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Uniformity was at the heart of many medieval monastic communities, which strove to achieve uniform practices in their monasteries. Famous examples are the Cistercians and the Dominicans. Cistercian uniformity had to apply to all aspects of spiritual and practical daily life, from the foundation of the monasteries, which had to be dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to the food and clothing.¹ The Dominicans had similar concerns and their constitutions, for instance, required the night and day Offices to be uniformly observed by everyone (*ab omnibus uniformiter observari*).² To this end, strict rules had been established regarding the copying of liturgical books: they had to be ‘identical in words, notes, marks of pauses, and standards of presentation’.³ The need to have identical liturgical books is central in achieving uniform practices and was also expressed by the Premonstratensians, whose statutes require them to have uniform (*uniformiter*) liturgical books.⁴ It was mainly through a centralizing authority and contingent mechanisms of power (such as a General Chapter and regular visitations of houses that were members of the respective branches of monasticism) that such communities strove to implement and maintain uniform customs.⁵ However, what did ‘uniformity’ *really* mean to them?

Arguably, medieval people could not imagine uniformity in the way in which we understand it today—as two (or more) things being *exactly* the same—because they did not have the technology required to achieve it. Recent scholars have already cast doubt upon the extent of uniformity in the practice of late-medieval and early-modern monastic groups. If the debate

- 1 • Brian Patrick McGuire, ‘Constitutions and the General Chapter’, in Mette Birkedal Bruun (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order* (Cambridge, 2013), 87–99, esp. 93–4. On the Cistercians more generally, see also Constance H. Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, 2000).
- 2 • ‘Totum officium, tam nocturnum quam diurnum, confirmamus et volumus ab omnibus uniformiter observari, ita quod nulli liceat de cetera aliquid innovare.’ *De oudste constituties van de Dominicanen: Voorgeschiedenis, tekst, bronnen, ontstaan en ontwikkeling (1215–1237)*, ed. Antoninus Hendrik Thomas (Leuven, 1965), 316. On the Dominicans, see Cornelia Linde (ed.), *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation*, Studies of the German Historical Institute, London (Oxford and New York, 2018), especially the contributions of Eleanor Giraud and Hrvoje Beban.
- 3 • Eleanor Giraud, “Totum Officium Bene Correctum Habeatur in Domo”: Uniformity in the Dominican Liturgy’, in Linde (ed.), *Making and Breaking the Rules*, 153–72 at 157.
- 4 • The stipulation of the Premonstratensian legislation (which is the same as for the Cistercians) reads: ‘Missale, textus, epistolare, collectaneus, graduale, antiphonarius, ympanarius, psalterium, leccionarius, regula, kalendarium [Cistercians: ubique] uniformiter habeantur.’ Christopher Norton, ‘Table of Cistercian Legislation on Art and Architecture’, in Christopher Norton and David Park (eds.), *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1986), 315–93 at 319; *Les Statuts de Prémontré au milieu du XIIe siècle*, ed. Placide F. Lefèvre and Wilfried M. Grauwen, *Bibliotheca analectorum praemonstratensium*, 12 (Averbode, 1978), 49. The title of this chapter in both rulings clearly forbids different books (‘Quos libros non licet habere diversos’).
- 5 • This is, for instance, the case for the Cistercian Order; see Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution*, 220, and Janet Burton and Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), esp. 82–103.

on the Cistercian Order historically was rather focused on the dating of Cistercian concern for uniformity, recent studies have begun to question whether uniformity of the Cistercian Order was ‘ever really seen as an achievable aim’.⁶ Regarding the uniformity of its liturgy, David Chadd concluded that ‘the Order might well have retired defeated; yet perhaps . . . they could not have hoped to keep closer to the ideal’.⁷ Similarly, for the Dominicans, Eleanor Giraud has demonstrated that in some cases in thirteenth-century France and England, local celebrations of saints supplemented the standard Dominican liturgy, without affecting the desired uniformity of the Dominican worship.⁸

This essay will contribute further to the discussion by putting the question in yet another context: the Congregation of Windesheim. Founded in the late fourteenth century and living under the Rule of St Augustine, the Congregation strove to implement uniformity in spiritual and behavioural matters in all monasteries associated with it. My underlying argument here is that even if monastic practices were not all *exactly* the same, the Congregation, in its own consciousness, in fact succeeded in implementing a ‘medieval uniformity’. Two perspectives are adduced to illustrate this: first, I focus on the level of individual liturgical melodies as required by the regulations of the Windesheim Congregation, and then compare them with melodies from reformed monasteries. Indeed, as will be shown below, uniformity had to extend to reformed monasteries as well, even when they were not formally incorporated into the Congregation. Second, the analysis of discrepancies between official liturgical regulations and local practices will demonstrate that these divergences were perceived as necessary adjustments which did not compromise the ‘uniformity’ desired by Windesheim. In a final step I shall broaden the discussion by showing how the late-medieval discourse on uniformity, here illustrated by Windesheim, was produced by people with specific interests in mind, and might not be representative of reality.

The Congregation of Windesheim: Contextual Elements

The Congregation of Windesheim (*Congregatio Windeshemensis*) was an assembly of Augustinian houses organized under the governance of a General Chapter (*capitulum generale*). It is considered to be the monastic arm of the late-medieval spiritual movement of the Modern Devotion (*devotio moderna*).⁹ Florens Radewyns, a Brother of the Common Life, and six of his companions from the Brethren, concerned by the increasing laxity of the Order, submitted a project to found a new canonical community to Bishop Floris van Wevelichoven of Utrecht, who approved it in 1386.¹⁰ The monastery of Windesheim was built the following year

- 6 • Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, 12. As Burton explains, research on the Cistercians has been centred on the dating of the early Cistercian documents, in order to identify how soon Cistercian monks set a radical agenda for reform, based on uniform ideas and principles.
- 7 • D. F. L. Chadd, ‘Liturgy and Liturgical Music: The Limits of Uniformity’, in Christopher Norton and David Park (eds.), *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1986), 299–315 at 314.
- 8 • Giraud, ‘Uniformity in the Dominican Liturgy’, 171–2.
- 9 • On this movement, see the introduction (with further bibliography) by John van Engen, *Devotio moderna: Basic Writings*, trans. and introduced by John van Engen (New York, 1988).
- 10 • Florens’s companions were Henricus Klingebijl (Clingeibile) from Hörter, Wernerus Keynkamp from

(its church was consecrated on 17 October 1387). In 1392, two independent new monasteries, inspired by Brethren of the Common Life, were founded (Mariënborn or Mariëndaal in Arnhem and Nieuwlicht, near Hoorn), with the explicit aim to join the new canonical community of Windesheim. Moreover, in 1394 or 1395, the monastery of Eemstein (founded in 1377), where the first newly recruited Windesheim canons had trained for the canonical life, also joined this community. This new incorporation marked the official coming into existence of the Chapter of Windesheim, with the monastery of Windesheim as the motherhouse of this new congregation.¹¹ It advocated a deeper and stricter inner life than other Orders at that time, with a focus on restoring the three monastic vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity to the fullness of their meaning as understood by the founders of the Congregation.¹² The movement attracted numerous monasteries, primarily in north-western Europe, which wished to become formal members of the Congregation. By the end of the fifteenth century, it numbered nearly a hundred monasteries, mostly located in present-day Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.¹³

Driven by the will to restore the purity of the early Church, the Congregation of Windesheim strove to implement its spiritual ideals in as many monasteries as possible. Consequently, in addition to the officially incorporated monasteries, the Congregation also lent its services to reform numerous other male and female houses in the same area.¹⁴ Secular rulers or

Lochern, Joannes van Kempen from Kempen, Henricus Wilde from 's-Hertogenbosch, Henricus Wilsen (Hendrik van Wilsem) from Kampen, and Bertholdus ten Hove from Zwolle. They became the first canons of Windesheim. *Des Augustinerpropstes Johannes Busch Chronicon Windeshemense und Liber de reformatione monasteriorum*, ed. Karl Grube (hereafter Grube, *Liber*), *Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen und angrenzender Gebiete* (Halle, 1886), 174–5 and 185.

