Abstract – Mapping Monasticism. A Digital Approach to the Network of Conques – This article explores the issues related to the monastic network of Sainte-Foy of Conques, presenting the results of a project that culminated in the creation of a digital map of the lands and churches donated to Conques, from its foundation up to the end of the twelfth century. It first situates the investigation on the monastic network of Sainte-Foy within different methodological frameworks, including the debates about digital mapping and the scholarship on Conques. Second, the article considers the results offered by the mapping exercise, exploring what the digital map reveals about Conques' monastic network. It then turns attention to possible intersections between the institutional geography promoted by the abbey and artistic practices. Ultimately, the article questions how the monastic network of Conques grew over time and across space, digitally mapping this expansion, and discusses its relevance in relation to artistic production, aiming to provide a springboard for further research.

Keywords – Digital mapping, monastic network, monastic foundations, artistic practices, memory

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Mapping Monasticism

A Digital Approach to the Network of Conques

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"In the time of King Henry the First […], Robert Fitzwalter and Sibill his wife, with one assent, moved with godly charitie, purposed them to visit the places of Peter and Paul, that by them and other holy saints ther, which they were disposed to visiten with a great devout mind […]; as they turned home againe, it came to there minds, by counsell, that they should visit an holy place of saint Giles in France with other holy saints in the way: […] when they should come from the said holy place of saint Giles, they were espied of brigants, and theeves that layne in caves and denns with strength, and waited upon them; and forasmuch as they were stronger than the said pilgrims, they fell upon them and robbed them and put them in prison, and fettered them with strong irons. […] They prayed devoutly to God and to the holy virgin Saint Faith to helpe them out of prison: and anone after by a vision Saint Faith appeared unto them and through helpe of God loosed their fetters, and brought them out of prison and there fetters with them, which remaine within this place [Conques] at this day"[1].

The liberation of Sybil de Cheyney and Robert Fitzwalter, her husband, performed after the couple was taken into captivity while returning to England from a pilgrimage to Rome, Saint-Gilles-du-Gard and other shrines, was likely recorded at the very beginning of the twelfth century, soon after the events it narrates. Whilst the original manuscript

1 William Dugdale, "Priory of St. Faith at Horsham, in Norfolk", in *Monasticon Anglicanum: a History of Abbies and Other Monasteries*, John Caley, Henry Ellis, Bulkeley Bandinel eds, vol. 3, London 1846, pp. 635–640, sp. p. 636.

is lost, the events are now transmitted in a copy (similarly lost), transcribed by William Dugdale in his *Monasticon Anglicanum*[2].

Detained in captivity, the couple evoked the help of God and St Foy (Faith). By the early twelfth century, the liberation of prisoners was indeed one of the specialties of St Faith. Bernard of Angers, in the first book of the collection of the saint's miracles, written between 1013 and 1020, mentions that similar supernatural liberations happen daily, so much so that the monks of Conques "loathed them – in short, they had become indifferent"[3]. Indeed, from the eleventh century onwards there was a proliferation of miracles related to the liberation of prisoners, involving not only St Faith but also other saints, such as St Benedict, St Mary Magdalene and, a few decades later, St Leonard. These narratives present many similarities: individuals are taken captive by bandits, Saracens, or other enemies; invoking the help of the saint, the captives are miraculously liberated[4]. These events are usually followed by a visit to the saint's shrines: in the words of the same Bernard of Angers, St Faith "orders the freed prisoners to hurry to Conques with their heavy fetters or chains to render their thanks", and it is in the shrines that the fetters, or other types of ex-votos, are often deposited[5].

The miraculous liberation of Sybil de Cheyney and Robert Fitzwalter, however, presents yet another event following the visit to the shrine:

> "And so then the made a faithfull promise and a voughe to God and to Saint Faith, that as soone as they came into England into there owne countrieth unto there owne manner of Horsford, that they should do edify there a monastery in the worship of God and S. Faith, and that it should be a cell to the said abbey of Counches and by the assent of th'abbot and bretheren there the foresaid Robert Fitzwalter brought with him twayne monkes of the said house, of the which one was cleped Barnard, and the other was cleped Girard"[6].

The donation of the fetters at the shrine was thus followed by the foundation of a monastery in honor of the saint. This event was rare but not uncommon, for example the Norman Bohemond founded the church of San Leonardo in Siponto (Apulia) following his miraculous liberation through the intercession of St Leonard of Noblat[7]. According to this account, however, the new monastery is placed under the abbey of Conques, a link

embodied by the twelve monks sent by the abbot with Robert Fitzwalker to establish the new foundation in England.

While much scholarly attention has been devoted to Conques and its history, as well as to other related sites, such as Horsham, the complex framework of relations between the mother abbey and its foundations has been peripheral to this rich debate[8]. Most recently, Kathleen Ashley has discussed some of these sites, such as Horsham St Faith and Sélestat, considering the role played by noble families in the diffusion of the cult of St Faith[9]. In a study on the priory of Santa Fede at Cavagnolo (Piedmont), Michele Vescovi explored broader issues related to the artistic geography of Conques, introducing the concept of monastic network, that is, the institutional geography established by the range of priories acquired by or donated to Conques[10].

This work is further developed here as we address the challenges and the results of a project that led to the creation of a digital map of the monastic network of Conques. This map presents the lands and churches donated to the abbey until the end of the twelfth century. It is first necessary to place this work within different methodological frameworks, that is, the debates about digital mapping and, briefly, the scholarship on Conques. From here, the article considers the results offered by the mapping exercise, exploring what the digital map reveals about the monastic network of Conques, to then turn its attention on the intersection between the institutional geography promoted by the abbey and artistic practices. Ultimately, the article questions how the monastic network of Conques grew over time and across space, digitally mapping this expansion and exploring its relevance in relation to artistic production, aiming to provide a springboard for further research.

Methodology

According to Jeremy W. Crampton, "digital mapping concerns the art and science of using digital technologies to deal with geospatial data", that is, to process and analyze data associated with particular locations[11]. The theoretical, technical, and technological frameworks related to data

collection and data visualization are constantly in motion. At its core, digital mapping belongs to the "spatial humanities", a branch of digital humanities specifically centered on the physical and geographical space in relation to broader cultural and historical questions. David Joseph Wrisley suggests that it would be more accurate to define digital mapping as "map visualization, or visualization of spatial information on a map interface"[12].

