

Philip of Harvengt's *Vita Augustini*: The Medieval Premonstratensians and the Patristic Model*)

The twelfth century knew Augustine well. At least so medievals believed and modern medievalists affirm. Sometimes twelfth-century imitations of Augustinian models looked remarkably little like their referents — for instance Guibert of Nogent's book of confessions or Otto of Freising's chronicle of two cities¹⁾ — but they nevertheless represented themselves as inspired by Augustine's works. No century since his own had had so expansive a literary imagination or a theological capacity, hence so great an ability to comprehend and to build upon the legacy of the greatest of the Latin Fathers. And Augustine, who figured importantly in the imagination of every major voice in the twelfth century's dynamic intellectual and spiritual discourse, was claimed as common progenitor even by explicitly opponent groups in the contemporary reformation of religious life²⁾.

How authors from different monastic and canonical camps appropriated Augustine's experience as a priest and as a member of a religious community — his practices rather than his theology — is less clear. Medieval *vitae* of Augustine, hagiographical works whose composition was separated from their subject's death by some seven centuries, have gone unexamined in recent scholarship on the Augustinian tradition in the Middle Ages. Such works are biographically unoriginal and theologically unpretentious, but while they have little fresh to contribute about their stated subject, they have much to suggest about the medieval uses of the

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¹⁾ Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, ed. and trans. Georges Bourgin (Paris, 1907); Otto of Freising, *Chronica sive historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. Walther Lammers, trans. Adolf Schmidt, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 16 (Berlin, 1960).

²⁾ Among many recent discussions of the conflict among orders and participants' use of patristic sources, see esp. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother* (Berkeley, 1982) 46-58.

patristic past. Here, one of the two lives of Augustine written by prominent figures in the twelfth-century controversy about the conduct of religious life will be centrally at issue. The *vita Augustini* of the Premonstratensian Philip of Harvengt, composed in the 1130s³), will be seen in the light of both its classical sources and the hagiography of Augustine written a few decades before by the Benedictine monk, Rupert of Deutz⁴).

Both Philip of Harvengt and his earlier contemporary Rupert were prominent apologists for their respective orders, and their comments on the patristic past must be seen in this historical context. Rupert's stature as an advocate of Cluniac Benedictinism has been well established in John Van Engen's recent study⁵). And despite Philip's lesser notoriety among modern scholars, the Premonstratensian was in the twelfth century hardly an obscure figure. Philip's abbey of Bonne Espérance in Brabant was one of the earliest and most prominent of Premonstratensian communities. Philip, its prior and later abbot, entered the double convent shortly after its foundation, around the time of Rupert of Deutz's death in the late 1120s. The Premonstratensian lived to be a very old man and had prolific literary remains; his collected extant works fill an entire volume in the *Patrologia Latina*⁶). But he was notorious in his own times for another reason, his terrier-like advocacy of the reform of clerical communities according to the Augustinian Rule. In the 1140s, more than ten years after he wrote his own version of Augustine's *vita*, Philip took issue with Bernard of Clairvaux over whether a regular canon might properly leave his own Premonstratensian foundation in order to join the Cistercians⁷). Unsurprisingly, Philip lost this battle and suffered bitterly for having come into conflict with the holy chimaera, but he left no question of his own conviction on behalf of the ascetic common life for regular clerics founded by Norbert of Gennepe, a posture he developed extensively in his *De institutione clericorum* a decade

³) See Carol Neel, "Philip of Harvengt and Anselm of Havelberg: The Premonstratensian Vision of Time", *Church History* 62 (1993) 487.

⁴) John Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, 1983) xvii, 47.

⁵) Van Engen, esp. 370-5.

⁶) The basic study of Philip's career remains G. Sijen, "Philippe de Harvengt", *Analecta Praemonstratensia* 14 (1938) 37-52.

⁷) Philip's conflict with Bernard is analyzed by Douglas Roby, "Philip of Harvengt's Contribution to the Question of Passage from One Order to Another", *Anal. Praem.* 49 (1973) 69-100. On this matter's practical and intellectual repercussions for Philip, see esp. 73-87.

later⁸). Philip's life of Augustine, like that written by Rupert of Deutz some twenty years before, thus emerges from a specific niche in the twelfth-century debate over forms of religious community.

