PETER THE VENERABLE AND SECULAR FRIENDSHIP

It was the summer of 1133. In a gesture of filial loyalty the abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable (r. 1122-56), wrote his spiritual father Pope Innocent II to promise whatever aid and succour he could provide. The letter, one of Peter’s earliest to him, likely received a warm welcome as Innocent was embroiled in a struggle with Anacletus II for control of the papacy and of Rome. 1 Innocent had been able to retake parts of the papal city with the help of “that friend of justice” Lothar III of Germany, who was making motions to leave after being crowned emperor. 2 The loss of his troops would have left Innocent unsupported against Anacletus’ allies and Peter the Venerable pledged aid in response to this threat in three forms: his own diplomatic efforts, the resources of Cluniac monasteries (the ecclesia cluniacensis) and the assistance of the ‘friends of Cluny’. About this latter group he promises:

As much as I can, whether by talk or text, by command, flattery or threat, I do not hesitate to subject to the feet of Your Majesty, through myself and through others, anyone – kings or princes, nobles or base-born, the great or the meek – who is joined to myself and to the ecclesia cluniacensis in any sort of friendship. 3

Peter does not elaborate on the specifics of this aid, but he seems to suggest that a multitude of the laity were readying themselves to serve under Innocent II. One might wonder if this was an impressive sounding but ultimately empty statement of Peter’s personal support. Innocent, however, would have understood Peter’s words as a clear reference to an informal network of secular elites bound to Peter and to Cluny through ties of political friendship (amicitia).

Later in the letter, Peter assumes Innocent’s familiarity with the discourse of political friendship by equating friends with political allies and highlighting the importance of their loyalty in a time when enemies abound. He reminds Innocent of Solomon’s injunction, “May you have many friends” (Eccli.

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1 Peter the Venerable and most of his monks were staunch supporters of and at times propagandists for Innocent II; on this, see Mary Stoll, The Jewish Pope: Ideology and Politics in the Papal Schism of 1130 (Leiden – New York: Brill, 1987), p. 21-44 for the role of Cluny and p. xii – xvii, 1-9 for an excellent summary of historiography on the schism.
2 The Vita Norberti archiepiscopi Madgeburgensis gives Lothar a long list of praiseworthy titles: Lotarius imperator timens Deum, strenuus belli doctor, praecipuus in armis, providus in consilio terribilis inimicis Dei, iuusticiæ socius, inimicus iniuiciæ; edited in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, vol. 12, ed. Roger Wilmans (Hannover: 1856), p. 663-706, here p. 702. This anonymous text was likely composed soon after Norbert’s death in 1134 by an individual who had participated in the Roman campaign.
3 Peter the Venerable, The Letters of Peter the Venerable, ed. Giles Constable, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Princeton University Press, 1967), here vol. I, p. 132, ep. 39; Quoscumque michi et Cluniacensi aeclesiae qualibet amicitia iunctos, reges et principes, nobiles et ignobiles, magnos et pessidos agonui, hos maiestatis uestræ pedibus subdere per me ipsum uise per alios, loquendo, scribendo, mandando, terendo, mulcendo pro posse non distali. This work is hereafter abbreviated as Letters; all references will be to the first volume and all translations into English are my own, unless otherwise noted.
and then paraphrases it, “Do not ever think that you can have enough of them” – making his case as if Innocent might hesitate to accept his offer. And maybe Innocent did hesitate. His other great friend, Lothar, was abandoning him after receiving an imperial coronation and jurisdictional concessions. Perhaps Innocent was anxious about what more he would need to concede in order to get the support of these other ‘friends’. He knew that friendship by definition demanded reciprocity and perhaps the favours he would owe were too great for him to return.

In this study, I wish to explore what Peter and Innocent would have thought was being offered in this letter. What did it mean to be friends with Cluny? What purpose did they serve? And who benefited from this arrangement? As background to these questions, my study will first outline Peter the Venerable’s attitude towards secular society and his general thoughts on friendship, showing that Peter welcomed the laity into the cloister and that friendship – a discourse used by Peter predominantly with other monks and churchmen – was also a means to associate lay people with the Cluniac path. The mutual benefits of this form of association are illustrated through the examples of Peter’s interaction with Raoul I of Vermandois, Alfonso VII of Léon-Castille and Roger II of Sicily, in which offers of friendship show its potential to define and bind together prince, king and abbot.

**Peter the Venerable and Aristocratic Society**

Peter the Venerable claimed a special position for the monastery of Cluny as a celestial citadel and earthly paradise unsullied by contact with the mundane world, but during his abbacy the cloisters of the *ecclesia cluniacensis* were neither sealed to the outside world, nor opposed to the wealth of resources nobles controlled. Peter himself shows ambivalence towards aristocratic society, both appealing to its prestige and also decrying its potential to abuse its power. Understanding how Peter related to secular magnates helps us to understand how he positions himself with his secular friends.

Ever since George Duby’s study of Cluny’s place in the Mâconnais, it has been common to speak of the ties of its monks to Burgundian aristocrats. Barbara Rosenwein and others have convincingly argued that reciprocal exchanges between “the neighbours of St. Peter” and Cluniac monks made the boundary between the monastic and secular worlds porous from the time of Cluny’s foundation. Personal relationships between abbots, monks and lay nobles dominated how cloister and countryside related to

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4 Ibid., p. 133; *Recolte quod au Salomon: Amici sint tibi multi ... Et ideo numquam talibus uos satis abundare credatis*.

5 See for example, the glorification of Cluny in Peter’s *De miraculis*, book I, chapter 9; edited as *Petri Cluniacensis abbatis, De miraculis libri duo*, ed. Dominique Bouthillier, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis, 83 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988).


one another until the thirteenth-century. Abbots were chosen from the great aristocratic families linked to Cluny, and the monks predominantly came from the noble class.

Peter’s background and the public image he cultivated suggests that he was very typical in this respect. His monks widely acknowledged that Peter came from Cluny’s aristocratic network and highlighted this aspect when perpetuating his reputation and, later, his memory. A panegyric poem written and circulated during his lifetime, for example, asks Cluniac monks to revel in Peter’s noble heritage:

Celebrate and rejoice happy Cluniacs
for another Hugh in his mores was given to you.
Hugh was noble and born of powerful parents;
The ancestry of Peter’s forefathers also renders him preeminent.
Hugh, whom Gaul worshiped and venerated above all,
shines with nobility from Lyons.
The dukes of the people of Auvergne,
that powerful nation born of the kings of Rome, begat Peter.

The author, Peter of Poitiers (who would later act as secretary and archivist for his abbot) identifies his abbot Peter with a past Cluniac abbot, Hugh of Semur (†1109), whose aristocratic origins and connection to the Capetian dynasty were well publicized in a series of vitae written after his canonization in 1120. Peter the Venerable, likewise, is presented as an aristocrat coming from the line of kings. The author glosses over, however, that his family, the Montboissiers, were of relatively secondary stature among the nobles of Auvergne. The claim to royal ancestry, it seems, marks an interest by the author in playing up Peter’s nobility; the comparison to Hugh buttresses by association Peter’s weak claims to nobles’ of Auvergne. Peter the Venerable himself must have approved of this characterization, since this description opens a poem which the abbot approved and later defended. This collusion of the two Peters suggests that family and noble stature were key parts of his public identity.

