

Sous la direction de
ÉRIC DELAISSÉ

LA CHARTE DE CHARITÉ 1119-2019

Un document pour préserver l'unité
entre les communautés

THE CHARTER OF CHARITY
1119-2019

A Document to Preserve Unity
among Communities

*Actes du colloque organisé par l'Association pour le Rayonnement de la Culture
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sous la direction de
ÉRIC DELAISSE

LA CHARTE DE CHARITÉ

1119-2019

Un document pour préserver l'unité

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF VENERATION OF ST. STEPHEN HARDING AS AUTHOR OF THE *CARTA CARITATIS*

INTRODUCTION, BIOGRAPHICAL PRÉCIS, OVERVIEW

Harding (probably his name at that point) began his clerical career as a boy oblate at the cathedral-monastery of Sherborne, located in south-central England. He was not of noble birth, as many later writers claim. He left Sherborne as a young man and went to study in France; there he met a fellow Englishman, Peter, with whom he made a pilgrimage to Rome. Peter likely took this name during this pilgrimage in devotion to the first pope; Harding likely took the name Stephen in honor of the protomartyr. It was Early Modern hagiographers who made a surname of Harding, calling him *Stephanus Hardingus*¹. Authors of the nineteenth century endorsed this anachronistic shift wholeheartedly, so that today most think that Harding is the family name².

Both monks entered Molesme upon returning to France, Peter remaining there until death. Stephen joined the group going to Cîteaux and in 1109, he became the third abbot of that house and died in 1134³.

DOES APPROBATION OF THE *CARTA CARITATIS* 'FOUND' THE ORDER ?

The only way that Stephen can be considered the founder of the Cistercian Order is if the *Carta caritatis* is seen as a founding constitution.

1. Chrysostomus HENRIQUEZ uses the name Stephanus Hardingus in his *Phoenix reviviscens, sive Ordinis Cisterciensis scriptorum Angliae et Hispaniae series*, Brussels, Jean Meerbeeck, 1626, p. 139-151; Augustinus SARTORIUS, *Verteüschtes Cistercium Bis-Tertium*, Prague, Wickhart, 1708, p. 16.

2. H. E. J. COWDREY, « Stephan Harding », in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 52, Oxford, 2004, p. 420.

3. *Idem*.

Thus, Stephen would be its *auctor*, which is indeed the term William of Malmesbury uses¹. Herbert of Clairvaux also refers to Stephen as *ordinis precipuus iniciator*², and the *Exordium magnum* calls him *primus inter primos*³. Many Early Modern historians regarded the year 1119 as a milestone standing for the fledgling order's originary completion⁴. The current edition of the *Annuario Pontificio* lists 1119 as the year of the Cistercian Order's approbation, thus implying that Stephen was the founder.⁵ Yet most authors who are themselves Cistercians strive for more antiquity, stating 1098 as the beginning of the movement. That is why they celebrated the Order's 900th anniversary in 1998, in which case Robert – not Stephen – would be the founder. Another problem arises when several sources claim that Alberic was the first abbot of Cîteaux. Some authors point to the fact that the order only became one after the mother house gave birth to daughters and then granddaughters⁶. Even more radically, Jean Leclercq would claim that actually Bernard of Clairvaux was the founder⁷. Of all these approaches, the practical point of view reminds us that filiation began under Stephen, thus making constitutional structures necessary in the day-to-day administration of the order. It was this successful administration that led to the Cistercians' prestige as something « new »⁸.

Most would follow the progression depicted on the frontispiece of Manrique's *Annales a condito Cistercio* of 1642, in which the monumental

1. « *Auctor et mediator* » : WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Roger A. B. MYNORS, Rodney THOMSON and Michael WINTERBOTTOM (ed.), vol. I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 576.

2. HERBERTUS TURRITANUS, *Liber visionum et miraculorum Clarevallensium*, 45, Giancarlo ZICHI, Graziano FOIS and Stefano MULA (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, coll. « Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis, 277 », 2017, p. 102. Brian P. MCGUIRE dates the *iniciator* expression to about 1200 in : « Who Founded the Order of Cîteaux ? », in *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God. Studies in Honor of Jean Leclercq*, E. Rozanne ELDER (ed.), Kalamazoo-Spencer, Cistercian Publications, coll. « Cistercian Studies Series, 160 », 1995, p. 407.