- 11 • Reiner R. Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden, 1968), 293–6; *Les Constitutions des chanoines réguliers de Windesheim/Constitutiones canonicorum Windeshemensium*, ed. Marcel Haverals and Francis Joseph Legrand (Turnhout, 2014), 5–9 (hereafter *CCW*). In the sources, the word ‘chapter’ (*capitulum*) is used to designate the regular meetings during which priors of Windesheim monasteries discussed issues concerning their monastic life and, by extension, the monastic union (or congregation) of male and female houses officially incorporated. In the following, the words Chapter and Congregation will be used interchangeably to designate this monastic union.
- 12 • The history of the Congregation of Windesheim has already been studied in great detail. See the most general but fundamental studies: Johannes G. R. Acquoy, *Het Klooster te Windesheim en zijn invloed*, 3 vols. (Utrecht, 1875); Post, *The Modern Devotion*. On Windesheim canonesses, see Wybren Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries: The ‘Modern Devotion’, the Canonesses of Windesheim, and their Writings*, trans. David F. Johnson (Woodbridge, 2004). The dissertation of Jostes is also relevant: Aloysia Elisabeth Jostes, ‘Die Historisierung der *Devotio moderna* im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert: Verbandsbewußtsein und Selbstverständnis in der Windesheimer Kongregation’ (diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2008), esp. 17–134.
- 13 • At the end of the fifteenth century, the Congregation officially comprised eighty-four male and thirteen female houses. For a list of these monasteries, see *Acta capituli Windeshemensis: Acta van de Kapittelvergaderingen der Congregatie van Windesheim*, ed. S. van der Woude, *Kerkhistorische Studien*, 6 (The Hague, 1953), 132–7 (hereafter *ACW*); R. Th. M. van Dijk and A. J. Hendrikman, ‘Tabellarium Chronologicum Windeshemense: De Windeshemse kloosters in chronologisch perspectief’, in Anton J. Hendrikman et al. (eds.), *Windesheim 1395–1995: Kloosters, teksten, invloeden; voordrachten gehouden tijdens het Internationaal Congres ‘600 Jaar Kapittel van Windesheim’, 27 mei 1995 te Zwolle* (Nijmegen, 1996), 186–212. For more information on the sources from each of the Windesheim monasteries, the *Monasticon Windeshemense* still proves to be useful: *Monasticon Windeshemense*, ed. Wilhelm Kohl, Ernest Persoons, and Klaus Scholz, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1977–84).
- 14 • This was, for instance, the case of the priors Johannes Busch (see below) or Heinrich Loder, who reformed numerous monasteries in Lower Saxony. See Klemens Löffler, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Augustinerchorherrenstifts Frenswegen (Windesheimer Kongregation)* (Soest, 1930); Nicolaus Heutger and Viola Heutger, *Niedersächsische Ordenshäuser und Stifte: Geschichte und Gegenwart. Vorträge und Forschungen* (Berlin, 2009).

bishops asked Windesheim to reform the monasteries that were on their lands,¹⁵ and, in 1451, the cardinal legate Nicholas of Cusa issued a mandate to Johannes Busch (at that time prior of Neuwerk) and to Paul Busse (prior of St. Moritz near Halle) to reform monasteries, providing further support to the movement.¹⁶ Johannes Busch in particular is an invaluable witness to the reform efforts of the Congregation, since he described the reforms he conducted in his *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum* towards the end of his life (between 1470 and 1474).¹⁷ More generally, Busch became a major witness to Windesheim history as well because of two further books he wrote, one on the history of the Congregation and another on the first canons, considered the founding fathers, of Windesheim.¹⁸

Windesheim Uniformity

Uniformity was a central concern of the Windesheim Chapter. This is especially visible in the Constitutions, the official regulations of the Congregation. This text, written by a committee of six canons at the beginning of the fifteenth century and approved by the General Chapter of 1402, was the basic rulebook to which all monasteries that wished to be incorporated into the Congregation had to conform.¹⁹ A version adapted for the specific requirements and circumstances of female houses was elaborated in the first half of the fifteenth century.²⁰ Both texts

- 15 • These included Augustinian houses, but Windesheim also reformed Cistercian, Dominican, and Premonstratensian houses. For example, in 1455, Duke William of Brunswick-Calenberg (r. 1423–73) commissioned Busch to reform the Augustinian female houses of Wennigsen (Grube, *Liber*, 555–8), Barsinghausen (ibid. 566–7), and Marienwerder (ibid. 567–8), as well as the Cistercian female house of Mariensee (ibid. 562–5). Prince-Bishop Magnus of Saxe-Lauenburg (r. 1424–52) of Hildesheim also supported Johannes Busch's efforts to reform monasteries of his diocese.
- 16 • Johannes Busch gave a list of about twenty male and female houses that the cardinal legate asked him to reform. Grube, *Liber*, 765–6.
- 17 • The *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum* was edited by Grube, *Liber*. A new edition is in preparation by Bertram Lesser: *Johannes Busch, Liber de reformatione monasteriorum—Briefe und Predigten. Textkritische Ausgabe. Mit einer Erstedition der Schriften von Hermann Ryd*, Publikationen der Akademie der Augustiner-Chorherren von Windesheim, Turnhout (in preparation). On Johannes Busch specifically, see the most recent and comprehensive study by Bertram Lesser, *Johannes Busch: Chronist der Devotio moderna. Werkstruktur, Überlieferung, Rezeption* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005). For a short introduction to Busch's life and his *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum*, see Julie Hotchin, 'Guidance for Men Who Minister to Women in the *Liber de Reformatione Monasteriorum* of Johannes Busch', in Juanita Feros Ruys (ed.), *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods* (Turnhout, 2008), 231–59 at 231–41.
- 18 • Respectively *Liber de origine devocionis moderne* (edited by Grube, *Liber*, 245–375) and *Liber de viris illustribus* (Grube, *Liber*, 1–244). Busch started writing these works in 1456 and completed them after several revisions in 1464. Lesser, *Johannes Busch*, 58–9.
- 19 • Johannes Busch mentioned this committee and its work in his chronicle of Windesheim, ch. XXIV 'De statutis capituli generalis de Windes[h]em, a quibus et quomodo primum sunt composita', edited by Grube, *Liber*, 308–9. See also Van der Woude, *ACW*, 15. The constitutions have recently been edited by Haverals and Legrand, *CCW*.
- 20 • The female constitutions have been edited by Rudolf T. M. van Dijk in *De constituties der Windesheimse vrouwenkloosters vóór 1559: Bijdrage tot de institutionele geschiedenis van het kapittel van Windesheim*, Middeleeuwse studies, 3 (Nijmegen, 1986) (from here on: *CM*). Based on the mentions of the female constitutions in the Acts of the General Chapter meetings of Windesheim, Van Dijk sets 1434 as the *terminus post quem* and 1443 as the *terminus ante quem* of the elaboration of this text. See pp. 45–6. The persons who elaborated the female constitutions are not known, but several decisions concerning female houses were taken during the annual Chapter meetings—which canonesses did not attend. It is therefore plausible that a commission of canons elaborated the text.

were continuously amended in the course of the years that ensued, following new decisions taken during annual chapter meetings.²¹

The prologue of the Windesheim Constitutions opens with the (almost) identical wording as earlier constitutions based on the Rule of St Augustine: it emphasizes the importance of living in uniformity (of monastic observances), since the rule requires the members to have one heart and one soul in God. Only then can the unity of outward behaviour stimulate and reflect the unity that must be preserved inside, in the heart:

Quoniam ex precepto regule iubemur habere cor unum et animam unam in domino, iustum est, ut qui sub una regula et unius professionis voto vivimus, uniformes in observancijs canonice religionis inveniamur quatinus unitatem, que interius servanda est in cordibus, foveat et representet uniformitas exterius servata in moribus.