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10 Peter of Poitiers, Panegyricus, in Patrologia Latina (PL), J.P.L Migne, gen. ed. (Paris: 1844-64), vol. 189, col. 48-57, here 48, ll. 1-7; Plaudite, felices, hilarescite, Cluniacenses./ Redditet est vobis moribus alter Hugo./ Nobilis ille fuit, magnisque parentibus ortus./ Hunc quoque praeclarum reddit origo patrum./ Ille super cunctos, quos excolit ac veneratur/ Gallia Lugduni, nobilitate nitet./ Hunc Latiae gentes regum de stirpe potentes,/ Arverni parentibus ortus:/ Hunc quoque praeclarum reddit origo patrum./ Ille super cunctos, quos excolit ac veneratur/ Gallia Lugduni, nobilitate nitet./ Hunc Latiae gentes regum de stirpe potentes./ Arverni parentibus ortus:/ Hunc quoque praeclarum reddit origo patrum./ Ille super cunctos, quos excolit ac veneratur/ Gallia Lugduni, nobilitate nitet.
12 Constable notes that the Montboissiers of Peter’s generation, however, became the premier ecclesiastical family of southern Burgundy, Lyonnais and Auvergne – a key source of influence for expanding the family’s noble power in the twelfth century; Letters, II, p. 234.
13 We are certain that this poem circulated with some readership, because Peter the Venerable later wrote a poetic defence of it, Adversus calumniatores carminum sui Petri Pictaviensis defensio (PL 189, col. 1005-1017), after Peter of Poitier’s style apparently received criticism. This work and Peter of Poitiers’ Panegyricus deserve further study – no analysis of the two has
The Chronicle of Geoffroy of Vigeois, Hugh of Poitiers’ Chronicle of Vézelay and the late-medieval Chronicon cluniacense all highlight the aristocratic origins of Peter the Venerable in their brief comments on him, suggesting that the information was widely known and repeated, but chief among the texts commemorating Peter’s aristocratic background is the vita Petri Venerabilis, written during the abbacy of Stephen of Boulogne (r. 1161–73) by a Cluniac monk Raoul. This text outlines Peter’s life and provides a traditional catalogue of hagiographic features (e.g. his virtues, his miracles). Sprinkled within are subtle defences of Peter’s abbacy – the legitimacy of his election, the importance of his support for Innocent II, the utility of his monastic reforms – and the text also brings up Peter’s contact with secular society several times. It especially highlights how “emperors, kings and princes of the world loved Peter with pious affection, venerated and respected him, and cleaved to him as they would to a lord and father”.  

As the vita portrays it, Peter was one of these princes. Raoul bookends his description of Peter’s saintly acts with an account of his noble birth at the beginning and a record of his extended family in the end. The first bits of information about Peter are the names of his parents, Maurice and Raingard, whom Raoul identifies as nobles of Auvergne (now identified as members of the Monthoisier family). The advantages of this ancestry is highlighted immediately by the author. Raoul describes Peter as being specially chosen by St. Peter even before his birth – something revealed to his parents by the aforementioned abbot Hugh. While pregnant, Raingard had sought the blessing of the abbot Hugh of Semur, who told her that the baby was intended for the Cluniac cloister. That she was able and willing to get access to Hugh indicated to the audience that her family had ties to the Cluniac orbit and was important enough to merit the personal attention of its abbot. The final chapter of the vita makes the status of the family even more explicit, noting that his great-grandfather had founded a Cluniac dependency, his mother and father both ended their lives in Cluniac houses and his brothers were important ecclesiastical and secular lords. But while the vita Petri may have underscored Peter the Venerable’s aristocratic background, it certainly did not suggest that he was beholden to his kin or his class in any way.

Gregory Smith’s study of Peter the Venerable’s concept of violence indicates that Peter was very wary about the aristocracy’s negative potential. In contrast to the smooth picture of a functioning gift-exchange put forth by many historians of Cluny, Smith argues that the nobility was a group about whose influence and coercive force Peter disparaged. He repeatedly describes their behaviour to be base and violent, as in a letter (ca. 1146) to Pope Eugenius III:

appeared since Jean Leclercq’s brief comments on them in his Pierre le Vénérable, Figures Monastiques (Paris: Éditions de Fontenelle, 1946).


16 Raoul de Sully, Vita Petri Venerabilis, col. 17B.

17 Ibid., col. 28AB.

One is constantly fighting against another; nearly all of them sharpen their swords for mutual slaughter; brother conspires for the death of a brother, all members of the laity – whether lords of castles, knights of lesser distinction, burgers, or peasants – lament what the prophet of God once said to an evil king of Israel: “I saw all Israel scattered in the mountains like sheep who have no shepherd”. 19

This letter (like many others) dwells on a single theme: the combative and divisive nature of the aristocracy must be brought to obey the pacifying authority of the Church. What the “bad” aristocracy lacked was the mutual love and charity (so abundant among monks!) necessary to unite Christians and Christendom. The solution seemed clear to Peter. Lay magnates needed to be drawn even closer into the bosom of Cluny to be taught to practice its caritas.

As his monks expected, Peter the Venerable carefully fulfilled his abbatial duty to mediate the interaction of the world inside and outside the cloister. 20 Dominique Iogna-Prat has convincingly argued that he engaged even more directly with the laity than typical for previous abbots. Traditionally Cluniac ideology was disseminated to secular society through the gift-exchange cycle, which drew in not only the donor, but also his or her wider social network. A noble who entered Cluny as a monk, for example, would often make a donation of land at the time of his conversion, which would be agreed to by his wife and kin, would be witnessed by his friends and could involve the transfer of serfs to Cluniac authority. 21 Such exchanges were often recorded in written charters, which were both a legalistic record of the donation and a written statement of Cluniac eschatology addressed to a lay audience. As Sébastien Barret has shown, this written record was likely only one aspect of a larger oral and ritual display and such occasions of gift-giving or conversion provided an important opportunity for Cluniacs to involve a segment of secular society outside their walls. 22

Such exchanges continued during Peter’s abbacy and were supplemented by additional measures. 23 In Iogna-Prat’s judgement, Peter advanced a traditional Cluniac concern with providing monastic hospitality to an ever-increasing number of visitors. This influx of outsiders would have provided Peter and his monks with continuing opportunities to meet with lay persons. Peter also intervened with other churchmen, such as the pope, on behalf of a growing number of lay benefactors.

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21 Iogna-Prat, Order and Exclusion, p. 88-89.


23 The records of the exchanges during Peter’s abbacy are archived in Cluny’s cartularies. For charters dating to Peter’s abbacy, see Recueil des chartes de l’abbaye de Cluny, Auguste Bernard and Alexandre Bruel, eds., Collection de documents inédits sur l’histoire de France - Première série. Histoire politique, 6 vols (Paris: 1876-1903; rpt. Frankfurt/Main 1974), V, p. 310-538. These charters, and other Burgundian charters can now be accessed through the database, Chartae Burgundiae Medii Aevi, at www.artehis.cnrs.fr/BDD/BCMA/AccueilCBMA.html.
This privilege was also granted to the families of deceased benefactors, since death did not sever a connection with Cluny.  