3. [...] *primus inter primos feruentissimo studio laboravit ac modis omnibus institit, ut locus et ordo Cisterciensis institueretur* : CONRADUS EBERBACENSIS, *Exordium magnum Cisterciense oder Bericht vom Anfang des Zisterzienserordens*, Hildegard BREM, Alberich Martin ALTERMATT, Bruno ROBECK (ed.), Grevenbroich, Bernardus-Verlag, 2000, part 1, 21, 22-23.

4. Julien PARIS, *Du premier esprit de l'ordre de Cisteaux*, Paris, Aliot, 1653, p. 138.

5. « Ordine Cisterciense », in *Annuario Pontificio*, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016, p. 1417.

6. Hildegard BREM, « Die Carta Caritatis », in *Cistercienser Chronik*, 126 (2019), p. 194-214 (especially, p. 206-209).

7. Jean LECLERCQ, « La 'paternité' de S. Bernard et les débuts de l'Ordre cistercien », in *Revue bénédictine*, 103 (1993), p. 445-481 ; English translation : « Saint Bernard and the Beginnings of the Cistercian Order », in *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 29 (1994), vol. 29, p. 379-393, cited in B. MCGUIRE, « Who Founded », p. 412, footnote 45.

8. H. BREM, « Die Carta Caritatis », p. 206-209.

book's title is flanked on each side by a bearded monk wearing a cowl. At the bottom lies Robert with the text caption : *Plantavi*. Left and right we see Alberic and Stephen, both with the caption *Rigavi*, and floating over them all with his arms outspread, we find Bernard : *Incrementum dedi*. Manrique's epithet is an apt allusion to 1 Cor 3,6 : *Ego plantavi, Apollo rigavit, deus autem incrementum dedit* and the antiphon sung on feasts devoted to St. Paul¹. The Westmalle Kalendarium of 1880 also uses a good formulation, calling Stephen *tertius abbas Cistercii et Ordinis institutor*². The trinitarian notion of origins perhaps made it easier to see the order as "complete" after Stephen, its third abbot.

It would be just as tenable to explain the origins differently. If we had only the *Exordium parvum* to judge by, for instance, there would be more reason to credit the *Privilegium Romanum* (and therefore, Abbot Alberic) as having « founded » the Order in 1102, since the *Privilegium* is mentioned there quite often and the *Carta caritatis* is never named explicitly³.

Furthermore, the order's foundational documents have been widely understood as a varied plurality. It is not accurate to single one out, since the papal bulls *Parvus fons* (1265) and *Fulgens sicut stella matutina* (1335) are considered to be indispensable later developmental stages of the *Carta*⁴. They helped to flesh out legislative questions like the *Definitorium*⁵ and the role of Cîteaux's monks in voting for their own abbot, who was simultaneously more than just the abbot of Cîteaux Abbey.

All foundation narratives remain artificial constructs to a certain degree. The question of founding an order is much more complex than finding a date. While we have abundant modern examples of foundations like the first Jesuits who self-consciously assembled on Montmartre on a symbolically powerful date (August 15, 1534) in order to make their vows, or innumerable women's religious communities who acted similarly, we must remember that a religious rule does not found a monastery. St. Benedict did not found the Benedictine Order, nor can one claim with certainty that St. Francis founded the Franciscan Order⁶. In any case, Cistercians propagated a new way of legal thinking in their religious communities which many

1. *Antiphonale synopticum*, nr. 1365 (<http://gregorianik.uni-regensburg.de/cdb/2580>).

2. *Kalendarium Cisterciense*, Westmalle, 1880, p. 183.

3. *Einmütig in der Liebe. Die frühesten Quellentexte von Cîteaux, Antiquissimi Textus Cistercienses lateinisch-deutsch*, Hildegard BREM and Alberich Martin ALTERMATT (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 1998, p. 60-95.

4. J. PARIS, *Du premier esprit*, p. 13-17.

5. H. BREM, « Die Carta Caritatis », p. 208.

6. He composed a primitive rule, now lost, which was in legal terms a failed document with no effect on the order's canonical structure : Volker LEPPIN, *Franziskus von Assisi*, Darmstadt, WBG Theiss, 2018, p. 123.

of them thought to be author-less, a compelling combination of antiquity and novelty. Medieval Cistercian hagiography propagates this mystical sense of the order's beginnings, even after several generations: Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogi* claim that the Holy Spirit gave the inspiration for the Cistercian Order, St. Benedict was its founder, and Robert of Molesme its reformer¹.

