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PART I

UNDERSTANDING MEDIEVAL FORGERIES



## INTRODUCTION

This book is about ideas and beliefs rather than events and actions. It is about what medieval people thought and believed should have happened, rather than what modern historians can demonstrate actually happened. Its major “events,” strictly speaking, did not ever occur – except in the minds of those who invented them or believed them. Its actors have been called reformers, scholars, and even saints; but they may also be regarded as forgers, deceivers, and liars. Its most powerful arguments are based on sources which traditional historical methods deem either useless or hopelessly compromised; yet it shows that forgeries are good evidence for understanding medieval perceptions of the past.

Any study of medieval forgeries must consider why they mattered, then and now. Understanding why forgeries were significant in the Middle Ages involves trying to comprehend the mentality of those who wrote them. In this study, I focus on monks, who had very strong notions about truth and lying, salvation and sin, as well as the relationship of the past, present, and future. And while monks were only part of the medieval clergy, which was only a small elite in medieval society, for the period between 900 and 1150 they were some of the most prolific writers and the greatest preservers of older writings. Consequently, some surviving monastic archives are sufficiently rich to allow close analysis of the function and meaning of forgeries for contemporaries.

Understanding why scholars of the Middle Ages should care about medieval forgeries is less straightforward. Outright forgeries invented events and, therefore, were inherently counter-factual. Forgeries rewrote the past in ways intended to mislead or deceive their audiences. So such rewritings reveal what their authors wanted others to believe and the limits of credulity. For these deceptions to be convincing, they had to look right and feel right. To look right, forgeries had to be similar to genuine texts and objects they mimicked. To feel right, they relied on an audience's willingness to accept they were genuine. Thus, both proper appearance and a receptive audience were needed to deceive successfully. Form and function were inherently related and the balance of the two mattered. Formal defects might be overlooked because of a strong disposition to accept what was proposed, whereas skepticism about claims might be overcome by highly

skillful presentation. If either was insufficient, of course, a forgery would be rejected. In consequence, both successful uses of forgery and failed attempts have much to tell us about monastic thought and practice. Overall, understanding forgery has important implications for monastic reforms, documentary culture, and the relationship between collective memory and historical truth in the years 900 to 1150.

This pivotal era has often been characterized as an age of monastic reform, although recent scholars have resisted an institutionalist and unifying view of reform and instead emphasized the variety, contingency, and flexibility of ideas and practices of multiple reforms.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, the landscape and chronoscape of forgery considered in this book seem to parallel Benedictine monastic reforms from 900 to 1150. A conventional approach would stress that monastic reforms carried out under Louis the Pious (814–40) were broadly influential throughout the empire during the ninth century (and later in England). It would also stress reforms inspired by the monasteries of Fleury and Cluny, which began in the tenth century and became caught up in the larger so-called “Gregorian reform” (and disputes over investitures) during the eleventh century. Abbot Abbo of Fleury (988–1004) inspired many northern monks to invoke papal authority to trump the bishop’s ordinary control of monasteries.<sup>2</sup> Monastic *libertas* (that is, freedom from episcopal, noble, royal, or other control) became fashionable and could be justified by reinterpreting (and inventing) ancient decrees of popes and councils. In particular, other monks were inspired to imitate Cluny’s quest for “immunities” from local control, beginning as early as 931 and continuing through the eleventh century. Cluniac ideas of freedom were broadly influential, shaping notions of sacred property, order, and monastic independence. By the second half of the eleventh century, such ideas would lead to claims of monastic “exemption” from episcopal control.<sup>3</sup>

But one should be wary of assuming a coherent set of reform ideas as an explanation for monastic forgeries and histories. Scholars of reform have tended to treat eleventh-century monasteries prospectively or retrospectively, in light of earlier (Carolingian) or later (twelfth-century) reforms. Modern historians’ search for reform “movements” has thus sometimes

<sup>1</sup> Conrad Leyser, “Church Reform – Full of Sound and Fury, Signifying Nothing?” *Early Medieval Europe* 24 (4) (2016): 478–99.

