

# PERSISTENT COMMUNITY

Architecture and Life of the Cistercians

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*Architecture and Life of the Cistercians*

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Fig. 1, Night stairs to the dormitory, Abbey of Sénanque.  
Photograph by the author.

## INTRODUCTION

The Cistercian order is an institution of Catholic religious monks. The order was created in the beginning of the twelfth century, after a several attempts to organize a cenobitic life. It had the ambition to escape agitation and focusing on a withdraw of society.<sup>1</sup> If some of the first monks had an eremitical way of life, the Cistercians used the community to progress, remove any sinful behaviour and pursue their objective of escaping the society. This idea of isolation was at the same time aiming for of physical tranquillity and following the theological mystic of the desert.<sup>2</sup>

To avoid the failure of their way of life in community, the Cistercians developed a precise architecture that was reproduced in all their monasteries. This architecture constitutes a type. Type and community are intimately linked, they accelerated the development of the order.<sup>3</sup> The monks lived enclosed in this architecture, requiring a strong sense of rhythm and ritual for a research of an ascetic life. The austerity of their daily life found a continuity in their art and architecture, it became the support of their ascetic discipline and reinforced their community.

The Cistercian's literature has proliferated in the twentieth century. The discovery of new manuscripts and the radically of their austere architecture recalling a modernism intrigued. The objectivity of the late literature is important to reconsider. The general enthusiasm led to theses that need to be read carefully. The late Cistercian literature was mainly written by Cistercian monks or nuns. This subjectivity is not an obstacle to use it and tackle the question of the communities in the Cistercian architecture. The Cistercian literature and biographies of Bernard of Clairvaux<sup>4</sup> of the twelfth century, contained also its part of subjectivity. Cautionary tales were redacted to exalt the enthusiasm of the rise of the order and Bernard of Clairvaux maintain an idealistic image according to his biographer and friend Guillaume of Saint Thierry. Writers of this period were impressed by the Cistercians and may have emphasis their descriptions.<sup>5</sup>

This study bears on the first century of the development of the order. The lapse of time of a hundred years represents a very long time that was the scene of important changes in the order and of an impossible constant ideology.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, Cistercians have produced impressive buildings that inspired the works of prolific architects like Fernand Pouillon and Le Corbusier. Surpassing the astonishment and the admiration for Cistercian architecture, this essay tends to pick images of the Cistercian reality, expressing the struggle to maintain the unity of their community.

1 Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe: The Architecture of the Orders* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1972), 9. Cenobite is a word compose of *koinè* meaning common and *bio* meaning life.

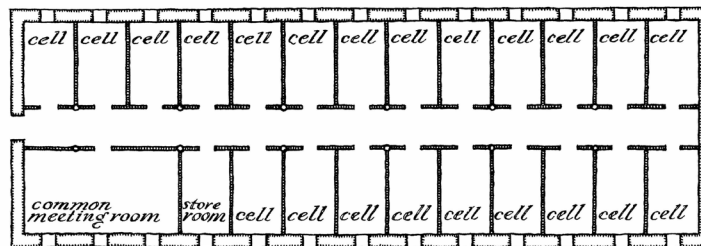
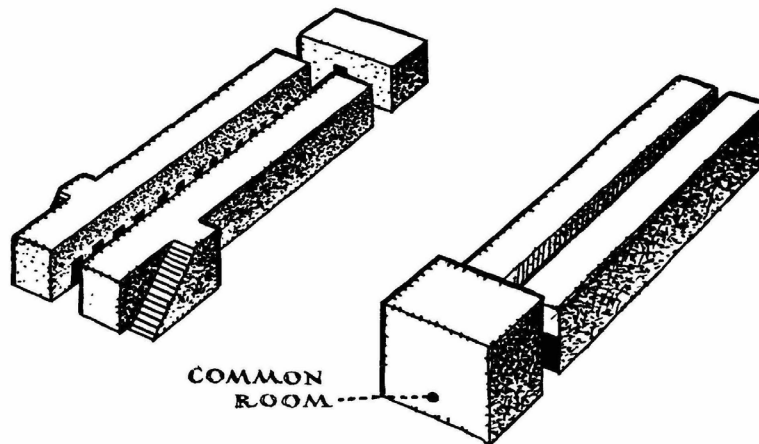
2 Marcel Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 2ème (Paris: Armand Colin, 2016), 9.

3 Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I* (Paris: Les Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1943), 24.

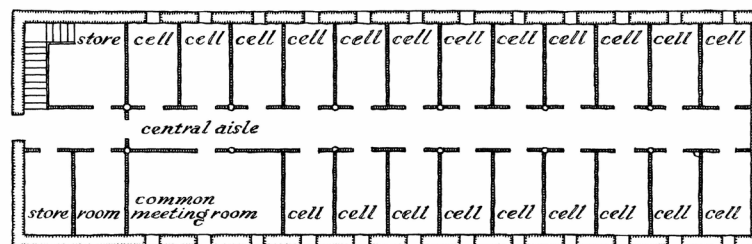
4 Bernard of Clairvaux is one of the funders of the Cistercian order. See p. 17

5 Jean-Baptiste Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, Cîteaux. Studia et Documenta (Achel: Ed. Sine Parvulos, 1986), 286.

6 Ibid., 317.



• GROUND FLOOR ONE STORY



• GROUND FLOOR TWO OR THREE

Fig.2, The Pachomian fold or house : one, two or three storeys houses with two ribbons of cells on either side of a central corridor, near the entrance a common meeting room and spaces for storage. Redrawn by Carl Bertil Lund after Sowers, 1951, from Walter Horn, *On the origin of medieval Cloister*, 17.

## FROM EASTERN DESERTS TO WESTERN FORESTS

In the first centuries after the beginning of Christianity, believers decided to escape from social life to avoid the temptation in the desert. This *fuga mundi* was directly linked with the Christian message. Tough conditions and discipline of life became a way to strengthen themselves. The research of asceticism was a means to progress in their faith.<sup>7</sup> « If you want to be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor. Then come and follow me » said the scriptures. Gathered in large numbers, they had to organize their daily life. The technical complexity of a solitary life led to the creation of an organized eremitic life or an elaborated cenobitic life. The hermits used to stay alone for long periods and make visits to each other time to time. Those monks pushed the asceticism until they suffered and were transcended. The cenobites, on the other way, decided to live in group in order to gather their resources and focus on their discipline.<sup>8</sup>

Pachomius (292-346) is known as the first monk to have created a monastery in Tabernisi along the Nils around 320. He established a rule in which the monks had to pray and work together, but also to learn how to read and write.<sup>9</sup> The use of a rule was found back in all the following monasteries. A monastic rule is what governs the life of the monks and directs the spirit of the discipline they chose to impose themselves. The rule is less than a command but more than an advice. While it is flexible according to the monasteries, its application is strict. A lot of elements of the rule of Pachomius is found back in the Cistercian rule, like the behaviour in the refectory, the attitude and dedication when ringing the bells or when to cover your head.<sup>10</sup> With more than two thousand monks, the Pachomian community had to split up and spread. The question of planning was important when creating so many communities simultaneously. Those first monasteries were organized in a series of contiguous cells facing a common room. There was an idea of collectivity but not yet the emblematic shape of the cloister. Since there was only one class of men, the monks, separation between people was unnecessary, but a wall was still created all around the monastery to embody the will of a rupture with the society.<sup>11</sup>

Monasticism developed in Europe following the authorization of the Christian religion. In 313, the emperor Constantine (272-310-337) legalized the religion and the Christianity was more and more present in the cities. Once again, the will of leaving the worldly agitation led some monks to try eremitic experiences. Benedict of Nursia (480-553), one of them, lived as an hermit for three years in a cave, before he was joined by others and founded twelve monasteries. He developed the idea that enduring an ascetic life alone was difficult and the *vita communis* was a way to strengthen the life discipline with the help of brethren. His first monasteries did not last, so he retreated in Monte Cassino in 529, to create a monastery on an old Roman compound. He understood the necessity of a rule to maintain a level of asceticism.<sup>12</sup>

The rule was redacted from 534, inspired from the previous one. It was written for the monks of his own monastery, but already used in the monastery around. In his rule, he gave advice on organization,

7 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 10. *Fuga mundi* is the concept of escaping of the world to avoid distraction. The asceticism is a self imposed discipline to aim toward perfection

*Bible* (England : King James Version, 1611), Mat. 12, 21

8 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 11.

9 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 51.

10 Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet, *Les 'Ecclesiastica Officia' Cisterciens Du XIIème Siècle Texte Latin Selon Les Manuscrits Édités de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114, Version Française, Annexe Liturgique, Notes, Index et Tables*, La Documentation Cistercienne (Reiningue: Les Ed. "La documentation cistercienne, 1989), 21.

11 Walter Horn, 'On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister', *Gesta* 12, no. 1/2 (1973): 17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/766633>.

12 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 25.



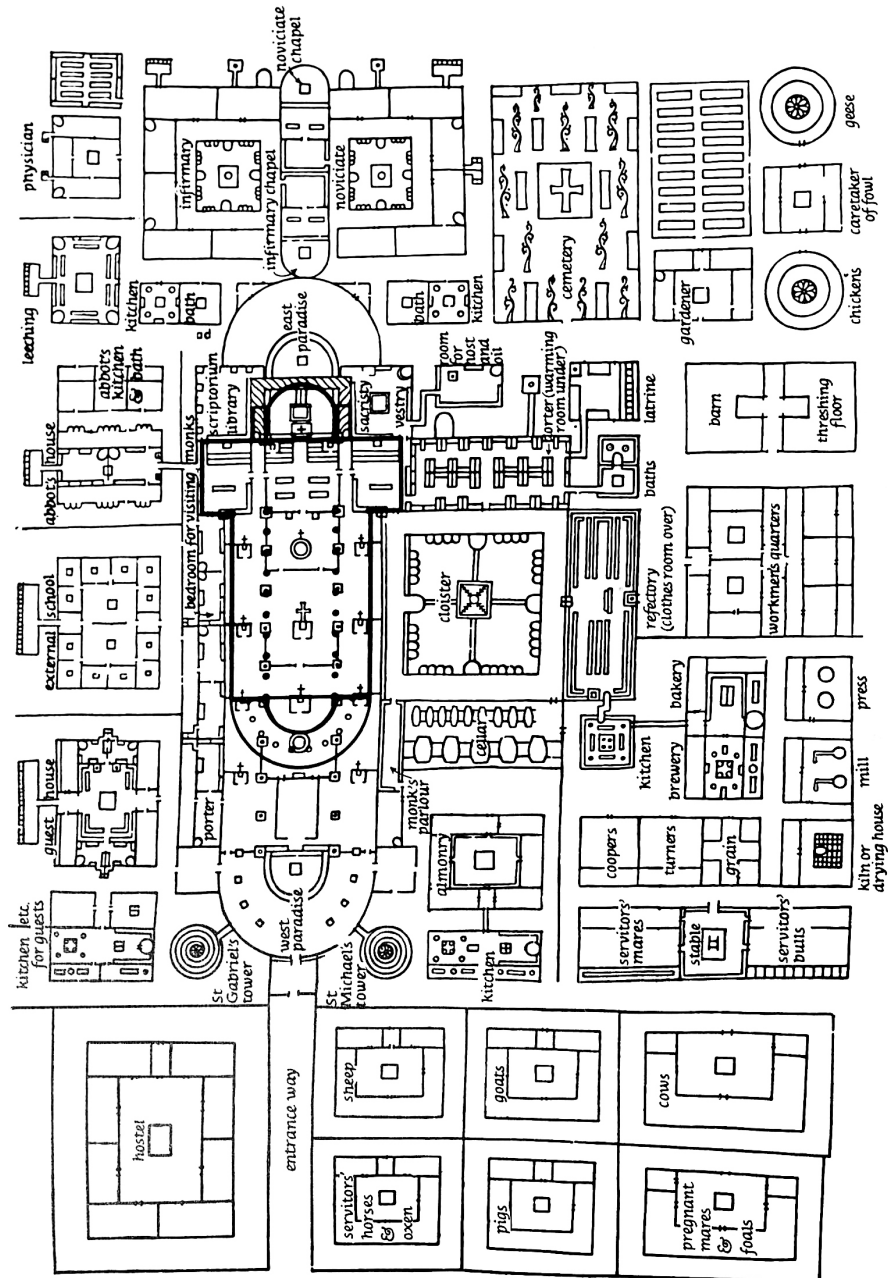


Fig. 3, The Saint Gall plan redrawn with identifications translated. From Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 39.

13 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 25. Abbot come from the Hebrew *abba* which signifiante father.

14 Ibid., 29.

15 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 12.

16 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 29. The *Opus Dei* mean the things of God, it reunite all the part of the monks life that was directly related to religion.

17 Horn, 'On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister', 20. Switzerland was a place were different monasticism mixed. The abbey of Saint Gall was founded by Gall, a disciple of Columbino, an Irish monks also passed by Lerins.

18 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 31.

19 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 65.

punishment, and schedule to administer a monastery. The main point was the vow of staying until the end in the same monastery, the *stabilitas loci*, the vows of humility, obedience and piety and the silence to maintain the solitude researched. With this rule the monastery became a place of community, the monks were gathered around an abbot that led the monastery.<sup>13</sup> Benedict did not believe that the body should be despised for the benefit of the spirit, as the first hermits did. It should be taken care as a God creation but should be dominated. In his rule, active participation of the monks is important, they chose to impose themselves a discipline and they elected their one master, the abbot to lead them according to the rule. The community became a tool to exercise their own humility and capacity to support and love each other.<sup>14</sup> Concretely, the community was unified by the same right, they have all the same clothes, two light tunics for summer and two velvet tunics for winter. The day was organized in between six to seven hours of offices and prayers, six to seven hours of work and eight to nine hours of meals and sleep.<sup>15</sup> The *Opus Dei* was the more important focus, they had to recite at least once a week the psalter, the book regrouping all the psalms. It is composed of a hundred and fifty old songs, mainly written by the Jewish King David. They are the main chore of the seven daily prayers of monks.<sup>16</sup>

His rule was precise but flexible. The pope Gregory the First (540-590-604) promoted this rule as a way of spreading Christianity. He sent monks in France, England and Ireland. Irish monasticism had a big impact on the perception of western monasticism. The Irish monks were focusing on the missionary side of their vocation and the good administration of their lands. Allow centuries, the different sensibilities of monasticism crossed each other and mixed, in place like the island of Lerins, where thousands of monks lived and was an active point of French monasticism.<sup>17</sup>

At the turn of the ninth century, the Carolingians used the Benedictine rule as a way of controlling the monasticism and structuring Christianity in the French territory. Councils were held to structure the expansion of Benedictine, plans appeared and cloisters became usual. In the eighth century, monasteries were massive, the national shrine of Saint Martin of Tours was governed by the monk Alcuin (735-796-804) and hosted twenty thousand monks. The monks were overflowing in the monasteries, there were recruited as soldiers, punished to monkshood sometimes or even almost enslaved as monks. The proliferation of Benedictine monasteries was intimately linked to the Carolingian power. The organization of those Frankish monasteries had influenced the other countries. The Emperor Charlemagne (748-800-814) understood the political power of Benedictine and was aware that a rule would maintain order.<sup>18</sup> Charlemagne wanted to control the monasteries, so he created the canons, city monks with a more lax rule.<sup>19</sup> He also did a lot of donations to the monasteries, and get involved in their administration. He decided to name abbots, and add schools to the monasteries. Those elements transformed the vocation of the monks and their self-management. It was a period of crisis of Benedictine ideals, they had the missions to christianize the territory that was not an entity penetrated by religion and lost the *clausatura* and the *stabilitas loci*. The successor of Charlemagne, Louis The Pious (778-814-840) was in rupture with his father and he supported the Benedictines, he

chose the abbot Benedict of Aniane (750-821), who had created his own monastery in his family property, to establish a reform and spread the Benedictine model.<sup>20</sup> In 816 and 817, synods were held in Aachen, they redefined the ideal of Benedictines and it was the first time that rule and plan were evoked jointly. In around 820, Hatto (763-836), the Abbot of Reichenau, drew a plan for the new monastery of Saint Gall.<sup>21</sup> The plan was sent to Gozebert, Abbot of Saint Gall from 816 to 836, as a reflection, at a time when abbots exchanged about the local monastic custom in between each other. This plan of Saint Gall was based on mathematics and perfect harmony. It was devised for seventy-seven monks according to the beds. The cloister was a square of exactly thirty meters long. It introduced several new formal rooms as the parlour, the *mandatum*, in which visitors were getting their feet washed, the dormitory, the cloister, the refectory but especially their positioning to one another. The plan of Saint Gall could be seen as the spatialization of the Synod of Aachen discussions led by Benedict of Aniane.<sup>22</sup>

Those rooms, dimensions and positions became an acknowledged base for the future monasteries. The recurring wars and Normans invasions complicated the development of monasticism in France for a few centuries,<sup>24</sup> but the bases of western monasticism were set. The Benedictine rule led to the creation of the Cluniacs and then the Cistercians.

20 Marcel Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs: Histoire de l'ordre de Cîteaux* (Paris: Fayard, 1993), 26.

21 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 38. « At the behest of Louis the Pious two monkish synods, presided over by Benedict of Aniane, took place in August 816 and July 817, and issued supplementary ordinances for the observation of St Benedict's Rule. They aimed at the standardization of monastic life in all Frankish monasteries. » (*Decreta, Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum* (ed. K. Hallinger) I, Siegburg 1963, p. 451.)

22 Ibid., 45.



## ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIFORM ORGANIZATION

### Cluny and the Feudal System

The Cistercian order was developed in opposition with the abbey of Cluny in a context of omnipresence of the Roman Church. The two previous centuries were dominated by the rise of another order, led by the Abbey of Cluny, which created a network of monasteries in the European territory. During the tenth century, religion prevailed. Religious coronation of rulers allows the legitimacy of the Kings and Emperors in Europe. New territories were christianized, in the East, the King of Hungary was converted, in the North, Sweden shift from a centre of paganism in the eleventh century to a Christian kingdom in the twelfth. In the south, the union of the King of Spain led the *reconquista* and chased Muslim out of Europe with the help of the French knights.<sup>23</sup>

23 Ibid., 14. This *reconquista* was perused until the capture of Toledo in 1085.

24 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 72. As described in the donation act, William the Pious did this gift to the apostles Peter and Paul to redeem his soul. This kind of gift from one of the main noble became an example.

25 The abbot were Berno of Baume (910-926), Odo (926-944), Majolus (954-994), Odilo (994-1049), Hugh of Semur (1049-1109).

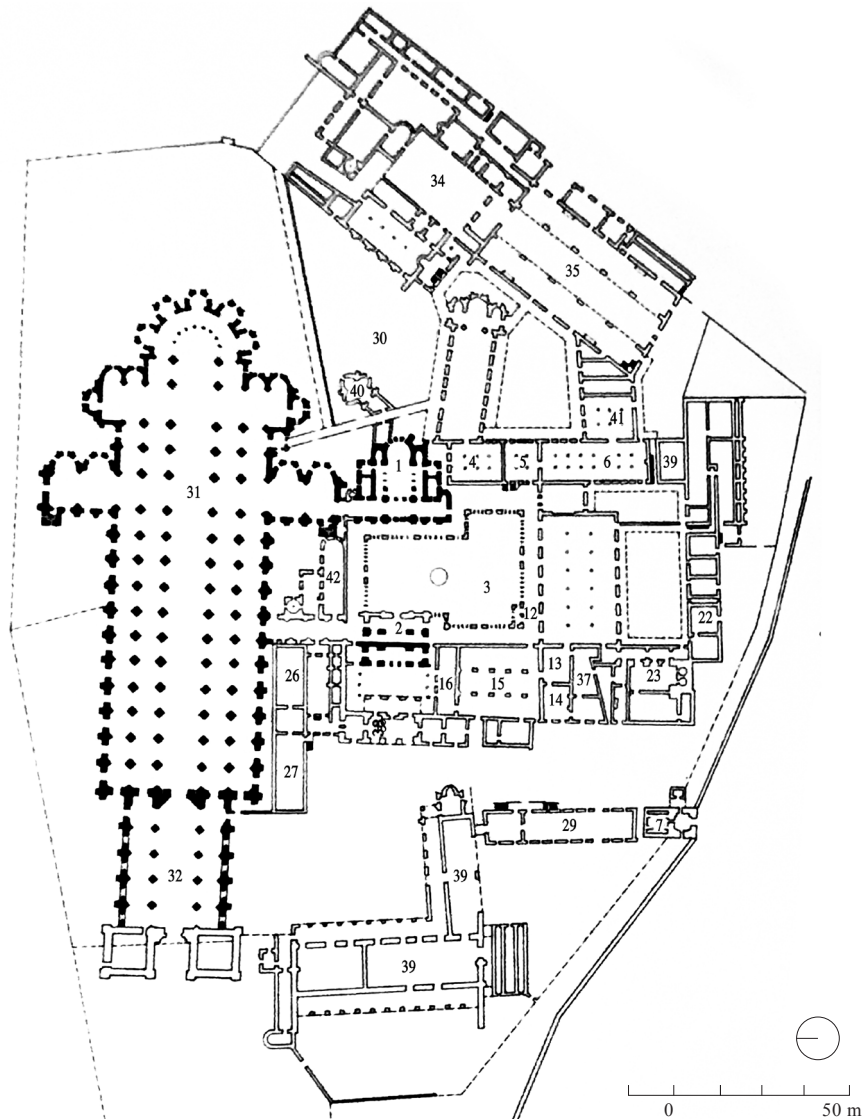
26 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 51.

In this Christian effervescence, Cluny was created in 909. It was a piece of land given by William the Pious (875-918) to the Pope. As a territory possessed directly by the Roman Church, it made it free from temporal power and any exterior interventions.<sup>24</sup> After the foundation, a series of only five abbots succeeded each other for two centuries in a row, this represented an important stability at this time and allowed the quick development of the abbey of Cluny.<sup>25</sup> During the abbacy of the second abbot in 930s, Cluny received the privilege from the Emperor of western France Henry I (876-919-936) to create and affiliate monasteries. This privilege set the starting point of the multiplication of the daughters of Cluny until it controlled a thousand and five hundred abbeys all over Europe during the twelfth century. The centralized power created by the mother abbey of Cluny made almost its abbot as a ruler. Within the abbey of Cluny, the number of monks increased from twelve in 910, seventy-three in 1063 until three hundred in 1122, and one thousand two hundred at the end of the twelfth century.<sup>26</sup>

In the eleventh century, the Capetian kings in France had only a weak influence and controlled only a small territory around Paris. The reign of Henry I<sup>st</sup> (1005-1060) was a series of battles against his vassals, the counts and dukes of France, to increase his influence. The French kings sought the support of the monasteries, both for their prayers and the network in the territories in order to assume a local control where the royal power was perceived more as a myth than a real power. Becoming anchor points, the monasteries obtained benefits in return such as protection and lands.<sup>27</sup>

27 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 16.

Simultaneously, there was a renewal of the Christian faith, the lords were moved by a religious ardour. It pushed them to the first crusade, to the creation of castles and churches, and to the conquest of the Northern Europe by the Teutonic knight and of England by William the Conqueror. From this idea of renewal, the Church saw the opportunity to emancipate itself from the temporal power. At the end of the eleventh century, the pope Gregory VII (1015-1073-1085) led reforms during few decades to clarify the distinction in the organization of clerics, laities and monks. The temporal power had the stranglehold upon the investitures of the bishops and therefore an important influence upon the Church and its possessions. This named clergy came from rich and noble families, an



Parts remaining from Cluny II :

- 1 Choir of the old church (Cluny II)
- 2 Narthex of old church
- 3 Cloister  
( Enlarged by taking in the old nave)
- 4 Chapter-house
- 5 Monks' parlour
- 6 Monks' common room,  
With the dormer above
- 7 Latrines
- 9 Warming room
- 12 Fountain
- 13 Kitchen

New buildings :

- 14 Lay-brothers' kitchen
- 15 Storehouse
- 16 Almonry
- 22 Workshops
- 23 Bakery
- 26 Women guests
- 27 Men guests
- 29 Stables, lay-brothers' quarters
- 30 Cemetery
- 31 New church( Cluny III)
- 32 New narthex
- 33 Lady Chapel
- 34 Infirmary court
- 35 Infirmary
- 36 Refectory
- 37 Kitchen
- 38 Abbot's palace
- 39 Hospices and stables
- 40 Cemetery chapel
- 41 Darter extension
- 42 Abbot's chapel

Fig. 4, Plan of Cluny III, the monastery as it was in about 1150, reconstructed after Pofessor Conant. From Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 61.

28 Ibid., 20.

29 Louis Julius Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1977), 3.

30 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 83.  
The pope Urbain II coming from Cluny published the « Sacred ban of Cluny » in 1095, giving to the abbot of Cluny the control upon the parish around the monastery.

31 Ibid., 93.

32 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 21.

33 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 54.

34 Ibid., 63.

anticlericalism was born to condemn their drifts, their lack of faith and piousness rigour.<sup>28</sup> The Gregorian Reforms aimed to take back the control on the nomination of the bishops and create a separation in between ecclesiastical and temporal power.<sup>29</sup> The Gregorian Reform was a real benefit for the Cluniacs that seized the opportunity of emancipating a bit more of the local authority. They were carefully defended by the pope, since a support of the reform and an opportunity to have an influence in France. Nevertheless, the Cluniac Order never forgot to keep a space of independence from any authority to pursue their own purposes.<sup>30</sup>

The Cluniac organization imitated perfectly the feudal system. The abbot of Cluny was choosing the new abbots of the abbeys and received their allegiances as it was done in the temporal society. During the twelfth century, Cluny organized its territories in ten different regions for a more efficient governance. This pyramidal system was a reproduction of the stranglehold from the king upon the lord. The Cluniac system succeeded to evolve, from the time of the central power during the Carolingian kingdom, to the feudal system of little lords in the Capetian system. The order worked in close relation with the feudal system. The sons of lords were joining the monasteries and were finding in it a manorial organization similar to temporal one that they were coming from. Monasteries administered the land, rendered justice, perceived the tithes and resources from peasants working on it. The link in between Cluniac and nobility had the impact of reducing the fight in between lords, by preaching the virtue of peace. The liturgical period as Lent or Advent were excluding the possibility of war, increasing the period of peace and productivity.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the absence of any clear superior authority, as a strong king or emperor, made the system of land exploitation developing around small local powers, lords. They united or opposed themselves according to family links, economic interest or hierarchical concerns of the vassalage system. This society of successive layers created stability and a relatively peaceful period. The demography and the productivity increased, leading to a first rise of circulation and commerce.<sup>32</sup>

The monastery of Cluny itself accumulated richness and extended several times to welcome more monks. In the second abbey of Cluny built in 1043, Cluny II, the plan was approximately following the one of Saint Gall, each monk had a bed and a window in the dormitory. The enrichment of the abbey due to the lands exploitation and donations were obvious, the example of running water in all the monastery expressed the luxury of the life conditions. The third abbey, Cluny III, was built in 1150, so big that the previous one could be considered as only a model of what Cluny was becoming. The cloister of Cluny III was enlarged upon old church of Cluny II. When a church was enlarged, it was usually made directly on the foundations of the previous one, reusing the stones. Cluny is a rare example where the church was on the side of it in order to have a fluid transition.<sup>33</sup> Cluny III arrived to a level of luxury that made some monks disagree with its architecture. This prodigality was also found in the different offices of the day, the multiplication of hymns and the lengthening of the liturgy made the monks stayed almost all day in the church.<sup>34</sup> More than the architecture, the implication of Cluniac in the society made them seem more as renters living on the profits of others

than monks trying to avoid the society. This behaviour drifts created an important schism in between themselves and with the population that they controlled.<sup>35</sup> In the twelfth century, the order ceased its exceptional growth, but it kept an important place in the monastic landscape. Without any very rigorous asceticism, it sometimes appeared like a refuge for the nobility, the elderly or even the younger.<sup>36</sup> Cluniacs forgot the manual labour of the rule of Benedict, and became almost exclusively priors. Worship and celebration became their most important activities. Cluny was becoming an addition of individuality both in architecture and in its social system. This image of heterogeneity influenced the importance of unity with the Cistercian reform.<sup>37</sup>

### The New Monastery of Cîteaux

The lassitude of the excess of Cluny led to spontaneous initiatives to a strict return at the Benedictine rule roots.<sup>38</sup> Those multiple creations usually tended to gather under the Benedictine or the Cistercian order after few generations. An important order creation was the Carthusian by Bruno (1030-1101) in 1084. He advocated for a semi hermitical way of life, where the monks lived alone but in the same monastery.<sup>39</sup>

One of those initiatives was led by Robert of Molesme (1029-1111), he was the initiator of the Cistercian reform.<sup>40</sup> He served as a prior and then an abbot in Saint Michel de Tonnerre, before to find the monastery of Molesme in 1075. He established a strict asceticism, which attracted a lot of monks and donations. In 1090, his ideal of religious life was already corrupted. In 1098, after the authorization of the archbishop Hugh de Die of Lyons, Robert and twenty monks decided to retire in another place in the south of Dijon. They called their abbey the « New Monastery ». Because of the conflict with his previous monastery, the pope Urban II asked Robert to come back to Molesme in 1099, although the purposes of Robert were aligned with the Gregorian Reform of the time.<sup>41</sup> A new abbot, Alberic (1029-1111), also coming from Molesme, was elected. He succeeded in obtaining an apostolic bull published by Paschal II, protecting the New Monastery in 1100.<sup>42</sup> Even if the monks had the will to return to a strong asceticism, the poverty of the beginning of the New Monastery was more imposed than chosen. The lack of means and the deplorable conditions almost killed the monks. They did not refuse the help of the Count Thibaut the Great of Champagne and moved in 1106 to another place, named Cîteaux, with clear water and better conditions.<sup>43</sup> They dedicated the first stone to the Blessed Virgin Mary, a tradition that last until today. They chose the white habit under the black scapular and a rope as a belt, on the contrary of the Benedictine and Cluniacs, all dressed in black.<sup>44</sup> The creation of the new monastery did not shock contemporaries by its singularity, it was a foundation as another.

The beginning of the life in Cîteaux was a day-to-day rule when their rule was not yet stated. A necessity of acknowledging the reform of the Cistercian was required because of the strong opposition with Cluny, that was losing ground when Cîteaux was developing. Cîteaux was criticizing the division of the rules, the possession of lands and titles. To justify their reform they advocated a return to the Benedict Rule and the eremitic

35 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 28.

36 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 108. The decrease of the Cluniac Order have to be balanced in the sense that it was still very recognizable even until the fourteenth century, especially around the Parisian region.

37 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 66.

38 Pacaut, *Les ordres monastiques et religieux au Moyen-Âge*, 130. The development of the congregation of Saint Ruf d'Avignon for example, will reach the number of 1100 daughters. This shows how the establishment of Cîteaux was not chance, the new order lasted in time.

39 Ibid., 128. Bruno met the founders of the Cistercian order, Robert and Stephen Harding in their previous monastery in Molesme when he visited it in 1078.

40 See the chronology in the annex p.45

41 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 13.

42 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 42.

43 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 323.

44 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 14. The choice of this particular habit had an importance when the Cistercian will oppose to the Cluniacs.



45 Ibid., 21.

46 Ibid., 18. In his research for the roots, he sent monks to Metz to look for the original ambrosian hymns or even worked with Jewish rabbis to create a new translation of the Bible.

47 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 54.

48 Ibid., 64. The impact of this text and the creation of the cistercian cautionner tales will be developed in the next part, in relation with the evolution of the perception of the order along its development.