Each of the two twelfth-century hagiographers, as their respective texts demonstrate, approached his task in awareness of and in particular indebtedness to Augustine's autobiographical account of the experiences leading up to his baptism and return to Africa in *Confessions*, and to the biographical sequel completed by Possidius, one of Augustine's disciples, after the bishop's death. Moreover, Rupert and Philip shared a certain literary temerity; their works are the first new lives of Augustine of Hippo to have been written since Possidius's⁹) — at least the first that survive — and these authors' willingness to undertake the exposition of a life so formative of later Christian experience itself bespeaks both a need and a willingness to replace ancient with contemporary interpretations.

Neither twelfth-century life of Augustine, as it turned out, effectively supplanted Possidius' in medieval libraries¹⁰). Rupert's hagiography survives in just two copies, one of which has only recently been identified; this *vita Augustini*, probably composed around 1100 when the young Benedictine remained at his home monastery of St. Lawrence in Liège and well before he undertook his prelatecy at Deutz, with which place-name he is typically identified, remains unedited¹¹). Philip's *vita Augustini*

⁸) The fourth section of Philip's *De institutione*, titled *De continentia*, is specifically directed to the conflict among orders: PL 203, cols. 665-1206, esp. 765-840.

⁹) *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis* (hereafter BHL), ed. Society of Bollandists (Brussels, 1898-1901) 1:126-7, nos. 791 (Rupert), 793-4 (Philip).

¹⁰) For instance, a thirteenth-century codex of saints' lives from the Premonstratensian abbey of Park (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale MS 11550-55), contains a copy of Possidius' life (fols. 123r-134v). Late rebinding has added to the volume a virtually contemporary fragment of Philip of Harvengt's *vita*, apparently also from Park. See *Catalogus codicum hagiographicum bibliothecae regiae Bruxellensis* (hereafter *Cat. hag.*), ed. Society of Bollandists, *Analecta Bollandiana* 2-8 (Brussels, 1886-9) 1, pt. 2:399-405.

¹¹) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368. See *Cat. hag.* 2:326-328. References below to Rupert's *vita* are to this fifteenth-century manuscript. See also John Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, 1983) xvii, 47 and n. 143. The second copy is Yale Marston 267 (thirteenth century). See François Dolbeau, *Revue des études augustiniennes* 29 (1983) 43. An edition of this text is currently in preparation; see *Speculum* 69 (1994) 310-1.

The attribution of the *vita Augustini* represented in the Brussels and Yale copies is at last confirmed, although as recently as twenty years ago it was questioned. Hubert Silvestre, whose work on the attribution of the chronicle of St. Lawrence, Liège, demonstrated that this historical work was not indeed Rupert's, suggested in the early 1980s that the *vita Augustini* at issue here might be similarly misattributed. To Silvestre, the saint's life known to him then only from a fifteenth-century manuscript from St. Lawrence attributing it to "Master Rupert, abbot of Deutz and monk of this place", (Brussels, Bibl.

was circulated more widely than Rupert's in the middle ages, but it too failed to take the place of Possidius' life even among twelfth- and thirteenth-century collections with access to its text. The early modern edition of the Premonstratensian's work, like Rupert's a composition of its author's early career, is reprinted in the PL. This *vita Augustini*'s truncation in many of its extant manuscript copies, along with the difficulty of disentangling its identification from later versions which borrow from it, has thus far discouraged its discussion as a source on twelfth-century patristic study¹²).

Indeed, Philip's hagiography of Augustine has attracted virtually no scholarly notice and Rupert's has found little more, despite lively recent attention to the two abbots as advocates of their respective religious orders¹³). Yet Philip's life became the basis for the *vita Augustini* of the fourteenth-century scholastic preacher Jordan of Quedlinburg¹⁴), and so presumably made its way into the perceptions of the patristic age of many, many university-trained Europeans of his and the following century. More importantly here, together with Rupert of Deutz's life of Augustine, Philip of Harvengt's *vita Augustini* provides specific insight on the meaning of the great Father's experience in the Church for principals in the twelfth-century debate over the ideal religious life.

roy. MS 9368, fol. 73v: "vita sancti augustini ypponensis episcopi, quam composuit magister robertus abbas tuicensis et monachus huius loci") seemed not to be in Rupert's typically polished style; it blended passages from Augustine's *Confessions* and a précis of Possidius' *vita* with inelegance unimaginable, for the Belgian paleographer, in the work of the Belgian black monk ("Que nous apprend Renier de Saint-Laurent sur Rupert de Deutz?", *Sacris erudiri* 25 (1982) 75-77). But in his review of John Van Engen's biography of Rupert a few years later, Silvestre acknowledged that the identification of a twelfth-century manuscript of the same *vita* in a Yale codex argues compellingly for the hagiographical text's attribution to Rupert. According to Silvestre, this life of Augustine must now be considered a work of the Benedictine's youth (*Scriptorium* 40 (1986) 141-4).

