. As God's most faithful warriors they were constantly assaulted by demons preying on them in moments of carelessness. Abbot Conrad of Eberbach (†1221) affirmed in his *Exordium Magnum Ordinis Cisterciensis* that 'while he [Satan] torments and inordinately taunts all worshippers of Christ, he assaults most of all those professed in the Cistercian Order.'[4] A simple monk may not have lived the spectacular lives of some of his brothers, but his prayers and seemingly mundane tasks ultimately served the same spiritual goal. As this was a daily reality to monastics like Alberic, uncovering his views on (dealing with) the demonic will be elucidating.

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[2] See Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Martlesham and Rochester 2011) esp. 71-111; David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge MA 2006); David L. Bradnick, *Evil, Spirits, and Possession: An Emergentist Theology of the Demonic* (Leiden 2017) esp. 29-38; also see Adolf Harnack, *Militia Christi: Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen 1905); and Philippe Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror: Christianity, Violence, and the West* (Philadelphia 2015) esp. 91-105.

[3] See e.g. Derek Baker, 'Heresy and learning in early Cistercianism', *Studies in Church History* 9 (1972) 93-107.

[4] Conrad of Eberbach, *The Great Beginnings of Cîteaux: A Narrative of the Beginning of the Cistercian Order*, Benedicta Ward and Paul Savage transl., E. Rozanne Elder ed. (Collegeville 2012), Prologue (p. 64). Similarly, Conrad affirms that 'the malice of the devils is great toward all Christians but especially toward all those who profess the monastic way of life.' (II.2, p. 199). He describes the founders of the Order as 'these great-hearted men, who were to be leaders and standard-bearers of innumerable soldiers of Christ' (I.11, p. 111) and uses the term 'soldiers of Christ' for the Cistercian monks in general (see I.20). Military imagery in a Cistercian context can also be found in e.g. Bernard of Clairvaux's writings, primarily the *Liber ad milites templi de laude novae militiae* (Book to the Knights of the Temple, in praise of the new knighthood). Also see Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, esp. 100, 107-108.

Alberic and his chronicle

Next to nothing is known about Alberic's life. His chronicle does not include biographical details besides his affiliation with the Abbey of Trois-Fontaines (northeastern France). However, in 2009 Stefano Mula made a convincing case for new information, namely that Alberic was at Clairvaux prior to relocating to Trois-Fontaines in 1229.[5] During that time, he also authored a short history of Clairvaux known as the *Chronicon Clarevallense* before starting to compose his universal chronicle in 1227 and moving monasteries two years later. The abbey of Trois-Fontaines had been founded in 1118 as the first daughter house of Clairvaux. Clairvaux itself, founded only three years earlier by Bernard of Clairvaux, was one of the first daughter houses of the Cistercian motherhouse at Cîteaux. Conform its illustrious pedigree, Trois-Fontaines had experienced a period of flourishing throughout the twelfth and into the thirteenth century. It had founded several daughter houses of its own, from Orval in modern-day Belgium (1132) all the way to Szentgotthárd in Hungary (1183). The second half of the thirteenth century then marked the start of gradual stagnation and decline, largely congruent with the development of the Order in general.[6] By the time Alberic composed his chronicle, the Cistercians were in some respects at the height of their success, but also found themselves in a period of transition and a continuous need for introspection to hold fast to their original ideals of reform and austerity in a changing world.[7]

Although the original manuscript of Alberic's chronicle has been lost, its content has survived in two copies (probably dating to the early fourteenth-century) which introduce it as

[5] Stefano Mula, 'Looking for an author: Alberic of Trois-Fontaines and the *Chronicon Clarevallense*', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 60 (2009) 5-25. Prior to this, the *Chronicon*'s author was only known as 'Brother A.' Also see Stefano Mula, '*Exempla* and Historiography: Alberic of Trois-Fontaines's Reading of Caesarius's *Dialogus miraculorum*' in: Victoria Smirnova, Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, and Jacques Berlioz eds., *The Art of Cistercian Persuasion in the Middle Ages and Beyond* (Leiden 2015) 143-159.
[6] On the abbey's history, see e.g. Anselme Dimier, 'Trois-Fontaines, abbaye cistercienne', *Mémoires de la Société d'agriculture, commerce, sciences et arts du département de la Marne* 80 (1965) 38-51.
[7] See e.g. Wim Verbaal, 'Cistercians in Dialogue: Bringing the World into the Monastery' in: Mette Birkedaal Bruun ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order* (Cambridge 2012) 233-244.

'*incipit cronica Alberici monachi Trium Fontium*'.[8] In 1874 Paul Scheffer-Boichorst edited the manuscript that is currently in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.[9] His lengthy introduction to the chronicle, its author, and Alberic's sources remains a highly regarded publication. Prior to 1874, the academic debate had revolved around a matter which might seem surprising, namely Alberic's authorship. Despite him being clearly named in the two extant manuscripts, some historians maintained that he could not be the (primary) author – or was not actually a monk at Trois-Fontaines – due to the paucity of explicit references to his monastery. But after Scheffer-Boichorst had convincingly argued for a solution that had until then not been considered, the debate was settled. Alberic was indeed a Cistercian monk from Trois-Fontaines and the chronicle's primary author, but the work had been interpolated by an Augustinian canon from Neufmoustier (Huy, Belgium) in the second half of the thirteenth century.[10] With this problem satisfactorily solved, scholars appear to have lost interest in the work itself.

Scheffer-Boichorst's somewhat negative assessment of the *Chronica*'s[11] readability, reliability, and literary merits probably did not help pique their interest either. In 1825, Louis Petit-Radel had appraised Alberic's chronicle as follows:

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[8] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS Latin 4896A f. 1r. 'Here begin the chronicles of Alberic, monk at Trois-Fontaines'. The other manuscript is Hannover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, XIII 748 f. 1-217 which reads 'Incipit cronica Alberici monachi Trium Fontium Leodiensis dyocesis'.

[9] Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, 'Chronica Albrici monachi Trium Fontium, a monacho Novi Monasterii Hoiensis interpolata' Paul Scheffer-Boichorst ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* SS 23 (Hannover 1874) 631-950; henceforth 'Alberic'. It is a partial edition: Scheffer-Boichorst has omitted some passages where Alberic cites an already edited source verbatim (the omissions range from a single sentence to some longer paragraphs). This is indicated by a ' – ' in the text between the first and last words of the passage (Scheffer-Boichorst explains this at p. 673). However, the vast majority of the text, citations included, is edited.

[10] See Louis Charles Petit-Radel, *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris 1835) Vol. 18, 279-292; Roger Wilmans, 'Über die Chronik Alberichs', *Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 10 (1851) 174-246 at 181-190; and Scheffer-Boichorst, 'Chronica Albrici', introduction at 631-673 (henceforth 'Introduction'), 631-673. On the identity of the author and the interpolation: idem, 631-643. In 1892 Godefroid Kurth, 'Maurice de Neufmoustier', *Bulletins de l'Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique*, 62 (1892) 668-684 argued that the interpolator was Maurice of Neufmoustier.

[11] I will refer to Alberic's chronicle as '*Chronica*', following the MS incipits and Scheffer-Boichorst's edition, for the sake of readability and to allow for easy distinction between it and Helinand of Froidmont's '*Chronicon*'.

> What the work has cost in time, in hard and persistent efforts, evokes both surprise and gratitude; especially when we consider that the author only worked in the interest of the truth, to the end of being useful, without being supported by the hope of making a name for himself and acquiring glory.[12]

But Scheffer-Boichorst did not share this sentiment. Although he admitted that Alberic had consulted an impressive amount of sources and should be commended for sometimes assuming a critical approach to authoritative sources, he maintained that the structure was terrible – an 'undeveloped, disordered mass'.[13] He did not see many other reasons to read the work either. He called Alberic a 'very rustic author, who scarcely had the ability to write prose'.[14] In addition to the 'boring accumulation of narratives', the editor shuddered at Alberic's inclusion of *chansons de geste* and miracle stories as if they were historically factual, calling it proof of the chronicler's 'astounding credulity'.[15] All in all, the chronicle was unfortunate evidence for a general 'decline of monastic literature' in the thirteenth century, and not very reliable as a source for historical research.[16] It is telling that it was not until the 1980s that serious scholarly interest in Alberic's chronicle resurged.

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[12] Petit-Radel, *Histoire littéraire*, 286-287. 'Ce que l'ouvrage a coûté de temps, d'efforts pénibles et persévérants, excite à la fois l'étonnement et la reconnaissance; surtout quand on considère que l'auteur n'a travaillé que dans l'intérêt de la vérité, dans le but d'être utile, sans être soutenu par l'espoir de se faire un nom et d'acquérir la gloire'.

[13] Scheffer-Boichorst, 'Introduction', 648. 'Cuius chronicon si rudem indigestamque molem dicimus, ei certo iniuriam non offerimus'.

[14] Ibidem. On a possible identification of this Alberic with another Alberic who wrote a book on poetry, Scheffer-Boichorst states: 'Sed dubitarim, num auctor tantae rusticitatis, cui vix prosae orationis facultas, unquam in rebus metricis versatus sit.'

[15] Ibidem, 650. 'Narrationibus insulse cumulatis accedit stupenda auctoris credulitas: fictiones Turpini ei ne tantillum quidem scrupulum moverunt; quae poetae suae aetatis de temporibus longe remotis cecinerunt, ea interdum sane in dubium vocavit, sed saepius aut vere facta esse credidit, aut cum historia, quae certa rerum fide nititur, in concordiam redigere tentavit; miraculis vanisque simulacris liber abundat: diaboli, ut ita dicam, in ferna perfodiunt, daemones super terram saltant, manes aerem pervolant.'

[16] Ibidem. 'Quibus rebus si rudem auctoris sermonem addideris, idem istud opus concedes litterarum monasticarum decrescentium, de quibus Albricus ipse conquestus est, lugubre argumentum praebere'.

Historiography

Given this history, it is not surprising that defending Alberic's use of epic literature as a historical source – which Scheffer-Boichorst had so strongly condemned – was one of the main objectives of historians in the 1980s-2000s. Since then, the desire to rehabilitate the chronicle as a valuable source for historical research and to nuance the supposed 'astounding credulity' of its author is a subtly recurring sentiment the scholarship. André Moisan in particular has contributed much in this regard. This thesis similarly seeks to shed more light on the chronicle's internal logic; on the considerations and intentions behind Alberic's choices as a compilator and historian, especially with regard to supernatural events. The chronicle undeservedly remains relatively understudied. This might be because the traditional view of its academic value is still influencing scholars' perception of its potential. As Antoni Grabowski accurately summarised as recently as in 2020: 'For some he [Alberic] is a trustworthy source of otherwise unknown information, but others treat him as an unoriginal author who could have been interesting only if the texts he used had not survived.'[17] I would argue that Alberic's chronicle has more to offer than just 'unknown information', which it indeed also contains. It is a rich source for many kinds of research.

Extant scholarship on Alberic's chronicle can be summarised by identifying three broad areas of interest to historians. Firstly, questions about Alberic himself, his methodology, and his sources. This includes the aforementioned scholarly debate about the chronicle's authorship, as well as Mula's findings on Alberic's earlier affiliation with Clairvaux. In 1984, Mireille Schmidt-Chazan highlighted the chronicler's incorporation of many 'German' sources that were largely unknown to or disregarded by other chroniclers outside the Empire,

[17] Antoni Grabowski, 'Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' Genealogies', *The Medieval History Journal* 23:2 (2020) 240-264, at 241. The chronicle does include unique excerpts from e.g. Audradus Modicus' largely lost *Liber revelationum* (*c*. 853). On this colourful visionary, see e.g. Paul Edward Dutton, *The politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Nebraska, 1994) esp. 143-146.

as well as a general favourable disposition towards the emperors in his writing. She therefore concludes that he was a native of the Empire, opposing Scheffer-Boichorst's staunch assertion that we are dealing with a Frenchman from the Champagne.[18] In the 1990s she also published a comparative study on three chronicles, including Alberic's.[19] She highlights the different ideologies underlying their creation as compilation-chronicles, which has caused them to turn out very differently despite their shared arsenal of sources. Alberic's work unfortunately receives the least attention due to the absence of a prologue which would explicitly expose his methodology and goals. Schmidt-Chazan does conclude that his chronicle is the least ideologically driven out of the three.[20] For instance, he consistently uses the relatively objective Anno Domini system instead of regnal years; a division of world history in different ages is absent. Finally, Woldomar Lippert and Kurt Reindel have demonstrated that Alberic also consulted the works Guy of Bazoches (†1203) and Peter Damian (†1072) instead of merely citing them through other chronicles, as Scheffer-Boichorst assumed.[21]

The second research area pertains to Alberic's references to epic literature. These often betray a noticeable interest in local legends and history. Whether this should be explained as the insider knowledge of a born-and-raised 'Frenchman', or as the curiosity of a well-integrated expat, has not yet been addressed. In 1984 – the same year Schmidt-Chazan published her article on Alberic's 'German' identity – André Moisan published an article on

[18] Mireille Schmidt-Chazan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines, un historien entre la France et l'Empire', *Annales de l'Est* 36 (1984) 163-192.
[19] Mireille Schmidt-Chazan, 'L'usage de la compilation dans les Chroniques de Robert d'Auxerre, Aubri de Trois-Fontaines et Jean de Saint-Victor', *Journal des savants* (1999:1) 261-294.
[20] Marie-Geneviève Grossel, 'Ces « chroniqueurs à l'oreille épique »: Remarques sur l'utilisation de la geste chez Philippe Mousket et Aubri de Trois-Fontaines' in: Miren Lacassagne ed., *Ce nous dist li escris… Che est la verite: Études de littérature médiévale offertes à André Moisan* (Aix-en-Provence 2000) 97-112 similarly notes Alberic's tendency to relay information in a factual, austere style – in contrast to Philippe Mouskes' (before 1220- 1282) rhymed chronicle of Frankish-French history, which incorporates many of the same (literary) sources.
[21] Woldomar Lippert, 'Zu Guido von Bazoches und Alberich von Troisfontaines', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters* (1892) 408-417; Kurt Reindel, 'Petrus Damiani bei Helinand von Froidmont und Alberich von Troisfontaines', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 53:1 (1999) 206-224.

the influence of the Champagne's rich literary culture on Alberic as a chronicler. He emphasises that Alberic was not the only one to trust – to an extent! – these sources to contain historical truth.[22] Other historians, such as A.B.H. Van Nitert and Marie-Geneviève Grossel, followed in his footsteps. They emphasise that the references to literary sources should be considered expressions of new thirteenth-century ideas on ways to distil truth from different types of sources.[23] The use of epic literature as a historical source does not in itself prove that Alberic was overly gullible or a subpar scholar altogether, as Scheffer-Boichorst concluded. Instead, Moisan, Van Nitert and Grossel highlight Alberic's rigorous editing practices and critical attitude towards these sources. Their findings also touch on Alberic's intended audience. Whereas Grossel makes a somewhat hesitant case for the local noble patrons of Trois-Fontaines Abbey, to whom Alberic might have been related, Van Nitert seeks the answer in the tradition of compiling reference works for Cistercian sermon writing.

The third area is crusade reports. A child of his time, and a Cistercian no less, Alberic was naturally invested in these holy wars, many of which took place during his own lifetime. A considerable portion of the chronicle is devoted to the topic. Research has focused mainly on his reports on the 1212 Reconquista campaign that culminated in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, and on the Baltic Crusades, in addition to two publications discussing respectively the Fourth Crusade (1204) and the Children's Crusade (1212).[24] His entries on the crusades to

[22] André Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines à l'écoute des chanteurs de geste' in: *Essor et fortune de la chanson de geste dans l'Europe et l'Orient latin: Actes du IXe Congrès international de la Société Rencesvals pour l'étude des épopées romanes, Padoue-Venise, 29 août-4 septembre 1982* (Modena 1984) Vol. 2, 949-976. Also see André Moisan, 'Clercs et légendes épiques: Helinand de Froidmont, Aubri de Trois-Fontaines, Vincent de Beauvais et la "chronique du pseudo-Turpin"' in: *Au carrefour des routes d'Europe: La chanson de geste* Vol. 2 (Aix-en-Provence 1987) 913-925 via https://books.openedition.org/pup/2365; and André Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines et la « Matière de Bretagne »', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 31:121 (1988) 37-42.

[23] A.B.H. van Nitert, 'Matière de France and the World Chronicle of Aubri de Trois-Fontaines' in: Hans van Dijk and Willem Noomen eds., *Aspects de l'épopée romane: Mentalités, idéologies, intertextualités* (Groningen 1995) 409-418; Grossel, 'Ces « chroniqueurs à l'oreille épique »'; comp. Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines à l'écoute des chanteurs de geste'.

[24] Martín Alvira Cabrer, *Las Navas de Tolosa 1212: Idea, liturgia y memoria de la batalla* (Madrid 2012); Matthew Bailey, 'Las Navas de Tolosa en *Chronicon mundi* y en *Historia de rebus Hispanie*', *Romance Quarterly* 60:2 (2013) 114-124; Miguel Dolan Gómez, '*Rex Parvus* or *Rex Nobilis*? Charlemagne and the

the Holy Land and against the Albigensians have not yet received the same attention. Interestingly, based on these accounts historians have presented very different interpretations of Alberic's reliability as a historian. This will be discussed in more detail below. Although not presented as crusade-related research, Antoni Grabowski's 2021 publication on Alberic's *origo gentis* story for the Baltic Semigallians does deal with the crusade. He not only highlights Alberic's concern with integrating 'new history' firmly into 'established history', but also the intention of this origin story to function as a way for the Baltic pagans to enter into civilised Christian history.[25]

Some research does not fit into these broad topics.[26] For example, Grabowski's 2020 study on Alberic's many intricate genealogies for all of Europe's noble families argues that the chronicler was inspired by Peter of Poitiers' (†1205) work on Christ's genealogy as a tool through which (biblical) history could be taught.[27] Alberic also uses genealogy as a foundation upon which to build his world history. Thus he especially highlights the

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Politics of History (and Crusading) in Thirteenth-Century Iberia' in: William J. Purkis and Matthew Gabriele eds., *The Charlemagne Legend in Medieval Latin Texts* (Woodbridge 2016) 92-114; Marek Tamm, 'Communicating Crusade: Livonian Mission and the Cistercian Network in the Thirteenth Century', *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 129/130 (2009) 341-372; Marek Tamm, 'The Livonian Crusade in Cistercian Stories of the Early Thirteenth Century' in: Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen and Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt eds., *Crusading on the Edge: Ideas and Practice of Crusading in Iberia and the Baltic Region, 1100-1500* (Leiden 2016) 365-389; Alfred Andrea, 'The Crusade Viewed from the Cloister: Ralph of Coggeshall and Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' in: Alfred Andrea and Brett E. Whale eds./transl., *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden 2008) 265-275; Gary Dickson, *The Children's Crusade: Medieval History, Modern Mythistory* (London 2008) esp. at 143-147. Studies of the Marian shrine at Rocamadour also often mention Alberic's Las Navas de Tolosa account because it features the Virgin of Rocamadour, but this is usually merely to demonstrate the far-reaching fame of the shrine at the time. These studies do not go into detail about the chronicle itself. See e.g. Amy Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds* (Oxford 2013) 34-35; and Esther Cohen, In the Name of God and Profit: The Pilgrimage Industry in Southern France in the Late Middle Ages (PhD dissertation, Brown University 1976) 77, which assumes that Alberic merely 'innocently recounted' the detail of the Rocamadour banner whereas it 'is clear evidence of a deliberate intention of Rocamadour to display its protectress as the saviour of Christian Spain'.

[25] Antoni Grabowski, 'Old Tales for a New *Gens*: Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' Grafting of History', *Acta Poloniae Historica* 124 (2021) 149-179.

[26] Additionally, Alberic's chronicle is sometimes mentioned when he reports on an event or person being studied. These studies do not go into enough detail to discuss here and usually rely on Scheffer-Boichorst, Schmidt-Chazan, and Moisan for their interpretation. See e.g. Filip van Tricht, 'Robert of Courtenay (1221-1227): An Idiot on the Throne of Constantinople?', *Speculum* 88:4 (2013) 996-1034. Van Tricht briefly presents Alberic's account as representative for and/or based on mainstream negative propaganda against Robert's reign, which he seeks to nuance.

[27] Grabowski, 'Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' Genealogies'.

interconnectivity of people and events through time. Studies like this provide valuable insight into Alberic's views on (writing) history. This thesis aims to do the same by focussing on his entries on supernatural occurrences.

Alberic's approach: structure and noteworthy features of his chronicle

Given the variety of interpretations of Alberic's work and the lack of an updated critical edition or introduction, it is valuable to briefly highlight some of the chronicle's stand-out characteristics and general structure. Probably its most striking feature, which even Scheffer-Boichorst had to admire, is the enormous amount of sources of many different types that Alberic consulted and integrated.[28] His work is a universal chronicle, discussing events from the Creation to the year 1241. Alberic took 'universal' quite seriously.[29] Additionally, he had a tendency to correct or add information to his sources, such as dates (to the day, if possible), names, places, or biographical details. Regardless of whether he was correct, this shows his strong desire for factual correctness, specificity, and comprehensiveness. It also means that historians should be particularly alert to instances where he leaves out information that one would expect to see given the sources to which he had access. That which is deliberately not included is often revealing of an author's underlying assumptions, priorities, or intentions.

Another noteworthy feature is Alberic's treatment of these many sources. He is rather diligent in naming his (written) sources. This results in a consistent structure where the source is indicated first, followed by a citation or summary of the relevant passage. [30] Although there are instances where he does not name his sources, it is noticeable how meticulous he was

[28] Scheffer-Boichorst, 'Introduction' discusses Alberic's sources at 652-671. They include (but are not limited to) epic literature/*chansons de geste* (see Moisan, 'Clercs et légendes épiques', 950; he counted over thirty distinct sources of this genre), letters, *Vitae*, charters, genealogical data, and oral eyewitness accounts.
[29] He also regularly reports on the fringes of medieval Christendom (the Baltic, the Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavia, even Iceland). Affairs close to home (in France) do not take centre stage.
[30] Do note that oral sources are not typically indicated in this way.

compared to many other medieval chroniclers. He also provides suggestions for further reading, sometimes accompanied by directions to a library which he knows owns the source in question.[31] This chosen structure also means that the chronicle can appear to be a mere copy-pasted patchwork instead of an independent narrative guided by a specific ideology or goal. This has probably deterred some scholars from investigating the chronicle. However, such a first impression is unfortunate, not least because he is not afraid to openly criticise his sources if necessary. Often he inserts multiple sources describing the same event right after each other, or even edits multiple longer accounts into a dialogue-like entry to highlight where they complement or contradict each other.[32] This naturally invites comparison between the sources.

When sources clash, Alberic often provides an evaluation of or solution to the discordance, sometimes with an explanation for his choice.[33] From his choice of what is intentionally left out, to the clever editing, rewriting, and organising of the information he does include, the chronicle is much more than a haphazard collection of verbatim citations. In some cases, he changed the original wording or sequence of events to such an extent that Scheffer-Boichorst missed the reference and assumed there was an unknown source.[34] In the later part of the chronicle Alberic could no longer rely on older written sources. Roughly speaking, up until the year 1000 the majority of the text is a compilation of older source material, which then gradually shifts into the opposite from around 1200 onwards, at which

[31] E.g. Alberic, 882.
[32] See e.g. his account of the First Crusade during the year 1098 (Alberic, 807-808). He successively cites Sigebert, Balderic of Dol, Guy of Bazoches, Robert the Monk/*Historia Hierosolymitana*, Guy, Robert, Guy, Balderic, Guy, Robert, Balderic, Guy, Balderic, Robert, Sigebert, Balderic and Robert, then Guy again. When switching sources, Alberic knits the exposition together through remarks like 'inde sequitur memorabile factum ducis Godefridi et militia singularis', 'Unde Guido', and 'Sequiter qualiter civitas fuit reddita:'.
[33] I will discuss some examples of this below. Also see Schmidt-Chazan, 'L'usage de la compilation', 275-276.
[34] See Mula, '*Exempla* and Historiography', 156-158.

point Alberic writes mainly in his own words.[35] Even before that, he regularly includes his own comments, sometimes indicated by a preceding 'Auctor:', 'Albericus:' or 'Albricus monachus:'.[36]

The chronicle takes the form of a reference work or encyclopaedia of historical knowledge rather than a continuous narrative account of history.[37] At one point Alberic explicitly notes that in his source 'the names of the cities of Spain are placed below here, which I have omitted for the sake of brevity'.[38] If one wanted to look up this information, one would be able to consult the source. He often abbreviates his sources by summarising the content rather than copying an entry in its entirety.[39] This method enabled him to include as much factual information as possible, while lowering the risk of not being able to finish the chronicle.[40] Furthermore, he regularly includes intra-textual cross-references – both to earlier and later points in time – to help his readers get the most out of his chronicle.[41] His desire to clarify is further evidenced by topographical explanations, translations of Latin placenames to the vernacular and vice versa, and an explanation of the Islamic dating system when a citation

[35] This is not surprising, as he would be writing about events that took place during his own lifetime at that point. The average length of the entries also increases progressively, meaning that about 42% of the chronicle pertains to the period prior to the year 1000 (about 222 folios out of 530 in the MS) and 58% (about 308 folios) to the period 1000-1241. Due to Scheffer-Boichorst's decision to leave out some verbatim citations, which is more often the case for earlier history, this ratio is exaggerated in the edition (35% of 267 pages discusses pre-1000 events).

[36] E.g. Alberic, 707, 807, 847; there are many more instances. Do note that he does not always provides this official indication for his own commentary.

[37] As noted by many historians, e.g. Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines et la « Matière de Bretagne »', 38 (which identifies Alberic as a 'chartiste avant-la-lettre' and a true 'encyclopédiste'); and Schmidt-Chazan, 'L'usage de la compilation', 278, 293.