49 Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France, La nuit des temps* 16 Ed.2 (Paris: Zodiaque, 1974), 15.

50 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 7.

51 Bernard de Clairvaux, *Apologie à Guillaume de Saint-Thierry* (Paris: Librairie de Louis Vivès, éditeur, 1866), 26.

52 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 25.

53 Ibid., 34.

like way of life of the desert fathers.<sup>45</sup> In 1109, Stephen Harding (1060-1109-1134), was elected abbot, he was an Englishman, who fled to France because of Norman. He spent his abbacy rooting the Cistercian traditions, he was a scholastic who pushed for news solid basis for the order.<sup>46</sup> This is one of the points that allowed the New Monastery to become an order and to persist in time. Nevertheless the New Monastery had trouble to attract new monks. In 1112, Bernard de Fontaine (1090-1153), arrived in the monastery of Cîteaux. He was young, and he motivated all his brothers and companions to join him in the New Monastery.

Bernard came from a noble family with a modest fortune, but his lineage was very important. This meant that the main part of Burgundy was own by his family. In the feudal system, it influenced the amount of gift received by the monastery, and showed an example for other nobles to join Cîteaux.<sup>47</sup> As the number of monks increased, the Abbey of Cîteaux founded the Abbeys of Pontigny, La Ferté, Clairvaux and Morimond in between 1112 and 1115. Bernard became the first abbot of Clairvaux in 1115, and also settle a strict asceticism in this new monastery that impressed the other ones. At this period, the abbot Stephen Harding created the imaginary around the New Monastery, which started to be called the order of Cîteaux or Cistercian order. The spread of new monasteries required the statement of a rule and a strict path to allow a continuity in each Cistercian monastery. Stephen made redacted the *Exordium pravum*, the first story of the creation of the founders, and the *Carta Caritas* in 1114 to ensure the good relations in between the monasteries.<sup>48</sup> After a break to handle this first expansion, the births of abbeys restarted in 1119 and the number of abbeys rose to seventy-three in 1134.<sup>49</sup>

The second generation of Cistercian founders is known for its implication in politics. Bernard of Clairvaux was part of this generation, his strong ideology and his charismatic attitude made him promote the Cistercian order in Europe.<sup>50</sup> Quit early, he subtly tackled the order of Cluny because of the same drifts that led to the creation of the Cistercian order. In 1124, he wrote in *Apologies* to Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, « In your clothing, you are not looking to cover yourself but to adorn oneself. [...] You would not care as much at your body if you had neglected your soul. »<sup>51</sup> In 1120, Cluny was in crisis after the eviction of their abbot Pons de Melgueil (1175-1109-1122), because of the excess of the Cluniacs monks. Peter the Venerable (1094 -1122-1156) replaced him as the abbot. After the publication of the *Apologies* of Bernard, Peter acknowledged some features of the Cistercian reform to apply it inside Cluny.<sup>52</sup> Cistercian had therefore an impact in the monastic societies.

The first part of the twelfth century was marked by a lack of permanence and continuity in the dynasty of rulers. In Germany, Henry V (1081-1111-1125) died without any heir, as Henry I (1068-1100-1135) in England, which created conflicts about their successions. France was weakened when Louis VII (1120-1137-1180) was crowned at only seventeen years old in 1137. During this period, the Cistercian order developed rapidly since it offered a structure that was independent of the temporal power and present in all those regions. Bernard de Clairvaux became an advisor for politic choices.<sup>53</sup> Crossing the border of monasticism, Bernard was

involved in the quarrel of the new pope naming in 1130, in between Innocent II (1130-1143) and Anaclet. Bernard chose Innocent II, a former Benedictine monk, and travel in England, in the German Empire and to the court of France in order to ensure the support of the rulers. When Innocent was chosen, he published a bull protecting the Cistercian and allowing the ambiguous status of the *conversi*.<sup>54</sup> In 1146, a new Crusade is summoned by Pope Eugene III (1090-1145-1153), a former Cistercian monk, and the King Louis VII. Bernard was in charge to exhort the nobility to join the mission as a call for piety.<sup>55</sup> The middle of the twelfth century was a shift for the Cistercian order. Bernard of Clairvaux died in 1153, and Thibaut the Great, Comte of Champagne (1090-1152) that helped with material support Cîteaux from the beginning died in 1152. The temporal power was shaken by the divorces of Louis VII and Aliénor d'Aquitaine (1122-1204) in 1153, who remarried Henry II Plantagenet (1133 - 1189), King of England, leading to substantial tensions.

In 1153, the abbey of Clairvaux grew to eight hundred monks,<sup>56</sup> and the number of Cistercian abbeys to three hundred ninety-three.<sup>57</sup> After 1153, some Cistercian monasteries quit their vocation of isolation. Some Cistercian started to secularize, they became at the service of the church with pastoral missions. This implies that the nomination of a cardinal, prelate and pope within the Cistercian was no more an exception. No derogation was required from the general chapter to move from a vocation of seclusion to an apostolic one.<sup>58</sup>

### Unity and Discipline

The Cistercians gave a deep importance to the unity of the order from the beginning. Already in 1099, they put an important focus on the return to the origin of the Benedictine rule. A sense of rhythm and unity was coming from the first scriptures. « How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! »<sup>59</sup> The second abbot of Cîteaux Stephen Harding developed Cistercian literature as a call for unity moved by the will of unifying the customs, the liturgy and the Cistercian environment. To found an abbey, the requirements were always the same,<sup>60</sup> one abbot and twelve monks ; some essential rooms : *oratorium*, refectory, dormitory, hostelry and gate room<sup>61</sup> ; and a number of books : psalter, hymnary, *collectaneum*, gradual, antiphony, rule, missal. After the foundation of the first daughter abbeys in 1114, the *Carta Caritas* became very important. The newly founded monasteries developed in close connections with the institution and their mother abbey. It settles the relationship in between abbeys, vertical from mother to daughter abbeys and horizontal in between each other.<sup>62</sup> The New Monastery was becoming more and more like an order. This work of maintaining the unity was acknowledged by the Pope Callixtus II (1060-1119-1124). In 1119, he published a papal confirmation of the *Carta Caritas*. It rooted the order ideals and the relationship with the pope.<sup>63</sup> The Cistercian community was more and more regulated. It could be seen as a restrictive order since it implied an amount of violence to conform the monks to the uniformity of the rule. Without a rule no monastery can survive, therefore the community implied unity and a strong commitment. The rule dictates the attitude of the monks but also defines the expression of their art.<sup>64</sup>

54 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 100. The *conversi* are monks and workers part of the Cistercian order, with lighter obligation to allow them to work outside the monastery. They will be discussed in the third chapter.

55 Ibid., 109. The call the second Crusade is text *De novae militiae laude*, written by Bernard de Clairvaux.

56 Ibid., 116.

57 Dimier and Porcher, *L'art cistercien*, 15.

58 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 160.

59 Bible, Psalm 132 (133).

60 Choisselet and Vernet, *Les 'Ecclesiastica Officia' Cisterciens Du XIIème Siècle Texte Latin Selon Les Manuscrits Édités de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114, Version Française, Annexe Liturgique, Notes, Index et Tables*.

61 See the Cistercian type plan.

62 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 19.

63 Ibid., 32. The Pope Callixtus II was a former subject of the count of Burgundy, coming from the same region as Cîteaux.

64 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 9.

65 Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance, *Carta Caritatis* (Cîteaux: O.S.C.O., 1114), 28–31, <https://www.archive.osb.org/cist/charta.html>.

66 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 88. Bernard of Clairvaux, letter to Henry Murdach, P.L. 182., Col. 242 B ; Opera Omnia, t. VII, p. 266.

67 Ibid., 107.

68 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 30.

69 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 19.

70 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 195.

71 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 11. As an exemple of the Statut LVIII of 1134 stipulate « None can write a book, nor the abbot, the monks, the novices, without the consent of the consentement of the General Chapter ». In deed, no book was written, only were copied, mainly in Cîteaux and Clairvaux were cells were dedicated to it. Only few monasteries possessed some copying workshop. Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*.

72 Ibid., 84.

73 Clairvaux, *Apologie à Guillaume de Saint-Thierry*, 15.

74 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 130. See the territorial sections in the typology p.57.

«There may be no discord in our conduct, but we should live by one charity, one rule, and like usages [...] Let the abbot of the senior church visit once a year all the monasteries he has founded; and should he visit more often, let them for that reason rejoice all the more.»<sup>65</sup>

This regulations extended to the location of abbey foundation, which was linked to the spirit of the abbey. Each time there was a visit before the possible new foundation. Bernard of Clairvaux was advocating for the most isolated location, « Believe my experience, you will find something more in the middle of the wood than in the books. Rocks and trees will teach you what you cannot learn from any master. »<sup>66</sup> The foundation required the isolation from any pathway, axis, villages or farms. Even if this isolation was more or less radical, the surroundings of forest as a space of boundary was a constant. The presence of running water for the drinking and its use for production and energy was essential, so was the possibility to domesticate the land to cultivate it after.<sup>67</sup>

The Cistercian carried this paradoxical idea of a strict return the Benedict rule when the rule was not strict in itself. This flexibility of the rule allowed it to be used in a lot of different orders. Cistercians took it spirit, adding precise and strict customs and rituals. The regulation was discussed during the General Chapter. It was the annual meeting of all the abbots to discuss about the order and stipulate very technical informations. The publication of the *Instituta Generalis Capituli* testify the will to uniform the monk's daily life. The customs published were not new but were officialized in such way.<sup>68</sup> In this sense the unity of Cistercian order was not only philosophical but rooted in the daily life of the monks, characterized by choices made and written in the literature. This implied a strict conduct, and an absolute engagement of the monks in the monastery.<sup>69</sup> The General Chapter was organized as a council for the seven abbots of the order in 1119. With the growth of the order, the morphology of the head of the order evolved, it became more an informative assembly as the number of abbots rose.<sup>70</sup> The General Chapter would be the place of the Cistercian unanimity, in the sense that it was the place where the decisions and main orientations of the order were taken.<sup>71</sup>

After the death of Stephen Harding in 1134, Bernard de Clairvaux took the spiritual lead of the order and renewed its spirit. He insisted on the coming back not only to the Benedictine rule but also to the origin of monasticism and the fathers desert. At its beginning, the New Monastery was created without any will of a new order creation. With the impulse of Barnard, the *Exordium Parvum*, the story of the founders, was written again to create a cautionary tale that pushed further again the asceticism, and amplified the rupture with the Cluniacs.<sup>72</sup> Bernard developed an imaginary around the order to promote it in front of the other order of the time. It was based on the even stricter discipline, « Any order exclude the disorder, and where rules the disorder, there is no more order »<sup>73</sup>. He focused on the representation of the order. When Steven Harding chose some relatively plain spot for the new monasteries, Bernard chose valleys with important declivity, according to a certain mysticism and reference to reclusion of the desert father.<sup>74</sup>



Fig. 5, Abbey of Sénanque's Valley.  
Photograph by the author.



75 Ibid., 13.

76 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 116. The first abbeys of the founders were usually built in wood. Clairvaux was reconstructed in 1135, like other abbey. Fontanay were founded in 1119 and rebuilt in 113 according this bernardine plan under the instruction of Bernard himself. (Louis Julius Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 269). See the typology in annex.

77 Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*, 40. An antiphonary is a book regrouping the melodies of the main hymns, psalms and songs of the liturgical rites.  
78 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 130.

79 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 141.

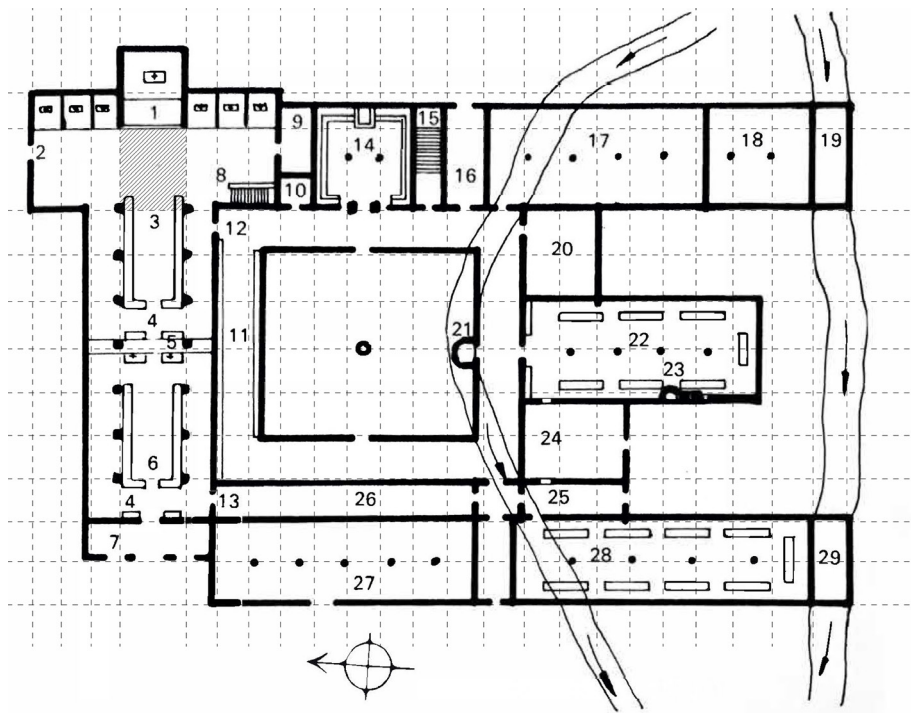
80 Ibid., 178. Quote in *The life of Saint Benedict and the service of God according to his commitment*.

81 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 294.

Concerning the art, the statutes of the General Chapter in 1135 about architecture, maintained that the goal of the Cistercian was to eradicate the particularism of the abbey.<sup>75</sup> In this sense, the first monasteries in wood let place to new abbeys built according the typical rigid Bernardine plan that spread in all the future abbeys.<sup>76</sup> Bernard also reformed the Cistercian psalmody, to go back to the Gregorian songs composed by Gregory the Great. After a research, he explained that the original ones were full of mistakes and composed a new one with his monastery. This new antiphonary was the opportunity to have clean and simple melodies and to spread them to unify all the monasteries.<sup>77</sup> No instruments were allowed with those songs. Like in music, this simplicity was found in the architecture where no ornamentation was allowed. Only the wooden cross in the church could be painted. In the Cistercian literature of the first periods, Bernard de Clairvaux maintained an idealistic image of a strict reformer and a strong aesthetic, in particular according to his biographer and friend Guillaume of Saint Thierry.<sup>78</sup> The creation of the cautionary tales around the foundation of the order embodied the pugnacity of the Cistercian to recall their unity.

The failure of the second Crusade in 1149, the implication of Bernard of Clairvaux in politics, the stranglehold that he had on the order, and the numerous trips outside his monastery, led the main abbots of the order to acknowledge that his worldly attitude was inappropriate to the monastic vocation.<sup>79</sup> In 1151, the Pope Eugene III (1080-1145-1153), a former Claravallian monk, published the bull *Sacrosanta* to ask the General Chapter to come back to the original ideals of the order of poverty. At this period, some monks left their own abbey to recreate more ascetic Cistercian monasteries. Jean de Buzay and Isaac de l'Étoile (□1110-1178) left their abbeys to found a new one in the Ile de Ré. In 1186, Joachim de Flore (1135-1202) left his role of Cistercian abbot of Santa Maria de Corazzo. He was disillusioned by the laxity of Cistercian monks discipline of his generation, «The perfection disappeared when the monks started to possess villages and peasants». He became a hermit and exercised a very harsh asceticism. So many monks shared his opinion that he founded twelve houses until 1202.<sup>80</sup> Those events showed with evidence two different interpretations of the Cistercian idealism, from isolation to networking and from contemplation to influence. The order was divided, and successive popes published different apostolic bulls to recall the Cistercian to discipline in 1169 and 1220.<sup>81</sup> The struggle to maintain unity and asceticism in the order expressed at the same time the failure of a system of community and its capacity to adapt over time.

The Cistercian found concrete solutions to persist. They sought harmony in between there order. To do so, they developed an architecture which frame there quotidian life. It formalized a rhythm and transformed any of their gestures in rituals.



- |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Sanctuary                                                                                       | 15 Stairs from the cloister to the dorter, which extended over the whole range 14-19                         |
| 2 Lych-gate, the door through which bodies were carried from the funeral service to the graveyard | 16 Parlour                                                                                                   |
| 3 Monks' choir                                                                                    | 17 Monks' common-room                                                                                        |
| 4 Benches for the sick                                                                            | 18 Room for novices                                                                                          |
| 5 Rood-screen, separating the monks' choir from that of the Conversi                              | 19 Latrine (used from the upper storey)                                                                      |
| 6 Choir of the conversi, or lay-brothers                                                          | 20 Calefactorium, or warming-room                                                                            |
| 7 Narthex                                                                                         | 21 Fountain for washing                                                                                      |
| 8 Night-stairs from the church to the dorter                                                      | 22 Refectory                                                                                                 |
| 9 Sacristy                                                                                        | 23 Pulpit, for reading during the meal                                                                       |
| 10 'Armarium' (aumbry), where books were kept                                                     | 24 Kitchen                                                                                                   |
| 11 Benches for reading, and for the 'maundy' ceremony of foot-washing                             | 25 Cellarer's parlour                                                                                        |
| 12 Monks' entry                                                                                   | 26 'Lane' or 'alley' of the lay-brothers                                                                     |
| 13 Lay-brothers' entry                                                                            | 27 Cellar, or store-room                                                                                     |
| 14 Chapter-house                                                                                  | 28 Lay-brothers' refectory. The dorter of the conversi, or lay-brothers, extended over the whole range 27-28 |
|                                                                                                   | 29 Latrines of the lay-brothers' dorter                                                                      |

Fig. 6, The ideal Cistercian monastery.  
 Drawn by Anselme Dimier in *L'Art Cistercien : France*, 41.

## Expression of the Cistercian Art

The monastery was the environment of the monks and its architecture had an impact on the attitude of its inhabitants. Since the monks followed the *stabilitas loci*, they had great care about their building. It was their frame of life and it influenced the ability of following the rules.<sup>82</sup> « From this day onwards, he is no longer allowed to leave the monastery » says the Benedict rule.<sup>83</sup> A monk without monastery was not conceivable, in the sense that the monastery needed monks, and a monk needed the monastery as a shell to protect him from the outside world.<sup>84</sup> The *clausatura* was this boundary both concrete and theoretical, a formal need that separated the communities of monks and conversi but especially separated the monks from the outside world, as it prevented the society to influence the inside of the monastery. The monk belonged to his monastery in a symbiosis with its environment. This was why the monastery needed to integrate all the elements for the monks daily life, from the latrines to the cellar. It needed to be spacious, bright and ventilated. The patio in the middle of the cloister appeared with the symbolic of the *paradisus claustralis*, the cloister paradise, a peaceful and silent space leading the monks further of their human condition. The cloister was the main life space of the monks. In this space they were mainly solitary, doing their reading and ruminating their prayers according to the expression of Bernard.<sup>85</sup> The cloister also allowed the monks to go from room to room without going out of the monastery. The circular circulation was very important because, it reinforced the idea of the *clausatura*. The Cistercians improved the Benedictine model, and made it clear to establish a plan where the specific characteristics of the building participated to the unity of the community.

« The intervention of the Cistercian bears on a theological reflexion and spirituality based on the orison in the silence of the body and the soul, and the asceticism weakening the body to free the soul for the research of God. »<sup>86</sup>

The Cistercians developed an architecture spirit that expressed their asceticism. Austerity was an aesthetic and a life discipline that reinforce the community. The rule of Benedict in itself did not discuss about architecture, nevertheless it required simplicity and bareness. « The *oratorium* will be what his name means. Nothing will be done or placed there that is not related to prayer. »<sup>87</sup> If the Cistercian architecture is really close to the Roman architecture, its spirit is not the same in the sense that the Roman architecture emphasis the sculpture and the representation. Cistercians got rid of ornamentation, capitals of the column were not sculpted with representative element, but only abstract geometric shapes. The ideal of poverty and the desire to escape from the world were expressed not only in the daily habits of the monks but also in their materials. Their crosses were made in wood, chalices in silver and only Marian sculptures were allowed. Architecturally, there were no ornament on the windows and no tower on the church as a sign of humility.<sup>88</sup> The architectural

82 Anselme Dimier, *Les moines bâtisseurs* (Paris: Fayard, 1964), 28.

83 Moines de Solesmes, *Règle de Saint Benoît*, Éditions de Solesmes, 2011 [530], chap. 58 « The rule for admission of brother », p. 80.

84 Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien*: France, La nuit des temps 16 Ed.2 (Paris: Zodiaque, 1974), p. 29.

85 Choisselet and Vernet, *Les 'Ecclesiastica Officia' Cisterciens Du XIIème Siècle Texte Latin Selon Les Manuscrits Édités de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114, Version Française, Annexe Liturgique, Notes, Index et Tables*, 29. Explanation from Bernard of Clairvaux (*De Diversis* 42,4; S.B. IV/1, 258,16 and *Second Sermon to St Paul and Peter*, S.B. V, 192,21-23).

86 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 212.

87 Moines de Solesmes, *Règle de Saint Benoît*, Éditions de Solesmes, 2011, 78.

88 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 72.

austerity was so much a concern of the General Chapter that it published in 1188 the statute *De non aedificando* that condemn the construction of expensive buildings. The same year, the general chapter asked to stop Abbey of Vaucelles constructions considered too richly decorated.<sup>89</sup>

Architecture style of the Cistercian monastery was a choice. Complex construction knowledge already existed but they consciously created an architecture of purism and austerity.<sup>90</sup> It was not a poor architecture but an architecture that expressed poverty. The straightforward rectilinear planning reflected the simple liturgy of the Cistercians, purged of Cluniac extravagances.<sup>91</sup> The construction of the monasteries were not cheap and required an accumulation of means and workforce. The monks and the conversi themselves participated to the construction of the monastery helped by the local carpenters, masons, and the local school of building. Those secular workers were essential to gather the amount of knowledge for the edification of the buildings.<sup>92</sup> The Cistercian austerity addressed only the spiritual elite of the monks. This functional austerity did not divert the attention neither satisfy emotion. It helped the rule to be applied and to tend toward their ideals. The Cistercian architecture is not about technical breakthroughs, but about the expression of an architecture shaped by a program according to the need of a united community.

« Even if we knew nothing of the Cistercians except their buildings we would be able to deduce the character of their movement. For an almost absolute unity within a far reaching architectural school presupposes a tightly organized group of men ready to accept with unwavering discipline the laws and the validity of a complete spiritual system which they themselves defined. »<sup>93</sup>

The Cistercian monastery design was raised from plan to concept. The modularity, the proportion of the plan, and the longevity of the building made of the monastery a permanence, both material and conceptual.<sup>94</sup> A scheme from the notebook of Villard de Honnecourt done in 1235 for the abbey of Morimond expressed proportions to follow in order to create a Cistercian abbey. The plan followed the system *ad quadrata*, and created the sequence of rooms, articulated by geometry. The module was based on the crossing, the first part of the church to be built. The abbey is planned with multiple or quarters of this module, this measurement allows the drawing of the ideal plan.<sup>95</sup> It could be adapted according to the number of brothers and conversi in the community, a structural frame could be added or suppressed in the nave, the dormitory or the refectory. The plan contained no complex curves or shapes to avoid any calculation. When the Roman church of the twelfth century had circular absides, the creation of square absides was an obvious choice to rationalize the drawing of the church. Since the monks memorized the main part of liturgy, very little light was needed for the celebration, therefore in their path toward simplicity, they suppressed traditional elements like of the clerestory, reducing the lighting of the church. It created a feeling of massiveness and confinement.<sup>96</sup>

The architecture created more than only the space that it contains. The simple volume of the church created a pure acoustic. It was an invisible dimension of the architecture, helping the transcendence toward God or

89 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 169–235. *De non aedificando*, About not building

90 Dimier and Porcher, *L'art cistercien*, 18.

91 Roger Stalley and Roger Andrew Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 177.

92 Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, 79.

93 François Bucher, 'Cistercian Architectural Purism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3, no. 1 (1960): 90.

94 See the typology in the annex p.57.

95 Ibid., 91. The ideal plan of the cistercian monastery have been redrawn a posteriori. The disparities with this ideal plan and the realized monasteries is demonstrate by the typology in annexe.

96 Ibid., 102. The clerestory is a row of windows in the wall on the wall on the side of the nave just under the vault.

97 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 9.

98 Bucher, 'Cistercian Architectural Purism', 100.

99 Stalley and Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, 180.

100 Moines de Solesmes, *Règle de Saint Benoît*, 69.

101 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 364.

102 Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet, *Les 'Ecclesiastica Officia' Cisterciens Du XIIème Siècle, La Documentation Cistercienne*, chap. 70 « The chapter and the confession », 203.  
103 Ibid. chap. 1- 44, 67-137.

104 Ibid. chap. 110 « The abbot », 311.

105 Ibid. chap. 111 « The prior », 315.

the unison of the monks. The acoustic was a condition and a mystical place of encounter with God.<sup>97</sup> The monastery resonated with sounds all along the day. The *compans*, the bells of the church, rang before the liturgical hours to call the monks that could be outside the abbey. To call the monks to work or to announce agony of a monk, the *tabula*, a wooden tablet, was hit. The *nola*, a small bell, informed the monks to go wash their hands before the meal, and dismissed them after. The multiplicity of sound signals was adapted according the location of the monks in or outside the monastery. It especially showed how communication was replaced by simple sound to stay as much as possible in silence. Sounds, architecture or light, were conditions leading to austerity. The monasteries were models of a type, their planning was therefore very fast. On the site, the builders were efficient since they needed to construct a series of repeated elements. The average construction time of the fifty earliest churches of the order was only nineteen years.<sup>98</sup> This was really short compared to other buildings of the same period, it helped to increase the fame of their project manager capacities.

« Purged of inessentials, the beauty of the Cistercian building depended solely on architectural values: purity of form, clarity of proportions, functional efficiency, and a high standard of construction, all qualities which eight centuries later were espoused by the architects of the International Modern Movement. Mies van der Rohe's dictum 'less is more' would have delighted St Bernard of Clairvaux. »<sup>99</sup>

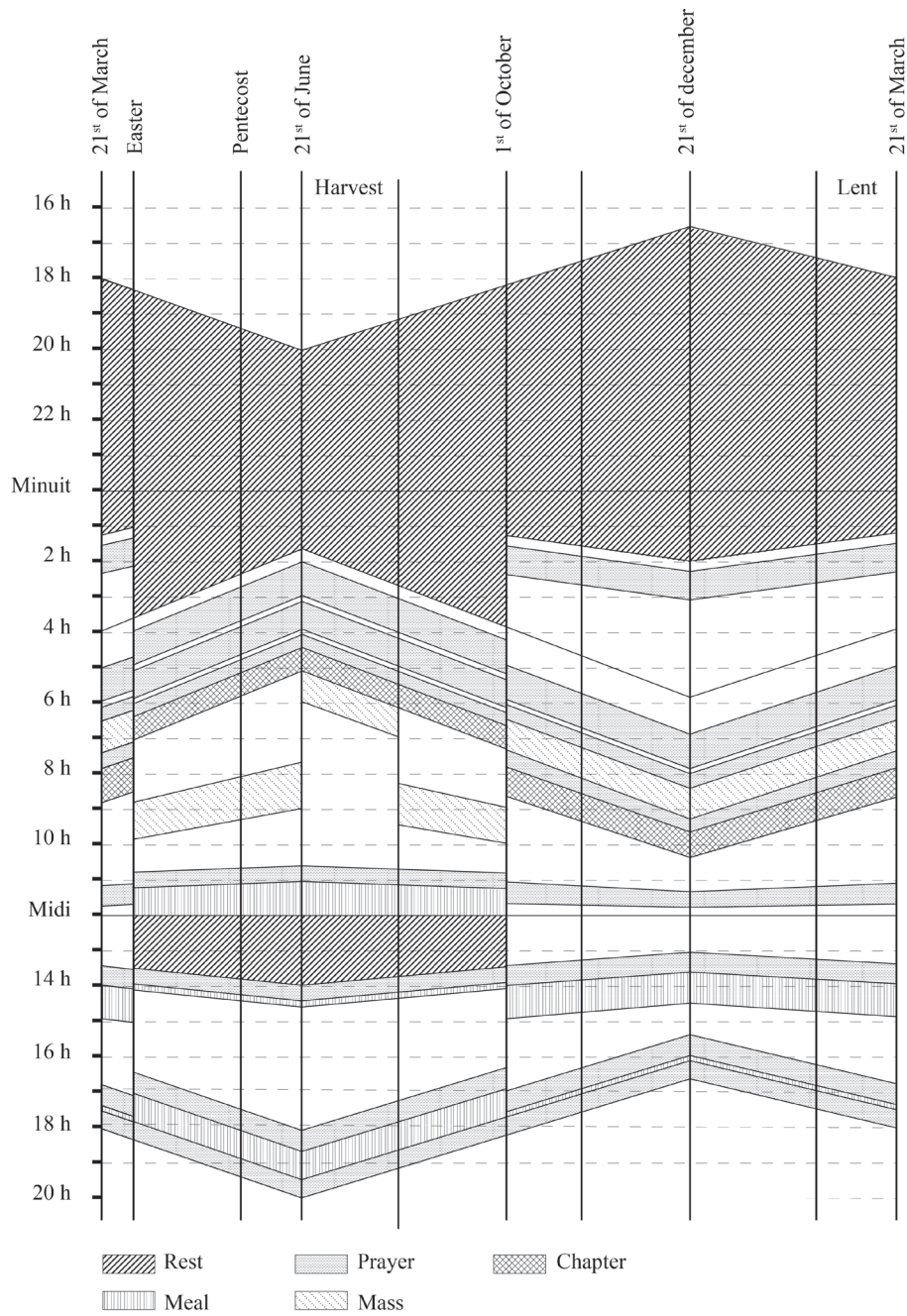
### Organization of the monastery, schedule, roles, and spaces

The schedule of the monks was very precise. To avoid any boredom, monks should have constant programmed activities, « Idleness is the enemy of the soul », said the Benedictine rule.<sup>100</sup> A day of a monk was composed of sleep, prayers and work. The mass and the hours rhythmized the day : vigils, lauds, tierce, sexte, none, vespers and compline. The prayers represented approximately six hours.<sup>101</sup> Each day the monks gather during the chapter to read a chapter of the rule of Benedict, to listen to the teaching of the abbot and claim the mistake that they had done.<sup>102</sup> The lectures and works took all the free times of the day. The schedule was shaped according to the seasons, the liturgical periods and the need of the monastery production.<sup>103</sup> The changes are the wakeup hours and the time of lectures or handcraft. Time was not calculated with the sun the day, the duration and the precise schedule definition is not really relevant.

The calendar of the years was defined in the begging of the years according to the liturgical periods in order to fit all selenites during the year. This was one of the tasks of the abbot and the prior. If the abbot was in charge of the spiritual guide of the community,<sup>104</sup> the prior was the organizer. He was giving the manual tasks each day after the chapter, doing the prior doing the meals and replace the abbot when he was not there.<sup>105</sup>

To allow the functioning of the community, several monks had specific missions in the service of the monastery. Those missions were taking a





Fig, 7, The schedule of the Cistercian monks along the years.  
Made by the author.