The questionable search for a single author

Nonetheless, Stephen has often been presented as the sole author of the *Carta* in history manuals, statues, and paintings, even though the document itself states at the very outset that many monks were involved: *domnus Stephanus abbas et fratres sui ordinaverunt*². From the *Exordium magnum* to the *Nomasticon Cisterciense* (1664) and all the way through to the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (1958),³ Stephen counts as the author. Even the General Chapter adapted this parlance in the eighteenth century⁴. The authorial attribution is, however, anachronistic and influenced by modern notions of intellectual property. Scholars unanimously accept that the *Carta* was finished years after Stephen died. In citing medieval martyrologies and monuments, the authors of the *Acta Sanctorum*, for example, make no claim that Stephen was the author of the *Carta*⁵.

Searching for a genius who created the order from scratch contradicts the ideals of the Cistercian movement. Cistercians precisely did not want to live like disciples who had gathered around charismatic leadership personalities: they tried to avoid personality cults. As Gert Melville has noted: «The Cistercian model stood ready as a way to counterbalance any loss of leadership and to secure a lasting stability by way of statutes, authorities, and organizations – especially the General Chapter»⁶. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the monks who succeeded the three founders were not

1. *Hoc autem fixum teneas, ordinis nostris auctorem esse Spiritum Sanctum, institutorem sanctum Benedictum, innovatorem vero venerabilem Abbatem Robertem*: CAESARIUS HEISTERBACENSIS, *Dialogus miraculorum*, dist. 1, cap. 1, Nikolaus NÖSGES and Horst SCHNEIDER (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, coll. «Fontes Christiani, 86», 2009, p. 8-10.

2. *Einmütig in der Liebe*, p. 98.

3. *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 166, col. 1377-1384; Kolumban SPAHR, «Charta Caritatis», in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 2, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1958, p. 1033.

4. Joseph-Marie CANIVEZ, *Statuta capitulorum generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, vol. 7, Louvain, Bureaux de la Revue, 1939, p. 662.

5. *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 166, col. 1374 A-C.

6. Gert MELVILLE, *The World of Medieval Monasticism, Its History and Forms of Life*, James D. MIXSON (trans.), Collegeville [Minnesota], Cistercian Publications, coll. «Cistercian Studies Series, 263», 2016, p. 159.

interested in getting their predecessors canonized. The only one to have been canonized by the Holy See was Robert in 1222, yet even then, the effort came from outside of the order. Molesme, not Cîteaux, initiated it¹. There was much fuss about Robert's lack of sanctity during the canonization process. Conrad of Eberbach insisted that he was lazy, keen on official recognition, and even apostate². For over 400 years, the Order celebrated only Robert liturgically, not Alberic or Stephen, making it clear that there was no push from within Cistercian ranks to canonize the other two. Nonetheless they could not well ignore Robert's feast day³.

It is true that in 1489, the abbot of Cîteaux included Stephen in the *Compendium sanctorum ordinis cisterciensis*⁴, and questionable sources claim that a beatification of sorts took place in 1584⁵, but it was the General Chapter of 1623 which first made the feast official, with gradual introduction of the feast following in 1627/28 and intensifying in 1683⁶. The breviary of 1783 includes a feast for Stephen⁷.

Those searching for a single act of creation will always be able to point to Stephen's undoubtable achievement in getting the *Carta* approved; this challenge could arguably have been more difficult than writing the document, and it remains Stephen's undoubtable personal accomplishment. What many forget is that the pope in office in 1119, Calixt II, did not approve the *Carta* from Rome but from the city of Saulieu, located about 80 km away from Cîteaux, which is where Calixt (previously archbishop of Vienne, Burgundy) was elected to the papacy by a small group of cardinals and then crowned⁸. He had not yet left. The approbation of the *Carta caritatis* was a miniature

1. Joseph-Marie CANIVEZ, *Statuta capitulorum generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, vol. 1, Louvain, Bureaux de la Revue, 1933, p. 527. Alberic is not listed in the Roman Martyrology, but his veneration on 26 January was sponsored in a special way by the Feuillants in 1701; the General Chapter approved Alberic's feast in 1738 (Séraphin LENSSEN, *Hagiologium*, I, Tilburg, 1948, Abbaye de Koningshoeven, p. 8; J.-M. CANIVEZ, *Statuta*, vol. 7, p. 724, footnote).

2. Holger STURM, « Beschriebene Zisterziensität », in *Mittelalter. Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, vol. 2, Weimar, 2019, p. 318-322 (DOI: 10.26012/mittelalter-23419).