In the field of pre-modern studies, geo-referenced data and its visualization has been at the core of a number of innovative projects, and their results are showing the potential of such an approach. For example, *Visualizing Venice* and its various sub-projects, offered a novel approach to digital technologies, concerned with the mapping and visualization of the city and its transformation over time, the connection between sites and buildings and, more generally, with the idea of "an integrated view of historic cities as working organism"[13]. The project DECIMA (Digitally Encoded Census Information and Mapping Archive) examined data from sixteenth-century censuses of Florence, such as occupation and property ownership, creating a GIS tool that provides a deeper and more granular level of investigation in the social history of the early modern city[14]. Digital mapping is particularly effective in highlighting and presenting networks, even beyond urban contexts, as discussed by Alessandro Nova and Giancarla Periti in relation to the range of monastic sites affiliated with the Benedictine Cassinese Congregation of Italy in the early modern period[15].

Similar questions and intellectual concerns led the work of our research team. *Mapping Monasticism* took, at its core, the challenges offered by a complex data set, namely the properties and priories of the abbey of Conques, georeferenced and visualized on a map interface. While other monastic networks or orders have received sustained scholarly scrutiny (for example, Cluny, or the Cistercians), much less attention has been devoted to Conques and its priories[16].

2   Kathleen M. Ashley, "The Mural Paintings of Horsham Saint Faith, Norfolk: Secular Patronage and Monastic Memory", in *Out of the stream. Studies in medieval and Renaissance mural painting*, Luís Urbano Afonso, Vitor Serrão eds, London 2007, pp. 318–334; Faye Taylor, *Miracula, Saints' Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes. Bobbio, Conques and Post-Carolingian Society*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nottingham 2012, p. 122; Kathleen M. Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints*, Abingdon 2021, pp. 122–126.

3   Pamela Sheingorn, *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Philadelphia 1995, pp. 102–103. Pierre Bonnassie, Frédéric de Gournay, "Sur la datation du Livre des miracles de sainte Foy de Conques", *Annales du Midi*, CVII/212 (1995), pp. 457–473.

4   On miracles related to prisoners, see: Michael E. Goodich, "The Miraculous Military Escape in Canonization Documents", in *Lives and Miracles of Saints: Studies in Medieval Latin Hagiography*, Michael E. Goodich ed., Aldershot 2004, pt. XIX, pp. 1–19; Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Imprisonment in the Medieval Religious Imagination, c. 1150–1400*, London 2011, pp. 36–57; Jessica N. Richardson, "Between the Limousin and the Holy Land: Prisoners, Performance, and the Portal of San Leonardo at Siponto", *Gesta*, LIV/2 (2015), pp. 165–194.

5   Sheingorn, *The Book* (n. 3), p. 103; Richardson, "Between the Limousin" (n. 4), pp. 168–169, 179. On votive offerings, see: *Agents of Faith. Votive Objects in Time and Place*, cat. exh. (New York, Bard Graduate Center Gallery, 2018–2019), Ittai Weinryb ed., New York 2018.

6   Dugdale, "Priory" (n. 1), p. 636.

7   Richardson, "Between the Limousin" (n. 4), pp. 188–190.

8   See, for example: Jean-Claude Fabre, "Le culte de sainte Foy et les possession de Conques dans le Tarn-et-Garonne", *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Tarn-et-Garonne*, CVIII (1983), pp. 7–23; Frédéric de Gournay, *Étude du cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques (actes postérieurs à 1030)*, Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail 1988; Kathleen M. Ashley, Pamela Sheingorn, "Le culte de Sainte Foy à Sélestat et à Conques: étude comparative", *Annuaire. Les Amis de la Bibliothèque Humaniste de Sélestat*, XLIV (1994), pp. 77–83; Frédéric de Gournay, "1200 ans après: le diplôme de Louis le Pieux et la fondation de Conques", *Études Aveyronnaises. Recueil des travaux de la Société des Lettres, Sciences et Arts de l'Aveyron*, (2019), pp. 103–116. See also Amy Remensnyder, "Of Halos and Crowns", in *Eadem, The Remembrance of Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France*, Ithaca/London 1995, pp. 89–107.

9   Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy* (n. 2), pp. 119–148.

10 Michele Luigi Vescovi, "Transregional Dynamics, Monastic Networks: Santa Fede in Cavagnolo, Conques, and the Geography of Romanesque Art", in *The Regional and Transregional in Romanesque Art and Architecture*, John McNeill, Richard Plant eds, London 2021, pp. 103–118.

11 Jeremy W. Crampton, "Digital Mapping", in *Understanding Spatial Media*, Rob Kitchin, Tracey P. Lauriault, Matthew W. Wilson eds, London 2017, pp. 35–43.

12 David Joseph Wrisley, "Spatial Humanities: an Agenda for Pre-Modern Research", *Porphyra*, XI/22 (2014), pp. 96–107.

13 Caroline Bruzelius, "Overview. The Visualizing Venice Enterprise", in *Visualizing Venice. Mapping and Modeling Time and Change in a City*, Kristin L. Huffman, Andrea Giordano, Caroline Bruzelius eds, Abingdon 2018, pp. 1–4, sp. p. 3.

14 *Mapping Space, Sense, and Movement in Florence. Historical GIS and the Early Modern City*, Nicholas Terpstra, Colin Rose eds, Abingdon 2016.

15 Alessandro Nova, Giancarla Periti, "Introduction", in *The Network of Cassinese Arts in Renaissance Italy*, Alessandro Nova, Giancarla Periti eds, Rome 2021, pp. 9–42.

16 See, for example: Joan Evans, *The Romanesque Architecture of the Order of Cluny*, Cambridge 1938; *Cluny, 910–2010: onze siècles de rayonnement*, Neil Stratford ed., Paris 2010; *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honor of Peter Fergusson*, Terryl N. Kinder ed., Turnhout 2004; *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, Mette Bikedal Bruun ed., New York 2013.

Yet, the monastic network of Conques can be established with a good degree of certainty. Gustave Desjardins, in the second half of the nineteenth century, discovered in the archives of the *Société des Lettres, Sciences et Arts de l'Aveyron*, the twelfth-century cartulary of the abbey in which 548 documents (dating between 801 and 1180) have been transcribed (Rodez, Bibliothèque de la Société des lettres de l'Aveyron, inv. 3 E 001)[17]. In 1879, Desjardins published his monograph on the *Cartulaire de Conques*, in which information provided by the twelfth-century cartulary was cross-referenced with other sources, including a *pancarte*, dating from the sixteenth-century, listing all the possessions of the abbey at that time[18].

