

## A converts' saint?

## Mary Magdalene and the Hirsau reform movement<sup>1</sup>

by Eva Ferro

In the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century a new series of office chants for the feast of Mary Magdalene was composed at the episcopal See of Constance<sup>2</sup>. This office, named after its Magnificat-antiphon *Suavissime universorum Domine*, spread vastly and quickly in south Germany since it was adopted and adapted by many of the cloisters of the Hirsau reform movement.<sup>3</sup> The monks of this movement thus showed a great interest for Mary Magdalene and I will try to study this veneration in more detail in the following paper. Based on the repertoire transmitted in a number of manuscripts from these cloisters, I will firstly analyze the form and content of this new office focusing on the construction of the figure of Mary Magdalene and then place it into its historical, cultural, and liturgical context.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a paper given in Leeds at the International Medieval Congress 2015 in session 631.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I analyzed in detail the circumstances regarding the composition and the diffusion of this office in an article: Eva FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine" - Eine 'konstanzische' Maria Magdalena-Historia in Hirsau?, in: Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft 56 (2014), pp. 49-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For this Benedictine reform movement cf. Karl SCHMID, Kloster Hirsau und seine Stifter, Freiburg i. Br. 1959 (Forschungen zur Oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 9), Hermann JAKOBS, Die Hirsauer. Ihre

Ausbreitung und Rechtsstellung im Zeitalter des Investiturstreits, Köln/Graz 1961 (Kölner Historische Abhandlungen 4), and Klaus SCHREINER, Hirsau und die Hirsauer Reform, in: Die Reformverbände und Kongregationen der Benediktiner im deutschen Sprachraum, ed. by Ulrich FAUST - Franz QUARTHAL, St. Ottilien 1999 (Germania Benedictina 1), pp. 89-124.



- - v 7 A - - 7 7 7 P - S PN -meum er netao ubi poluerunt eum aevia. The aum desil for converta est ve crov tum er udor vetum Raurem et . . d Je. Y . Y T. Par .. netae bar quia retul el aevia. In ewangtio ~ 1 . 7 & t.d. - v 1P. yans. y.d. v Ad -- 1.7 oc à Dyeu cheful maria converta illa dyeu e i vabboni er dixer ei nolime Por Pu TT Jour Thu T- -d-- PN-rangere nou dum enim alcende adparrem meum aevia ac via. ā Olongaudendum elt marrier de tie que co In. in uespa-Inev. 26 1 P 167. 6 A D. b. v 1 1-11 P lu tellum file beare marie inqua pecarozel confolantur pro qua Angeli meelt wandantur dum pallor muenient perduam demoz - A A - P - - + + + + - + A - d 1 - 1 te per duxit aduitam adquam ut et not peruemanul pronobil pyn. n.d. upla intercedar quelumul. tre by torra de tra marra oragal. In. A bout - 7 bon p y d - 77 - 0 Vanil lime unuer torun domine milerico velu Inev. a TA - AP TAUT & TST .. TATO diarum pater mutillime qui omnia inspeccaro concludif 11 - 1 - 11 - - And - 11 - d - - 11 - A ut omnum miterator mileveard miter morum momnibul mile 1 - 1 8 - 9 1- 10 11 - 1 301 1 61 raminum not memorel ve pierarif numie ve fontem rogamul 20 Ad- ydy A. wy 1d- Ad- y Ad- yuy 2. supplies ut aprid to porente beare marie magdalene suffulta pre 1 S. 01 - 11 - 0 1 : dr - 1 A1 - 0 - 1 camme euf ce tolum exemplo mercamut diligere mulaun ut et te AT b- I b. . I - AA by wint. d ---R mutal nobil que ben unmulai tibe tole per cammul mula. Invit. wy . y y made - yAAA diter up & tale of rellam zepichum marunnam cum maria presto lanter ne so la ster

Figure 1: Beginning of *Suavissime universorum Domine* in manuscript St. Gallen, Stiftsbibl., Cod. Sang. 389, p. 232 (<u>http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch</u>) License: CC BY-NC 3.0 Unported: <u>http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/</u>.