[38] Alberic, 716. 'Hic subiciuntur nomina urbium Hispanie, qui causa brevitatis omisi'.

[39] Sometimes he only cites the first sentence of his source preceded by a note to the effect of '[source] gives an account of [event], which begins as follows:'; e.g. Alberic, 838.

[40] The chronicle is still likely unfinished; it abruptly ends in mid-1241 (see Schmidt-Chazan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines', 163), but it is unclear why it was not completed. This should always be kept in mind, together with the fact that the original manuscript has been lost and that the surviving copies have been interpolated. It is possible that Alberic died before being able to complete his work. However, Scheffer-Boichorst argues that he first stopped writing in 1241 but then revised his work in 1251-1252, for instance to include references to Giles of Orval's *Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium* (compiled in 1247-1251); see 'Introduction', pp. 646-647. Schmidt-Chazan (163 and 177; also Van Nitert, 'Matière de France', 410) does not dispute this, although this somewhat complicates the question of why the chronicle remained unfinished – if not due to the death of the author. The later revision could have been the work of the interpolator, but Scheffer-Boichorst does not think this likely.

[41] E.g. Alberic, 711. 'de hoc plenius habetur in anno 766'.

refers to it.[42] The chronicle takes on a textbook-like quality when Alberic recounts the founding of the mendicant orders, explaining that the Dominicans follow the Rule of Augustine and call their superior a *prior generalis*, whereas the Franciscans have their own rule and a *ministrum generalem*.[43]

Finally, some topics were of particular interest to Alberic. These stand out because they are frequently discussed, or are the subject of Alberic's own commentaries and entries. They include his familiarity with the affairs of the Empire (both past and current), a passion for detailed genealogies, a broad knowledge of and interest in books and literature, – Grabowski calls him 'one of the most well-versed authors of his time' – crusades, heresies, and demonic activity.[44] On the other hand, something that is noticeably absent is an interest in Marian miracles and expressions of Marian devotion. The Cistercians, like many others, claimed a special relationship with the Virgin; devotion to the Heavenly Queen often permeated their writings.[45] Not so in Alberic's case: only a handful of entries mention her briefly. His account of Las Navas de Tolosa is the only detailed exception.

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[42] E.g. ibidem, 885 ('Bulgaria, que est inter Hungariam et Greciam'), 849 ('Rupe Amatoris, id est Rochemador') and 927 ('Lilenveld, id est campus liliorum'); the Islamic dating system is mentioned at p. 695.
[43] Ibidem, 887-888.
[44] On the Empire: Schmidt-Chazan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines'. On the genealogies: Grabowski, 'Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' Genealogies'. On his knowledge on books: Mula, 'Looking for an author'; the similar amount and nature of references to books and other written works in Alberic's *Chronica* and the *Chronicon Clarevallense* is one of his arguments supporting Alberic's authorship of both. The quote is from Grabowksi, 'Old Tales for a New *Gens*', 152. The second part of this thesis will investigate Alberic's interest in heresy and the demonic. Tamm, 'Communicating Crusade' also notes a particular concern with the Cistercians and martyrdom, but this is mainly the case for the entries on the Baltic Crusades.
[45] Many scholars have written about Cistercian Marian devotion. See e.g. James France, 'Cistercians under Our Lady's Mantle', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 37:4 (2002) 393-414 and Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven 2009) 149–157. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote extensively on Mary; Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum* includes an entire Book focussed on the Virgin's miraculous interventions – to name but two examples. In one case, Alberic has rewritten a Marian miracle story from the *Dialogus Miraculorum* in such a way as to almost eliminate reference to her entirely; see Mula, '*Exempla* and Historiography', 158. Helinand of Froidmont's *Chronicon* (c. 1150-probably 1237) also has many more detailed Marian entries compared to Alberic.

Thesis structure

Was the supernatural as a whole a topic of great interest to Alberic, as some scholars have implied? In the first part of this thesis, I will argue that it is not. Neither is the inclusion of supernatural occurrences simply the result of credulity or a lack of scholarly capabilities on Alberic's part. This can be established by a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. First, I will demonstrate that the number of entries reporting on the supernatural is very small compared to the total amount of information that Alberic provides. All relevant entries – those discussing supernatural occurrences – have been tracked down through both digital analysis and close reading of the chronicle. These entries will be qualitatively assessed based on the (often small) amount of detail they provide on the supernatural. Next, through close reading of the passages in context, I will show that Alberic often does not includes these entries simply because they mention supernatural occurrences, but primarily because he concluded that they contain true historical facts. His passion for correct chronology and dates kept him from including stories that he could not date satisfactorily. To highlight his fact-oriented *modus operandi* I will then adopt a comparative approach. His reception of Helinand of Froidmont's (*c*. 1150-after 1229, probably 1237) chronicle, in particular his accounts of the supernatural, reveals much about Alberic's priorities. Further comparison to Helinand will also shed light on the influence of Cistercian spirituality and ideas about knowledge and education on the *Chronica*. Finally, the differences between Helinand and Alberic's chronicles raise questions about the latter's intended audience and use, which will also be addressed.

The second part of this thesis consists of a case study on a sub-class of supernatural occurrences, namely entries reporting on with demonic activity. The quantitative research presented in Part I reveals the relatively high frequency with which Alberic discusses demons. Close reading of these passages invites further investigation due to the significant amount of detail which is provided in several of these entries, and a more urgent tone in Alberic's

writing. These accounts can thus be marked as exceptional. They reveal how Alberic, a thirteenth-century Cistercian monk with a passion for (historical) knowledge, was particularly mindful of the demonic, the heretical, and sorcery – three threats to Christendom which he explicitly connects to each other. He was not a groundbreaking theologian or demonologist, but the way in which he reports on this topic reveals a lot about both himself and the world in which he lived.

Firstly, I will briefly investigating his reception of writings on the demonic by fellow Cistercians Herbert of Clairvaux (c. 1153-c. 1198), Caesarius of Heisterbach (*c*. 1180-*c*. 1240), and Helinand of Froidmond, and compare this to his own treatment of demon stories. Next, I will focus on three noteworthy features of Alberic's reports on demonic activity. These reflect both the early thirteenth-century's 'persecuting society' and monastic culture, as well as aspects of Alberic's own personality and interests.[46] These are, firstly, an evident fear of internal threats to the Church, demonstrated in accounts of pious clergymen and monks falling prey to demonic influence and heresy. Secondly, the acknowledgement of a wide array of demonic abilities and strategies which at times border on the unorthodox. Thirdly, the recurring connection between demons, heresy, and sorcery, which corresponds to the historical context of the chronicle's creation. According to some historians, the first half of the thirteenth century marked the beginning stages of a development which increasingly allowed for the persecution of suspected magic practitioners in inquisitorial procedures.[47] These were initially intended for the crime of heresy. This laid the foundation for the late medieval and early modern witch hunts. Alberic's chronicle demonstrates that the near-equation of heretics,

[46] On 'persecuting society', see R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe* (Oxford 1987) and R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Malden MA 2007).
[47] See e.g. Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (Philadelphia 1978); Alain Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, Teresa Lavender Fagan transl. (Chicago 2006), originally published as *Satan hérétique: Naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident Médiéval (1280-1330)* (Paris 2004).

demon worshippers, and sorcerers was already highly developed in the early 1200s. All in all, I hope to contribute to a deeper appreciation for and better understanding of Alberic's chronicle, his approach to writing history, and his worldviews.

I. A wonderful world: the chronicler and the supernatural

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well. (Mark 16:17-18)

Medieval chroniclers lived in a wonderful world – literally. Their worldview firmly built upon Biblical truths like this passage from the Gospel of Mark, they were much more inclined to see the miraculous and the supernatural manifested in the world around them than the average modern-day westerner. Miracles, exorcisms, and divine aid in justly fought wars were to be expected in the presence of truly repentant believers seeking to spread the Gospel. Reports of supernatural occurrences had their rightful place in the midst of what most modern scholars would agree are 'historical facts' – or at least accounts of factual events. To the medieval chronicler events of the supernatural variety were no less 'real' than others.

Just like with any event, claims about supernatural occurrences required provenance from a reliable source and careful fact-checking by either the chronicler himself or those he considered more qualified than him in order to be deemed authentic. Alberic and many of his fellow chroniclers were well aware that even historical 'facts' could be (ab)used to propagandistic and ideologically driven ends; they could be manipulated so as to change their meaning, or be invented altogether. The same was true for supernatural occurrences. However, this should not deter scholars from researching these entries seriously. Believing in supernatural manifestations does not equal gullibility or an inability to think critically. Chroniclers included these accounts for a reason, and those reasons are worth investigating.

1. Historiography of Alberic's merit as a historian

Scheffer-Boichorst was certainly not the last to criticise Alberic's scholarly efforts and the value of his chronicle to historians. In a discussion of his entries on the Fourth Crusade (1204), Alfred Andrea states that 'safe in his cloister, Alberic shows an almost naive interest in the battles surrounding the capture of the city, which tell us less about the conquest of Constantinople and more about his fanciful understanding of that frankly brutal event'.[48] Rather than assuming simple naivety, Gary Dickson accuses Alberic of deliberately inventing information in his account of the Children's Crusade (1212).[49] To him, Alberic is a 'mythistorian' constructing a hagiography for the child crusaders rather than a scholar reconstructing a historical event. He states that 'historical unreliability and a propensity to exaggerate do not make Alberic a mythistorian. What does is his love of mythistory for its own sake.'[50] This statement is not supported with further evidence. In sharp contrast, Antoni Grabowski's research on another possibly invented historical narrative – the *origo gentis* of the Semigallians – does not assume the worst about Alberic's intentions as a historian. Instead, he highlights the chronicler's thorough understanding of the historiographer's task as it was conceived of during his time.[51] The chronicle as a whole supports this view much better. Moisan also stresses that Alberic was not a 'born forger', but sometimes simply chose to follow one of multiple theories floating around about the (far) past.[52] On other occasions, he included several theories for the reader to make up their own mind.[53]

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[48] Andrea, 'The Crusade Viewed from the Cloister', 270.
[49] Dickson, *The Children's Crusade*, 143-147.
[50] Ibidem. 146-147.
[51] Grabowski, 'Old Tales for a New *Gens*'.
[52] Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines et la « Matière de Bretagne »', 39. 'Loin d'être un falsificateur-né, notre moine s'est conformé à une tradition parmi d'autres tout aussi flottantes'.
[53] As for the true tomb of Bede (Alberic, 820) and the capture of Latin Emperor Baldwin I (Alberic, 886), which I will both discuss below.

Studies on Alberic's report on the 1212 Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa also suffer from a tendency to criticise his reliability as a historian based on relatively short excerpts. This account is of interest to historians of the Reconquista because it is one of the few detailed non-Spanish sources. However, they ultimately prioritise the Spanish (eyewitness) accounts. For instance, Martín Alvira Cabrer's standard work *Las Navas de Tolosa 1212: Idea, liturgia y memoria de la batalla* mentions Alberic's information when it diverts from the Spanish sources, but does not go into detail about the *Chronica*'s internal logic or underlying goals.[54] Alvira characterises Alberic as 'always conducive to miracle stories', although he admits that the chronicler was in one particular instance 'more prudent and less credulous' than usual.[55] Alberic's unique attribution of the Christian victory to miraculous intervention by the Virgin of Rocamadour is then easily dismissed as the fanciful interpretation of a pious monk too far removed from the events to give a factual explanation.[56]

However, these general conclusions about Alberic's academic skills and intentions do not hold up as well when the chronicle as a whole and its context of creation are taken into account. Matthew Bailey and Miguel Dolan Gómez have more carefully addressed *why*

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[54] Alvira, *Las Navas de Tolosa 1212* mentions Alberic's account at 38-39 (brief introduction of the chronicle), 113, 152, 154, 168, 173, 231, 281, 288 (discusses the Marian banner), 301, 331, 343-345 (very briefly discusses the dispute at Malagón and Calatrava, which Bailey and Gomez investigate in much more detail, see below), 258, 382. Julio González, *El Reino de Castilla en la época de Alfonso VIII*, Vol. 1 (Madrid 1960) 49-50 characterises Alberic as a 'lover of miracles'. I thank professor Alvira for alerting me to this through private correspondence.

[55] Ibidem, 168. 'siempre propicio a los relatos milagrosos'; 'en su favor debe decirse que aquí se muestra más prudente y menos crédulo, asegurando que el *hombre silvestre* que enseño el camino a los christianos "se decía" (*ut dicebat*) que era un enviado divino'. Alvira echoes Scheffer-Boichorst's sentiments about Alberic's credulity (proven by his inclusion of miracle stories), but does not cite Scheffer-Boichorst's introduction. He does acknowledge that Alberic was 'bien informado de los asuntos hispanos' during the aftermath of 1212 (p. 382) and concludes that he used Alphonso VIII of Castile and Arnaud Amalric's eyewitness accounts to construct his own narrative (p. 358).

[56] It is telling that Dickson's book is amongst the studies Alvira annotates to his brief introduction of Alberic's chronicle, see Alvira, *Las Navas de Tolosa 1212*, 38-39. For his brief introduction of Alberic he cites Schmidt-Chazan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines', Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines à l'écoute des chanteurs de geste', Dickson, *The Children's Crusade*; as well as Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink eds., *Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises. Le Moyen Âge* (Paris 1992) 110-111; and Francisco J. Hernández, 'La corte de Fernando III y la casa real de Francia: Documentos, crónicas y monumentos' in: *Fernando III y su tiempo (1201-1252): VIII Congreso de Estudios Medievales* (Léon 2003) 103-156. Julio González' opinion of Alberic may also have coloured his perspective (see note 53), as well as Scheffer-Boichors's introduction.

Alberic's account is different from the Spanish sources. Both emphasise that his account should be understood within the French crusading paradigm within which he was writing.[57] The miracle story is part of his attempt to rehabilitate the crusade's 'French' participants and claim a 'French' share in this 'Spanish' victory. These studies demonstrate that the chronicle cannot be simply dismissed as the product of a miracle-loving monk's credulity, even when a miracle is at the centre of an account. Politico-cultural sentiments played an important role in Alberic's unique account of the battle.

Other historians have also contributed to a more nuanced understanding of Alberic's treatment of religious elements. The *Chronica* includes several accounts where supernatural occurrences would be expected given the context or source, but are suspiciously absent. Moisan points out that Alberic's adaptations of the *Historia Caroli Magni* are surprisingly fact-oriented; he has edited out several references to overt divine intervention, theological disputes, and conspicuous expressions of piety.[58] Marek Tamm emphasises the same for Alberic's reports on the Baltic Crusades, which are based on oral sources.[59] These focus on the role of the Cistercians and the political power struggles at play; they do not discuss miracles. Tamm explains the sharp contrast between Alberic's historical accounts and Caesarius of Heisterbach's miracle stories set in the same context (and probably based on the same oral sources) primarily by a difference in genre. Alberic wrote a chronicle; Caesarius compiled a miracle collection. However, the same contrast can also be noted for other chronicles reporting on the Baltic Crusades, such as *Heinrici Cronicon Lyvoniae* (*c*. 1229),

[57] Bailey, 'Las Navas de Tolosa'; and Dolan, '*Rex Parvus* or *Rex Nobilis*?'. My unpublished paper The Virgin at War: Alberic of Trois-Fontaines († after 1252) on the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) (unpublished Research MA paper, Leiden University 2023) builds on their research but focusses on the Marian aspect (which is exceptional for Alberic) as well as Cistercian connections to Rocamadour and the Albigensian Crusade.
[58] Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines à l'écoute des chanteurs de geste', 955.
[59] Tamm, 'The Livonian Crusade in Cistercian Stories'; he also discusses Alberic's informants for these entries.

which do emphasise miracles. Marian intervention and devotion were especially emphasised during these crusades, and would be expected in Alberic's accounts.[60]

Also based on a comparison between Alberic and Caesarius, Stefano Mula demonstrates that Alberic's primary concern was to write 'true history'.[61] During his research on Alberic's possible authorship of the *Chronicon Clarevallense*, he stumbled upon another manuscript written in the same hand. He considers both to be Alberic's autographs. Titled *Adbreuiatio*, it contains a neatly organised selection of *exempla* from Caesarius' *Dialogus Miraculorum*; not by theme but in chronological order. Additional historical information such as dates, names, places, and sources is also provided. The selection, chronological orgaisation, and additional facts are congruent with Alberic's unique reception of Caesarius in the *Chronica*. Mula therefore concludes that the *Adbreuiatio* and the *Chronicon* are all part of the same long-term project, namely the gigantic universal history. Thus, they give us valuable insight into his work process and goals – which prioritise historical reliability over miraculous or edifying content *an sich*.

It is undeniable that Alberic was sometimes prone to overestimating his own skills in his quest for knowledge; for instance when he interlaced two or more genealogies based on the (incorrect) conviction that two different people were one and the same.[62] As Moisan notes, he sometimes tried to forcefully 'reconcile the irreconcilable' in an effort to generate more historical knowledge.[63] However, most scholars who have investigated the chronicle in depth

[60] On Marian devotion with regard to the conquest and Christianisation of the Baltic, See Jüri Kivimäe, '*Servi Beatae Marie Virginis*: Christians and Pagans in Henry's Chronicle of Livonia' in: Kirsi Salonen and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa eds., *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages: Popes, Saints, and Crusaders* (Amsterdam 2020) 201-226; on the continued importance of Marian devotion in the Baltic see Marian Dygo, 'The Political Role of the Cult of the Virgin Mary in Teutonic Prussia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *Journal of Medieval History* 15:1 (1989) 63-80.
[61] Mula, 'Looking for an author'; and Mula, '*Exempla* and Historiography', 151.
[62] Grabowski, 'Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' Genealogies', 247.
[63] Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines à l'écoute des chanteurs de geste', 973. 'On le voit, bien des efforts sont déployés pour tout concilier… même l'inconciliable.'

agree that Alberic's primary concern was to provide as many historical facts as possible. He demonstrates some remarkable critical thinking skills in dealing with his source material and the way in which he combines their content with his own research and experiences. As shown by his reception of Caesarius, the supernatural definitely has a place in his chronicle; but the primary criterium for inclusion is historical authenticity and relevance.

2. The data: accounts of the supernatural in the *Chronica*

In order to assess the weight – both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking – and role of the supernatural in Alberic's work, I have compiled a list of all entries in which supernatural occurrences are discussed (see Appendices A and B).[64] 'Supernatural occurrences' fall into one or more of the following categories: miracles, demonic/diabolical activity, visions/dreams/apparitions, and prophecies. Taken at face value, the total number of hits for supernatural occurrences (namely, 209) is quite high. However, this is somewhat deceptive. Firstly, sometimes multiple 'types' of supernatural occurrences apply to a single account. For example, if a miracle repulses a demon, this yields two hits ('miracle' and 'demon'). It is therefore better to count the amount of *entries* discussing the supernatural. This amounts to a total of 179 entries. Additionally, Alberic's tendency to cross-reference means that some events are mentioned in multiple entries.[65] Secondly, the chronicle is very long. The relevant entries, although there are many in absolute terms, add up to only a small percentage of the total work. For comparison: the period 1000-1241 alone (about half of the chronicle) measures well over two thousand entries.

[64] Although, at present, I cannot guarantee that every single entry meeting the criteria has been included, the utmost care has been taken to compile the current list and I am confident that the accumulated material allows for reliable conclusions to be drawn.

[65] E.g. the entries on Elizabeth of Schönau's vision of the eleven thousand virgins (Alberic, 683 and 843) and on the Holy Lance, the discovery of which is discussed under the year 1098 (Alberic, 810) but which is already referred to in the year 987 on the occasion of the discovery of a false holy lance (Alberic, 773).

Thirdly, this list includes entries that do not discuss the supernatural in detail. Frequently occurring examples include reports which merely state that 'miracles happened at the tomb of this saint', or 'this saint performed many miracles'. In order to get better insight into Alberic's treatment of the supernatural, these miracle accounts have been marked as 'second rank' accounts.[66] To be considered a 'first rank' miracle account, a certain level of information has to be present, such as what the miracle looked like and who performed it (other than 'God').[67] Additionally, reports are considered second rank when they merely mention a miraculous aspect as background information. Examples are Alberic's report on the translation of a relic, which he briefly notes is 'known to have resuscitated saint Maternus' and his reference to the biblical resurrection of Lazarus in the context of another relic translation.[68] The 179 entries describing supernatural occurrences include 109 entries on miracles, of which only 48 (44%) can be classified as first rank miracle accounts. Thus, including second rank miracles in the total count but still introducing this distinction demonstrates that many of Alberic's 'miracle stories' are formulaic in nature or reveal a desire to include relevant context clues for his readers – rather than being evidence of an interest in miracles for the sake of miracles. Exceptional reports like that on the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa disproportionally attract the attention of historians, contributing to an overgeneralised view of the importance of the supernatural in the chronicle as a whole.

[66] Miracles account for the majority of supernatural occurrences in Alberic's chronicle, and extant scholarship focuses mostly on miracle stories. For the current research, this 'first' or 'second rank' distinction has therefore not been applied to other categories of supernatural occurrences.
[67] Note that this still allows for entries which provide minimal detail to be considered a first rank miracle account. Much more nuance could be added to this ranking, but it suffices for the present purposes.
[68] Alberic, 766 and 739.

3. The supernatural and Alberic's passion for facts and dates

Alberic's passion for numbers is evident from several entries providing detailed data on the number of abbots, chapels, houses, or priories associated with different religious orders at the time of his writing.[69] Historians have also noted that he took great care to track down the correct chronology of historical events; he even boasted about this himself![70] Some examples will demonstrate the particular pride he took in his skill to reconstruct correct dates. First of all, in the absence of a prologue giving us explicit insight into his methodology, he jumps headfirst into calculating and defending a biblical timeline, discussing contradictory opinions about important dates and resolving them.[71] This sets the tone for the remainder of the work. Especially the age of the Earth and the dates of Jesus' birth and resurrection receive much attention.[72] All this is presented in his own words supported with brief citations, clearly the fruit of diligent scholarly labour.

Even more enlightening for Alberic's priorities is an essay-like entry in which he defends his conviction that an influential source, Gregory of Tours' (*c*. 538-594) *Historia Francorum*, has erred with regard to the date of Saint Martin's death – which no one before him had noticed.[73] He presents a detailed argument based on his observation that the number of years between certain events does not correspond in different sources. Next, he shows that this can be resolved by counting from the Incarnation instead of the Passion, as Gregory did.[74] 'Therefore' he writes, 'I am saying, not out of my opinion, but out of confirmation and

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[69] Ibidem, 800 (Carthusians), 820 (Knights Hospitallers and Templars), 823 (Premonstratensians), 828 (Saint-Victor in Paris), 875 (Trinitarians), and 895 (*ordo Vallis Scolarium* in the diocese of Langres and *Mons Dei* in the diocese of Speyer).
[70] E.g. Scheffer-Boichorst, 'Introduction', 649. 'Albricum maximam operam in chronologia corrigenda navasse et hac in causa quasi magnifice se intulisse'.
[71] Alberic, 674.
[72] Ibidem, 678-679.
[73] Ibidem, 688. A similar argument based on chronological incongruences is found at p. 773, where he calls out William of Malmesbury's incorrect genealogy of Hugh Capet.
[74] According to modern scholarship, he does not get the date exactly right. Putting it at 400, he does get closer to the actual date (which is 397) than Gregory of Tours (who argues 412).

certainty, that the blessed Martin died in this year [400 AD], and I am ready to prove this with certain authorities against all those time reckoners (*conpotistas*)and chronographers, if they have been contradictory.'[75] His next statement is similarly revealing of his priorities:

> But it is not surprising if this was hitherto not corrected, because holy men who are in monasteries are more intent on contemplation and [writing] sermons than on [writing] chronicles. And the *literati* who are in the world strive towards benefices (*prebendas*) or money. Thence the following is [said]: "Galen gives wealth, as does the Justinian [law] degree. Collect the chaff from some, the grain from the others." As this book is reckoned by such people under chaff, or considered as chaff, it is no wonder if the aforementioned authority hitherto has not been corrected by those who have a certain knowledge and exceed the others under the guise of authority.[76]

He not only defends the value of studying and writing chronicles in general, but takes great pride in his own critical reading abilities and his willingness to put the search for truth above all else; he may also have suffered from a mild case of pride. This entry on Saint Martin's death is not about the saint's passing at all; it is a demonstration of Alberic's scholarly skills and priorities. References to miracles performed by the great saint are absent, and the brief mention of a vision in this entry is only included because it supports Alberic's argument.

Elsewhere Alberic provides more insight into his methodology and motivations. He mentions that the sources he had been using thus far now cease to provide him with the information he needs, and laments that 'therefore, since such men, who could have said many

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[75] Alberic, 688. 'Dico ergo non per opinionem, sed per affirmationem et certitudinem, quod beatus Martinus obiit hoc anno, et hoc paratus sum probare certis auctoritatibus contra omnes conpotistas et cronographos, si fuerint contradictores.'