<sup>2</sup> Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury: A Study of the Ideas about Society and Law of the Tenth-Century Monastic Reform Movement* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987), 58–9, 104–6, 127–30.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 156–83.

prevented understanding eleventh-century monks in their own terms.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the rhetoric of so-called “Gregorian” reformers has been unwittingly written backwards. For instance, historians have sometimes accepted late eleventh-century monks’ stories that “exemptions” had precedents in the period before 1050, although the vast majority of such claims were based on modifying older, more restricted immunities.<sup>5</sup> Such a view was encouraged by medieval monastic storytellers.<sup>6</sup> Overall, the local and personal variations of “reform” at particular monasteries have been underappreciated yet were clearly important. So, a healthy skepticism about “reform” influences seems warranted. Indeed, specific expressions of “reform” at the houses studied in part II vary greatly.

However, more important than any given reform agenda was the notion of “reform” itself. “Reform” could be invoked because a community or its leader wished to affirm their piety and shore up material support, or to promote greater spirituality, or because a ruler or patron wanted change in worship or management. But “reform,” arising from whatever institutional, theological, or political wellspring, also brought an important perspective: a desire to alter the house in the present. “Reformers” had a new vision of what they wanted monastic life to be, which led them to reinterpret the past. Their reinterpretations often posited a golden age in the distant past while downgrading the recent past – including forgetting it – which was viewed as fallen or corrupt. That is, the religious goals of the reformers were promoted and justified using a revisionist approach to sacred texts, objects, and spaces.<sup>7</sup> This two-faced approach to time was shared by forgers, who also looked backwards and forwards. Also, materiality was inherent in the medieval understanding of what it meant to “re-form” something. This makes sense when we consider the Latin word *reformo*, the primary meaning of which was to “reshape” or “remold” an object physically, for example: working clay into a new shape.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, “re-forming” and

<sup>4</sup> John Howe, *Before the Gregorian Reform: The Latin Church at the Turn of the Millennium* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2016), 1–12.

<sup>5</sup> Steven Vanderputten and Benjamin Pohl, “Fécamp, Cluny, and the Invention of Tradition in the Eleventh Century,” *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies* 5 (2016): 1–41.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900–1100* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 186: “The root of the problem lies in the fact that reform, in addition to being a historical reality, also functioned as a literary theme, to which notions such as decline, renewal, and reconciliation were central.”

<sup>7</sup> Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1–43.

<sup>8</sup> Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), s.v. *reformo*.

“forging” were similar because they involved both mental and material elements. Producing texts, seals, coins, or even tools, involved crafting – or “forging” in its general sense of making, as explained in chapter one.

For some historians, shifts in documentary culture help explain a perceived flowering of forgeries from 900 to 1150. Such an approach highlights trends in both law and literacy. First of all, differences in legal and written culture between northern and southern Europe were substantial. The south continued the Roman tradition of written law codes and notarial production of documents. Although the north would never completely abandon these older models, the influence of custom and, perhaps more significantly, the diffusion of document production to monastic and other *scriptoria*, created a different scribal and legal culture. These geographic differences in law and literacy had important effects on the role and function of written documents (especially in relation to objects and oral traditions) as well as modes of proof.<sup>9</sup> So, they help circumscribe the bounds of this study, which treats monastic houses in northwest Europe – the zone in which the sealed charter and customary law became dominant.

Second, forgery may be viewed as a significant subset of document rewriting undertaken from 900 to 1150. Particularly important was the spread of the cartulary (a book of charter copies), with its attendant processes of selection, suppression, and organization of documents in a sequence. Increasingly, scholars have recognized the process of “cartularization,” that is, how the arranging of document copies could itself shape attitudes to land, community, disputes, the past, and so on. Rather than treating cartularies merely as convenient collections of document copies to be mined, these scholars demonstrated that they could be “read” for their larger meaning. In a pioneering analysis, Patrick Geary argued that archival and historical memory in France and Germany was altered by how monks preserved documents around 1000, especially how they used their archives as “raw material for the creation of a new past.”<sup>10</sup> Around the same time, Dominique Barthélemy issued warnings about the potential evidentiary dangers of the

<sup>9</sup> Chris Wickham, “Lawyer’s Time: History and Memory in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Italy,” in *Land and Power: Studies in Italian and European Social History, 400–1200*, ed. Chris Wickham (London: British School at Rome, 1994), 275–93. Petra Schulte, “*Fides Publica*: Die Dekonstruktion eines Forschungsbegriffes,” in *Strategies of Writing: Studies on Text and Trust in Medieval Europe*, ed. Petra Schulte et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 15–36.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 103. Compare Georges Declercq, “Originals and Cartularies: The Organization of Archival Memory (Ninth–Eleventh Centuries),” in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. Karl Heidecker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 147–70.