But before beginning with the analysis of the chants it seems helpful to introduce some basic concepts of medieval liturgy. The two main parts of the liturgical activity in a cloister were mass and the liturgy of the hours or *divinum officium*. While mass was celebrated to commemorate Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and thus included the Eucharist, the liturgy of the hours didn't comprise it. Rather, it was a mean "[to sanctify] the day [...] by recurring prayer"<sup>4</sup> and so to symbolically respect the biblical precept found in Luke 18, 1: "oportet semper orare et non deficere - transl.: it is duty to always pray and never to stop". It was the idea of a *laus perhennis*, a continuous praise to God that was symbolically maintained through prayer at eight particular times of day and night: vespers, compline, matins (which included three nocturnes), lauds and the canonical hours (prime, third, sixt and none). These daily services included different liturgical activities, like prayer and the reading of lessons, but they mostly consisted of chant: The Rule of Benedict indeed prescribed to sing the whole psalter (150 psalms) within a week time and psalmody can therefore be understood as the 'backbone' of the liturgy of the hours. Furthermore, each psalm was accompanied by a short chant called antiphon (antiphona) that highlighted one particular aspect of the psalm and connected it specifically to the feast being celebrated<sup>5</sup>. Lectures held during the night prayer (the so called matins) were also accompanied by chants called responsories (*responsorium*). They followed the recited text and elaborated on particular aspects of it<sup>6</sup>. From the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards it became custom in particular for saints' feasts to compose entire sets of antiphons and responsories based on the life (vita) of the saint. Since such sets of chants re-narrated the life and deeds of the saint and thus comprised narrative elements they were known in the Middle Ages as *historiae*<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cf. Aimé Georges MARTIMORt, The Liturgy of the Hours, in: The Church at Prayer. An Introduction to the Liturgy, ed. by Irénée Henri DALMAIS - Pierre JOUNEI - Aimé Georges MARTIMORt, Vol. IV: The Liturgy and Time, Collegeville, MN 1985, pp. 151–256, here: pp. 155 f.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In the analysis of the office I will refer to singular antiphons with 'A' followed by a number (A1, A2) to indicate the position of the chant during the Night office. For the antiphons at Lauds I will use the abbreviation 'L-A' and also use decimal numbers for their position within Lauds. The antiphon sung to the Magnificat at Vespers will be indicated with M-A1 for the first Vesper and with M-A2 for the second Vesper. The antiphon sung to the Benedictus at Lauds is identified with B-A. I will also use the abbreviation I for Invitatorium.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Responsories are indicated with 'R' also followed by a number to indicate their position during the Night office.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Cf. Ritva JONSSON, Historia: études sur la genèse des offices versifiés, Stockholm 1968 (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia latina Stockholmiensia 15), pp. 12-13 and Joachim KNAPE, "Zur Benennung der Offizien im Mittelalter. Das Wort "historia" als liturgischer Begriff", in: Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft 26 (1984), pp. 305-320, here: pp. 306-307 and Felix HEINZER, "Die "Heilige



Many monastic houses connected to the Hirsau reform movement introduced during the  $12^{th}$  century the *Suavissime-historia* to celebrate the feast of Mary Magdalene on the  $22^{nd}$  of July. Before this point Mary Magdalene was celebrated in Hirsau and its cloisters with a common office for Holy Virgins with barely any specific reference to the story of Magdalene. Hence, the fact that many cloisters now introduced a new, particular office for her feast testifies that their interest in this figure had increased and that they now wished to celebrate her more solemnly. The following analysis is based on different texts – not yet edited – as they are transmitted in various manuscript sources used for liturgy in these cloisters<sup>8</sup>.

Content and structure of the Suavissime-*historia* give insight on the figure of Mary Magdalene venerated by these institutions. Three main aspects characterize the saintly woman: Firstly, Mary Magdalene is described as the woman who visited Jesus at the house of Simon the Phariseus and was healed from her sickness by him<sup>9</sup>. Secondly, Mary also is said to be the sister of Martha and Lazarus, the woman who sits at Jesus' feet to listen to his teachings and thus the one who dedicates her life to contemplation<sup>10</sup>. Thirdly, Mary Magdalene is presented as the first witness of the resurrection of Jesus<sup>11</sup>. The office clearly takes upon the biblical narrative about a "Mary of Magdala", but in

the Bible this name appears independently in three different contexts and it is never stated clearly if one and the same woman is the protagonist in all three episodes. The office seems to take upon this inconsistency and it can be at first sight a bit confusing: Which Mary's story is being told here?