[76] Ibidem. 'Non est autem mirum, si usque ad hec tempora istud non fuit correctum, quia sancti viri, qui sunt in claustris, plus intendunt contemplatione et sermonibus quam cronicis. Et literati qui sunt in seculo vel ad prebendas tendunt vel ad pecuniam. Unde est illud: "Dat Galienus opes et sanctio Iustiniana. Ex aliis paleas, ex istis collige grana." Cum ergo liber iste conputetur a talibus inter paleas vel reputetur pro paleis, non est mirum, si predicta auctoritas huc usque non fuit correcta ab hiis, qui scientiam certam habebant et auctoritate personatus ceteris excellebant.'

and good things – and could have said it well – leave us in the middle of the journey, I trust in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we will be able to do just as well to attempt to collect (*colligere*) and order (*ordinare*) according to the prescribed outline the things that they have trodden under foot as if contemptible.'[77] He consistently calls out his sources when they fail to mention something he deems important. Of Sigebert he complains that he 'makes no mention of the third brother of this Charles'.[78] Later on, he remarks that 'this chapter, which Sigebert places here, should have been placed above, after the war at the Meuse between count Conrad [the Red] and Reginar [III] of Hainaut. In this way it will be true what bishop Otto [of Freising] says when the same Conrad was reconciled to the emperor, [namely] that the emperor afterwards left count Conrad in Italy to pursue Berenger.'[79]

Sometimes he also explains how it is possible that his sources have erred or contradict each other. In the case of Gregory of Tours errors occurred due to a confusion between the Incarnation and the Passion. In a later instance Alberic explains a comment by Otto of Freising as rooted in (too much?) reverence for the papal office: 'these things were said by this bishop [Otto] out of reverence for the holy see'. He is quick to add that 'Peter Damian feels differently, and they also judge the preceding and subsequent events differently.'[80] Elsewhere he solves clashing reports on the number of people involved in a certain battle by

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[77] Ibidem, 736. 'Usque ad hunc annum Minor Ecclesiastica Hystoria Hugonis monachi pertingit, quem etiam magister Richardus in Excerptionibus suis non transit. Unde quoniam tales viri, qui multa et bona et bene dicere potuissent, in medio itinere nos relinquunt, de domini nostril Iesu Christi gratia confisi, prout melius poterimus, que ab istis quasi despecta conculcata sunt, colligere et secundum prescriptam formulam ordinare conabimur.' See Schmidt-Chazan, 'L'usage de la compilation' on the process of compilation, including the use of the terms *colligere*, *ordinare* and *narrare* with regard to chroniclers' methodologies.

[78] Ibidem, 736. 'De tertia autem fratrem istorum Karolum nullam facit mentionem Sigebertus'

[79] Ibidem, 766. 'Hoc capitulum, quod ponit Sigebertus, debuit poni supra post bellum [citing Sigebert:] quod fuit super Mosam inter Conradum ducem et Raginerum Hainonensem [end citation] et cetera. Et sic postea eodem Conrado imperatori reconciliato verum erit, quod ait episcopus Otto [of Freising], [citing Otto:] quod imperator postea ipsum reliquit Conrardum ducem in Italia ad persequendum Berengarium.'

[80] Ibidem, 769. 'Hec dicta sunt ab isto episcopo pro reverentia sancta sedis, sed aliter sentit Petrus Damianus, et ipsa etiam antecedentia gestorum et subsequentia aliter iudicant.' The context is pope Leo VIII's installation as antipope (later legitimate pope) by emperor Otto I. Alberic cites Otto of Freising's doubts about the allegedly reprehensible behaviour of the deposed pope John XII, stemming from belief in a divine protection preventing the pope from falling into such great sin.

explaining that the authors each counted according to different criteria. Guy of Bazoches counted only the knights (*milites*), Otto of Freising gave the total amount of fighters (*pugnatores*), and William of Malmesbury included all non-combatants travelling with the army.[81]

Other entries confirm that a hunger for historical facts was at the forefront of Alberic's mind when deciding what to include in his work. His reception of Caesarius, as discussed by Mula, is but one example. His version of the famous miracle story of Theophilus' pact with the Devil and his subsequent rescue by the Virgin redirects attention away from the miraculous deliverance. The story is reduced to the following line, highlighting the date: 'Anno 536: Concerning Theophilus, who, penitent, was reconciled by the blessed Mary'.[82] Additionally, three entries about the visions of mystic Elizabeth of Schönau (1129-1164) are particularly revealing. Under the year 1155 Alberic mentions the nature of her visions and at which time she began and completed writing her main work. However, he then highlights a minor work, a sermon, in which she claimed to have received a vision disclosing *the exact date* of Mary's Assumption.[83] For 1156, he cites Elizabeth's vision of the martyrdom of the eleven thousand virgins. To him, the most important aspect is again that Elizabeth has been provided with detailed information about the dates of their travel to Cologne and subsequent martyrdom. Finally, under the years 237-238 he is even more explicit. He flashes forward to Elizabeth's visions, explaining that he is listing this event under these years because that is what her vision taught her. He concludes: 'With regard to the date and the revelation of all this

[81] Ibidem, 806. 'Secundum Guidonem fuerunt ibi 100 milia milites, secundum episcopum Ottonem 300 milia pugnatores, secundum Guilelmum, qui comprehendit omnes divites et pauperes, iuvenes et senes, parvulos et mulieres, potuerunt estimari ad sexagies centum milia. Ita potest fieri diversarum sententiarum concordantia.'
[82] Alberic, 692. 'Anno 536. De Theophilo penitente per beatam Mariam reconciliato'. Note that this entry has not been counted as featuring demonic/diabolical activity due to Alberic's omission of any direct mention of this aspect. I have categorised it as a second rank miracle account without mention of *miraculum* or *mirabilium* (See Appendix A. Methodology and data).
[83] Ibidem, 843.

history, all the authors of histories and chronographers have erred until the time of this Elizabeth.'[84] He is most interested in the historical information Elizabeth's visions can provide him with, and regards them as a reliable way to resolve discordances amongst historians which would have remained unsolved otherwise.

Supernatural revelation can therefore be a medium through which Alberic satiates his thirst for information or confirmation thereof. For 1233 he also includes a report of a vision to confirm his expectations of an impending papal decision; official letters had not yet been received at the time of his writing.[85] However, as is clear from his source-based calculations, he does not rely on divine revelation alone to make his cases. In some instances, he explicitly expresses caution against believing certain reports on the supernatural, just as he does when citing epic literature.[86] For instance, when he recounts the tale of Amicus and Amelius (including several supernatural occurrences) he explicitly distinguishes between different elements of the story based on levels of reliability. He assures his readers that 'although the preceding narration appears in some aspects to be apocryphal, those that follow are authentic.'[87] Under the year 1173 he reports on a girl from Sens who claimed to have discovered a cave full of treasures, but is quick to mention that the local bishop has warned people not to go there on pain of excommunication because it was merely a demonic illusion.[88] In this case, he may have included the tale as a warning to his readers. Similarly, under 1224 he notes that claims of miracles by a female recluse were under investigation by both ecclesiastical and secular authorities, with no conclusive verdict on their veracity at the

[84] Ibidem, 683. 'De quarum sanctarum tempore et de revelatione huius historie omnes usque ad tempus istius Elizabeth errabant hystoriarum scriptores et cronographi. In eisdem etiam visionibus continetur, quis in hoc anno erat Coloniensis episcopus.' He also marks as important that 'In this vision was also contained who was bishop of Cologne in that year.'
[85] Ibidem, 932.
[86] See Van Nitert, 'Matière de France and the World Chronicle of Aubri de Trois-Fontaines' for examples.
[87] Alberic, 714. 'Licet igitur predicta narratio videatur esse in aliquibus apocrifa, ea tamen, que secuntur, autentica sunt.'
[88] Ibidem, 854.

time of writing. Some lauded her piety; others rejected her claims. Alberic leaves it up to the reader at this point, but expresses caution against such (yet) unsubstantiated claims.[89] The same is true for an entry discussing several – sometimes contradictory – reports on the capture and possible murder of Latin Emperor Baldwin I following the Battle of Adrianople (1205). Alberic warns after one report that from it alone 'the death of this Baldwin is not confirmed, but I simply report what a certain Flemish preacher has said.'[90]

We have now seen two ways in which Alberic often uses accounts of supernatural occurrences. Firstly, he includes them not primarily because of the supernatural content itself, but because they contain historical information – which he can then also use to date events or to correct mistakes in other sources. Secondly, a supernatural event like a vision can itself be a channel through which clarity is provided regarding historical facts. Instances where Alberic demonstrates a critical attitude towards the reliability of such reports warn us against assuming too quickly that any mention of a supernatural event is merely proof of gullibility or intense piety on his part.

4. Alberic's reception of Helinand of Froidmont

A comparative approach will shed further light on the extent to which Alberic's treatment of the supernatural follows conventions of the time, or is instead his personal approach to writing history. Helinand of Froidmont's *Chronicon* lends itself well to this end. There are some important similarities between the two chroniclers that allow for a comparison with a minimal amount of variables. Helinand himself (*c*. 1150-probably 1237) is better known than Alberic, but his chronicle was not very widely-known either – at least judging from the lack of many

[89] Ibidem, 913. On late medieval suspicion against female mystics, see Nancy Caciola, 'Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42:2 (2000) 268-306.
[90] Ibidem, 886. 'Unde de morte huius Balduini non affirmando, sed simpliciter refero quod ad quodam presbitero Flandrensi dicitur.'

surviving copies. It has also never been fully edited and parts of it were already lost within a couple of decades after it was written.[91] More importantly though, Helinand was a Cistercian like Alberic; both men lived around the same time; Helinand's northern French monastery of Froidmont was relatively speaking not too far from Trois-Fontaines; and both monks decided to write a massive universal chronicle based on impressive amounts of sources. Furthermore, Helinand stopped writing in 1223 – his entries discuss events up to 1204 – and Alberic knew his work well. In fact, Helinand is amongst his most cited sources together with Sigebert of Gembloux (*c*. 1030-1112) and continuators, Otto of Freising (*c*. 1114-1158), and William the Breton (*c*. 1165-*c*. 1225). Even more importantly, Helinand is the written source that Alberic uses most often for supernatural accounts; nineteen such entries are identifiable as based on his chronicle (see Appendix A, Table 2).[92] This allows us to track which features Alberic retains, which ones he omits, and where he disagrees with or expands on them.

Helinand's early life is less shrouded in mystery than Alberic's. His family had connections to the court of King Philip Augustus of France and several influential bishops; he was a *trouvère* before becoming a monk.[93] However, not much is known about the period between his early years in the monastery and his participation in the last phase of the Albigensian Crusade in 1229.[94] It is possible that his personal involvement in the final stages

[91] As is the case for Alberic's chronicle, two manuscript copies of Helinand's *Chronicon* have survived, as well as an incomplete early modern edition. In the 1990s Edmé Smits, M. Geertsma, C.H. Kneepkens, Eric Saak, Johannes Voorbij and Marinus Woesthuis initiated a project aiming at a complete critical edition. Much work was done but when funding ran out in 1997, the project was gradually abandoned and has unfortunately never been completed. See Hans Voorbij, 'The Chronicon of Helinand of Froidmont: A Printed Edition in an Electronic Environment', *Beiträge der Internationalen Fachtagung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für germanistische Edition im Constantijn Huygens Instituut* 4 (1998/1999) 3-12 for one of the latest updates on the edition and an introduction to the chronicle. I thank dr. Eric Saak for answering my questions about the project's current status through private correspondence.

[92] For comparison: Alberic's own information (usually through non-identified oral sources) is by far his most important source for supernatural events. This is the case for 55% of entries. This may reflect a tendency to consider accounts he has heard himself as more reliable (or containing more historical details) than those reported in older written sources.

[93] See Marie-Geneviève Grossel, 'Hélinand avant Froidmont: À la recherche d'un « trouvère » perdu', *Sacris Erudiri* 53 (2013) 319-352.

[94] On Helinand's involvement with the Albigensian Crusades, see Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade,* 174-201 and Beverly Maine Kienzle, 'Mary Speaks Against Heresy: An Unedited Sermon of Hélinand of

of the crusade contributed to the abandonment of his chronicle around 1223. To his contemporaries, Helinand was probably better known for his sermons and anti-heretical (especially Cathar) preaching than for his chronicle. No less than 69 Latin sermons of his hand have been preserved. His Old French poem *Les Vers de la Mort* (written *c*. 1194-1197) – a testament to his pre-monastic life as a *trouvère* – has survived in twenty-four manuscripts and has been edited, in contrast to only two late manuscript copies and an incomplete early modern edition for his chronicle.[95]

Despite the similarities between Alberic and Helinand, as well as between their respective chronicles, there are important differences. As to their personal life, Helinand was one such Cistercian who at some point left his cloister to preach in anti-heretical contexts, whereas evidence of such activities is absent for Alberic. With respect to the chronicles, Helinand's style leans more towards narrative than towards factual; he provides much more descriptive details especially where the supernatural is concerned. Conversely, for the vast majority of the chronicle Alberic demonstrates a determination to keep entries as succinct as possible. Perhaps he took note of Helinand's inability to finish his work and resolved to approach his own project with the mindset of an editor who knows that not everything can be included. Many short and clear summaries are sometimes more valuable than a few detailed

Froidmont for the Purification, Paris B.N. ms. lat. 14591', *Sacris Erudiri* 32:2 (1991) 291-308. He delivered the inaugural sermon as well as the address for opening and closing the synod that met in November of 1229, leading to the 1229 Treaty of Paris which formally ended the Albigensian Crusade. (*Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 182).

[95] Interest in the *Chronicon* peaked in the 1990s among scholars of the Helinand Project but may be resurging. For some of the most recent scholarship see e.g. Elisa Lonati, 'Hélinand de Froidmont lecteur des Anciens: Premières observations sur la dimension classique dans le *Chronicon*, ses sources et son influence sur la tradition encyclopédique ultérieure' in: Silverio Franzoni, Elisa Lonati and Adriano Russo eds., *Le Sens des textes classiques au Moyen Age: Transmission, exégèse, réécriture* (Turnhout 2022) 245-264; Elisa Lonati, 'A l'école d'Hélinand de Froidmont: Sur la physionomie et la postérité de ses emprunts aux *Gesta regum Anglorum* de Guillaume de Malmesbury', *Sacris Erudiri* 59 (2020) 201-266; Isabelle Draelants, 'Hélinand de Froidmont et l'exégèse hébraïque du *Dialogus* de Petrus Alfonsi' in: Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and Philipp Roelli eds., *Petrus Alfonsi and his Dialogus: Background, Context, Reception* (Florence 2014) 301-319; C. H. Kneepkens, 'The Odyssey of the Manuscripts of Helinand's *Chronicon*', *Sacris Erudiri* 52 (2013) 353-384; and Meindert Geertsma, 'Helinand's *De Bono Regimine Principis*: A Mirror for Princes or an Exegesis of Deuteronomy 17, 14-20?', *Sacris Erudiri* 52 (2013) 385-414.

descriptions. He conceived of his chronicle as a reference work, so he often encouraged readers to read the sources themselves if they wished to know more details – or to appreciate the literary quality of the source![96] The stylistic merit of his own writing was not his priority. The main goal was to compile true facts and provide clarity where others had erred in this regard. Helinand the poet paid more attention to style next to content.

Alberic's reception of Helinand demonstrates his preference for the succinct approach. It also supports the interpretation that historical relevance usually takes precedence over the supernatural *an sich* in his chronicle. Take his account of the translation of a Marian relic in the year 1115. He states that he cites Helinand, and briefly recounts the election of seven canons of Laon who were tasked to take this relic and several others to England. There, 'many miracles were performed in various places by the Blessed Virgin', until at last the canons came to Wilton Abbey where they were shown the tomb of Bede the Venerable.[97] Two things are of note. Firstly, writing this entry provokes a question in Alberic that is not related to the many miracles that took place, but draws attention away from those to a matter of historical authenticity instead: 'what is true about the tomb of Bede?'[98] At least two groups, one of them being the monks of Wilton Abbey, claimed to house the tomb of Saint Bede. Alberic's displeasure at the fact that he is unable to give a definitive answer is palpable. However, he

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[96] See e.g. Alberic, 882 for his recommendations on the Albigensian Crusade ('Qui de historia Albigensium plenium cognoscere voluerit, habetur libellus monachi domni Guidonis abbatis de Sarnaio et episcopi Carcassonensis, ubi totum illud negotium diligenter explicatur.'). Notwithstanding his stylistic choices for the chronicle, Alberic evidently appreciated literature as a genre; Moisan, Van Nitert and Grossel have drawn attention to his remark that 'about the repudiation of this queen, who is called Sibilia, the French singers have composed a beautiful story' (Alberic, 712: 'Super repudiatione dicte regine, que dicta est Sibilia, a cantoribus Gallicis pulcherrima contexta est fabula'), despite warning that some parts of it were 'entirely false' (p. 713 'omnino falsum').

[97] Ibidem, 820. 'Cum hiis reliquiis profecti sunt in Angliam, in qua insula multa facta sunt miracula in diversis locis per beatam virginem.'

[98] Ibidem, 820, 'Hic oritur questio, unde querendum est, quid sit verius de sepultura venerabilis Bede, vel si utrumque stare potest et quod hic dicitur et quod in legenda translationis beati Cuthberti de corpore eiusdem venerabilis Bede scribitur. Sed dicunt quidam, quod fuerunt duo Bede, primus qui fecit omelias, et is te de Wiltonia'. A similar discussion on the authenticity of an object is found under the year 987 (p. 773), where Alberic goes against William of Malmesbury's identification of a certain lance with the Holy Lance relic. He argues this to be impossible because the true location was only divinely revealed during the First Crusade (which he discusses mainly under the year 1098, p. 810).

diligently lists several possibilities and implicitly encourages his readers to read up on every bit of information surrounding the tombs. He remarks that Helinand does not address it, but that the reader should take note that the Bede who is buried at Wilton rests next to the body of Saint Edith about whom he has already briefly written under the year 1052.[99] This demonstrates his ability to memorise and recall relevant pieces of information, as well as his desire to make his readers aware of the relevancy of historical information.

Secondly, Scheffer-Boichorst's edition makes the passage look like this is a verbatim citation of Helinand's complete entry, but that is deceptive. As is the case in many instances, Alberic does copy Helinand's exact words, but leaves out major parts of the original text. Although Scheffer-Boichorst does indicate where he himself omitted parts of Alberic's manuscript, he does not do so when Alberic edited out parts of his sources. Here, the left-out information describes the 'many miracles' that took place during the canons' tour through England.[100] It does not concern minor details, but a lengthy account that takes up about four pages in the edition. Alberic states that 'many miracles were performed in various places by the Blessed Virgin' to indicate that he is summarising the contents of his source.[101] He often does this with similar phrases, for instance under the year 1166: 'Helinand: In this year for a time a heavy scourge castigated the people of God in the countryside of Rouergue, for ferocious wolves snatched small children from their mothers' arms and devoured them with dire bites. This plague was ended by the Blessed Virgin Mary of Rocamadour, *who also did*

[99] Ibidem, 820. 'Sed dicunt quidam, quod fuerunt duo Bede, primus qui fecit omelias, et iste de Wiltonia, iuxta quem sepulata est mulier illa versificatrix inclita. Non dicitur hic, que fuerit ista, sed hanc dicunt fuisse Egitam, que dicitur Idith, de qua superius in anno Domini 1052 expressimus.'

[100] Helinand of Froidmont, 'Chronicon' in: J.P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris 1849 to 1855) 771-1080, at 1012-1017. Henceforth 'Helinand'. The *PL* edition is imperfect, but will suffice for the present purposes. The differences between Alberic's account and Helinand's entry are so stark that matters of exact wording do not matter.

[101] If the Helinand edition is correct (which is likely in light of similar sentences Alberic employs elsewhere), this sentence is added by Alberic and is not – as Scheffer-Boichorst implies by the continuous use of a smaller font for citations – present in Helinand's original.

many other miracles.'[102] Helinand's entry again comprises several paragraphs, which Alberic summarises in two sentences.[103]

Another – less elegant – strategy which he sometimes employs for brevity's sake is to cite the opening sentence of his source and finish with 'etcetera' to indicate that the source continues on beyond what he is copying. This is the case for a brief entry on Saint William of Norwich based on Helinand's much longer account. It reads:

> The narration (*relatio*) of dom Helinand concerning a vision of infernal punishments follows, it begins thus: William, a boy from England, was crucified by the Jews in the city of Norwich on Good Friday, concerning which vision one reads: a certain boy named William, aged fifteen, etcetera. Which is found in the annals.[104]

Neither an account of this crucifixion nor the subsequent vision is included in Alberic's chronicle. These methods for summarising his sources are not exclusive to Alberic's treatment of Helinand; they are employed throughout the chronicle. They are deliberate strategies serving the purpose of brevity and clarity, and highlight the historical event instead of supernatural or religious aspects.[105] This approach, coupled with the care Alberic takes to indicate his sources, augments the readability of his massive chronicle. Contrary to the conclusion of some historians that his work is a disordered mess, he took consistent measures to ensure that his chronicle – densely packed with historical events and different perspectives

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[102] Alberic, 849. 'Elinandus: Hoc anno in Ruthenensi pago quedam tempestas gravi flagello castigavit populum Dei. Nam lupi feroces ab uberibus matrum parvulos rapiebant et diris morsibus devorabant. Hec pestilentia sedata est, et multa alia miracula per beatem Mariam virginem de Rupe Amatoris, id est Rochemador.' My emphasis.

[103] Helinand, 1067-1068. The source of this story is the miracle collection of Rocamadour, which Helinand must have seen; his version is identical to the original text. See Anonymous, *Les miracles de Notre-Dame de Rocamadour. Texte et traduction*, Edmond Albe ed./transl. (Paris 1907) for the original Latin and a French translation; and Anonymous, *The miracles of our lady of Rocamadour: Text and analysis*, Marcus Bull transl. (Woodbridge 1999) for an updated introduction and English translation. This miracle is number II.15.

[104] Alberic, 838. 'Relatio domni Elinandi de visione penarum inferni sequitur sic incipiens: Guilelmus puer in Anglia crucifigitur a Iudeis in urbe Norwico in die parasceues, de quo talis visio legitur: Puer quidam nomine Guilelmus annorum 15 etc. que in annali inveniuntur.' Helinand, 1036-1037.

[105] Other instances of the 'et cetera' strategy can be found on pages 797, 817, 819, 849, 884, 914, and elsewhere.

on them as it is – remained relatively easily consultable to his readers. It is not meant to be a comprehensive narrative of everything in itself, but intended to provide readers with just enough information that they could look up the details themselves if they wished to know more.

5. Chronicles and Cistercian views on knowledge

The Cistercians' attitudes to the pursuit of knowledge were complex, and have been a topic of much scholarly debate. Bernard of Clairvaux's heated argument with Peter Abelard on the possibility of knowing God through human ratio played an important part in setting the tone for later Cistercian attitudes. Bernard, and others with him, emphasised that God could ultimately only be known through mystical contemplation. If otherwise, would he truly be God? Although some historians concluded that the Cistercians were anti-intellectual, more recent scholarship argues rather that they protested against the particular scholastic-dialectic intellectualism propagated in the twelfth and thirteenth-century schools, but that they were not anti-intellectual on principle.[106] Worried by the tendency of *magister*s and students to encourage rivalry and the pursuit of worldly riches and prestige, they emphasised that personal spiritual growth should be the ultimate goal. Rational knowledge could be a tool in this journey, but never the end itself. Alberic also subscribed to his Order's generally negative view of the schools. This is evident from his harsh remark about the greed of 'secular *literati'* in his discussion on Saint Martin's death. Ratio and knowledge had a place in the cloister – many Cistercians in Alberic's time were themselves educated in the schools – but these should always be subordinate to divine contemplation. Wim Verbaal even argues that the Cistercians

[106] These historians reject the old model of a Cistercian 'golden age' which quickly turned into decline following the rise of scholasticism. E.g. Burton and Kerr, *The Cistercians*, esp. chapter 14; Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order* esp. chapter 7; also see Verbaal, 'Cistercians in Dialogue' on different stages and evolving attitudes of the Cistercians towards the schools throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Marinus Woesthuis, "*Nunc ad Historiam Revertamur*': History and Preaching in Helinand of Froidmont', *Sacris Erudiri* 34 (1994) 313-333.

were originally so successful as an Order because they were able to present this alternative education ideal, not just because they answered to a need for monastic reform. Far from being completely cut off from the world, the Cistercians were in constant dialogue with it. They reacted to a growing individualism and questioning of authority by absorbing elements of it without losing their own identity and monastic ideals.[107]

Eric Saak argues that Cistercian spirituality and the White Monks' ideas on knowledge shed more light on the intention behind Helinand's chronicle.[108] He concludes that it is a 'Cistercian textbook' compiling all the historical material that Cistercians would need to interpret the scriptures in an orthodox way.[109] They were then to act upon that interpretation through meditation and/or preaching. However, it is not just an informative encyclopaedia of knowledge, but also a normative-didactic text drawing the boundaries of permissible knowledge.[110] Helinand was aware that knowledge is never neutral, but is created and understood within a specific power system.[111] The *Chronicon* should therefore be seen as the product of ideas on knowledge, its acquisition, and its dissemination within one such system, the Cistercian Order. Drawing attention to the fact that Helinand does not use the word *compilare* (to compile) to describe his methodology, Saak argues that he conceived of his duties not just as 'placing gathered information in the correct order', but also discussing that which should be regarded as 'wrong knowledge'.[112] Adhering to the view that the pursuit of

[107] According to Verbaal, 'Cistercians in Dialogue', the most dynamic stage ended around 1200. According to his view, Alberic's lifetime would be a period characterised by a turn towards mysticism and an inwards orientation in reaction to the birth of the mendicant orders. He identifies this period as one of general decrease in intellectual level for the Cistercians. Alberic's chronicle reflects little of this 'turn towards mysticism'.
[108] Eric Saak, 'The Limits of Knowledge in Helinand de Froidmont's *Chronicon*' in: Peter Binkley ed., *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts* (Leiden 1997) 289-302.
[109] Ibidem, 301.
[110] Ibidem, 293.
[111] Other historians have emphasised this for the Cistercians in general; see Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, 208.
[112] Saak, 'The Limits of Knowledge', 293. Saak also summarises Helinand's methodology in *Augustinian Theology in the Later Middle Ages* Vol. 1 (Leiden 2021) 58-65. He sees him as a pioneer of thirteenth-century developments in compilatory/encyclopaedic writing. Helinand's reception of Augustine shows that he reconstructed Augustine's texts for his own purposes instead of simply copying him as an authority.

knowledge is fruitless and even dangerous when the end goal is not to grow closer to God, Helinand thus warns his reader against knowledge that could endanger – or at the very least is not pertinent to – this journey of spiritual growth.

