

shows any sign of being influenced by Theoderic's customary<sup>59</sup>. And the same is true of why there is no evidence of subsequent attempts to use the customary to aid with the Benedictine reform of a religious community.

In Kassius Hallinger's view, Theoderic's decision to ignore the fact that his testimony would have little direct impact on monastic practice in the German-speaking world could mean only one thing, namely that the *Consuetudines Floriacenses antiquiores* were nothing more than an inconsequential piece of "Fleury propaganda"<sup>60</sup>. But as we already saw, the German scholar struggled to see as proper customs any of the non-Cluniac ones, due to the fact that the contents of these texts did not match his normative understanding of the genre. Against his model, Cochelin proposed to interpret all pre-1070 customs as documents that were strictly created for inspirational purposes. But, against her suggestions, the absence of evidence that Theoderic's customary was made with a normative aim in mind does not mean that the author (whether his contemporaries knew him by name or not) made no claims to authority. Three such claims can be identified in his work: namely, as a seasoned observer of monastic practice; as a reliable witness to Fleury's status as a "monarchic institution" towering above all other monasteries in "Gaul"; and as a relayer of key ideas and attitudes from that milieu. To understand how he arrived at these claims and subsequently justified them, we need to look at Theoderic's trajectory in life and the ideological and institutional settings that he frequented prior to writing the customary.

### The Shaping of an Authoritative Voice

Central to Theoderic's claim to authority as author of the Fleury customary was his earlier ambition to personally witness, on a theoretical and practical level, how Benedictine tradition was lived in major institutions that were deemed significant as monastic sites of memory and/or because of their influence on contemporary monastic ideology and practice. We can make an educated guess about how this ambition emerged by looking at his reconstructed life prior to entering Fleury in 988–992. Scholars agree that he was probably born around

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59) CCM 7,1 (as in n. 5) p. 409.

60) Ibid. p. 424.