Seeing that, according to the command of the rule, it is required of us to have one heart and one soul in the Lord, it is right that, [since] we live under a single rule and the vow of one profession, we are uniform in the canonical regular observances, so that the outward uniformity of behaviour may sharpen and display the unity which must be preserved internally in the hearts.²²

In the case of Windesheim, this opening is not only relevant as an expression of the desire for uniformity but also because it shows the clear will to inscribe this text, and therefore the whole Congregation, within a broader monastic tradition. Using this pre-existing text was also a way to lend weight and to legitimize the need for uniformity which was repeated in the rest of the Constitutions.

Uniformity was sought in the practical life of the canons and canonesses of Windesheim, as well as in their spiritual life. To this end, several committees of Windesheim canons were created, whose task it was to establish authoritative texts for the Congregation's liturgical books, including its *Liber ordinarius* and its *Manuale*.²³ The *Liber ordinarius* has an intermediary position between the Constitutions and liturgical books: it has a strong normative value (Rudolf van Dijk considers it as an extension of the Constitutions for everything that is related to the liturgy). It codifies the liturgical practices, describes the rites of the liturgical year, and indicates the incipits of the various chants, readings, and prayers.²⁴ The content of the *Manuale*

- 21 • Most of these decisions have been collected by two Windesheim canons, Martinus Schouben and Jacobus Bosmans, in the eighteenth century. The Congregation was greatly weakened by the Protestant Reformation but flourished again in the seventeenth century; the last Windesheim house was closed in 1809 and the last Windesheim canon died in 1865. See *Congregations and Houses: Canons Regular of the Congregation of Windesheim* ([http://www.augustiniancanons.org/About/houses_and_congregations_through_copy\(1\).htm#Windesheim](http://www.augustiniancanons.org/About/houses_and_congregations_through_copy(1).htm#Windesheim), last accessed 4 June 2019). The decisions collected by Schouben and Bosmans have been edited by Van der Woude, *ACW*. Some of the new decisions were also gathered at the end of pre-existing Constitutions, usually in a chapter entitled *De diversis statutis*. In 1431, one major revision led to a whole new version of the male Constitutions, which mostly consisted in the reorganization of the appropriate chapters integrating the decisions collected previously in the section *De diversis statutis*. See Van Dijk, *CM*, 13–34.
- 22 • Haverals and Legrand, *CCW*, 40. This opening is itself based on the Rule of St Augustine: 'Primum, propter quod in unum estis congregati, ut unanimes habitetis in domo et sit vobis anima una et cor unum in deum.' Luc Verheijen, *La Règle de Saint Augustin*, Études augustiniennes, 2 vols. (Paris, 1967), i. 417. The same prologue was already used by the Premonstratensians and reused by the Dominicans.
- 23 • Busch described these committees and the uniformity of these books; see Grube, *Liber*, 100, 102, 407. See also Acquoy, *Het Klooster te Windesheim en zijn invloed*, i. 205–11; Post, *The Modern Devotion*, 304–6.
- 24 • On the *Liber ordinarius* from Windesheim, see Hans Michael Franke, *Der Liber ordinarius der Regularanoniker der Windesheimer Kongregation* (Leverkusen, 1981); Van Dijk, *CM*, 212–20.

Windeshemense is not as fixed as the content of the *Ordinarius*: it generally contains detailed descriptions of specific rituals (for instance processions, the Washing of the Feet, investiture, and profession rituals). It also includes the full texts of the readings and musical notation of the chants to be sung.²⁵

Official copies of the Windesheim books were preserved in selected male monasteries and served as authoritative texts for all other copies. For instance, the 1434 revised version of the male Constitutions was originally copied in three master-copy manuscripts which circulated among the incorporated monasteries as required but were stored permanently in the Windesheim, Neuss, and Groenendaal houses once every monastery had a copy of them.²⁶ According to a (nowadays well-known) quotation by Johannes Busch, in its own view, the Chapter of Windesheim succeeded more than any other Order before it in achieving uniformity in the spelling, punctuation, and accentuation of liturgical books ('ad unam iotam bene sunt correctae punctuatae et ordinatae debiteque accentuatae, ut talis librorum correctio et consonantie conformitas in nullo mundi ordine usquam reperitur').²⁷

Johannes Busch and the Reformed Monasteries

According to Johannes Busch, the desire for uniformity within the Windesheim Congregation also extended to reformed but not formally incorporated monasteries. Indeed, he often stated in his report that the reformed but not incorporated monasteries complied with 'our' statutes, liturgies, chants, and ceremonies, that is, with the customs required by the General Chapter of Windesheim.²⁸ In practice, it remains unclear what the exact relationship was between Windesheim and the reformed monasteries, for being reformed according to the regulations of Windesheim and following the Windesheim statutes, customs, and ceremonies did not mean that these monasteries were officially incorporated in the Congregation (which would have made them subject to the stringent internal control mechanisms laid down in the Windesheim Constitutions). The influence of Windesheim nevertheless was strong in the fifteenth century: to be certified by Busch (and the authorities that inevitably supported him, bishops and local princes) as successfully reformed, the monasteries had to demonstrate their ability and their willingness to follow the same temporal and spiritual regulations as Windesheim.²⁹ Moreover, the monasteries were often supervised by a Windesheim canon.³⁰ Thus, even if they were not incorporated formally, many—but not all—reformed monasteries had tight connections with Windesheim.

25 • On the *Manuale Windeshemense*, see Van Dijk, *CM*, 221–7.

26 • Haverals and Legrand, *CCW*, 14.

27 • Grube, *Chronicon*, 311. See also Post, *The Modern Devotion*, 307.

28 • For instance, Busch writes: 'In statutis, ordinario, cantu, et ceremoniis per omnia se nostris conformaverunt' ('They fully complied with our statutes, *Liber ordinarius*, chant, and ceremonies') (about the female monastery of Heiningen), or 'Sic ergo nunc in omnibus nobis sunt conformes' (In this way, therefore, they now conform in every way to our [way of doing things]) (about the female monastery of Steterburg). Grube, *Liber*, 604 and 607 respectively.

29 • See Manon Louvriot, 'Controlling Space, Disciplining Voice: The Congregation of Windesheim and Fifteenth-Century Monastic Reform in Northern Germany and the Low Countries' (diss., Utrecht University, 2019), esp. 102–5.

Case Study: The Female House of Steterburg (Diocese of Hildesheim)

The desire for uniformity of Windesheim and the degree to which it was achieved is particularly interesting in the case of reformed monasteries, because they prove how important it was to reach a level of uniformity at affiliated houses that was as close as possible to that of the incorporated monasteries. The case of the female house of Steterburg, located in Lower Saxony in the Diocese of Hildesheim, is a particularly good example.³¹ In addition to the relatively good source situation,³² the house is of special interest here because it was reformed in 1451 by Johannes Busch himself.³³ Its reformed status was also clearly proclaimed by the Steterburg canonesses, as is visible from the colophon of a late fifteenth-century, post-reform Steterburg breviary:

Conscriptus est libellus iste anno domini 1479^o In stidderborch [Steterburg] monasterio *reformato* ordinis canonicarum regularium diocesis hildesemensis quem conscripsit soror Sophia gryz professa ordinatione reverende matris yde ghustidde de Brunsvicensi civitate tercie priorisse *post reformationem* antedicti monasterii ...