The Conques Cartulary has attracted the interest of scholars. Amongst these, Frédéric de Gournay delved into the richness of this collection, offering valuable insights on the toponymy, vassal system, and the broader social, political, and institutional issues revealed by this collection of documents[19]. The history of Conques, similar to many other monastic institutions, is marked by donations which augment the wealth and possessions of the abbey. In this case, Louis the Pious played a fundamental role through his 819 diploma which constituted the patrimony of the newly established abbey and traced the history of the site from a hermitage to a monastic community[20]. Throughout its history, the abbey had been the subject of donations from ruling families and individuals. Beyond this, De Gournay has examined the role of other social groups, highlighting that during the tenth century, and until 1031, the majority of cartulary documents refer to donations or to the trade of goods of a relatively modest nature. These documents show a geographical density in the area of Conques and reveal that the donors were not aristocrats[21]. From the end of the tenth century, the number of acquisitions and donations increased substantially, continuing under Abbot Odolricus (1031–1065), under whom the reconstruction of the abbey church was initiated, reaching the apex of prosperity under the abbacy of Begon III (1087–1108)[22].

The project *Mapping Monasticism* builds upon these rich studies. At its inception, developing from previous research, its focus was mainly art historical, related to the ecclesiastical foundations of Conques, such as Horsham[23]. In other words, our interest was in mapping religious buildings donated to Conques, or lands on which the mother abbey would later promote the construction of priories or chapels. However, it was soon realized that including all other donations to the mother abbey, and not exclusively chapels or religious buildings, would provide a bigger data set, offering a more nuanced understanding of the monastic network of Conques.

Desjardins' *Cartulaire de Conques* provided the data for this project. We based our study on the localities identified in the commentary of the cartulary, providing amendments if corrected by subsequent literature. Further data, occasionally not provided by Desjardins, such as the date of the donation, has been excavated in the Latin edition of the cartulary itself. The primary concern of this project relates to the monumental heritage of the monastic network of Conques. Thus, even at the risk of over-simplifying the richness of the data, we divided the donations to the abbey into three main categories. The first, "churches", relates to chapels or priories donated to Conques, or lands donated with the purpose of erecting religious buildings. In the second category, "lands", we recorded the location of plots donated to the abbey. Our aim was not to record and identify individual plots but, rather, to identify their locations. For this reason, donations of multiple plots located in the same area have been recorded only once. Furthermore, if a church had been donated with lands, we recorded the donation in the first category. In the third category we nested all the other donations that were not so easily clustered under "church" or "land".

Data from Desjardins' edition of the cartulary has been organized in spreadsheets, divided between the categories mentioned above. For each donation we identify the location providing further metadata, such as the date of acquisition/donation (if available) and the reference to Desjardins: once each site has been located, further metadata has been added to the spreadsheet recording the distance from the mother abbey. We recorded distance according to two variables:

the linear distance (expressed in km, and to the nearest whole kilometer) from Conques, and the walking distance, calculated by Google Maps. The walking distance is recorded in walking days, calculated on the assumption that a person could travel on foot for twelve hours per day; donations within a six hour walk from Conques were recorded as "immediate vicinity" and 0 days of travel, donations from six to twelve hours were recorded as 1 day of travel, from twelve to twenty-four hours were 2 days, and so on.

We are aware of the intrinsic limitations in using the calculation of the walking distance as outlined above, as it assumes that a person is capable of walking for twelve hours per day. The estimated walking itinerary is based upon modern roads or trails accessible by foot rather than routes which would have been used by medieval travelers. Maritime travel (which mainly applies to sites in England) is estimated based on transport by ferry. Furthermore, it does not account for changes in the landscape since the Middle Ages which would impact travel time, for example the transformations of the natural landscape, in terms of orography and vegetation, and the availability of bridges to cross rivers. Nevertheless, it still provides, at the very least, a basic and consistent dataset to measure the distance between the mother abbey and its foundations.

Each donation or location mentioned by Desjardins has been pinned on Google Maps (http://lncn.ac/mappingmon). This platform has been selected mainly for its accessibility [Fig. 1]. With its combination of satellite imagery, aerial photography, street maps and street views, and with the route-planning tools, Google Maps makes our map of the monastic network of Conques more accessible to the wider public. The locations are color-coded: red for the mother abbey of Conques, blue for churches, green for lands, and yellow for other foundations. In instances of churches and other foundations, we first attempted to match their dedications to existing sites and/or buildings, however where this was not possible the marker was placed in the vicinity of the listed commune. Similarly, lands were identified based upon the commune or village listed in the cartulary and, in rare cases, pinned to a more specific locale if

this was suggested by toponymy. Ambiguities in names have been solved, where possible, by close reading of the passages together with references in subsequent studies. Additionally, metadata were added to the map, mainly to include the date of foundation if known. *Mapping Monasticism* is a constant work-in-progress, a project that could be further developed and used by other research groups. While the resulting map cannot be considered an exhaustive record of Conques' holdings, it still provides an agile and accessible tool for the visualization and understanding of the monastic network of Conques.

Mapping the monastic network: analysis

The project mapped 382 sites amongst those listed by Desjardins, including 204 locations of lands and 162 churches. The digital mapping of the monastic network of Conques might be analyzed by considering the variables of space and time. In the context of this project, with space we explore

17 Gustave Desjardins, "Essai sur le cartulaire de l'abbaye de Sainte-Foi de Conques en Rouergue (IXe–XIIe siècles)", *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, XXXIII (1872), pp. 254–282.

18 Gustave Desjardins, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques en Rouergue*, Paris 1879. Another list of the benefices has been published in 1648: "Benefices du Diocese de Rhodez", in *Pouillé General Contenant les Benefices de l'Archevesché de Bourges*, Paris 1648, pp. 11–18. Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy* (n. 2), pp. 18–20. The geographical focus of Desjardins relate to the possessions of the abbey as defined in the twelfth-century cartulary, based in the European continent.

19 See, amongst other publications: Frédéric de Gournay, "Aperçu sur les données du cartulaire de Conques", *Revue du Rouergue*, XXI (1990), pp. 6–25; *Idem*, "La toponymie des cantons de Conques et de Marcillac", *Études Aveyronnaises. Recueil des travaux de la Société des Lettres, Sciences et Arts de l'Aveyron*, (2015), pp. 407–426; *Idem, Le Rouergue au tournant de l'an mil: de l'ordre carolingien à l'ordre féodal (IXe–XIIe siècle)*, Rodez 2004 [online: http://books.openedition.org/pumi/30411, 05.06.2023].