3. Pius MAURER, « Der heutige Generalkalender des Cistercienserordens », in *Analecta Cisterciensia*, 68 (2018), p. 345.

4. Claudio STERCAL, *Stephen Harding: A Biographical Sketch and Texts*, Martha KRIEG (trans.), Trappist [Kentucky], Cistercian Publications, coll. « Cistercian Studies Series, 226 », 2008, p. 35.

5. ANONYMOUS, *Compendium of the History of the Cistercian Order*, Trappist [Kentucky], Gethsemani Abbey, 1944, p. 346.

6. H. E. J. COWDREY, « Stephan Harding »; Jean de la Croix BOUTON, « Stephan Harding », in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 8, Munich, Lexma-Verlag, 1997, p. 119-120.

7. C. STERCAL, *Stephen Harding*, p. 35-36.

8. GREGOR MÜLLER, *Vom Cistercienser Orden*, Bregenz, Teutsch, 1927, p. 30.

masterpiece of ecclesiastical *ars diplomatica*. The *Exordium Cisterii* hints at such skills when it notes that Stephen knew Pope Calixt from his visit to Cîteaux in 1117, when he was still Archbishop of Vienne.

STEPHEN LACKING IN GENERAL MEDIEVAL HAGIOGRAPHY

While Stephen does appear in important narrative texts like the *exordia* and Herbert's *Liber visionum et miraculorum Clarevallensium*, these texts did not circulate widely. He is lacking in the books that were truly popular in medieval Europe. A comparison of one text transmission is revealing, namely the story of novice Bernard forgetting to pray a psalm and being reminded of the omission the next day by his abbot, Stephen Harding. The story appears in both Herbert of Clairvaux's *Liber visionum* and Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium magnum*, yet although the first mentions « St. Stephen »¹ by name, the second author references only an unnamed « abbot »², indicating that the detail is not very important. These texts were composed in the last third of the twelfth century³.

Voragine's *Legenda aurea* has entries on Benedict, Bernard and Francis of Assisi, but no entry on the « founder » of the Cistercian Order. Stephen is also missing from the *Dialogus miraculorum* by Caesarius of Heisterbach. Therefore it comes as no surprise that we have no system of iconographic attributes for the third abbot of Cîteaux.

Stephen's relative obscurity on a continental scale becomes clear by comparing him with St. Bernard. The latter was so popular that time and again, appeals were made to rename the order after him. Calling Cistercians the Sons of St. Bernard or Bernardines is widespread, but the General Chapter refused to give in to such trends, vehemently opposing a proposition to rename the order in 1487. Still, the vehemence proves how vexing the popular development away from Cîteaux as *mater nostra* was⁴. A papal bull forbidding the Bernardine name was issued in 1489⁵.

1. HERBERTUS TURRITANUS, *Liber visionum et miraculorum*, 45 (G. ZICHI, G. FOIS and S. MULA (ed.), p. 102).

2. *Exordium magnum*, lib. 1, 23 (B. GRIESSER (ed.), p. 51).

3. Gaetano RACITI, « Herbert de Mores », in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 7.1, Paris, Beauchesne, 1995, p. 268-270; Koloman SPAHR, « Konrad », in *Neue deutsche Biographie*, vol. 12, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1980, p. 536.

4. Gregor MÜLLER, « Der Name Cistercienser », in *Cistercienser Chronik*, 17 (1905), p. 46-52, here 48.

5. Joseph-Marie CANIVEZ, *Statuta capitulorum generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, vol. 5, Louvain, Bureaux de la Revue, 1937, p. 663-670, here 664.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ROMAN MARTYROLOGY (1583/1586)

The publication of Baronius' *Martyrologium romanum* at the end of the sixteenth century prompted an increase in liturgical veneration of St. Stephen. In the course of the seventeenth century, the Cistercian General Chapter repeatedly raised the liturgical rank of Stephen's feast which in turn prompted theological writers to produce new texts for the occasion. The Roman martyrology had this effect because it listed Stephen's feast on April 17, albeit at the eighth (and last) position for that date¹. The General Chapter of 1623 reacted directly to this challenge, noting: « The miracles and the sanctity of his life make it clear beyond a doubt that our holy father Stephen should be glorified as a saint, and the Roman Church has done so in its martyrology. Therefore the Chapter mandates that henceforth his feast should be celebrated with 12 readings throughout the order and that his feast should be added to the Cistercian breviary »². To return to the topic of the *Carta caritatis*, the martyrology makes no mention of it, nor whether Stephen founded the order. Instead, it states that he received St. Bernard into the novitiate.