This book was compiled in the year of the Lord 1479 in the *reformed* monastery of Steterburg, of the Order of the Augustinian canonesses in the diocese of Hildesheim. It was written down by sister Sophia Gryz, who made her profession under the guidance of the Venerable Mother Yde Ghustidde from the town of Braunschweig, the third prioress *after the reform* of the aforementioned monastery ...³⁴

- 30 • This was, for instance, the case of Heiningen, which was supervised by the prior of the incorporated Windesheim monastery of St. Bartholomäus in Sülte near Hildesheim (and therefore by Johannes Busch himself between 1457 and 1476), or of Steterburg, supervised by the prior of the incorporated Windesheim monastery of Riechenberg. For Heiningen, see Klaus Scholz, *Monasticon Windeshemense*, ed. Wilhelm Kohl, Ernest Persoons, and Klaus Scholz, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1977), ii: *Deutsches Sprachgebiet*, 228–9. For Steterburg, the case study of this article (see below), this is visible in the profession of faith, which is made ‘in the presence of the prior of Riechenberg’ (*in presencia prioris in Richenberge*), Wolfenbüttel 1028, fol. 72^r. However, Windesheim canons also supervised female houses which were not reformed by the Congregation, nor officially incorporated, such as the female house of Mariënpool, which had a rector from the Chapter of Sion, to which the house belonged, or from the Chapter of Windesheim (on this monastery, see *Commemoration in the convent Mariënpool: prayer and politics*, <https://xposre.nl/ria/mariënpool/index.htm> (last accessed 11 Jan. 2019)). The precise qualities of the affiliations of female houses to Windesheim are therefore complex and extremely diverse. Overall, the relations between the Congregation and the about seventy monasteries (among which about twenty-five female houses) that were reformed by Busch are not always clear, even when the institution (in case of female houses) was supervised by a Windesheim canon. Such relations need further research, which is beyond the scope and focus of this essay.
- 31 • The house was originally founded in c.1000 by Frederunda von Ölsburg and her father, count Altmann von Ölsburg. On the history of the monastery, see Silvia Bunselmeyer, *Das Stift Steterburg im Mittelalter* (Braunschweig, 1983).
- 32 • On the state of the sources of Steterburg, see Britta-Juliane Kruse, *Stiftsbibliothek und Kirchenschatz: Materielle Kultur in den Chorfrauenstiften Steterburg und Heiningen* (Wiesbaden, 2016), esp. 419–25.
- 33 • For Johannes Busch’s description of his reform of Steterburg, see Grube, *Liber*, 604–7. See also the edition published in Eckart Conrad Lutz, *Arbeiten an der Identität: Zur Medialität der ‘cura monialium’ im Kompendium des Rektors eines reformierten Chorfrauenstifts. Mit Edition und Abbildung einer Windesheimer ‘Forma investiendi sanctimonialium’ und ihrer Notation* (Berlin and New York, 2010), 221–3, based on Lesser’s forthcoming edition.
- 34 • Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, VII B Hs 372, fol. 356^v (emphasis mine). Sophia Gryz (also Gris) was, at least from 1486 and until 1490, *procuratrix* of Steterburg. Ide Ghustidde (also Ida Gustidde) was prioress of the monastery between 1476 and 1497. Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, VII B Hs 367, fols. 170^r and 715^f, and Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, 8 Urk. 336. See also Bunselmeyer, *Das Stift Steterburg im Mittelalter*, 264 and 260 respectively.

This colophon seems to indicate that locating her sponsor in the line of post-reform prioresses was important for the scribe Sophia Gryz. Moreover, starting the count of the prioresses from the moment of the reform might suggest that the reform was almost tantamount to a second foundation of the monastery. While this was indeed a milestone, the colophon also confirms the prestige the canonesses associated with their affiliation to the Congregation of Windesheim when it refers to the ‘reformed monastery of Steterburg’, thus making a clear distinction between before and after the reform.

Despite the apparent success of the reform, there are variations in Steterburg sources which raise questions about uniformity. The balance between compliance with and deviations from the Windesheim rules reveal how strong the desire for uniformity of Windesheim was, while still allowing fluidity.

Uniformity and Melodies

Recently, Eleanor Giraud has convincingly demonstrated that thirteenth-century Dominicans endeavoured and succeeded in achieving liturgical uniformity, as can be seen in the comparative lack of variance in early manuscripts.³⁵ Based on a close comparison of the chants for Mass of Holy Week of six liturgical manuscripts copied shortly after 1256, Giraud introduces the distinction between ‘graphic’ or written variants (variations affecting the presentation of the chant) and ‘sonic’ or sung variants (for instance, repeated pitches and changes in pitches or ligatures), among which only the first do not seem to alter how the music was sung.³⁶

This distinction is helpful for analysing the level of compliance of a *Manuale* from Steterburg (Wolfenbüttel 1028)³⁷ with a *Manuale* from a Windesheim male house (Utrecht 432).³⁸ It has already been demonstrated by previous scholars that the liturgies for Windesheim male and female houses were extremely similar: the differences noticed by Van Dijk in the behaviour of canons and canonesses during Mass lie in details (for instance in the posture to adopt during the various readings and chants), rather than in the general proceedings of the Mass (for example, the order and choice of readings and chants).³⁹ Moreover, Eckart Conrad Lutz has recently compared a mid-fifteenth-century Windesheim *Liber ordinarius* from the male house of Sint-Agnietenberg (near Zwolle) with a female *Liber ordinarius* from the reformed female house of Heiningen. The comparison of the texts and of the proceedings of the liturgical

35 • Giraud, ‘Uniformity in the Dominican Liturgy’, 153–72.

36 • Ibid. 168.

37 • Wolfenbüttel 1028 (<http://diglib.hab.de/mss/1028-helmst/start.htm?image=00001>, last accessed 4 June 2019). The manuscript is dated after 1451. For a more general overview of the codicological structure and of the use of this manuscript, see the studies in Britta-Juliane Kruse (ed.), *Rosenkränze und Seelengärten: Bildung und Frömmigkeit in Niedersächsischen Frauenklöstern* (Wiesbaden, 2013); Kruse, *Stiftsbibliothek und Kirchenschatz*. See also Lutz, *Arbeiten an der Identität*.

38 • Utrecht 432 (<http://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/resolver.php?obj=002652767&ctype=2>, last accessed 18 Dec. 2018). The exact provenance of the manuscript is unknown, but an addition on fol. 79^r mentions its use in a Windesheim monastery during the papacy of Martin V (r. 1417–31): ‘hanc gratiam absolucionis a pena et culpa contulit capitulo nostro de Wyndeseim ... dominus Martinus papa quintus ...’ (‘Pope Martin V conferred this grace of absolution of guilt and punishment on our Chapter of Windesheim ...’).

39 • Van Dijk, *CM*, 402–6.

ceremonies led Lutz to conclude that the *Ordinarius* from Heiningen was a literal copy of the Windesheim *Ordinarius* adapted for female houses (that is, with gender-based differences).⁴⁰ Therefore, the liturgy of male and female Windesheim houses and of officially incorporated and not incorporated but reformed houses was the same, at least based on what the sources tell us. The comparison of the aforementioned *Manualia* Utrecht 432 and Wolfenbüttel 1028, from similar contexts (a male Windesheim house and a female reformed house respectively), will complement Lutz's analysis on the links between such houses and reveal the extent to which the uniformity of Windesheim applies in reformed female houses as well.