106 Ibid. chap. 113 « The novice master », 319.

107 Ibid. chap. 114 « The sacristan and its helper », 319.

108 Ibid. chap. 115 « The cantor and its helper », 323.

109 Ibid. chap. 116 « The nursing brother », 327.

110 Ibid. chap. 117 « The cellarer », 329.

111 Ibid. chap. 118 « The refectorer », 333.

112 Ibid. chap. 119 « The gatekeeper », 335.

113 Ibid. chap. 103 « The weekly priest », 301.

114 Ibid. chap. 106 « The weekly lecturer », 303.

115 Ibid. chap. 109 « The weekly cooker », 308.

116 Moines de Solesmes, *Règle de Saint Benoît*, 55.

117 Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet, *Les 'Ecclesiastica Officia' Cisterciens Du XIIème Siècle*, La Documentation Cistercienne, chap. 72, « Where the monks can enter and when », 215

118 Ibid. The *Ecclesiastica Officia* is the description of the sum of all the situations happening in a monastery. His writing was led by Bernard around 1134 to standardize all the customs of the cistercians monasteries. The main part of those customs were already existing, but not theorized.

lot of time and impact their schedule. The novice master was in charge of the education of the novices, he was teaching them the rituals and the Benedict rule.<sup>106</sup> The sacristan was responsible for practical elements, like the lighting of the monastery, a very important task since the monks were living an important part of the day at night. He rang the bells at the beginning of each activity to ensure the smooth running of the timing.<sup>107</sup> To fit the schedule and because of solar imprecision, he used to ask the cantor, the monks in charge of the singing, to slow or accelerate the rhythm.<sup>108</sup> Moments of latency were always dedicated to prayer, alone, without books, in the church or in the cloister. Those moments were called intervals. The nursing brother was taking care of the ill brothers. He was also in charge of the bleeding of the monks three times a year. He worked in collaboration with the cellarer to decide the amount of food to give to those weaken brothers.<sup>109</sup> The cellarer was handling the supply of the monastery, he was the most exposed to the outside world, speaking with the conversi and negotiating sale prices of the overproduction.<sup>110</sup> The refectorer was setting the table and bringing the food to the monks.<sup>111</sup> The gatekeeper welcomed, took care of the visitors and distributed food to the beggars. He was staying at the gate almost all day.<sup>112</sup>

Weekly duties were added to this permanent function. There were assigned during the chapter on Sunday, after the reading of the Benedict rule. Each brother who was named bowed to show that he had understood. The weekly tasks were diverse. The weekly priest had to officiate at each hour and during the masses. He said the benedictions during the weeks, for the cooker, the travellers and each time needed.<sup>113</sup> The weekly lecturer had to read a text during the meals. It could be a chapter of the Bible, an homely or saint lives.<sup>114</sup> The meal was taken silently, listening to the lecture. The refectory was a place of feeding of the body and the spirit. The weekly cooker received the orders from the cellarer and skipped the working time to prepare the food. They were also in charge of preparing the wood for the fire, cleaning the common laundry, cleaning the kitchen and the latrines.<sup>115</sup>

The strict organization allowed a fluid schedule, and the brother without duty to dedicate entirely to each activity of the day without any mental load. « Each will receive according to their needs » say the Benedict rule.<sup>116</sup> The monks received different lectures, different amounts of food or different workloads according to their capacity. This repartition required a very precise knowledge of each individual monk of the community. The monks had the opportunity to speak with the abbot or the prior every day after the chapter in the parlour. It is the only place where the discussion is not entirely ritualized.<sup>117</sup> It is this strong awareness of monks as individuals that allowed the power of a unified community. The consciousness of the difference of the monks allowed to delete any sense of individuality during the rituals.

The Cistercian life was dictated by the overpower of the community, nevertheless the condense plan of a monastery is a series of threshold oscillating in between privacy and communality. According to the activities, a gradient of intimacy could be found, expressed by the use of the objects, the activities or the spaces. Those elements are carefully described, step by step in the *Ecclesiastica Officia*.<sup>118</sup> This literature

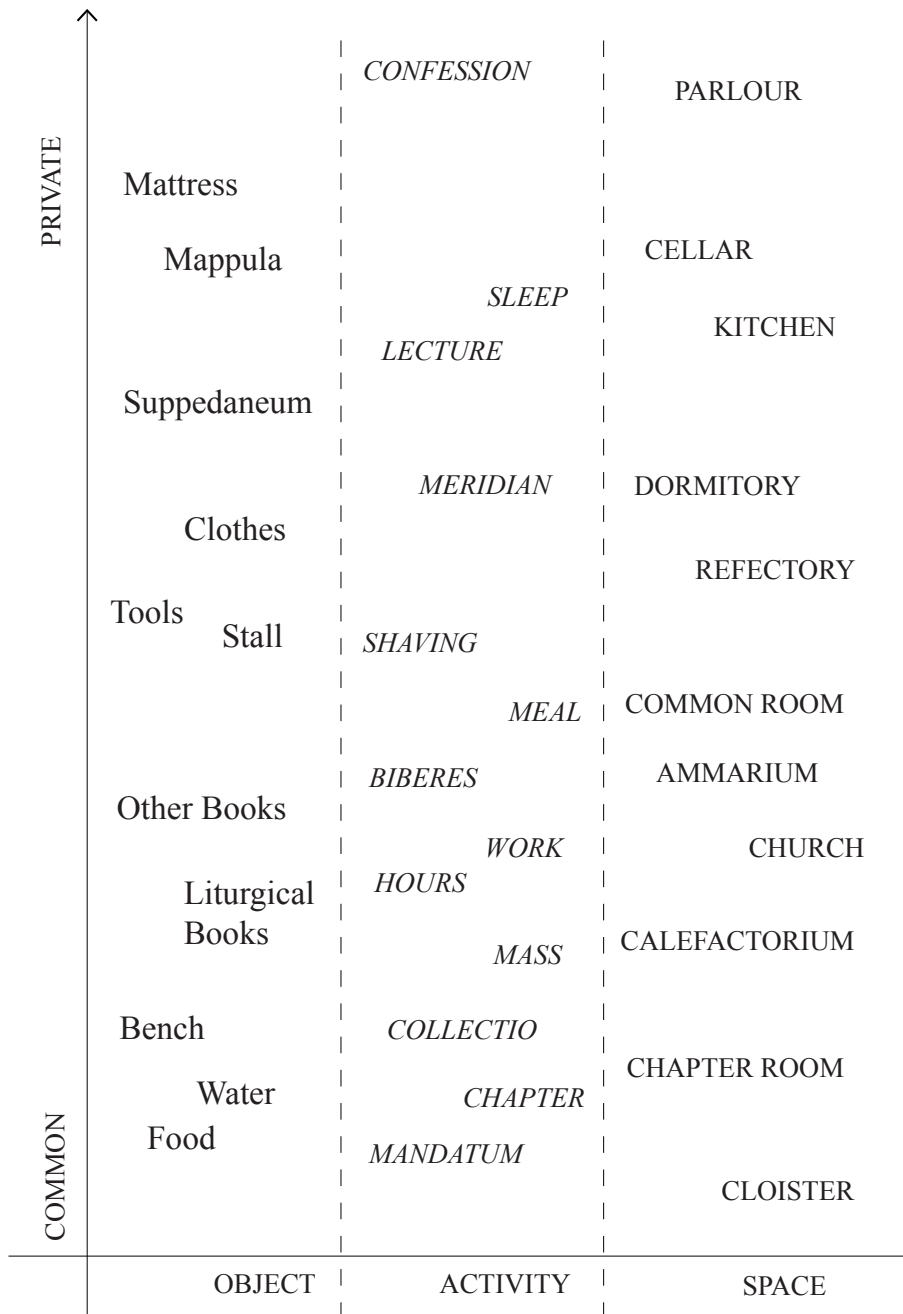


Fig. 8, Gradient of collectivity according the elements of the Cistercian monastery.  
Made by the author.

creates a relation in between the different spaces of the monastery, the rituals that they shelter and the daily obligation that the life in community generated.<sup>119</sup>

### Monastery Tales

119 See the annex Monastery Tales. The quotidian life of the monks of the twelfth century is redrawn to actualized their rituals and customs.

120 See the drawings in the annex p.47

121 Ibid. chap. 71 « How the brethren behave during the lecture », 213.

122 Ibid. chap. 76 « The meal », 227.

123 Ibid. chap. 71 « How the brethren behave during the lecture », 213.

124 Ibid. chap. 17 « The palm sunday », 97.

125 Ibid. chap. 79 « Behavior after vespers », 33.

126 Ibid. chap. 114 « The sacristan and its helper », 319.

127 Ibid. chap. 13 « The beginning of Lent », 89.

128 Ibid. chap. 109 « The weekly cooker », 308. It is also found in the Benedict rule « He will eat alone, separated from the company of all and deprived of his portion of wine until he has repented and corrected himself » (Moines de Solesmes, Règle de Saint Benoît, chap. 43 « Late arrivals at the Divine office or at the table », p. 65.)

129 Ibid. chap. 81 « The Collatio », 233.

130 Ibid. chap. 109 « The weekly cooker », 308.

131 See the drawings in the annex p.57

132 Ibid. chap. 70 « The Chapter and the confession », 203.

The cloister<sup>120</sup> is the space of circulation in which precise rules of conduct are followed. When the monks are alone, they bow when they cross each other and step aside when they cross the abbot<sup>121</sup> ; when they are in procession, they walk two by two in an appropriate rhythm, usually from the refectory to the church.<sup>122</sup> It is the peaceful place used for the lectures, the monks can seat all around the cloister and read thanks to the light of the patio. During their reading, they wear the cowl to protect them to be disturbed from the possible movement around them in the cloister ; the rule stipulate that the monks wearing the cowl should be in a position showing that they are not asleep.<sup>123</sup>

The cloister welcomes the pragmatic needs of the monks. Since they cannot go outside, it is the place where they wash their clothes,<sup>124</sup> where they dry their habits<sup>125</sup> and the sacramental bread that took the humidity<sup>126</sup> or put their shoes when they need to stay bare foot during Lent.<sup>127</sup> Meals start with a prayer, if a monk arrived after this prayer, he cannot enter in the monastery and wait that the refectorer bring him his plate and bread, he is deprived of his wine pitcher.<sup>128</sup>

The cloister is also a place of rituals. After the meal, and before they go to sleep after the compline, the monks seat in line on the benches along the church for the *collatio*, a preach told by the abbot. It is one of the last moments of the day and the day and the community is reunited, the brethren are seated in line, at equality.<sup>129</sup> On the Saturdays, the *collatio* is followed by *mandatum*, when the weekly cookers wash the feet of their brethren on those same benches.<sup>130</sup>

The chapter room<sup>131</sup> is the place where the monks gather in the morning. They salute each other when entering and they install on a stone bench running along the wall with one or two rows. They are positioned according to their seniority. In the middle there is the *analogium*, a pulpit with the rule of Benedict. The community is physically united around the rule, the spiritual symbolic is expressed in this space.

A chapter of the rule is read, the weekly tasks are distributed, the abbot comment the reading and then the time of confession starts. The brethren who are guilty of a mistake in the day before confess and prostrate in the middle of the room. They can denounce a brother, not for the overwhelmed but to help him correct himself. If it is true the accused one prostrate, if not the accusation cannot be repeated by the same brother. The soil of this room used to be lower than the cloister, as a sign of humility the brethren abase themselves to the lowest to express their mistakes. The punishment is chosen by the abbot. The monk that has to receive punishment take out his cowl, roll down his clothing to the belt and kneels, then an older brother hit him in the back with a birch until the abbot stop him, this action is done in silence. This is a violent moment. Then there is a prayer and if someone who have lost something can ask the others during the chapter.<sup>132</sup>

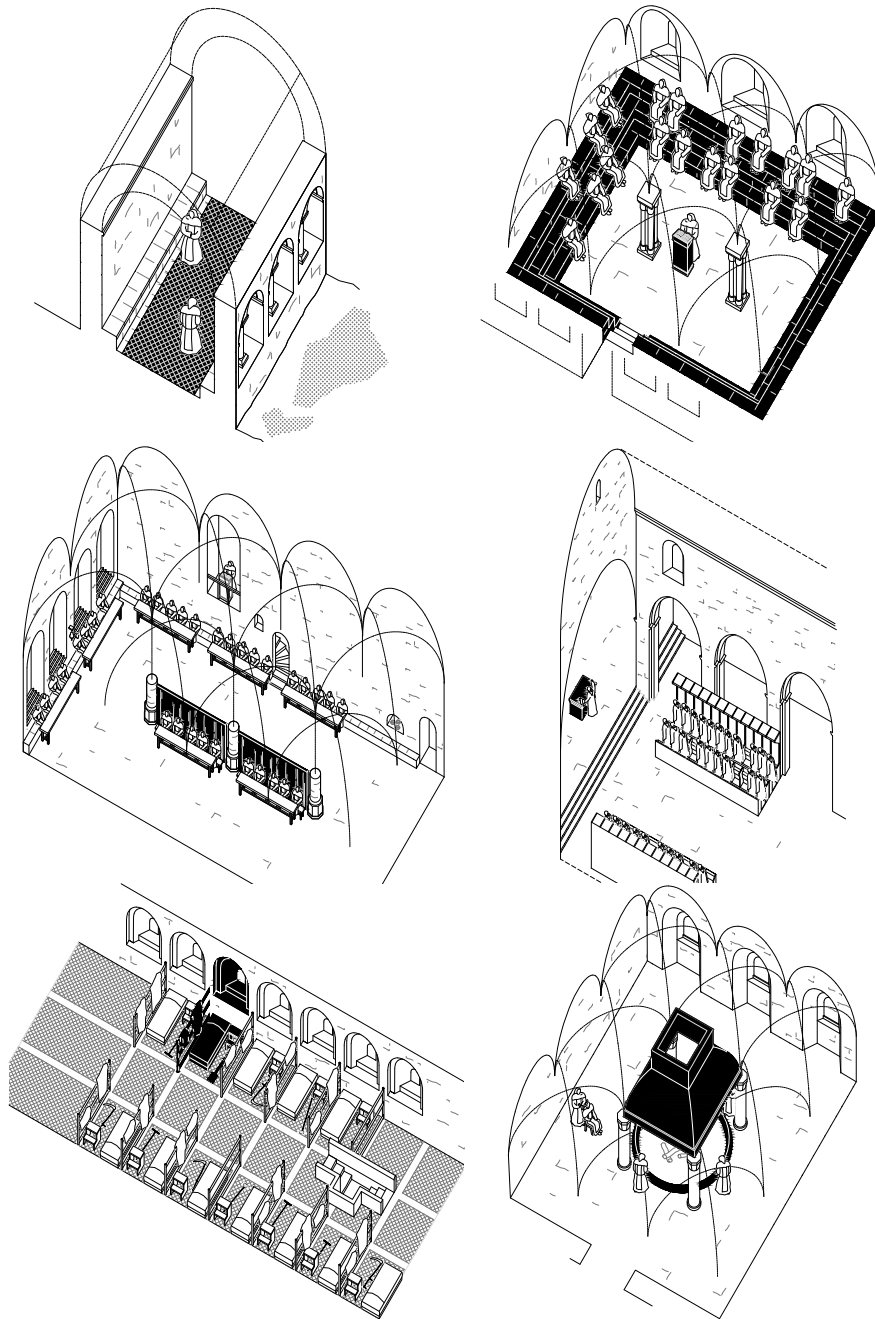


Fig. 9, Quotidian life axonometric drawing.  
Made by the author. See the Monastic Tales annex p. 77

133 *Ibid.* chap. 113 « The master of the novices », 319. « The master of the novices have to bring them to the sermon of the chapter »

134 See the drawings in the annex p.63

135 *Ibid.* chap. 76 « The meal », 225.

136 *Ibid.* chap. 76 « The meal », 225. They can share food with their direct neighbor on each side, or with two neighbors on the same side.

137 *Ibid.* Note 5, 406.

138 *Ibid.* chap. 113 « The meal », 227. « the monks will cover what they have left of bread ». After the last or the only one meal the refectorer take all the leftover to give it to the host or the beggars.

139 See the drawings in the annex p.67

140 *Ibid.* chap. 72 « Where the monks can enter and when », 213. The literature does not give a detail disposition of each element, but the perches were in a transversal way. It supposedly was used a sort of separation. Moreover, the idea of one window for one monks is not verified everywhere. In Sénanque, a part of the dormitory is blind and did not prevail a window for everyone.

141 *Ibid.* chap. 75 « The work », p 221. The tools that they can keep were the forces (scissors specific to shearing sheep), weeders, forks, and rakes and sickles.

The room is widely open with two or three bays to allow the novices to listen from the cloister. They are not yet authorized to enter in the chapter room since they are not entities part of the community. The wall is a filter protecting the intimacy of the community.<sup>133</sup>

The refectory<sup>134</sup> is the space to nourish both body and spirit. When the bell rings, the monks go wash their hands in the *lavatorium* in front of the entrance of the refectory, they enter and take place in a U shape according to their seniority. The prior is located in the axe of the door and the older are seated on his side and so one until the younger along the door. The abbot eats with the guests at the hostelry. If there is too many monks, a row is added in the middle and the monks are placed back to back. Anyone is facing another monk.<sup>135</sup> A prayer is said by the prior, the monks seat and the weekly lecturer starts to read. The meal is taken in silence, the monks do not have discussion with their neighbours. The meal is therefore an individual act with all the community gathered. Loneliness finds its place in the group.

They each received a loaf of bread and a pitcher of wine for the day. The refectorer brings the amount of food necessary to each one, mainly vegetables without sauce.<sup>136</sup> Sick monks and monks that have been bled can eat more. They have to drink with two hands, as a sign of dedication. At the end of the meal, they keep the rest of the bread in the *mappula*,<sup>137</sup> a small napkin, and the rest of wine in the pitcher for the second meal of the day. In winter, they only keep the wine since the second meal is only a *biberes*, were they only can drink.<sup>138</sup> There is no property in the monastery, but there is a thin space for individual possession. When property is a title of ownership, possession refer to a temporary condition. Use is the condition for possession.

After the last or the only meal the refectorer take all the leftovers to give it to the host or the beggars.

The dormitory<sup>139</sup> is the common room were all the monks sleep. Cistercians are radical cenobitic monks, and the dormitory express the intention to share the most intimate moments of the day. It is a way to oversee the behaviour of the monks. The older ones were checking the younger. The chastity was an important vow from the monks. The number of twelve monks was a biblical reference but also a way to avoid sexual drifts that happened in other communities.

Each monk has a simple mattress in front of its own window, *suppedaneum*, which is a sort of stool and a bar or perches to put their clothes on it, in some case it can have a common wardrobe. They can change on their bed, but cannot sit for other reasons in this room. It is very frequented during the day, since the monks come to change themselves. They can change if there are cold, to wear on two or three tunics superposed. After the chapter, they go up to take there change their night shoes that are a sort of sandals for their daily shoes to go to work.<sup>140</sup>

Along their mattress, they keep their tools next to their bed during the harvest. This allows them to win some time during a time when the literature explicitly mentions that they are susceptible to miss the liturgical hours, the mass or the chapter.<sup>141</sup> The multiplicity of elements is the dormitory reveal that this radical common space let an interstice to



express their individuality.<sup>142</sup>

142 Ibid. Note 146, 445.

The *calefactorium*<sup>143</sup> is the only heated place. Even if the activities are less ritualized the monks has to stay in silence in this place. They can go in the *calefactorium* to grease their shoes, to do the bleeding and to warm up during the intervals in the early morning.<sup>144 145</sup>

The monks can be bled four times a year. This medical intervention was common in the Middle Ages. The bleeding is done in the *calefactorium* and have an impact on the schedule of the monks the entire week after. They rest more, they eat more, they work less, and they assist to the liturgical hours from the chapter room.<sup>146</sup>

This room is also used for duty tasks, to warm the ink before to work at the *scriptorium*, and to heat the wax to create the candles. The candles need to be done really regularly since it was the only means of lighting.<sup>147</sup>

The church<sup>148</sup> is the space where the monks are spending seven to eight hours minimum during the day. It could be described as a workshop of prayers. The prayer is a ritual act by which the monks address to God or its intercessors. The literature provides a quantity of information concerning how the monks should act in the church, how to sing, respond, say the verse, about when they should stand up, seat down, kneel, join and spread their hands, where they should seat and go or even how they should walk, alone or together. They are placed according to their seniority and on two opposite sides to face each other during the liturgy. Very little light come in the church since the monks should know the psalter and text by heart. The novices are placed in the centre and can have books.<sup>149</sup>

The monks form a very carnal relationship with architecture, in the sense that some rituals ask them to have physical contact with it. When they arrive late or do a mistake in the liturgy, they make amend by touching the ground and during Lent, they are barefoot as a sign of humility.

An important community ritual is the transmission of peace. In the middle of the celebration they give the « peace of God » to each other, starting by the priest, then the older monks come to the priest to get it with an accolade, wait until the second older come to him to give it to him in the same way, and so on until the younger than give it to the novice and then the *conversi*.<sup>150</sup> All those rituals force them to be in perpetual contact in between each other. The sum of these small insignificant gestures strengthens the community.

The intensity of the enclosed life of the monks, was only possible in regards to their relation to the outside world. From the monastery to the territory, the different scales of planning had the only purpose to make possible a radical cenobitic life which required to attract all the resources directly to the monastery without mixing the outside world.

143 See the drawings in the annex p.69

144 Ibid. chap. 72 « Where the monks can enter and when », 213.

145 Ibid. chap. 116 « the nurse brother », 329. Even fi in the chap. 4 it is specified that the *calefactorium* is used to warm up during the night of the Nativity, the nurse brother has for mission to light the fire for the intervals. This let believe that the *calefactorium* was accessible each time the temperature was too low.

148 See the drawings in the annex p.71

146 Ibid. chap. 90 « The bleeding », 259.

147 Ibid. chap. 113 « The sacristan and his help », 321.

149 Ibid. chap. 1- 44, 67-137.

150 Ibid. chap. 57 « The peace », 180.



### Conversi as a productive boundary

The utilization of external secular people to serve the economy of a monastery existed since the ninth century. Special statuses were accorded to peasants helping the monasteries, but the official *conversi* statuses were a particularity of the Cistercian order. At the beginning, the peasants only joined the monks when the world was the most important during the harvest. As the monasteries grew, the monks could not conciliate time for all the exterior tasks and the *opus dei*. The scale of the production implied the need of exterior peasants dedicated full time to the land production. Administering lay peasants required from the monks to mix with the population and to break the *clausatura*. The help of peasants recalled the drift of the Cluniacs and the manorial administration of the population by some monasteries. The social repercussions of this worldly task weakened the *fuga mundi* of the monks. At the beginning of the tenth century, some monasteries in the north of Italy imposed a monastic discipline to their lay servants. The Cistercians took back this organization as the New Monastery was possessing more and more lands. The second abbot of Cîteaux Stephen Harding had relations with those Italian monasteries. Thus, he developed this dual community composed of monks and lay brothers, called *conversi*.<sup>151</sup> In the twelfth century, the status of *conversi* attracted a lot of poor peasants since the life conditions could be miserable. The life in an abbey allowed food security and descent place to sleep and some clothing, they had a more flexible rhythm, with more sleep and fewer offices. There was more *conversi* than choir monks by a ratio of two to one or even three to one. Their discipline was described in the *Usus Conversorum* and officialized in 1134 by the pope.<sup>152</sup>

151 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 334.

152 Ibid., 340.

The *conversi* had a different schedule than the choir monks, but the Cistercians tried to unify their customs. They also had a one-year novitiate and were swearing obedience to the abbot. They did not have the possibility of becoming monks or priest, but they were not a lower ranking of the monks, it was just different vocations with different duties. Their habit was grey but quite similar to choir monks one. The *conversi* lived in the monastery or in granges. In the monastery, their life condition was quite similar to the monks but, they could not enter in the cloister, and had their own dormitory, refectory and chapter room. In the granges they had also spaces to sleep and to eat, the spacial organization was less defined and they had to stay in silence and keep some distances, especially if lay peasants were also working with them. The *conversi* did not have to go to the mass and pray the offices each day, they learned the main prayers as the *Peter Noster* or the *Credo*, and recited a hundred of them to replace the holy hours. Only on the Sunday, they all gathered for the mass, they were located at the back of the abbatial, behind a rood screen to separate them from the monks. Since there were praying less, not listening to the teaching and not having the lecture each day, they were less scholars. In 1188 the general chapter asked that the noble men could only enter in the order as monks and not *conversi*.<sup>153</sup> The different tasks created different needs. Since they had only manual work and spent their day outside,

153 Ibid., 337.



Fig. 10, Granges of Saint Bernard, in the Valley of Sénanque.  
Photograph by the author

154 Jean Gimpel, *The Medieval Machine: The Industrial Revolution of the Middle Ages*, Second ed. (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1988), 40. In the monastery of Margram, conversi incarcerated the monks and deprive them of food until new statuses were decided.

155 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 334.

156 Ibid., 283.

157 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 269.

158 Ibid., 135. In 1132 the abbot of the abbey of the Mirror refuse to pay the tithe to the Cluniac abbey of Gigny that was previously receiving the tithe for the exploitation of those land by the peasant.

159 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 155.

160 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 299. A rich, old and corpulent count gave some good land to the Abbey of Vaudey, in 1140 in exchange of a papal dispensation for a vow of pilgrimage in Jerusalem.

162 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 299. Three or four granges of the Abbaye of Fountains have originally been settlement. Evacuation of villages have been led in 1153 by the Abbey of Maulbronn.

161 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 162.

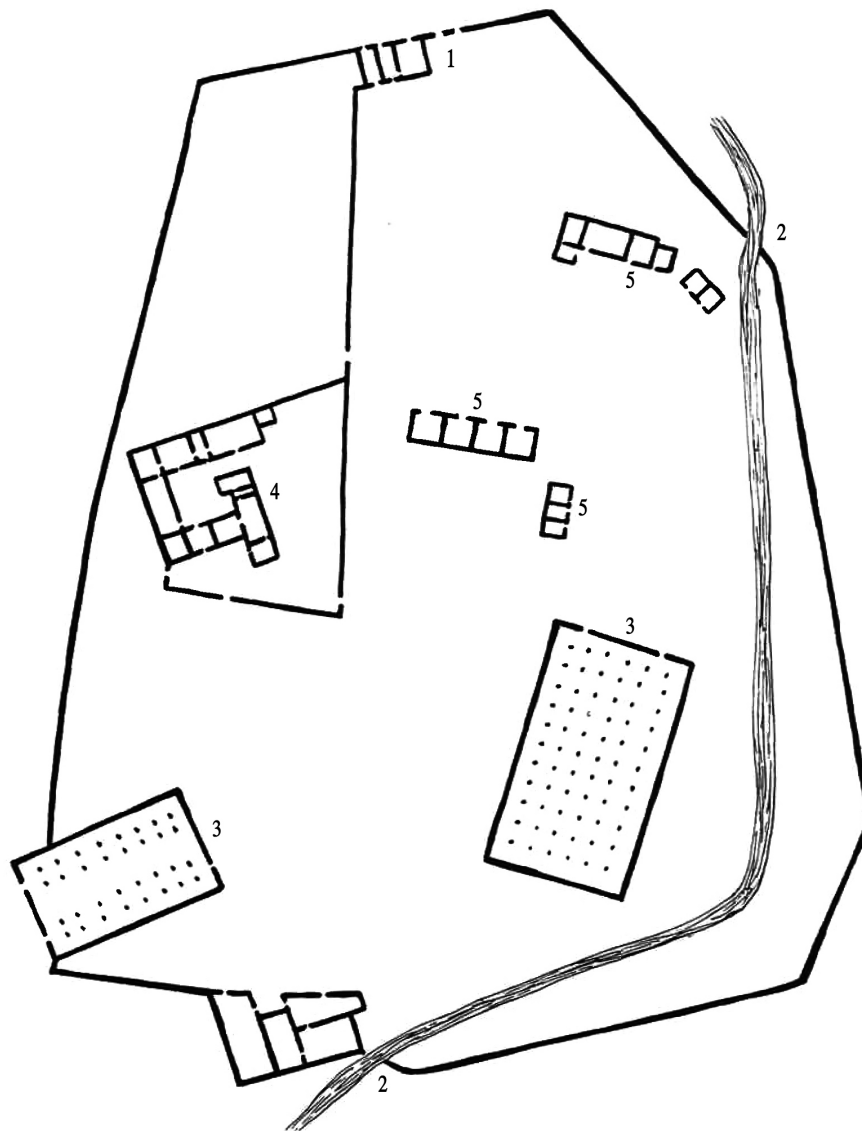
the custom gave them more food and drinks. The drinking habit in the Cistercian granges became a problem at the beginning of the thirteenth century. An attempt to forbid wine for the conversi led to rebellion and bloodshed inside monasteries. This is one of the reasons why the right of the conversi changed to be more laxist about foods and prayers time.<sup>154</sup> Maintaining a high level of asceticism outside of the *clausatura* of the monastery was more difficult.

The conversi were a social boundary, which protected the monks from relationships with the outside world. Lay brother is in itself a contradiction, but this ambiguity is what allowed the Cistercian order to fit in its economic context. If a monastery had theoretically the ability to be independent of any other economic resources than its own labour, it could not be self-sufficient for all the specific elements like salt, for example. Therefore, the conversi went on the markets to trade the exceeding for resources. They did what the schedule of the offices and the hermitical life was not allowing. Even in the granges they kept a link with the abbey thanks to the master of the conversi, he listened inspected the granges and their work, distributed the tasks and listened to their confession.<sup>155</sup>

In the middle of the twelfth century, when the conversi rule became more lax, the abbeys had paid peasants.<sup>156</sup> The relation with serfs, the taxes, or the donations were commonly existing especially in the monastery attached to the order after several years of existence. The conversi created a bridge with the secular workers of the abbey. There was around the abbey an entire social system creating a slow gradient from secular to religious and from agitation to serenity. The conversi, as the cloister, was part of the deep boundary in between monks and secular life.<sup>157</sup>

## Territorial Planning and Influence

Cistercians managed successfully to obtain lands in quantity to take advantage of the freedom of an empty space to plan their production. When the monks settled in a new territory, they were taking possession of new lands thanks to the gift of lords or landowners. They were not paying the taxes that peasants were paying for the same land before. This represented a loss of incomes for the lords and for the other abbeys that were also perceiving the tithe.<sup>158</sup> A lot of lands were given to the Cistercian when the second crusade was launched by the Cistercians in the name of Bernard de Clairvaux. The lords that were leaving their territory preferred to ensure the good administration of their land by the monks.<sup>159</sup> The condition of the donation of the lands were not always made in a perfect purity of the law.<sup>160</sup> The amount of gift was deeply linked to the impulse of the abbot to discuss with the lord of the land, to promote donation to the church and promise prayer to the sake of their soul. They were negotiated certain number of masses for the rest of the soul of the death, and transforming *opus dei* in a quantifiable element to trade lands.<sup>161</sup> The love of solitude led the Cistercian to destroy villages to ensure their isolation. They transformed settlements into granges, and found arrangement to relocate the population.<sup>162</sup> Those excesses belonged



- |                                                                                |                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Main gate                                                                   | 4. Residential buildings for conversi and servants in a particular enclosure |
| 2. Water stream                                                                | 5. Stables and stables                                                       |
| 3. Granges : the largest has 7 naves the other has its entrance to the outside | 6. Other door and accommodation of the hospitable brother.                   |

Fig. 11, Plan of the Grange d'Outre Aube, under the Abbey of Clairveaux supervision. From Auburger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 180.

163 Auberger, *L'unanimité Cistercienne Primitive Mythe Ou Réalité ?*, 180. Gautier Map tried to demonstrate by a series of example to the King of England Henry II how the Cistercians were full of cupidity.

