

Abstract

“Goswin's Song of the Conquest of Alcácer” (*Gosuini de Expugnatione Salaciae Carmen*) exists in a unique exemplar in a codex dating to the latter half of the thirteenth century belonging to the library of the great Portuguese Cistercian monastery of Alcobaça. It recounts the Portuguese conquest, in combination with maritime Northern European crusaders, of a strategically vital Muslim fortress during the formative years of the autonomous kingdom of Portugal; namely the conquest of Alcácer do Sal in 1217. Beyond his name, the identity of Goswin has up to now remained a mystery. Against the background of the Fifth Crusade and through an exploration of a maze of connections, political, religious and literary, both in Portugal and in the Southern Low Countries, this paper presents the case that the Goswin of the Song is in fact Goswin of Bossut (fl. 1231-1238) cantor of the important Cistercian monastery of Villers in Brabant and known author of at least three Lives; *Ida the Compassionate of Nivelles*, *Arnulf lay brother of Villers* and *Abundus, Monk of Villers*, and several other works both poetical and musical.