A fundamental graphic variant between Utrecht 432 and Wolfenbüttel 1028 is the type of notation: Utrecht 432 uses square notation while Wolfenbüttel 1028 uses *Hufnagelschrift*. This is due to the provenance of the two manuscripts, from the dioceses of Utrecht and of Hildesheim respectively in (what is now) the Netherlands and Germany. Despite the different notational systems, the two manuscripts present an astonishing level of similarity. This is especially visible in long melismatic passages, such as the *Alleluia* of the chant *Cum Rex glorie* of the Easter Sunday procession (see Pl. 9.1), but also in smaller melismas such as the words *claritatis* and *terrore* of the chant *Sedit angelus* (see Pl. 9.2): even if the ligatures look different, the groups of notes are strictly the same. Therefore, the graphic differences, which pertain to the notations themselves, do not seem to impact the musical content.



Plate 9.1. Comparison of the ligatures and groups of notes of the *Alleluia* melisma in *Cum Rex glorie*: (a) Utrecht 432, fol. 46^v; (b) Wolfenbüttel 1028, fol. 33^v. Reproduced with permission of the Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, and the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel



Plate 9.2. Comparison of the ligatures and groups of notes of the melismas on *claritatis* and *terrore* in the chant *Sedit angelus*: (a) Utrecht 432, fol. 47^v (staves 4 and 5); (b) Wolfenbüttel 1028, fol. 35^v (staves 3 and 5). Reproduced with permission of the Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, and the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel

40 • Lutz, *Arbeiten an der Identität*, esp. 43. Lutz used the following male Windesheim *Ordinarius*: Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Hs. 1448, dated 1456. Van Dijk has identified this manuscript as a representative example of the mid-fifteenth-century *Ordinarius Windeshemensis* (Van Dijk, *CM*, 212–21). Therefore, even if no *Ordinarius* from officially incorporated female houses has come down to us, this exemplar from Heiningen is a valuable source of information for Windesheim liturgical practices in female houses.

In addition to the note shapes, the staves of Utrecht 432 are composed of four red lines, while the staves of Wolfenbüttel 1028 are composed of five lines, including a red (F-clef) and a yellow (C-clef) line. These two elements demonstrate that total visual uniformity was, apparently, not considered essential, at least in officially incorporated versus reformed monasteries. Rather, local scribal practices seem to have been allowed, at least in reformed houses (though it is not clear who, among the Chapter of Windesheim, the reformer, the local bishop, or the rector of the female house allowed such practices). It is also possible that no special permission was necessary and that regional scribal practices did not jeopardize uniformity as understood by Windesheim, and hence, that they were not a concern for the implementation of the Windesheim customs. This would not be surprising given the fact that other Orders allowed for regional characteristics, too: indeed, Chadd suggests that the Cistercians did not attempt to impose uniformity of notation, especially taking into account that notation was a minimal prescription, and that the actual, sonic, performance of chant was at the core of the uniformity.⁴¹

The use of vertical lines between groups of notes is the main (if not the only) difference in the musical notation of Wolfenbüttel and Utrecht 432.⁴² Table 9.1, based on processional chants for Holy Week, Easter Sunday, and Rogation days, is representative of the proportions of differences one finds in the use of vertical lines in these two manuscripts.⁴³ Plate 9.3 illustrates some of these differences.



Plate 9.3. Examples of different placements of vertical lines between Utrecht 432 and Wolfenbüttel 1028: (a) Utrecht 432, fols. 47^v and 52^f; (b) Wolfenbüttel 1028, fols. 35^f and 39^v. Reproduced with permission of the Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, and the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel

- 41 • Chadd, 'Liturgy and Liturgical Music: The Limits of Uniformity', 302. The copying practices of Wolfenbüttel 1028 and Utrecht 432 seem to confirm Chadd's hypothesis for Windesheim circles.
- 42 • The term 'vertical lines' is borrowed from Giraud, 'Uniformity in the Dominican Liturgy'. The Windesheim sources do not contain any specific term for this notational device.
- 43 • Given its central, liturgical, importance, Holy Week is often used as a representative example of liturgical practices. This is what Giraud did in her study of the Dominican liturgy (Giraud, 'Uniformity in the Dominican Liturgy', esp. 158), as well as Lutz in his study of the female monasteries of Heiningen and Steterburg, reformed by Windesheim (Lutz, *Arbeiten an der Identität*). This article follows the same trend. Given the importance of the Rogations procession, it seemed necessary to complete this table with the processional chants of this feast as well, in order to have more representative results. The two manuscripts indicate that four chants should be sung: *Surgite sancti dei*, *Salvator mundi*, *Regina celi letare*, and *Lux perpetua lucebit*. However, Utrecht 432 does not have musical notation for the last two: the melodic comparison is therefore impossible in those cases (only the incipits are indicated; see fol. 52^v).

The differences we find indicate either different phrasing practices or different visual indications. Vertical lines can be considered as sonic elements indicating phrasing, or as graphic elements giving visual points of reference in the copying process which did not impact the musical content. Given the small amount of differences between the two sources, it is difficult to identify which of those two possibilities is the most plausible. Furthermore, in Wolfenbüttel 1028, the vertical lines seem to have been written down by a different scribe after the copying of the melodies, whereas the lines in Utrecht 432 were copied by the same scribe and together with the melodies. Thus, it is also possible that the second scribe of Wolfenbüttel 1028 omitted some of the vertical lines (as might be the case, for instance, in the second example of Pl. 9.3). However, given the high number of vertical lines in both manuscripts, the figures in Table 9.1 show that differences in the use of vertical lines are very occasional and are therefore not significant in terms of compromising the chant uniformity sought by Windesheim.

Table 9.1. Differences in the use of vertical lines between Utrecht 423 and Wolfenbüttel 1028

Chant	Extra vertical line in Utrecht 432	Extra vertical line in Wolfenbüttel 1028	Number of vertical lines in Utrecht 432	Number of vertical lines in Wolfenbüttel 1028
<i>Inventor rutili dux</i>	4	0	52	48
<i>Cum rex glorie</i>	1	2	47	48
<i>Salve festa dies</i>	3	1	22	20
<i>Sedit angelus</i>	1	3 ^a	15	17
<i>Sedit angelus V. Crucifixum in carne</i>	1	5 ^b	14	18
<i>Sedit angelus V. Recordamini quomodo</i>	1	1	13	13
<i>Surgite sancti dei</i>	2	0	17	15
<i>Salvator mundi</i>	3	3	19	19
<i>Total amount of vertical lines</i>	16	15	199	198

a Including 2 replaced by a clef change: vertical lines as separation of phrases were not necessary.

b Including 1 replaced by a clef change: vertical line as separation of phrases was not necessary.

Concerning melodies, Ulrike Hascher-Burger has already underlined how few variations there are among manuscripts from Augustinian and even Cistercian female houses from Lower Saxony reformed by Windesheim.⁴⁴ In the chants compared in Table 9.1, only one difference has been notated: in the chant *Surgite sancti dei* one pitch is repeated in Wolfenbüttel 1028 (Pl. 9.4) but not in Utrecht 432. It might be due to a variation in the melody, in which case the melodic contour is not impacted. However, it seems more likely to be an omission of the Utrecht scribe.

44 • Ulrike Hascher-Burger, 'In omnibus essent conformes? Windesheimer Reform und liturgische Erneuerung in niedersächsischen Frauenkonventen im 15. Jahrhundert', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93 (2013), 535–47 at 545.

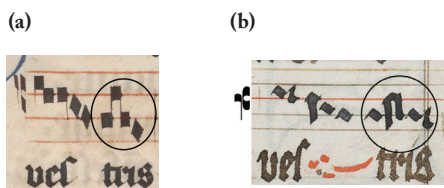


Plate 9.4. Variation in repetition of pitches in the chant *Surgite sancti dei*: (a) Utrecht 432, fol. 51^v; (b) Wolfenbüttel 1028, fol. 38^f (penultimate note doubled). Reproduced with permission of the Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, and the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel

This unique difference therefore confirms Hascher-Burger's observations: uniformity at the level of individual melodies seems to have been respected in minute detail, at least as much as it is possible to tell from the sources. This also shows that the passage from one notation to the other did not impact the status of the musical melodies.