This is made most explicit in Helinand's digressions from the chronological framework. Periodically, theological-spiritual or didactive pieces of writing interrupt the steady succession of years and events. At times he even inserts a sermon of his own hand, which is not surprising given his experience as a preacher. One such digression is Book VIII of the *Chronicon*, which is entirely dedicated to condemning (neo)platonic views on souls.[113] Such digressions are absent in Alberic's work. There are some sidesteps in the *Chronica* which inform us about his personal interests and concerns, but these are not nearly as long or frequent, nor do they resemble actual sermons or theological treatises. He hardly cites biblical or patristic sources in the chronicle. His discussion of biblical dates on the first pages of his chronicle most closely resemble Helinand's major digressions. However, Alberic's focus is on the dates themselves, not on the theological or devotional implications of his calculations. This is a very different approach compared to Helinand's, to whom 'history is rather the framework which enables [him] at given points to elaborate on various topics.'[114] In Alberic's case, the historical framework itself is almost sacred.

Alberic's main goal does appear to be *compilare* and *ordinare*, to compile and to put in order.[115] He frequently stresses the importance of discussing information in the correct order; his cross-references often include a disclaimer that the full account needs to be consulted 'in

[113] Ibidem, 294-301; Saak argues that Plato and Macrobius (who Helinand attacks in Book VIII) actually function as a stand-in for erring groups (in Helinand's view) of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, especially the neoplatonic School of Chartres.
[114] Edmé Smits 'Helinand of Froidmont and the A-text of Seneca's Tragedies', *Mnemosyne* S.IV, 36 (1986) 324-258, at 336.
[115] On compilation, also see Schmidt-Chazan, 'L'usage de la compilation'; and R.H. Rouse and M.A. Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* Revisited' in: M.D. Jordan and K. Emery eds., *Ad Litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers* (Notre Dame 1992) 113-134.

its proper place'. For example, he discusses the alleged discovery of a Christ relic in 1098, but finishes by flashing forward in this manner: 'But in which way that leaden box with the shroud (*sudarium*) [passed] from hand to hand and finally came to a certain abbey of our Order, we shall tell in its place [under 1119], lest we appear here to say one thing for another.'[116] Knowledge is not neutral either in Alberic's chronicle. His choices as a compilator dictate which information is shared with the reader and what is not included, how it is presented and contrasted to other information, and what is emphasised versus what is silently omitted. These choices are influenced by personal interests, but also by Cistercian attitudes towards knowledge in general. However, it is telling that Helinand's digressions are usually directed against heresies, whereas Alberic's are often related to errors other chroniclers have made. He certainly condemns heretics at every possible occasion, but does not go into much detail about their beliefs. At one point he even states that 'we do not need now to present in the open what the belief and teaching of these heretics are – which originated in the detestable Manichean[s] – nor what they do in secret.'[117]

6. The *Chronica*'s intended use: a tool for sermon writing?

To an extent, these methodological, editorial, and stylistic choices reveal what purpose a chronicle could or was intended to serve. There is no consensus about Alberic's intended audience.[118] In the absence of counterarguments, I would argue that his intended audience was first and foremost his fellow Cistercians. The White Monks primarily produced texts for

[116] Ibidem, 809. 'Qualiter autem vasculum illud plumbeum cum sudario de manu in manum et usque ad quandam nostri ordinis abbatiam pervenerit, suo loco dicemus, ne hic aliud pro alio dicere videamur.' Another example can be found on p. 871. 'Qualiter autem post annos 17 rex eam receperit in perfectam gratiam, suo loco dicetur.'
[117] Alberic, 945. 'Que sit opinio istorum hereticorum vel que assertio, qui originem habent a detestando Manicheo, vel que ipsi faciant in abscondito, non est modo necesse in medium proferre'.
[118] Comp. Van Nitert, 'Matière de France and the World Chronicle of Aubri de Trois-Fontaines' 411-412; and Grossel, 'Ces « chroniqueurs à l'oreille épique »', par. 36.

'internal' use.[119] Emilia Jamroziak argues that the main purpose of their historiographical works was 'not to inform posterity about the important historical events, but to inculcate in Cistercian monks a sense of belonging to the Order, and to teach them to learn from the past experience of their communities, and to follow the example of the holy abbots and pray for all past and present friends of the abbey.'[120] She draws this general conclusion from research based mainly on English Cistercian chronicles, like that of Ralph of Coggeshall.[121] These are relatively regional in scope and do not exactly fall into the same category as Helinand and Alberic's universal chronicles. However, these too were produced in the context of the Cistercian ideal of personal spiritual growth. Their conception of the ultimate goal of knowledge as growing in virtue does point in the direction of a primarily internal audience for such works as well. This internal use comprised private contemplation or meditation, consultation for sermon writing, and the formation of novices. Scholars of Helinand's chronicle agree that his intended audience was the Cistercian monks, and that it was meant to be used as a tool for sermon writing for himself and his brothers.[122]

However, what determines whether a chronicle was intended to serve as a tool for sermon writing? Van Nitert assumes that Alberic's *Chronica* was also compiled to this end, but his arguments are primarily based on inference rather than primary source research. Firstly, he refers to Richard H. Rouse's studies on the thirteenth-century development of innovative study aids such as alphabetic inventory lists, indexes, and numbered chapters.

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[119] Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, chapter 7. She also notes with regard to sermons that 'the most important audiences for Cistercian preaching were always their own communities'. Preaching a crusade to the masses made up a minority of all sermons. A 'sermon' could be a speech delivered to a group, but also a text intended to be contemplated in private and circulate within the community in this way (p. 224-225).
[120] Ibidem, 220. There were strict rules limiting the production of texts like sermons and theological works precisely because these tended to circulate outside the order as well, whereas the writing of chronicles and hagiographical texts was less rigorously regulated (p. 209).
[121] See Elizabeth Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order: Cistercian Historical Writing in England, 1150–1220* (Turnhout 2002) chapter 6, esp. p. 190-191 and 193 (one of Jamroziak's sources) on the relationship between Ralph's *exempla*/vision stories and specifically Cistercian ideals, meant as instructions and examples to the readers.
[122] See e.g. Woesthuis, '*Nunc ad Historiam Revertamur*'.

Rouse argues that the Cistercians, in their role as anti-heresy preachers, pioneered these innovations as tools for sermon writing.[123] However, Rouse's research does not prove (or argue) that all Cistercian texts were written to the sole end of sermon production. Alberic probably benefitted from these innovations in some way during his compilation process, but his own chronicle does not reflect them. He does not annotate specific passages in his sources using chapter indications; there are no separate books, chapters or chapter headlines apart from the indication of the year, no index, not even a prologue outlining the structure.

Secondly, Van Nitert refers to Edmé Smits' studies on Helinand's chronicle. Following Smits' conclusion that the *Chronicon* served as a reference work for sermon writing, he deducts that 'apparently the Cistercian world chronicle lends itself very well for [*sic*] such use'.[124] However, there are important differences between Helinand's chronicle and Alberic's work, and even Helinand's chronicle does not fully reflect the innovations Rouse describes. This is not to say that the *Chronicon* was not intended to serve this goal, but it invites caution against jumping to conclusions regarding Alberic's work. Furthermore, the fact that something can be used for a certain purpose does not mean that it was intended to be used (primarily) in that way. For example, Richard and Mary Rouse argued in the 1970s that Thomas of Ireland's *Manipulus Florum* (*c*. 1306) constitutes a prime example of a work devised as a sermon composition aid. However, in 2006 Chris Nighman revised this view based on Thomas' own definition of *predicacio* (preaching).[125] His criteria for what constitutes appropriate material

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[123] R. H. Rouse, 'Cistercian Aids to Study in the Thirteenth Century' in: *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History* Vol. 2 (1976) 123-134; and R.H. Rouse, 'L'évolution des attitudes envers l'autorité écrite: Le développement des instruments de travail au XIIIe siècle' in: Geneviève Hasenohr and Jean Longère eds., *Culture et travail intellectuel dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris 1981) 115-144. Cistercian sermon writing has been a topic of interest to many historians. Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, 209, agrees that a rising desire to organise and codify accumulated knowledge in the thirteenth century gave birth to the earliest 'collections of extracts for use in composing sermons, and as aids to scriptural exegesis'. The Cistercians, 'who needed them as preachers and for mentoring novices', were their inventors.

[124] Van Nitert 'Matière de France and the World Chronicle of Aubri de Trois-Fontaines', 411.

[125] Chris L. Nighman, 'Commonplaces on Preaching among Commonplaces for Preaching? The topic *Predicatio* in Thomas of Ireland's *Manipulus Florum*', *Medieval Sermon Studies* 49 (2005) 37-57.

for sermons would exclude large parts of his own work. The *Manipulus*' reception shows that it was used to compose sermons, but this was likely not Thomas' main intention.

Therefore, we first need to establish what a chronicle would need in order to potentially serve as a tool for sermon writing based on our understanding of Cistercian spirituality, education ideals, attitudes towards knowledge, and goals for preaching. Whether Alberic's chronicle was *intended* to be such a tool, is next. A text has the potential to serve as a sermon aid or instructional tool in a Cistercian context if it provides one or more of the following: 1) a better understanding of God's providence throughout history; 2) a deeper understanding of Scripture and its correct exegesis; 3) a sense of belonging to the Order and a better understanding of Cistercian ideals; 4) inspiration for effective preaching both inside and outside of the community – the latter especially in crusade or anti-heresy contexts; and/or 5) an example that monks should imitate in their pursuit of Christian virtues and personal salvation.

The potential for point one is most easily argued for in the case of Alberic's chronicle. Indeed, it would apply to any medieval chronicle. It therefore does not prove much with regard to the specific intentions behind Alberic's work. Point two is harder to argue for. Alberic's discussion of biblical times is very limited and focusses almost exclusively on dates. He also rarely discusses theological debates, and never in detail. On the occasion of the death of a theologian or the completion of their work he sometimes mentions their books, but rarely discusses the content. As for point three, the universal chronicle lends itself less well to fostering a sense of community and demonstrating shared experiences amongst monks than more regional chronicles. Although Alberic does emphasise Cistercian involvement in his reports on the Baltic Crusades, the Order's history and its exploits are not noticeably emphasised throughout the chronicle. This is even less so for characteristically 'Cistercian

ideals'.[126] Pride in his Order and a sense of belonging to a larger community peek through here and there, but are not the main intention behind Alberic's writing.

The concept of *exempla* is useful to explore point four and five, as well as to highlight further differences between Helinand and Alberic. An *exemplum* can be broadly defined as 'a brief embedded narrative designed to illustrate an argument'.[127] In the Middle Ages, *exempla* were mainly employed in sermons, and served to inspire people to live more holy lives and/or warn them of behaviour and beliefs that would result in divine punishment. The definition is then as follows: 'a short narrative presented as truthful and intended to be inserted into a discourse (usually a sermon) to convince an audience of a salutary lesson'.[128] Often they include a supernatural or miraculous element. Furthermore, it is important to note that *exempla* 'are elastic, taking on the shape and meaning with which the speaker chooses to endow them, [meaning that] opposing speakers can use the same subject matter to make opposite points.'[129] In his research on Helinand's *Chronicon* Marinus Woesthuis rightly emphasises that it is the context rather than the content which turns something into an *exemplum*. In theory, any event, person, or bit of (historical) information has the potential to be used as or in an *exemplum.*[130] In that sense, the same is true for any entry in Alberic's chronicle. Nevertheless, there is no proof that Alberic intended for this to be the primary use of his chronicle.

Woesthuis' investigation of Helinand's incorporation of *exempla* reveals further differences between Helinand and Alberic. Woesthuis describes the former's ideal

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[126] Compared to e.g. Ralph of Coggeshall's *Chronicon*; see Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, chapter 6.
[127] Jane D. Chaplin, '*Exempla*' in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (2012) https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah08064
[128] Claude Brémond, Jacques Le Goff, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L''Exemplum'* (Turnhout 1982) 37-38; also see Jussi Hansa, '*Miracula* and *Exempla* – A Complicated Relationship' in: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Jenni Kuuliala, and Iona McCleery eds., *A Companion to Medieval Miracle Collections* (Leiden 2021) 125-143.
[129] Chaplin, '*Exempla*'.
[130] Woesthuis. '*Nunc ad Historiam Revertamur*', 327-330 esp. 328.

methodology as follows: first he cites Sigebert on an event; then he adds extra information such as placenames, dates and biographical details; next he discusses a somewhat related story that usually concerns the supernatural; and finally, he includes a digression in which the story becomes an *exemplum* for an argument which is not directly related to the original historical context. This argument includes the story, Bible citations, a broader historical perspective, and other authorities supporting his view. After having made his point, he returns to the chronological structure. Woesthuis draws attention to the phrase '*nunc ad historiam revertamur*' (now, let us return to history) which Helinand uses in such cases.[131] This shows that the chronicler distinguished between 'the account of historical events' and his digressions, which he deemed relevant but did not consider to be 'history proper'.[132] The criteria based on which these *exempla* and the surrounding argument are not deemed 'history', are firstly that they abandon chronology (the historical story is taken out of its original time and place), and secondly that it is no longer about the literal meaning of the events but about the timeless application of some truth within them. Woesthuis ties this to the common conception of scriptural exegesis as divided into a literal interpretation (for which historical facts were necessary) and a spiritual interpretation, which should be founded on the former but transcend it.[133] Helinand considered it his duty to provide both a narration of facts and also an interpretation, explanation, or application which rose above history proper. Furthermore, Helinand's sermons confirm that he used the information and *exempla* from his own chronicle to compose his preaching material.[134]

In Helinand's case, we can therefore conclude that he wrote his chronicle with this use (sermon writing) in mind. However, Alberic's *Chronica* lacks distinct evidence to prove that

[131] I have come across one instance in which Alberic similarly writes '*ad narrationem hystorie revertamur*' (p. 774), after a genealogical digression.
[132] Woesthuis, '*Nunc ad Historiam Revertamur*', 317-319.
[133] Ibidem, 324-326.
[134] Ibidem, 328.

the same intention was at the forefront of his mind. Whereas Helinand provides literal examples of how his historical facts could (should?) serve broader purposes, Alberic usually restricts himself to neatly organising as much 'raw material' as possible and correcting factual mistakes. There are no sermons or instructional texts known of his hand which could shed light on other applications that he might have envisioned. Instead, he wrote another chronicle and a chronological selection of Caesarius' most historically reliable miracle stories. With his condescending statement that 'holy men in cloisters focus more on contemplation and sermons than on [writing] chronicles' he even explicitly distances himself from those who disregard his beloved chronicles in favour of sermons. This does not mean that his chronicle was never used by anyone to compose sermons. Skilled preachers would be able to distil useful information from the historical facts which Alberic provides if they wanted to. Likewise, any event or person mentioned in the *Chronica* could potentially inspire monks to live better lives closer to God, whether Alberic makes this explicit or not. But these reflections do underscore that we should be careful not to assume too quickly that a chronicle was intended for a particular purpose solely based on conclusions about similar sources and broader trends. From Helinand's stylistically pleasing theological digressions to Alberic's focus on brevity and raw facts, the Cistercian universal chronicle could take many shapes and serve many purposes, reflecting the personalities and intentions of their authors.

Conclusions Part I

In conclusion, Alberic was not particularly inclined to write about miracles or other supernatural occurrences. This is most evident from the paucity of entries discussing such events, especially in detail. A comparison to Helinand's chronicle highlights this even further. When Alberic does include reports on supernatural occurrences, his most important criteria are historical reliability and relevance to his arguments about historical facts. His goal was to

accumulate a much true historical information as possible, to put it in the correct chronological order, to solve discordances between sources, and to call out their shortcomings. Throughout the chronicle, he demonstrates a critical attitude and a sharp eye for matters of historical authenticity. His work was not intended to be a tool in the process of sermon writing. Rather, it is the product of a genuine search for truth and his love of historical knowledge which he wished to impart on his fellow monks.

II. A frightening world: Alberic on demons and heretics

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (1 Timothy 4:1)

In Alberic's chronicle, demons often appear in conjunction with heretics. The apostle Paul already made this connection in his first letter to Timothy. As he puts it elsewhere, 'our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against (…) the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms'.[135] Therefore, partaking in spiritual warfare was an important task of the medieval monk. Prayer is an essential part of this continuous battle by those belonging to God against the attacks of the Devil and his demons. Monks and nuns were to spend their days in prayer and contemplation on behalf of all the people. They committed themselves to fight a daily battle against both their own sinful nature and the demons that harassed them in an attempt to halt their soul-saving efforts. Therefore, the demonic was never far from the mind of monastics. The spiritual realm was – or at least should be – as much a daily reality to them as the mundane. The Cistercians even developed nuanced ideas about a God-given gift that enabled some monks to detect demons.[136] Possibly the most demon-obsessed Cistercian of Alberic's time, abbot Richalmus of Schöntal (†1219), affirmed in his *Liber Revelationum* that 'their multitude is so great that the whole world is full of them; and all the air, all of it, I say, is nothing but their density!'[137] This book chronicles his daily experiences with these multitudes of demons.

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[135] Ephesians 6:12.
[136] Tom License, 'The Gift of Seeing Demons in Early Cistercian Spirituality', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 39:1 (2004) 49-65. The subject is discussed by e.g. Caesarius of Heisterbach and Richalmus of Schöntal.
[137] Richalmus of Schöntal, *Richalm von Schöntal: Liber revelationum*, Paul Gerhard Schmidt ed. (Hannover 2009) n° 46; recently translated in French by Jean-Claude Schmitt as *Le cloître des ombres* (Paris 2021). 'Tanta est multitudo eorum, quod totus mundus plenus est; et totus aer, totus, inquam, aer non est nisi quedam spissitudo eorum.'

But demons were not restricted to attacking the monastery. The monks might have been trained to be more aware of potential threats than the average peasant. They may also have emphasised the particular hardships they had to endure in order to assert their importance to society.[138] But danger lurked everywhere. Many examples of demons interfering in the lives of a variety of people are included in Alberic's chronicle. The demonic is one of his areas of interest, judging by the relative frequency and urgent tone with which he discusses it. Of the 179 entries describing supernatural occurrences, 43 (24%) feature demons, the Devil, demonic sorcery, and/or Hell.[139] Several go into great detail as well. These are the exceptional entries that are all the more worthy of investigation because it is not Alberic's norm to elaborate on the supernatural. The fact that he did tells us a lot about him as a person and a historian.

[138] See Juanita Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo 2017) 33-59; and Emilia Jamroziak, 'Miracles in Monastic Culture' in: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Jenni Kuuliala, and Iona McCleery eds., *A Companion to Medieval Miracle Collections* (Leiden 2021) 36-53 on miracle stories in general (not necessarily featuring demons).

[139] For comparison: 109 entries feature a miracle, 57 feature prophecies, visions, revelations etc. Note that in many cases multiple categories apply to a single entry.

7. Demons in the thirteenth century

Who or what are (Judeo-Christian) demons?[140] Some believe they are the rebellious angels who were cast out from heaven with Satan; others identify demons with the spirits of the Nephilim – believed to be the unlawful offspring of angels and humans at the time of Noah – who drowned in the deluge. In the Middle Ages most theologians, following Augustine, rejected the theory that (fallen) angels could effectively reproduce with humans, meaning that demons were only the fallen angels themselves.[141] Certain is that they are spiritual beings, although one key feature of their existence is that they do often strongly desire to possess a body (again).[142] Christianity deemed them evil without exception – as opposed to for instance the classical *daimones* which could be either good or bad natured. Despite their incorporeality they are also able to affect the material and emotional world to some degree. However, the extent to, and the ways in which, they can do this was (and is) debated. Questions ranged from very practical to very theoretical. To what extent are demons immaterial and (how) can they become visible?[143] Can Christians be possessed? Where in the body of demoniacs do demons live? Can demons resist being exorcised? Can they be redeemed? To what extent can demons cause humans to inflict harm on themselves?

As demons are inherently evil, so are their goals. Their ultimate objective is to keep or lead people away from the Christian truth, but they can employ different strategies to achieve this. By hijacking or creating pagan religions and 'proving' these by false miracles, they keep

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[140] On demons in the ancient and medieval Judeo-Christian context, see e.g. Bradnick, *Evil, Spirits, and Possession*; Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*; Nienke Vos and Willemien Otten eds., *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity* (Leiden 2011); Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk*; Dyan Eliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia 1999).
[141] Bradnick, *Evil, Spirits, and Possession*, 45.
[142] Views on exactly how incorporeal demons were could be complex. Sometimes demons were thought to be slightly more corporeal than angels, for instance. This especially came into play with widespread belief in demons' desire to have sexual relationships with humans, especially women. See Eliott, *Fallen Bodies*, chapter 6 'On Angelic Disembodiment and the Incredible Purity of Demons', on changing perceptions on the corporality of spiritual beings in the first centuries of Christianity.
[143] See License, 'The Gift of Seeing Demons'.

non-Christians captive in idol worship. Similarly, they lend their power to the credit of sorcerers and false prophets. Additionally, they attempt to corrupt Christian doctrines and prey on those who have not been soundly instructed in their faith. They especially attack people who are prone to letting their emotions dominate them, because demons can easily manipulate these emotions. Furthermore, they cause general misery and despair by promoting war, adultery, overindulgence and other sins. Finally, they can possess (or: demonise) people in order to continuously influence their thoughts and actions.[144] Much debate still exists over the particularities of their methods and the extent of their power, as was the case in Alberic's time.

The demonic was a hot topic in the thirteenth century. Increased interest arose partially as a response to (perceived) heretical beliefs about Satan, demons, and angels which had sprouted up at the time. For instance, Cathars held the view that all material things were created by the Devil instead of God and were therefore inherently evil, leading them to deny the Catholic dogma of the Incarnation and instead propose that Christ's body had been merely 'fantastical' or angelic.[145] In turbulent times, especially when distrust and deception abound, the demonic may peak in relevancy. Alberic's lifetime was certainly one of transformations. The birth of a so-called *persecuting society* around the mid-twelfth century characterised itself by a heightened fear of heretical threats, the rise of social control in the religious sphere, and an increased zeal to destroy enemies of the Church on all fronts during the first half of the thirteenth century.[146] This widespread atmosphere of religious violence, fear, suspicion, and a

[144] Overview loosey based on Bradnick, *Evil, Spirits, and Possession*, esp. 24-27.
[145] For the twelfth and early thirteenth century, sources on the Cathars are nearly exclusively of Catholic origin. They are often strongly polemic in nature, but are likely based on some truth. For an overview of the scholarship, see e.g. Antonio Sennis ed., *Cathars in Question* (York 2016); also see Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, and Kienzle, 'Mary Speaks Against Heresy'. Early sources (mid to late twelfth century) on Cathar beliefs are e.g. the letters between Bernard of Clairvaux and Everwin of Steinfeld, Eckbert of Schönau's *Sermones contra Catharos* (excerpts of both can be found in R.I. Moore ed./transl. *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Toronto 1995) 74-78, 90-93), and the chronicle of Geoffroy of Vigeois (Pierre Botineau and Jean-Loup Lemaître eds./transl., *La chronique de Geoffroi de Breuil* (Paris 2021), 90 (Latin), 230-231 (French translation)).
[146] On the concept of persecuting society, see Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (1987 and 2007).

degree of general confusion and uncertainty influenced Alberic's perception of the demonic, as well as the way in which he imparts knowledge on this topic to his readers.

That knowledge came from other written sources, but also through oral accounts. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries collections of miracle tales rapidly grew in popularity.[147] These stories regularly feature demons and were therefore one of the primary ways to collect and disseminate ideas about their abilities and goals, as well as their weaknesses and recommendations on how to protect oneself against their influence. Tales like this (but not necessarily taken from these neatly compiled collections) form the basis of Alberic's reports on the demonic.[148] The flourishing of miracle collections at this time had multiple causes, but Juanita Ruys' *Demons in the Middle Ages* emphasises the importance of the birth of new monastic orders such as that of the Cistercians.[149] This fuelled an environment in which old and new orders sought to (re)assert their importance to society. One way of doing so was through compiling miracle books. These tales showcased both the many miracles associated with a given Order or community (as symbols of divine favour), and the hardships it endured due to demonic attacks. After all, demons would attack God's most loyal servants most fervently. The amount of demonic assaults a monastic community experienced could therefore serve as a standard by which to judge its piety.

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[147] Some examples include the miracle collections of an anonymous benedictine monk at Rocamadour (1172-1173), Herbert of Clairvaux (late twelfth century), Conrad of Eberbach (*c*. 1186-1221, whose work integrates miracle stories into a historical narrative on the Cistercian Order), Caesarius of Heisterbach (*c*. 1219-1223), Gautier de Coincy (*c*. 1218-1233), and Gonzalo de Berceo (*c*. 1260).

[148] The new scholastic approach also propelled the debate about demons and angels forward (see Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*, chapter 3 for an overview of scholastic positions). This context is important, but Alberic's work and thought fits much better into the monastic tradition which relied more on miracle accounts and personal experience than systematic rational arguments.

[149] Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*, 34-35. On the general function of miracles and miracle tales (not necessarily involving demons) in a monastic context, see Jamroziak, 'Miracles in monastic culture'.