¹²) For a survey of extant copies of Philip's *vita Augustini*, see G. P. Sijen, *Anal. Praem.* 15 (1939) 155-6. The first edition was in N. Chamart, *Domini Philippi abbatis Bonae Spei opera omnia* (Douai, 1621); it is reprinted in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter PL) (Paris, 1841-64) 203, cols. 1205-34. Confusion about whose life of Augustine is whose is evident even in *Cat. hag.* 1:290-2, where Philip's and Jordan's lives are impossible to distinguish.

¹³) On Rupert, see Van Engen esp. 370-5; on Philip, see Bynum esp. 36-40.

¹⁴) BHL 795. Jordan's life is edited by J. Hommey, *Supplementum patrum* (Paris, 1684) 596-625. On Jordan's text, see Rudolph Arbesmann, "Jordanus of Saxony's *Vita s. Augustini*: The Source for John Capgrave's Life of St. Augustine", *Traditio* 1 (1943) 345-6. See also *Cat. hag.* 1:291, where Jordan is quoted as acknowledging his indebtedness to Philip; see also Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 1351-72, fol. 47v.

The general shape of Rupert's hagiographical text provides numerous points of contrast with Philip's work. Even cursory reading shows that the Benedictine's life of Augustine tends rather to epitomize its principal sources, Possidius and *Confessions*, than to redirect their impact on their readers' sense of the contemporary meaning of the patristic model. As the Benedictine hagiographer's later contemporary Hugh of St. Victor pointed out about the craft of history, the material of the past is virtually infinite; the historian's task is not to rehearse it all, but to spin out enough detail to weave a coherent pattern¹⁵). In anthologizing Augustine's own memoirs and summarizing comments by his contemporary biographer, Rupert of Deutz was defining just such a pattern; the medieval hagiographer's choice of particular aspects of his subject's life effectively maps his critical perspective. At the moment of the young Rupert's composition of a *vita Augustini*, of course, he is unlikely to have anticipated either that communities of regular canons and reformed monks would proliferate rapidly throughout the rest of his life, or — much less — that he would himself in the 1120s take the offensive against these new religious groups' self-promotion in his literary *Altercatio monachi et clerici* or the historical altercations that lay behind it¹⁶). But in the earliest 1100s there was no such need. Rupert's work thus reflects a Benedictine reading of the saint's experience in the relative calm before the full onslaught of monastic reform.

Comparison of Rupert's text on Augustine with these principal resources shows immediately that he drew about half of his material from Augustine's account of his youth and the latter from Possidius' record of the saint's life as a Christian¹⁷). In both cases Rupert borrowed heavily, tending simply to lift passages from *Confessions* and to emend and paraphrase material from Possidius. His imagery for his subject is itself heavily Augustinian. The saint becomes for the Benedictine author, as he opens his work, the pillar of cloud guiding the Israelites through the desert. He finally rains his wisdom on the land in a curious transformation of *Confessions'* early books' less unambivalently positive

¹⁵) W. M. Green, "Hugo de St-Victor *De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum*", *Speculum* 18 (1943) 491.

¹⁶) PL 170, cols. 537-42. See Van Engen (310-334), who holds, arguing from Philip of Harvengt's later testimony, that Rupert's opponent in an actual debate was Norbert, the Premonstratensian founder himself (311).

¹⁷) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fols. 74r-76r are based on *Confessions*, fols. 77v-80v on Possidius.

water imagery¹⁸). Rupert borrows from Augustine's own account to follow his conversion and early career as a Christian. At great length, considering the brevity of his *vita*, Rupert repeats his subject's comments on the spiritual states of those closest to him. The hagiographer includes extensive passages on Alypius, retelling the stories of Augustine's young friend's fascination with the circus¹⁹) and his false accusation as a thief²⁰); Rupert incorporates another long passage on Augustine's pride and pain over his young son Adeodatus²¹). Throughout, in his indebtedness to *Confessions*, the twelfth-century author seems chiefly concerned that his reader appreciate the illusory quality of worldly happiness as exposed in Augustine's and his intimates' lives.