The extreme similarities of the two sources at the level of individual melodies show that sonic variations were only minor, if not inexistent, at least based on what the sources show. On the contrary, the use of two different notational systems demonstrates that graphic variants were not necessary to achieve the uniformity of Windesheim. The differences in the use of vertical lines, even if their purpose is not clear, are not numerous enough to significantly impact the uniformity of the sonic aspects of the chants, especially given the high amount of vertical lines in both sources.

Therefore, conclusions similar to those found by Giraud within the thirteenth-century Dominican liturgy can be drawn: the Dominican liturgy allowed for 'occasional minor "sonic" variation . . . and was much freer with regard to written variations'.⁴⁵ Windesheim indeed allowed written variations; the choice of the notational system is the most visible witness of this. The appearance of the notation did not change the musical content, however: the almost complete absence of pitch differences reveals the criteria according to which Windesheim judged whether it had succeeded in implementing sonic uniformity in reformed (female) houses.⁴⁶ In the medieval context, where the transmission and stability of texts were often made difficult by material or technical factors, such lack of differences is particularly striking. This clearly points towards a great stress on the achievement of melodic uniformity. Wolfenbüttel 1028 therefore seems to be representative of Johannes Busch's report according to which Steterburg was in compliance with Windesheim customs (*in omnibus nobis sunt conformes*).⁴⁷

Johannes Busch often concluded his reports by writing that the Augustinian monasteries have now adopted 'our chants' (the chants of the Windesheim Chapter), though without giving more details. For instance, in Steterburg, he writes that the canonesses preserved much of (*pro maiori parte*) the 'old chant' (*cantum antiquum*) until his arrival but, thanks to his counsel and to the good will of the canonesses, they adopted the chant of 'our general chapter' (*cantum capituli nostri generalis*).⁴⁸ This points to a clear awareness of 'old' chants that needed to be changed. While this older state is lost to us because of the lack of sources, the comparison of individual melodies following the reform, as given above, confirms Busch's statement.

45 • Giraud, 'Uniformity in the Dominican Liturgy', 169.

46 • Interestingly, the sources studied by Giraud were all written in square notation. The fact that the shift from one notational system to another did not affect the musical content in the Windesheim sources points at a very stable musical transmission.

47 • Grube, *Liber*, 607.

48 • 'Cantum antiquum pro maiori parte usque ad adventum meum ad eas retinuerant, sed de consilio meo et voluntate cantum capituli nostri generalis assumpserunt et ordinarium et servant usque in presentem diem.' Grube, *Liber*, 607.

In addition, Busch often wrote that reformed monasteries were now in full compliance with the statutes, the *Ordinarius*, the chants and ceremonies of the Chapter.⁴⁹ Given the sonic uniformity of melodies, it would be tempting to draw the same conclusions about these other aspects of the liturgy and of monastic life.

Uniformity and Celebrations

However, if we zoom out from palaeographic minutiae to a more general level, some discrepancies do emerge between Johannes Busch's discourse on his reforms, official Windesheim regulations, and local practices. These differences indicate at first glance a break with uniformity. One visible aspect which points towards residual non-uniform practices concerns the organization of processions.

Processions

The Chapter of Windesheim forbade canonesses to make processions. The prohibition is stated in the female constitutions as follows: 'Moniales non faciant processiones, sed in choro cantant que proprie ad processionem cantanda ordinata sunt' ('Canonesses are not to perform processions, but sing in the choir those [chants] which are ordained to be sung during the processions').⁵⁰

This prohibition was not in the original Windesheim statutes since it is part of *De diversis statutis*, a chapter which gathers new regulations decided by the annual Chapter meetings.⁵¹ This prohibition was very likely decided in the 1430s,⁵² and it was also copied in at least one version of the *Constitutiones canonicorum Windeshemensium*, with a small variation (italicized here): 'Moniales non faciant processiones, sed *possunt cantare* in choro que proprie ad processionem cantanda ordinata sunt' ('Canonesses are not to perform processions, but they *can sing* in the choir those [chants] which are ordained to be sung during the processions').⁵³

This small difference in wording, however, does not leave any doubt regarding the meaning of this decision: canonesses could not perform the movements of the processions in the proper sense of the word, i.e. outside their choir, even if they were allowed to sing processional

49 • The aforementioned quotation concerning the Augustinian female monastery of Heiningen, for example, is very clear: 'In statutis, ordinario, cantu et ceremoniis per omnia se nostris conformaverunt' (see above, n. 28); Grube, *Liber*, 604. Another example includes the Augustinian male house of St. Justinus in Eppersburg: 'Assumpserunt ergo ibi statuta nostra capituli de Windes[h]em, ordinarium[,] cantum, habitum, ceremonialia et usque in presens satis bene cuncta observant ...' ('Therefore, they adopted the statutes, the *Liber ordinarius*, the chant, the dress, the ceremonies of our Chapter of Windesheim, and they observe them all well and sufficiently until the present day'). Grube, *Liber*, 472. 'Habitus' here refers to the dress and, by extension, to the religious way of life: when the inhabitants of the monastery 'took the Windesheim dress', they also adopted the Congregation's religious life. The edition by Grube does not feature a comma between 'ordinarium' and 'cantum', but it seems to be a misreading or a misunderstanding. The previous quotation, for instance, distinguishes 'ordinarius' from 'cantus', which makes perfect sense: 'ordinarius' there refers to the book codifying the practical aspects of the liturgy (the *Liber ordinarius*) while 'cantus' refers to the chants that were sung.

50 • Van Dijk, *CM*, 828.

51 • The chapter *De diversis statutis* or *Statuta de diversis que ad omnes pertinent* already figures in manuscripts from c.1432–4. See Haverals and Legrand, *CCW*, 13.

52 • Van Dijk, *CM*, 513.

53 • *CCW*, BnF, lat. 10883, fol. 82^v, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90683oog>, last accessed 18 Dec. 2018).

chants and, perhaps, enact abstract versions of the relevant processions within the confines of the choir.⁵⁴ Moreover, while the chapter on the cantor in the male Constitutions indicates that he was in charge of organizing and controlling processions, including watching over the proper movements of the monastic bodies,⁵⁵ the same sentence was omitted in the corresponding chapter of the Constitutions for female communities on the cantrix.⁵⁶ Apart from these two elements, no other sources evoke this prohibition, but these two sentences strongly suggest that any form of processional movements in any kind of physical space (either inside or outside the enclosure) was forbidden. However, singing the chants in a stationary way would still have enabled the canonesses to create an imagined space.⁵⁷ Processions were important rituals transforming material space into a metaphorically transcended space—for example, to recreate the city of Jerusalem or to transform the space of the monastery into a symbolic representation of the heavenly paradise. In such rituals, not only movements and gestures were essential, but also objects (crosses, candles), art work, and, of course, sound (readings, chants). All participated in the process of transcending the material space. Therefore, despite the prohibition of the ambulatory element of processions, the Windesheim Constitutions, by allowing canonesses to sing processional chants, still gave them the possibility to perform the symbolic, metaphorical meaning of processions.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, contrary to the explicit full compliance of the monastery of Steterburg with Windesheim customs, as Busch tells us,⁵⁹ and contrary to the prohibition clearly stated in the Constitutions, sources from Steterburg clearly attest that processions had been performed outside the choir after the reform. The *Manuale Wolfenbüttel* 1028 not only contains melodies of processional chants, but also details on the movements to be performed by the canonesses on the main feast days, namely Palm Sunday, the Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday, Rogation Days,

