

Annexe 1: Characteristics of major monastic orders in the Middle Ages

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Although the creation of religious orders was mainly the product of the eleventh, twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, some underlying distinctions were present much earlier. Monasticism in the early Church was largely separated from the majority of Christian communities where the emphasis was on pastoral care. Furthermore, monasticism contained both communal and hermetic traditions. In simplified terms, later orders of monks, canons and friars reflected these divisions, with varying degrees of emphasis on their different aspects, and differing views on the extent of interaction with the wider Christian community. As society changed, the value placed on communities devoted to prayer and contemplation also changed. Practice within monastic orders was not static, and many new orders reflected attempts to return to an original purity, although there were inevitable differences about what this meant. The formation of a new order was often not the intention of the reformers.

	Rule	Source of Income	Property of individual Monks or canons	Location of monastery	Nature of services	Organisation of order	Ordained priests (or deacons)
<i>Monks</i>							
Benedictine	St Benedict	Often extensive estates, many held from 10 th century or earlier	No	Various		No central control. Triennial “national” chapters from 1215, inconsistently held	Few, but more over time
Cluniac	St Benedict (elaborated for ritual)	In England, often more fragmented holdings than Benedictines	No	Various	High ritual	Monasteries subordinated to Cluny (at least until later Middle Ages)	Some
Cistercian	St Benedict (in “pure” form, elaborated in charter)	Usually extensive lands in remote, often previously undeveloped areas	No	Remote rural	Austere	Annual general chapter of order. Daughter houses subject to visitation by their mother houses	Increasing numbers over time
Carthusian	Initially no rule but developed statutes based partly on the rule of St Benedict and partly on lives of early hermit monks.	Often fragmented estates. Later houses often gained lands from suppression of early alien priories	No (but individual goods because of cellular structure)	Ideally remote, but some later houses were founded near towns	Few communal services	General chapter of order	Usually

Canons regular

Augustinian	St Augustine	Very variable endowments	No	Various		No central control. Six-yearly provincial chapters from 1339. Houses subject to diocesan visitation	Yes (sometimes ministering in parishes)
Premonstratensian	St Augustine	Often similar to Cistercians but on a smaller scale	No	Remote rural	Austere	Abbot of Prémontré was Abbot-General of the order	Yes

Friars

Franciscan	St Francis (adapted to form a workable constitution)	Supported by alms, not endowments	No	Mainly urban	Preaching	General chapter, with a Minister-General of the order	Not initially, but more after first generation
Dominican	St Augustine	Supported by alms, not endowments	No	Mainly urban	Preaching (also with emphasis on confession)	General chapter (annual), with a Master of the order. Provinces sub-divided into vicariates for the purpose of visitation	Generally yes

Canons secular

(by definition not monastic)

Colleges of canons	In general no rule, but early collegiate rules existed in Europe	Many canons came to be individually endowed (prebendaries) especially from twelfth century	Yes	Various			Yes
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Note

The above does not include all orders and applies to male religious only. Neither does it cover all variations in practice or changes over time. Only the Cistercians, the friars and, to some extent, the Carthusians in this table had the organisational framework that would merit the description of an order, although, by looking to a single mother house, the Cluniacs and the Premonstratensians had elements of it. Various papal attempts to impose structures on the Benedictines and the Augustinians still left the former as essentially independent monasteries and the latter as part of the Church's diocesan organisation. The prohibition on personal property in various orders was occasionally not fully observed, especially in the later Middle Ages. Friars were distinct from monks not only in their vows of poverty but also in their involvement in the community rather than being enclosed. Unlike monks, they belonged to a province rather than to a specific monastery. Colleges in no sense formed an order, but they were distinguished from other churches with multiple priests by having a corporate identity. Colleges were not enclosed, with canons free to move outside. Many later medieval collegiate foundations were chantry colleges, where priests said masses for the souls of the dead. These priests were usually paid stipends from the overall endowment of the college rather than being separately endowed.

Most of the above also gained income from the appropriation of parish tithes. The exceptions included the Cistercians and the Premonstratensians, except on land which had previously been tithed, and the friars who depended on alms rather than endowments, even though there were a few exceptions to the exceptions.

In Surrey, Chertsey Abbey was Benedictine, Bermondsey was Cluniac, Waverley was Cistercian, and Sheen Charterhouse was founded for Carthusians by Henry V. There were Augustinian priories at Merton, Newark, Reigate, Southwark, and Tandridge. Surrey had no Premonstratensian abbey; Sussex examples were at Bayham and Duford. The only Franciscan house in Surrey was that of the Observants, a late medieval "purist" group who retreated from urban engagement, brought to Richmond by Henry VII. There was a Dominican friary at Guildford. Surrey did not have a college of canons after Southwark became Augustinian in the early twelfth century, unlike Sussex, where the colleges of Bosham, Hastings and South Malling all had prebendaries. There were, however, two later medieval chantry colleges in Surrey, at Kingston (Lovekyn Chapel) and Lingfield. Surrey had no nunneries (unless there was briefly one at Oxenford), unlike e.g. Hampshire, with major houses of Benedictine nuns at Romsey, Wherwell, and the Winchester Nunnaminster, and Cistercian nuns at Wintney.

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