“mutation documentaire” in mid-eleventh century France, although he later deemphasized any crisis.<sup>11</sup> Their work helped inform two *École des Chartes* roundtables, devoted to cartularies and written acts which highlighted the fluidity of documentary culture during the eleventh century.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Michael Clanchy emphasized transformations from memory to written records in England, especially after 1066.<sup>13</sup> In the early 2000s, Pierre Chastang argued more explicitly for a process of “cartularization” and for strong connections to monastic and clerical reform.<sup>14</sup> Increasingly, scholars began to explore textual modifications resulting from the archiving and copying of documents in books.<sup>15</sup> Recent work has gone further still, exploring the pious, commemorative, and historical discourses of early cartularies. Notably, Constance Bouchard has innovatively analyzed Burgundian cartularies, reading them in reverse chronological order, to emphasize selection from an archive, thereby unpacking the layers of rewriting.<sup>16</sup>

Taken together, this scholarship emphasizes that documentary form and storage shifted from 900 to 1150, involving reorganizing and significant rewriting. Assessing the role of forgery only becomes more complex in the later twelfth century, when the nascent legal institutions of Europe stimulated further changes in documentary culture. However, these shifts can be viewed as a scholarly opportunity. Indeed, forgery – as a form of prospective writing – is a good indicator of increasing desire for written records. After all, why forge a document, especially given the difficulty and danger, unless there was a use for it?<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Dominique Barthélemy, “La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu? (Note critique),” *Annales: ESC* 47 (1992): 767–77 and “Une crise de l’écrite? Observations sur des actes de Saint-Aubin d’Angers (XIe siècle),” *BEC* 155 (1997): 95–117.

<sup>12</sup> Olivier Guyotjeannin et al., eds., *Les cartularies* (Paris: École de Chartes, 1993) and Guoytjeannin, ed., *Pratiques de l’écrit documentaire au XIe siècle*, *BEC* 155 (1997).

<sup>13</sup> Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), esp. 147–86.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Chastang, *Lire, écrire, transcrire: le travail des rédacteurs de cartulaires en Bas-Languedoc (XIe–XIIIe siècles)* (Paris: CTHS, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Adam J. Kosto and Anders Winroth, eds., *Charters, Cartularies, and Archives: The Preservation and Transmission of Documents in the Medieval West* (Toronto: PIMS, 2002). Laurent Morelle, “The Metamorphosis of Three Monastic Charter Collections in the Eleventh Century (Saint-Amand, Saint-Riquier, Montier-en-Der),” in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word*, ed. Heidecker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 171–204.

<sup>16</sup> Constance Bouchard, *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors: Memory and Forgetting in France, 500–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 9–37.

<sup>17</sup> Julia Barrow, “Why Forge Episcopal Acta? Preliminary Observations on the Forged Charters in the *English Episcopal Acta* series,” in *The Foundations of Medieval English Ecclesiastical History: Essays Presented to David Smith*, ed. Philippa Hoskin et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 18–39.



Overall, studies of documentary culture seem congruent with patterns of forgeries analyzed here, probably because they take the writings of medieval monks as their focus. Such studies usually remain close to source criticism rather than theory. Of course, applying the methodological tools of modern source criticism allows us to distinguish genuine from forged, actual from invented, in medieval monastic writings. But in doing so we also put on blinders, which sometimes prevent us from seeing an intended message because of our focus on dissecting its medium. However, for medieval monks medium and message were united. Charters, cartularies, and historical narratives all shared material and intellectual processes of production – and reproduction.

Furthermore, the long eleventh century may be distinctive in terms of the uses of writing. Before and after, lay documentary culture seemed to have a stronger influence, while during it ecclesiastical and especially monastic influence was dominant. Another characteristic of this period was about trusting writing.<sup>18</sup> One feature that seems to distinguish the scribal culture of the eleventh century was that written documents suffered from a “credibility gap,” that is they did not seem to constitute acts (or proof) by themselves. Paul Bertrand argues that the principal role of a document in the eleventh century was as an “aide-mémoire” that provided what an audience needed to help reconstruct, and believe, its message. For such writing to be effective, it had to be supported by witnesses, seals, oaths, association with the holy, and so on, to be convincing as a recollection of past actions.<sup>19</sup> Such careful intellectual, social, and material “framing” helped to create trust. The monastic writers studied here were the masters of such framing and were very concerned with the trustworthiness of their creations, since this is what gave them meaning and utility.