164 Lekai, *The Cistercians Ideals and Reality*, 296.

165 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 256. Clairvaux possesses 4 granges before 1153 and 19 in the beginning of the thirteenth century (J-F Leroux, *L'abbaye de Clairvaux, La vie en champagne*)

166 Gimpel, *The Medieval Machine*, 40.

167 Ibid., 36. For example in the abbey of Ramsey, there was 40 oxen and 2 horses in 1125 and 24 oxen and 8 horses in 1160.

168 Ibid., 67.

more to an abuse of power that a research of *fugua mundi*. This raised a hostility against the Cistercian in England. They developed a reputation of brigands in the way they obtained lands.<sup>163</sup> The Cistercian order found a political breach in the beginning of the twelfth in which they sneaked and grew very fast. No stand political power was organizing the territory and they used this moment of floating to recover as much land as possible.

The Cistercian territory is one of the most mastered in order to organized rationally the work load. Trespassing this pastoral mystic, the local situation of each abbey was requiring some adaptation and decision from the abbot. It was almost custom that the General Chapter regulation was not respected in case of need. Each abbey had small arrangements to transgress the rule and find its best productivity.<sup>164</sup> The agrarian organization of abbeys allowed an efficiency incomparable for this time. When peasants worked on small lands having to pay taxes, monks had an overview on a large-scaled territory to plan their organization along donated parcels. The system of granges allowed the exploitation of lands far from the abbey. Only the lay brothers were able to go there since monks could not sleep away from the abbey. The lands were composed of pastures, cereal land, and vineyards. The granges were situated in between five to twenty-five kilometres, such a distance represented one day of work and a big radius of influence.<sup>165</sup>

The Cistercians were above the other agrarian productive power thanks to their capacity to arbitrate and handle their own economy actively. The general use of the three-field system represented a breakthrough in the sense that productivity of the field was raised from one third and that it provided food proportional along all the year. It reduced the need for storage, and avoiding periods of shortage.<sup>166</sup> In the fields, the number of horses rose rapidly to become a norm. The debate in between horse and ox was important. Efficiency of a horse production during a day was twice more than oxen. The horses were more efficient because of their capacity to tow more weight but more complicated to feed them with oats. The oxen were eating everything and their caring was easier, but they were slower and usually had to work in pairs. There was then economical calculations to make in between with efficiency and cost, even taking into account what to do with the animal when old or dead.<sup>167</sup> This conscious global economy of their estates allowed the monastery to avoid bankruptcy and sought wealthiness.

The monastery had a stranglehold on the production means in and around their territory. The Cistercian had no difficulties to obtain legal permission from the authorities to create mills or new infrastructures and to exploit their lands.<sup>168</sup> So while they were managing the peasants and having influence on lords, they were also actively watching and overseeing the development of their neighbours. The development of mills led to the industrial dispute to keep the monopoly of the mill factories. Usually the monks were the first to develop this technology, which brought them wealth and richness. They were usually against the construction of secular windmills that would decrease their own production. In England, the abbey of Bury Saint Edmunds had the single very productive mill of the region. The neighbour lord built its own mill to avoid paying the



abbey in order to crush grain. The abbot learned this new creation and sent *conversi* to destroy the new mills. This neighbour conflict was not always dealt with violence. In France, the Abbot of Royaumont went to court to ask the destruction of the new secular windmill. The trial went in favour of the lord that could keep its own mill. Conflicts with lords symbolized their progressive loss of influence in a society where they used to prevail in all the domains.<sup>169</sup>

169 Ibid., 26.

### Survival productivity to massive exportations

The Cistercians were in the head of the technical innovations. That participated to the elaboration of new technology in reusing what the roman literature had developed. There was no need for the Roman to develop too much the water system since they had slaves that were cheaper. In the Middle Ages deprived of slaves, the use of technology was a requirement to obtain at a sufficient productivity. It allowed to simplify the work of monks in a society without slavery. The Monastery of Saint Germain-des-Près possessed fifty-nine mills in the ninth century.<sup>170</sup> This technology spread it in the secular world. The mills were omnipresent in the villages, there were bank mills, bridge mills or even floating mills. There were not only mere factories but also social places where the peasant had to wait in line to transform their food. They have illustrated themselves by the use of drain, rivers, watering. They used mills, usually more efficient than they need, especially in Burgundy, with in between two to six mills by abbeys. From the end of the twelfth century, the windmills were developed wherever there was no stream to find energy. They had the advantage of working even in freezing time.<sup>171</sup>

170 Ibid., 10.

« In the monastery of Clairvaux, water was running everywhere, and was used for crushing wheat, sieving flour, fulling cloth, and tanning. It was avoiding a considerable amount of physical tasks to the monks. »<sup>172</sup>

171 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 269.

The monks democratized the use of certain particular practices that had difficulties to be integrated in the peasant society. They showed examples of uses to liberate reluctance within the peasantry. The use of animals was also transforming the traditional agriculture and was a criticized practice, for example. They did so in taking advantage of the appropriate use of each element. In the Roman time, the Theodorian Code of 438 required a legal maximum carriage of 500 kilograms for the horses, when the Middle Ages the horses were charged until 3 000 kilograms. The main difference of carrying weight is due to the harness.<sup>173</sup> The heavy wheeled plow is representative of invention that transformed the agriculture thanks to engineering, horses, and the use of mixed discipline as the black smith. Along with the plow, the harrow was used to sow the seeds. This plow implied the use of four horses. Size and shape of the field were transformed according to the complexity of directing a horse coupling. The fields were divided in long strips of land to avoid changing the axes of the horse coupling. The enthusiasm to be leaders in the innovation transformed the monks in efficient producers creating surplus.

172 Gimpel, *The Medieval Machine*,  
5. Quoted in David Luckhurst  
"Monastic Watermills," Society for  
the Protection of Ancient Buildings,  
no. 8 (London), n.d.: 6.

173 Ibid., 35. The early  
representation of horse working in  
field is in the Bayeux tapestry of  
1066. In 1910, the engineer Lefebvre  
des Noëttes did some experiments  
that showed that 500 kilograms was  
the maximum possible load for a  
horse with a roman harness. It was  
technical matters that created this  
limit.

« [Cistercians] found themselves in a controversial position because of



the economic consequences of their ideals. In their sincere desire to flee the worldly and commercial life of the cities, the Cistercians went to live in areas “remote from habitation of man”. But by attempting to become independent of the outside world, they created an economic empire based on a highly centralized administration and on up-to-date technological expertise. »<sup>174</sup>

174 Ibid., 48.

The Cistercian became integrated in the wider scale commerce. After a few decades of domestication of the land, the abbeys were over productive and were able to sell their overproduction on the market. Since 1140, Fontenay possessed some steel furnaces. Such infrastructures were only punctual in the territory at this time, and implied that the monasteries were very present on the local market. In the second part of the twelfth century, some *conversi* became *mercatores*, it was their responsibility to manage sales and purchases of the abbey. Usually also, the sale was made inside the monastery. This demonstrated how the commerce slowly stopped the isolation the monasteries.

The Cistercians products were also in high demand due to their quality and consistency. The wool was really looked for by Italian textile artisans, the consistent good quality made easier and faster its transformation. The commercial trade of very important quantity of raw material with only one person, the cellarer, was simplifying their transactions. Fountains Abbey had until eighteen thousand sheep, and the production of its wool was meant for exportation, as the others English abbey used to do. If the commercial relations were weakening the ideal of solitude of the monks, it did not always go with wealthiness and benefices. On the contrary, the slow changes of customs and daily schedule of the monks increased the time of studies and writing. The pastoral activities were let on the side. Fewer workforces implied an obligation to this efficiency and commerce.<sup>175</sup> The Cistercians got caught in a search for production to compensate for the deviations made from their initial regulations.

175 Pacaut, *Les Moines Blancs*, 278.

The Cistercians ideals evolved over the twelfth century. Their discipline was corrupted by the temporal changes. The creation of money changed the relationship to work. The city and the money disoriented the Cistercian monasticism that was in concurrency with the new mendicant orders. There was a need for religious within the city. Poverty and austerity change of paradigm, it was not anymore an ideal or a mindset but a life condition where it is possible to buy more or fewer resources. It became a social state. The Cistercian discipline wavered before the power of the productive society.

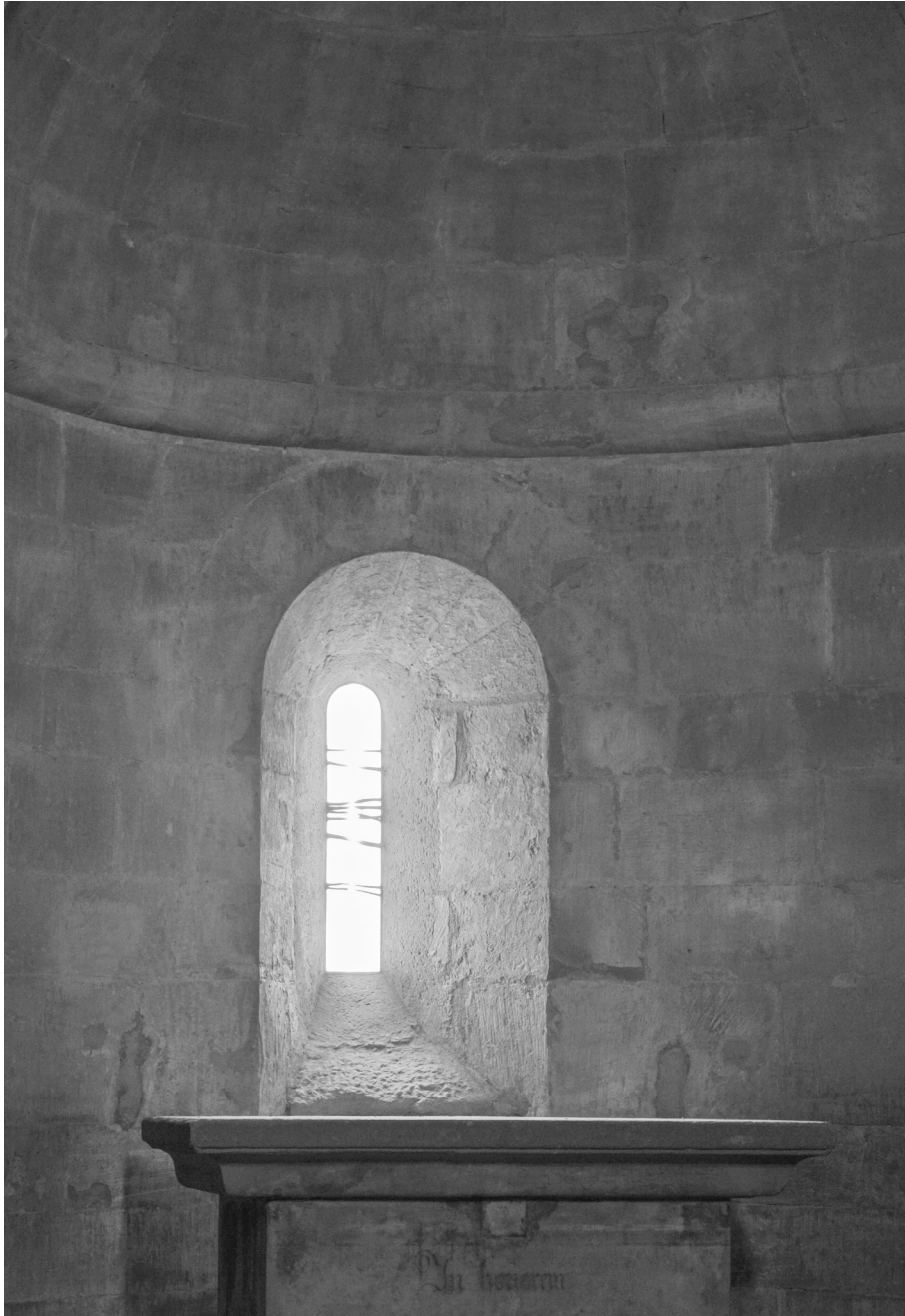


Fig. 11, Abides of the Abbey of Sénanque's Church.  
Photograph by the author.

## THINKING COMMUNITY AFTER THE CISTERCIANS

The Cistercian experiment interrogate the purposes of the concept of community. The aim of their community was to raised their spirituality and mutualize their needs to simplify the organization of their daily lives. The community was a mean to reach a higher purpose. The community was not a natural organization, it was shaped with rules and laws. This conception of community breaks with its modern definition as a flexible group gathered around a same idea. In housing architecture, the community is researched and acknowledge as a benefit.

The architecture of the Cistercians lasted longer than their communities. The creation of an order or a community is easy but its lasting requires a strong commitment. Elements of a united community have to be replaced. Inclusivity is a hard work. The singularities of the new members have to find their place in the leniency of the others. As soon as one link of the chain disappear s the entire system is touch. Thinking communities need to apprehend the group in its renewal and persistence. The housing design itself should considers its own use in time. The shelters are constructed to last, but the spirit and ideal of common housing should last also. Commonality is not only about sharing a roof, it is about using the community to improve a condition. The some of each individual does not worth the power of a united community.

Community and individuality are connected. Cistercian order can be seen as a totalitarian system . The reflection, the spirituality and the means of production were alienated by the overpower of the community. The monks and conversi joined the monastery not only for the ideas of the order but sometimes forced by their deplorable life conditions as twelfth century peasants. Cistercians were not allowed to have any kind of artistic expressions so they focused on architecture. Nevertheless, the constraint of austerity was a self imposed condition and became source of architectural creation for them. The scale of the community is an objection to the totalitarian system comparison. In the monasticism heterotopia, the strong awareness of each monks as individuals allowed a unified community. The consciousness of the difference of the monks allowed to delete any sense of individuality during the rituals. The community is not a shapeless mass of persons, it is a meticulous fusion peculiarities of individuals. In a monastery, serval people had the role to overview the good functioning of the community. They were deeply aware that the material conditions influence, the daily life. Despite this they did not choose prosperity to persist but discipline. The balance is not in between community and individuality, the both should always works together.

The Cistercians found their posterity not only in their constructions but in the innovative spirit and pragmatic planning shaping architecture. It relays a detachment of a referential architecture and expresses the permanence of space, volume and an entity. Their architecture formalized the rituals, it was the spatialization of their ideals of austerity. The Cistercian experiment is a reflection about the relationship in between community and architecture.

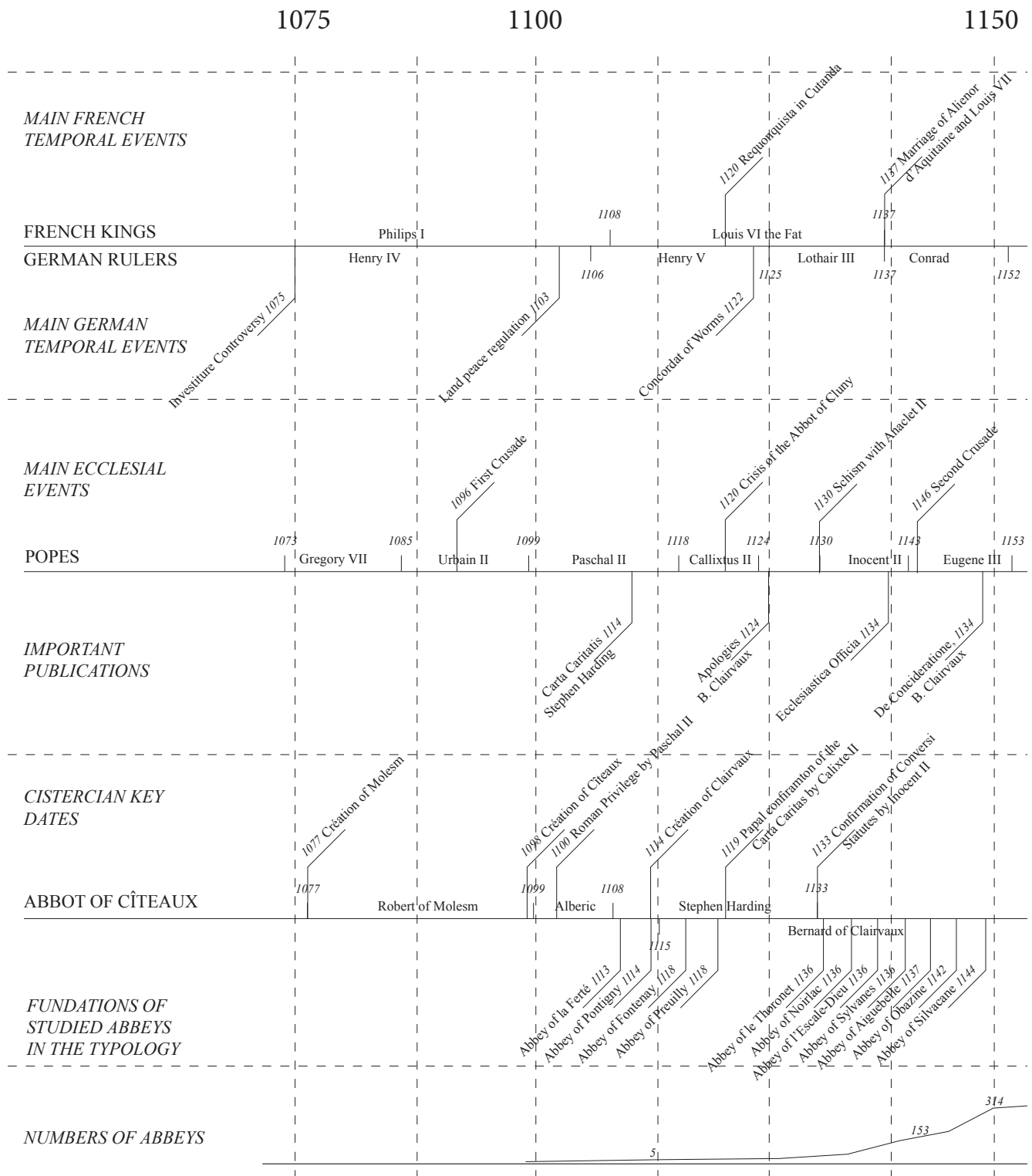


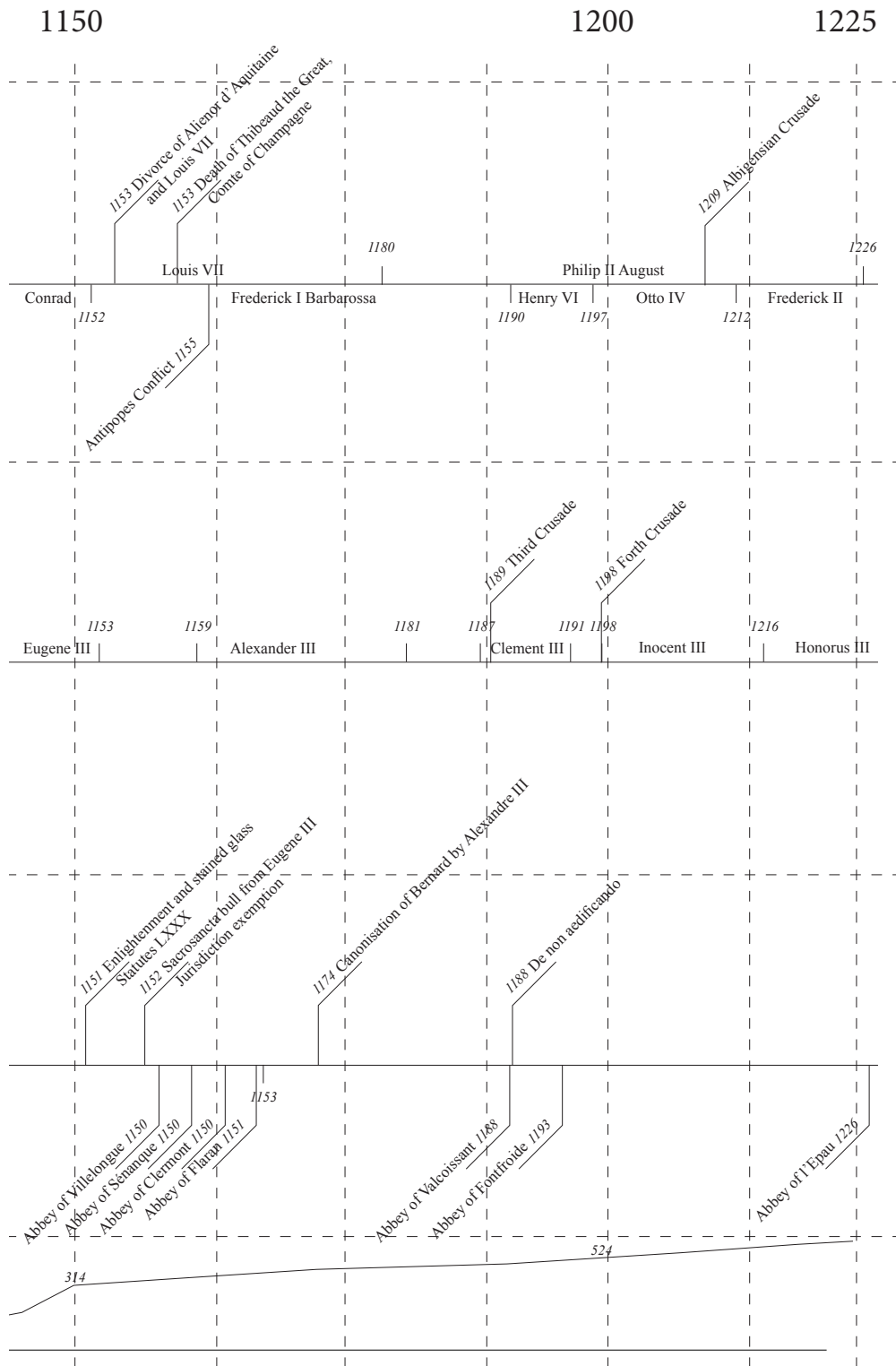
## ANNEXE

Chronology  
Monastery Tales  
Typology

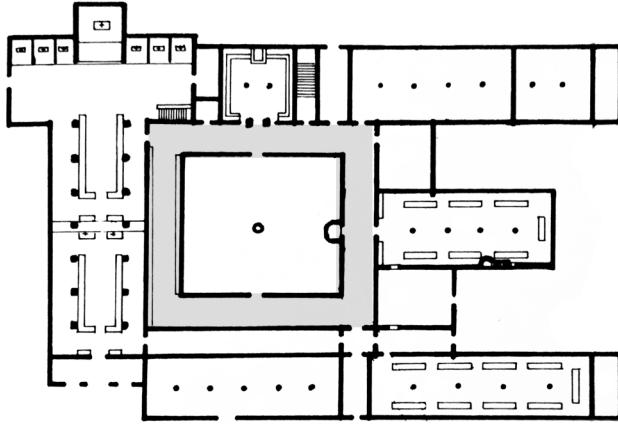


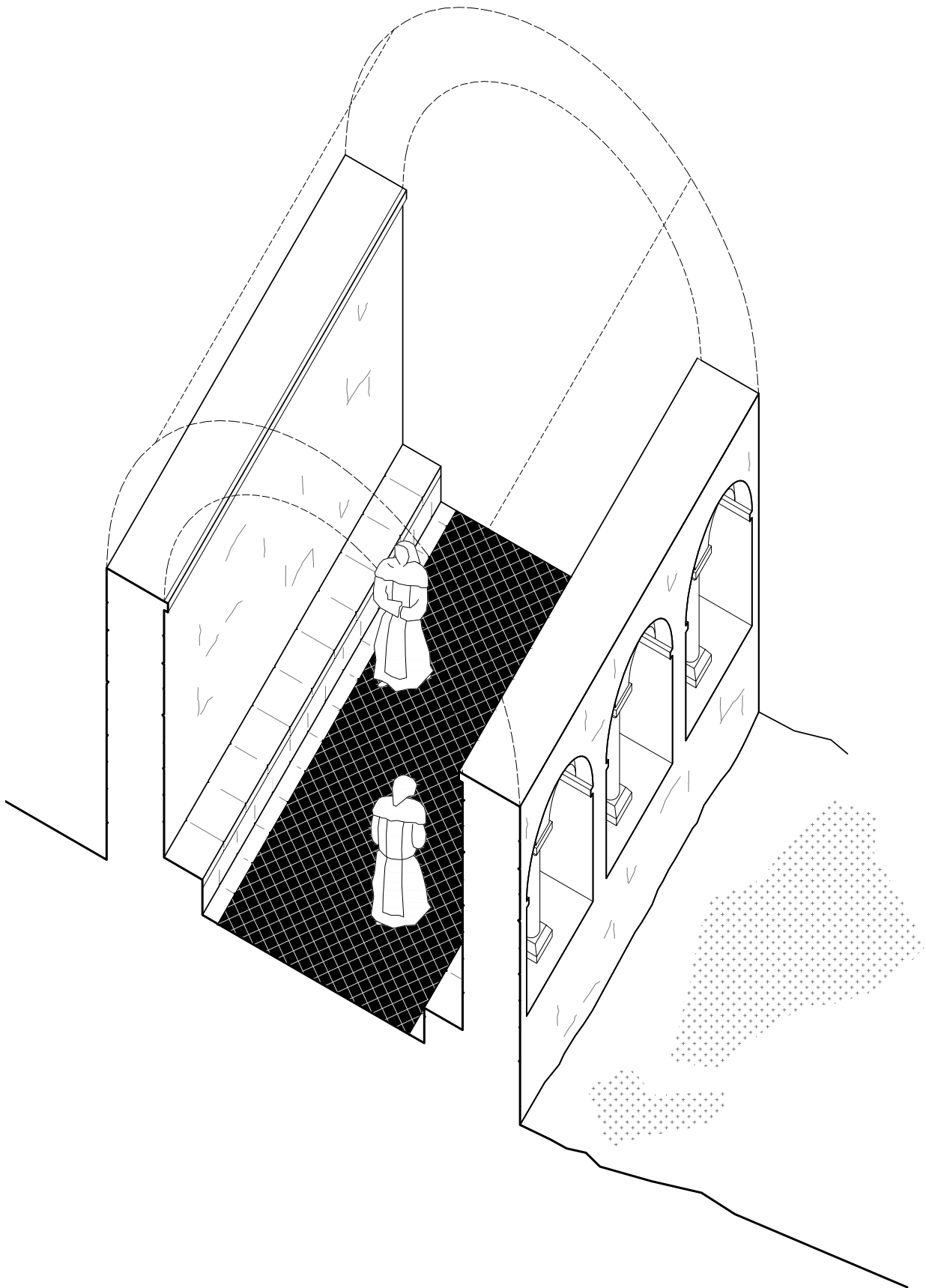
# ANNEX : CHRONOLOGY





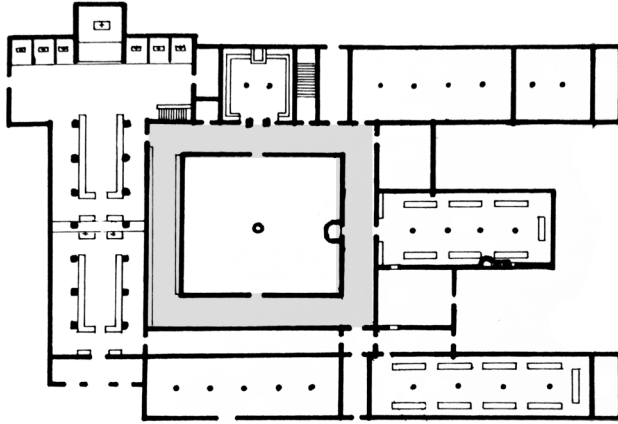
## The Cloister

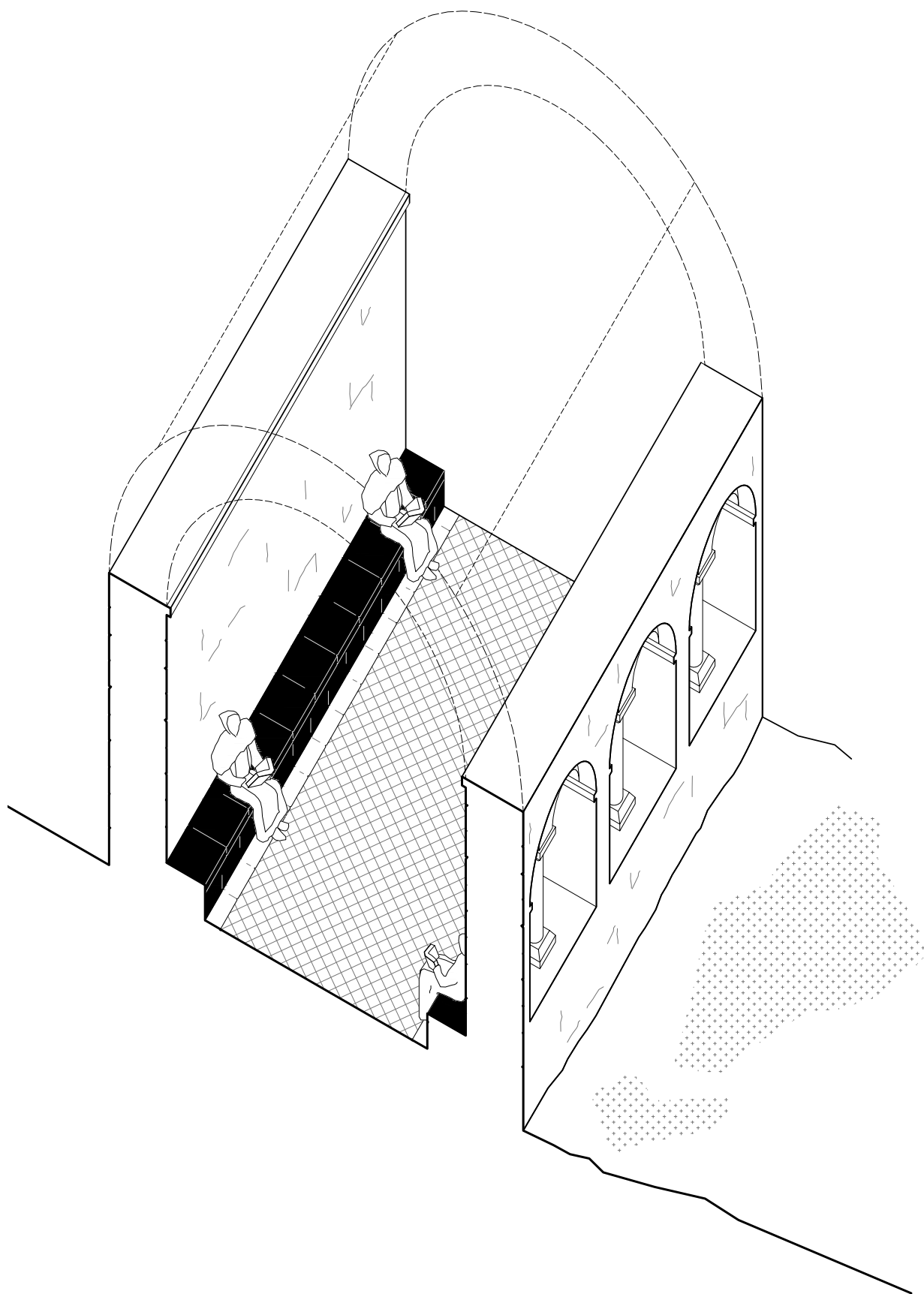




Circulation  
Cloister of the Abbey of the Thoronet, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

## The Cloister

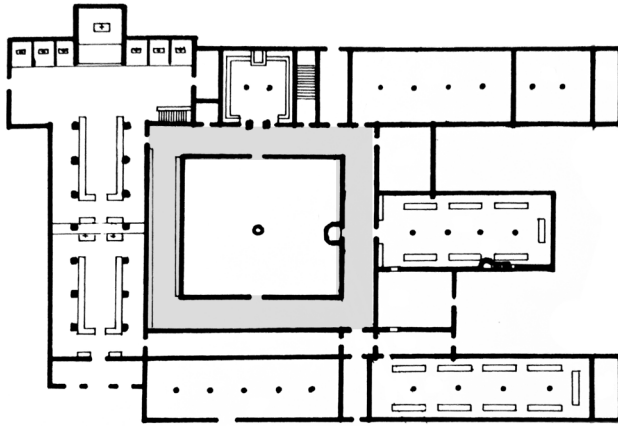


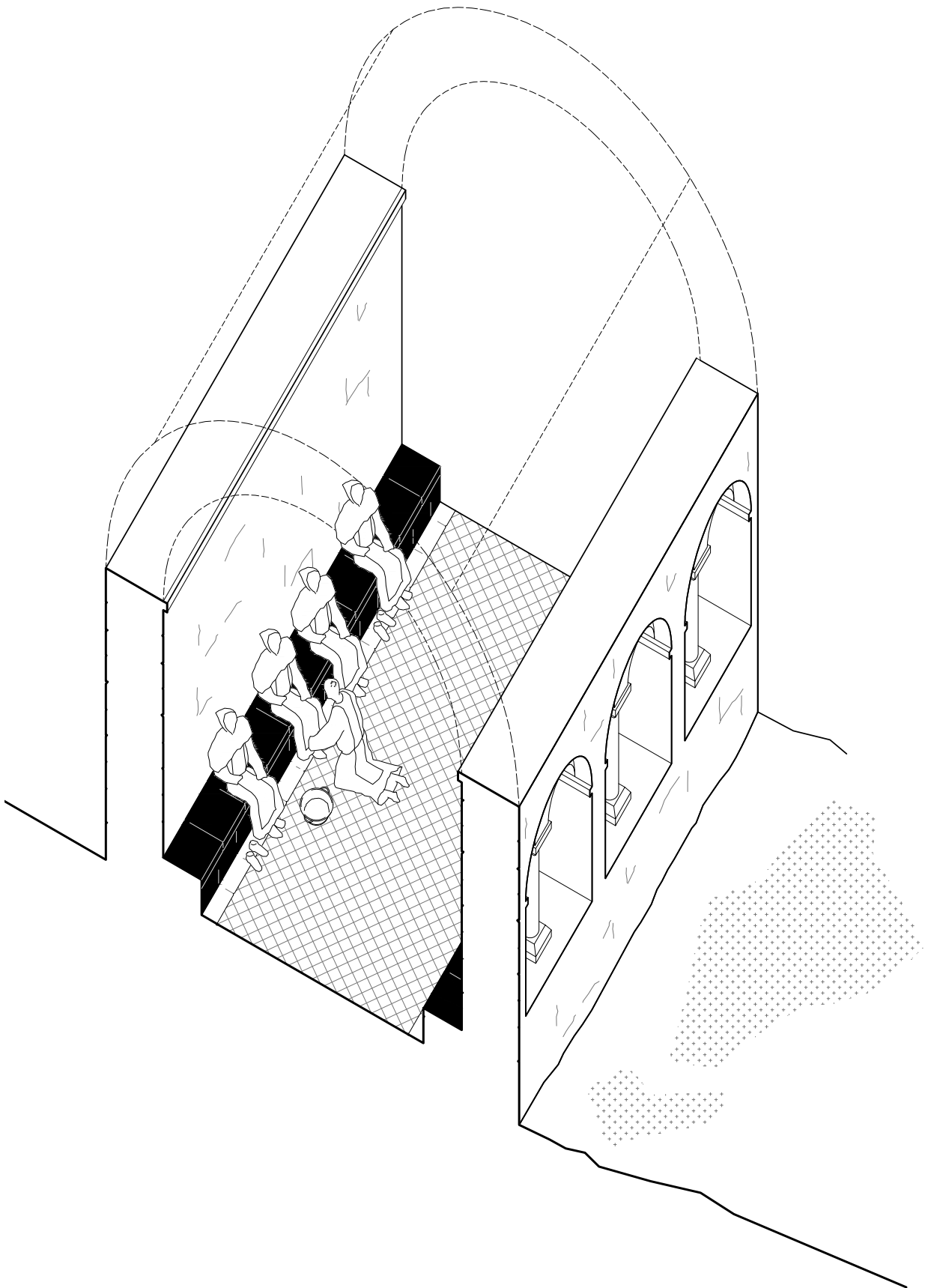


Lecture  
Cloister of the Abbey of the Thoronet, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.