- 54 • The prohibition implies that once canonesses could perform the movements of the processions outside the choir, within the enclosure. However, according to Johannes Busch, enclosure was most of the time not fully respected in the houses he reformed, which could have entailed visual and physical contacts with laypeople who were allowed in the church. The prohibition nevertheless makes it clear that even within their enclosure, Windesheim canonesses were not allowed to perform processional movements.
- 55 • ‘Ipsius quoque est processiones ordinare et facienda disponere, et eos qui non bene incedunt dirigere.’ *CCW*, 144.
- 56 • Van Dijk, *CM*, 726–7.
- 57 • Processions in female orders in general need further research. However, case studies undertaken by modern scholarship attest to the performance of processions by religious women inside and outside the enclosure. A telling example is the nuns of the Benedictine Abbey of the Holy Cross in Poitiers in the fifteenth century, discussed by Jennifer C. Edwards, *Superior Women: Medieval Female Authority in Poitiers’ Abbey of Sainte-Croix* (Oxford, 2019), 201–28. Gabriela Signori also mentions several late-medieval examples in Benedictine abbeys in ‘Wanderers between Worlds: Visitors, Letters, Wills, and Gifts as Means of Communication in Exchanges between Cloister and the World’, in Jeffrey H. Hamburger and Susan Marti (eds.), *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York, 2008), 259–73 at 260–1.
- 58 • For the symbolic meaning of the various elements of processions in a similar context, see June Mecham, ‘Spatial Geography of the Convent of Wienhausen’, in Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2005), 139–56. Though in a different context (thirteenth-century Cistercian monasteries of Yorkshire), this question is also very well exemplified in Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries* (Turnhout, 2001), 47–71. For a more general discussion of monastic space, see Columba Stewart, ‘Monastic Space and Time’, in Hendrik W. Dey and Elizabeth Fentress (eds.), *Western Monasticism ante Litteram: The Spaces of Monastic Observance in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2011), 43–51.
- 59 • ‘Sic ergo nunc in omnibus nobis sunt conformes.’ Grube, *Liber*, 607.

the Vigil of Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Assumption, and the Dedication of the church.⁶⁰ The *Manuale* from Steterburg is not an isolated testimony to processions continuing after the Windesheim reform was accomplished: they are also mentioned in the 1479 breviary from the same house. For instance, in the calendar, on the solemn feast of the Assumption of Mary, one can read: 'Ad processionem *Felix namque*'.⁶¹

This proves that some reformed monasteries retained some of their older practices, despite their (or Johannes Busch's) claim of being reformed according to the Windesheim Constitutions.⁶² Even if the reform was successfully implemented, it was necessary to organize the liturgy on a practical level, which clearly led to outcomes that could differ from the Windesheim regulations and must have been the product of local negotiations. Further research is required to fully reveal the rationale behind these persistences, but deviances are not unusual in liturgical history. What Chadd concluded about the thirteenth-century Cistercian liturgy is also valid for the fifteenth-century Windesheim Congregation: 'the *genii loci* could exert a more tenacious hold than the rather abstract ideals of fidelity to a universal Rule'.⁶³

Ceremonies

Flexibility in the implementation of uniformity is also visible in the general organization of celebrations within the narrower circle of officially incorporated monasteries. As early as 1431, the General Chapter agreed to allow monasteries to incorporate the feasts of the diocese in which they were located even if this caused divergences from the officially sanctioned Windesheim Calendar and the respective liturgies.⁶⁴ Similarly to the ongoing practice of processions in at least some reformed, albeit unincorporated, female houses, as demonstrated in the case of Steterburg, this permission demonstrates the willingness of the Congregation to adapt to local practices within circumscribed limits. Local practices were of profound importance in the medieval liturgy,⁶⁵ and this Chapter decision of 1431 was a way to control the ensuing di-

60 • The first folios of the manuscript are missing: the manuscript now begins with the end of the chant *Cum appropinquaret Dominus* for the Palm Sunday procession. A mid-fifteenth-century *Manuale* (Los Angeles, Occidental College, 1 box 233 2 L615) has been identified by Britta Kruse as possibly originating from Steterburg (based on numerous similarities of content and decorations, as well as on the mention of the patrons Jacobus and Christophorus and of the altars of St Augustine and Bernward of Hildesheim). This other *Manuale* opens with Candlemas procession: it is therefore possible that Wolfenbüttel 1028 originally opened with this feast as well. See Kruse, *Stiftsbibliothek und Kirchenschatz*, 423.

61 • Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, VII B Hs 372, fol. 12^r.

62 • The continued practice of processions despite their ban by the Windesheim Constitutions is not the only example of such exceptions. Similar discrepancies have been identified, for instance, regarding the use of polyphony or of organs: Ulrike Hascher-Burger, *Gesungene Innigkeit: Studien zu einer Musikhandschrift der Devotio moderna* (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, ms. 16 H 34, olim B 113). *Mit einer Edition der Gesänge* (Leiden, 2002), esp. 185–241, and Ulrike Hascher-Burger, 'Orgelspiel versus Orgelverbot: Ein Paradigmenstreit im Umfeld der norddeutschen Klosterreform im 15. Jahrhundert?', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 35–6 (2017), 69–86.

63 • Chadd, 'Liturgy and Liturgical Music: The Limits of Uniformity', 314.

64 • 'Unaquaque domus poterit se conformare in celebratione festorum cum ordinario dyocesis in qua sita est.' Van der Woude, *ACW*, 23.

65 • Susan Boynton has exemplified this in earlier centuries: Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125* (Ithaca, NY and London, 2006).

vergences from the ideal of *uniformitas* as much as was possible by allowing limited divergence within specific confines (here those of the diocesan liturgical calendars).

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This is perhaps the reason why, at least until 1447, feasts that were not officially part of the Windesheim liturgy were still celebrated in officially incorporated monasteries. Indeed, in a document dated 27 February 1447, Hildesheim Prince-Bishop Magnus of Saxe-Lauenburg noted that numerous unnecessary ceremonies and practices from the time before the reform were still performed in the monasteries of St Bartholomäus in Sülte near Hildesheim, of Wittenburg, and of Riechenberg. In the letter, he writes that these excesses must be corrected because they are not in compliance with the Windesheim regulations.⁶⁶ Interestingly, in the same year the General Chapter ordained that *visitatores* must be particularly careful that no discrepancies exist 'in statutes, books, [keeping of] silence, and so on' ('in statutis, in libris, in silentio et caeteris'), since such discrepancies lessened the conformity to the Windesheim statutes and therefore jeopardized the harmony of the Chapter.⁶⁷ The bishop anticipated the application of this stipulation (which was only confirmed by the Chapter in 1449) with his letter. This demonstrates, on the one hand, the strong episcopal support that the Windesheim Congregation had enjoyed in the diocese of Hildesheim, and, on the other, the fact that feasts or ceremonies that were not officially Windesheim-sanctioned started to be a concern for the Chapter, and therefore that they clearly wanted to adjust their decision of 1431 allowing local feasts. It also shows that tolerance towards local practices went in waves, demonstrating the ongoing struggle of the Chapter of Windesheim to deal with, on the one hand, the need to implement uniformity and to control monasteries which were sometimes hundreds of miles away from the motherhouse, and, on the other, to control the continued (re-)assertion of local customs and traditions.

Between 1440 and June 1447, Johannes Busch was the prior of the monastery of St. Bartholomäus in Sülte. The letter of the Prince-Bishop of Hildesheim proves that even in this monastery, led by the kingpin of the reform himself, feasts that were not sanctioned by Windesheim continued to be organized. If these were allowed by the 1431 Windesheim decision, it sheds a different light on Busch's writings. As Bertram Lesser has written, the Prince-Bishop's letter must have affected Busch, since he later kept insisting in his verbal descriptions how strongly he wanted, and how convincingly he succeeded in, implementing Windesheim customs and ceremonies.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the letter of the Prince-Bishop of Hildesheim also nuances Busch's own testimony on his reforms.