Similarly, in his borrowings from Possidius' *vita Augustini* as in the original commentary he attaches to them, Rupert dwells on the perils of heresy in the late ancient world — again urging flight from dangerous secular circumstances. Rupert shows Augustine, as Possidius had likewise emphasized, surrounded by Manichees, Donatists, Circumcellions, Pelagians, and finally Arians, against all of whom he battles indefatigably²²). In this context, the saint's private habits and his work as a monastic founder recede into the background. Rupert mentions that in Augustine's early retirement in Africa the saint began a "monastery" for which he wrote a "rule, a short statement but with important precepts"²³). Later, as heresy raged, Rupert's Augustine sent out "priests and bishops" against the enemies of orthodoxy from this monastic center²⁴).

Effectively, however, Rupert of Deutz limits his references to Augustine's religious community to these few instances, thus minimizing Possidius' definition of the saint's personal life as specifically monastic and understating the linkage of clerical and regular life which the earlier hagiographer had explicitly described in that community. For instance,

¹⁸) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fol. 73v: "Ipse est enim columna nubis in qua thronum suum posuit sapientia dei, de cuius ore tanquam de nube plena aquis".

¹⁹) Brussels, Bibl. roy. 9368, fols. 74v-75r. Compare *Confessions* 6.8, ed. M. Skutella, rev. H. Juergens and W. Schaub (Stuttgart, 1981) 111-2.

²⁰) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fols. 75r-76r. Compare *Conf.* 6.9, ed. Skutella 112-4.

²¹) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fols. 76v-77r. Compare *Conf.* 9.6, ed. Skutella 190-1.

²²) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fols. 78v-80r. Compare Possidius, *Vita sancti Aurelii Augustini*, PL 32, cols. 40-49.

²³) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fol. 77v: "... construxit monasterium ad habitandum cum pusillo grege fratrum ... quibus eciam scripsit regulam sermone brevem preceptis gravem".

²⁴) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fol. 79v: "... ex eo monasterio quo presbyter factus constituerat multis ecclesiis presbyteros episcopos rogatus dederat".

Possidius had clearly stated that “those who lived with and under St. Augustine, serving God in the monastery, were ordained clerics of the church at Hippo”²⁵); again he recorded that Augustine shared his home and his table with “clerics”²⁶), whom he held to his “firm *regula*”²⁷). But Rupert never connects the term *clericus* or any attention to Augustine’s companions’ priestly status with his passing references to the saint’s religious community. Overall, in spite of his own monastic profession and concerns, Rupert generally fails to present Augustine as a model for the regular religious life. To the extent that Rupert’s life of Augustine encourages monasticism, it does so by stressing the vanity of secular experience. The Benedictine’s reading of Augustine’s career as a priest and bishop thus demonstrates unconcern with the meaning of the saint’s dual role as a secular cleric and a monastic leader for forms of regular religious life in the twelfth-century world.

On almost every level — in terms of its imagery, content, and tendentiousness — Philip of Harvengt’s life of Augustine contrasts sharply with Rupert of Deutz’s. Philip made virtually no use of Rupert’s text, if indeed he knew it; the only suggestion that he may have been familiar with his predecessor’s *vita*, despite the Premonstratensian’s demonstrably extensive knowledge of the work of the Benedictine theologian²⁸), lies in Philip’s development of an image buried in Rupert’s text. Augustine had himself likened the renewed youth of Psalm 102’s eagle to the revived soul of a Christian in both his exegetical work and *Confessions*²⁹). Rupert applies this among many other scriptural figures to Augustine’s own conversion: “when his youth was renewed like the eagle’s, his sharp eyes illumined by the light of Christ, he flew up toward the clouds”³⁰). The same image, the figure of the eagle in his youth, becomes in Philip of Harvengt’s life of Augustine the central metaphor not

²⁵) PL 32, col. 42: “... sub sancto et cum sancto Augustino in monasterio Deo servientes, Ecclesiae Hipponensi clerici ordinari coeperunt”.

²⁶) PL 203, col. 54: “Cum ipso semper clerici una etiam domo ac mensa sumptibus communibus alebantur et vestiebantur”.