All antiphons and responsories of the first Matin, with only one exception, describe Mary as a sick woman who lives in Magdala:

Al Ingressus Iesus domum Symonis pharisei, cum egrotis medicus discubuit et ecce Maria mulier<sup>12</sup> egrota in domum ad medicum, salutis desiderio facta inpudens, audacter irrupit.<sup>13</sup>

Königstochter" in der Liturgie. Zur Inszenierung Elisabeths im Festoffizium "Laetare Germania", in: Elisabeth von Thüringen - eine europäische Heilige: Aufsätze, ed. by Dieter BLUME, Petersberg: Imhof 2007, pp. 215-225, here: p. 215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Cf. Appendix 1. The table lists all known manuscripts that transmit this *historia*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Cf. Lc 7, 36-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Cf. Lc 10, 38-42 and Io 11, 5-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Cf. Io 20, 1-18 and Mc 16, 9-10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Cf. Le 7, 36 f.



(After Jesus entered the house of Simon the Phariseus, while he was eating with the sick people, also Mary the sick urged into the house and came to the doctor since she was made audacious by her desire to be healed)

She is described as a *mulier egrota* who is eventually healed by Jesus, who is in this case called *celestis medicus*.

A2 [...] *Septem* quippe *nequitiis*<sup>14</sup> verbo medicus effugatis, ignivit cor eius incendio ardentissime caritatis. <sup>15</sup>

 $([\ldots]$  After the seven sicknesses were ejected by the word of the doctor, her heart inflamed with a fire of glowing love)

Furthermore, Mary, grateful to her new master, is filled with love for him and as a proof of her total dedication to him she cleans his feet with her tears and hair:

A4 Maria ergo accepit libram unguenti nardi pistici preciosi et unxit pedes Iesu et capillis suis extersit et domus impleta est ex odore unguenti.<sup>16</sup> (Mary then took a pound of the precious nard ointment and anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair and the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil)

The Love that fills Mary Magdalene for her healer and master is very strongly emphasized in the office: her *dilectio* is praised many times (A5, R3: *Dimissa sunt ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum*)<sup>17</sup>; Mary is the *dilectrix* (B-A: *o Maria, Christi Iesu Domini omnimodis ardentissima dilectrix*)<sup>18</sup>, her heart is described as being filled with the fire of *caritas* (for instance A2; also A3 *Incendit plene Maria peccati rubiginem, que arsit tam incomparabiliter per inextinguibilem sanctissime dilectionis ignem*)<sup>19</sup>. This is an important aspect of the office and it will turn up again at a later point in this paper.

During the course of the night prayer, in the office a new storyline is introduced: Mary of Magdalene is also presented as the sister of Martha and Lazarus. When Jesus visits

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*, ed. by Radbod WILLEMS, Turnhout 1954 (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 36), tractatus VII, cap. 19, l. 10-11 (p. 78). For the edition of the *historia* cf. my article mentioned in footnote 2. Here: FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Cf. Prv 26, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Io 12, 3. FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", ibd.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", ibd.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 53.



Mary and her sister at the house to talk to them about the importance of *vita contemplativa*, the contemplative life, and about *vita activa*, active life, Martha goes on with her daily practical duties, while Magdalena rightly chooses to dedicate her life to the contemplation of Jesus' spiritual teachings. As Mary herself reckons, contemplation is the most necessary activity:

A7 Intendens porro Maria unum quod est necessarium sororemque linquens solam circa frequens ministerium, secus pedes Domini sedebat et verbum illius semper audiebat.<sup>20</sup>

(Mary understood what the only necessary thing was and she left her sister to attend alone the daily duty, while she sat at the Lord's feet and always listened to his teaching)

By the time of the third matins, almost at the end of the night celebration of the office, yet another Mary of Magdala appears: she is described as the first person to meet the resurrected Jesus at the now empty tomb and also as the one who announces the resurrection of the Lord to the disciples: She is defined '*verax eius apostola*' and she even deserves to announce the resurrection to Jesus' very same apostles:

R8 [...] *Tantumque apud eum locum gratię invenit, ut hunc ipsis quoque apostolis* verax eius apostola resurrexisse *nunciaret.*<sup>21</sup> ([...] She found in him such grace, that she, her true apostle, announced to the very disciples that he had resurrected)

The scene of Mary at the tomb of Jesus (her discovery of the empty grave, her conversation with the angels, her vision of the resurrected Jesus and so on) also constitute in *Suavissime* the exclusive topic of the antiphons for Lauds, the celebration that followed the third nocturne. The fact that the biblical narrative took place around dawn, just like monastic Lauds, and also the fact that this scene played a central role in the Eastern liturgy, explains why in *Suavissime* the whole celebration of Lauds revolved solely around this topic.