Forgery also reveals a lot about how histories were written from 900 to 1150. Forgeries and other rewritings of the past were often done in groups or sequences. Sometimes these sequences implied a story or, at least, a chronology. Increasingly, scholars have come to regard such sequences as an important intermediate step towards the composition of narratives. In particular, several panels on “Cartularies as Histories” at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds in 2016–17 explored historicizing discourses in early cartularies.<sup>20</sup> Thus, sequences of forgeries have added value in revealing monastic desires and collective memory.

<sup>18</sup> Marco Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” in *Strategies of Writing*, ed. Petra Schulte et al., 37–59; Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 295–328, ch. 9 “Trusting Writing.”

<sup>19</sup> Paul Bertrand, *Les écritures ordinaires: Sociologie d'un temps de révolution documentaire (1250–1350)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2015), 360.

<sup>20</sup> Organized by Charles Insley and Charles Rozier; the author was a participant.

One should study forgeries together with historical writings because they offer a valuable perspective on medieval perceptions of the past. This evidentiary value has frequently been overlooked by historians operating too rigidly in modernist or post-modernist frameworks. Modernist source criticism was prone to what might be called “original sin” – applying criteria to individual documents to find “originals” – in order to reject forgeries as “bad evidence.” Postmodernist inquiries do the reverse: because they treat all artifacts as “texts” in the quest to expose meta-narratives, they collapse distinctions between fiction and forgery – reducing them by implication to equivalence. But one can look beyond these perspectives. Forgeries are interesting to historians precisely because they offer the negative image of the idealized genuine original of positivist methods: they are false documents which purport to be truthful. Yet they are different from fictions, even when placed within a narrative to further a (hi)story, because they are inherently counter-factual. Thus, forgeries suggest that medieval people had a strong historical sense, albeit different from professional historians. Of course, strict referential representation is not present in medieval histories, because medieval writers did not seek an “objective” version of events. Thus, medieval historical writings seem to fail modern, small-scale measures of truth-value.<sup>21</sup> However, truth claims could be made apparent to premodern audiences and medieval writers (and forgers) could use truth-telling language to claim that events they narrated had actually happened. Therefore, it is crucial to understand monastic truth claims within their own modes of historical writing.

Certainly, medieval monks were proficient in creating “usable pasts” – pasts usable for present purposes – when they wrote histories.<sup>22</sup> This is not surprising – as many premodern (and some modern) groups shaped their pasts in similar ways. There were strong motives for inventing traditions, since they imparted the authority of the ancient to innovations.<sup>23</sup> But in creating “usable pasts” medieval monastic historians employed both genuine and forged documents. They chose sources not for their objective “truth value,” but rather for how they conformed to truths they already believed. Obvious examples exist in foundation legends of monastic houses, which

<sup>21</sup> Compare Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 10–3 and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Forging the Past: The Language of Historical Truth in the Middle Ages,” *The History Teacher* 17, no. 2 (1984): 267–83 at 266–8 and 283.

<sup>22</sup> Karine Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (York: York Medieval Press, 2005), 1–16.

<sup>23</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Trevor Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

inter-mingled saints' lives and the purported historical actions of kings and patrons.<sup>24</sup> Such monastic stories about saints and ancestors were frequently rewritten to serve present needs.<sup>25</sup> In my experience, the foundation charter (or its equivalent, the first charter reproduced in a monastic cartulary) was the one most highly revered and most often modified. One should be suspicious of such "foundational" texts; yet these documents were woven into house histories repeatedly, indicating their enduring importance to medieval monks' self-fashioning.

Comprehending how forgeries rewrote the past requires recognizing that medieval monks had a distinctive understanding of the relationship of the past, present, and future. In particular, they had ideas about writing "history," but their categories were (and are) sometimes confusing. In Latin, the word *historia* had been used since Roman times. The problem is that the concept/practice which *historia* expressed was not the same as the modern, professional understanding of "history" as a discipline. Medieval people had inherited notions about *historia* from two traditions, the classical and the Christian, which offered different ideas. So, it is worth reviewing what each contributed to monastic practices of historical writing.