66 • The bishop especially mentions Masses and vigils, funerals and saints' feasts (*tam in missis et vigiliis, funeralibus ac aliquibus sanctorum festis*). See Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover, Cal. Or. 100 Wittenburg Nr. 81 (<http://www.arcinsys.niedersachsen.de/arcinsys/detailAction?detailid=v1680406>, last accessed 18 Dec. 2018). The three monasteries were reformed according to the Windesheim Constitutions and officially incorporated within the Congregation as follows: Riechenberg: reformed in 1414, incorporated in 1433 (Grube, *Liber*, 482–84; Heutger and Heutger, *Niedersächsische Ordenshäuser und Stifte*, 208–20). Wittenburg: reformed and incorporated in 1423 (Grube, *Liber*, 479–82; Heutger and Heutger, *Niedersächsische Ordenshäuser und Stifte*, 194–207). St. Bartholomäus in Sülte: reformed in 1439, incorporated in 1441 (Van der Woude, *ACW*, 36 and 134). On this event, see also Lesser, *Johannes Busch*, 290–1.

67 • Van der Woude, *ACW*, 44.

68 • Lesser, *Johannes Busch*, 290–1. Among the numerous cases found in the *Liber de reformatione*, two examples can be quoted: about the monastery of Neuwerk, reformed in 1445, Busch wrote: 'Sic ergo apud cantum

Not only the local sources themselves, but also the position of the Chapter of Windesheim (as is visible in its successive stipulations) nuance the desire of uniformity of the Chapter and the discourse of Johannes Busch on the achievement of ‘uniformity’ in reformed monasteries. Busch obviously had an interest in demonstrating that his reforms were an unmitigated success and, hence, that all reformed monasteries were fully and without exception in compliance with the Windesheim regulations. After all, he was mandated by the cardinal legate Nicholas of Cusa and he had to prove the efficiency of his work.⁶⁹ Bertram Lesser’s analysis also emphasized that Busch’s *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum* was not just a reform handbook nor just an ‘autobiographical, missionary-style factual report’ (‘autobiographisch-missionarischer Tatenbericht’) of his reforms but also a means to position himself among the illustrious, exemplary men of Windesheim.⁷⁰ It was therefore in Busch’s (political and spiritual) interest to stress (and perhaps exaggerate) the Windesheim uniformity of the monasteries he reformed.

Conclusion

It has become clear that the female reformed monastery at Steterburg shared the same melodies as officially incorporated Windesheim male houses, as illustrated by the *Manuale* Utrecht 432. The comparison of this *Manuale* with the *Manuale* Wolfenbüttel 1028 from Steterburg has also proved that graphic variants were not significant in the accomplishment of this uniformity, and that sonic unity was much more essential—and indeed achieved, at least as far as the notated sources can tell us in this case. The differences in the use of vertical lines observed above might point to different phrasing, but their small number shows that these were minor variations, and did not significantly impact the uniformity in the chant performance.

However, the uniformity of melodies was counterbalanced by non-compliance of the reformed house of Steterburg with the prohibition of processions stipulated in the Constitutions. Since the Constitutions are presented as the warrant of uniformity, any deviance from this text would point to a break with uniformity.⁷¹ Finally, the Chapter of Windesheim itself struggled with implementing the strict uniformity of practices, temporarily authorizing some local deviances, as is visible in the 1431 decision to allow local, diocesan feasts, revoked in favour of the full uniformity of practices in the General Chapter several years later, in 1447. Finally, the mix of uniform and non-uniform practices contradicts—or at least puts into per-

nostrum per annos plusquam viginti quinque permanserunt, statuta, ordinarium et ceremonialia nostra servantes.’ (‘This way, therefore, they retained our chants over more than twenty-five years, and preserved our statutes, *Liber ordinarius*, and ceremonies’). Grube, *Liber*, 436. Another example is the female house of the Heiligkreuzkloster in Erfurt, reformed in 1470: ‘...in habitu, cantu, statutis et ceremonialibus per omnia nobis in Sulta sunt conformes’. (... ‘they are completely in compliance with the dress, the chant, the statutes, and the ceremonies with ours in Sülte’). Grube, *Liber*, 612.

69 • Grube, *Liber*, 759–63.

70 • Lesser, *Johannes Busch*, esp. 276 and 291–2.

71 • The prologue of the constitutions is very clear in this regard: unity will be ensured and achieved better if everything is written down and if no one is allowed to change anything in this text (‘Quod profecto eo competencius et plenius poterit observari, si ea que agenda sunt scripto fuerint commendata, si omnibus qualiter sit vivendum scriptura teste innotescat, si mutare vel addere vel minuire nulli quicquam propria voluntate liceat, ne si minima neglexerimus paulatim defluamus’). Translation Haverals and Legrand, *CCW*, 40. This part of the prologue was also used by the Premonstratensians and Dominicans.

spective—Johannes Busch's repeated assertions that reformed monasteries were fully in compliance with Windesheim statutes, ceremonies, and books.

Should we then conclude that the Chapter of Windesheim did not succeed in achieving its goals? The regulations of Windesheim do not necessarily describe actual practices, but ideals that monasteries within the Congregation had to strive to reach. In her study of Cistercian documents, Constance Berman states that since 'divergence from the model is the norm', the 'Ideals and Reality model' has to be reconsidered.⁷² Berman's statement invites us to question the very notion of 'Windesheim ideals', since it appears too simple to analyse Windesheim practices in terms of an opposition between ideals (what the regulations prescribed) and reality (the divergences from the regulations which emerge from local liturgical sources). Of course, the regulations Windesheim established in the Constitutions and adjusted each year during the Chapter meetings seem to describe a 'standard of perfection or excellence' (which was also conceived of by the Chapter as a re-establishment of older monastic traditions), a 'thing conceived in its highest perfection ... an object to be realized or aimed at'.⁷³ This last definition of 'ideal', however, is exactly what could nuance the understanding of the ideal as the perfect achievement, and therefore an achievement somewhat removed from reality: an ideal is 'an object to be aimed at' but cannot be reached in the real world.

The case study presented in this article seems to indicate that uniformity was indeed for late-medieval people an object to be aimed at, rather than an object to be achieved. The mix of uniform and non-uniform practices observed in Steterburg opens questions about the meaning, origins, and reasons for divergences between the norms (the ideals) and the local practices (the reality) in reformed monasteries, especially taking into account the various perspectives adopted by the sources (the Chapter of Windesheim, Johannes Busch, liturgical books produced for and by reformed monasteries themselves).

Moreover, even if the discourse in sources does not explicitly state it, elements point towards uniformity understood as stability over the years. As discussed here, the female house of Steterburg clearly points to the continued uses of local practices, whether in the actual performance of the liturgy (such as processions) or in the copying of books (keeping local musical notation). Uniformity through stability and persistence is also what Johannes Busch advocated when he wrote, on several occasions, that reformed monasteries have now followed the ceremonies, statutes, and chants for more than twenty years.⁷⁴ Uniformity might not be only a horizontal notion (all the monasteries do exactly the same), but rather a vertical notion, that is, a persistent state of things over the years in a given house.

72 • Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution*, 55–6.

73 • 'ideal, adj. and n.'. OED Online (<http://www.oed.com>, last accessed 25 Jan. 2019).

74 • For example, about the male monastery of Neuwerk, Busch wrote that they have been following the chant, statutes, and ceremonies of Windesheim for more than twenty-five years (Grube, *Liber*, 435–6.). Steterburg has been following the Windesheim liturgical practices 'until the present day', which means for about twenty years, since the house was reformed in 1451 and the *Liber* written between 1470 and 1474 (Grube, *Liber*, 607).