



Three Treatises From Bec on the Nature of Monastic Life (Medieval Academy Books)

Giles Constable

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The abbey of Bec was founded in the eleventh century and was one of the best-known and most influential monasteries in Normandy. Celebrated for its high standard of religious life and its intellectual activity, Bec also had an exceptional degree of institutional independence.

The three treatises collected and translated in this volume - *Tractatus de professionibus monachorum* ('The Profession of Monks'), *De professionibus abbatum* ('The Profession of Abbots'), and *De libertate Beccensis monasterii* ('On the Liberty of the Monastery of Bec') - are a striking statement of the position of Bec in relation to episcopal and ducal (later royal) authorities. Little is known about the anonymous author of these works except that he was a twelfth-century monk with an attachment to Augustine and Gregory the Great, and that he had considerable knowledge of canon law. His purpose in writing these treatises was to assert and justify the privileges of Bec at a time when many bishops were reacting against monastic freedom, especially with regard to profession.

This volume is an important contribution to understanding not only monasticism in Normandy, but also the conflict between church and state in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.



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