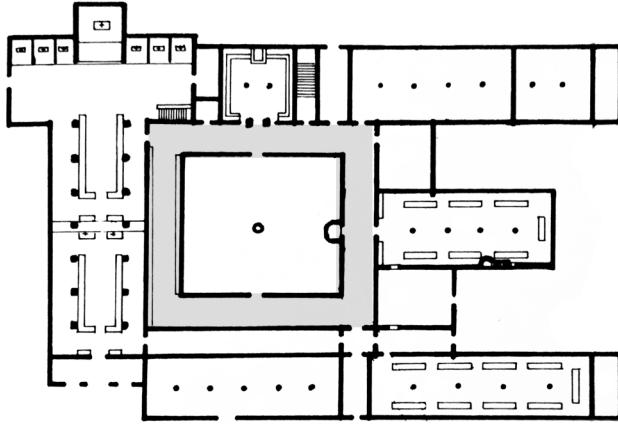
## The Cloister

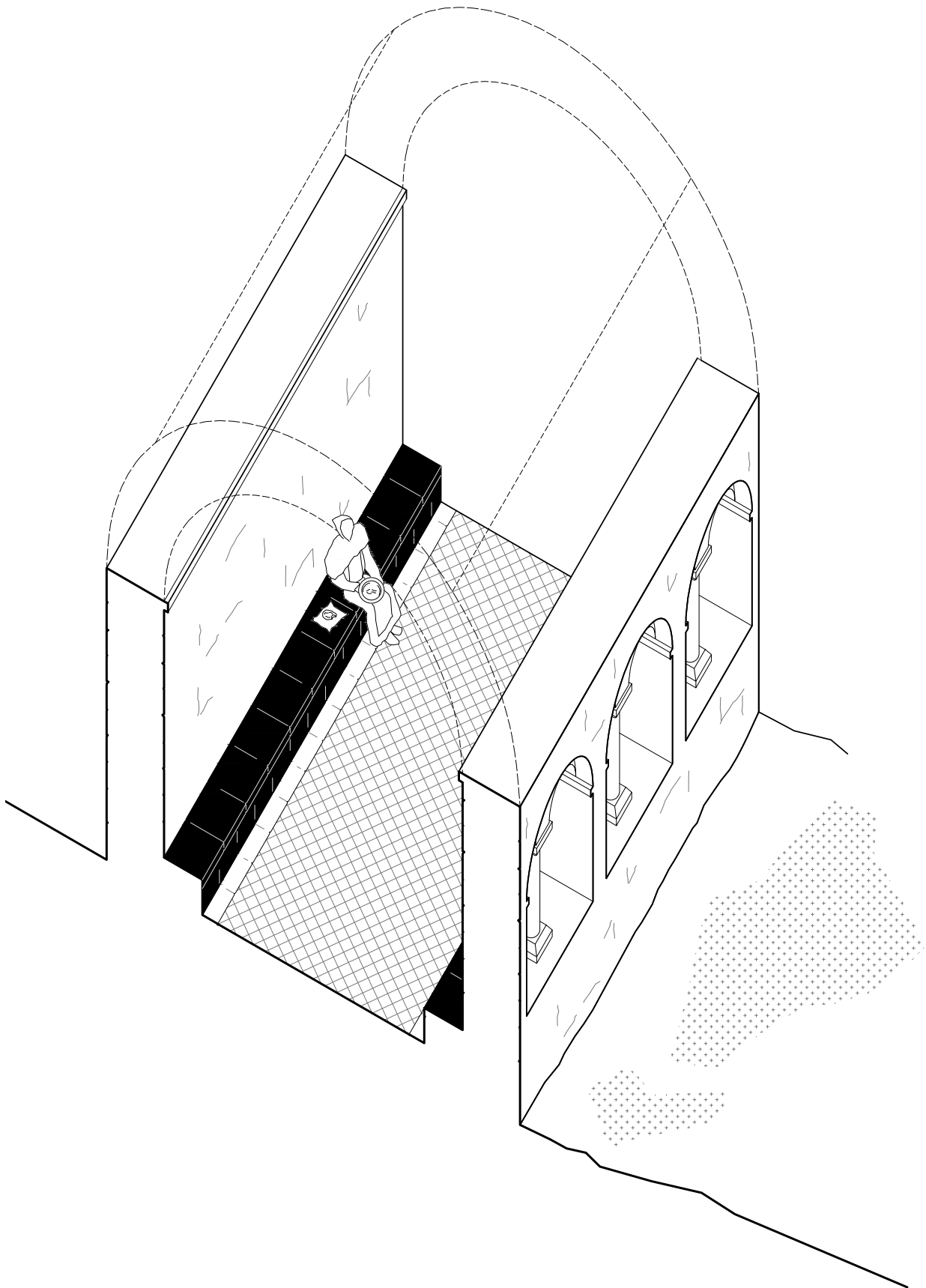




Mandatum and humility  
Cloister of the Abbey of the Thoronet, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

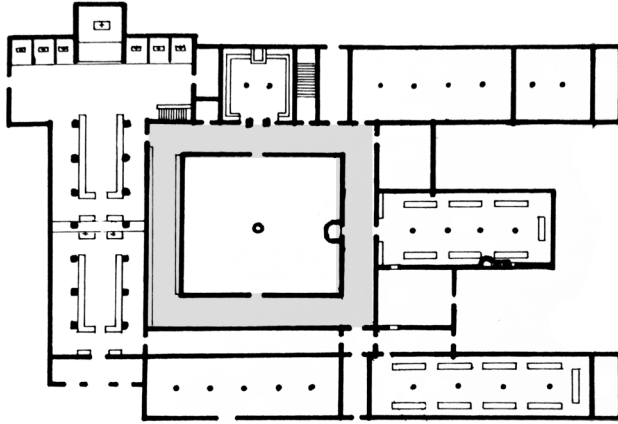
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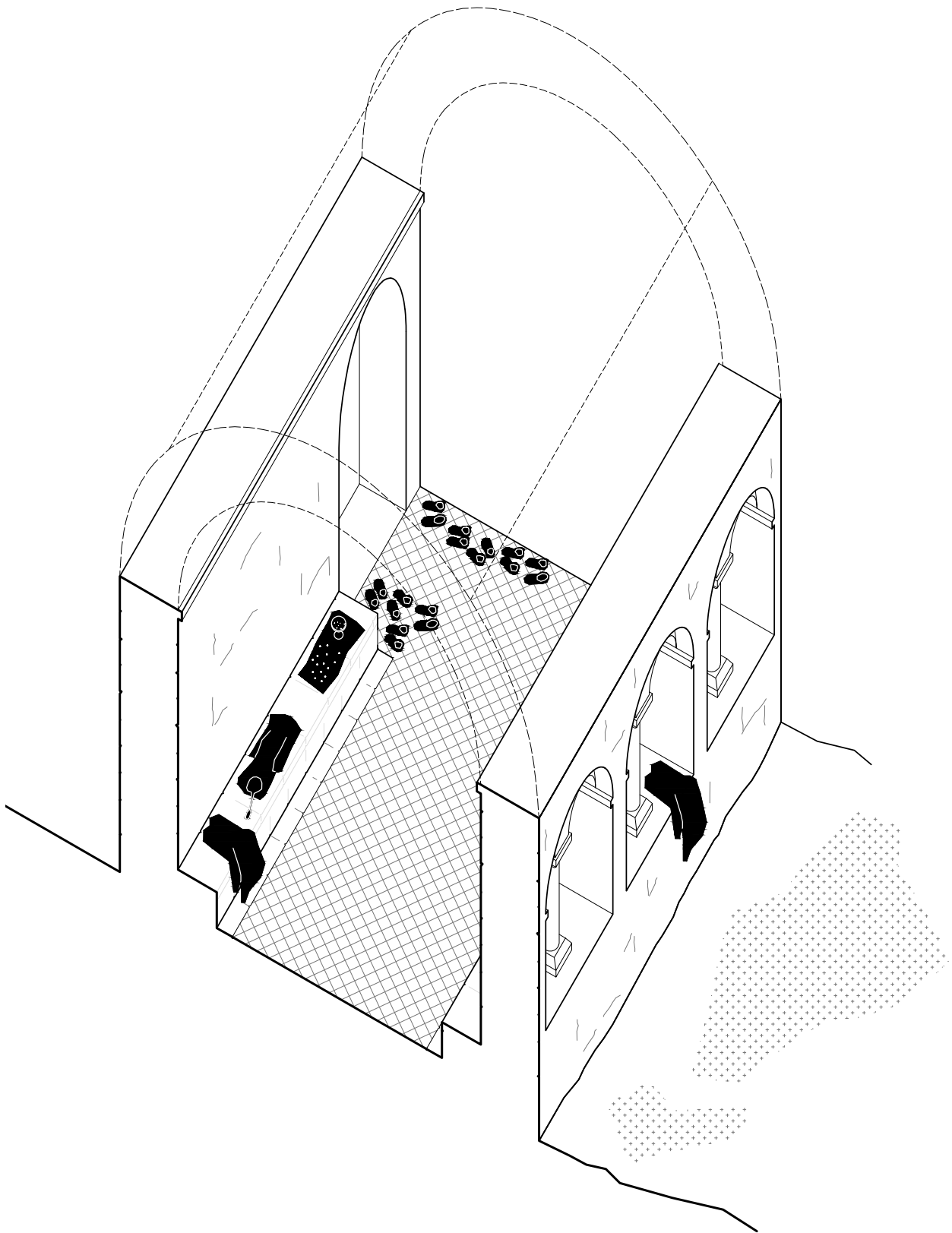




Lonely meal for a latecomer  
Cloister of the Abbey of the Thoronet, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

## The Cloister

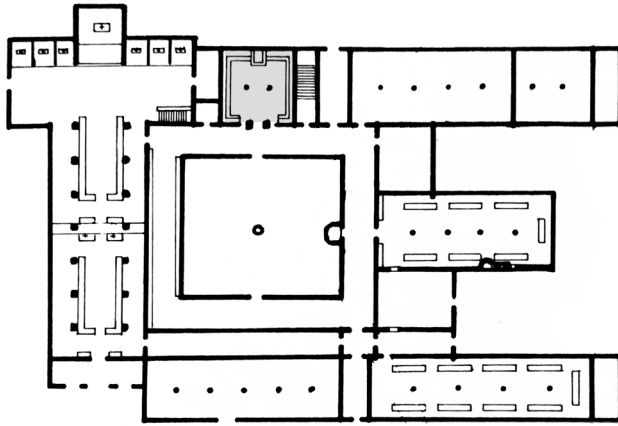


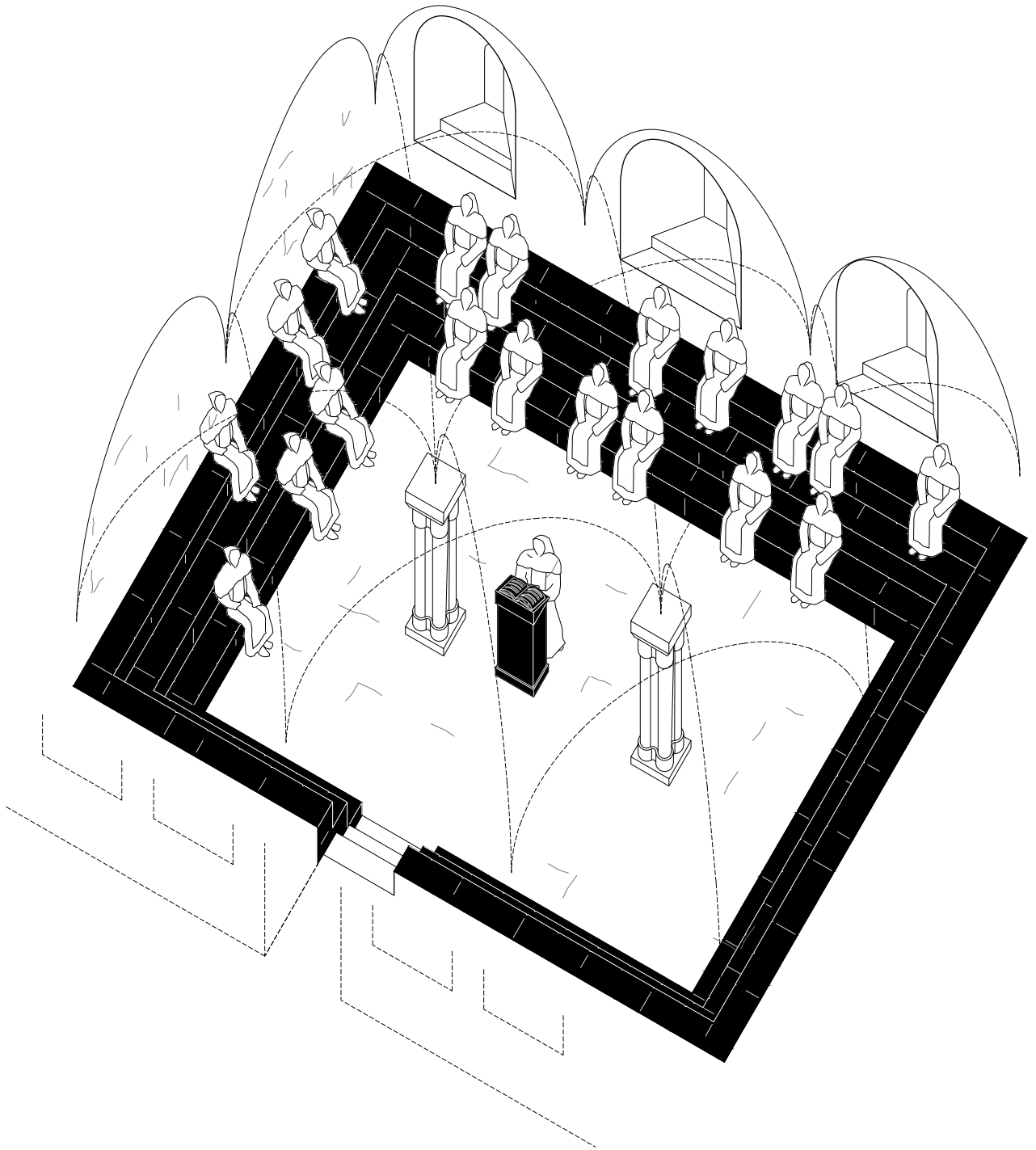


Domestic uses  
Cloister of the Abbey of the Thoronet, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.



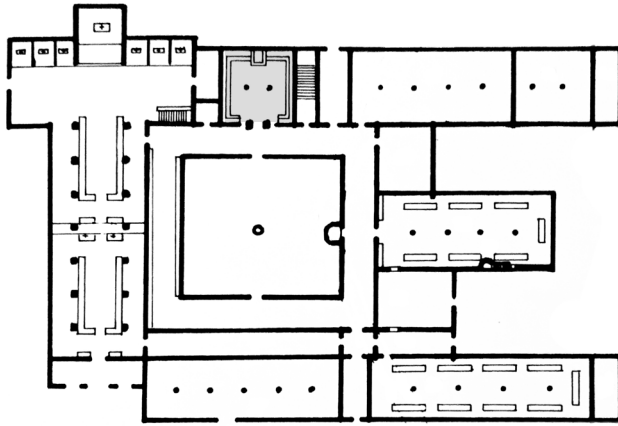
## The Chapter Room

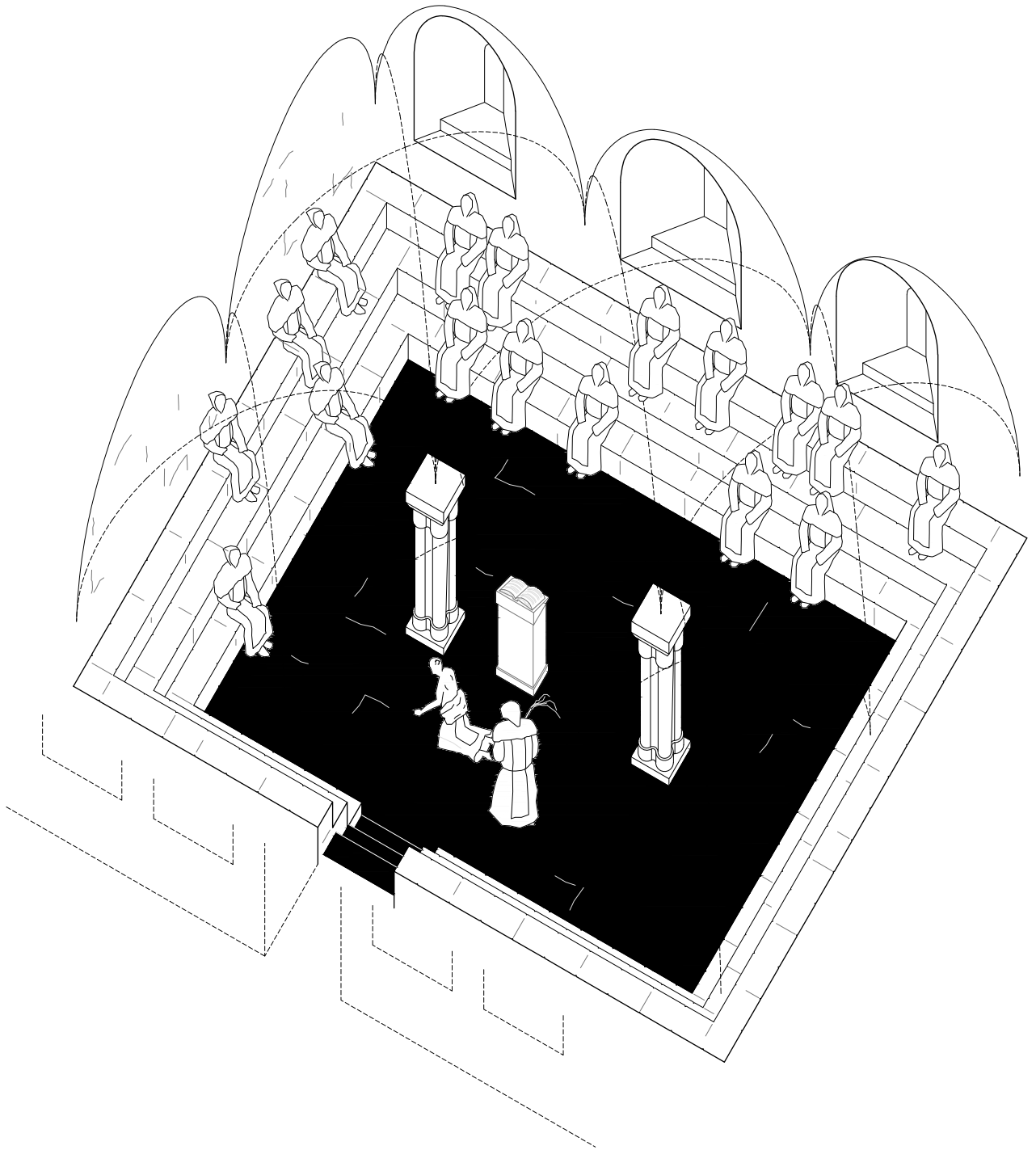




Unity around the rule  
Chapter Room of the Abbey of Sénanque, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

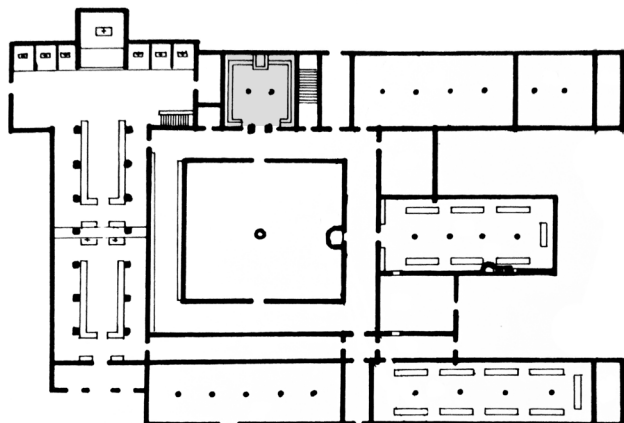
## The Chapter Room

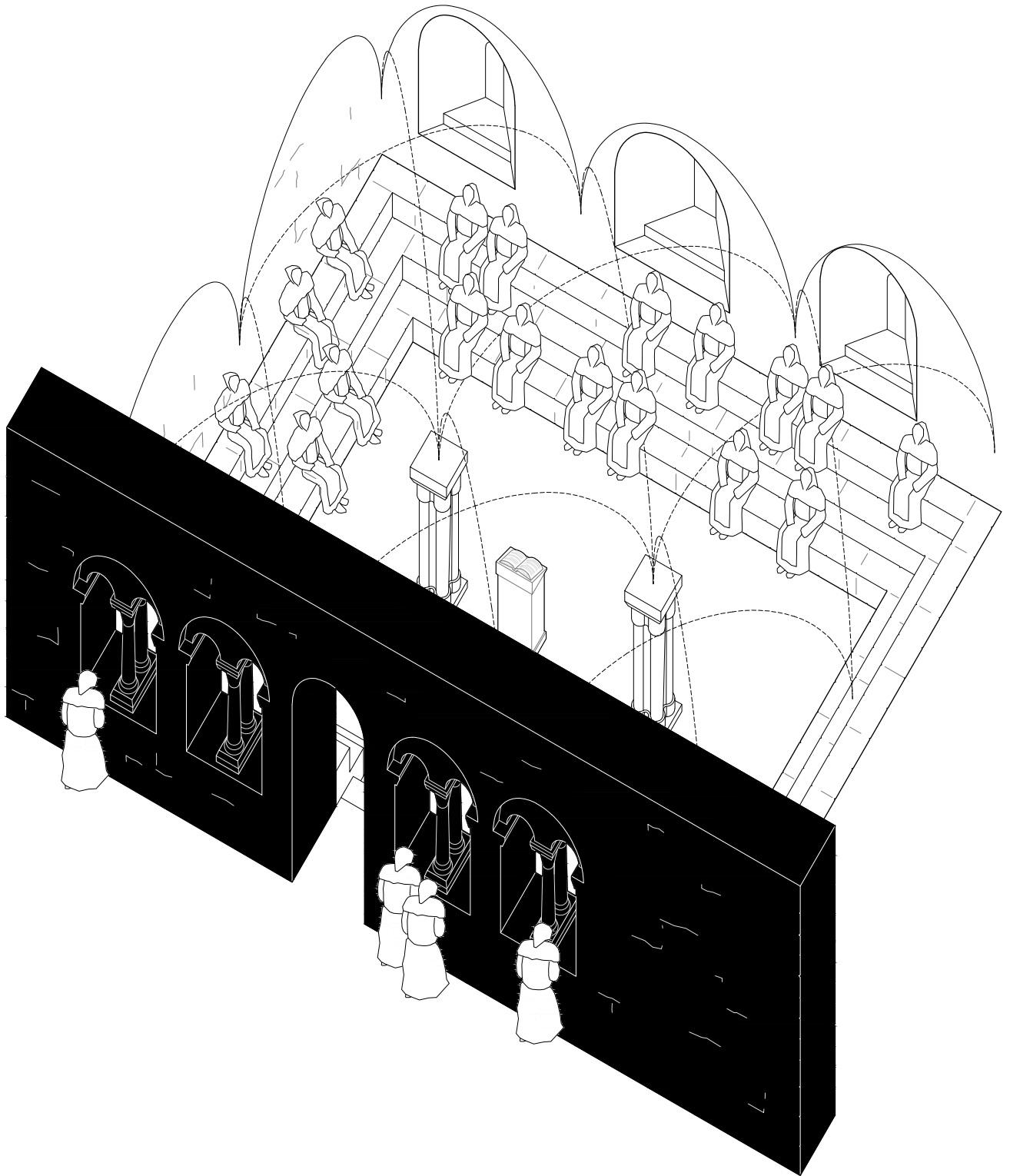




Punishment on the ground  
Chapter Room of the Abbey of Sénanque, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

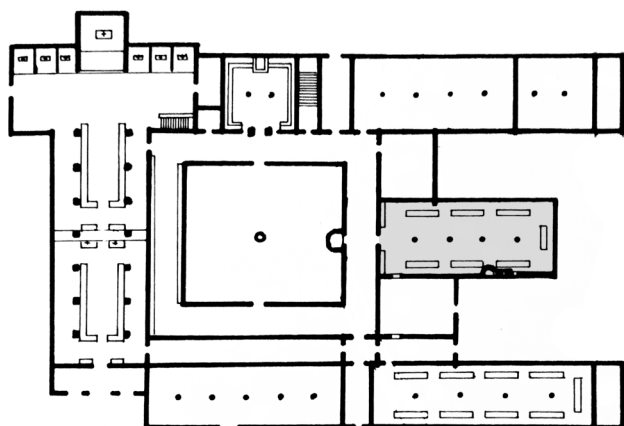
## The Chapter Room



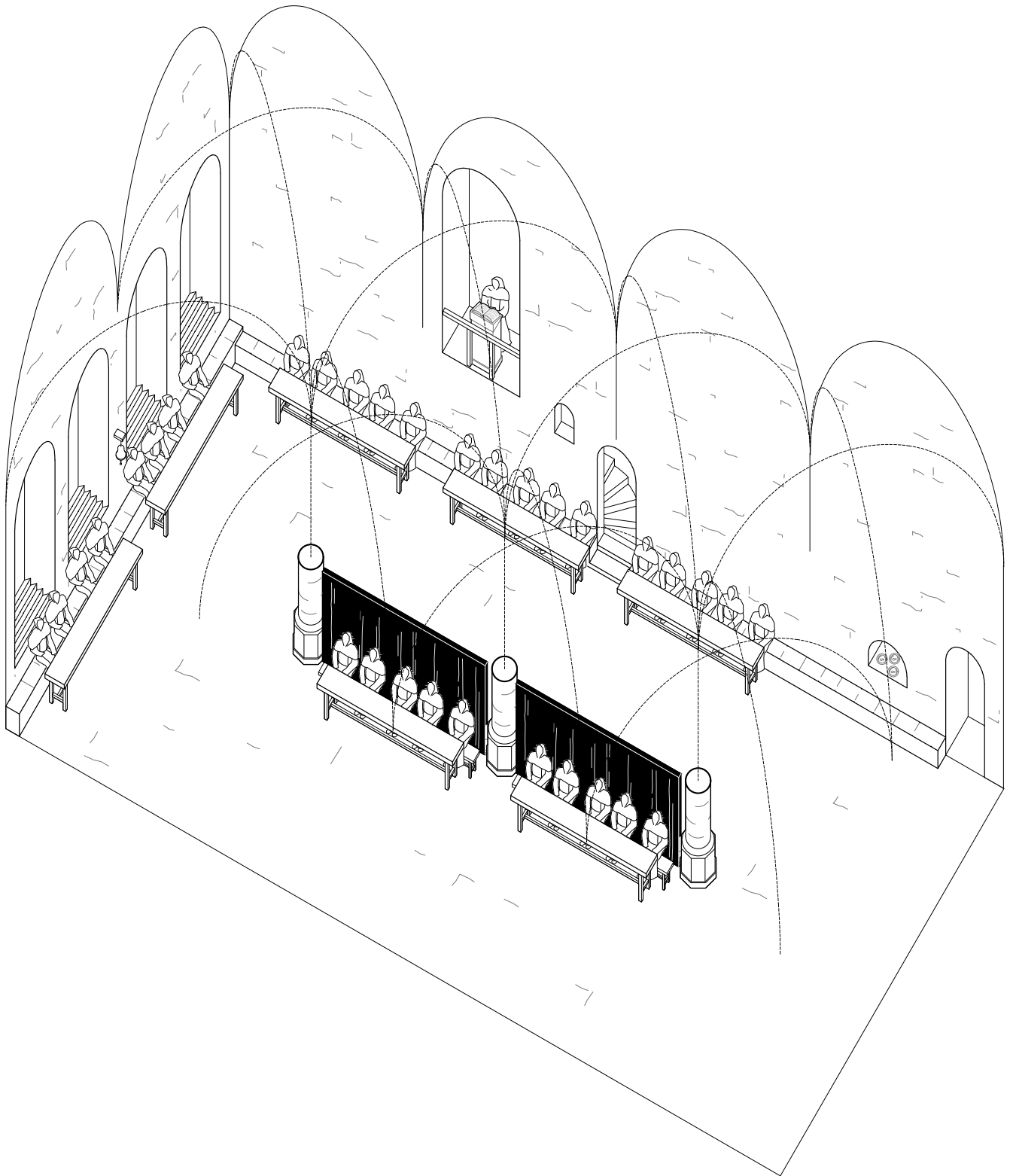


Novice listening, the was as a filter  
Chapter Room of the Abbey of Sénanque, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

