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"Engineering Miracles: Water Control, Conversion and the Creation of a Religious Landscape in the Medieval Ardennes"

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Arnold, Ellen F. "Engineering Miracles: Water Control, Conversion and the Creation of a Religious Landscape in the Medieval Ardennes." *Environment and History* 13, no.4 (Nov., 2007): 447–76. doi:10.3197/096734007X243177 . Though sometimes at odds, the religious and economic identities of medieval monks could also reinforce one another. Benedictine monks throughout the medieval world engaged in the economic transformation of the world while also seeking to flee many kinds of secular involvement. In the early and high Middle Ages, the monks of the Ardennes actively worked to reconcile this by constructing a religious framework for their practical activities. They controlled, managed and engineered water resources, and created miracle stories that highlighted these activities. Medieval monks had cultural and religious reasons for creating stories about water control, and religious stories need a firmer place in discussions of environment and technology. This article demonstrates that monks were able to use their religious authority and their control of religious message to support and supplement their temporal powers. The control of water resources was more than an economic or practical necessity; it was deeply connected to monastic identity and the relationships between monks and the secular world. All rights reserved. © 2007 The White Horse Press

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