For the Romans, *historia* was part of rhetoric, following Greek tradition and elaborated by orators such as Cicero and Quintilian. However, rhetoric was viewed more restrictively by medieval educators as the art of composing letters (*ars dictaminis*) or sermons (*ars praedicandi*).<sup>26</sup> Instead, they regarded *historia* as part of grammar (another branch of the *trivium* of writing arts), under which it is found in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, a distortive but widely used transmitter of classical terms for medieval readers. There, Isidore distinguished two types of narration: *fabula* (fables) and *historia*. Isidore's initial definition of *historia* was: "A history is a narration of deeds accomplished; through it what occurred in the past is sorted out."<sup>27</sup> Thus, *historia* was a narrative of events, a "story" in a basic sense. An interesting anecdotal support for reading *historia* as "story" is linguistic: in no major European

<sup>24</sup> Amy Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Samantha Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Bouchard, *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors*, 3–4.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Camargo, *Ars dictaminis*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 60 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991); Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *The Sermon*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 81–83 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), I.41.1: "Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quam ea, quae in praeterito facta sunt, dinoscuntur." Trans. Stephen A. Barney et al., *Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 67.

language other than English are the words for “history” and “story” different (*Historia*, *storia*, *histoire*, *Geschichte*, etc.) Indeed, this distinction did not exist even in English before 1485.<sup>28</sup> Adopting “story” uncritically for *historia*, however, is too sweeping and does not do justice to the diversity and sophistication of medieval historical writings. Modern scholars of medieval historical writing often point out that *historia* was not considered *scientia* (a coherent area of knowledge) in the Middle Ages; rather it was only a type of *narratio* and, so, not fundamentally analytic at all. It was not a field of study but a mode of speaking or writing. Thus, *historia* was not what today is meant by “history,” which is a post-medieval concept.<sup>29</sup>

Isidore’s definition of *historia* is a touchstone for scholars specializing in medieval historiography, who favor Isidore because he was one of the few early medieval authors to define *historia* directly. However, Isidore’s basic definition of “history” was nuanced in a later chapter devoted to “kinds of history.” Importantly, his initial binary division of narrative as *historial/fabula* was modified and he put forward a tripartite distinction:

And history, ‘plausible narration’ (*argumentum*), and fable differ from one another. Histories are true deeds that have happened, plausible narrations are things that, even if they have not happened, nevertheless could happen, and fables are things that have not happened and cannot happen, because they are contrary to nature.<sup>30</sup>

This distinction was adapted imperfectly from Cicero’s *De inventione* and the (pseudo) Cicero *Ad herennium*, which because of their (mis)attribution enjoyed high prestige with later scholastics and humanists.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7, s.v. “history.” Meaning 1, now obsolete, “a relation of incidents (in early use either true or imaginary); later only those professedly true; a narrative, tale, or story,” earliest use Gower in 1390. Meaning 2, “a written narrative constituting a continuous, methodical read in order of time,” earliest use Caxton in 1485. Meaning 3, “a branch of knowledge,” earliest use Shakespeare in 1611.

<sup>29</sup> Joachim Knappe, “*Historia*, Textuality and *Episteme* in the Middle Ages,” in *Historia: The Concept and Genres in the Middle Ages*, ed. Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen and Päivi Mehtonen (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2000), 11–27.

<sup>30</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, I.44.5: “Item inter historiam et argumentum et fabulam interesse. Nam historiae sunt res verae quae factae sunt; argumenta sunt quae etsi facta non sunt, fieri tamen possunt; fabulae vero sunt quae nec factae sunt nec fieri possunt, quia contra natura sunt.” Trans. Barney et al., *Etymologies*, 67.

<sup>31</sup> Cicero, *De inventione* I.ix.27, ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 54–58; Cicero, *Ad herennium* I.viii.13, ed. and trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 22–25. For reception in medieval rhetoric, John O. Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric in Treatise, Scholion and Commentary*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 58 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995),

Significantly, Isidore's tripartite distinction (*historia*, *argumentum*, *fabula*) was based on how each narrative represented the past and their truth-value. For this study, what is most striking about Isidore's definition of *historia* is that it precluded "forgery," since it was supposed to narrate "true deeds" which had actually happened. Instead, "forgery" goes better with *argumentum* – as something that could have happened but didn't – and not *fabula*, since the inherent impossibility of fables would fail to achieve the credibility forgers desired. In consequence, I consider not just narratives explicitly purporting to be *historiae* but also other medieval texts which might fall under *argumentum*, "plausible narrative."<sup>32</sup>