## The Refectory

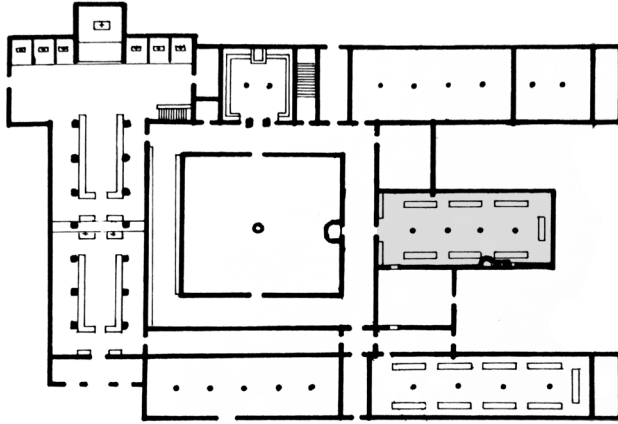


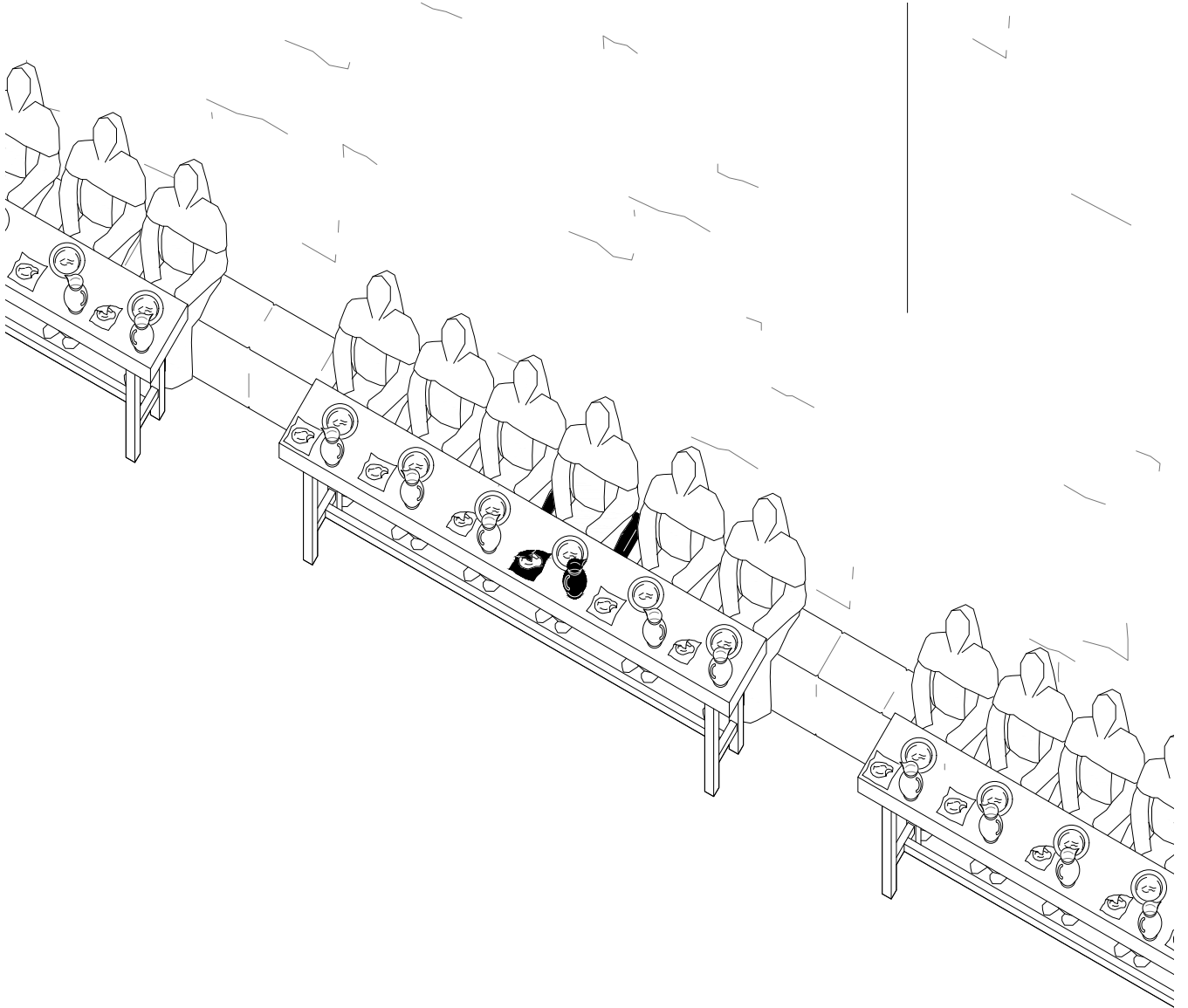




Regulated meal  
Refectory of the Abbey of Noirlac, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

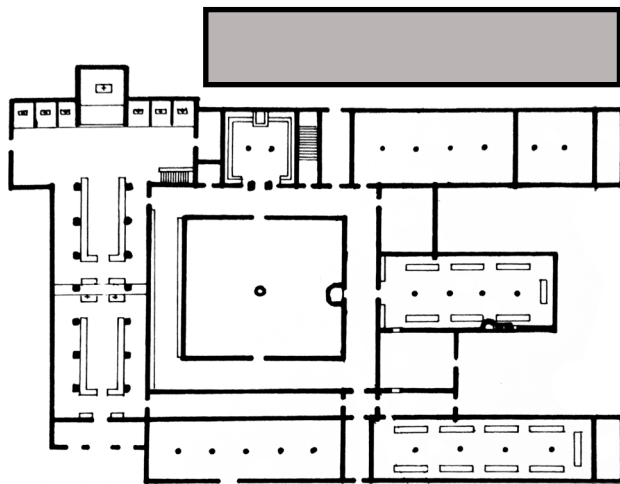
## The Refectory

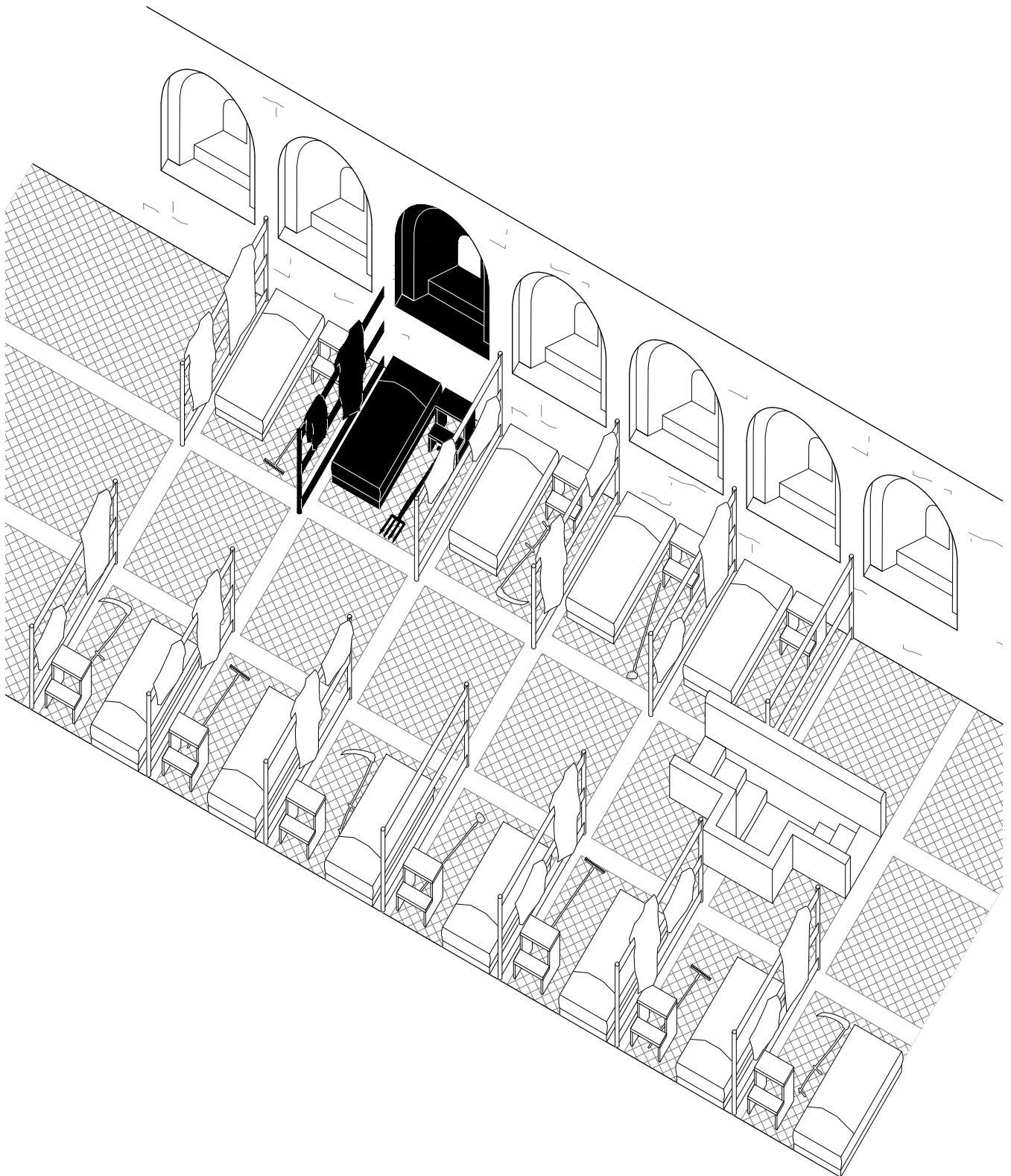




Possession and food  
Refectory of the Abbey of Noirlac, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

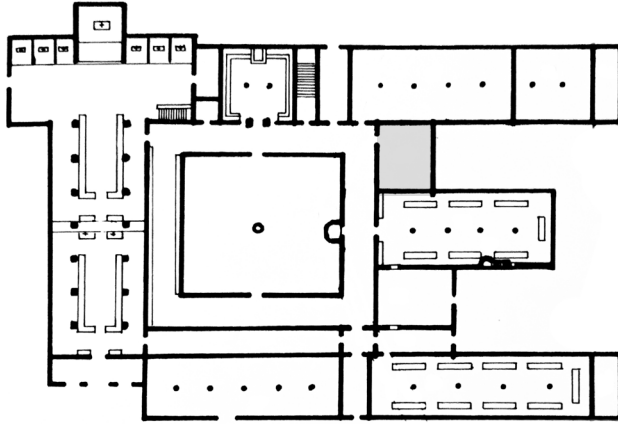
## The Dormitory

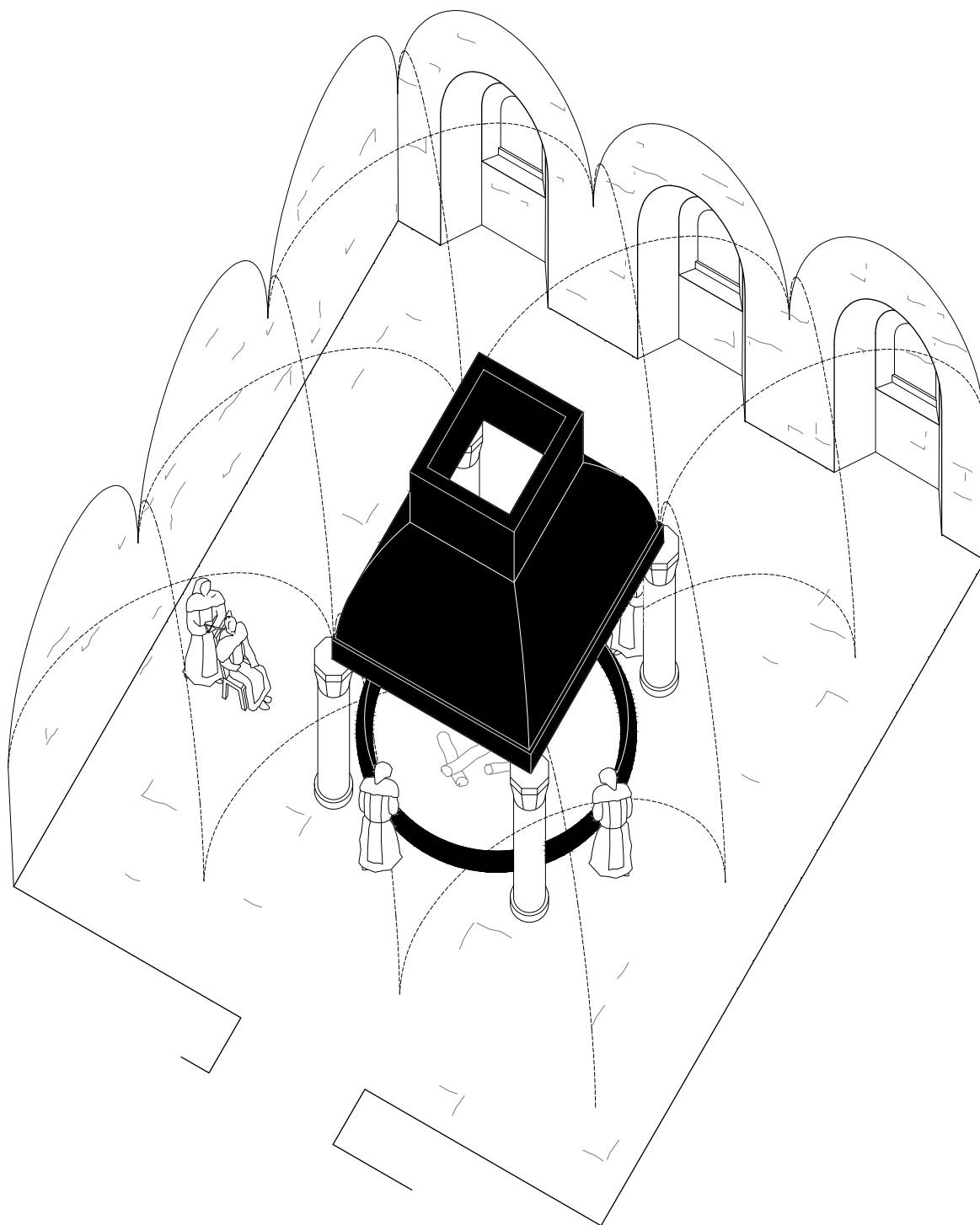




Common intimacy  
Dormitory of the Abbey of the Thoronet, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

## The Calefactorium

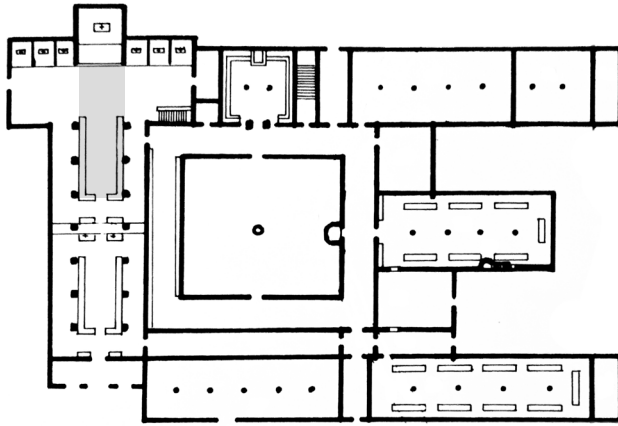


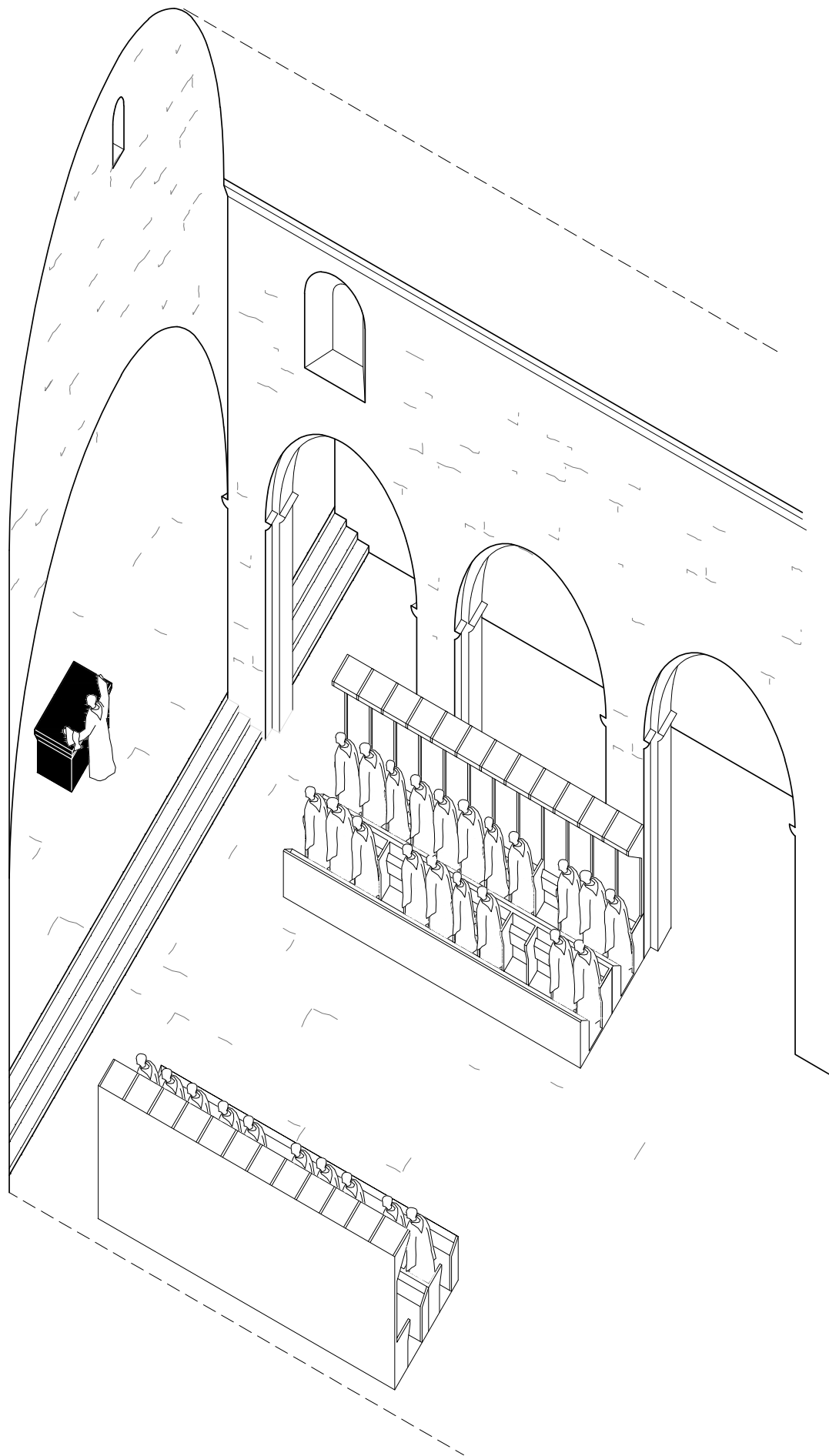


Domestic uses  
Calefactorium of the Abbey of Longpont, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

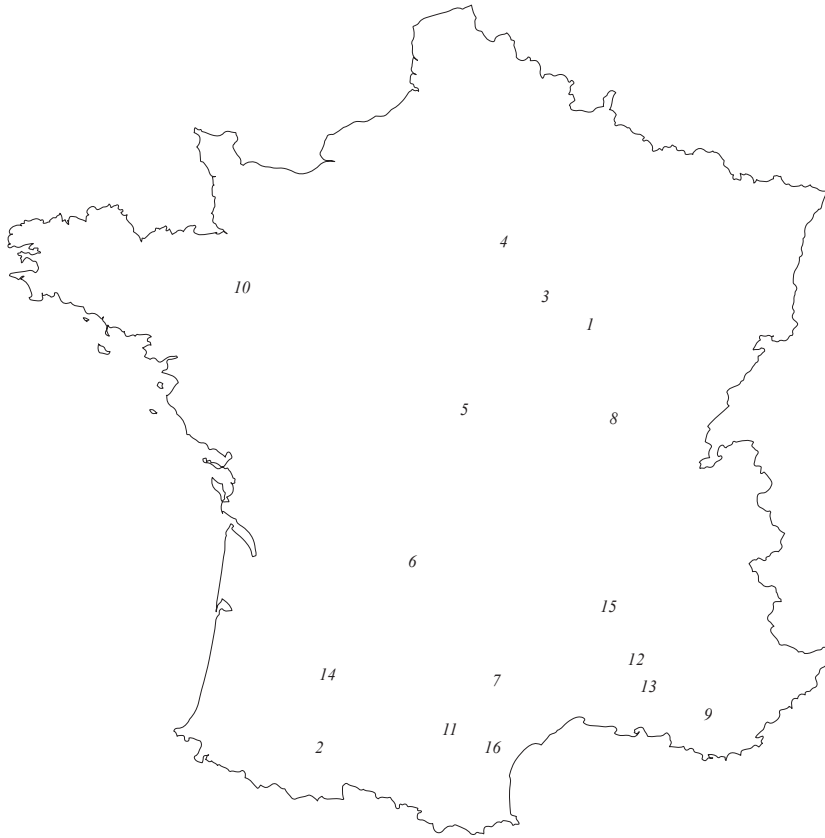


## The Church



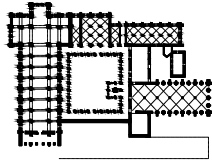


Unison  
Church of the Abbey of Sénanque, axonometric drawing.  
Drawn by the author.

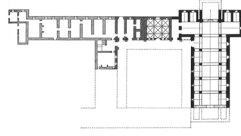


The abbeys are sorted by date of construction to follow the architectural path of the Cistercian order. The foundation is always indicated in second. The esthetic and programmatic choices did not evolve with fluidity, there was back and forth in the planning. The span in between the foundation and the construction highlight the precarious conditions in which the monks lived during the first years of a new abbey. The monks were living in wooden shelters.

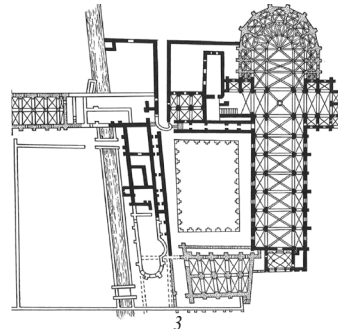
All the construction are posterior to 1139. The will of a persistent architecture arrived in the second generation of founders with the impulse of Bernard de Clairvaux. He created a type plan and the Cistercians reproduced it in all the abbey during the following century. It was called a Bernadine plan more than a Cistercian because of its specificities, only representative of this peculiar short period of the Cistercian order history. Evolutions according the relaxation of the supervision of the works by the order is noticeable along the typology. The territorial maps and sections of the abbeys are drawn by the author.



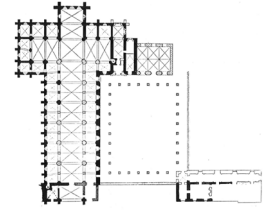
1  
Abbey of Fontenay  
1139, 1118



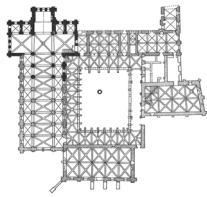
2  
Abbey of l'Escale-Dieu  
1143, 1136



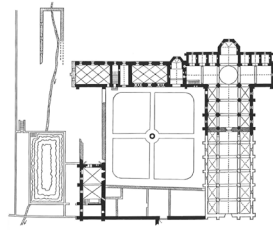
3  
Abbey of Pontigny  
1150, 1114



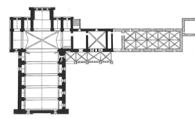
4  
Abbey of Preuilly  
1150, 1118



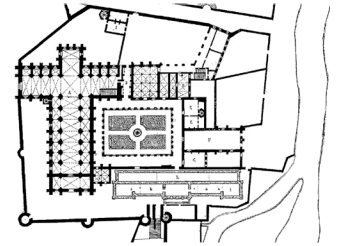
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Abbey of Noirlac  
1150, 1136



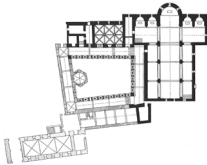
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Abbey of Obazine  
1156, 1142



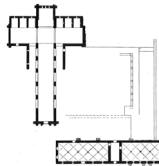
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Abbey of Sylvanès  
1157, 1136



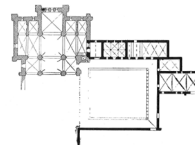
8  
Abbey of la Ferté  
1158, 1113



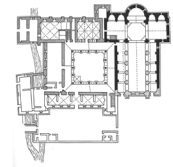
9  
Abbey of le Thoronet  
1160, 1136



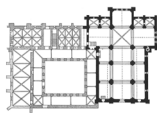
10  
Abbey of Clermont  
1160, 1152



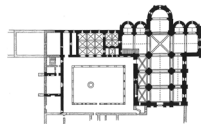
11  
Abbey of Villongue  
1165, 1150



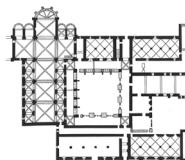
12  
Abbey of Sénanque  
1169, 1148



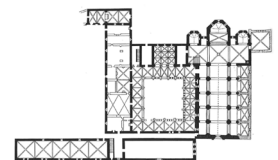
13  
Abbey of Silvacane  
1175, 1144



14  
Abbey of Flaran  
1180, 1151



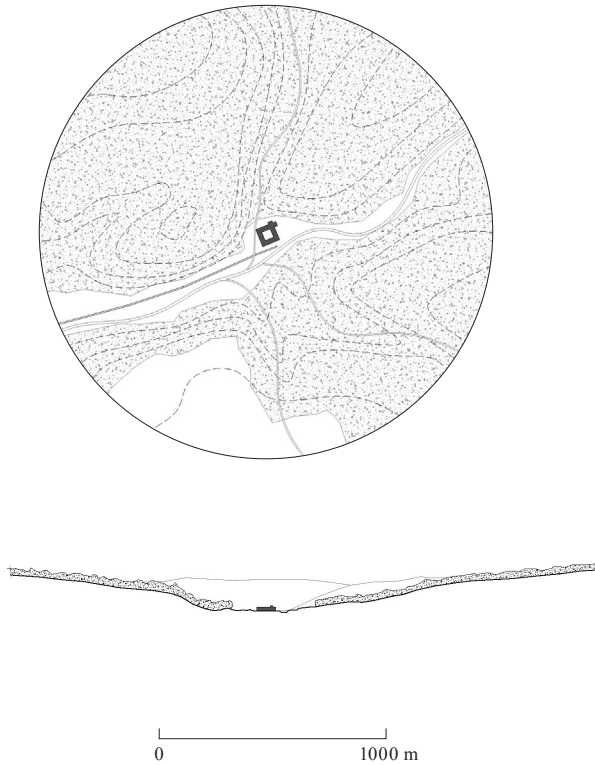
15  
Abbey of Aiguebelle  
End of the XIIth, 1137



16  
Abbey of Fontfroide  
End of the XIIth, 1093

Redrawing of the Abbey of Fontenay plan view. Drawn by the author, adapted from Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, p.70.

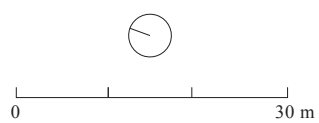
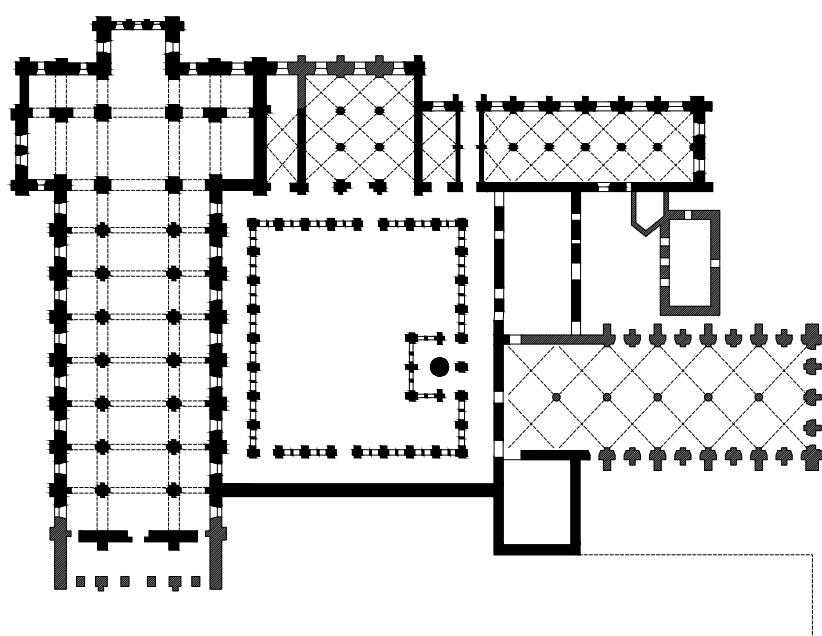
Abbey of Fontenay  
1139,1118



The Abbey of Fontenay was founded in 1118 by monks of Clairvaux. The abbey was located in a valley filled with swamps. The lands belonged to the family of Bernard de Clairvaux and a small hermitage of two monks was already settled. Bernard sent monks to this new location and named his cousin as the first abbot. In 1130 the monks moved of location, and a lot of works were done to contain the ponds and clear the forest before building the monastery. The construction of the church started in 1139 and finished in 1147.