8. Demons in the *Chronica* and other Cistercian writings

Miracle tales involving the demonic could have multiple functions. Demonstrating a community's spiritual war achievements was one of them. Secondly, they functioned as warnings against demonic activity in this life and/or the torments awaiting sinners in Hell in the next. Thirdly, they instructed readers on the nature of demons, their abilities, and the strategies they could employ to attack Christians. Fourthly, they could instruct readers on the correct ways of dealing with the demonic. This could either be explicitly included in the source itself, or must be distilled through implicit assumptions. Ruys cautiously suggests another possible function of accounts of demonic attacks, namely as 'psychological outlets for monks struggling with their conversion'.[150]

In Alberic's chronicle, the first function of miracle tales is absent. He rarely mentions his own abbey and never in the context of supernatural events.[151] Additionally, although some reports on the demonic involve Cistercians or come from Cistercian sources, there is no consistent effort to connect the supernatural to the Cistercians in particular. There is also no evidence suggesting that Alberic included these stories in order to reconcile himself with his monastic vocation. The other functions can be found in most of Alberic's reports. We have already seen the second function in action, in the form of Alberic's report on the deceived girl from Sens and her cave of (probably demonic) treasures.[152] By including the warning from the local bishop, Alberic reminds his reader of the dangers of demonic deception – and the danger of believing such reports too easily!

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[150] Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*, 41.
[151] It is hard to say whether the chronicle originally included more information on Trois-Fontaines, which may have been edited out by the interpolator. Given the nature of a universal chronicle, it is not surprising that the focus is not on an individual community. Comp. Jamroziak, 'Miracles in Monastic Culture' on the ways in which individual monastic communities interacted with miracles and the commemoration of them. She highlights the difficulty the Cistercians had with finding a balance between the positive aspects of miraculous experiences and the disruption they brought to monastic observance. Alberic's chronicle does not address this issue.
[152] Alberic, 854.

Miracle collections and other sources which include stories on the supernatural (such as the *Chronica*) bear witness to a wide variety of possible demonic manifestations during Alberic's lifetime. Although debate about the abilities and nature of demons is older than Christianity, this period is characterised by a very broad spectrum of possibilities – sometimes spilling into the unorthodox. For instance, in several stories a demon is able to drive a monk to such despair that he commits the unforgivable sin of suicide.[153] Others appear to entertain the possibility of genuine remorse in demons.[154] In contrast, some tales downplay the threat of demons to such an extent as to almost ridicule Biblical exhortations to be vigilant.[155] Folkloric and classical pagan traditions as well as human creativity had become mixed with Christian theology, producing a range of possible demonic manifestations from harmless pranking spirits to tormenting denizens of a fiery Hell.

Searching for a sophisticated demonology behind Alberic's entries on the supernatural will not yield much. After all, he was a chronicler, not a theologian or spiritual instructor. They form a window into early thirteenth-century perceptions of the demonic – coloured by Alberic's personal convictions and the monastic tradition – more so than a conscious attempt to explain and categorise this reality. The *Chronica* might well be an accurate reflection of the period's seemingly endless possibilities with regard to demonic manifestations, which is valuable in itself. Rigorous systematisation fit better with the scholastic approach anyway, although other Cistercians did engage more deliberately with the topic. This especially took shape in *exempla* for the instruction and formation of young monks. Alberic's views of the demonic were certainly influenced by their writings (and his own monastic formation), but his

[153] See Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*, 48, 56.
[154] E.g. Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V.10; the most recent English translation is Ronald Pepin, *The Dialogue on Miracles* (Collegeville 2023) 2 Vols.
[155] Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*, 46-47; 49-50 notes that both Caesarius and Guibert of Nogent allow for the existence of both more and less harmful demons (the former being the ones who rebelled against God, the latter those who merely followed the former in their fall).

chronicle does not demonstrate a particular adherence to one source. Thirty out of the 43 entries featuring demons (70%) do not have an identifiable written source other than Alberic.[156]

Caesarius of Heisterbach, with whose work Alberic was very familiar, devoted the entirety of Book V (56 stories) of his *Dialogus Miraculorum* to demons.[157] Additionally, several stories in other Books feature demons as well. His intention behind including these many stories about demons is made clear in the introduction to Book V: 'that there are demons, that they are many, and that they are wicked, I shall be able to show you [the novice] by many examples.'[158] Theoretical knowledge about the demonic – which he briefly summarises beforehand – would not suffice for the novice's formation; waging a daily spiritual battle required practical lived experience to learn from.[159] However, Alberic only includes one of these demon *exempla*, and not even from Book V.[160] His brief summary of this tale cuts out so much of the original content that one of its two lessons – a warning against (accidentally) giving the Devil consent – is lost. Instead, he deems it valuable to add a small bit of factual information which is absent in Caesarius' original: the name of the demon in question. A crucial difference between Alberic's and Caesarius' work is the explicitly didactic nature of the *Dialogus Miraculorum*. Its stories are always followed by a lesson about the nature, goals, and/or limitations of demons and the Devil. In contrast, in the *Chronica* the content itself – and especially its presumed status as true historical information – is the primary focus, not the moral-theological implications of these facts.

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[156] Compared to about 55% of all 179 entries on the supernatural. Of course it is possible that Alberic did use written sources which have not been discovered yet, or have gotten lost, but in any case he does not name them.
[157] On the *Dialogus Miraculorum*, see e.g. Victoria Smirnova's recent *Medieval Exempla in Transition: Caesarius of Heisterbach's Dialogus Miraculorum and Its Readers* (Collegeville 2023).
[158] Ibidem, V.1.
[159] See Stefano Mula, 'Twelfth- and Thirteenth-century Cistercian *Exempla* Collections: Role, Diffusion, and Evolution', *History Compass* 8:8 (2010) 903–912, at 906.
[160] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, III.6; Alberic, 902.

A slightly older Cistercian source for demon stories is Herbert of Clairvaux' late twelfth-century *Liber miraculorum et visionum*, one of the earliest Cistercian miracle collections. It contains 165 stories, including a large number which feature demons. Ruys emphasises its interesting combinations of 'earlier folklore regarding evil spirits with the Christian belief system' and the use of classical terminology such as *cacodaemones* together with biblically based demonic features.[161] Herbert's demons regularly appear in animal shapes, and, like Richalmus, he emphasises their tendency to operate in terrifyingly large hordes. Both these characteristics are relatively absent in Alberic's *Chronica*. In only one account do demons take the shape of animals and the entries generally focus on one or a small group of (sometimes named) demons instead of emphasising their great nameless multitude.[162] Alberic adapts two of Herbert's stories on demonic activity. One discusses the apparition of a deceased count to his followers, asking them to give alms to the poor on his behalf. This will shorten his time in Purgatory, where he is being tortured by demons. The other consists of a very detailed description of a volcanic eruption at an earthly entrance to Hell known as the Hell of Iceland (*infernum Hysselandie*). In the first case Alberic's version is a factual summary which omits the elaborate dialogue included in Herbert's narration.[163] His Hell of Iceland account is notable because it focusses entirely on geographical phenomena and omits Herbert's concluding remarks which contain a pious lesson (see below).[164]

In contrast to Caesarius and Herbert, Helinand's chronicle addresses demons first of all from the theological angle. Book II contains a major digression on theories about demons

[161] Ruys, *Demons in the Middle Ages*, 38.
[162] It is unclear whether the flying 'monstrous others resembling gryphons' in Alberic, 829 (see below) are demons. No matter what, they are monstrous and otherworldly instead of recognisable animals strictly speaking.
[163] Herbert's version is n° 121 in Giancarlo Zichi, Graziano Fois and Stefano Mula eds., *Herberti Tvrritani Archiepiscopi: Liber Visionvm Clarevallensivm* (Turnhout 2017).
[164] Alberic, 829-830; Herbert, *Herberti Tvrritani Archiepiscopi*, n° 123.

and angels, mostly adhering to Augustine's understanding of the topic.[165] Helinand particularly refutes the third century anti-Christian neoplatonic philosophers Plotinus and Porphyrius, rejecting the latter's ideas on the usefulness of theurgy – divine magic serving the ultimate goal of unison with the divine – in attempts to purify one's soul. In contrast, he stresses the power of Christ's cleansing sacrifice instead of self-purification with the help of demons posing as angels. Alberic omits any reference to this theological discussion.[166] He also does not include several references to demonic activity found elsewhere in the *Chronicon*; two examples are Saint Dunstan's fight with the Devil and a vision received by Fulbert of Chartres of Berengar of Tours being assaulted by invisible demons seeking to corrupt him.[167] He does cite Helinand verbatim on both Dunstan and Berengar, but omits these notes on the demonic.

Alberic's reasons for choosing to include 'only' 43 stories from the wealth of demon tales at his disposal cannot always be satisfactorily reconstructed.[168] His strong desire for a reliable historical date to position the story in his chronicle was certainly an important factor. Caesarius and Herbert's stories often lack such exact dates because they were intended to serve as timelessly applicable teaching material.[169] This sets Alberic's chronicle apart from the miracle collections. In those, 'the specific identification of the protagonists is not important since the emphasis is on the event, and what is relevant is the participation in the Order and the sharing of memories.'[170] To Alberic, this type of specific information (names, dates,

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[165] See Saak, *Augustinian Theology*, 62-63; and Eric Saak, 'In the Wake of Lombard: The Reception of Augustine in the Early Thirteenth Century', *Augustinian Studies* 46:1 (2015) 71-104 (the appendix includes a transcription of Book II, which is not included in the *Patrologia Latina* edition).
[166] It is possible that Alberic did not have access to earlier parts of Helinand's chronicle, but if he did, it would be surprising for him to include this theological discussion.
[167] Helinand, 899-904; 947.
[168] The same is true for accounts (of the supernatural) in general. Neither is this issue unique to Alberic's work.
[169] Mula, 'Twelfth- and Thirteenth-century Cistercian *Exempla* Collections', 906; Jamroziak, 'Miracles in Monastic Culture', 45. Herbert's stories are not even organised chronologically. An account sourced from the *Vita Caroli Magni* (nº126, about events from the ninth century) follows right after a story from the days of Bernard of Clairvaux (nº 125, mid-twelfth century).
[170] Mula, 'Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Cistercian *Exempla* Collections', 906.

places) was crucial, as is demonstrated by his addition of the name of the demon from Caesarius' story. Chroniclers like Helinand do put such narratives under a certain date, but Alberic was not always convinced that they had dated their events correctly in general.[171] In case of doubt, he likely decided against including a story. This is also true for cases where he doubted the historical veracity of the story itself. Finally, we have seen that he was conscious of his limited ability to include all the information he could find. Choices had to be made, and there may not always have been an elaborate thought process behind them. Some stories may just have appealed more to him than others for personal reasons. This does not mean, however, that nothing can be gleaned from the way in which he dealt with demons in his chronicle.

Alberic's demons appear in many shapes and sizes. For instance, one report features rather folkloric-looking creatures that bring misfortune to a community but lack most biblical features of demons. He notes that what looked like two hundred small red men came riding on red horses from the woods and into a village, evading any attempt to catch them; 'almost everyone who saw them ran into some misfortune that year [1235].'[172] Another account involves demons cackling at human misery in the shape of flying vultures and ravens, although it is not clarified whether they somehow took on this visible shape or possessed actual birds.[173] The traditional association between demons and the lower skies as their natural territory (as opposed to the higher heavens where the angels dwelt) is also present in

[171] There are many instances where he cites these (and other) chronicles under different dates compared to the original work. Some examples featuring demons: Sigebert discusses Berengar of Tours under 1051, Alberic under 1050; William of Malmesbury recounts Gerbert of Aurillac's youth under 975 and 1002, Alberic already under 988 and 997; the story of a man who is turned into a donkey is told under 1051 in Helinand, but under 1049 in Alberic. Sometimes there is an explanation for his choice (as with the death of Saint Martin), but more often none is given. Based on the cases where he does strongly argue his case and his passion for chronology, these choices were often deliberate. Also see Moisan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines et la « Matière de Bretagne »' on date changes featuring Arthurian events.
[172] Alberic, 937. 'Fere omnes illi, qui eos viderunt, aliquod infortunium eodem anno incurrerunt.'
[173] Ibidem, 950.

two similar reports of violent storms caused by demons soaring through the air in 1174 and 1240.[174] Another entrenched belief linked the presence of the demonic to unbearably foul smells or faeces. This connection is also made – and emphasised – in four of Alberic's entries.[175] Several accounts tell of a more sinisterly deceptive manifestation, namely instances where demons disguise themselves as humans.[176] Other entries demonstrate a view of demons as the ones accusing Christians before the throne of God or as those torturing sinners in Hell and Purgatory, taking great pleasure in doing so.[177] Some stories tell of direct encounters between people and individual demons who are unmistakably recognised as such, although no physical description is given.[178] Alberic probably imagined them to look like the well-known images of grotesque, furry, and horned humanoids found in illuminated manuscripts (see Illustrations 1-3). These entries on direct demonic manifestations are distinct from reports on demoniacs, which are people of flesh and blood who are inhabited (or: possessed, demonised) by one or more demons.[179] Finally, Alberic accounts for the possibility that demons influence human actions without being easily detectable. This includes cases where the truly detestable behaviour of a person betrays a necessary evil presence, as well as instances of demonic interference with divination and dice games.[180]

9. Theology or geography? Alberic's treatment of Hell and Purgatory

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw an increasing interest in Hell and purgatorial punishments, which would often be carried out by demons. This fascination was possibly

[174] Ibidem, 855 and 947.
[175] Ibidem, 828, 845, 937, 944-945.
[176] E.g. ibidem, 828, 902, 944-945.
[177] Ibidem, 733-736 (the accuser type is found exclusively in references to Audradus Modicus), 776, 834-836, 849.
[178] Ibidem, 789, 931-932.
[179] Ibidem, 854, 877-878.
[180] Ibidem, 758, 768, 774, 827, 878-879.

Illustration 1. Battle between angels and demons. *Commentary on the Apocalyps*, Bibliothèque Municipale de Toulouse, MS 815, f. 26r (*c.* 1220-1270) via Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) www.gallica.bnf.fr.

Illustration 2. Christ driving out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. *Bible Moralisée*, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 270b, f. 118r (*c.* 1230-1240) licenced by Creative Commons https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/.

Illustration 3. Demons punishing an unfortunate soul. *Apocalyps of Paul*, Bibliothèque Municipale de Toulouse, MS 815, f. 59v (*c.* 1220-1270) via Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) www.gallica.bnf.fr.

fuelled by growing fears about heresies; terrifying visions of Hell would hopefully deter people from betraying Mother Church. The official formulation of the doctrine of Purgatory in 1274 can be seen as a culmination of this interest. Jacques Le Goff identifies 1150-1250 as a crucial period for the formation and spread of beliefs on Purgatory in the West – exactly Alberic's lifetime.[181] Although it should be noted that the official doctrine does not demand belief in Purgatory as a *place* – it is rather a process of purification which possibly but not necessarily takes place in a physical place by physical means – popular ideas about Purgatory, Hell and Paradise as physical earthly places were widespread in the High and Late Middle Ages. Medieval authors also let their creativity run wild when it came to the punishments to be endured in Purgatory as well as in Hell. Dante's Mount Purgatory and the circles of Hell in *The Divine Comedy* (1321) can be seen as the most sophisticated product of such ideas.

However, as Le Goff also emphasises, the literary genre of the journey through the realms of the dead was not invented by Dante. Otherworld visits were already a popular topic in pre-Christian Irish mythology; Orpheus' journey into Hades is another example. The concept inspired Christian stories in which someone either visits a physical place on earth (sometimes called a Hellmouth) from which they can enter Hell or Purgatory, or is spiritually transported there by means of a vision or dream. Sometimes the journey ends with a glorious glimpse of the joys of Heaven or the Earthly Paradise in order to encourage and comfort the true believer. Usually the person in question either does not believe in the reality of demons and Hell, or has serious sins to repent of and is convinced to do so through the terrible demonic punishments they witness on their journey. Proving the existence of the evil

[181] Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris 1981). Notwithstanding criticism on Le Goff's theories, he points to important developments shaping belief in Purgatory during the mid-twelfth to mid-thirteenth century. For an overview of the development of (both theological and 'popular') ideas in favour of and against certain conceptions of Purgatory, see Paul J. Griffiths, 'Purgatory' in: Jerry L. Walls ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (Oxford 2007) 427-445. Also see Carl Watkins, 'Landscapes of the Dead in the Late Medieval Imagination', *Journal of Medieval History* 48:2 (2022) 250-264.

supernatural and exhorting Christians to repent was also the intention behind the creation of the entrance to Saint Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland.[182] As these journeys through Hell/Purgatory form a separate subclass within the category of entries on demonic activity, I will discuss these first. They also most clearly demonstrate Alberic's tendency to draw conclusions from or ask questions about accounts of the supernatural that are not primarily pious or exemplary in nature – similar to the question of authenticity triggered by the entry on Bede's tomb.

Famous examples preceding *The Divine Comedy* include the *Visio Tnugdali* (1149) and the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* (*c*. 1180, written by a Cistercian). However, the concept is also found in the Carolingian *Visio Karoli Grossi* (*c*. 900). Alberic mentions all three works in his chronicle, summarising them in his own words.[183] His rendition of the Saint Patrick's Purgatory story is particularly detailed, taking up about three pages despite cutting out lots of the original text. Additionally, there are two entries which convey similar themes. Firstly, Sigebert's account of a monk who could hear the screams of tormented souls in Hell by walking close to volcanic cracks in the ground; and secondly, Herbert's tale about the deceased count who appeared to some of his soldiers, warning them not to come close lest they be burned by the fire tormenting him.[184] Additionally, Alberic introduces Helinand's account of a 'vision of the punishments of Hell' by William of Norwich, but unfortunately he does not recount the content of the vision himself.[185] Alberic very rarely employs the term

[182] According to the tale, Saint Patrick (†461) was met with disbelief in the punishments of Hell by the Irish. Christ appeared and showed Patrick an entrance to Purgatory. This would convince the unbelievers of the reality and necessity of the Christian faith. It is said that whoever spends a day and a night inside, truly repenting of his sins, will be completely cleansed. Alberic also recounts that a church was later constructed near the entrance, as well as a wall around it. In order to enter this cleansing trial, a letter from the local bishop must be obtained. Alberic notes that since its inception, many people have entered; some of which have returned while others have perished.
[183] Alberic, 840, 834-836, 746. Other examples which Alberic does not mention are the famous *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (Voyage of Saint Brendan the Abbot, *c*. 900) and the less well-known *Visio Godeschalci* (*c*. 1190).
[184] Ibidem, 776, 849.
[185] Ibidem, 838.

'purgatory' (*purgatorium*), but its existence as in the later doctrine is implied – for instance in the story of count Philip.[186] Philip's plea to build a hospital for the poor on his behalf in order to lessen his penal punishments tells us that he is not irredeemably in Hell, but rather in Purgatory awaiting the fulfilment of his temporal punishments before being allowed entry into Heaven.

As we have seen, Alberic sometimes uses stories about supernatural occurrences to argue for a particular belief or conviction of his. In the case of the journey through Hell accounts, he is especially interested in the idea that earthly entrances to Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise exist. His argument is simple, but it shows again that he approached his work with a scholarly mindset. He also had the ability to easily recall and connect relevant information which he had written down or heard long before. Three entries compose his argument here. In chronological order: firstly, the account of a Benedictine monk staying near the volcanic island Vulcano (north of Sicily), sourced from Sigebert (AD 997).[187] Secondly, Herbert of Clairvaux' Hell of Iceland account (AD 1130), similarly situated at a volcano.[188] Thirdly,

[186] In entries after the year 1000, the term is only used three times. Two mentions refer to Saint Patrick's Purgatory, and one appears in a note on a vision by Marie d'Ognies, which showed her that the slain of a particular battle during the Albigensian Crusades were gloriously carried straight to heavenly joys without any need for Purgatory/purification (Alberic, 892).

[187] Sigebert refers to the place as *Oilae Vulcani* (comp. Alberic's *Olla Vulcani*). Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (IV.30) is the likely origin of belief in a Hell entrance in the area of Sicily; see Sigebert's entry under the year 998 and note 214 in J.P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 160 (Paris 1854) 197-198. *Oilae Vulcani* likely refers to the small volcanic island of Vulcano, north of Sicily (part of the archipelago known as the Aeolian Islands), which was also known as a cauldron or smithy of the classical god Hephaestus/Vulcan. Alberic later mentions this '*Olla Vulcani*' together with Mount Etna on Sicily itself. Etna was understandably also a popular candidate to house an earthly entrance to Hell. It is unclear how much Alberic knew about the exact topography of the Sicily area and whether he thought the entrances at Vulcan and Etna were one and the same, but he appears to differentiate between the two (see Alberic, 836).

[188] Alberic, 829-830; Herbert of Clairvaux, *Herberti Tvrritani Archiepiscopi*, nº 123. In Alberic's time, the association between Hell and volcanoes or volcanic eruptions was far from new, and neither was the fiery nature of postmortem punishments. This was sometimes, as in Saint Patrick's Purgatory, combined with the motif of a deep pit or cave in the bowels of the earth unrelated to volcanic activity. See e.g. Margaret Burrell, 'Hell as a Geological Construct', *Florilegium* 24:1 (2007) 87-54, which discusses different versions of Saint Brendan's Voyage and the Saint Patrick's Purgatory story, as well as modern-day volcanology and speleology.

tying it all together, the account of knight Owen's visit to Saint Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland (AD 1141).[189]

In Alberic's original source, the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, the description of Owen's journey through Purgatory and Hell is only part of the whole work. Also included are a theological survey of underworlds, two homilies (one on Purgatory/Hell and one on Heaven/Paradise) and an exhortation to pray for the dead and remember the happiness of the saints. Alberic replaces all of this by the following conclusion:

> Therefore, [the belief] that Hell is either under the Earth or in a hollow in the Earth, and that the Earthly Paradise is in the East and also in the Earth, agrees with this narrative. And that there is also a Hell above the Earth in some part of the world, agrees with the narrative that was given above about the Hell of Iceland and also with the Cauldron (*Olla*) of Vulcan, and Etna of Sicily.[190]

Once again Alberic demonstrates a disinterest in theoretical theology in favour of tangible facts. He only draws his conclusion after having provided three examples of eyewitness accounts of earthly Hell entrances at various points in his chronicle (Vulcan, Iceland, Ireland), and naming a fourth one (Etna) to drive the point home. It is possible that Alberic elaborates on these three accounts in particular – the Hell of Sicily, the Hell of Iceland, and Patrick's Purgatory – but only briefly dwells on the *Visio Tnugdali* and William of Norwich' vision because they, as the names imply, do not recount a physical visit to Hell but a merely spiritual experience. As such, it is less interesting to Alberic, who partially includes these stories to

[189] Alberic does not cite a source, but it is likely that he had read the original *Tractatus*. Neither does he disclose why he chose to date the story to 1141 exactly. The entry itself does mention that it took place during the reign of King Stephen of England (r. 1135-1154).
[190] Alberic, 836. 'Quod ergo infernus vel subtus terram vel in terre concavite sit, et quod paradisus terrestris in oriente et etiam in terra sit, concordat ad hoc ista narratio. Et quod item infernus super terram in aliqua parte mundi sit, concordat narratio, que superius posita est de inferno Hisselandie, concordat etiam Olla Vulcani et Ethna de Sicilia'.

support his belief in earthly entrances to the realms of the dead.[191] It may also explain why he preferred this story over another, much more detailed, story from Herbert, in which Saint Augustine takes a monk on a guided tour through Hell by spiritual means instead of a physical entrance.[192]

The Hell of Iceland entry also provides further insight into Alberic's sources, as well as his approach to compiling historical accounts. It is prompted by another remarkable tale featuring demons, which had reached Alberic as the result of a long process of transmission. Under 1130, he records the violent death of Magnus the Strong (*c*. 1106-1134), son of Niels I of Denmark (r. 1104-1134).[193] He then notes that several Icelandic shepherds saw the souls of Magnus and his supporters flying by in the form of ravens as they were being driven towards and thrown into the Hell of Iceland by 'monstrous others' (*alie immanissime*) resembling gryphons – probably demons.[194] One of the shepherds afterwards became a Cistercian monk and told the story to a Swedish brother. A delegation of Danish abbots then reported it to the Cistercian General Chapter, which presumably disseminated the tale, and thus it eventually reached Alberic. This entry presents the occasion for Alberic to share with his readers all he knows about this Hell of Iceland. At first sight Herbert's account does not qualify for inclusion in the *Chronica* because not even a hint of a date is provided. However, it is valuable information to Alberic's argument for earthly Hells which he can now share thanks to the – firmly dated – trigger entry.

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[191] The *Visio Tnugdali* is summarised in two sentences ('Visio Tugdali: Facta est in Hibernia hoc anno quedam mirabilis visio de penis inferni et gaudiis paradisi que Tugdali visio appellatur. Hanc si quis plane scire desiderat, in multis abbatiis poterit reperire.') but the story of Saint Patrick's Purgatory is among the longest entries in the chronicle. However, Alberic does elaborate slightly more on the *Visio Karoli Grossi*, which also recounts a dreamlike visit. On the *Visio Karoli Grossi* and similar visions, see Dutton, *The politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire*.
[192] Herbert of Clairvaux, *Herberti Tvrritani Archiepiscopi*, nº 19.
[193] Alberic, 829.
[194] It is not specified whether the gryphons are angels or demons, but demons are the most likely.

When we compare it to the original, the account also demonstrates Alberic's interest in facts over pious lessons. Alberic cites Herbert verbatim.[195] However, in his brief introduction to the passage he adds the name of the volcano ('Eclafeld'), which is absent in Herbert. It is commonly known as Hekla, in southern Iceland.[196] By contrast, he omits Herbert's concluding remarks. The left-out passage is the one that originally turned the story into an *exemplum*. Herbert asks, 'What, then, can be more horrible than [the unquenchable fires of this Hell]?' and immediately provides the answer: to not believe in the reality of infernal punishments, only to end up in their eternal suffering.[197] Through this omission, Alberic turns the tale back into a historical account rather than an *exemplum*. The journey through Hell accounts therefore mainly demonstrate Alberic's tendency to include reports on the supernatural for other reasons than to serve as *exempla*.