In the course of the seventeenth century, more prescriptions for intensified liturgical veneration of Stephen followed. The General Chapter of 1628 granted him all the privileges granted to Bernard, but without the octave³. 1683 saw the introduction of the octave and transferred the feast from April 17 to July 16. Still, the chapter fathers of that year hesitated to grant Stephen the honor of being the one and only founder of the order. Though wishing to venerate him, they nonetheless referred to him as *quasi fundator*⁴. The Chapter of 1699 reported that a plenary indulgence had been secured from the Holy See for veneration of Stephen Harding⁵. Seeking yet another way of increasing devotions, the General Chapter of 1783 introduced a votive Mass for Mondays ; this regulation stayed in force until 1870⁶.

In addition to these decisions made at the official level of the General Chapter, historians of daily life know that the liturgical reality in the monasteries could be another matter entirely. Some abbeys will have ignored the instructions from Cîteaux, while others will have been even more fervent. In the event, we have indications of varying degrees of veneration in different

1. *Martyrologium Romanum*, Rome, Typographia Dominici Basae, 1586, p. 170.

2. J.-M. CANIVEZ, *Statuta*, vol. 7, p. 353.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 361.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 550.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 623.

6. C. STERCAL, *Stephen Harding*, p. 35-36.

congregations, but there are no comprehensive studies for reference. Henriquez, to name one example, reports in 1649 that only the Spanish Congregation has an office for Stephen in their liturgical calendar¹.

STEPHEN IN EARLY MODERN HAGIOGRAPHY

Recent research on the beginnings of the Cistercian movement is lively and has brought substantial new insights. It delves into the period around 1100 with great fervor, yet regards Early Modern historical scholarship with suspicion, considering it outdated or unreliable for a number of well-founded methodological reasons. I would propose, however, that baroque hagiography, although often fictional, nonetheless delivers important information about Cistercian identity and self-perception, which in turn is to be considered as data. It is fictional, yet factual evidence of attitudes prevalent in earlier times.

Cistercian historians like Angel Manrique (1577-1649), Chrysostomus Henriquez (1594-1632), Charles de Visch (1596-1666), Caspar Jongelincx (1596-1669) and Bertrand Tissier (ca. 1600-1672) were Early Modern scholars who devoted themselves to writing the history of their order as part of the scholarly upswing that was an integral part of baroque renewal. More research on these authors' portrayal of the *Carta caritatis* and Stephen's role in writing it is necessary. The following example is limited to one of the more prolific authors named above, Chrysostomus Henriquez, and his treatment of Stephen in a handbook of Cistercian history, the *Astrum Cisterciensium complectens sanctorum Cisterciensium praeclarissima gesta*, published in Cologne in 1649 and widely-distributed at the time.

In the *Gesta*, Henriquez explains that Stephen did not write the *Carta* alone, but together with a council of confreres: *Verum antequam Abbatiae florere inciperent, beatissimus Pater Stephanus, cum consilio fratrum suorum decretum, quod Charta charitatis vocatur, Spiritu Sancto inspiratus exaruit*². A short entry devoted to Stephen in another section of the lexicon – it is part of the catalogue of the abbots of Cîteaux – makes no mention of the *Carta* at all. It appears only indirectly, for those who are able and willing to draw canonical conclusions from other facts. The following facts are listed as the basics of Stephen's biography: the entry's title identifies Stephen as the third abbot of Cîteaux and the first « Abbot General » (a title not used

1. Chrysostomus HENRIQUEZ, *Astrum Cisterciensium complectens sanctorum Cisterciensium gesta*, Cologne, Cholinus, 1649, p. 49.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

by the first Cistercians). The lexicon entry notes his English descent and claims that his abbatiade marked the beginning of increasingly aristocratic membership (*nobiles propagines producere caepit*) which spread over the entire world. The text explains that the Cistercian family began to grow, notably with the arrival of Bernard and 30 companions, making them into the soldiers of a sacred militia and teaching them to grow as monks. Henriquez argues that Stephen was the first General of the Order in the strict sense: his two predecessors were abbots of only one monastery (Cîteaux), but Stephen was abbot of many. The lack of reference to the *Carta* in this lexicon entry is conspicuous, since the preceding entry about Alberic makes passing reference to another legal document important to the order – the *Privilegium Romanum* – although it is certainly less important than the *Carta*¹.