Under Peter the Venerable, Cluny actively sought to engage outwardly. A feeling of responsibility for the whole Christian world very much underlies Peter the Venerable’s ideal of authorship, which allowed him to be a “silent preacher” without leaving the cloister. Iogna-Prat sees Peter’s theological treatises as the codification of a desire to consolidate Christian orthodoxy (and thus Christendom) in a Cluniac world-view demonizing the Jewish, Islamic and heretical ‘Others’. While this argument has been critiqued since the manuscripts of his treatises show little evidence for circulating outside the Cluniac orbit, Iogna-Prat persuasively makes the case that it was Peter’s intention.

Gillian Knight suggests an additional avenue for Peter to engage with the laity. She sees Peter’s letters (and later his letter collection) as a widely circulating means to spread Cluniac messages beyond the personal encounters in regional networks that Peter cultivated. Her studies largely focus on his correspondence with churchmen, but her conclusion seems to hold true for secular society as well. Of Peter’s seventy correspondents (as extant in his letter collection), thirteen are secular individuals, ranging in status from lawyers to kings. Many letters allowed Peter to speak directly to nobles outside his normal sphere of influence, such as the King of Jerusalem (ep. 82) or John Comnenus, the Byzantine Emperor (ep. 75). Others simply reinforced relationships which had already been established, such as his correspondence with the knight Hugh Catula or the lawyer Dulcian, whom Peter reminded about their unfulfilled vows to enter Cluny. Many more letters to laymen were likely written, but have since been lost.

Giles Constable first suggested that Peter saw letters as a privileged medium for the negotiation of friendship and this conclusion has been reiterated several times. What has not yet been explored, however, are his letters of friendship with those outside the institutional Church. As argued below, Peter’s letters to lay persons used the discourse of friendship to mediate his epistolary relationships – whether Peter had met his correspondents or not. They show that Peter counted some of the most influential kings and nobles of Europe as his so-called “friends”, whom he strove to draw into stronger association with Cluny. Before turning to these letters, however, it is necessary to briefly consider what ‘friendship’ meant to Peter the Venerable.

24 King Alfonso VII of Léon-Castille, discussed below, provides an example of cross-generational links. For a particularly ghoulish example of the perceived association between Cluny and donor after death, see Raoul de Sully’s story (Vita Petri Venerabilis, col. 25C) about an unnamed English knight who was visited by the spectre of King Henry of England. As Raoul tells it, Henry asked the knight to warn his “friend and father, Peter” that the monks of St. Pancras should not cease from saying prayers for his soul. Peter did so and was later visited by Henry’s ghost who thanked him for his intercession.


26 See for example the reviews in a special volume of Early Medieval Europe, in particular Isabelle Cochelin’s “Orders and Exclusions” Early Medieval Europe 13.4 (2005), pp. 395-403, here 397-98.


According to his *vita*, Peter the Venerable was beloved to all his monks and “won the affection of all”.30 He “loved the brothers with the innermost fervour of his heart” and “treated them as if his very self”.31 If we take Peter’s hagiographer at his word, many of his relationships with his monks could be considered friendships – in the modern sense of friendship as a private emotional bond between individuals. Unlike the modern variety, however, friendships among medieval aristocrats were often used as public expressions of alliance, or demonstrations of membership in a “co-operative union”.32 Lords would routinely enter into sworn friendships that were made concrete through rituals or, beginning in the twelfth century, through written contracts. These relationships were intended to ensure mutual support and to help realize common goals in a society lacking the complex network of institutions that permeates the political culture of current Western society.

While the equation of friendship and alliance was at the basis of medieval friendship practices, a long history of related customs and ideas had raised friendship into a secular and religious ideal by the twelfth century among Europe’s lay and clerical elites. Classical conceptions of civic virtue and Christian models of love had converged by Peter’s time to establish a lofty definition of friendship, adherence to which was a form of self-validation for those in power. By thinking and acting “friendly”, lords (both ecclesiastical and temporal) engaged in specific behavioural patterns and ways of feeling that differentiated them, as C. Stephen Jaeger has argued, and provided tangible proof of their “moral and class superiority”.33 Jaeger explains that this form of public “gesture” demanded a grounding in ‘real’ emotion and could not be empty ceremonial posturing, since to do so would reverse the prestige-giving effect. That is to say, a friendship seen as hypocritical would diminish the status of someone claiming prestige through it. As Jaeger argues, this definition of friendship was equally important in court or cloister.

As a son of the powerful Montboissier family, Peter the Venerable could hardly have avoided a familiarity with the political friendships that arose between lay aristocrats. Peter continued to be involved in the social and political world of his birth and well understood the bonds of co-operation underlying its order. His knowledge of aristocratic friendship, for example, can be seen clearly in a letter (ca. 1140) to his brother Pontius, then abbot of Vézelay.34 In it he decries Pontius’ lack of concern about their feuding brothers Heraclius, a provost of a college of secular canons in Lyons, and Eustache, a knight and aristocrat. These two had become locked in mutual conflict (*guerra*) of some unspecified nature which led Peter the Venerable to intervene and to establish a peaceful accord between them. “By my, I repeat *my*, effort, care and constant concern,” Peter stresses, “our brothers are now bound in friendship and perpetual alliance by unbreakable oaths”.35 This letter not only shows that Peter was well aware of aristocratic practices of friendship, but that he saw an important role for a churchman in defining, establishing and overseeing them.

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30 Raoul de Sully, *Vita Petri Venerabilis*, col. 19B; *omnia affectus in se provocaret*.
31 Ibid., col. 19B; *Dilegebat namque fraters intimo cordis fervore, et unamquamque quasi se ipsum*.
34 *Letters*, p. 232-33, ep. 91.
35 Ibid., p. 233; *Meo, meo inquam, studio, mea cura, mea inquietudine [...] Eracliumque et Eustachium germanos, sacramentis iniolabilibus in perpetuum foedus amicitiamque iuratos*. 
Peter the Venerable never dealt at any length with the subject of friendship nor does he differentiate whether there are modes of friendship suitable only to the religious or to the secular sphere. Lacking any explicit evidence of this distinction and since we only have indications of his thinking of the subject, we are forced to extrapolate a model of friendship with the laity from his comments to other monks, abbots and bishops. These hints are, however, suggestive of the general rules and responsibilities that Peter the Venerable saw as integral to “true” Christian friendship, and seem applicable to both the secular and sacred world. If Peter was speaking to outsiders with an intent to introduce his Cluniac ideology, presumably he could not say one thing to churchmen and another to the laity without being seen as hypocritical (and thus unworthy of respect and of “true” friendship).