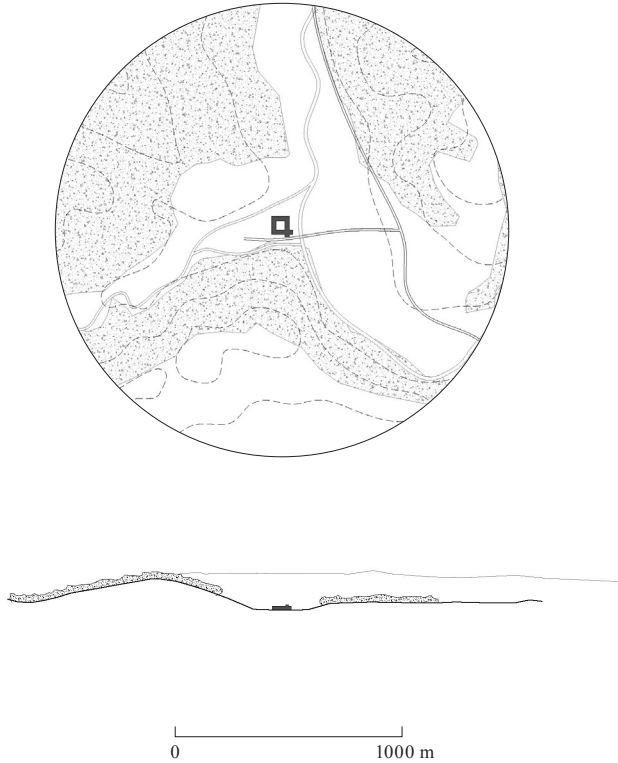
It is the older one that have been transmitted intact until today. It was the first abbey built under the direct watch of Bernard. There was no bell tower and the massive and thick church could be confuse with a grange. The omnipresence of domesticated water allowed it use for workshop. In the end of the twelfth century, a forge was constructed parallel to the canal and was mutualized a mill.

Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean  
Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*,  
64-70.



Redrawing of the Abbey of Fontenay plan view. Drawn by the author, adapted from Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 70.

Abbey of L'Escale Dieu  
1143, 1136

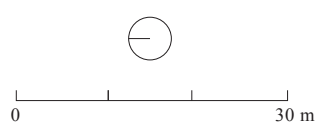
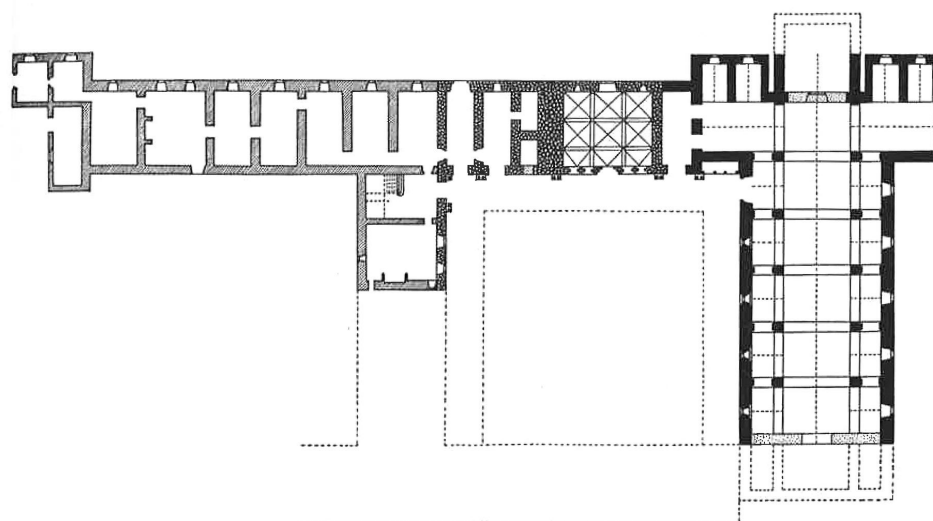


The Abbey of l'Escale-Dieu was founded in 1136 by Morimond, itself daughter of Cîteaux. In 1140, they moved of location on lands exempted of taxes by the neighbor lords. It was located downstream of high mountains which provide very clean water for the monastery. It grew rapidly and was already able to found others abbeys in Spain in 1141.

The construction started in 1143. In the church, the pillars of the nave are deprived of any ornamentation and without base, à l'antique. It is a sever architecture without any molding. The cloister was demolished to be sell in 1830.

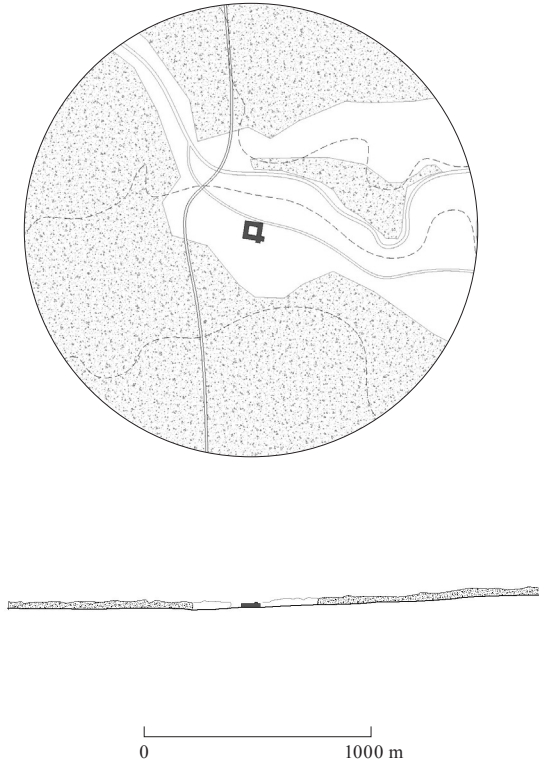
Ibid, 74-79.





Abbey of the Escale Dieu plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 79.

Abbey of Pontigny  
1150, 1114

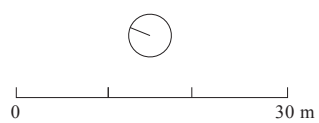
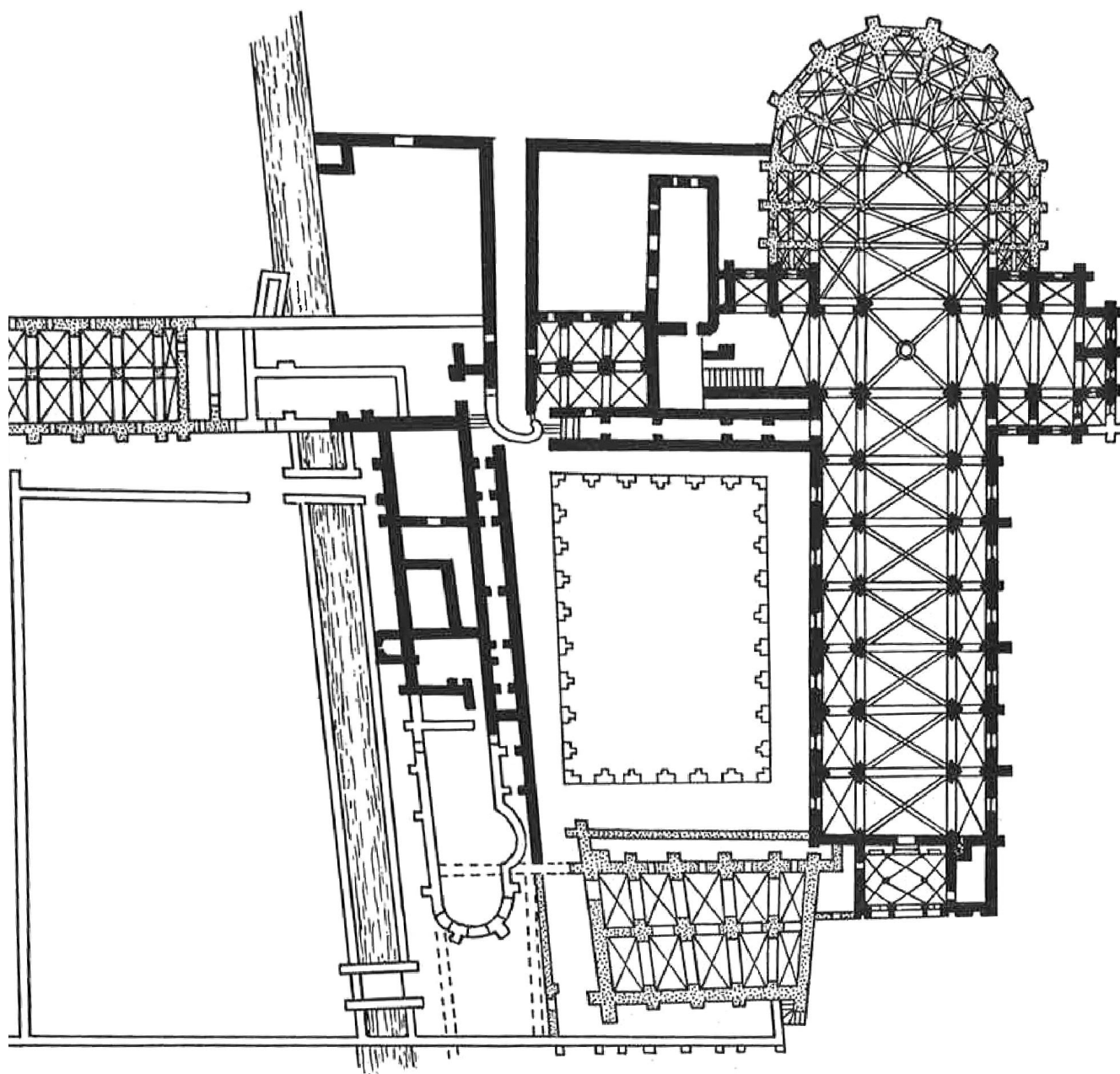


The Abbey of Pontigny was one of the first Cistercian foundation in 1114. It was the second daughter of Cîteaux. It settled in clearing in the middle of the wood. A few years later, it was able to found daughters in 1119. The count of Champagne Thibaut the Great did important donations to the abbey in such a way that the construction of the monastery started in 1150.

The church of Pontigny was finished at the end of the twelfth century. The chevet was planed rectangular according to the foundations, but unknown changes made it in circle using the new technics never employed before in the Cistercian construction. Besides this new technical elements, the style stayed very sober. It showed the evolution of their construction practices at the turn of the end of the century.

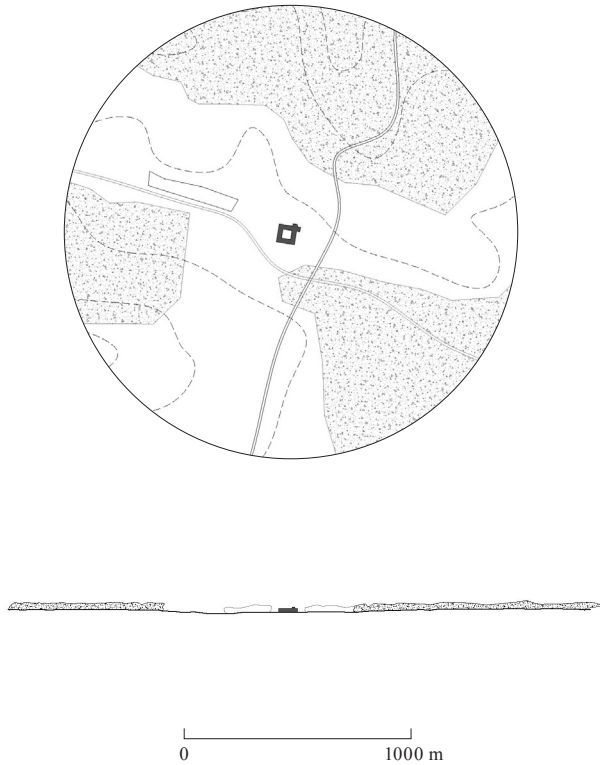
Ibid, 262-266

Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*, 189.



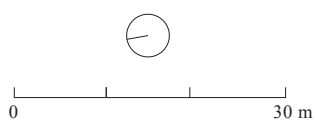
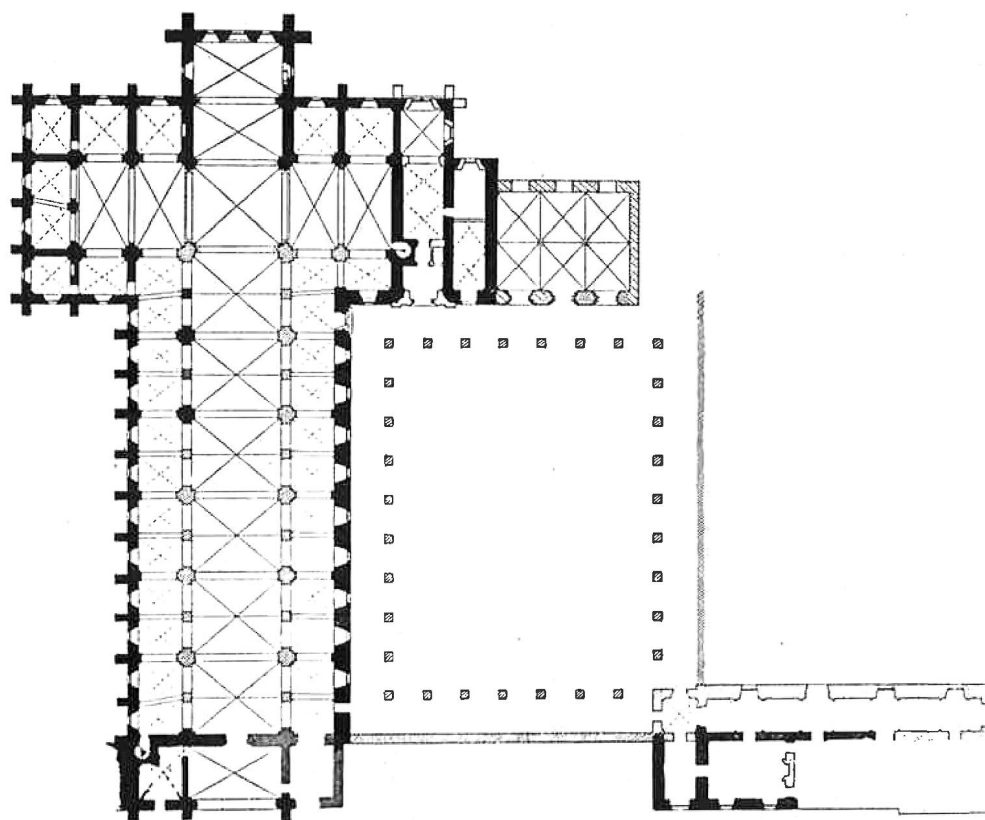
Abbey of Pontigny plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France, 70.*

Abbey of Preuilly  
1150, 1118



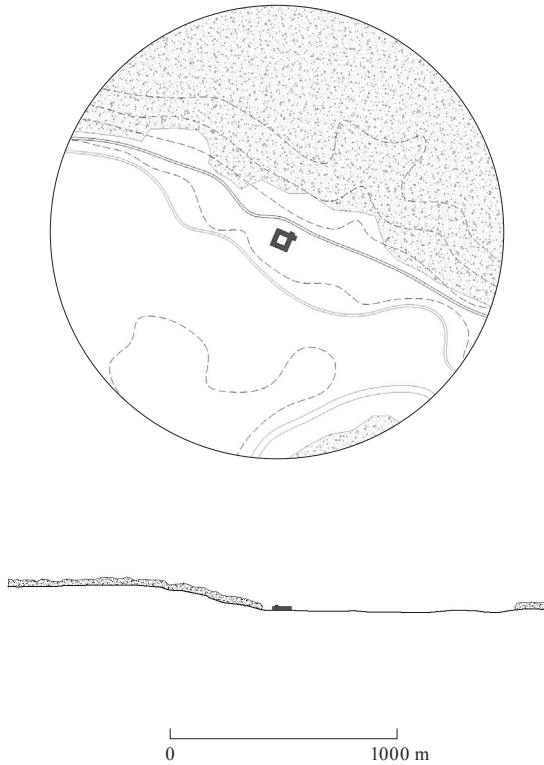
The Abbey of Preuilly was founded in 1118 as the fifth daughter of Cîteaux. The church was built in the second third of the twelfth century. The chevet of the church was surrounded like in Pontigny of a multiplicity of chapels which made the center of the church was very deep. Its mother abbey, Cîteaux, also needed more chapel because of the rise of the number of monks priests and use the plan of Preuilly as an example for its reconstruction after the death of Bernard de Clairvaux in 1154.

Ibid., 190.  
Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture* Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 189.



Abbey of Preuilly plan view. Drawn by Henry Faucheur, in Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*, 190.

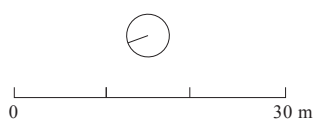
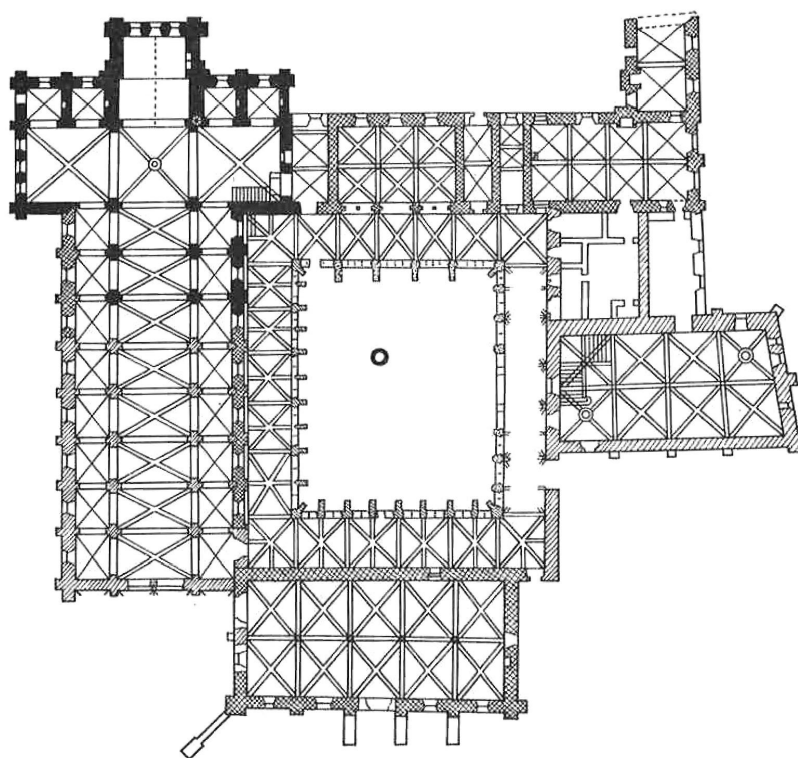
Abbey of Noirlac  
1150,1136



The Abbey of Noirlac was founded in 1136 by Clairvaux. It was located in a busy location near a village, on a Roman road and along the Cher, a main French water transportation axes. The monks had very difficult beginning, and had to accept help in 1149. They received wheat from other abbeys.

After da series of donations from the lords around, the abbey regained wealth and the construction of the monastery started in 1150. The church possessed square apses, the plan followed the type even if the cloister was slightly rectangular to fit the size of the church composed of eight bays.

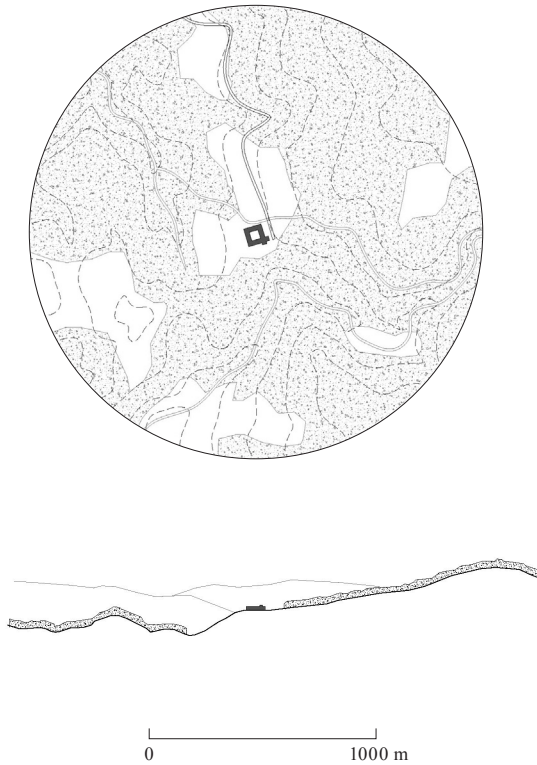
Ibid., 254-260.



Abbey of Noirlac plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France*, 261.



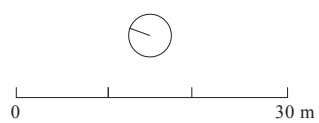
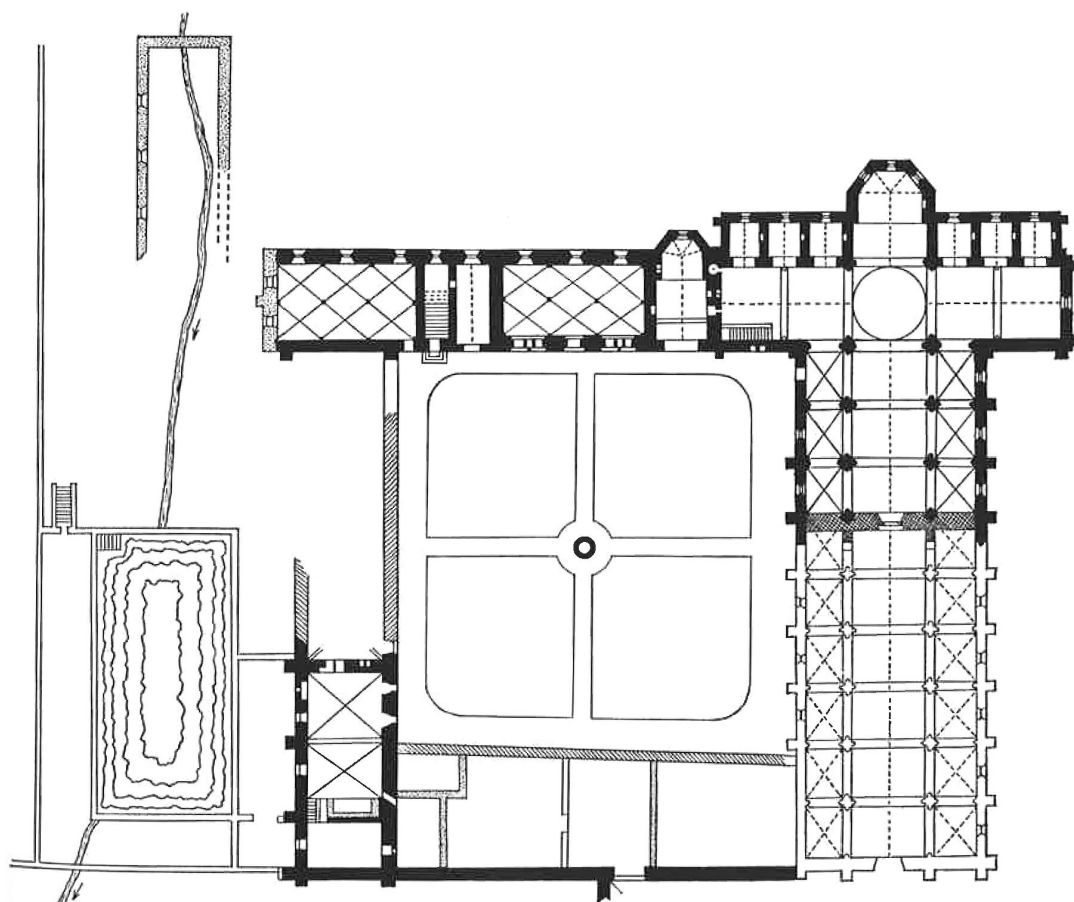
Abbey of Obazine  
1156, 1142



The Abbey of Obazine was founded in 1142. The site is situated on wooden hills. Two eremitic priests were joined by disciples at the beginning of the twelfth century. They founded the monastery in 1142, and joined the Cistercian order in 1148. There was so many monks joining the monastery that the well water dried. Obazine had to found daughters to spread the numbers of its monks. Natural conditions were a limiting factor for the scale of abbeys.

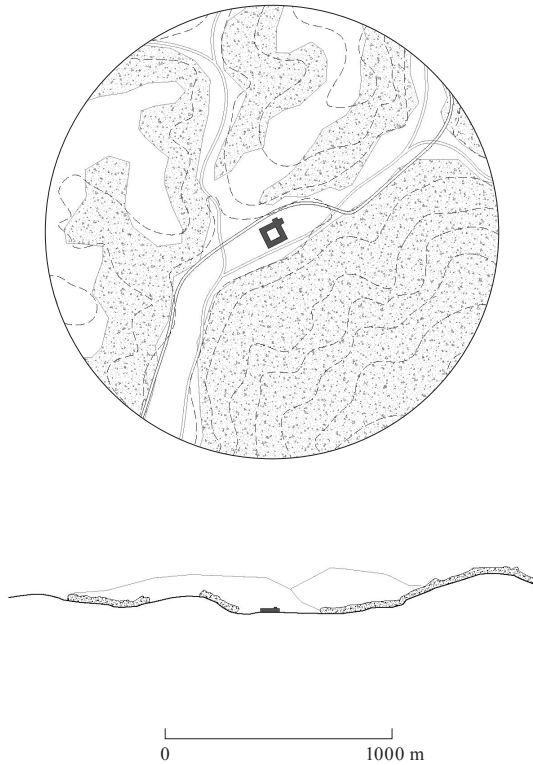
The monastery was built in 1156. The refectory had a rare parallel position along the cloister because of the strong declivity of the parcel.

Ibid., 177-182



Abbey of Obazine plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France*, 182.

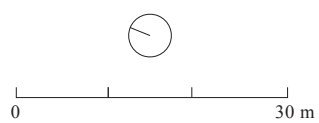
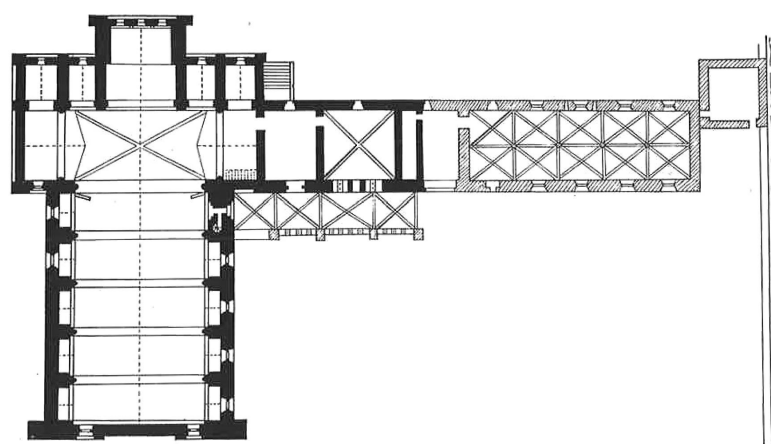
Abbey of Sylvanès  
1157, 1136



The Abbey of Sylvanès was founded in 1136 by Mazan, a daughter of Bonnevaux, itself daughter of Cîteaux. It was located in a narrow valley to replace an hermitage that was growing. The thermal water of the valley made it a busy passage, in 1151 the monks moved to settle upstream of the river.

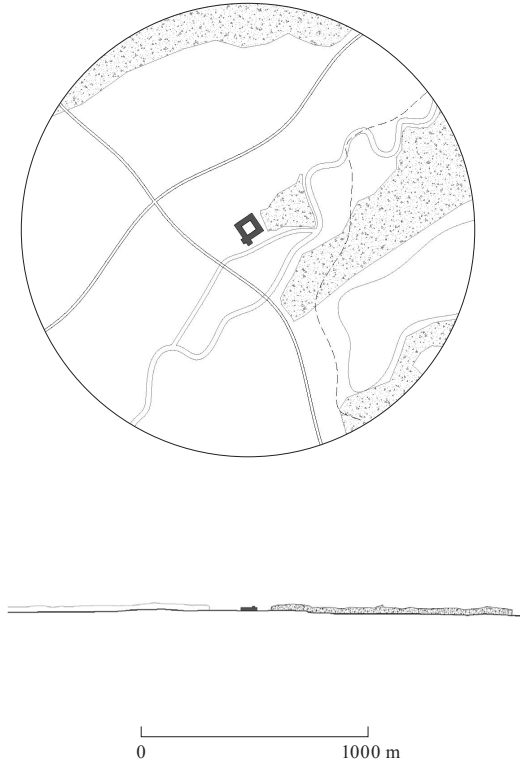
The construction of the abbey started in 1157. The monastery was built on an embankments to obtain a flat surface. The church was composed of one nave without any aisles. The spaces in between the massive pillars created a series of small chapels of one and a half meter deep.

Ibid., 142-148.



Abbey of Sylvanès plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France*, 148.

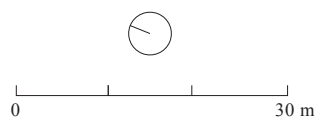
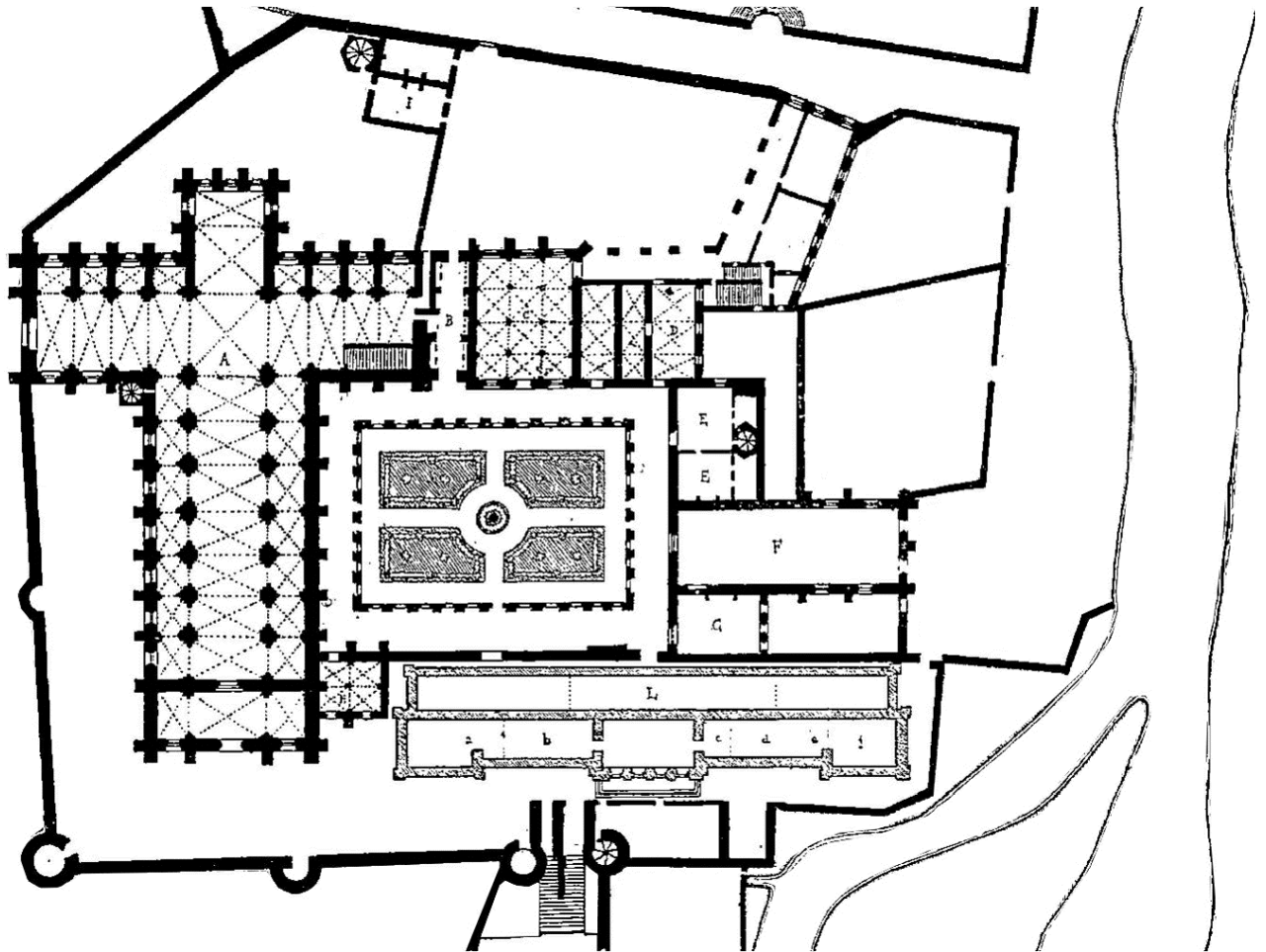
Abbey of la Ferté  
1158, 1113



The abbey of La Ferté was the first daughter of Cîteaux in 1113. In a symbolic way, it was the moment when the New Monastery of Cîteaux began to be an order, since it thereby had to oversee this abbey.