As to the identity of the protagonist of these stories in *Suavissime* all three Maries of Magdala are melted into one single character: one same Mary Magdalene is the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Lc 10, 39–42. FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", ibd.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *Homiliae in evangelia*, ed. by Raymond ETAIX, Turnholti 1999 (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 141), homilia XXV, 1. 285–294 (p. 215). FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 55.



protagonist of the story told in the office and the different episodes narrated have to be understood as different stages in the life of the same figure:

M-A1 [...] Hec est illa Maria, cui dimissa sunt peccata multa quia dilexit multum. Hec est enim illa Maria, que resurgentem a mortuis prima omnium videre meruit Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum  $[...]^{22}$ 

([...] She is that Mary to whom all her sins were forgiven because she loved much. She is that Mary who deserved to meet the resurrected Jesus before everybody else [...])

Moreover, the office explicitly explains, that the three stages of Mary Magdalene's life are to be understood as changes in her way of life:

R8 Adest testis divine misericordie beata Maria, que lavans lacrimis maculas criminis, susceptoris sui tetigit vestigia ac prava sua derelinquens itinera. Huic **post hęc** assidebat verbumque illius audiebat. Viventi adheserat, mortuum querebat, viventem repperit quem mortuum quesivit  $[...]^{23}$ 

(Here is the witness of the divine mercifulness blissful Mary, who, washing away the stains of sin with her tears, touched the robe of the savior and abandoned her sinful ways. Afterward (after these things) she sat at his feet and listened to his word. She stood by him when he lived, she looked for him dead. She found the man alive, who she was looking for dead [...])

In this respect '*post hęc*' is a crucial expression: it postulates that these episodes follow each other and are consecutive phases in Mary's life: at first she is a *peccatrix*, a sinner, who then goes from being a sinner through a deep experience of repentance to living the contemplative life. For her decision of abandoning a life of sin and for her dedication to a contemplative life, she is rewarded by being the first to learn of the resurrection of the Lord.

The office here takes upon the interpretation of this biblical figure delivered by Gregory the Great. Gregory, in fact, had pointed out in his *Sermons on the Gospel* that all the Maries of Magdala in the Bible were one and the same woman. For Gregory, there was only one woman, who thus had to be seen as the protagonist of all different stories told in the Bible. Furthermore, the different episodes in Mary Magdalene's story actually represent different stages of her life. The text of *Suavissime* not only takes upon Gregory's version on this matter, it also relies extensively on Gregory's texts and often

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *Homiliae in evangelia*, ed. by Raymond ETAIX, Turnholti 1999 (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 141), homilia XXV, l. 285–294 (p. 215). FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 54-55.



even quotes it *verbatim*. Moreover, the text of the *Suavissime*-office also indicates how this figure of Mary Magdalene affected its audience, the monks in the south German cloisters of the Hirsau movement.

In *Suavissime* a twofold parallel between the stories narrated in the chants and their actual performers, the monks singing in the choir, is created. The first hint in this direction is found in the *Invitatorium* (indicated with I) of *Suavissime*, the chant that functioned as an invitation for the monks to summon and begin the night prayer. It represents a beautiful piece of liturgical poetry rhythmically composed:

I Stellam Christum matutinam, cum Maria prestolantes, ne sola stet foris plorans, nos cum ea vigilemus, ut per noctem quem insomnis queritando dilexerat hunc inventum simul una procidentes adoremus<sup>24</sup> (While we wait together with Mary, so that she won't be alone outside crying, let us wake together with her the morning star Christ, let us adore together the one that she found and who she looked for sleepless through the night)

Suddenly, the monks holding the wake and waiting the morning to come appear to be together with Mary Magdalene: they sing with her to keep her company and await with her the resurrection of Jesus. By comparing their situation to that of the Magdalene crying over the tomb of Jesus in the night before his resurrection, the monks gave a deeper theological sense to their own liturgical activity (the praying of the night office) and constructed a directed bond with Mary, who in this case is their paradigm.