20 Hervé Oudart, "L'ermite et le prince. Les débuts de la vie monastique à Conques (fin VIIIe–début XIe siècle)", *Revue Historique*, CCIXVII/1 (1997), pp. 3–39, sp. pp. 17–18; Frédéric de Gournay, "Le diplôme de l'empereur Louis le Pieux en faveur de monastère de Conques", *Études Aveyronnaises. Recueil des travaux de la Société des Lettres, Sciences et Arts de l'Aveyron*, (1996), pp. 127–135.

21 De Gournay, *Le Rouergue* (n. 19), ch. 1, 51–52; ch. 3, 41–46.

22 Jacques Bousquet, *Le Rouergue au premier Moyen Âge (vers 800 – vers 1250): les pouvoirs, leurs rapports et leurs domaines*, Rodez 1992, pp. 284–316; Frédéric de Gournay, *Les documents écrits de l'abbaye de Conques (IXe–XIIIe s.)*, Mémoire de DEA en Histoire, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail 1992, pp. 106–148; Lei Huang, *L'abbatiale Sainte-Foy de Conques (IXe–XIIe siècles)*, (Ph.D. Dissertation), Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne 2018, pp. 22–24.

23 Vescovi, "Transregional Dynamics" (n. 10).
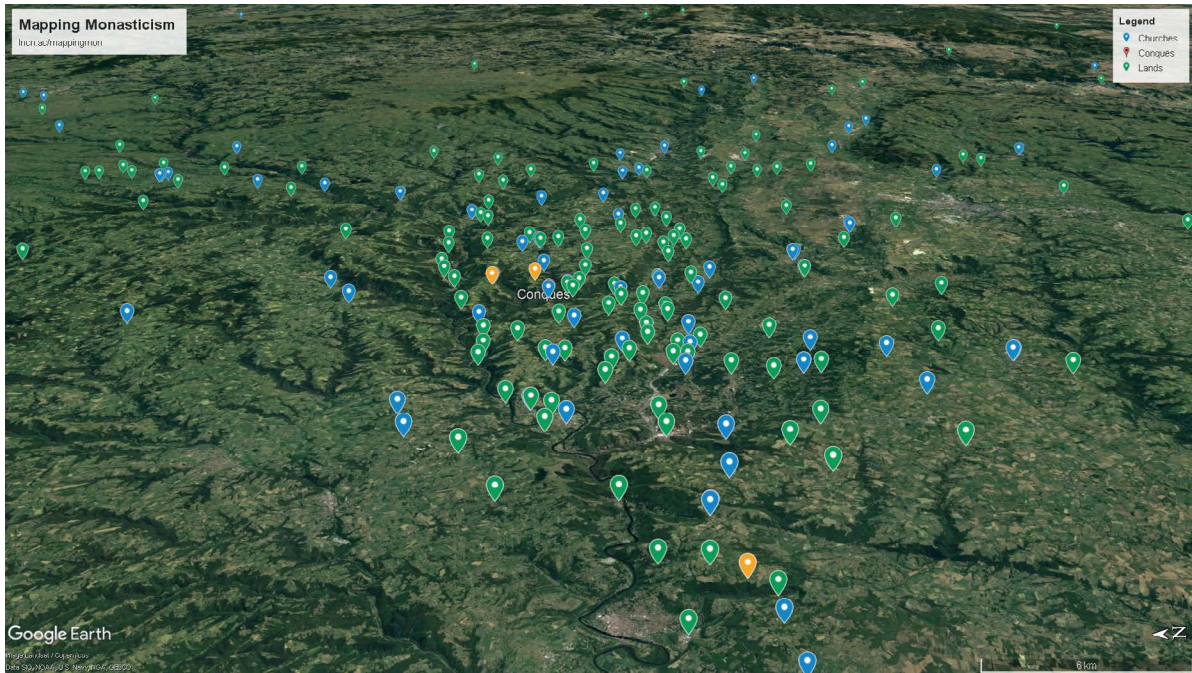
the distance of the foundations from the mother abbey, and their geographical density [Fig. 2]. The majority of the churches, priories and chapels related to Conques, 100 in total (62%), are within 60 km (linear distance) from the mother abbey, of these, 50 churches (31%) are located within 20 km from Conques (and further 12 between 20 and 25 km)[24]. In total, 112 churches (ca 70%) are located within 100 km. Similarly, 161 locations related to the donation of lands to the abbey (on a total of 204, ca 80%) are located within 60 km from the mother abbey, of these, 94 (46%) are within a 20 km radius from Conques[25].

This dataset shows that the density of the properties/dependencies of the abbey, whether churches or lands, is particularly prominent around Conques. More precisely, the immediate vicinity of the abbey (defined as within a six-hour walk from the mother abbey) includes 48 churches (30%) and 78 locations related to lands (38%), and 43 churches (27%) and 57 sites related to lands (28%) are located between six and 12 hours of walk. In total, 91 churches (56%) and 135 land sites (66%) are located within the radius of one day walk (12 hours) from the mother abbey.
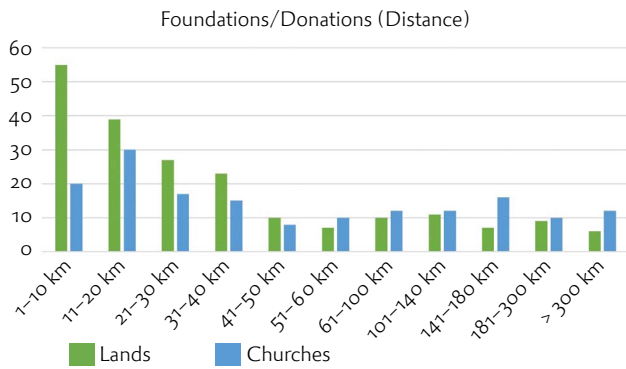
Moving from the category of space to that of time, we considered the donations to the abbey across its history up to the thirteenth century

as recorded in the cartulary, compiled by Desjardins and integrated by the same scholar with further data [Fig. 3]. We divided the timeline in seven periods.

1. The foundation and early phase, including the donations by Louis the Pious (819) and Pepin I (838);
2. From 839 until the end of the abbacy of Arlald I (992), this period includes the translation of St Faith's body (866);
3. Until the abbacy of Odolricus (1030);
4. The abbacy of Odolricus (1031–1065);
5. Until the abbacy of Begon III (1086);
6. The abbacy of Begon III (1087–1108);
7. From 1109 onwards.