As part of the intensification of official veneration of Stephen during the seventeenth century, several new hymns were written and published as an appendix to the *Kalendarium Cisterciense, seu martyrologium* in 1689². They appear at the back of the book, coming after a publisher's advertisement for Cistercian titles³. This less than flattering placement makes it clear that publishing the lyrics was an afterthought. However, the preceding advertising serves as a valuable contextualization. Many of the titles listed for sale come from the milieu of the Strict Observance, thus helping to explain why the hymns accentuate Stephen's proclivity for manual labor, monastic poverty and Marian devotions.

The title of the hymn-appendix identifies Stephen as *ordinis institutor*. The lyrics are divided into six numbered divisions, but some of them are clearly connected, being subdivisions of a larger entity. Nowhere is there explicit mention of the *Carta caritatis*, but there are several references to religious law. Phrases like *documenta sanctae legis* or *quos charitatis vinculo sibi parens annexuit* or *legem serans arctius* are ambiguous references to the *Carta caritatis*. One passage, however, helps to sanctify Stephen's legislative efforts explicitly: *Decreta stabunt caelitus edita [...] Hic novus est generandus Ordo*. Stephen took heavenly decrees and helped give birth to a new order. Still, he is not mentioned as *Carta's* author.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

2. The initiative for a new Cistercian martyrology came at the General Chapter of 1601. The result was published in 1689. See Jean-Loup LEMAÎTRE, « Le martyrologe cistercien publié à Paris en 1689 par Jean Petit », in *Cîteaux. Commentarii cistercienses*, 50 (1999), p. 135-186.

3. The Repertorium hymnologicum erroneously maintains that the hymns were first published in 1726, a full generation later: Ulysse CHEVALIER, *Repertorium hymnologicum*, Louvain, Lefever, 1892-1921; in various volumes, see entries 19479 (thought to be from 1780), 19598 (ditto 1780), 25322 (thought to be 1726), 26330 (ditto 1726), 27466 (ditto 1726), 34193 (ditto 1726); J.-L. LEMAÎTRE, « Le martyrologe », p. 151.

A German translation and popularization of a historical compendium by Angel Manrique, published in Regensburg in 1739, gives us an example from the Common Observance, since most German-speaking abbeys belonged to this group. As for the authorship of the *Carta*, the Regensburg publication claims that the *Carta* was communally written by the chapter fathers at the very first General Chapter, purportedly held in 1119. Stephen does not appear as the sole author, but as the impetus for the *Carta's* creation, since he convoked the chapter¹. In easy-to-understand German, the book states very clearly that while Stephen may be the creator [*Urheber*] of the document, « that is not to say that he made the law from his own power and will [*Gewalt und Willen*], but rather the *Carta* came to be through the advice, consent and approbation of other abbots and monks assembled there »². While this theory about the *Carta's* genesis is not tenable in the light of recent research, it clearly documents that monks in the eighteenth century – even on a popular level – thought of the *Carta* as the result of a collaboration.

Baroque hagiography often portrays Stephen as the abbot who « completes » the Cistercian reform³, but it is difficult to define this completion. Was the order complete because Stephen administered the group effort that led to the *Carta*, as legal scholars would maintain today, or was this completion not so abstract? The Roman martyrology's entry on Stephen Harding mentions Bernard of Clairvaux's entry at Cîteaux as Stephen's claim to sanctity. For the purposes of perhaps overdetermined historical narratives about the Cistercian Order, it was easier to assert that the Order was complete once Bernard entered. Popular imagination favors schematic stories, not the drafting of monastic constitutions and the honing of administrative structures.

ROMANTIC PATRIOTISM : STEPHEN AS AN ENGLISHMAN

The baroque-era historians enjoyed the play on words between *anglicus* and *angelus*, a hagiographical trope made popular by legends about Pope Gregory the Great. Angel Manrique applies it to Stephen, who was often portrayed as vesting Bernard in the white habit of Cistercian novices : *Anglicus hic Stephanus fulsit, velut Angelus unus, Sacrata veste Bernardum*

1. Angel MANRIQUE and Bonifacius HILTPRAND, *Annales Cistercienses*, Regensburg, Johann Caspar Memmel, 1739, p. 51-54.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

3. *cum ipsis sacra Cisterciensis reformatio fines acciperet* : C. HENRIQUEZ, *Phoenix reviviscens*, p. 146.

*vestiit iste*¹. Henriquez writes: *natione Anglus, Angelus vero conuersationis puritate, mentis candore*².