For Peter, friendship was a Christian bond grounded in love and charity, which demanded the performance of specific duties (e.g. exchanging favours, reciprocating letters) to provide stability to what was a fluid relationship. Almost without fail, Peter’s letters to his friends emphasize the deep and abiding love between him and the recipient. Using language a modern reader would consider romantic, Peter yearns to speak with his many “beloveds” (carissime) and talks of friendship as a relationship which “knows only to love”. This love is imagined as a spiritual love, arising as it does from a soul’s recognition of a kindred spirit. By this Peter did not suggest the maxim that “likes attract”, but rather admitted that only pure and virtuous souls are able to perceive and sustain the unanimity (unanimitas) and accord (consensio) that must exist between friends. For this reason, Peter’s letters describe friends as sharing “a single heart” (simpex cor) or as “half my soul” (animae dimidium meae) and consider the bond of friendship to be “a love derived from a supernal love” (amor ille a superno amore diriuatus) or “a vestige of eternal love” (vestigium amoris eterni). Peter understood charity to be implicated in the experience of friendship and he expected friendship to act in the service of God and in pursuit of the good.

Peter’s explanatory framework for friendship was mystical, but we should be cautious about imagining that he naively imagined Christendom to be a society of friends. The bond of charity explained how friendship was possible between people in a world of sin, but did not provide an indication of how people would behave. How people made use of the possibilities which charity/friendship granted, defined what kind of persons they were and determined their reward in the afterlife. In this sense, therefore, Peter views friendship as the product of Christian free will: the possibility for friendship is divinely mandated, but people must voluntarily subject themselves to its regimen. They did so, Peter

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36 I provide here only a brief summary of Peter’s thought on friendship, something more fully described in my article, “Thoughts on Friendship in the Letters of Peter the Venerable,” forthcoming in Revue Bénédictine.

37 Letters, p. 9, ep. 5; nichilque nisi diligere scirens.

38 Jaeger (Ennobling Love, p. 14-16) uses the term “non-libidal” desire to describe this bond. Though these letters are filled with declarations of love between men, I agree with Jaeger’s assertion that it is anachronistic to see such langu.

39 Letters, p. 11, ep. 5 (first three) and p. 176, ep. 55. The second quotation is a citation of Horace, Odes, I, iii, l. 8.

40 He criticizes Peter of Poitiers, for instance, for failing to consider the public good. “Never caring to reciprocate any return for our goodwill—what I call a salubrious right of friendship—you seem to live for yourself, to take care for your affairs, but to slight those of others and—what is even worse—of friends.” Letters, p. 49, ep. 26; [C]um te michi semper adhaerere debere, tam multus amor quo te amplexuere, quam multa utilitias quo te indigebam instanter commonerent subposita tanen uelle meum voluntati tuae, preaposui salutem tuam necessitati meae, praetuli oculum tuum negotios meis. Tu autem nullam hauc nostrae benevolentiae uecem reddere curans, quod salutu amicitiue privilegio dixerim, uidiers tibi uidere, tua curare, ea quae sunt aliorum et quod est deterius amicorum uilipendere.
believes, by following the obligations and performance of friendship. If friends act without fail, long established friendships would endure without end and into Heaven.

Many of Peter’s images emphasize the strength of his relationship with his dearest friends. It is an unbreakable cord, a chain and fetters he will never remove and an indestructible shackle. But with these same friends, he also uses metaphors underscoring friendship’s transitory nature. Friendship could be a rising and setting sun, finely aging wine, or a fire, sometimes burning bright, sometimes cooling to embers. This last metaphor – first used to warn Hato of Troyes about the necessity of a constant performance of friendship – is particularly evocative of how Peter views the inherent instability of friendship:

*The proof of love is a demonstration in works.* If there is a fire, it provides warmth. If it provides warmth, then it has not burned for long. If it has burned for some time, then soon it will burn itself out. In friendship, Peter suggests, constant attention is needed. It demands careful stoking and knowing when to add more fuel for the fire. If too much time is taken between demonstrations of friendship, he implies, the passion of friendship will die.

Peter’s includes a range of possibilities for what constitutes the necessary practices of friendship. They are generally conceived to be tangible favours (such as assistance in episcopal negotiations, judicial help, gifts of land, revenues, or memorial masses) and more immaterial support (such as discussion, debate, advice and consolation). These latter actions dominate Peter’s letters on friendship which seek to express the passion and emotion of his love through the written word. A letter to Hato describes this process:

You have the manner of a bellows, my beloved, whose breath [spíritus] causes dying embers to ignite and then to erupt into enormous flames. By writing often, as if constantly blowing like a bellows, your spirit (not the airy, but the divine spirit as I see it) labours to rekindle the fire of my heart (certainly not deadened towards you!), and it also struggles to recall to its customary wordiness the breath [vápor] of my speech long hooded in silence.

The good will and pleasant thoughts that arise following a demonstration of friendship leads to a specific way of feeling among strong friends. The more gifts are exchanged and the more love is expressed, the greater is the desire to reciprocate, and thus greater is the mutual bond between friends. Peter assimilates the terminology and theoretical obligations of amicítiá, therefore, to the medieval processes of gift-giving.

Peter gave friendship both a practical social role and an uplifting spiritual goal, and in understanding it as such, he paralleled contemporary twelfth-century models of friendship. In Peter’s

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41 See ep. 5, 14, 49, 55 and 108.
42 Letters, p. 10, ep. 5: Probatio dilectionis, exhibitio est operas. Si ignis est, calet. Si calet, non diu flammas continet. Si diu continuerit, mox ignis esse cessabit.
43 Letters, p. 223, ep. 86: Morem follies habes harissime, qui spíritu quo plenus est, emortuum fere scintillam ignescere, et in immensas quandoque flammas erumpere cogit. Sic spíritus tuus non ut ille aerius sed ut credo diuinus non quidem erga te emoruum ignem pectoris mei, sed diu silentio flando suscitare nittitur, et ad uerba solita reuocare molitur.
letters we see evidence of Jaeger’s idea that medieval Christian thinkers adhered to an idealized paradigm of friendship. Time and time again Peter differentiates between friends “in name” (also called “false friends” or “friends of Mammon”) and “true” or “sincere” friends. This latter type, which Peter the Venerable extols throughout his letters, is limited to the few who are capable of it. This is not to say that Peter restricts the theoretical potential for friendship to lay and ecclesiastical elites. He does admit that true friendship is conceptually possible between all Christians since God’s charity has infused them with the ability to love. But only the rare individual was perceived to submit—or were portrayed as adhering—to friendship’s demanding regimen.

Despite the abstract theoretical underpinning to Peter’s ideas, these ideas had a very concrete function. Key to understanding Peter’s depiction of “true” friendship is to be aware of its ability to establish social differentiation; his discussions and rules for how friends behave allow him to make distinctions in status between individuals. The praise or critique of a friendship was a means for Peter to reward or to humiliate and either was intended to encourage further positive interaction. With his ecclesiastical and monastic friends, Peter praised their gifts of dialogue, advice or love to fan the flames of friendship. With secular friends, Peter saw the exchange of favours in more material terms – the “love” was only real when backed up by donations or physical support for the Church. This difference, however, does not mean that Peter abandoned his uplifting ideal of spiritual friendship as a soul’s recognition of its like. Instead, Peter used his spiritual ideal for friendship as a way to further involve and implicate lay magnates in a Cluniac ideology already engrained through the gift-exchange common in the ecclesia cluniacensis.

Who these people were and why they became friends with Cluny show the political and social tool which Peter the Venerable viewed in friendship. He used the discourse of friendship to communicate a political theory for proper Christian governance and encouraged nobles to enter into associative friendships with Cluny (i.e. the monastic family and congregation of Cluny). I now turn to considering the nature of these relationships which bound Peter the Venerable in friendship with some of the most powerful figures of twelfth-century Christendom.