10. Demonic heretics: no one is safe

Despite the variety of demonic appearances and tactics described in the *Chronica*, there is one manifestation which Alberic deems particularly threatening, namely the demonic in conjunction with heresy (and/or sorcery). Ten out of 43 entries (24%) make this demon-heretic connection. Furthermore, some of these are among the lengthiest entries and their

[195] Alberic names Herbert as the source for his information on the Hell of Iceland (Alberic, 829. 'plena continetur narratio domni Herberti in libro miraculorum Clarevallis'), but Scheffer-Boichorst has edited the passage as if it is entirely in Alberic's own words. Comp. Herbert of Clairvaux, *Herberti Tvrritani Archiepiscopi*, nº 123.
[196] Its disastrous eruption in 1104, after centuries of dormancy, was the likely event described in Herbert's extremely detailed account of a volcanic eruption and the subsequent geological consequences. Accounts of the 1104 eruption (like Herbert's) established Hekla as a Hell entrance into the medieval mind. Modern-day volcanology has shown that the description is largely accurate. His source is thought to have been Eskil, archbishop of Lund († after 1177), who greatly admired Bernard of Clairvaux and spend some time at Clairvaux in the 1170s where he probably met Herbert. Herbert talks at length about Eskil in stories nº 105 and 106. On Hekla, and its history and legends, see Sigurdur Thorarinsson, *Hekla: A Notorious Volcano* Jóhann Hannesson and Pétur Karlsson transl. (Reykjavik 1970).
[197] Herbert of Clairvaux, *Herberti Tvrritani Archiepiscopi*, nº 123. 'Quid ergo mirabilibus istis mirabilius? Quidue terribilius excogitari potest? Quis iam ita peruersus et ita incredulus extat ut ignem eternum animas cruciantem esse discredat, cum uideat oculis istum de quo nunc loquimur non solummodo solum petrasque marmoreas, uerum etiam et inuincibiles aquas tanta horibilitate comburere, que ceteros ignes consueuerunt tanta facilitate extinguere? Sed qui parata diabolo et angelis eius ignis eterni supplicia dedignantur credere uel audire, ipsi in eis postmodum precipitandi sunt, que modo, dum licet, effugere contempnunt.'

language often feels more urgent than Alberic's usual factual style. This is the case for entries discussing heretics in general. For instance, he triumphantly mentions the many victories which Simon of Montfort (*c*. 1175-1218) obtained against the Albigensians through divine miracles.[198] His first entry connecting the spread of heresy to the Devil's influence is found already under the year 281. The trigger is a brief note in Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* reporting that in this year the disgusting (*turpissima*) heresy of the Manichaeans came out of Persia. Alberic then adds that 'they are the ones who are called *Bulgari* in our days, through whom the Devil gained many false martyrs for himself through the flames. And o such sorrow! Evilest wantonness, to how much blindness have you come down?'[199] *Bulgari* or *Bulgri* is a term Alberic applies somewhat loosely to heretics in different regions.[200]

Demonising heretics was far from new, but was an important part of the thirteenth-century anti-heretic discourse.[201] Neither was the connection between demons and heretics far-fetched; one of the key strategies of the former was leading the latter into doctrinal error to ensure their damnation. Beverly Kienzle has done much research on the Cistercian response to twelfth and thirteenth-century heresies. With regard to demonisation, she suggests that 'the humanization of Christ in twelfth-century culture has as a counterpart the closer identification of any given person with evil; [both] the ultimate good and the supreme evil were

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[198] Alberic, 889.

[199] Ibidem, 684. 'Isti sunt, qui nostris diebus vocantur Bulgari, per quam diabolus multos sibi falsos martyres per ignem acquisivit. Et o pro dolor! Pessima luxuria, ad quantam cecitatem devenisti!'

[200] The term *bulg(a)ri* as a general term for heretics is not unique to Alberic and might stem from (perceived) connections between the twelfth to thirteenth-century heretics and earlier heresies (like the tenth-century dualist heresy of the bogomils) which originated in the 'East' (i.e. the vague area of Bulgaria). See Monique Zerner, 'Du court moment où on appela les hérétiques des « *bougres* »: Et quelques déductions', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 32:128 (1989) 305-324, which mentions this passage. Also see Sennis, *Cathars in Question* on different terms applied to the 'Cathar' heretics by both contemporaries and modern scholars. Alberic also uses other terms in his chronicle, but never *cathari*.

[201] See e.g. Lucy E. Bosworth, Perceptions of the Origins and Causes of Heresy in Medieval Heresiology (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh 1995) 174-210; the demonisation of heretics is also discussed in Norman Cohn's classic *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (London 1975) and its revised edition *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonisation of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (Chicago 1993). Also see Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*.

humanized.'[202] Helinand frequently demonises heretics in his sermons and chronicle.[203] He asserts that heretics petition the Devil for the acquisition of earthly goods and that 'the "priests of the Devil" who in antiquity were the idolatrous priests are now the heretics' bishops or elect.'[204] Caesarius addresses the issue of heresy primarily in Book V on demons; there, he highlights (heretical) acts of sacrilege that were also associated with Devil worship.[205] The chronicle of Ralph of Coggeshall († after 1227), a contemporary of Alberic and fellow Cistercian, also testifies to a subtle but deep-seated fear of heretical corruption. Compared to Alberic's, his chronicle is limited in scope (both chronologically and geographically), but it includes six seemingly random entries on supernatural or 'wondrous' occurrences. One discusses a female heretic and explicitly makes the connection with witchcraft and demons as well. Elizabeth Freeman notes that his stories all address the common theme of 'unusual bodies'.[206] She interprets this as a deliberate reference to the Body of Christ as a metaphor for the Church, which Ralph fears is disintegrating through heretical corruption.

Alberic himself makes the connection between heretics and demons for example by applying a traditional characteristic of demons – their foul stench – to heretics. In an entry discussing the burning of heretics in Germany (1239), he suggests that elaborating on their beliefs and practices is not essential to recognising their errors. Rather, he says, 'we do not need now to present in the open what the belief and teaching of these heretics are – which

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[202] Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 11.
[203] Systematic research on the demonisation of heretics in the *Chronicon* would benefit greatly from a definitive edition; see ibidem, 181.
[204] Ibidem, 174-201, esp. 190-191; the reference is to Helinand of Froidmont, 'Sermo XXVI' in: J.P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* 212, 692D-700B.
[205] Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 153.
[206] Elizabeth Freeman, 'Wonders, Prodigies and Marvels: Unusual Bodies and the Fear of Heresy in Ralph of Coggeshall's *Chronicon Anglicanum*', *Journal of Medieval History* 26:2 (2000) 127–143. Also comp. Christine M. Neufeld's interpretation of one of these stories in 'Hermeneutical Perversions: Ralph of Coggeshall's "Witch of Rheims"', *Philological Quarterly* 85 (2006) 1-24, which emphasises the background of Cistercian-scholastic rivalry instead of that of the crusades and anti-heretic campaigns.

originated in the detestable Manichean[s] – nor what they do in secret. For these [beliefs, teachings, and deeds] stink and are horrible, and they have stank so much among other [heretical beliefs, teachings, and secret deeds] that wise men detect them owing to this very stench.'[207]

Under 1148, Alberic cites Sigebert on the heresy of Éon de l'Étoile (†1150), but shifts attention to 'the greatest heresy', the one led by an apostate Benedictine monk called Henry in the south of France.[208] The success of this Henry of Lausanne (†1148) was the catalyst for Bernard of Clairvaux' preaching mission in the Midi (1145).[209] Alberic then continues to quote Sigebert, making it look like his words apply primarily to Henry instead of Éon: '[a]t last, filled with a diabolical spirit, he broke out in such great insanity that he said and was forced to believe himself to be the son of God.'[210] This messianic element applies to Éon, but not to Henry's preaching. Whether Alberic assumed that his readers knew he was speaking about Éon again, or deliberately wanted to associate Henry with the same terrible accusation, is unclear. Either way, the passage does underscore the close connection between heretics and diabolical/demonic influence in Alberic's mind.

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[207] Alberic, 945. 'Que sit opinio istorum hereticorum vel que assertio, qui originem habent a detestando Manicheo, vel que ipsi faciant in abscondito, non est modo necesse in medium proferre, quia sunt fetida et horribilia, et ipsi inter alios ita feterunt, quod etiam ipso fetore deprehenduntur a sapientibus.' Here the 'stench' might be metaphorical. The disclaimer that 'only the wise' will be able to accurately discern it, points in that direction; (a lack of) wisdom would not impact one's sensory abilities. However, Alberic might have thought of a literal foul smell given the many instances where the presence of demons is linked to a real detectable stench (also often connected to faeces and latrines). In those cases, the stench does not always need to be detectable by everyone in order to be real. The wisdom necessary for discernment might come down to connecting the smell to its source, namely a heretical and/or demonic presence. The most common metaphors for heresy included pollution, pestilence, illness, and poison. These have an implicit association with unpleasant smells, but Alberic's explicit connection with stench on its own is noteworthy.

[208] Ibidem, 839. 'Heresis Eunitarum intra Britannias pullulat, imo ut verius dicatur maxima heresis Popelitanorum Henrici apostate pessimi quondam nigri monachi in terra Albigensium pulllulavit.'

[209] See Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 90-108; and Marcia Colish, 'Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lausanne, and the Façade of St.-Gilles', *Traditio* 28 (1972) 451-460.

[210] Alberic, 839 'Ad postremum diabolico spiritu completus in tantam prorupit insaniam, ut diceret et credi cogeret se esse filium Dei.'

Another entry in which demons are dramatically involved in a heretic's life is Alberic's discussion of Berengar of Tours' (†1088) disbelief in transubstantiation.[211] After citing Sigebert's brief notes, he adds some disturbing information about Berengar's life which is not found in his sources. According to him, some say that Berengar was a powerful ex-necromancer, a *nigromanticus*.[212] *Nigromantia* is in Alberic's chronicle usually reserved for practices involving the summoning of demons; in this case there is also a connection with necromancy in the technical sense of magic involving the dead (*necros*).[213] Berengar had allegedly been carried from Tours to Rome by the Devil (or a demon) at some point in his adolescence, where he presumably learned his demonic craft. He was also responsible for the death of a young boy entrusted to his care; the boy had read Berengar's necromancy books while he was away and was promptly killed by a demon. Upon his return, Berengar forced the demon to enter the corpse through the mouth and had him walk it around for some time, pretending nothing had happened. Finally the truth was discovered by another *nigromanticus*. Berengar was found guilty but fled to a church, where he was ultimately delivered. He suffered repeated condemnation by the Church for his theological views but possibly genuinely repented; Alberic leaves his final fate up to speculation.[214]

The pinnacle of a demonic-heretical alliance revealed itself in 1233. Alberic does not provide a source, but triumphantly recounts the burning of 'so many heretics in Germany that

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[211] Ibidem, 789, under the year 1050.
[212] Ibidem. 'De isto Berengario quedam vulgo narrantur, quod fuerit in adolescentia potens nigromanticus'. This information is not included in Alberic's other sources on Berengar (Sigebert and Helinand). These rumours likely circulated orally.
[213] Necromancy (*necromantia*), technically refers to magic involving the dead (*necros*); often divination through consulting the spirits of the departed. Its common spelling shifted to *nigromantia*, more accurately translated as the broader 'black magic' or 'dark arts'. Alberic consistently uses the spelling *nigromantia* and often connects this to demon summoning, as in his accounts of Berengar, of Gerbert of Aurillac (774, 776) and elsewhere (932). His account of a man who was turned into a donkey is the exception as no demons are mentioned, but they are probably assumed to have been the source of the magic.
[214] Alberic, 789. He does include Berengar's dying words, spoken on Epiphany 1088: 'Today my God Jesus Christ will appear to me, either to glory, as I hope on account of [my] repentance, or to punishment, as others would have it, as I fear.' ('Hodie apparebit mihi Deus meus Iesus Christus, propter poenitentia, ut spero, ad gloria, vel propter alios, ut timeo, ad penam'), cited from Helinand.

their number cannot be expressed'.[215] They were so wicked that some could not be burned unless the consecrated host was first held in front of the pyre. One 'friend of Lucifer' was even snatched up by demons while she was being led to the fire, and never seen again. What had they done to have become so evil? Alberic refers to a 'synagogue of heretics' (*synagoga hereticorum*) but what he describes is full-blown satanism. Apparently, an image of Lucifer which was displayed during their gatherings answered his worshippers' questions until a Catholic cleric (*catholicus clericus*, emphasising the orthodox-heretical dichotomy) miraculously destroyed it by displaying the host in front of it. In Alberic's mind heresy was so intrinsically related to the demonic– and vice versa – that satanism and heresy almost serve as synonyms. Where demons gained footholds, heresy was sure to sprout; where heresy was discovered, demons were surely at the heart of the matter.

Did this mean that monks – as demons' favoured prey – would be particularly prone to falling into heresy as well? Multiple of Alberic's entries on the demonic do deal with fallen clergy in particular, though only three deal with monastic figures. We have already seen Henry the apostate monk; Berengar of Tours was a theologian and archdeacon. Another account connects the despicable behaviour of Pope John XII (937-964) to his drinking 'for the love of the Devil' and his invocation of demonic assistance during dice games.[216] Two lengthy entries based on William of Malmesbury's even longer accounts discuss the wild rumours surrounding Gerbert of Aurillac's (Pope Sylvester II, *c*. 946-1003) youth as a monk. According to these tales, he at some point fled his monastery to study astrology from the Saracens in Spain, where he also 'acquired the art of summoning shapes (*figuras*) from Hell'.[217] He then stole his teacher's book, summoned the Devil and made a pact with him in

[215] Ibidem, 931-932. 'per Alemanniam vero facta est tanta hereticorum conbustio, quod non possit numerus conprehendi'. His account is probably based on (oral) eyewitness accounts.
[216] Ibidem, 768.
[217] Ibidem, 774 .

order to escape, before building a successful career as a treasure hunter and finally returning to France.[218] Other entries report on a 'very pious' but still demon-possessed monk and a *magister* leading 'eight vain clerics' into a ritual to summon no less than four demon princes.[219] Finally, one account makes note of a 'very pious woman' who turned out to be a terrible heretic.[220] Another account speaks of 'an old woman named Gisla who was called [an] abbess', but from the context it is more likely that she was an 'abbess' in her heretical sect than that she was a former Catholic abbess fallen into error.[221]

Clearly, no one was safe from the demonic, and anyone could become a heretic. The worrying realisation that even established authorities could be used by 'false theologians' to confirm heresies – and that this could lead to the condemnation of the work itself! – echoes in Alberic's lament on the condemnation of the ninth-century theologian John Scotus Eriugena's *De Divisione Naturae* by pope Honorius III in 1225:

> It is no wonder therefore, if this book, published over and about three hundred years ago, ended up on the recently celebrated council and incurred damnation in that year because of the new Albigensians and the false theologians, who perverted its words by badly understanding them – words that were perhaps well uttered in their time and simply understood by the ancients – and confirmed their heresy from them.[222]

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[218] Ibidem, 776 includes an episode from his treasure hunter days featuring another Jewish *nigromanticus*.
[219] Ibidem, 877-878, 932.
[220] Ibidem, 937. This story calls to mind an episode from the Book of Acts (16:16-18) where Paul and his companions are followed around by a slave girl with a spirit of divination.
[221] Ibidem, 944-945. 'Fuit etiam ibi vetula magne fame de Pruino, Gisla nomine, que dicebatur abbatissa, cuius mors dilata est'.
[222] Ibidem, 915. 'De libello supra dicto testatur magister Hugo de Sancto Victore in libro Didascalicon, quod Iohannes Scotus scripsit theologiam de decem cathegoriis in Deum. De quo Iohanne habetur in historia nova Anglorum, quod martyr estimatus est; lege supra in anno 878; non est igitur mirum, si libellus hic, ante 300 circiter annos editus, et magnum concilium nuper celebratum evasit et hoc anno dampnationem incurrit propter novos Albigenses et falsos theologos, qui verba bene forsitan suo tempore prolata et antiquis simpliciter intellecta, male intelligendo pervetebant et ex eis suam heresim confimabant.' The book is first mentioned under the year 878 (p. 742-743). The entry flashes forward to 1225, warning that it was then condemned and ordered to be burned.

Neither great piety, nor monastic vows or theological study could in itself prevent one from falling into these traps – quite the opposite. Did this frighten Alberic? It was certainly on the minds of his Cistercian brethren as well. Helinand expresses a deep concern for the state of the clergy that was being educated at the schools in his days: 'See, that clerics in Paris seek the liberal arts; in Orleans, literature; in Bologna, [Justinian's] Codex; in Salerno, medicine boxes; in Toledo, demons; and nowhere, morals!'[223] Apart from his generally negative view of the schools, how did Toledo's clerics come to be characterised as those 'seeking demons'?[224] Eric Saak points out that it is probably a reference to the Toledo School of Translators, an association of scholars translating Islamic texts into Latin. These included treatises on astrology, which quickly became a topic of interest amongst the scholastics. Helinand dedicates his Book VI to arguing that astrology is nothing less than 'consultations and pacts with demons.'[225]

According to Derek Baker, the first half of the thirteenth century saw a heightened fear of heresy within the ranks of the Cistercians themselves as well.[226] Several reports on heretical monks surfaced from around Europe, inquisitorial investigations were opened and abbots were urged to weed their communities. The Order might yet retain its purity by cutting off the sick branches… The Cistercians apparently tried to keep this under wraps; there is scant evidence in the official reports of the General Chapter. However, the available sources show that this anxiety was quite specific to the timeframe 1219-1259. Baker therefore suggests that 'either heresy infiltrated the Order in that period, or existing practices and views

[223] Helinand of Froidmont, 'Sermo XV' in: J.P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* 212, 603A. 'Ecce quereunt clerici Parisius artes liberales, Aurelianis auctores, Bononiae codices, Salerni pyxides, Toleti daemones, et nusquam mores.'
[224] For more on his view of the schools, see Saak, 'The Limits of Knowledge', esp. 296-299; and Beverly Maine Kienzle, 'Erudition at God's Service: Hélinand's Toulouse Sermons' in: J.R. Sommerfeldt ed. *Erudition at God's Service* (Kalamazoo 1987).
[225] Saak, 'The Limits of Knowledge', 296-297.
[226] Baker, 'Heresy and Learning in Early Cistercianism'.

became suspect in the context of the prevailing anxiety about heresy within the Church as a whole'.[227] He argues that the latter is more likely, especially as very little is said about the actual 'heretical' beliefs or practices of these monks. Based on a letter from abbot Stephen of Lexington of Clairvaux (*c*. 1198-1258) expressing his desire to establish a Cistercian study college in Paris (founded in 1247), Baker positions this problem in the context of the Order's desperate need for a new generation of inspired and educated leaders. Stephen had identified this problem and linked it to an increased risk for heresy, precisely because 'this was an Order whose spiritual strength and inspiration was based upon the individual experience of the monk-ascetic in personal communion with his God.'[228] In the absence of qualified leaders imposing strict discipline, the monks could easily stray into all kinds of heterodox interpretations. The Cistercian heresy problem was therefore 'not so much formal creeds or defined practices as aberrations from the strongly ascetic, personal Cistercian way of life'.[229]

Here, Baker touches on two important points. Firstly, the real fear of Cistercians of Alberic's age that heresy (in whatever form) could creep into their own monastery – their own hearts! – at any moment. Secondly, the tension between Cistercian distrust of the scholastics on the one hand, and the pressing need for well-educated leaders of their own on the other hand. Baker does not mention demons at all, but it is in this context of endemic anxiety and confusion that we should read Alberic's accounts of heretics and demons. Additionally, the connection is easily made. Demons kept monks from focussing on what truly matters, which gave rise to laxity, wrong interpretations and dangerous desires, which in turn opened the door to heresy (and demon worship) even within the monastery. Therefore, monks needed to be

[227] Ibidem, 100.
[228] Ibidem, 102.
[229] Ibidem, 106.

educated, but also kept away from knowledge that could endanger their souls. At times, this was a hard balance to strike.

11. Orthodox demons? Knowledge and salvation

The final goal of demons and the Devil is usually to keep people away from knowledge of the Christian truth in order to ensure their ultimate damnation; spreading heresy is a great way to do this. However, Alberic also includes two accounts that go against this logic. The first entry, based on a non-defined source which 'you can find at Clairvaux', involves two female Lombard demoniacs.[230] In true Alberic style, this account is a short summary of the original, making the order of events a little confusing. However, the gist is clear. A Cistercian abbot delivered the first woman, from Lodi, from her demon, but at some point this demon encountered another demoniac in Milan. The Milanese demon fiercely rebuked him for apparently having openly preached the Passion of Christ and sung his praises through the mouth of the woman he possessed. Why would a demon do that?[231]

The second account testifies to the scarily cunning strategies demons could devise. In one of three entries on the supernatural for which Alberic lists himself as the source, under the year 1200, he relates the story of a very pious German monk named Thare, who was known to always take communion.[232] However, Thare was possessed by a demon named Belial.[233] Alberic notes that it was always clear when the monk himself spoke, and when the demon

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[230] Alberic, 854. I have not been able to locate the source; it is not Herbert of Clairvaux.
[231] See Caciola, 'Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession' on the difficulty that medieval observers had in determining whether someone was possessed by a demon or inspired by the Holy Spirit, as the outward signs were often indistinguishable to them. However, Alberic's account leaves little room for the interpretation that the Lodi woman was actually inspired by the Holy Spirit instead of demon-possessed.
[232] Ibidem, 877-878. He lists Peter, abbot of *Chaerio*, who accompanied cardinal Wido on the visit which is discussed in the entry, as his source.
[233] The term 'belial' (Hebrew בְּלִיַּעַל *bělīya'al*) appears several times in the Bible. It's literal meaning is likely 'worthless', but it was taken as a proper name in later tradition. Sometimes it was used as a name for Satan (comp. 'Lucifer'). Alberic's Belial does not appear to be the Devil himself, but is nevertheless a powerful and ancient demon.

spoke through him. Belial strangely helped Thare to live an even more pious life, for instance by encouraging him to confess his sins. When a certain cardinal Wido visited the community and was confronted by this demonised monk, he doubted whether Thare should be allowed to take communion. However, the demon told him there would be no harm, 'because your communion is food for the soul, not for the body, and I do not have his soul in my possession, only the body.'[234] Understandably, Wido attempted to exorcise the demon, but was met by stoic refusal and told that 'this power has not been conceded to you.'[235] The poor cardinal then preached to the congregation, but afterwards the demon scoffed that he did not do very well and proceeded to preach a much better sermon – both in Latin and German! Finally, the cardinal asked Belial why he possessed Thare. The chilling answer? It was his goal to proclaim the Gospel to everyone, so that no one could plead ignorance on Judgement Day to avert their punishment.

These accounts raise questions about the (irredeemably evil?) nature of demons and the lengths they possibly go through to ensure the damnation of believers. Knowledge plays a crucial role in the believer's journey towards salvation or damnation. The right knowledge should lead to eternal joy, but if one does not act on it, it will all the more condemn him. Furthermore, recognising 'wrong' knowledge is equally as important in order to avoid heretical error – as Helinand often emphasises. Finally, as the Cistercians were well aware,

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[234] Alberic, 877 'quia tua communio cibus est anime, non cibus corporis, et ego animam istius non habeo in meam postestatem, sed tantummodo corpus.' Comp. Mark 7:18-19, where Jesus declares: 'Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body', and the parallel passage in Matthew 15:16. A similar story about a demoniac who is offered the Eucharist is found in Gerald of Wales' (*c*. 1146-*c*. 1223) *Gemma Ecclesiastica* and adapted in the *Liber exemplorum ad usum pradicantium'* (*c*. 1275-1279), as noted in Caciola, 'Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession', 282. There also, the demon is reported to have said that 'the Lord is in her soul and I live in her intestines', meaning that the demoniac could safely take communion. Caciola stresses that this distinction between inhabitation of the soul versus the body helped medieval observers discern whether someone was demonised or inspired by the Holy Spirit; two different kinds of 'possession' which were hard to distinguish based on external behaviour alone. Also note that Thare the monk is an interesting exception amongst female-dominated reports on demoniacs in the Middle Ages.

[235] Alberic, 877. 'Et cum adiurasset eum cardinalis, ut recederet, dixit: Propter te non recedo, quia potestas hec non est tibi concessa.'

desiring knowledge could in itself easily lead to sin and eventually damnation. Alberic's reports on Gerbert of Aurillac emphasise that the wayward monk sought 'in short, whatever, *hurtful or salutary*, human curiosity has discovered' – and this is not put in a positive light.[236] Essentially, the monks found themselves trapped on all sides, with only a very narrow path leading to salvation. This fine line between the need for knowledge in order to be saved and the danger of possessing or desiring the wrong knowledge instead, is strikingly reflected in Alberic's chronicle and his own insatiable thirst for (historical) knowledge.

