

abbey's collection precisely in this way<sup>103</sup>. This explains why he not only called on Theoderic to submit several new texts with a distinctly 'Fleuriac' flavour, but also gave the latter free reign to express himself in a critical manner regarding the conduct and attitudes of his German peers, even if the abbot himself may not always have agreed.

### Conclusions

At the beginning of this paper, we saw that according to the current state of research, monastic customs of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries were written not for normative but for inspirational purposes. But as the present paper has argued based on a study of Theoderic's *Consuetudines Floriacenses antiquiores*, the then lack of incentive to use these documents as instruments of monastic governance does not mean that their authors declined to make any authoritative claims. Admittedly the personal background and full scope of the ones Theoderic made in his customary may not have been obvious to the earliest readers of the work. Indeed, these things must be carefully reconstructed from the fragmented evidence of his life history – more specifically his theoretical and real-life encounters with different monastic communities as well as with their practices and ideals – and a comparative reading of his extant body of work. However, this should not tempt us into thinking that we can ignore this information when trying to interpret Theoderic's intentions as author of the customary. If anything, as I hope this study has shown, any future discussions about the purpose and discourse of customs from this period ought to be embedded in a conversation about then current reflections and debates on monastic best practice. As highlighted here, these discussions should refer more explicitly to the broader literary context and reading culture in which the customs originated and were initially received. Further research into both things will no doubt help to uncover multiple claims to authority in these texts, beyond the normative one that scholarship has traditionally focused on.

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103) HALLINGER, Willigis (as in n. 44) p. 100; Heinrich WAGNER, *Die Äbte von Amorbach im Mittelalter*, Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter 54 (1992) p. 69–107, at p. 87f., and Hartmut HOFFMANN, *Schreibschulen des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts im Südwesten des Deutschen Reichs*, mit einem Beitrag von Elmar HOCHHOLZER, 2 vols. (MGH Schriften 53, 2004), here 2 p. 817.