

Monastic Exemption: The Long Road to Protection

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This paper examines the normative character of monastic exemption. In tracing the formation and development of exemption privileges between the fifth and ninth centuries, it argues for an emerging pattern under the Franks that proved central to developing notions of spiritual and physical protection. As a consequence of this novel mentality, a monastery's relationship with its surrounding environment permitted greater degrees of freedom and protection than ever before. This unique transformation took time to develop, however, forging alliances that effectively shifted individual monasteries away from their Frankish protectorate towards the spiritual centre in Rome. The consequences of this landmark shift, it will be argued, benefited the early medieval papacy in its burgeoning claims of centralized power and legitimacy.