One complicating factor was the potentially important knowledge which demons – as ancient spiritual beings – held, but humans did not. Various accounts in Alberic's chronicle emphasise different kinds of knowledge which could be obtained from demons, both good and bad. In the story about Thare, after the demon had shown to be a much better preacher than the cardinal, the community asked a pressing question, namely 'what do you think about monks who have property?'[237] The answer, in line with Cistercian austerity ideals, was that 'a monk who has a penny (*obulum*), is not worth a penny.'[238] Amidst the general fear of heresy and laxity, even demons could become a source of orthodox doctrine and preaching… Another report on knowledge is found under 1241. A 'good and wise' *magister* who had visited Constantinople 'a couple of years ago' had been asked to force a demon to answer a question.[239] The answer was a riddle which the *magister* refused to explain because it would become clear soon enough. Alberic specifies that it has now come to pass, as it spoke of the future of Constantinople's relationship with the Comans. Despite biblical and ecclesiastical

[236] Ibidem, 776. 'ibi quidquid noxium vel salubre curiositas humana scrutabatur, deprehendit.' My emphasis.
[237] Ibidem, 878. 'Et quid tibi videtur de monachis qui habent proprietatem?'
[238] Ibidem, 'Monachus qui habet obulum, non valet obulum.' He might be citing a saying by or attributed to Jerome, see Tom Gaens, Beter dan het origineel: Kartuizeridealen en de vroege Moderne Devotie (PhD dissertation, University of Groningen 2019) 93 note 70, for other examples and the attribution to Jerome.
[239] Alberic, 949.

warnings against partaking in divination, he does not condemn the situation and seems happy to report on a prophecy coming true regardless of the demonic source.

In his heavily abbreviated version of one of Caesarius' stories for 1214, Alberic notes that many people from the surrounding country came to the demon Cohoth, who was harassing a pious virgin in Brabant, to inquire 'about their fortunes' (*de rebus suis certis et incertis*).[240] The demon also openly revealed everyone's sins, except those which they had already confessed. Alberic's version slightly shifts the message of Caesarius' original, and puts the spotlight on different aspects.[241] He completely omits this demon's main intention, which was to break the girl's vow of virginity. Additionally, in the original the demon's habit of disclosing people's sins is characterised as very malicious, whereas it could be interpreted positively in the *Chronica* given the similarity with the Thare story. In both cases, people were urged to confess, which is good.[242] Caesarius also specifies that people asked Cohoth whether he could say the *Pater Noster* and the Creed correctly; he makes no mention of inquiries into their own fortunes. In his account, the type of knowledge that is desired has more to do with how demons could potentially be recognised and distinguished from true believers.

The level of knowledge that demons can possess, which is far above that of humans, is also the theme for a striking entry under 1129. Here it is knowledge of the far past that gives away the non-human nature of the Devil. Disguised as a squire, he faithfully served count Sybodo of Hochstaden for many years.[243] However, one time at night they were both up and looked out to the night sky from the privy. Prompted by the count to give his opinion on the Moon, the 'squire' admitted that he 'was present at its creation', and revealed knowledge on

[240] Ibidem, 902.
[241] Comp. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, III.6
[242] Caesarius does add two additional stories about the same demon in the explanatory part of this chapter which focus on the power of confession to hide sins. But the demon's role is not portrayed as positive in itself.
[243] Alberic, 828. There is no source indicated; I have not been able to find one. Scheffer-Boichorst also notes that there does not appear to have been a 'count Sybodo' of either Hochstaden or Are (Alberic himself was not sure which county).

its age and the origin of the world.[244] Discovered, he was forced to leave the castle 'through the [toilet] opening'.[245] What the Devil sought to gain from serving this count as a squire is left entirely unclear, and unfortunately Alberic's source does not appear to have included the revealed age of the Earth and Moon. Unless it did, and Alberic used it for his own calculations, but he did not want to disclose that his source was the Devil himself… He interestingly does not outright condemn any of these examples of people obtaining knowledge from demonic sources. In their thirst for knowledge and certainty, Alberic and his contemporaries sometimes also conveniently ignored that the Devil is the arch-liar. Caesarius' account hints at this contradiction but refuses to fully develop its implications.[246]

But what about the Luciferian 'synagogue of heretics' with its question-answering image of the Devil in 1233? In that case directing questions at the Devil is strongly condemned; Alberic triumphantly recounts the burning of these heretics. What is the difference between these instances? It is a very fine line indeed, but mainly comes down to two points. Firstly, no one should actively summon demons to worship them, which is implied to be the case in 1233, but if the demons reveal themselves, one can take advantage of it. Secondly, Alberic can perhaps sympathise with using demons to gain knowledge, but asking for carnal desires to be fulfilled is an entirely different story.

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[244] Ibidem. 'Quid tibi videtur de luna? Qui respondit: In eius creatione presens fui. Insuper et de etate lune a prima sua creatione et mundi origine ei manifestavit.' In Alberic, 845 the fact that demons are liars is emphasised, although this is especially applied to illusions.

[245] Ibidem. 'Tandem licentiatus a comite cum sua confusione per foramen ipsius camere coactus est discedere.'

[246] The story emphasises the power of true confession (with the intent of never sinning again) to literally obscure a sin for the demon who could otherwise air one's dirty laundry. The demon reveals someone's sins; mortified, they deny it to be true, then quickly run to a priest to do confession, return, and when the demon is incapable of even remembering what he accused them of just minutes before, bystanders assume that he lied the first time. The sinner's reputation with the neighbours is saved, but the demon was speaking nothing but truth. Apparently, scaring people into going to confession was more important to Caesarius than addressing th is uncomfortable situation in which a demon speaks only truth and people are essentially encouraged to keep lying rather than come clean to their neighbours.

12. The Bermuda Triangle of demons, heresy, and sorcery

The issues of worldly desires and demon summoning via *nigromantia* or sorcery are most elaborately addressed in Alberic's account of the eight vain clerics, a case which also highlights the thin boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy/satanism. This story is seamlessly inserted after the description of the German Luciferians, and serves as an explanation for the presence of such satanic practices.[247] In this entry, many things come together. Heresy, demon worship, *nigromantia* or sorcery, miracles, scholastics, clerical depravity... It might well be Alberic's most shocking account due to the colourful description of a summoning ritual it includes. One would almost expect a 'do not try this at home' disclaimer.

The main character is a *magister* from Toledo – remember Helinand's conviction that 'clerics in Toledo seek demons'! – a *nigromanticus* 'wholly devoted to the Devil', who travelled to Maastricht and attracted the attention of eight vain clerics.[248] At their prompting he led them into a midnight ritual featuring a safe-zone circle for the clerics, empty chairs for the three Magi, another chair carefully decorated with flowers outside of the circle, a skinned cat and two bifurcated pigeons. Three demon princes and their superior, called Epanamon,

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[247] Alberic's entry on the Luciferian affair is very long. It discusses the burning of the heretics, the host miracles, the rapture of one heretic by demons, a letter to the pope complaining about the conduct of inquisitory delegate Conrad of Marburg, Conrad's subsequent murder, and finally the account of the eight clerics as an explanation for the Luciferian nature of the cult. The passage is relatively often mentioned in research because of Conrad's infamous career; Alberic is the only one to discuss the source of the satanic element. See e.g. Paul B. Pixton, Dietrich of Wied, Archbishop of Trier, 1212-1242: A Study of Princely Politics and Religious Reform (PhD dissertation, University of Iowa 1972) 97-99; and Paul B. Bixton, *The German Episcopacy and the Implementation of the Decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council*, 1216-1245 (Leiden 1994), esp. at 383-386, 403-404. Alberic appears to connect this episode to the Stedinger Crusade (1233-1234). Some historians have interpreted this as him justifying the crusade by connecting the Stedinger rebels to Luciferian/heretical beliefs, see e.g. Megan Cassidy-Welch, 'The Stedinger Crusade: War, Remembrance, and Absence in Thirteenth-century Germany', *Viator* 44:2 (2013) 159-174, 164. The passage has also been noted due to its colourful description of a summoning ritual by Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps: Essais d'anthropologie médiévale* (Paris 2001) 183-199; and Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, '*Vox in Rama*: Die Dämonisierung des schwarzen Katers' in: Rainer Kampling ed., *Eine seltsame Gefährtin: Katzen, Religion, Theologie und Theologen* (Frankfurt am Main 2007) 194-176, which focusses on the sacrificed cat. Neither deals in much detail with Alberic's chronicle itself.

[248] Alberic, 932. 'totus dyabolo deditus'.

appear and devour the cat, providing the *magister* with the opportunity to catch Epanamon in a glass vial sealed with wax Alpha and Omega signs. The clerics may reveal their heart's desires to the demons, and are promised to obtain whatever they ask for. One asked for favour at the Duke of Brabant's court, another for the 'consent' of a noble woman, and so forth. However, one asked for sexual relations with a certain young man and is refused, because this was too illicit a desire (*tam ilicito desiderio*) even for demons. He was graciously allowed to ask for something else. Again, demons prove more morally sound than clerics.

The *magister* then led the clerics 'into the greatest perversity'.[249] He did not allow them to leave the circle until sunrise and discussed the most horrible things about Christ and all Christians with the demons. However, before they could finally exit the clerics were instructed to confess that 'God has become man; in this honour I live'; otherwise the demons would have devoured them.[250] Alberic emphasises that 'he who had compelled them to deny the Incarnation, could not lead them out of the circle sound of mind without confessing that same Incarnation'.[251] In the middle of a heinous act of occultism, the Christian truth shined most brightly – although the clerics might have been beyond saving at that point. Alberic describes his source as someone who had spoken with some of these very clerics through whom the cult of Lucifer spread and grew. However, he reassures his readers that the *magister* drowned on his way to spread this perversity to England, 'joining such a lord as the one he served'.[252]

Of course the demon-heretic-necromancer triangle did not appear out of thin air. Heretics had always been demonised to varying degrees, and the connection between heresy

[249] Ibidem. 'Postea audientibus illis clericis, cepit ille magister multa contraria loqui de Christo cum demonibus suis et de omnibus christianis et ipsos clericos in maximam perversitatem induxit'.
[250] Ibidem. 'Deus homo factus est, in hoc honore vivo'.
[251] Ibidem. 'et qui eos conpellebat ad negandum misterium incarnationis, non poterat sanos educere de circulo sine confessione ipsius incarnationis.'
[252] Ibidem. 'Tante perversitatis magister volens transire in Angliam submersus est in mari et adiunctus est tali domno quali servivit.'

and sorcery also dates from Early Christianity; in particular from the figure of Simon Magus. In the Book of Acts, Simon 'the Magician' is reported to have wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from the apostles. Soon the story was embellished, suggesting that he grew a cult around his own person and became the arch-heresiarch of all later heretics. Though it is not always made explicit, his magical abilities could only have come from the Devil. In the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the infamous demons-heretics-sorcery triangle would slowly become formalised in canon law and inquisitorial procedures. Instances of sorcery[253] could eventually be prosecuted as heresy. Alan Charles Kors and Edwards Peters identify thirteenth-century developments as the foundation for late medieval and early modern witch hunts.[254] However, it remained unclear for quite some time whether reports of sorcery and divination should be taken into account by inquisitors of heretical matters. Pope Alexander IV's 1258 decision to allowed inquisitors to try sorcerers and witches if there was evidence of manifest heresy as well marked a development, but did not yet fully equate the issues in legal terms.

Alain Boureau also addresses these developments in his monograph *Satan the Heretic*.[255] He provides valuable insight into papal-scholastic deliberations on the topic, but

[253] I employ the terms 'necromancy/*nigromantia*' and 'sorcery' loosely interchangeably to refer to occult attempts at interaction with or manipulation of the (evil) supernatural, including demon summoning. Modern scholarship has proposed stricter distinctions between terms like 'diabolism', 'necromancy', 'sorcery', 'witchcraft' and '(black) magic' – especially in research on the late medieval and early modern witch hunts (See 'Maleficium' in Jonathan Durrant and Michael D. Bailey eds., *Historical Dictionary of Witchcraft* (Lanham 2012); also see Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law*) but Alberic's chronicle does not make such distinctions. He uses the term *maleficium*, a central term to research on the later witch hunts, only twice in the sense of witchcraft. Once in a quote from William the Breton on the marriage of Philip Augustus and Ingeborg of Denmark (Alberic, 871, for context see Constance M. Rousseau, 'Neither Bewitched nor Beguiled: Philip Augustus's Alleged Impotence and Innocent III's Response', *Speculum* 89:2 (2014) 410-436), and once in a quote from Helinand on two 'old women' (*aniculae*) who turned people into animals (Alberic, 789). In this same entry he uses *nigromantia* as a synonym for *maleficium*.

[254] Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters eds., *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia 2001) 112-114. A translation of Gregory IX's decretal letter *Vox in Rama* (1233), which was sent to Conrad of Marburg and the archbishops of Mainz and Hildesheim in reaction to their reports on the heretical/satanic sects spreading in the Rhineland, can be found on p. 114-116. It goes into great detail on the satanic practices reportedly practiced by these groups.

[255] Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*. It has received mixed reviews; see e.g. reviews by Nicholas Vincent in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58:3 (2007) 549-551; Sophie Page in *The Catholic Historical Review* 93 (2007) 624-625; Dyan Eliott in *The American Historical Review* 113:2 (2008) 559-560; Julien Véronèse in *Annales.*

overstretches their importance in his conclusions. He claims that 'this work shows that in contrast to what has previously been believed, an obsession with the Devil did not constitute an essential aspect of medieval Christianity but that it emerged rather suddenly between 1280 and 1330', which is only tenable if one adheres to a very particular definition of 'obsession'.[256] The same is true for 'demonology' in the supposed 'birth of demonology' in the 1320s. As this thesis has shown, 'obsession' with the Devil and demons was never absent in medieval Christianity; least of all in monastic thought. Boureau insufficiently acknowledges widespread and highly developed ideas on demons circulating in and out of monasteries because this falls outside of his focus on scholastic debates.[257] In practice, the scholastic approach and legal-theological debates cannot be separated from miracle stories, popular beliefs, and monastic traditions testifying to continuous urgent concern with the demonic, as well as belief in the intrinsic connection between heresy, demons and sorcery.[258] As far removed as Alberic was from the epicentre of (fourteenth-century) scholastic discussions, their core issues are reflected in his entries on demons, necromancers, and heretics. In the *Chronica*, 'heretic' and 'demon worshipper' are only a hair's breadth away from being synonyms.

Histoire, Sciences Sociales 63:1 (2008) 189-191; Henry Ansgar Kell in *History of Religions*, 49:1 (2009) 88-92, which is the most scathing; and Philipps Stevens Jr in *The Historian*, 77 (2015) 826-827.

[256] Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, 3-4.

[257] This is also noted in Dyan Eliott's review: 'The claim that there was no particular interest in demons prior to the late thirteenth century downplays the pivotal role of William of Auvergne (p. 94). Moreover, movement beyond the narrow perimeters of scholasticism to pastoral theologians renders this chronology [of the birth of demonology between 1280-1330] even more suspect. Writers such as Caesarius of Heisterbach were fascinated by every aspect of demons'. I would add especially Richalmus of Schöntal as proof for this. In contrast, Boureau characterises the scholastics as 'the theologians and canonists who gave shape and strength to a concern with demons' (p. 5).

[258] Also see Sophie Page, *Magic in the Cloister: Pious Motives, Illicit Interests, and Occult Approaches to the Medieval Universe* (Pennsylvania 2013) on late thirteenth to fourteenth-century monastic involvement with magic, further complicating a strict dichotomy.

Conclusions Part II

In summary, Alberic's entries on demonic activity constitute a rich subclass of accounts of supernatural occurrences given their relative frequency and the insight they provide; not only into his scholarly methodology but also into his worldview as a thirteenth-century monastic historian. On the one hand, his preference for historical facts over religious instruction and devotion is reflected in the type of information which he adds, as well as his tendency to omit explicitly didactic pious content. On the other hand, several uncharacteristically colourful and highly detailed stories reveal a deep concern over the state of the Church of his time and a fear of rising heresies and demon worship within the heart of the Body of Christ. Possessed monks, preaching demons, necromancer clerics; they testify to an atmosphere of confusion and anxiety in which truth was much desired but harder to come by than Alberic wished. If only heretics could really be recognised by their smell! Far from safely locked away in their monasteries, monks like him knew that they too stood on the frontlines of raging spiritual wars. Knowledge, which Alberic certainly craved, could be just as easily a key to salvation as a one-way-ticket to damnation in these circumstances. Dedicating himself to uncovering true historical facts may have provided a temporary escape from threats that could unfortunately not be resolved by diligently comparing sources and recalculating dates.

Conclusion

Medieval chroniclers did not distinguish between 'historical events' and manifestations of the supernatural in the way that modern historians do. Miracles, visions, and even demonic activity were part of the God-given order of history and were, as such, included in their chronicles. In a sense, therefore, this distinction is artificial and anachronistic. However, it is useful insofar as it allows historians to investigate the degree to which these chroniclers accorded equal importance to events that we might place in these categories. Additionally, viewing these chroniclers as a monolith does not do justice to their individual experiences, interests, skills, and goals. Even though they all believed in supernatural manifestations, the extent to which these events take centre stage in their chronicles varies. This thesis has investigated how one thirteenth-century chronicler, the Cistercian Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, approached his task as a historian. Quantitative and qualitative research on his treatment of sources discussing supernatural occurrences has shed more light on his method and priorities. He is far from unreliable as a historian; he did not credulously believe all miracle stories to contain historical facts. As this thesis has demonstrated, he was an ambitious scholar with a critical attitude to sources and a passion for knowledge and truth. His chronicle is valuable to historians today, not just as a source of historical information but also as window into Alberic's (inner) world.

The first part of this thesis has refuted the view that Alberic was particularly inclined to include or emphasise miracle stories or accounts of the supernatural in general. Entries featuring supernatural elements form only a fraction of the *Chronica* as a whole; only 179 entries out of an estimated four to five thousand qualify. Many of these are formulaic rather than expressions of deep interest in the supernatural *an sich*. Of the 109 accounts reporting

miracles, only 48 provide details beyond the fact that 'someone did miracles'. Additionally, an emphasis on Marian devotion, which would be expected in a Cistercian source, is noticeably absent. Finally, where Alberic does report on supernatural occurrences, he often draws attention away from the religious aspect. He frequently omits the theological, pious-moral, or spiritual lessons which are included in his sources. In contrast, reconstructing chronology and recovering as much information on a given event as possible emerge as Alberic's main priorities. He took pride in his own skills in this department and called out a regrettable disinterest in chronicles and resolving chronological discordances on the part of both his fellow monks and other learned men. A comparison with Helinand of Froidmont's *Chronicon* – especially Alberic's reception of Helinand's reports on the supernatural – highlighted differences in style, goals, and priorities in this respect. Both authors present a compilation of true knowledge produced within the spiritual-intellectual environment of the Cistercian Order, but Helinand's digressions into explicitly (religious) exemplary and didactic territory are noticeably absent in Alberic's work. His approach to chronicle compilation is instead characterised by brevity and little explicit interpretation of 'raw facts'. These differences also allowed this thesis to investigate whether the *Chronica* had been intended as a tool for sermon writing. Although it could have been used in this way, I have argued that this was likely not Alberic's primary intention.

Having established that detailed accounts about supernatural occurrences are rare in Alberic's chronicle, Part II put the spotlight on a selection of exceptions which also provided more insight into his inner world. Entries featuring demonic activity stand out amongst other reports on the supernatural given their relative frequency, the level of detail, and sometimes a heightened sense of urgency or care. This urgency is especially pronounced when Alberic discusses the demonic in conjunction with heresy. True to his priorities and expertise, the entries do not reflect a fully developed or coherent demonology. Neither do they provide clear

instructions to his readers on how to deal with demons – not even an unequivocal 'do not deal with them'! His treatment of reports on demonic activity does allow us a peek into the mind of a thirteenth-century monastic historian living through a time of widespread religious violence and transformation.

Four things stand out. Firstly, his tendency to use supernatural occurrences to build an argument for a particular conviction of his, which is demonstrated in the entries discussing journeys through earthly Hell and Purgatory entrances. Although belief in earthly Hells technically constitutes a religious belief, in contrast to his sources Alberic does not stress the need to repent or pray for the deceased, nor the necessity of belief in evil spirits and infernal or purgatorial punishments *an sich*. He presents his argument as primarily pertaining to geography. Secondly, the entries highlight an entrenched belief in the inherent connection between heresy and demons. They also emphasise that even the most pious and well-read monks or theologians are not safe from heresy and demonic possession. Helinand's sermons, as well as thirteenth-century reports on 'heretical' Cistercian monks contextualise Alberic's tangible anxiety about threats from within. Thirdly, the *Chronica*'s demons are at times disturbingly orthodox and pious in contrast to a host of lax, perverted, and heretical 'Christians'. Alberic the scholar is himself especially interested in the possibility of obtaining super-human knowledge from demons about the past, present, and future. In times of widespread suspicion and confusion, even demons could become sources of truth… However, the line between salvific knowledge and knowledge that damns, which Alberic tried to navigate as well, is evidently very thin. Fourthly, the entries complete the third leg of an infamous triangle connecting demons, heretics, and sorcery. They show that these three threats to Mother Church were so tightly interwoven in Alberic's mind that they almost serve as synonyms.

The *Chronica* was Alberic's lifework. This product of countless hours – decades! – of pouring over sources, comparing them, solving discordances, reconstructing genealogies and chronologies, selecting citations, rewriting them, searching for additional information, and adding commentary deserves more recognition as a valuable source for research. Despite its partial reliance on older, better-known sources, his at times unique reception of them is worthy of investigation; as is the considerable amount of original content in the second part. Furthermore, much of Alberic's personality and personal views on history, as well as the great transformations and events of his own lifetime, shines through the pages. It is a wealth of potential waiting to be fully explored.

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Appendix A. Methodology and data

Data selection

The list of relevant data– entries containing references to supernatural occurrences – which is the basis of the current research has been compiled through both close reading of Alberic's chronicle and the use of a digital search function. Entries pertaining to the period prior to the year 1000 were selected through close reading of the edition. I then transcribed the second half of the *Chronica*'s edition, discussing events between 1000-1241, into a searchable file. This allowed for a thorough search based on the following hits: *miraculum, mirabilis*, *demon*, Satan, *diabolus*, *nigromanticus*, *maleficium*, *visio*, *revelatio*, and *prophetia* (as well as relevant variations and cases in Latin). Where necessary, I have consulted the Paris manuscript to check passages that are abbreviated in the edition. Each hit was examined to determine whether it pointed to a relevant passage. For example, not all hits for *mirabilis* referred to a supernatural occurrence, and some hits for *prophetia* merely called Mohammed a pseudoprophet. Finally, close reading of the second part of the chronicle yielded several more passages which had not come up while searching for the abovementioned terms.

The selected entries were compiled chronologically in two lists, one for the period prior to 1000 and one for the period up to 1241. The following information is included: 1) the date and edition page number, 2) searchable codes assigning the applicable categories of supernatural occurrences to the entries, and 3) a short description of the content. I did not count multiple supernatural occurrences within the same entry as separate entries. All entries were marked as belonging to one or more of the following categories: miracles, demonic or diabolical activity, visions/dreams/apparitions, and prophecies. I also included a code highlighting entries discussing heresy to facilitate the research I intended to carry out. Miracle accounts (the largest category) were then assigned to one of three subclasses: one for entries

containing the word *miraculum*, one for entries including the word *mirabilium* and one for accounts without either term. Finally, I created a subcode for miracle accounts to distinguish between 'first class' and 'second class' miracle accounts. In order to be marked as a first-class miracle account, some detail on what the miracle looked like it and who performed it (besides 'God') had to be present. This demarcation criterium still allowed for some very concise entries to be considered 'first class' accounts, but it revealed that a considerable amount of 'miracle accounts' were little more than formulaic references to the supernatural.

Table 1. ***Categories of the supernatural in Alberic's entries***

CODE	Description	Hits before 1000	Hits 1000-1241	Total
CODE1	Miracles (*miraculum*)	16	61	77
CODE2	Miracles (*mirabilium*)	1	6	7
CODE3	Miracles (other)	9	16	25
CODE4	Demons, Devil, necromancy, Hell	10	33	43
CODE5	Visions (*visio*)	9	11	20
CODE6	Revelations, dreams, apparitions, etc.	11	8	19
CODE7	Prophecies	7	11	18
Total number of hits		**63**	**146**	**209**
Total number of entries		**56**	**123**	**179**
Number of entries excl. second-rank miracles		*43*	*75*	***118***

References to divine aid – especially in battle – expressed in very general terms (e.g. 'by the grace/providence/assistance of God we obtained a victory') form a related but separate category. These formulas are common in the sources Alberic cites, but he rarely uses them in his own writing. Most also do not describe a particular supernatural event (in contrast to e.g. the account of Mary's intervention during the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, or even the 1144 'miraculous' victory of Alfonso of Portugal). Therefore, these instances were noted, but have been left out of the total count of supernatural occurrences. The goal of this research is not to

investigate whether Alberic believed in God's willingness to provide victory or justice, but if and how he chose to write about specific manifestations of such intervention.

Sources on the supernatural

The majority of Alberic's entries on the supernatural do not cite a written source. Most of these are likely based on oral sources; in several instances details on the informant are provided. In some cases, an uncited written source may have been available to Alberic, but has now been lost or has not yet been discovered. A total of 28 external sources can be identified for accounts of the supernatural. Alberic is the sole identifiable author of 55% (98 entries) of all entries on the supernatural, for three of which he explicitly names himself as the source. He adds information to an entry in another 35 accounts. In most entries, he has edited the original text to a greater or lesser extent.

The identification of the sources is primarily based on Scheffer-Boichorst (who both confirmed whether Alberic's own identification was correct and identified sources where Alberic did not list one). In most cases I have also been able to confirm the source. Alberic's use of certain sources for reports on the supernatural largely reflects his relative reliance on these sources for the chronicle in general. Helinand, Sigebert, William the Breton and Guy of Bazoches are all cited frequently throughout the chronicle. However, Otto of Freising, who is cited about as much as Sigebert, is only consulted three times with regard to a supernatural occurrence. Conversely, Herbert of Clairvaux, Caesarius of Heisterbach, and Audradus Modicus are, conform the nature of their works, rarely to never cited with regards to 'non-supernatural' events.