Secular Friendships

The picture we can recreate of the lay ‘friends of Cluny’ during Peter’s abbacy remains fragmentary – unsurprising given the factors hindering any reconstruction of this amorphous network. The primary difficulty is that friendship favours its negotiation through ephemeral displays of speech and gesture. Since.mediuves saw friendship more an emotional community than a juridical or institutional one (something which would have encouraged being recorded in written documentation), historians must rely on extant letters and charters which mention them in passing. Peter’s correspondence show that a wide range of persons – abbots and priors, bishops and clerics, kings and noblemen – were admitted into Peter the Venerable’s friendship circle. More than forty separate groups or individuals are explicitly named as friends; less than one fifth were lay persons. This number should not be used to estimate the number of his lay friendships, however, since the surviving letter collection does not provide a complete record but only a selection of letters designed to promote Peter’s prestige. Letters citing secular friendships, therefore, likely record only the most elite of his amicable associations.

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See ep. 6 and 49.
The number of the ‘friends of Cluny’ during Peter the Venerable’s abbacy was likely considerable. Monastic necrologies (lists of the deceased to be memorialized liturgically) suggest that a sizeable population of amici were linked with Cluny. 45 While the necrology of Cluny itself has been lost, the necrologies of other houses within the ecclesia cluniacensis accord the status of family or friend (familiares/amici nostrî) to a long list nobles and other lay persons within the Cluniac orbit. 46 The necrology of Marcigny-sur-Loire (where Peter’s mother Raingard ended her life) endows specific men and women in particular with the status of amicus noster/amica nostra alongside their names. 47 For example, a ‘Judith’ (Iulitta), likely the sister of Roger II of Sicily, is memorialized on March 30th as “our friend”. 48 Most individuals are singled out with these simple words; for others, the necrology adds, “an office must be performed”. 49 There is no clear correlation between special offices being said and friendship, however, since officium fiat is recorded far more often than whether an individual was an amicus/amica.

Beyond their names recorded in a book of memory, almost no details are known about these individuals’ relationships with Cluny. For some others we have slightly more evidence from Peter’s letters. King Sigard I, of Norway, is called “the most noble of kings and friend of our society” for his Christian rule, his protection of the Church and his unceasing war against the “enemies of Christ’s cross”. 49 Count Amadeus III of Savoy (†1148) is titled the “most beloved friend of ours” in a letter (1137/38) urging him to come to peace with his nephew King Louis VII of France, a title likely earned by the number of monasteries he patronized. 50 We can surmise how Sigard and Amadeus came by their status, but three other nobles, Raoul I of Vermandois, Alfonso VII of Léon-Castille and Roger II of Sicily, allow us to establish a more nuanced picture of Peter and his secular friends.

RAOUL I OF VERMANDOIS

Sometime after 1152, Peter wrote to all his monks in all the monasteries linked to Cluny in order to record his gratitude for a lifetime of good works done by Count Raoul (Radulphus) I of Vermundois, a member of the royal family and a royal seneschal. 51 The first part of this text retells how Count Raoul made one final grant of land and money as he lay dying, before bringing himself to the monastic community of Cluny. 52 The second part of the text draws on a source charter no longer extant elsewhere, outlining in detail the nature of Raoul’s gifts and how they were to be reciprocated with a host of Clunian prayers and masses. The document records a not unusual occurrence: the deathbed conversion (ad suceurendum) of one of Cluny’s patrons earned him liturgical remembrance as a full monk. What is atypical, however, was that Raoul also gained the title of magnus amicus et

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46 A composite recreation of the Cluniac necrology is provided in the side by side presentation of several necrologies edited in, Synopse der cluniacensischen Necrologien, ed. Joachim Wollasch, 2 vols., Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 39 (Münich: Wilhelm Fink, 1982).
48 Synopse der cluniacensischen Necrologien, p. 179; Iulitta amica nostra.
49 For all the specific notations of amicus/amica in the Cluniac necrologies, see appendix A (below).
51 Letters, p. 199, ep. 68; Nobilissimo principi et karissimo amico nostro domino Amedeo comiti et marchioni.
benefactor ("great friend and benefactor") of Cluny. Understanding why Peter chose to note this allows us to open a window on a social, political and religious relationship existing between a prominent abbot and a powerful noble.

From the first reference to Raoul as a “great friend” at the opening of Peter’s letter, we see that his relationship to Cluny is presented as a facet of Raoul’s identity as basic as his name, station and lineage:

I, brother Peter, the humble abbot of Cluny, make known the following matters to the reader: Count Raoul of Perrone, son of Hugh the Great who himself was the brother of Philip, king of the Franks, stands out as a great friend and benefactor of this, the Holy Cluniac Church, in which we desire to serve God omnipotent. After all his other good works done to appease God when hale and hearty, this man, when sick and at death’s door, added another great offering to his past ones.54

Peter admits a certain parallel between himself, who serves God, and Raoul, who strives to appease Him. This equivalence earns the count a place of respect within the Cluniac pantheon and necrology, as the document subsequently outlines. The reward for Raoul’s good works and his many gifts is spelled out in detail and the text enumerates how often and how many masses were to be said for his soul by each and every monk of the ecclesia cluniacensis. Beyond the expected services, however, Peter indicates that Raoul should be gifted with additional commemorations which are “rarely” granted and when offered are only done so to Cluny’s other great friends, namely kings and emperors.

A key to becoming a “great friend” was a proven history of benefaction: founding monasteries, granting revenues for their upkeep, or providing large lump sum payments of silver and gold to a Cluny increasingly desperate to meet its expenses.55 The characterization of a benefactor as a friend seems normal today, when the term commonly identifies financial donors to arts groups (e.g. friends of the orchestra) and at first glance, this connotation of friend seems typical for the medieval period as well. Though infrequently, Peter does use magnus amicus elsewhere to indicate Cluny’s most liberal benefactors – suggesting that this meaning was understood by his medieval readers. For example, Peter’s book of miracle stories retells a dream vision which outlines in quasi-juridical language the specifics of King Alfonso VI’s donations to Cluny and their reconfirmation by his successors. At the end of this story-charter, Peter notes that Alfonso VI († 1109) was known across Spain and France as a “great friend of the


56 For example, the organization, the Friends of the National Art Centre Orchestra (Ottawa), defines themselves thusly (http://www.friendsofnaco.ca; accessed April 22, 2009): “By statute, Friends of NACO is an Association; by membership, Friends is a community. Through events and activities, Friends is a space where music lovers meet, and come to embrace, share and develop a common passion. Founded at the same time as the NAC Orchestra some 40 years ago, Friends has been connecting music and people ever since.”
Cluniac church” due to his generosity. In a letter to Henry, Bishop of Winchester, Peter praises him and King Stephen of England for their continuous gifts. He describes them as one in whom “all the friends of the Cluniac flock, all its providers, and all its benefactors have come together” (likely ca. 1135) and as “standing out above all of Cluny’s friends and benefactors” (1135). But many benefactors did not earn the name amicus. The Empress Matilda, Stephen’s rival in claiming the crown of England, for example, was rewarded for her and her father’s generosity with liturgical commemoration identical to Raoul’s (ca. 1155), but was not called a friend.

