

*monasteries, and which is second to none in Gaul It seems to me that you are right to look to know the customs of this place that are so worthy of imitation*⁹¹.

Although these words were written in deference to the text's addressee, Theoderic made it clear that his first-hand knowledge of Fleury's customs and his experience in comparing these to those of monasteries in Gaul made him an authoritative voice on their superiority. Further on in the text (and further in support of his authoritative voice) he also mentioned that he had studied the customs of Italian monks and the clerics of Laterans and found that these compared negatively to those of Monte Cassino and (especially) Fleury⁹².

However, being able to argue authoritatively that Fleury's customs were superior to those practices in other places was one thing; claiming to be an authoritative source was another. Theoderic knew full well that his readers were already well informed on the Fleury monks' cultic practices and customs (the best proof of which is the existence of the *Consuetudines Germaniae* Versions E and FF¹, and the many attestations of other direct and indirect encounters by German agents with the Loire abbey and its customs). And he also knew that they might find patronizing his claim to speak authoritatively about these. Although one must always be careful not to be fooled by the obligatory humility statements in works of this nature, the prologue to the *Illatio* contains a passage that may well be revealing of real objections by Richard and his peers about Theoderic's lecturing tone. In it, the author pretends that the abbot spoke the following words:

For what ironic purpose is it that you mock mine and our lack of knowledge by speaking so impudently? ... You should know that it is not up to you to write about how this most holy Father of ours has journeyed from this world to the Lord, for that is something that all of Christendom knows. Nor is it your place to tell the story of his translation, but only of that feast, which is called Illatio, and why it is called Illatio, and why it is celebrated on the

91) Theoderic of Fleury/Trier/Amorbach, *Consuetudines Floriacenses antiquiores*, in: CCM 7,3 (as in n. 23) p. 7f.: *Rogat paternitas vestra ymmo normali iniungit imperio, quatenus Gallicorum monasteriorum consuetudines atque monasticas disciplinas, quibus immutitum me esse profiteor, et precipue Ffloriacensis monasterii, quod quasi caput et archisterium quodammodo ceterorum videtur monasteriorum, quoque Gallia nichil excellentius habet, qualicumque sermone vobis debeam compendiose caraxare. Nec preposterum quidem iudico tanti loci imitabiles vos querere consuetudines ...*

92) CCM 7,1 (as in n. 5) p. 39.