Table 2. ***Relative reliance on different sources for accounts of the supernatural***

Source	Number of entries based on this source[1]
Alberic[2] or oral/unidentifiable sources	95
Alberic (named)	3
Alberic only adds to the supernatural element	10
Alberic only adds historical/genealogical details	15
Helinand of Froidmont	19
Sigebert of Gembloux (incl. continuators)	14
William the Breton	8
Guy of Bazoches	5
William of Malmesbury	5
Audradus Modicus	5
Herbert of Clairvaux	4
Caesarius of Heisterbach	4
Other (used 3 times or less)[3]	22

[1] Note that a single entry can be based on multiple sources.

[2] Including the *Chronicon Clarevallense*

[3] These include: Otto of Freising, *Vita Sancte Simonis*, Peter Damian, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, *Liber Sancti Jacobi/Codex Calixtinus*, a letter from pope Leo I, Gilles of Orval, Elizabeth of Schönau, a *Libellum descriptionis Wallie*, a letter to pope Gregory IX, Oliver of Paderborn, William of Tyre, Rufinus' translation of Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, Hugh of Fleury, Bede, Flodoard of Rheims, *Vita Caroli Magni*, Odo of Cluny, the Book of Daniel, and Liutprand of Cremona.

Appendix B. List of entries featuring supernatural occurrences

CODE1	Miracles (*miraculum*)
CODE2	Miracles (*mirabilium*)
CODE3	Miracles (other)
CODE4	Demons, Devil, necromancy, Hell
CODE5	Visions (*visio*)
CODE6	Revelations, dreams, apparitions, etc.
CODE7	Prophecies
CODE8	Heresy
SRMA	Second-rank miracle account

Entries prior to 1000 AD

	Year and (*edition page*)	Type(s) of supernatural occurrence(s)	Subject
1	0 (*678-679*)	CODE7	Prophecy from the Book of Daniel, mentioned in the interest of calculating the date of Christ's birth.
2	97 (*681*)	CODE7	Prophecy by Saint Denis predicting the return of John the Apostle from Patmos.
3	237-238 (*683*)	CODE5	Martyrdom of the eleven thousand virgins, as dated through visions received by Elizabeth of Schönau.
4	281 (*684*)	CODE4 CODE8	Rise of the Manichaean heresy, which Alberic connects to the Devil-inspired heretics of his own day.
5	343 (*686*)	CODE6	An angel reveals to Pope Julius I how the body of Pope Clement I could be recovered.
6	347 (*686*)	CODE1 SRMA	'That miracle' reported by Gregory of Tours; mentioned in order to date the episcopy of Saint Severin of Cologne.
7	400 (*688*)	CODE5	Vision received by Saint Ambrose to inform him of Saint Martin's death; mentioned in order to date the death of the saint.
8	434 (*689*)	CODE7	Prophecy spoken by Merlin to Vortigern.
9	489 (*691*)	CODE6	Revelation of (the location of) the sanctuary of the archangel Michael at Monte Gargano.
10	536 (*692*)	CODE3 SRMA	Theophilus restored by the Virgin Mary.
11	626 (*696*)	CODE1	Saint John I Agnus made bishop of Tongres after the miraculous flowering of his staff.
12	674 (*699*)	CODE6	Translation of Saint Benedict and his sister Saint Scolastica after a vision received by the abbot of Fleury.
13	675 (*699*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Cuthbert.

14	687 (*700*)	CODE1 SRMA	Saint Bonitus, about whom can be read in a Marian miracle book.
15	688 (*701*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Leodegar.
16	698 (*702*)	CODE6	Dream by Philippicus, son of Nicephorus, (r. 711-713) revealing to him that he would become Byzantine emperor.
17	717 (*703*)	CODE7	Prophecy spoken by Merlin on the kings of Britain and England.
18	723 (*704*)	CODE1	Saint Rigobert of Reims miraculously recovers two church bells which had been stolen.
19	752 (*708*)	CODE1 SRMA	A monk is miraculously prevented from moving Saint Benedict's bones.
20	754 (*709*)	CODE5	Vision of heaven received by Pope Stephen II.
21	764 (*711*)	CODE1 SRMA	More on Saint Bonitus based on Peter Damian and a book of Marian miracles.
22	774 (*713-715*)	CODE2	Tale of Amicus and Amelius; miracles, involvement of the angel Raphael.
23	778 (*716*)	CODE4	Charlemagne utterly destroys the idols in Spain, except for an idol in Andalusia in a place called *Salayn Cadis*; Alberic notes that in that a demonic legion is sealed there.
24	778 (*716*)	CODE5	Vision received by Charlemagne of Saint James the Elder and the pilgrimage to Compostela.
25	783 (*717*)	CODE7	An ancient prophecy on Christ's virgin birth discovered in Constantinople.
26	788 (*717*)	CODE6	Reference to *Karel ende Elegast*, in which Charlemagne uncovers a conspiracy because an angel encourages him to go stealing at night.
27	802 (*721*)	CODE1 CODE6	Charlemagne's victories against the Saracens in the East following predictions of his God-given successes and the miraculous appearances of a bird and an angel.
28	812 (*727*)	CODE3 SRMA CODE6	Body of Saint Salvus found after its location was revealed to Charlemagne; many sick people are restored to health.
29	815 (*728*)	CODE1	A man is turned to stone for conducting construction works at a church; an onlooker is grateful to Saint James because the saint only struck him with blindness.
30	842 (*733*)	CODE6	Vision received by Audradus Modicus installing him as a servant of Christ.
31	842 (*733-734*)	CODE3 CODE4 CODE5	Vision of Heaven received by Audradus Modicus; demons accuse the human race before God but are silenced by angels thanks to the intercession of Saint Martin.
32	845 (*734*)	CODE7	Vision received by Audradus Modicus of Norman attacks on Paris; he predicted that the king would not be able to repel them, but that they would leave the city after ten years – according to Alberic this indeed came to pass.

33	846 (*734*)	CODE3	Audradus Modicus is cured of several inconveniences.
34	849 (*735*)	CODE5	Audradus Modicus presents his books to the pope after having received a vision of Saint Peter.
35	850 (*735-736*)	CODE4 CODE5	Vision received by Audradus Modicus of two demons accusing mankind. Another vision: God gives different parts of the world to Mary, Saints Peter, Paul, and Martin, and the angel Michael; God holds King Louis the Pious accountable for the civil war amongst his sons and proclaims divine verdicts on all three of them.
36	856 (*737*)	CODE7	On the birth of a son of Noah after the deluge, who is possibly mentioned in a certain prophecy.
37	859 (*737*)	CODE3 CODE5	Vision of Saint Cyriacus received by Charles the Bald, which saves him from a wild boar attack. He is informed of the poverty of Nevers, which he remedies.
38	866 (*739*)	CODE3 SRMA	Reference to the resurrection of Lazarus; mentioned in relation to the translation of Mary Magdalene's relics.
39	882 (*744*)	CODE1	Translation of Saint Martin of Tours; a dispute is resolved by putting a sick person in between the relics of Saint Martin and those of Saint Germanus, which were already in the monastery. Martin cures the person and is henceforth venerated for his miracles, but Germanus remains venerated for his hospitality.
40	889 (*746*)	CODE4 CODE5	*Visio Karoli Grossi*; Charles the Fat's spiritual journey through Hell.
41	913 (*755*)	CODE3	Retranslation of St Martin; people were healed even if they did not ask for it, trees flowered even though it was winter.
42	924 (*758*)	CODE4	Murder of King Berengar I of Italy by Flanthbertus, who was influenced by the Devil.
43	929 (*759*)	CODE1	The lute of Ansel of Canterbury's brother starts singing an antiphon.
44	953 (*766*)	CODE3 SRMA	Translations of several relics from Rome to Cologne, including the staff of Saint Peter, which was known to have resuscitated Saint Maternus.
45	954 (*766*)	CODE6	A thundering voice from Heaven announces the death of the King of England to Saint Dunstan.
46	959 (*767*)	CODE6	Saint Dunstan hears a voice from Heaven on the occasion of the ascension of King Edward the Martyr at age 16.
47	960 (*767*)	CODE1	Miraculous healing by Saint Martin of Tours.
48	964 (*768*)	CODE4	Pope John XII accused of many vices, including drinking 'for the love of the Devil', and invoking demons during dice games.
49	974 (*771*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the tomb of the martyred Wensceslaus, Prince of Bohemia.
50	976 (*771-772*)	CODE3	The pious Duke Eusebius is aided in battle against Duke Ostorgius by the souls of the deceased for whom he so diligently prays.

51	980 (*722*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles through the relics of several saints in Ghent.
52	987 (*773*)	CODE6	Discovery of an alleged Holy Lance relic; Alberic does not believe it to be authentic.
53	988 (*774*)	CODE4	Pope Sylvester II's (Gerbert of Aurillac) youth spent learning astrology and demon summoning from the Saracens in Spain, and making a pact with the Devil before returning to France.
54	994 (*776*)	CODE1 SRMA	The miracle book of Saint Faith of Conques.
55	997 (*776*)	CODE4	Cries of tortured souls in Purgatory can be heard through volcanic cracks on the island of Volcano near Sicily; a monk overhears demons complain that these souls are being released early thanks to the almsgiving and prayers of the faithful (especially Cluniac monks).
56	999 (*776*)	CODE4	More on Gerbert of Aurillac/Sylvester II, who uncovered many pagan treasures with the help of the Devil.

Entries 1000-1241

	Year and *edition page*	**Type(s) of supernatural occurrence(s)**	**Subject**
1	1010 (*779*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by King Stephen of Hungary.
2	1011 (*811*)	CODE2	A deceased bishop and several others temporarily return from the dead to provide aid.
3	1024 (*782*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the tomb of Saint Henry of Bamberg.
4	1029 (*783*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Simeon of Trier.
5	1035 (*785*)	CODE6	Dream by Richard, Duke of Normandy, predicting that his son William would become king of England.
6	1044 (*787*)	CODE5	Apparition of a deceased man named Benedict.
7	1049 (*789*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Bardo, Bishop of Mainz.
8	1049 (*789*)	CODE1 CODE4	A man is turned into a donkey by two old women who make a living by selling people who they have turned into animals; he regains his true form when he jumps into a lake because nothing created by necromancy can remain when touched by water.
9	1050 (*789*)	CODE4 CODE8	Berengar of Tours accused of having been a necromancer.
10	1052 (*789-790*)	CODE1 SRMA	Several English saints known for their uncorrupted bodies.
11	1059 (*791*)	CODE1 CODE5 CODE7	Vision received by King Edward of England, known for the gift of prophecy, on the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

12	1062 (*793*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by bishop Anno II of Cologne.
13	1066 (*796*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Theobald of Provins.
14	1094 (*803*)	CODE6	Apparition of Christ to Peter the Hermit.
15	1098 (*810*)	CODE3	Miraculous discovery of the true Holy Lance.
16	1099 (*811*)	CODE1 SRMA	Reference to a story about a lord of Coucy who ran to the Holy Sepulchre and left his horse outside, but the story is not actually inserted.
17	1099 (*812*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the tomb of Saint Wibertus.
18	1099 (*812*)	CODE7	Birth of saint Hildegard; her books and prophecies.
19	1100 (*814*)	CODE4	The Devil appears to several people in England; in a neighbouring town a fountain of blood flows for fourteen days.
20	1104 (*816*)	CODE1 CODE2	Miracles related to the translation of Saint Cuthbert.
21	1112 (*819*)	SRMA	Reference to a Marian miracle during the reign of bishop Helinand of Laon.
22	1115 (*820*)	CODE1 SRMA	Seven canons of Laon travel to England with various relics; Mary performs several miracles.
23	1118 (*822*)	CODE1 CODE6	Exposition on the translation of and exploits and miracles by Saint James the Elder and the *Codex Calixtinus*; reconstruction of key dates.
24	1119 (*824*)	CODE1 SRMA	The Shroud of Christ miraculously survives a fire and is transported to a Cistercian Abbey.
25	1124 (*826*)	CODE7	Reference to a prophecy by Ezekiel.
26	1127 (*827*)	CODE4	Through the Devil's influence Charles the Good of Flanders is murdered at the altar during Lent.
27	1128 (*828*)	CODE3	Mary miraculously cures people of Saint Anthony's fire (*plaga ignis dei*).
28	1129 (*828*)	CODE4	The Devil, disguised as a squire, serves Sybodo count of Hochstaden or Are, but reveals himself when he confesses to have been present at the creation of the Moon.
29	1130 (*828*)	CODE6	Saint Bernard of Clairvaux hears angels singing *Salve Regina* at Saint Benigni Abbey.
30	1130 (*829*)	CODE4	Death and subsequent escort into the Hell of Iceland of Magnus the Strong and his followers.
31	1130 (*829-830*)	CODE1 CODE4 SRMA	Description of a volcanic eruption at the location known as the Hell of Iceland.
32	1132 (*831*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Malachy and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.
33	1134 (*831*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the tomb of Saint William of York, who was murdered through a poisoned Mass chalice and refused an antidote out of reverence for the sacrament.
34	1135 (*831*)	CODE1	Miracles at the tomb of Schothelinus, a German recluse.

		SRMA	
35	1136 (*832*)	CODE7	Prophecy spoken by Merlin.
36	1141 (*833-834*)	CODE5	Hildegard of Bingen's visions revealing to her the content of her books.
37	1141 (*834-836*)	CODE2 CODE4	Knight Owen's journey through Saint Patrick's Purgatory.
38	1141 (*836*)	CODE3 SRMA	Many people cured of Saint Anthony's fire thanks to the intercession of Mary and many saints.
39	1142 (*836*)	CODE4 CODE8	The questionable views of Peter Abelard, which diminish the power of Christ's sacrifice and the sacraments to redeem mankind from the grasp of the Devil.
40	1142 (*836*)	CODE1	Bishop Adalbero of Liege trusts more in God than in human strength; he brings the relics of Saint Lambert to the battlefield and succeeds in taking back a castle which the count of Barri had unjustly taken from him. The arrival of the saint was so miraculous that one of the count's sons died instantly.
41	1144 (*837*)	CODE1 SRMA	Alfonso I of Portugal miraculously defeats the Saracens in Spain.
42	1146 (*838*)	CODE7 CODE8	Otto of Freising on eschatology; the signs of the End Times and the prophets' writings on this subject.
43	1146 (*838*)	CODE4 CODE5	William of Norwich' crucifixion and vision of the punishments of Hell.
44	1147 (*839*)	CODE1	Many miracles performed by Saint Bernard while preaching the crusade in Germany, including a ressurrection.
45	1147 (*839*)	CODE3	Christians raise the banner of the cross during the Siege of Damascus (Second Crusade), miraculously turning the soot which the enemy tried to blow in their faces in their favour.
46	1148 (*839*)	CODE4 CODE8	A diabolical spirit forces heretic Éon de l'Étoile and/or Henry of Lausanne to believe himself to be the son of God.
47	1149 (*840*)	CODE4 CODE5	*Visio Tnugdali* on the punishments of Hell and the joys of Paradise.
48	1150 (*840*)	CODE1	Saint Bernard cures the mute son of an apostate monk who fathered many children.
49	1153 (*842*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Pope Eugene III, a former Cistercian monk.
50	1155 (*843*)	CODE5	Visions received by Elizabeth of Schönau; her book and a sermon on the date of Mary's Assumption.
51	1156 (*843*)	CODE6	Revelation received by Elizabeth of Schönau on the date and manner of the martyrdom of the eleven thousand virgins.
52	1159 (*844*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by the Virgin Mary of Rocamadour.
53	1160 (*845*)	CODE1 (but demonic)	Heretics appear in Germany, aided by a host of false miracle-performing demons. People are invited to dine

		CODE4 CODE8	with them, but one is warned to protect himself against illusions with the sign of the cross. The dinner turns out to consist of faeces and trash, but once people have tasted it they become so deceived that they can no longer see the truth.
54	1163 (*847*)	CODE3 SRMA CODE5	A vision informs count Henry of Champagne of the location of the body of Saint Hilda; he goes to retrieve it but has to be saved miraculously after falling into a well.
55	1165 (*848*)	CODE1	King Louis VII of France finally and miraculously fathers a son (Philip Augustus) after supplicating God with many prayers in the midst of a meeting of the Cistercian General Chapter.
56	1166 (*849*)	CODE1 SRMA	Mary of Rocamadour delivers people from ferocious wolves; and many other miracles.
57	1166 (*849*)	CODE1 CODE4	The deceased count Philip of *Losens* appears to his soldiers, telling them about the purgatorial punishments he is being subjected to and urging them to provide for the poor on his behalf.
58	1167 (*849*)	CODE1	The Duke of Saxony goes to war against the pagans; a cross miraculously appears on or above every slain Christian.
59	1170 (*853*)	CODE6	Vision received by Hildegard of Bingen of the personified Church.
60	1171 (*854*)	CODE1 SRMA	Martyrdom of and miracles by Thomas of Canterbury.
61	1171 (*854*)	CODE1 SRMA	Books on miracles by Saint Gundricus.
62	1173 (*854*)	CODE3 CODE4	A Lombard demoniac is delivered by a Cistercian abbot; the demon encounters another demoniac in Milan and is fiercely rebuked for apparently having openly sung the praises of Christ and preaching his Passion.
63	1173 (*854*)	CODE4	A girl from Sens is led to a cave full of (possibly demonic/illusory) treasures.
64	1174 (*855*)	CODE4	Demons cause a terrible storm and famines in Portugal/Spain.
65	1179 (*856*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the tomb of Saint Richard at the Church of the Holy Innocents in Paris.
66	1181 (*857*)	CODE1 SRMA	Henry of Clairvaux miraculously takes a castle occupied by Albigensians.
67	1184 (*858*)	CODE6	Saint Glodesind of Metz appears to the mother of the blessed virgin Ascelina.
68	1185 (*858*)	CODE4	The son of count Hugh VIII de Lusignan is seized by the Devil after killing a man named Bertrand and not seen again, leaving the county without heir.
69	1186 (*859*)	CODE5	Vision received by an old widow instructing King Philip Augustus to open a public cemetery.
70	1187 (*860*)	CODE7	Some astrologers prophesy that a violent storm is coming; this turns out to be false in the literal sense but could be understood to refer to Saladin's conquests.

71	1188 (*861*)	CODE1	King Philip Augustus' army is miraculously supplied with water after an unnatural period of draught.
72	1188 (*861*)	CODE1	A Welsh prince miraculously causes birds to start singing while he was praying.
73	1190 (*863*)	CODE4	On Pentecost, a certain count William (William III of Mâcon?) was carried away by a demon on a black horse and never seen again.
74	1195 (*872*)	CODE1 SRMA CODE6	The blessed virgin Ascelina foresees her own death a year before it happens; more on her life and miracles can be found in the *Life of Ascelina* by Gossuinus.
75	1197 (*874*)	CODE1 SRMA	Many miracles by the Archbishop of Bourges, but they were revealed only after his death.
76	1198 (*875*)	CODE1 SRMA	Foundation of the Order of the Holy Trinity, which received its first house from a knight who was miraculously saved at Aleppo during the Third Crusade.
77	1199 (*876-877*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles and blessings by magister Fulco in Paris, who passionately preached against usury.
78	1200 (*877*)	CODE3	A pious French knight prostrates himself in the mud before the consecrated host; his clothes miraculously remain clean.
79	1200 (*877-878*)	CODE4	A pious German monk named Thare is possed by the demon Belial, who helps him grow in his faith and refuses to be exorcised. Belial preaches more eloquently than a cardinal and answers questions on monastic poverty; his goal is to preach the Gospel to everyone, so that no one will have an excuse on Judgement Day.
80	1201 (*878-879*)	CODE3 CODE4	A bowman is filled with a diabolical spirit during a siege, shooting an arrow at a crucifix which starts to bleed.
81	1202 (*881*)	CODE5	Visions received by a certain Humeline of Amiens, whose son Theobald became archbishop of Rouen.
82	1203 (*882*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Drogo in Sébourg.
83	1205 (*885*)	CODE1 SRMA	Othon de la Roche miraculously becomes duke of Athens and Thebes.
84	1205 (*885*)	CODE1	In the aftermath of the Battle of Adrianople a woman sees flashing lights surrounding a corpse, which she buries with honour. Later she reports miraculous healings experienced by both her and her husband.
85	1205 (*886*)	CODE1	Eucharistic miracle proving the superiority of the Latin rite Mass over the Syriac rite.
86	1209 (*889*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint William of Bourges.
87	1209 (*890*)	CODE1 SRMA CODE8	Simon of Montfort obtains miraculous victories against the Albigensian heretics.
88	1211 (*892*)	CODE1 SRMA	The fame of William of Bourges' miracles spreads throughout France.
89	1211 (*892*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Flandrina, the sister of bishop Geoffrey of Tripoli.

90	1212 (*893-894*)	CODE1 SRMA	The miraculous campaign and martyrdom of the child crusaders.
91	1212 (*894-895*)	CODE1	Four miracles during the crusade campaign leading up to the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa: a God-sent peasant shows the army a secret passage; a priest carrying the host remains unharmed at the siege of Malagón; the army is miraculously supplied with enough food and water; the banner of Mary of Rocamadour ensures the final victory.
92	1212 (*896*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the discovery of the relics of Mary Salome.
93	1213 (*896-897*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles at the tomb of count Philip I of Namur, known for his great humility, contrition, and generosity towards the poor and the sick.
	1213 (*897-898*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracle related to the Battle of Muret.
94	1214 (*902*)	CODE4 CODE7	Capture of Count Ferdinant of Flanders after the Battle of Bouvines; he was tricked into thinking that he would be victorious by an ambiguous prophecy which actually came from demonic sources.
95	1214 (*902*)	CODE4	Magister Oliver of Cologne encounters a demon called Cohoth while preaching in Brabant; the demon is harassing a pious virgin and exposes people's sins if they have not confessed them, but also answers questions about their fortunes.
96	1218 (*907*)	CODE3	Thanks to Mary's intercession a catastrophic flood is halted in Frisia.
97	1220 (*910*)	CODE7	Prophecy discovered after the capture of Damietta; it contains truths but is also deceptive in some respects.
98	1224 (*913*)	CODE3 CODE4	A recluse woman claims to subsist only on the Eucharist, as well as being miraculously aided in other ways. The truth of these claims is still being investigated.
99	1224 (*913*)	CODE7	Prophecy on Christian victories in Spain three years from now.
100	1225 (917)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles cease after the murder of archbishop Engelbert II of Berg.
101	1226 (*918*)	CODE2	Miracle of a rotated church crucifix during a violent storm in the vicinity of Foigny.
102	1227 (*920*)	CODE3 CODE7	A light as from a candle and a hand miraculously appear out of the mist as a monk celebrates the Mass; it writes down many rebukes and several prophecies.
103	1228 (*922*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Wiliam of Æbelholt in Denmark.
104	1228 (*922*)	CODE2 SRMA	The head of Saint Philip remains miraculously unharmed during a storm.
105	1231 (*928*)	CODE3 CODE8	Miraculous annual healings of lepers by the archbishops of Milan.
106	1231 (*929*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Anthony of Padua.

107	1231 (*929*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint William in Laon.
108	1231 (*930*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, including resurrections.
109	1233 (*931-932*)	CODE3 CODE4 CODE5 CODE8	The burning of many Luciferian heretics in Germany; eucharistic miracles; the investigations of Conrad of Marburg; a vision disclosing the pope's reaction to complaints about Conrad's methods.
110	1233 (*931-932*)	CODE4 CODE5 CODE8	Explaining the origins of the German Luciferian cult discovered in 1233: a necromancer *magister* from Toledo leads eight vain clerics from Maastricht in a demon summoning ritual in order to fulfil their sinful desires, after which they spread this perversity throughout the region.
111	1233 (*931*)	CODE1	Miracles surrounding the recovery of a Holy Nail relic at the Abbey of Saint-Denis.
112	1233 (*933*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracle by a Dominican called *Iohannes de Vincentia*.
113	1234 (*935*)	CODE4	The alleged Nossorite (Alawite) belief that women are created by the Devil.
114	1234 (*935-936*)	CODE3	Miracles performed by an image of the Virgin Mary and an oil pouring from it which does not diminished no matter how much of it is used; more and more people (even Muslims) venerate the image and eventually it turns into flesh.
115	1234 (*936*)	CODE3	Alberic adresses the problem of multiple monasteries claiming to possess the true body of a single saint; in one of the examples which he discusses this was resolved by the miraculous triplication of the body.
116	1235 (*937*)	CODE4 CODE8	Heretics who were wholly devoted to the Devil are burned in Châlons, Cambrai, and Douay under the supervision of Philip the Chancellor. A seemingly very pious woman called Alaydis is revealed to actually act out of self-interest and is also burned.
117	1235 (*937*)	CODE4	Two hundred small red men riding red horses come out of the woods and ride through a village; they evade capture and bring misfortune to anyone who saw them.
118	1235 (*937*)	CODE1 SRMA	Miracles by Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, mentioned again on the occasion of her canonisation.
119	1239 (*944-945*)	CODE4 CODE8	At Mont-Aimé 183 heretics are burned under the supervision of Robert le Bougre and a huge crowd of eminent onlookers; someone confesses to have witnessed a shapeshifting demon amongst the heretics.
120	1240 (*947*)	CODE3 CODE4	Demons running through the air cause a violent storm; a priest carrying the consecrated host is barely saved.
121	1240 (*948*)	CODE2	A miracle involving the Chair of Saint Peter.
122	1241 (*949*)	CODE4 CODE7	A magister forces a demon to prophesy, predicting the future of Byzantine-Coman relations.

123	1241 (*950*)	CODE4	Many knights die at a Pentecost tournament near Cologne after an explosion; demons are heard cackling as they soar through the sky in the guise of vultures and ravens.