²⁷) PL 32, col. 56: “Indisciplinationes quoque et transgressiones suorum a regula recta et honestate, arguebat ...”.

²⁸) See Roby 83; PL 203, cols. 765-1206, where Philip responds directly to Rupert’s *Altercatio*.

²⁹) Cf. Augustine, *Ennarationes in psalmos* 102.9, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 40 (Turnhout, 1956) 1459; *Conf.* 11.9, ed. Skutella 272.

³⁰) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 9368, fol. 76v: “O quantum erat in celo gaudium angelis dei in inventione dragine tam preciose tamquam fulgentis, cum renovaretur iuventus aquile que acutis oculis et illustratis christi lumine usque ad nubes evolaret”.

only for the saint's personal conversion, but for the illumination communicated by him to the clerics living in community around him, and by extension to their heirs in the church throughout time. Describing an Augustine lingering painfully on the fringes of the church in Milan, Philip characterizes his subject as "struck by weakness, so that he was not yet strong enough to train his eye on the light of the eternal sun"³¹). But by the time of his death, in Philip's account, he could direct "his eagle-like gaze on the radiance of God's word"³²).

Philip's departure from his source texts and from Rupert's stodgy hagiographical pattern is suggested in these figurative passages and evident throughout his text. Augustine remains for Philip of Harvengt as for Rupert of Deutz a theological prodigy and antiheresiarch, but the later hagiographer embraces his subject's experience in his own. His proem addresses his *vita Augustini* specifically to his own confreres, whom he describes as interested in the nuggets of Augustine's "actions and habits" more than Possidius' prolixity³³). In the sequel, Philip's Augustine, liberated in large part from his self-description in *Confessions* or Possidius' eyewitness evidence, emerges as a figure remarkably resembling the Premonstratensians of the twelfth century.

Philip's approximation of Augustine's life to the Premonstratensian pattern of common life, mixed contemplation and activity in the secular church, and double communities of men and women is thoroughgoing. Again and again Philip emphasizes that Augustine lived in a community of regular clerics, "a monastery of clerics ... under a rule"³⁴). Philip describes Augustine's rule for these clerics in detail, stressing the urgency with which the author enforced it among his companions³⁵). The Premonstratensian hagiographer portrays Augustine as committed to the notion that the most effective pastorate was of regular religious.

³¹) PL 203, col. 1210: "Reverberatus enim infirmitate proprie, in Solis aeterni radium defigere non praevalerat oculus, et cum eniteretur, recedebat horrore".

³²) PL 203, col. 1230: "... in ejus radiis aquilinum intuitum fixit, et quamvis in terris corpore versaretur, tamen spiritu in coelestibus vixit".

³³) PL 203, col. 1205: "Quia enim fratres ... actus ejus et mores memoria volebant claudere, et libellum, qui de vita ejusdem scriptus est, propter prolixitatem ... gravabantur ...".

³⁴) PL 203, col. 1221: "... voluit in ipsa episcopali domo monasterium habere clericorum, ut qui presbyter in horto regulariter vixerat, in episcopatu nihilominus pauper cum pauperibus Deo sub regula deserviret".

³⁵) PL 203, col. 1225: "... sanctae institutionis regulam eis studuit scribere, in qua eleganter expressit quid facere debeat subditus, quid vero praepositus, quid omnibus conveniat generaliter, quid singulis specialiter".

According to Philip, the bishop of Hippo left behind not only many houses of clerics, but also many communities of women governed by the same rule³⁶). Finally, at Augustine's death, Philip comments: "indeed [St. Augustine] is both the ornament and the model of our own [religious] profession, the mirror and the measure of our form of religious life"³⁷).

Throughout his *vita Augustini*, Philip of Harvengt stresses Augustine's eminence as a preacher, effectively arguing the primacy of what Caroline Bynum has found best expressed in the phrase *docere verbo et exemplo* — teaching by word and example — in the lives of twelfth-century Augustinian canons³⁸). Philip's portrayal of his saintly model as regular priest, however, extends beyond Bynum's characterization of the distinctiveness of reformed canons to a specifically Premonstratensian spirituality. In apparent reference to the Premonstratensian founder Norbert's institution of white canons in his own eventual cathedral at Magdeburg, Philip represents Augustine at Hippo as "wishing to have a monastery of clerics in the episcopal church itself, so that he who had lived as a priest in rural seclusion might even as bishop serve God under a rule — as a poor man among other poor men"³⁹). The hagiographer implicitly likens Augustine's activity as a founder of religious life to Norbert's departure from the wilderness at Prémontré, with its new community of canons, and his transformation of Magdeburg's cathedral chapter into a community like his earlier foundation⁴⁰).