Scholars have already explored the trends in the donations to the abbey: this chronological division, instead, questions how the monastic network expanded, and whether the donations of churches and lands followed similar patterns. In dividing these periods, we placed a primary focus on the chronological framework in which the abbey church was under construction, from the abbacy of Odolricus to that of Begon, from 1031 to 1108.

Starting with the donation of chapels and churches, the abbey of Conques expanded substantially its own monastic network from the abbacy of Odolricus (1031–1065) onwards: between

Foundations/Donations (Distance)

Lands ■ Churches ■

Churches | Lands

1. 818–838
2. 839–992
3. 993–1030
4. 1031–1065
5. 1066–1086
6. 1087–1108
7. After 1109

2 / Chart showing the geographical distribution of churches and lands belonging to Conques (analysis by T. Shannon and M. Vescovi)

3 / Charts showing the chronological range of the foundations of and donations to Conques (analysis by T. Shannon and M. Vescovi)
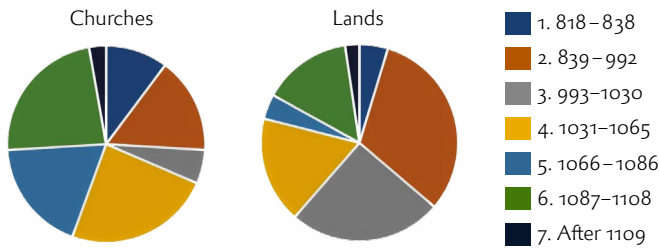
this period and the end of the abbacy of Begon, Conques received at least 71 churches, that is, close to half of its total number (164). While numbers should be considered with care – for example, the donation/foundation date of 40 churches is unknown – the expansion of the monastic network is in this period indisputable, as between 840 and 1030 the abbey received only 34 churches. The expansion of the monastic network in relation to lands presents a different picture. In this case, the number of locations mentioned in donations from the abbacy of Odolricus to that of Begon is 62, which is less than the number of locations acquired by the abbey between 840 and 1030 (105). Also in this case, it is necessary to carefully consider these numbers, as 22 locations are generically related to the eleventh century.

When considering time and space together, it becomes apparent that the early donations and/or acquisitions were, from the very beginning, within a radius of ca 30 km, obviously with some exceptions: for example, Conques owned a priory in Molompize (Cantal), 91 km from the mother abbey, already in 823, and a vinery in Jarjayes (Hautes-Alpes) donated in 928[26]. Only during the eleventh century did the abbey begin to receive donations or exchanges for lands and churches located more than 100 km away from Conques. In

the same period, however, Conques continued to receive donations of holdings closer to the abbey.

During the abbacy of Begon, Conques expanded its network even further, receiving donations well beyond 300 km away from the mother abbey. Noble families and bishops promoted these donations, from Peter of Andouque, bishop of Pamplona, to Sancho Sanchez, count of Erro, Theobald III, count of Blois, Hildegard with her sons, Otto of Hohenstaufen, bishop of Strasbourg, and his brother Frederick, duke of Swabia[27]. While local noble families (or families from nearby areas) played a key role in the donations of Conques (with many of them eventually joining the abbey as monks and later abbots), under the abbacy of Begon noble families, such as Sybil de Cheyney and her husband, were the agents of the expansion

24 Twenty churches were located within 10 km from the mother abbey; 30 between 11–20 km; 17 between 21–30 km; 15 between 31–40 km; 8 between 41–50 km; and 10 between 51–60 km.

25 The project identified 55 locations related to lands within 10 km; 39 between 11–20 km; 27 between 21–30 km; 23 between 31–40 km; 10 between 41–50 km; and 7 between 51–60 km. The complex framework of the donations to Conques has been extensively discussed by De Gournay, *Les documents écrits* (n. 22), pp. 121–148.

26 Desjardins, *Cartulaire* (n. 18), pp. lxxxviii, cx. On the earliest donations to Conques, see: De Gournay, *Les documents écrits* (n. 22), pp. 106–112; Idem, "Aperçu sur les données" (n. 19), pp. 9–25.

27 Desjardins, *Cartulaire* (n. 18), pp. cxv–cxx.

of the monastic network of Conques across Europe, from the Iberian Peninsula, to England, Alsace, and Northern Italy[28].

Monastic network and artistic practices

Scholars have long acknowledged the crucial impact of the artistic production of Conques well beyond the abbey's monastic enclosure. For example, a long historiographical tradition, from Arthur Kingsley Porter to Manuel Castiñeiras, acknowledged the significance of its sculpture for Santiago de Compostela[29]. Beyond the Camino, scholars have also emphasized the artistic dialogue that existed between Conques and the monumental landscape of Auvergne, with Lei Huang recently arguing for a "*géographie technique commune*" between the two areas in the second half of the eleventh century[30].

In the stimulating and rich debate on Conques beyond Conques, one issue has received only cursory attention: to what extent did the monastic network established by Conques, visualized in our map, intersect with artistic practices? Furthermore, did the establishment of new priories involve the mobility of artefacts, masons, figurative

repertoires? More generally, what can be gleaned from closer observation of artistic production across the monastic network of the abbey? The connection between institutional geographies and artistic production have been the subject of recent work, for example Joanna Cannon's study of the Provincia Romana of the early Dominican Order, or the edited volume on the Benedictine Cassinese Congregation of Italy in the early modern period[31]. The aim of this investigation is not to establish a tautological paradigm, that is, to argue for the existence of an art of the monastic network of Conques. Such an approach, proposed in relation to Cluny, has shown substantial shortcomings[32]. Instead, through discussion of a few sites, the purpose of this section is to outline the complex intersections between the monastic network and its artistic production.

A case in point in this investigation is provided by the church of Santa Fede in Cavagnolo Po, in the modern region of Piedmont, roughly 30 km north-east of Turin [Fig. 4]. According to the Conques *pancarte*, it was a priory of Conques, in the ancient diocese of Vercelli[33]. The institutional status of the church is also demonstrated by the last will of John II, Marquis of Montferrat (r. 1338–1372), in

which it is listed as "the priory of Santa Fede, sub-
ject to the abbey of Conques", adding that, in this
period, it was usually managed by one prior with
two monks[34]. A detailed analysis of this building
has been already discussed elsewhere[35]. In sum-
mary, the structure presents a complex architec-
tural palimpsest with two construction phases,
the first, in squared ashlars, started from both
the apses and the façade but was interrupted after
the first three pairs of the eastern piers had been
erected. The construction of the church was even-
tually completed in brick by a second workshop.