Furthermore, a second, stronger parallel is constructed between the lifestyle chosen by Mary and the one chosen by the monks. In the *Suavissime-historia*, as we have seen before, Mary is described as the sister who chose 'the best part', that is the *vita contemplativa*: [...] *Maria optimam partem elegit, que non auferetur ab ea* (*Mary has chosen the best part, the one that cannot be taken away from her*)<sup>25</sup>. This particular sentence describing Mary choosing the *vita contemplativa* is found in another chant of

Landesbibliothek, HB I 55, HB I 98, HB XVII 19, Cod. bibl. fol. 39, Breviarium constantiense

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> This *Invitatorium* is transmitted by the following manuscripts: St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 389 and 437; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. liturg. 202 and 360; Stuttgart, Württembergische

<sup>(</sup>Augsburg: Erhard Ratdolt 1499, GW Nr. 5325); Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Lit. 23 and 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 53.



the office, but this time it is used, with slight variations of the grammatical structure of the sentence (the person is now a first person plural, *nos*, here: *a nobis*) to describe the monks themselves:

B-A2 Optime partis perprudens tu revera et optima electrix, o Maria, Christi Iesu Domini omnimodis *ardentissima* dilectrix, supplices tuos sagacius instituens illo tui plurimo in eum ardore percupientissimos etiam *in partem, que non a nobis unquam auferatur*<sup>26</sup> ipsum ex toto **eligere**, *fac* indefessa *suffragatrix* nos *plenariam*<sup>27</sup> hanc gaudiorum omnium theoriam intentissimos semper pre omnibus efficaciter diligere [...]

([...] we who are strongly committed to the part that can never be taken away from us [...])

The monks identify themselves with Mary, since they both made the same decision to dedicate their lives to *contemplatio*.

It is precisely in this analogy between the monks and Mary Magdalene that I see an explanation for the increased desire of the cloisters of the Hirsau reform movement to venerate this saint during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century. Although it may seem strange that a prostitute and a sinner could be a fitting role model for a monk, it becomes plausible and even logical if one takes into account the social and historical context of the Hirsau reform movement.

During the 11<sup>th</sup> century the social composition of many reformed Benedictine cloisters was changing. At this time not only the traditional practice of the *oblatio puerorum*, the gift of children to the cloisters, was being directly criticized by the leading personalities of the reform<sup>28</sup>, it was at the same time also being challenged by a growing number of adult *conversi*, people who entered the cloister after having lived in the *saeculum*, the secular life<sup>29</sup>. It was particularly the cloisters of the Cluniac reform movement, Hirsau being one of these, that were faced with a massive increase<sup>30</sup> of such adult converts. It

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Lc 10,42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Cf. Hermannus Contractus, "Exsurgat totus almiphonus" 9b: "Fundans saphyris caeruleis miris candidatam et unionibus iaspidibus et propugnatam munit gemmeis turriculis" (Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi 44 (1904), pp. 204–206 Nr. 227, here p. 205; the biblical reference is: Apoc 21,19). FERRO, "Suavissime universorum domine", p. 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Cf. Mayke de JONg, In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West, Leiden [u.a.] 1996, pp. 126 f. and Mirko BREITENSTEIN, Das Noviziat im hohen Mittelalter, Berlin/Münster 2008 (Vita regularis. Abhandlungen 38), pp. 87 f.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Cf. Wolfgang TESKe, Laien, Laienmönche und Laienbrüder in der Abtei Cluny. Ein Beitrag zum "Konversen-Problem", in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 10 (1976), pp. 248–322 and 11, pp. 288–339.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> The number of such adult conversions may have been inflated by the reformers themselves or by medieval chroniclers supporting the Hirsau movement. Nonetheless many of such conversions really did happen, since Wilhelm of Hirsau himself handles such *conversi* explicitly in his *Constitutiones Hirsaugienses*. Cf. Ernst TREMP, Das hochmittelalterliche Reformmönchtum unter dem Ansturm der



was not only learned secular priests, but also noble laymen and women and even uneducated (*illiterati*), who were since the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century increasingly turning to the convents.

While for the *nutriti*, the monks who had been bred in the cloister and had never left it, Mary Magdalene, the prostitute was not completely suited as a role model, she was the perfect paradigm for the converts who had lived a sinful life before entering the cloister. Like her, they had decided to abandon their sinful ways and after an act of repentance to dedicate themselves to contemplative life within the walls of the cloister. The story of the Magdalene could even encourage them in their decision of such a challenging and difficult lifestyle with the promise of a spiritual reward: just like Mary they could hope to be the firsts to meet Christ after the Day of the Last Judgement.