Another set of medieval notions about history came from Christian history. The Christian master narrative of human history, from Creation to Crucifixion to Last Judgment, provided a framework to situate past, present, and future events. Such thinking infused many types of medieval historical writing. The most obvious example is "universal history," which narrated the history of the world from creation until the present, often using the metaphor of the six days of creation for six ages of the world. Universal histories or continuations of them were popular with monastic writers, keen to use them for their own messaging.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, methods developed to interpret the Bible (exegesis) also had a major influence on medieval practices of historical writing. Although early medieval traditions of exegesis varied, eventually four levels of interpretation became standard in monastic and cathedral school curriculums: history (*historia* or *littera*, reading for the literal sense); allegory (*allegoria*, with its variant *typologia*, which explained how Old Testament events prefigured the New Testament); tropology (*tropologia*, or moral interpretation); and anagogy (*anagoge*, which related biblical text to the end of time). To read *historialiter*, thus, was to read a text literally for its obvious, surface meaning. This kind of reading shunned false readings of texts expressing sacred truths, and so would have inherently condemned forgery. Other

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54–57. For popularity, Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 22, 65–6, 123–6.

<sup>32</sup> For *argumentum* in relation to fiction, Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper, 1963), 452–3.

<sup>33</sup> Michele Campopiano, "Introduction: New Perspectives on Universal Chronicles in the High Middle Ages," in *Universal Chronicles in the High Middle Ages*, ed. Michele Campopiano and Henry Bainton (York: York Medieval Press, 2017), 9–13; Karl Heinrich Krüger, *Universalchroniken*, *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental*, 16 (Turnhout: Belgium, 1976).

modes of exegesis, especially anagogy, also influenced medieval historians' presentation of events as revelations.

Christian ideas and models were adapted into various forms of historical writings. These forms had medieval names and have been analyzed extensively by modern scholars. Many Christian writers (including Isidore) posited a distinction between a *historia* (a continuous narrative of events) and a *chronicon* (a "chronicle" organized by years), which Eusebius had popularized. This distinction between the *historia* and *chronicon* offered choices to medieval writers about how to arrange their texts and (re)present past events. In theory (but not always in practice), a *chronicon* was supposed to possess *brevitas* and be straightforward, whereas *historia* allowed for *prolixitas* and a more elaborate style of explanation.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, many varieties of local "chronicles" proliferated in the high Middle Ages.<sup>35</sup> Another medieval genre was the annal, in which events were recorded by year. Isidore had also distinguished histories based on how much time they treated (diaries for days, *kalendaria* for months, *annales* for years), though his scheme was not the only one.<sup>36</sup> Traditionally, scholars have viewed annals as evolving from annotations of Easter tables.<sup>37</sup> One should also mention the various forms of biography: the *vita* (the "life," often of a saint or martyr) and the *gesta* (the "deeds" of an exemplary person, such as a king, abbot, or bishop).<sup>38</sup> Indeed saints lives (hagiographies) proliferated in monasteries from 900 to 1150, and arose alongside (and shared features with) forgeries, cartularies, and other historical narratives. Thus, the Christian view of human history, early exemplars of Christian historical writing, demands of the liturgical calendar, and the celebration of particular people all influenced medieval historical writings.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard Guénee, "Histoire et chronique: Nouvelles réflexions sur les genres historiques au moyen âge," in *La chronique et l'histoire au moyen âge*, ed. Daniel Poiron (Paris: Université de Paris, 1984), 3–25, esp. 8–9. See also his "Histoires, annales, chroniques: Essai sur les genres historiques au moyen âge" *Annales: ESC* 28 (1973): 997–1016. For *brevitas* and *prolixitas*, Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, ed. *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 5–6.

<sup>35</sup> Elisabeth Van Houts, *Local and Regional Chronicles*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 78 (Turnhout: Belgium, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.44.1.

<sup>37</sup> Michael McCormick, *Les annals du haut moyen âge*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), 13–21.

<sup>38</sup> Guy Philippart, *Les légendiers latins et autres manuscrits hagiographiques*, 2 vols. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 24–25 (Turnhout: Belgium, 1977); Michel Sot, *Gesta episcoporum, gesta abbatum*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 37 (Turnhout: Belgium, 1981).



