AIM(S)

- To explore in detail the emergence of the Cistercian religious orders in Burgundy in the mid eleventh century.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of the foundation of Cîteaux and the emergence of the Cistercian order, and of distinctive Cistercian monastic practice;
- show a comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of certain specific themes, problems, developments and aspects of the Cistercian order and Cistercian monasticism;
- show a critical awareness of relevant documentary source materials, such as the Exordium Parvum, Carta Caritatis and Bernard’s Apologia;
- demonstrate a critical awareness of current scholarship and historiographical trends underpinning and shaping our knowledge of the Cistercian order and its significance in the medieval monastic tradition.

CONTENT

Far from being isolated, enclosed retreats from the world that as they are often portrayed monastic houses came to be an integral part of medieval society. This module focuses on the origins, emergence and development of the most revolutionary and influential monastic movement of the twelfth century. Beginning with the foundation of Cîteaux near Dijon in 1098 the Cistercian order spread from its centre in Burgundy to the whole of Western Europe and beyond, so that by the death of the most famous of all Cistercians, St Bernard, in 1153, the order numbered over 350 houses, which had either been founded ‘de novo’ or incorporated into the ranks of the Cistercians. Yet the narrative presented by the sources – both those emanating from Cîteaux and those written by non-Cistercians, tells a far from
straightforward story, and the emergence of the Cistercian order, and its distinctive qualities remain the subject of controversy. This module looks at the evidence for the foundation of Cîteaux, which is set in the context of the emergence of similar monastic movements of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and the growth of the order. This involves close study of the documentary evidence (which is provided in translation) and of the historiographical debate. It then goes on to consider, through a study of the controversy between the Cistercians and the Cluniacs and of Cistercian legislation, the emergence of a Cistercian identity.

ASSESSMENT

Coursework 100%

This module has two assessments:

1. One essay of 4000 words, worth 80%
2. One book review or document report of 1000 words, worth 20%

Example: To what extent was the controversy between the Cistercian order and Bishop of Cluny the result of theological differences as opposed to legislative alterations?

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Essential

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Casey, M., ‘Bernard of Clairvaux: the face behind the persona’, Cistercian Studies Quarterly 27(2) (1992), 133–51

Recommended


Lackner, Bede K., *The eleventh-century background of Citeaux* (Kalamazoo, 1972)


---------------, *The Cistercians: ideals and reality* (Kent State, USA, 1977)

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Pennington, M. Basil (ed.), *The Cistercian Spirit: a symposium in memory of Thomas Merton* (Kalamazoo, 1969)