If the title was unimportant, though, why did Peter emphasize that Raoul was a “great friend and benefactor” not once, but twice in this letter? As argued below, the examples of Alfonso VII and Roger II suggest that Peter does so because being a friend entails more than being a benefactor. Friends needed to meet Peter’s standard of true friendship, offering “more from the heart and less with the mouth, more through actions and less with words”. Though gifts were the means for powerful magnates to participate in and support the goals of the ecclesia cluniacensis, Peter portrayed these gifts as indications of a shared vision of Christian political order—since Cluny’s friendship could not be bought by lucre alone.

ALFONSO VII, KING-EMPEROR OF LÉON-CastiLLe

The implication of friendship with aristocratic gift-exchange is further illustrated by Peter the Venerable’s (and therefore Cluny’s) relationship with Alfonso VII (†1158), the grandson of Alfonso VI (whom Peter also called a “great friend of Cluny”). Following the death of Alfonso VI in 1109, the ties of Castilian magnates to the ecclesia cluniacensis had lessened and the frequency as well as the size of donations had decreased. Early on in his reign (September 7, 1132), however, Alfonso VII invested Cluny with the sizable gift of the venerable abbey of Sahagún (Sanctus Facundus). A charter records his rationale:

Divine providence allows emperors and kings to rise to the height of terrestrial kingship in order that they might supplement the poverty of the servants of God from their

57 De miraculis, I, 28, p. 91; Cluniacensis ecclesie magnus amicus. Like Raoul, Alfonso VI was commemorated in all the monasteries of Cluny and a directive sent by Abbot Hugh (†1109) refers to him as a fidelis amicus (Receuil des chartes, IV, n°. 3442). The list of liturgical services granted to Alfonso VI and Raoul I of Vermandois are identical.


59 Receuil des chartes, V, p. 532-33, n°. 4183.

60 The only other charter I have come across which used a similar expression, is a charter granted and recorded by Bishop Bernard of Saintes in 1149 to Geoffrey of Le Loroux, archbishop of Bordeaux, calling him an amicus … ecclesiae cluniacensis; ibid., V, p. 484, n°. 4139.


abundance and thus through the mercy which they disburse, they merit to receive an eternal crown after the temporal crown. 63

This grant granted formal juridical and financial authority over a monastery where Cluny had maintained a reforming presence since the time of Alfonso VI. 64 Ten years later a similar donation was made during Peter the Venerable’s journey to Spain in 1142, as evidenced by a charter (July 29, 1142) giving the monastery of San-Pedro-de-Cárdena to Cluny by Alfonso VII. It records an arrangement of reciprocity identical in nature between the spiritual authority of Cluny and the temporal power of the king-emperor of Léon-Castile:

The more someone is seen to abound greatly in riches and possessions, the more he should be very generous with what he possesses to churches and the true worshippers of God for the salvation of his soul, as indicated by the words of the Apostle, Do good to all, but especially to the servants of faith and those of Solomon, A man’s wealth is the redemption of his soul. 65

The religious preamble segues into a record of exchange common to Cluniac charters: lands and money for Cluny, prayers for Alfonso VII and his parents. Less than a year and a half later, Alfonso further strengthens the bond between himself and Cluny by repeating almost identical words and very similar conditions in a grant of the abbey of San-Vicente-de-Salamanca to Cluny (October 29, 1143).66 All these donations repeat the message that Alfonso shared a similar vision of Christian political society with Peter and with Cluny. 67 These texts all claim that the king made the donations because he already conceived of his obligations to the Church along these lines. Ostensibly it was Alfonso, not Peter, that requested such exchanges. This charter, like the one recording Raoul’s gifts, therefore contains both legal niceties, but also contains an ideological message of union between monastery and magnate.

The context for these grants, however, suggest the nuance of Peter’s relationship with Cluny’s secular friends. In the time between these two major donations Peter the Venerable speaks very favourably of Alfonso VII in a plaintive letter (mid-1143) to Innocent II:

63 Recueil des chartes, V, p. 390-91, n°. 4038; (dated September 7, 1132) Ad hoc divina providentia imperatones et reges terreni regni apicem conscendere permittit, ut servorum Dei de sua abundantia suppleant inopeam et sic per misericordiam quam impenderint, aeternam post temporem mercantur percipere coronam.


65 Recueil des chartes, V, p. 423-24, n°. 4072; (dated 29 July, 1142) Quanto divitiis et possessionibus habundantius quisque videtur affluere, tanto largius de his quе possidet et ecclesiis et servis Dei cultioribus pro salute animae suae debet impenderere, juxta illud Apostoli: Facite bonum ad omnes, maxime autem ad domesticos fidei, et illud Salomonis: Divitiæ viri redemptio animæ ipsius sunt.

66 Recueil des chartes, V, pp. 428-29, n°. 4076 (October 29, 1143).

Though the emperor of Spain, that great prince of the Christian people, a devoted son of your majesty, is very able and should be able to come before Your Piety, he has chosen me to come as a mediator and intercessor, since he is a friend and benefactor of the Cluniac Church extraordinary among today’s kings.68

On Alfonso’s behalf, Peter attempts to influence Innocent II’s judgement on the disputed election of the archbishopric of Compostela. He argues that Alfonso’s candidate, Bishop Berengar of Salamanca, was the most worthy candidate who should be allowed to take up his crosier. Peter begs for his pope’s favour, and requests that he respects justice, since Berengar was elected canonically and was a virtuous man, unlike the disputant who, as Peter describes it, was driven by lucre.

Given the timing of Alfonso’s grants to Cluny, it may appear that the grant of San-Pedro-de-Cárdena is a ‘down payment’ for Peter’s future intercession. Charles Bishko interprets Peter’s trip to Spain in this way – a result of Alfonso’s need to ensure that his man was installed as the ecclesiastical lord in an area where he was extending his influence but faced opposition.69 The use of the term amicus, however, cautions against seeing this exchange as some sort of simple trade of land for diplomacy. The term reminds Innocent that Alfonso VII had already shown himself well disposed to Cluny and its reform program, and that his forefathers ranked among Cluny’s supporters. Elsewhere, Peter’s letters to popes and bishops show that he often used a public declaration of friendship as a form of medieval character reference. To accept to be named or to name oneself as a friend of a man searching for an ecclesiastical position, was to vouch for his Christian nature and virtuous behaviour.70 By this statement, Peter makes the claim that he is not a hired gun for Alfonso, but rather an individual taking care for sake of common charity. And since Peter’s letter, buttressed by that of other prominent churchmen, convinced Innocent that Berengar was a worthy candidate, he must have been persuasive.71

From this episode, we glimpse how Peter subsumes Alfonso’s behaviour into the discourse of friendship. He portrays him to Innocent as one bound by the obligations of friendship and uses this image to persuade Innocent that Alfonso was acting in the interests of the Church. But Peter did not make an empty rhetorical claim. He had strong “proof of friendship” that Alfonso was a likeminded supporter of the Church. To be thought to accept Alfonso as friend for self-interest (thereby acting the “friend of Mammon”) would acknowledge Peter’s hypocrisy and would destroy his credibility, not only with Innocent, but with any learned audience of the letter.