The leadership of the Hirsau reform movement was not only aware of this change in their cloisters, but actually openly encouraged it. For example Ulrich of Cluny in his letter to his old friend Wilhelm of Hirsau, the leader of the Hirsau reform movement.

Ulrich is very critical of the *oblatio puerorum*: he observes that the *nutriti* contributed to the decline of the Benedictine order: not only they were often physically impaired and intellectual deficient, but even the healthy ones too often lacked the commitment and the fervor of the faith. Ulrich rather applauds those who *sponte sua*, as fully grown men, decided to abdicate the *saeculum* and to dedicate themselves to God out of true inspiration. In his eyes, they even represent the only hope for a Church that, in his opinion, is in urgent need of being reformed:

si qua districtio huius spiritualis milicie inter has nostrorum temporum feces esse potest, non esse, nisi ubi maior est numerus | et auctoritas maior illorum, qui **non aetate lasciua nec imperio parentum**, **sed sponte sua**, **et maioris aetatis solo Christo imperante** ad eius se obsequium **rebus saeculi abdicatis** contulerunt. (if there can be any rigor of this spiritual army among these dregs of our times, it cannot be, except where those who have the majority and the greater authority have put themselves at the service of the Lord neither at a lascivious age, not at the command of their parents, but of their own will, and at the age of majority, at the command of Christ alone, after renouncing the things of the world.)<sup>31</sup>

Adelskonversionen, in: Pfaffen und Laien. Ein mittelalterlicher Antagonismus, ed. by Eckart Conrad LUTZ – Ernst TREMP, Freiburg/Schweiz 1999 (Scrinium Friburgense 10), pp. 33–56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Ulrich of Zell's customary, dedicatory epistle and prooemium [Paris, Bibl. Nationale de France, ms. lat. 18353II, f. 1r-3r], ed. Susan BOYNTON, Isabelle COCHELIN, in: From dead of night to end of day - The medieval customs of Cluny. During three sessions organized at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds in 2001 = Du coeur de la nuit à la fin du jour: Les coutumes clunisiennes au Moyen Âge, ed. by Susan BOYNTON, Isabelle COCHELIN, Turnhout 2005 (Disciplina monastica 3), pp. 329-347, here 330 f.



It is the fervent love, (the *dilectio* that also moved Mary Magdalene!) that the reformers expect from their monks, not the lukewarm heart of monks out of habit and constriction. Even though such men and women have lived in the outside world and had been polluted by it, in a contemporary terminology they were *coinquinati*<sup>32</sup>, they still could wash away their sins, just like Mary, through an act of repentance and true love. Mary Magdalene did not only constitute a role model for the *conversi*, who saw the story of their own life in her, she also embodied the reform ideals and the ideal new monk for the leaders of the Cluniac-Hirsau reform movement.

The strong increase in the veneration of Mary Magdalene observed in the south German cloisters of the Hirsau reform movement is fully understandable in the light of the important changes taking places during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Not only the social composition of many reformed Benedictine cloisters was sensibly changing, also the leading personalities of the reform movement implemented an untraditional recruitment policy that positively and actively supported such a change. Accordingly, Mary Magdalene was a perfect fit in such a context: on the one hand, her story could motivate the adult *conversi* in their chosen path: Mary embodied the life of a reformed sinner who, moved by true love for God, is rewarded by being the first to learn of the resurrection of Jesus. On the other hand, the reformers possibly approved and even fostered her devotion in order not only to polemize against the old custom of the *oblatio puerorum*, but also to propagate a new ideal of a monk. So Mary Magdalene not only was a convert, but she also truly was a converts' saint.

## Appendix 1 – A list of all known manuscripts and prints that transmit *Suavissime universorum Domine*

- 1 Bamberg, Staatsbibl., Msc. Lit. 23
- 2 Bamberg, Staatsbibl., Msc. Lit. 24
- 3 Bamberg, Staatsbibl., Msc. Lit. 25

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Cf. Herbert Grundmann, Adelsbekehrungen im Hochmittelalter. *Conversi* und *nutriti* im Kloster, in: id. (ed.), Ausgewählte Aufsätze, Bd. 1, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 125-149, here p. 125.

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