Again, Philip claims for Augustine the unification of fulfillment of both Mary's and Martha's scriptural roles. In the hagiographer's representation, Augustine's encouragement of his first companions' study, so that they might "read, fulfill, and teach divine scripture", "fulfilled the duty of Martha as of Mary — with Martha teaching those close to him, that is feeding the Lord; with Mary reading and meditating, that is listening to the Lord"⁴¹). The relative merits of Mary's and Martha's respectively

³⁶) PL 203, col. 1228: "Monasteria tam virorum quam feminarum plene continentibus reliquit ...".

³⁷) PL 203, col. 1229: "Ipse quippe est decus et forma hujus nostrae professionis, ipse speculum et regula nostrae religionis".

³⁸) See *Jesus as Mother* 36-58, esp. 53-8.

³⁹) PL 203, col. 1221: "... voluit in episcopali domo monasterium habere clericorum, ut qui presbyter in horto regulariter vixerat, in episcopatu nihilominus pauper cum pauperibus Deo sub regula deserviret".

⁴⁰) Norbert founded the order's original house in 1121. He was called to the archiepiscopate at Magdeburg in 1126, and immediately established his order in Germany. See Norbert Backmund, *Geschichte des Prämonstratenserordens* (Grafen, 1986) 29-33.

⁴¹) PL 203, col. 1218: "His igitur impendens studium, Marthe et Mariae implevit officium, cum Martha docendo proximos, cum Maria, legendo, meditando, audiens Dominum".

contemplative and active religious lives were, as Bynum has emphasized, a commonplace of the conflict between the monks and the canons throughout the twelfth century⁴²). The claim of superiority by virtue of conjoining the two paths seems, however, to have been a peculiarly Premonstratensian claim; Anselm of Havelberg, the order's outstanding theologian of history, asserted that Norbert's order followed the apostle John in sharing the fruits of contemplative experience by preaching widely to God's churches⁴³). Similarly, Philip in his *vita Augustini* associates Augustine, his order's effective first founder, in the aquiline imagery suggestive of the archetypal contemplative, John, so expressing the shape of Augustine's religious life in the language of Premonstratensian apologetic⁴⁴).

Philip of Harvengt's linkage of his and his confreres' experience to this reformulated patristic model is comprehensive, extending beyond the detail of his record of Augustine's canonical life to the familiar tone of his *vita*. For instance, Philip includes a humorous story about the saint's relationship with his devotés. The hagiographer claims to have found out in "the text of a certain story" about an old man who, having venerated Augustine all his life, was about to die in the hope that the saint would welcome him to heaven. The man fell asleep, and dreamed that he arrived at heaven's gate, but when he looked about for his special patron he saw no Augustine. The man then anxiously inquired of an angel where the saint might be found; he was answered that Augustine, always preoccupied with seeking the divine when he lived on earth, was that much more unable to break his contemplation now that he was in God's presence. According to the angel, such a saint cannot be expected to show up to welcome even the most faithful among the recently arrived, but he cares about them nonetheless⁴⁵). Philip of Harvengt's gentle witicism encircles his Premonstratensian audience in the confidence of their apparently distant model's support.

The novelty and interest for twelfth-century readers in Philip's hagiographical work, in comparison to Rupert of Deutz's, is confirmed in the

⁴²) Bynum 32, 52.

⁴³) Anselm, *Epistola apologetica*, PL 188, cols. 1131-2. Compare Bynum (34), whose sensitive analysis of canonical spirituality nevertheless fails to unlock the meaning of these figures in the Premonstratensian idiom.

⁴⁴) See again Neel, "Anselm ... and Philip" 492-3. This image likewise appears as associated specifically with the followers of Norbert in *Vita Norberti archiepiscopi Magdeburgensis, Acta Sanctorum*, ed. Society of Bollandists, Junii I (Paris, 1867) 823.