ROGER II, KING OF SICILY

A letter (1139/1141) to “my lord and friend” Roger II, the king of Sicily (†1154) further suggests how gifts alone did not justify a rank among Cluny’s great friends.72 Peter the Venerable concedes that reports of Roger’s benevolent rule “first impelled me to love you and also urged me to admit you to the ranks of the greatest friends and benefactors of the Cluniac church, that is, the great Roman, French,

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68 Letters, p. 265, ep. 103; Imperator Hyspanus, magnus Christiani populi princeps, devotus maiestati vestrae filius, licet apud pietatem vestram multum possit et posse debeat, tamen quia inter modernos reges praecipuus amicus et benefactor Cluniacensis ecclesiae est, me ad praesens mediatores et apud vos intercessorem elegit.
70 See for example, ep. 79, 85, 89, and 166.
71 Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, also wrote to Innocent II in support of Berengar (see Bishko, “Peter the Venerable’s Journey to Spain,” pp. 172).
72 Letters, p. 230, ep. 90; domino et amicus Rogerio.
English and Spanish kings”. This praise of Roger is not unlike what was offered to Stephen, Alfonso or Raoul, and points to the origin of friendship in a common Christian outlook. But how is it that Roger became one of Cluny’s “great friends” when he had not made a single donation to Cluny? Roger, it should be remembered, had been an ardent supporter of the antipope Anacletus II, was excommunicated by Innocent II in April 1139 and had captured and imprisoned Innocent II a few months later. The transformation of Roger’s position reveals that Peter’s use of friendship was not just a reward for past behaviour, but also a prize to be offered when looking to the future.

Peter opens the letter declaring, “we embrace your Highness with the arms of true love, even if we have never laid eyes on your countenance.” He announces that he came to know about Roger’s sincere love for Cluny from the testimony of a Cluniac monk Geoffrey who was the prior of San Maria de Gimara, the only Cluniac house in Sicily and who was making overtures to Cluny on Roger’s behalf. The nature of Roger’s proposals are left unstated by Peter, but almost certainly they related to the truce forced on Innocent II by Roger (25 July, 1139). The letter is filled with praise for Roger’s peace-making and communicates Peter’s anxiety about the tenuousness of the current peace. This political alliance is likely the explanation for why Peter extends his friendship to Roger. Like with Alfonso VII, Peter welcomed this secular leader’s request for diplomacy as part of the cycle of friendship.

The letter’s central theme repeats the ideology recorded in Alfonso VII’s charters: God permits temporal kings to rule as His intermediaries so long as their power is marshalled to undertake the will of God. This Roger does, Peter praises, by creating a lasting peace in an area (Sicily, Apulia and Calabria) historically wracked by conflict and disorder. Roger is therefore an exemplar of Christian kingship which evokes Peter’s recognition of shared charity. Peter offers his friendship, the proof of which he then outlines in detail:

For this reason, already now for a long time I have proven myself a supplicant before God and a preacher to men out of concern for peace, for honour, for your salvation, and I have marshalled both my countrymen [nostris] and foreigners [alienis] to do the same. My conscience is witness to this, as is the Roman chancellor [Haimeric] and the lord Pope [Innocent II] himself, recognized in Pisa, Roma and throughout France. I often bring up your peace to him, with words spoken when together, with letters when apart. I have asked and urged him not to believe your enemies and the disturbers of your peace. This, though delayed for some time, has now finally had an effect. This delights us and all lovers of peace –namely, everyone who hears about this– and incites us to make demonstrations of thanks to God.

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73 Ibid., p. 231, ep. 90; Ista [...] ut inter magnos reges Romanos dico, Francos, Anglos, Hyspanos, maximos Cluniacensis aeclesiae amicos et benefactores, uos quoque admitterem coegerunt.
74 This house was founded by Roger’s sister Judith. For the charter of donation, see Recueil des chartes, V, pp. 165-171, no. 3815.
75 Letters, p. 231, ep. 90; Ea de causa iam ex multo tempore pro pace, pro honore, pro salute vestra et apud deum praeclaram, et apud hominum praedicatorum me constitui, et ad idem agendum tum de nostris quam de alienis quos potui attraxi. Testis est horum conscientia mea, testis Romanus cancellarius, testis et ipse dominus papa, quem Pisis quam Romae quem intra Gallias constuitatum, praesens urbis, absens litteris de pace vestra sepe conueni, et ne iminimis uestris nostram pacem eiusque perturbatoribus credere, et regnauit et monuisti. Quod licet diu dilatatum, sed nunc tandem ad effectum perductum, nos et omnes quicumque audire potuerunt pacis amatores laetificat, et ad gratiarum actiones deo persoluendas invitat.
The sincerity of his offer of friendship is demonstrated, Peter claims, by his longstanding diplomacy on Roger’s behalf. And Peter next verbalizes his expectation of a return for his benevolence. Future donations (or “demonstrations of thanks”) by Roger would rebalance Peter’s favour.

Peter’s letter, however, does not offer only a single tit-for-tat exchange, but a continuing relationship. He expresses his hope that Roger’s potential donations would allow the spread of Cluniac monasteries in his lands, which would, in turn, bring further returns to Roger in the form of social and religious solidarity. Peter suggests that increasing the number of Cluniac monks in Sicily would multiply the ardour for religion in Roger’s kingdom—a kingdom which once was a safe haven for the Saracens. Their example would establish the Christian unity, he argues, key to a firm loyalty to Roger’s Christian kingship. An allusion to the book of Sirach (4.10) reminds Roger about the political value of this strategy, since a king relying on his power alone “does not have someone to support him when he falls.”

By working for orthodoxy and by spreading word of Roger’s renown, Cluny’s monks and its friendship provided avenues for Roger to strengthen his kingdom. Through this exchange king and cloister would be bound together by ever tighter bonds of mutual support.

Peter’s letter can be viewed as an outline of the conditions for Peter/Cluny to support Roger in pursuing peace with Innocent. If Roger sincerely wanted a lasting peace with Innocent through Cluny, then he sincerely must want to be its friend. Peter implicitly demands that Roger adhere to what was expected of a friend and explicitly underlines that Roger could not be just a typical noble, but virtue incarnate, another Solomon, a fervent defender of the peace. Peter also enjoins Roger to engage in the exchange of benevolence (e.g. gifts) that characterized friendship. There is nothing particularly unique about this depiction, as Peter’s other letters demonstrate this presentation to be topical.

Recalling Odo of Cluny’s depiction of Gerald of Aurillac as a monkish warrior, Roger is glorified for his civilized Christian nature and his friendship with Cluny. The glorifying portrait is designed to aggrandize Roger, but also to communicate Peter’s civilizing message: support Cluny or risk being publicized as an uncharitable aristocrat.