The two different construction campaigns cor-
respond to the activity of two different workshops
of sculptors, and many capitals carved by the
first workshop were left unfinished. The produc-
tion of this first workshop, mainly confined to
flat-leafed capitals with foliate decoration, does

28 De Gournay, *Les documents écrits* (n. 22), pp. 116–118; *Idem*,
Le Rouergue (n. 19), ch. 1, 50–72; ch. 3, 3–20, 86–87; Ashley,
The Cults of Sainte Foy (n. 2), pp. 120–131. In the second half
of the eleventh century, also miracle narratives related to St
Faith are now located in places distant from the abbey, see
Kathleen M. Ashley, Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text,
Sign, & History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy*, Chicago 1999,
pp. 100–116. See also Faye Taylor, "Mapping miracles: Me-
dieval hagiography and the potential of GIS", in *History and*

GIS: Epistemologies, Considerations and Reflections, Alexander
von Lünen, Charles Travis eds, Dordrecht 2012, pp. 111–126.
29 Arthur Kingsley Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage
Roads*, Boston 1923, vol. 1, pp. 228–233; Manuel Antonio
Castiñeiras González, "Da Conques a Compostella: Retorica
e Performance nell'Era dei Portali Parlanti", in *Medievo: Im-
magine e Memoria*, Arturo Carlo Quintavalle ed., Milan 2009,
pp. 233–251; Manuel Antonio Castiñeiras González, "Ojo
avizor: Porter, un Pantocrátor errático y la estela de Conques
en Compostela", *Ad Limina*, IX (2018), pp. 247–268.
30 Lei Huang, "De l'Auvergne à Conques: à propos d'une géo-
graphie de techniques de construction romane", in *Construire!
Entre Antiquité et Époque Moderne*, Giles Bienvenu, Mar-
tial Monteil, Hélène Rousteau-Chambon eds, Paris 2019,
pp. 87–94.
31 Joanna Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches: Art in the
Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Four-
teenth Centuries*, New Haven 2013; *The Network* (n. 15).
32 Evans, *The Romanesque Architecture* (n. 16); Paolo Piva, *Le chiese
cluniacensi. Architettura monastica nell'Italia del Nord*, Milan 1998.
33 Desjardins, *Cartulaire* (n. 18), p. cxix: "*Au Diocese de Vercelles
en Piedmont. Prieuré de saincte Foy de Visterne, ou de Cananhol*".
34 "*in villa Cavagnolii diocesis Vercell. Prioratus Sanctae Fidis,
subjectus Abbatiae Monasterii Conchu. Bathen* [sic! Ruthen].
*Diocesis Ordinis S. Benedicti, qui prioratus est solitus gubernari
per unum priorem cum duobus Monacis*". Benvenuto de Sancto
Georgio, *Historia Montis-Ferrati ab origine marchionum illius
tractus usque ad annum* MCCCCXC, *Rerum Italicarum Scripto-
res*, XXIII, Ludovico Antonio Muratori ed., Mediolani 1733,
col. 570; Michele Luigi Vescovi, *'Monferrato' medievale. Cro-
cevia di culture e sperimentazioni*, Verona 2012, pp. 88–89, 107,
128, n. 28.
35 On this see, most recently: Vescovi, *'Monferrato' medieva-
le* (n. 34), pp. 87–109; Chiara Devoti, Monica Naretto, *L'ab-
baziale di Santa Fede a Cavagnolo Po*, Savigliano 2015; Vescovi,
"Transregional Dynamics" (n. 10), pp. 105–109.

5 / Capital,
Santa Fede,
Cavagnolo Po,
12th century

not find similarities in the Lombard artistic traditions, yet it finds comparisons in some of the capitals at Conques[36]. Amongst these is a capital on the easternmost pier, facing the south aisle. It presents two orders of flat leaves, with a palmette alternating with a leaf, which contains a sphere at its apex, a unicum in the artistic landscape of the north of Italy [**Fig. 5**]. Its overall layout and design present many similarities with a type of capital used in the mother abbey of Conques [**Fig. 6**], located in the west aisle of the south transept, in proximity to the nave of the church[37].

Unfortunately, very little is known about the circumstances of the foundation of Santa Fede, as no documentary evidence survives from this period. Johannes Battista Moriondus, an eighteenth-century theologian and scholar, was able to read in Cavagnolo a fragment of a Chronicle reporting "the origin of the monastery of Santa Fede [...] composed by its monks", that has been lost[38]. Nevertheless, the construction of the church arguably dates from around the early

twelfth century, that is, from the period under the abbacy of Begon. At this time through abbatial efforts and through the agency of noble families the monastic network of Conques was spreading throughout Europe[39]. Not only documentary evidence (although late in relation to the time of the priory's establishment), but artistic production itself demonstrates the connection between Conques and Cavagnolo.

Cavagnolo, however, is an exception, rather than the rule, in the analysis of the artistic practices of the monastic network of Conques. We need only turn to the church Sainte-Foy in Sélestat, less than 20 km west of the Rhine. A church at the site was donated to Conques in 1094–1095 by Otto of Hohenstaufen, bishop of Strasbourg, and his brother Frederick, duke of Swabia[40]. The existing building, instead, was erected only in the second half of the twelfth century. The structure was built in granite of Andlau and sandstone of Schirmeck, local stones that give to Romanesque architecture in Alsace its characteristic color palette, ranging

from red to yellow [Fig. 7]. The architecture of
Sainte-Foy in Sélestat strongly belongs to the local
tradition, as demonstrated, for example, by the
parietal decoration of the apse, similar to that
of Notre-Dame at Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, or, even
more closely related in its double-layer arcade, to
the apsidal decoration of Vicherey. The interior
presents an alternate system, linked to rib-vaults
on the nave: from this perspective, it is similar
to the interior of Rosheim or Saint-Jean-Saverne.
Furthermore, the respond facing the nave of the
weak pier, as in Notre Dame of Saint-Die, does not
support any transversal element[41]. In other words,
Sainte-Foy at Sélestat speaks the architectural
and decorative languages of the local area and
very little, if nothing at all, belongs to the artistic
tradition of Conques.