Identifying Stephen as the sole author of the *Carta caritatis* granted weight to the patriotic assertion that Stephen contributed substantially to «*Anglia's glory*»; this argument had been used first in Malmesbury's *Gesta regum anglorum*³. The only full-length modern biographical monograph written about Stephen continued this tradition vigorously. It was written by a young Englishman named Dalgairns. Jean Leclercq has warned that Malmesbury's statements were questionable because tainted by patriotic fervor⁴. The same warnings are in order when reading Dalgairns, yet precisely because the book was so widely distributed and has survived as the only monograph-length biography until our day, it is valuable evidence in the context of romantic historiography.

Dalgairns was a historian to be reckoned with. Even if he had no access to archival sources, he cited the Rule of St. Benedict, the Rule of the Master, Manrique, Mabillon, Martène, and the *Nomasticon cisterciense* regularly. To this day, a century and a half after its publication, lexica list the Dalgairns monograph as the most definitive source on Stephen Harding⁵.

Dalgairns' biography was written in an England very different from William of Malmesbury's. As he wrote the book on Stephen in 1844, the recent university graduate Dalgairns was still an Anglican, but he would be received into the Roman Catholic Church on September 29, 1845 by Blessed Dominic Barberi (1792–1849)⁶. Significantly, Dalgairns' life of St. Stephen was the very first publication in John Henry Newman's series «*Lives of the English Saints*». Newman later regretted starting with a saint so obscure⁷, yet he had no idea how great the first book's long-term suc-

1. Angel MANRIQUE, *Cisterciensium seu verius ecclesiasticorum annalium a condito Cistercio*, vol. 1, Lyon, G. Boissat & L. Anisson, 1642, p. 472.

2. C. HENRIQUEZ, *Astrum Cisterciensium*, p. 49.

3. ... *quod ad Angliae gloriam pertineat*: WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, vol. 1, p. 576.

4. Jean LECLERCQ, «*Le témoignage de Guillaume de Malmesbury sur S. Étienne Harding*», in *Studia Monastica*, 36 (1994), p. 13-19, cited in B. MCGUIRE, «*Who Founded*», p. 412, footnote 45.

5. Eberhard HOFFMANN, «*Stephan Harding*», in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 9, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1937, col. 802; Thomas MERTON, *In the Valley of Wormwood. Cistercian Blessed and Saints of the Golden Age*, Collegeville [Minnesota], Cistercian Publications, coll. «*Cistercian Studies Series*, 233 », 2013, p. 200; H. E. J. COWDREY, «*Stephan Harding*».

6. «*Dalgairns, Bernard*», in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 447-448.

7. Elizabeth MACFARLANE, «*John Henry Newman's Lives of the English Saints*», in *Making and Remaking Saints in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Gareth ATKINS (ed.), Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016, p. 245-261, here 250-251.

cess would be. The first edition appeared in English in 1844, two further English editions followed within the year with reprints as late as 2015. The book was translated into French 1846 (several editions followed), German in 1865 and Hungarian in 1929.

The chapter about Cistercian expansion and administration is titled « Stephen creates an order » and it is he who invents the first General Chapter and with it, « Stephen had devised an expedient », « the first germ of the government » which was « Stephen's plan » bound for endorsement from the Church universal at the Fourth Lateran Council¹. In this view, Harding stands as the great Englishman who founded the great Cistercian Order. The order, in turn, appears as a product of English culture. Dalgairns cites William of Malmesbury and reinforces the nationalistic aspects already nascent in the medieval portrait : « St. Stephen was in character a very Englishman ; his life has that strange mixture of repose and of action which characterises England. [...] His very countenance [...] was English ; he was courteous in speech, blithe in countenance, with a soul ever joyful in the Lord »². These assertions originate in Malmesbury's *Gesta*.

It did not matter that few Englishmen of the day knew who Stephen Harding was. The violence done to the Cistercian Order was particularly manifest in England through that country's prominent examples of monastic ruins like those at the former Cistercian Tintern Abbey. For Dalgairns, such ruins were proof of the sins committed against England's Catholic cultural identity, and they needed spiritual reparation : « May his [St. Stephen's] prayers now be heard before the throne of grace, for that dear country now lying under the wrath of God for the sins of its children »³.

There is, however, one catch in the anglophile initiative to reclaim Stephen as an English saint : he chose to leave England at a very early age, and never returned. The fact of his (probably forbidden) departure from Sherborne Cathedral crisscrosses the otherwise straightforward trajectory of sanctity that we find in Dalgairns' biography. Was it apostasy or merely wanderlust ? He presumably had already taken his vows, though he was very young. It appears to have been a period of rebellion in his life. In any case, the later progression of the Cistercian movement would not have been possible without this interlude, since « it allowed him to have contact in France with the most renowned schools of the age – Paris, Rheims, Laon, Bec, Chartres » and with his friend the cleric Peter, with whom Stephen made the pilgrimage to Rome⁴.