The evidence from Roger II’s reign indicates that Peter was correct in identifying Roger’s deep concern for maintaining an image as a Christian leader. Hubert Houben’s study of Roger II shows that he laboured to enshrine and popularize an image of himself as a Christian ruler (i.e. governing in accordance with Christian ideas of justice, supporting the Church, encouraging Christian intellectuals) in art, architecture and literature. One example of this campaign is a history of his reign commissioned by Roger from a Benedictine abbot, Alexander of Telese (†1143), which praises Roger’s Christian majesty

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77 The practical tone of Peter’s argument is repeated in subsequent letters. The reciprocal role of king and Cluny is again explored in ep. 131 (Letters, p. 330-333) where Peter emphasizes the utility of donating to Cluny, where gifts will not be spent on the monks, but will be multiplied in direct charity. Peter unashamedly characterizes Cluny as playing an important role in the earthly world and acting as a treasury for all Christians (monks or otherwise).
76 Cf. ep. 75 to the Byzantine Emperor John Comnenus or ep. 82 to the King of Jerusalem. Peter addresses King Sigard of Norway in almost identical terms: “So greatly do you submit the pride of kings most affectionately to the sweet yoke of Christ ....” Letters, ep. 44, p. 141; Quadrat regium j baptism Christi trego affectuosissime subieceritis.
and emphasizes his extreme hatred for liars, hypocrites and flatterers. Such a concern with disseminating a popular conception of himself as above reproach is what Peter may have been appealing to with his offer of sincere friendship.

Perhaps Peter was also encouraged by the knowledge that the women in Roger’s life had already shown themselves to be important supporters of Cluny. Roger’s first wife Elvira was the daughter of Alfonso VI of León-Castille and may have played a role in urging Roger to link himself to a powerful monastery traditionally allied with her family. Judith, Roger’s sister, had already linked herself to Cluny by granting that the Sicilian monastery of San Maria de Gimmara be filled with Cluniac monks.

There is also no indication, however, that Roger ever responded favourably to Peter’s suggestions. The peace agreement between Innocent and Roger languished due to the opposition of Roman cardinals, and successive popes remained antagonistic to Roger. Nor do any letters from Roger survive to indicate whether Peter’s strategy was successful in binding him to Cluny. Peter did send two subsequent letters to him (the first dating from 1146 and the second from soon after) enjoining Roger to act in line with the model of kingship outlined in his initial letter in 1139. The 1146 letter implores Roger’s generosity and outlines a king’s responsibility to dispense his largesse to the poor brothers of Cluny. The second enjoins Roger to reach a peace with the Emperor Conrad III and offers himself as a mediator. That Peter could ask or offer such services hints at a continued relationship between Roger and Cluny, whether real or claimed. While the first letter no longer makes mention of Roger as a friend, the second remarks that Cluny still commemorated Roger alongside its other “friends and benefactors”, allowing him to continue to make requests, long after Cluny’s initial utility for Roger had faded into the past.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I return to Peter’s offer of assistance to Innocent II. Peter’s letter did not bring with it the necessary martial force to sustain Innocent in Rome. In fact, nobody came to help and soon after receiving Peter’s letter, he fled Rome for northern Italy – then traveling onto France – where secular and ecclesiastical lords, of whom Peter was one, sheltered and aided him. If we are to trust the *Vita Petri Venerabilis*, however, Peter is the hero of the story. In this account, Peter had himself raced to Rome, bringing horses with him to ferry Innocent to France. Not only did Peter shepherd Innocent to Cluny, but he then welcomed and celebrated him with such solemnity that, according to the author Raoul, the rest of the Gallican Church immediately recognized Innocent as the rightful claimant. In turn, a love for Peter compelled the French king, and then the kings of England, Spain and Germany to follow suit and to ensure unity throughout Christendom.

Peter the Venerable was indisputably a key supporter and propagandist on Innocent’s behalf, but Raoul’s depiction almost comically overemphasizes Peter’s role and the influence he had over the lay

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84 _Letters_, p. 394-5, ep. 162.

85 *Vita Petri Venerabilis*, col. 20.

86 Ibid., col. 21A.
supporters of Cluny. Innocent II, though elected irregularly and only rarely in Rome, did succeed in
becoming the universally recognized claimant to the papacy largely because of his superior ability at
controlling public opinion. Ultimately it was not lances or swords which settled the papal schism, but
the protracted negotiations between the various camps, the successful propaganda campaigns waged by
Innocent’s supporters and the death of Anacletus II. The ‘soft power’ wielded by Peter the Venerable,
and others like him, succeeded in breaking the impasse and unifying the Roman Church under a single
pontiff. This was the point of Peter’s and Cluny’s friendships: to help overcome divisiveness and to
associate everybody under Christian harmonious accord.

Appendix A. Friend citations in the Cluniac Necrologies†

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<td>19.4</td>
<td>Gila amica</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<td>20.4</td>
<td>Rodulfus amicus</td>
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<td>26.4</td>
<td>Amza amica nostra</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Otgisus amicus noster</td>
<td>Longpont</td>
<td>247</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obiit Petronilla de Bison, amica nostra, qui iacet in cimiterio nostro; officium fiat pro ipsa, quia nobis quam plurima bona fecit in uita sua et in ultima voluntate legavit sexaginta solidos Parisienses pro suo anniversario annuatim faciendo</td>
<td>Longpont</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>Rotbertus amicus</td>
<td>Longpont</td>
<td>251</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Obiit Osanna uxor Michaelis de Gaurie que dedit conuentui unam peciam uinee apud Castris in territorio, quod dicitur &lt;...&gt; con pro se et pro marito suo pro anniversariis amicorum. Officium fiat.</td>
<td>Longpont</td>
<td>253</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Ulaldeada amica nostra</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<td>9.6</td>
<td>Eustachius amicus noster</td>
<td>SMdC</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Stephanus amicus qui dedit XI solidos, officium</td>
<td>St. Martial II</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>Burchardus sacerdos amicus</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<td>19.6</td>
<td>Obiit Arenborga amica nostra</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>Maroardus amicus</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<td>24.6</td>
<td>Berchardis amica</td>
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<td>Alonnis sacerdos amicus</td>
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<td>Gertrudis amica nostra</td>
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<td>28.7</td>
<td>Ulricus tricenarius de Crecei amicus</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<td>14.9</td>
<td>Balfredus sacerdos amicus</td>
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<td>20.9</td>
<td>Ermengardis amica nostra</td>
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<td>Beatrix amica nostra</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
<td>605</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.10</td>
<td>Dalmatibus amici nostri, officium fiat</td>
<td>SMdC, St. Martial I, II</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Ancilla amica nostra</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
<td>611</td>
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† As reconstructed from the *Synopse der Necrologien*. 
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<td>Emmo presbiter amicus noster</td>
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<td>Lizelinus amicus</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>Margareta amici nostri, officium pro ipsis</td>
<td>Marcigny</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>Hugo de Lupidomibus succentor Belvacensis monachus ad succurrendum, qui dedit priori centum libras Turonenses in utilitatem ecclesie conuertendas. Et conuentui centum libras Turonenses ad emendam redditus pro pitancia contentus, pro quo concessimus eidem missam speciadem defunctorum, celebrandam pro remedio anime sue et aunculi sui prioris Balduini et fratrum suorum et patris et matris et omnium amicorum suorum ad altare Sancte Margarete, scribendam singulis ebdomadis, sabbato, in tabula. Officium fiat, capa in choro.</td>
<td>SMdC</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>