⁴⁵) PL 203, col. 1229-30: "... quae in textu cujusdam invenitur historiae".

two lives' histories in their and the following century. Rupert's is likely to have remained unknown outside his own monastic house⁴⁶). Philip's, on the other hand, found its way among Premonstratensian and closely associated Cistercian and Augustinian communities, as the provenances of extant manuscripts attest⁴⁷). Long before its copies were catalogued for modern libraries, however, an astute medieval observer remarked on the availability of Philip's work. Jordan of Quedlinburg noted that this version of Augustine's story is found "in many old monasteries of the regular canons and the Premonstratensians"⁴⁸).

Certainly Philip's *vita Augustini* was well-crafted for the use to which Jordan found it put — to undergird the self-perception of medieval regular canons. As such, it was copied and bound with compatible texts to form volumes amounting to self-justificatory omnibuses on the canonical life. So, for instance, one of the Brussels volumes containing a manuscript of a part of Philip of Harvengt's *vita* also includes a full copy of Jordan of Quedlinburg's based on Philip's, as well as Hugh of St. Victor's *Soliloquies* and some sermons of Augustine there described as "for his brother hermits"; the manuscript was made for the monastery of Rougeval, where the Augustinians there might well have used it to remind themselves of their own distinctiveness among the Church's orders⁴⁹).

The tendentiousness of the two twelfth-century lives of Augustine seems thus to have been appreciated by their readership. Both twelfth-century hagiographers, Rupert of Deutz and Philip of Harvengt, called into service the idioms of their respective communities to describe the life of the fourth-century bishop of Hippo. Rupert's account presents Augustine as a model for retreat from the secular world even though specific aspects of his life in community go unexplored. Philip of Harvengt's *vita Augustini*, on the other hand, projects the Premonstratensian

⁴⁶) The provenance of the Yale copy of Rupert's work is unclear, but likely to have been St. Lawrence; the Brussels copy is certainly St. Lawrence's. See Brussels, Bibl. roy. 9368, fol. 1r: in a fifteenth-century hand, "liber monasterii Sancti laurentii prope Leodium".

⁴⁷) Among manuscripts thus far examined for this project, for instance, Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS D. Phillipps 4768 belonged to the Cistercians at Cambron, MS 11550-55 to the Premonstratensians at Park, and MS 1351-72 to the Augustinians at Rougeval.

⁴⁸) Brussels, Bibl. roy. 13511-72, fol. 47v: "Et habetur illa legenda in multis antiquis monasteriis canonicorum regularium et Praemonstratensium". See *Cat. hag.* 1:290-2.

⁴⁹) Brussels, Bibl. roy. MS 1351-72; see J. Van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique* (Brussels, 1901-9) 2:163-5.

founder Norbert's prescriptions for his own followers back into the fourth century, emphasizing immediacy of descent from Augustine.

The two lives of Augustine considered here present in a straightforward way what twelfth-century religious of different perspectives believed essential for their confreres to know about the life of one of the greatest of historical Christians. More importantly for this study, Philip of Harvengt's *vita Augustini* illumines the twelfth-century Premonstratensians' sense of their relationship to monastic and canonical tradition. The identification of Philip's hagiographical posture accomplished here, however, carries with it more than intrinsic interest. The white canons of Prémontré, despite their explosive numbers and geographical extent by the end of the twelfth century, and despite the distinctiveness of their social organization and apocalyptic thought⁵⁰), remain for modern scholars a curiously elusive historical phenomenon. Norbert himself, although a famous preacher and ascetic, left behind no written word. The relationship between his career and the canonical order he began thus far remains indistinct⁵¹). Here, however, Philip of Harvengt's life of Augustine of Hippo, seen against the backdrop of Rupert of Deutz's nearly contemporary Benedictine account, is shown to suggest Norbert's early followers' concerns in recasting the model of their effective first founder, the patristic author of their own rule for common life. The twelfth-century Order of Prémontré begins to emerge from among the proliferation of contemporary religious groups in Philip's portrayal of Augustine as a virtual white canon.

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⁵⁰) See, for instance, Guntram Bischoff, "Early Premonstratensian Eschatology: The Apocalyptic Myth", in *Spirituality of Western Christendom*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder, Cistercian Studies 30 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1976) 41-71; Carol Neel, "The Origins of the Beguines", *Signs* 14 (1989) 321-41.

⁵¹) Wilfried M. Grauven, "Die Quellen zur Geschichte Norberts von Xanten", in *Norbert von Xanten: Adliger, Ordensstifter, Kirchenfürst*, ed. Kaspar Elm (Cologne, 1984) 15-34.