As much as modern scholars have sought to analyze these “genres” in typologies, medieval practices were fluid. Indeed, various forms of historical writing (*chronica*, *historiae*, etc.) often overlapped and were pursued together.<sup>39</sup> Medieval authors mixed and matched freely, even when they attached a label to their text. Another way to define medieval historical writings is to use modern categories. While such categories can be helpful analytically, one must remember the disparity between medieval and modern notions of “history.” For the sake of clarity, I will use Latin terms when referring to the medieval genres of historical narrative (e.g., *historia*, *gesta*), and reserve English terms (“history,” “biography”) for the modern categories. Indeed, one major point of this book is that forgeries highlight the differences between medieval *historiae* (and other historical narratives) and modern, professional histories. The creation, use, and attitudes about forgeries by monks all depended on medieval senses of the past, whereas their discovery, evidentiary value, and broader significance derive from modern perspectives. In particular, forgeries in medieval histories reveal the master and grand narratives which dominated monastic perceptions of the past, present, and future. These controlling schemes gave meaning to all parts of their historical writings – including forgeries.

Overall, we should realize that monks were drawn to historical writing for several key reasons. First, monks lived in institutions focused on time (the daily routine, the liturgical calendar, and the progress of years). Second, they were professional rememberers, charged with commemorating benefactors, and so past deeds (and future salvation) dominated their outlook. Third, monks were literate cultural editors, who used their writing skills to express what they thought the world had been and should be. Finally, if interested in “reform,” they also contrasted the present with the past in polemical ways to assure greater spirituality. All these fundamental aspects of monasticism could drive monks to rewrite their pasts. If one seeks to understand such rewritings, forgeries are a crucial nexus for analysis. This is because forgeries, in all their pretended verisimilitude, offer rich sources for medieval perceptions about the past, responses to present demands, and attempts to reconcile with a presumed future. Furthermore, on many occasions the two activities – forging and history-writing – were mutually reinforcing.

A book concerned with forgery demands a different approach. I begin with a chapter devoted to rethinking medieval forgeries. This chapter has four goals. The first is to define terms, especially why “forgery” has been

<sup>39</sup> Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD, Volume I: A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 1–62, ch. 1 “Nomenclature and Genre,” esp. 5–7.

a difficult category for historians and why more flexible and nuanced language may be needed to distinguish and comprehend the mental and material aspects of medieval forgeries. A second goal is to review known patterns of forging. A third goal is to introduce the three monasteries analyzed in part II, including contextualizing them as centers of forging activities. The fourth goal is to explain the relationship between forgeries, collective memory, and historical truth for medieval monks. Therefore, the last section outlines previous approaches and highlights key assumptions which underlay medieval monastics' use of forgeries and historical writings.

The most unusual part of my argument is contained in part II, "Twice Told Tales." These three chapters describe the relationship between forgeries, cartularies, and historical writing at three monastic houses: Saint Peter's, Ghent in the county of Flanders; Saint-Denis near Paris, France; and Christ Church, Canterbury in England. These micro-historical studies are deliberately restricted in time to allow for analysis in depth. Although the unique circumstances and sources of each monastery are respected, the structure of the chapters is parallel. In each case, I first relate the "story" of the house using texts produced at a particular juncture in time (the beginning, middle, and end of the eleventh century, respectively). Then, I revisit that "story" to analyze how (and why) it was accomplished and to suggest how we might understand it. I also consider if the "story" had later influence, or what I call a "sequel." Thus, each monastery's tale will be told twice in different modes of exposition. In a concluding section, I compare these micro-histories and consider what can be learned from them.

Next, I move forward in time, analyzing changes in the interaction of forgeries, cartularies, and historical writings during the twelfth century. These analyses build on the studies in part II by using them as foci to search for broader patterns. Chapters five and six are comparative and draw examples from other monasteries in England, France, and Flanders. Some of these houses were connected (either closely or loosely) with those analyzed previously and highlighting any links is a subsidiary goal of these chapters. Chapter five explains how changes in law and documentary culture affected perpetrating, detecting, and preventing forgery. Chapter six considers new challenges to the writing of plausible narratives and convincing histories. The conclusion considers the implications of my findings about medieval forgers and historians for modern historians' understanding of medieval Europe. Overall, these arguments show how medieval forgers rewrote the past in order to frame their present and shape a more desirable future.