A similar situation is revealed also at the
church of Esclottes. In 1076 Amancuus donat-
ed a piece of land to Conques, so a church could
be erected on the site[42]. The existing church of
Saint-Blaise in Esclottes, instead, dates from at

36 Vescovi, "Transregional Dynamics" (n. 10), pp. 110–111.
37 Furthermore, a capital with a similar layout appears also
    in the portal of the south transept of the abbey church of
    Conques, see Éliane Vergnolle, Henri Pradalier, Nelly Pou-
    sthomis-Dalle, "Conques, Sainte-Foy. L'abbatiale romane", in
    Congrès Archéologique de France. Monuments de l'Aveyron, Paris
    2011, 71–160, sp. p. 102; Huang, *L'Abbatiale Sainte-Foy* (n. 22),
    vol. 1, pp. 227, 240; vol. 2, pp. 50, 116.
38 Josephum Antonium Moriondus, *Monumenta Aquensia*, Taurini
    1790, vol. 2, 25: "*Inter Monferratensia Chronica recenseri possunt duo,
    quae ad Monasteria in ea ditione posita pertinebant. Primi fragmen-
    tum mihi fuit olim a quodam Cavagnolii Communitatis Consiliario
    ostensum, in quo agebatur de origine Monasterii S. Fidei in eo terri-
    torio extantis, quod nunc Mensae Episcopali Aquensi probante Rege
    nostro in perpetuo fuit a S. Pontifice unitum, ex quo concludi posset ab
    illius Monachis fuisse conscriptum; ubi autem integrum extet posteri-
    tas forte deteget aliquando*". Vescovi, '*Monferrato' medievale* (n. 34),
    p. 104; Vescovi, "Transregional Dynamics" (n. 10), p. 111.
39 Vescovi, '*Monferrato' medievale* (n. 34), pp. 7–21, 87–109 (with
    a discussion on the rich debate on the church).
40 Jean-Yves Mariotte, "La Comtesse Hildegarde, fondatrice de
    Sainte-Foy", *Annuaire. Les amis de la Bibliothèque Humaniste de
    Sélestat*, XLIV (1994), pp. 7–16.
41 Caroline Vienney, "Sélestat, église Sainte-Foy", in *Congrès Ar-
    chéologique de France. Monuments de Strasbourg et du Bas-Rhin*, Pa-
    ris 2006, pp. 133–148; Jean-Philippe Meyer, "Sculptures romanes
    de Sainte-Foy de Sélestat et leurs modèles à Worms", *Cahiers
    alsaciens d'archéologie, d'art et d'histoire*, LVIII (2015), pp. 21–31.
42 Desjardins, *Cartulaire* (n. 18), p. 51; Vescovi, "Transregional
    Dynamics" (n. 10), p. 114.

7 / Nave,
Sainte-Foy,
Sélestat, second
half of the
12th century

8 / Capital with
Adam and Eve,
Sainte-Blaise,
Esclottes, Sainte-
-Blaise, 12th century

least 70–80 years after the donation of the land, probably replacing the original structure built immediately after the donation. This building has received only cursory attention from scholars. Nevertheless, it has been proposed that both its architecture, as well as its capitals, are the product of a workshop previously active also in the nearby abbey of Saint-Ferme[43]. The two churches present not only a similar elevation and architectural layout, but also stunning similarities in the carved decoration. A capital in Esclottes represents Adam and Eve, framed by two volutes. Eve stands at the center of the main face of the capital, her legs crossed, holding the apple in her left hand, while touching the tree with her right hand. On the right, Adam is carved on the contiguous face of the capital, standing with his torso bent forward, as if reaching for the apple held by Eve [Fig. 8]. The same scene appears also in Saint-Ferme: while the size of the capital is different, as well as the carving style, the general layout is extremely similar, with Adam on the

right, bending frontally and Eve standing with her legs crossed [Fig. 9].

These examples reveal two different dynamics. On the one hand, Sélestat and Esclottes present an extremely similar situation: both were donated to Conques in the final quarter of the eleventh century and both were rebuilt a couple of generations later (ca 50–70 years after the donation). In each case, the artistic production at the site is distant from that of Conques, it is the product of what could be defined as local workshops, strongly linked to the artistic traditions of the areas. On the contrary, the analysis of Cavagnolo suggests a stricter adherence to the artistic practices of Conques, and the evidence suggests that the existing church was erected around the time of the affiliation or donation to the mother abbey. Thus, this might suggest that the chronological proximity between the establishment of the priory and the construction of the church might have had an important role in the transmission of artistic practices.

9 / Capital with Adam and Eve, abbey-church of Saint-Ferme, Saint--Ferme, 12th century

Analysis of the evidence from the Conques cartulary, the miracles of St Faith and foundation legends, such as that of Horsham or Sélestat, reveal interesting scenarios related to the establishment of priories: firstly, the evidence shows that, like Sybil and her husband, donors visit Conques. Secondly, monks are sent from Conques to populate the new foundation, such as Barnard and Girard to Horsham, or Bertram sent to Sélestat – according to Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, the vast majority of the monks of Sélestat were sent continuously from Conques[44]. Finally, as mentioned above, in 1076 Amancuus donated, together with other goods, two *mansi* in Esclottes, with the request that "the monk Deusdet or Petrus or Odolricus build here a church in honour of St Faith"[45]. In some cases, such as in Sélestat, the donors provide the building by the time of the establishment of the monastic community; in other cases, such as in Esclottes, the monks themselves were responsible for the construction of the sacred building[46].

In reflecting on the transmission of artistic practices or repertoires in the monastic network of Conques, time is not the only possible variable. The church of Perse (Espalion) was donated in 1060 to the abbey of Conques, and the extant building was erected in the first half of the twelfth century. As recently noted by Huang, certain elements of the carved decoration of this church

43 Michelle Gaborit, "L'église de Sainte-Radegonde (Gironde)", *Revue Archéologique de Bordeaux*, LXXXVII (1996), pp. 71–88, sp. p. 83; Juan Antonio Olañeta Molina, *La representación de Daniel en el foso de los leones en la escultura de Occidente (ss. XI–XIII). Corpus y estudio iconográfico de la transformación, función y significado de una imagen polivalente*, (Ph.D. dissetation), Universitat de Barcelona 2017, vol. 2, D-100; Christian Bougoux, *L'imagerie romane de l'Entre-Deux-Mers*, Bordeaux 2006, pp. 465–487.

44 Ashley, Sheingorn, "Le culte" (n. 8), p. 80.

45 Desjardins, *Cartulaire* (n. 18), p. 51: "*per talem convenientiam ut Deusdet monacus aut Petrus aut Odolricus faciant unam aecclesiam ibi in honore sanctae Fidis*".