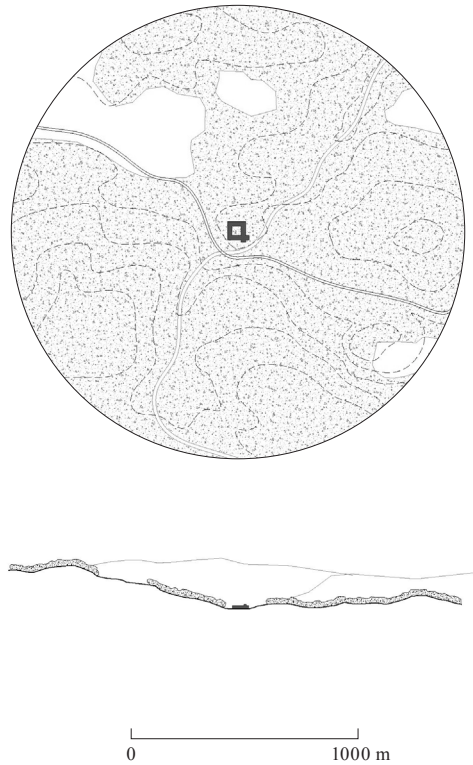
The decision create a new abbey was impulse by the bishop of the region who refused that Cîteaux stoped welcoming new monks, to do so he found lords willing to give lands to root this new monastery. The abbey is constructed according the Bernardine plan in 1158.

Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*, 8,62.



Abbey of la Ferté plan view. Drawn by Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*, 112.

Abbey of le Thoronet  
1160, 1136

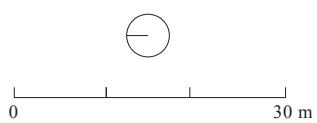
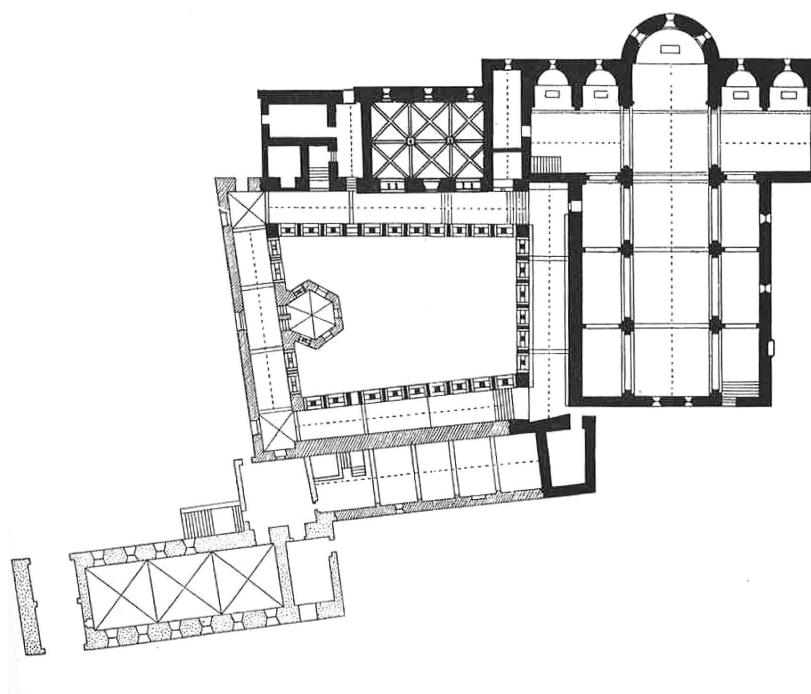


The Abbey of le Thoronet was founded in 1136 by Mazan, a daughter of Bonnevaux, itself daughter of Cîteaux. It was a very hardly accessible location. The monastery was located at Florielle at the beginning and moved several years after the foundation at the actual place of Le Thoronet.

The construction of the Thoronet started in 1160. Its architecture is cloth to the one of Sénanaque also daughter of Mazan from Bonnevaux from Cîteaux. The ornamentation was reduced to its more simple expression. The absides were round, with quarter-sphere vault. This did not correspond to the Bernardine plan that avoid any circular shape. The cloister of the thoronet was constructed with a trapezoidal shape and possessed stairs since it was not flat because of the declivity of the plot.

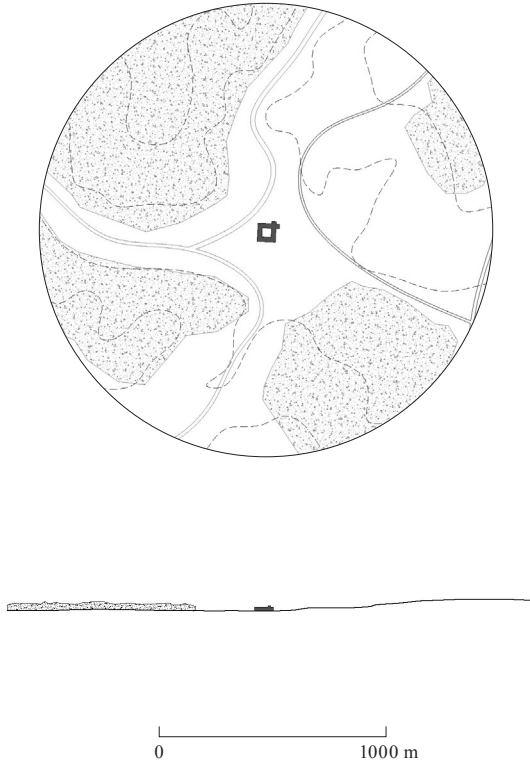
Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean  
Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*,  
184-190





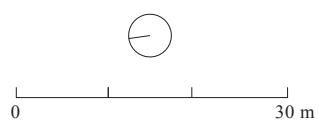
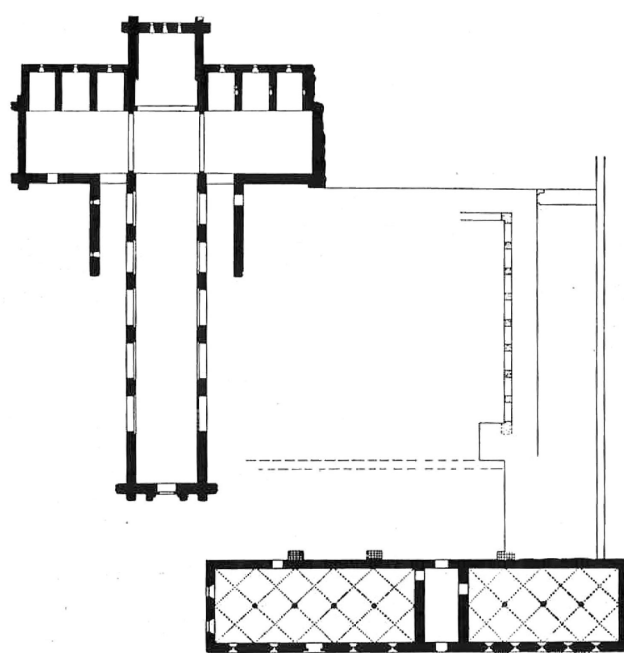
Abbey of the Thoronet plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 289.

Abbey of Clermont  
1160, 1152



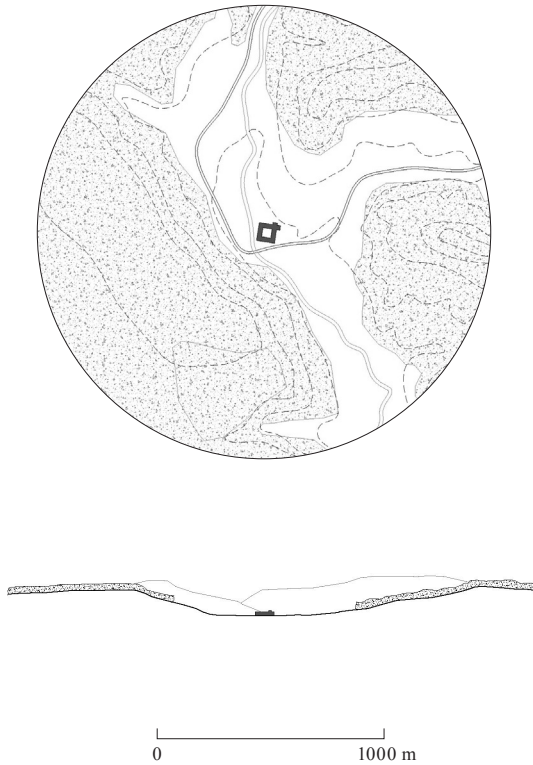
The Abbey of Clermont was one of the last foundation of Bernard de Clairvaux in 1152. The plan was exactly following the Bernardine type with flat absides and and the particular alley of the conversi. It was an exportation of a typical plan of Burgundy region in the west of France, where this architecture was not yet developed. Nevertheless it the architecture was still a mixed of craftsmanship, the covering was made with a wooden carpentry. It express how type and regionalism gave new building. The church was even more radically stripped of any ornamentation that the Provençal abbeys.

Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean  
Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*,  
42-65



Abbey of Clermont plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France*, 64.

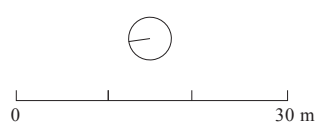
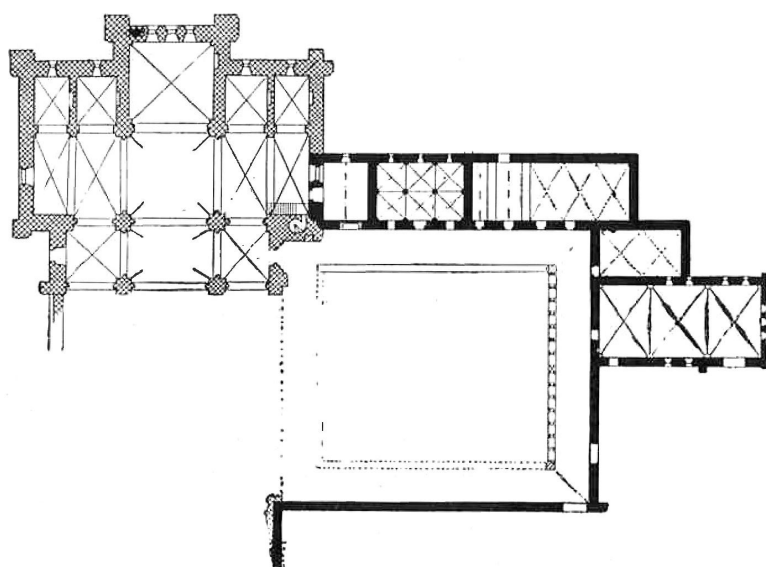
Abbey of Villongue  
1165, 1150



The Abbey of Villelongue was founded in 1150 by Bonnefont, daughter of Moriomd. It was situated in the middle of a relatively large valley along a river stream. The monks moved and the abbey was constructed in 1165, it particularly the church built after the common room. The disorder in the construction planning might be explain by the relocation.

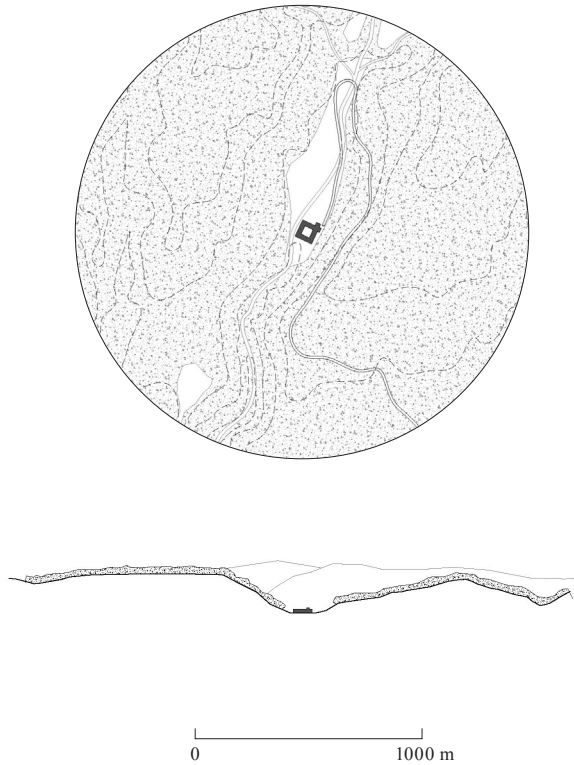
The shape of the church underline the bernardine plan persistence, with the flat absides, even after his death. The stairs to the bell tower and the night stairs interlocked, it showed the ability of the Cistercian builders to manage precisely their plan.

Ibid., 262-266



Abbey of Villelongue plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 165.

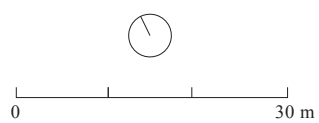
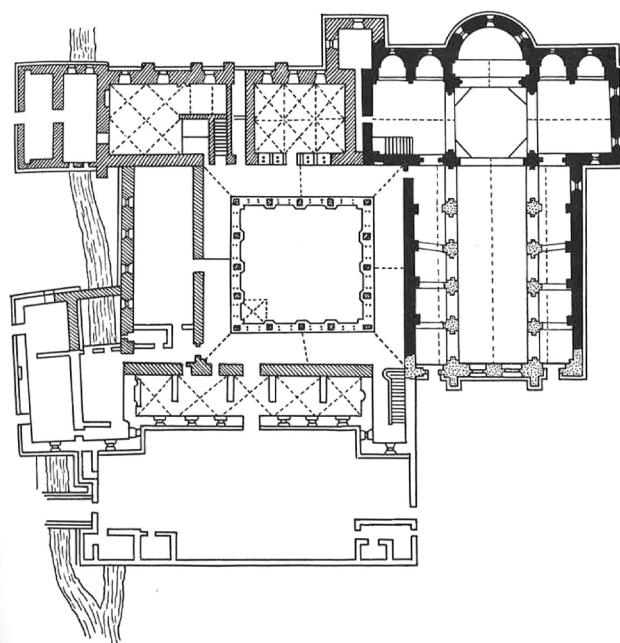
Abbey of Sénanque  
1169, 1148



The Abbey of Sénanque was founded in 1148 by Mazan, a daughter of Bonnevaux, itself daughter of Cîteaux. It was situated in a steep valley and difficult to access. The abbey was protected by the most powerful houses of Provence.

The abbey presents a lot of resemblance with the abbey of Silvacane and the Thoronet. They are called the three Provençal sisters. There was no entrance in the church for any exterior visitor. The remoteness of the abbey and the complete *clausura* express the firm will to be isolated. The church is not oriented, because of the narrowness of the valley, the church was constructed parallel to it and because of the river stream. The refectory was also parallel to the cloister, this very far composition was once again due to the morphology of the valley. The choir was crowned by a cupola, the barrel vault does not go until the choir as the type plan recommends. This cupola was already a drift from an austere architecture. The cloister was way more ornamented than the church showing a gradient of interiority in between the spaces.

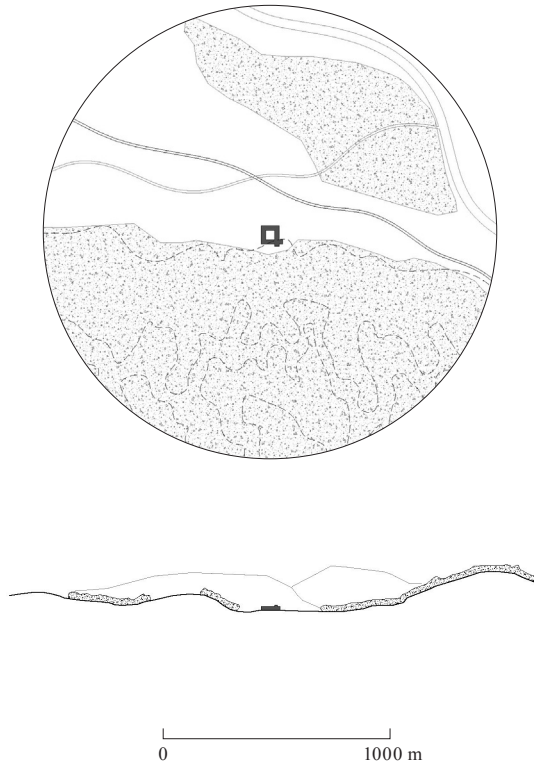
Ibid, 132-139.



Abbey of Sénanque plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 138.



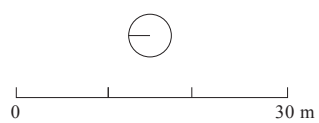
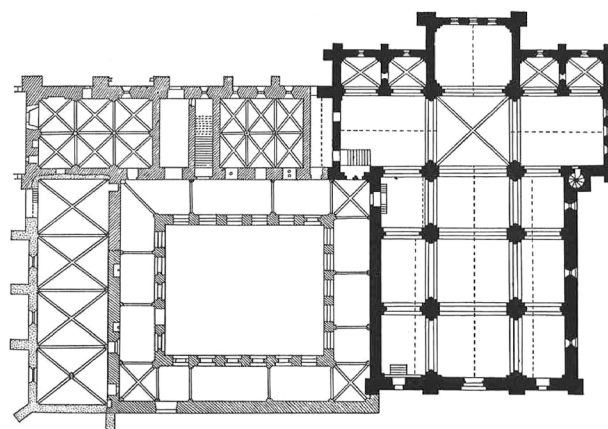
Abbey of Silvacane  
1175, 1144



The Abbey of Silvacane was affiliate to Morimond in 1144. It was situated on the top of a hill, in the middle of the valley of the Durance, a main French river stream. The abbey was not hided as usual but exposed and visible from afar. The site was originally occupied by two lay brethren. They helped the travelers to cross the river stream and gave them hospitality. Since the community was growing with new disciples, they decided to join the Cistercian.

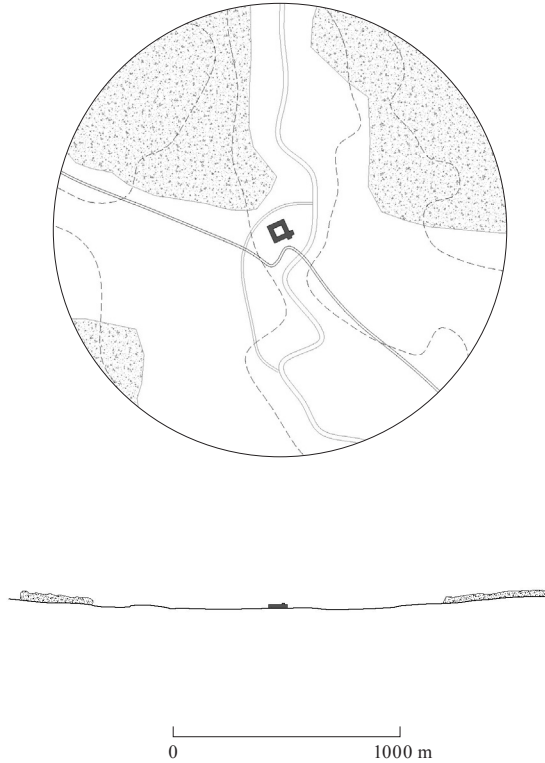
The construction started in 1175 on a steep plot. The different part of the abbey are not at the same level. This lack of space imposed the construction of a refectory parallel to the cloister. Even if constructed after the death of Bernard de Clairvaux, the proportion and the geometry of the church were striking by their fidelity to the Bernardine plan.

Ibid., 132-139



Abbey of Silvacane plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France*, 138.

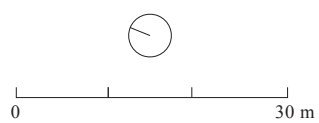
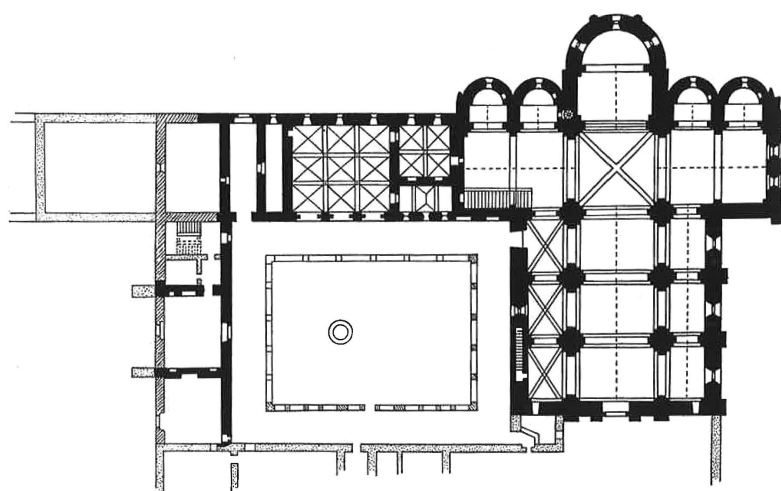
Abbey of Flaran  
1180, 1151



The Abbey of Flaran was a foundation of l'Escaie-Dieu, daughter of Morimond. The abbey was located on a peninsula shaped by the monks themselves. The monks destroyed an old church to settle on it. The territory of the abbey enlarged with the donation of lords that joined the monastery as monks. It was carefully protected by the papacy, the Pope excommunicated a local lord after he attacked by the abbey.

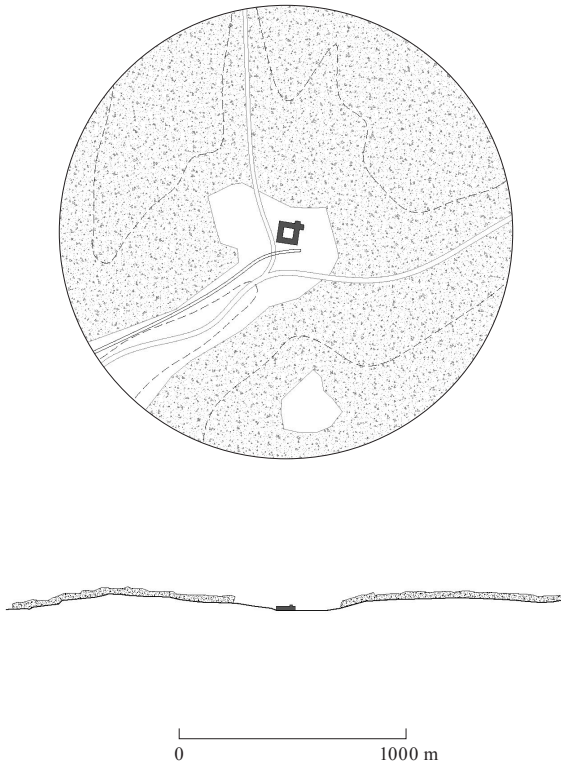
The construction started in 1180. The church was very small, wider than deep. Its late construction in the century explained the circular shape of the absides and the luxury of the colored marble used for the chapter. It possessed a particularity with its amarium. Used to store the books, it was usually only an alcove, in Flaran, it was a room covered by a vault.

Ibid., 306- 312



Abbey of Flaran plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher,  
*L'art cistercien: France*, 310.

Abbey of Aiguebelle  
End of the XIIth, 1137

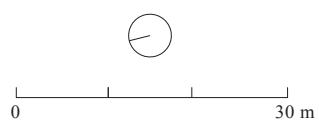
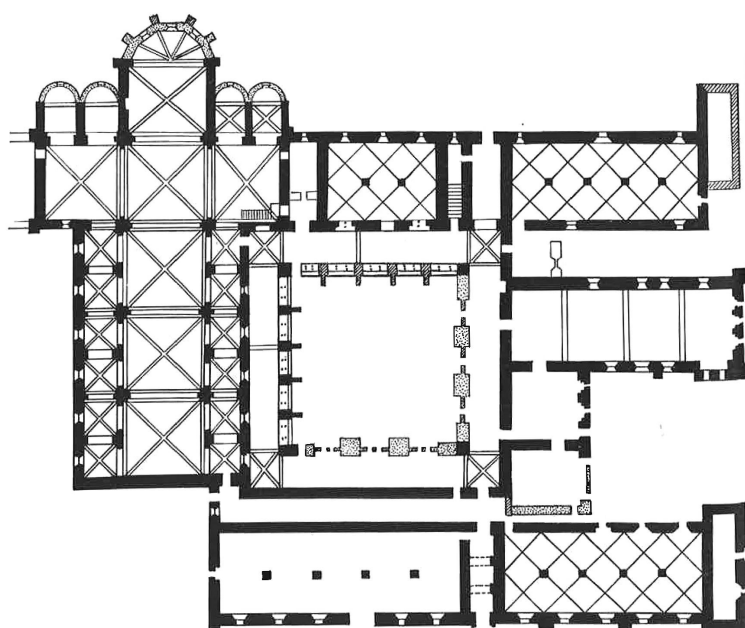


The abbey of Aiguebelle was founded by Morimond in 1137, after the request from the lord of the lands to create this new monastery. It is situated at the crossing of three river stream. A lot of water flowed and was used as a resource, *aqua bella* mean beautiful water. In 1160 the lord of the land allowed the monks to exploit his land without any taxes. The abbey became very prosper.

The construction of the abbey started at the end of the twelfth century. It is one of the only place where the alley of the *conversi* still exist. The plan of the abbey is almost identical to the Bernardine plan.

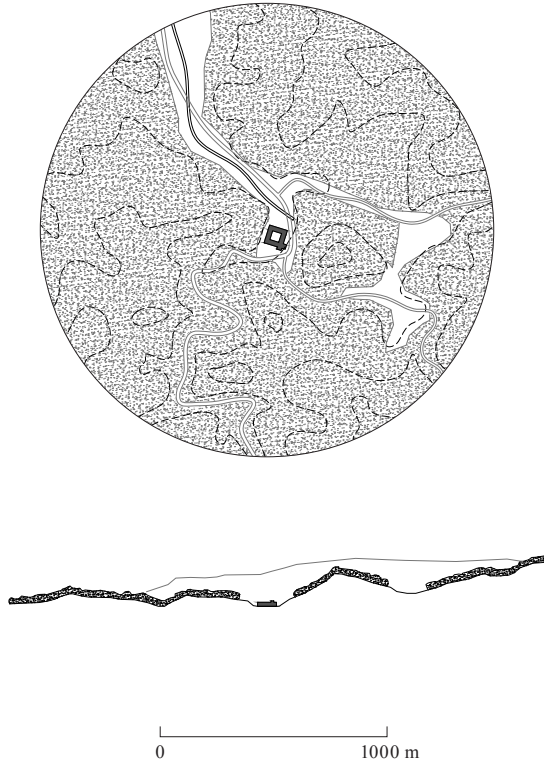
Ibid., 220-226

Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France I*, 209



Abbey of Aiguebelle plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 225.

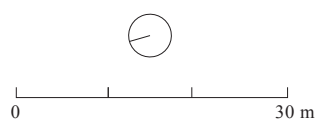
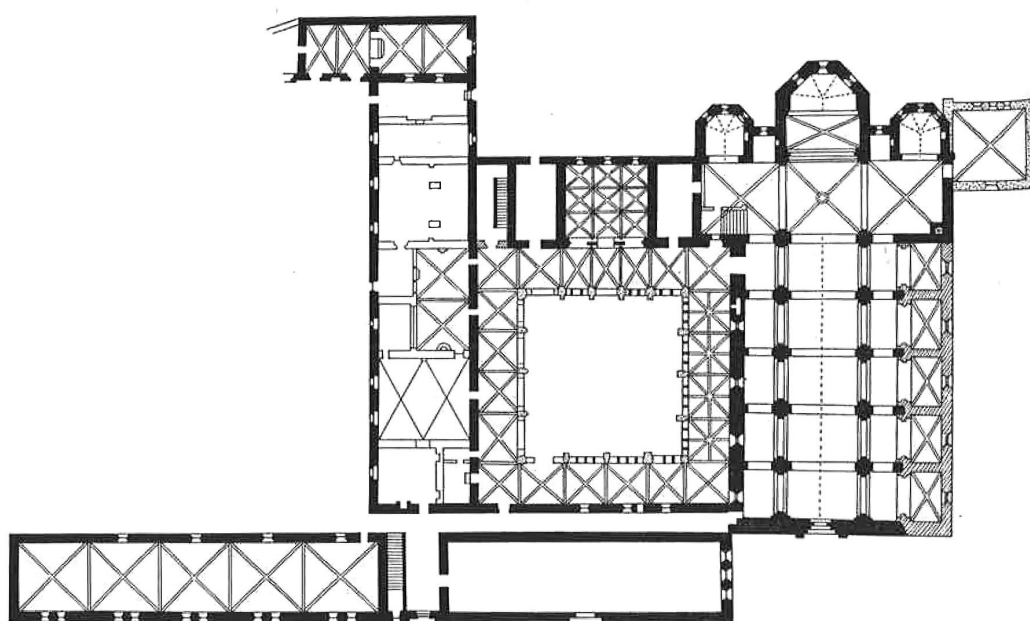
Abbey of Fontfroide  
End of the XIIth, 1093



The Abbey of Fonfroide was founded before the creation of Cîteaux in 1093 and joined the Cistercian order as the filiation of Clairveaux in 1146, when Bernard was very influent. It was located along a small river stream that overflow randomly and created a lot of damages

The construction of the abbey started at the end of the twelfth century. The church had the particularity to be very narrow and high. It was unusual for this time. The refectory is parallel to the cloister. If some monastery were justifying this orientation by a lack of place, in Fonfroide there is no apparent argument for such an orientation. The building of the monks is stretched until the river to located the latrine above the stream to avoid any additional cleaning work.

Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean  
Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*,  
228-243.



Abbey of Fontfroide plan view. Drawn by Marie-Anselme Dimier and Jean Porcher, *L'art cistercien: France*, 243.



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This paper is part of a research project on *Domesticity* within the TPOD laboratory consisting of the following Theoretical Statements:

*Beyond the Closet*, Klea Ott

*Staging Movement*, Ada Massarente

*Destination Home*, Vanesa Santillan Messina

*First Struggle Then Housing*, Antoine Ricard-Gauthier

*Pretending to Take the Country's Side*, Karl-August Valfells

*Housewifization*, Meryl Louise Barthe

*Round Table*, Jian Lin Wong

*Persistent Community*, Melchior Dechancé

*Room for Women*, Camyl Vigheault

*From Hard to Soft*, Julie-Anna Barès

*Factory of Lives*, Serena Mazzetti