46 Paul Deschamps, "Étude sur les sculptures de Sainte-Foy de Conques et de Saint-Sernin de Toulouse et leurs relations avec celles de Saint-Isidore de Léon et de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle", *Bulletin Monumental*, C/3–4 (1941), pp. 239–264, sp. p. 244.

gravitate towards the repertoire of Conques, such as the capitals with flat leaves and figures[47]. These similarities, indeed, are also found in the portal carvings, which recall that of the mother abbey, particularly the Mouth of Hell and Satan [**Figs 10 – 11**][48]. Similar to Sélestat and Esclottes, this church was reconstructed at least half a century after its donation to Conques: yet, contrary to these two cases, it shows a closer adherence to the artistic and visual repertoires of the mother abbey. However, Espalion is less than 50 km away from Conques, thus space, the physical proximity to the mother abbey might also explain the similarities.

Artistic production in sites connected to Conques can also be linked to memory and commemoration. The emperor Frederick Barbarossa, in 1162–1163, donated stained-glass windows to the church founded by his ancestors in Sélestat. While the windows are lost, their subject was described in the sixteenth century. The central window presented Christ with John the Baptist and St Faith, with a depiction of Barbarossa offering the window. Next were scenes representing the martyrdom of the saint, and on another window, there were some episodes of the legend related to the foundation of the priory, depicting "a procession of pilgrims, horsemen, and Hohenstaufen brothers, who gave their mother's heritage to Sainte Foy"[49]. Similarly, in the mid-thirteenth century the refectory of Horsham was decorated with scenes related to the miraculous liberation of Sybil and Robert, more than 150 years after the events they depict. Furthermore, these paintings present the visit of the couple to Conques, their subsequent return in England with the monks, and a further scene in which monks and workers alike are busy erecting the priory of Horsham, under the attentive supervision of Sybil [**Fig. 12**]. These paintings, as well as the windows of Sélestat, as suggested by Kathleen Ashley, in presenting the "saintly and human" founders, "transcend their historical specificity to become icons of patronage"[50]. In other words, artistic production serves also a memorial function. In Sélestat and Horsham, it transmits and crystallizes the memory of the foundation, and the links of the site with the mother abbey of Conques.

10/ Tympanum, Saint-Hilarian--Sainte-Foy de Perse, Espalion, 12th century

11/ Tympanum, Sainte-Foy, Conques, 12th century

12/ Construction of the priory, refectory wall painting, Horsham St Faith, mid-13th century / © Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive

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47 Huang, *L'Abbatiale Sainte-Foy* (n. 22), vol. 1, pp. 372–373.
48 Marcello Angheben, *D'un jugement à l'autre: la représentation du jugement immédiat dans les Jugements derniers français: 1100–1250*, Turnhout 2013, pp. 88–95.
49 Ashley, Sheingorn, "Le culte" (n. 8), pp. 81–82; Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy* (n. 2), p. 131.
50 Ashley, "The Mural Paintings" (n. 2), p. 333.

Conclusion

This article presents the results of the analysis of the monastic network of Conques, a network which takes into account the institutional ties and links established by a multitude of agents, such as the mother abbey, lay and religious donors, and even monks. Textual sources confirm the crucial role of the mother abbey in this monastic network: donors from across Europe visited Conques, and it is from here that monks are sent to establish or inhabit new houses. The digital map offers the opportunity to engage visually with the expansion of the monastic network, considering and questioning how this grew across time and space. While major sites related to Conques, such as Sélestat, Horsham and Cavagnolo have received scholarly interest, the analysis of the artistic practices and production of its monastic network is still a work-in-progress, one that – we hope – the digital map might encourage and facilitate in the future. Finally, this form of data presentation offers the potential for further analysis involving, for example, topography and orography to examine trends in the geographic location of donations.

Beyond the significance of the transmission of artistic practices, the monastic network of Conques and its digital topographical visualization provide a new platform for rethinking the impact of the abbey in relation to cultural heritage. The monastic network reconnects the mother abbey with sites across Europe and vice versa, highlighting the interconnectedness of places and people, each with their own individual stories, offering the public, both local and global, opportunities to rediscover these places and memories, those well-known and those untold, linking the past and its heritage with the present and its monumental landscape.

summary

Mapování monasticismu.
Digitální pohled na klášterní
síť opatství v Conques

Tento článek představuje výsledky projektu, který zahrnoval mapování všech pozemků a kostelů darovaných nebo získaných opatstvím Conques, které lze definovat jako klášterní síť opatství. Naším hlavním zdrojem je kartotéka Conques vydaná Gustavem Desjardinsem (1879). V rámci projektu bylo zmapováno 382 lokalit, z toho 202 pozemků a 164 kostelů. Tento soubor dat byl analyzován s ohledem na kategorie prostoru (vzdálenost od mateřského opatství) a času (relativní chronologie lokalit). Výsledky ukazují geografickou hustotu této sítě v blízkosti mateřského opatství, přičemž 62 % kostelů a 75 % lokalit pozemků se nachází do 60 km od mateřského opatství. Stejně tak se více než polovina držby opatství nacházela v okruhu jednoho dne chůze (cca 12 hodin) od mateřského opatství. Přejdeme-li od kategorie prostoru ke kategorii času, opatství Conques od doby administrativy Odolrica (1031–1065) podstatně rozšířilo klášterní síť kostelů. Mezi rokem 1031 a koncem vlády opata Begona (1087–1108) získalo Conques nejméně 71 kostelů, což je téměř polovina z celkového počtu. Rozšíření pozemků ukazuje jiný obraz. Počet lokalit zmiňovaných v donacích od Odolricova opatství do Begonova opatství je 62, což je méně než 105 lokalit, které opatství získalo mezi lety 840 a 1030. Rané donace a/nebo akvizice se odehrávaly převážně v okruhu cca 30 km. Teprve v průběhu jedenáctého století začalo opatství přijímat dary nebo směny za pozemky a kostely vzdálené více než 100 km od Conques. Za opatství Begona Conques svou síť ještě více rozšířilo a přijímalo donace vzdálené i více než 300 km od mateřského opatství. Článek se zabývá tím, do jaké míry se tato klášterní síť, jak ji odhaluje tento soubor dat, protíná s uměleckou produkcí, přičemž zvláštní pozornost je věnována času a prostoru. Náš výzkum ukazuje, že převorství postavená nedávno po donaci Conques prezentují přísnější dodržování uměleckých praktik z Conques. Analýza umělecké produkce klášterní sítě Conques je stále v procesu, který – jak doufáme – podpoří a usnadní digitální mapa.