1. John Bernard DALGAIRNS, *St. Stephen Abbot. The Cistercian Saints of England*, London, James Toovey, coll. « Lives of the English Saints », 1844, p. 150-152.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

3. *Idem.*

4. C. STERCAL, *Stephen Harding*, p. 16.

English patriotism clearly made Stephen the sole author of the *Carta caritatis*, and the success of the Dalgairns monograph spread this news over generations. By 1897, the editor of the famous *Cistercienser-Chronik*, Fr. Gregor Müller of Mehrerau Abbey, asserted Stephen's sole authorship of the *Carta* vehemently: « Today, no one doubts that Stephen was the actual author [*der eigentliche Verfasser*]. Those who seek to rob him of this honor claim that the great work came about through the communal efforts of abbots, monks and bishops »¹. Müller argued this point from several perspectives, including linguistic style, certain technical terms used in the *Carta*, and the absence of dates and signatures². For non-experts writing in the twentieth century, Stephen's role as sole author became (faulty) « common knowledge » and was often asserted by manuals of monastic history, most recently in an overview published in 2017³.

CONCLUSION

The modern search for one single founder of the Cistercian Order began in the nineteenth century and ended after the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council led both Observances to celebrate the Feasts of Robert, Alberic and Stephen on one and the same day, January 26th. The one feast day made them all founders in their own way. Monks of the first Cistercian generations would have had little interest in such questions, since their role models were desert monks who erased as many feast days from their calendar as possible. They found them to be distracting, especially if the liturgical rank meant having to read fantastical *vitae* during the prayers⁴. Cistercians had this austerity in common with Carthusians, whose founder would have been much easier to localize. Yet the feast for St. Bruno the Carthusian (October 6th) was first taken into Roman calendar only in 1623;⁵ there was no need for it earlier. The feast was presumably introduced because Bruno, like Stephen, had been

1. G. MÜLLER, *Vom Cistercienser Orden*, p. 28.

2. *Compendium of the History of the Cistercian Order*, p. 362.

3. *Ihr Verfasser, unbestritten Stephan Harding, der sie um 1133 [!] entwarf*. See Mariano DELL'OMO, *Geschichte des abendländischen Mönchtums vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart. Das Charisma des hl. Benedikt zwischen dem 6. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Sankt Ottilien, EOS-Verlag, coll. « Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige. Ergänzungsband, 51 », 2017, p. 260.

4. P. MAURER, « Der heutige Generalkalender », p. 344.

5. *Bullarium Romanum*, vol. 3, Rome, Typographia Rev. Camerae Apostolicae, 1638, p. 325.

included in the *Martyrologium romanum* by Baronius, also at the eighth position¹.

Even if Stephen had written the *Carta* by himself, it would be just one accomplishment among several other initiatives. His guiding hand in producing the Harding Bible and in the revision of the Cistercian Hymnal are equally significant accomplishments². Recent times have looked eagerly on the first project, for which Stephen consulted Jewish scholars³. It is my suspicion that the trauma of twentieth-century antisemitism makes Stephen seem the more a hero because of the respect he showed for rabbis as biblical experts. What many don't know is that consulting Jews for the purposes of biblical scholarship was nothing new. The practice goes back to St. Jerome and was propagated by St. Peter Damien earlier in the eleventh century. The latter propagated the novel idea that Jews had survived in order to serve Christians as custodians of divine law: « in a certain manner, they are our librarians »⁴. Aside from the rabbinical question, Stephen's sophisticated interest in biblical scholarship is remarkable in itself; his *monitum* of 1109 stands out as a landmark in the medieval study of biblical texts⁵.

Today's scholars do not consider Stephen to have been the sole author of the *Carta caritatis*; it would be difficult to argue that he was. While he is portrayed as sole author in certain medieval sources, the question was not of primary importance in that era, since Stephen is missing from popular hagiography. Few were interested in isolating him as a founder who was any more important than the two abbots of Cîteaux before him. The questions of canonization and liturgical veneration came up in the seventeenth century, prompted by developments outside of the order. It was a member of the Oxford Movement, in the nineteenth century, a gifted young scholar and zealous convert, who declared that Stephen had created an order with the *Carta caritatis*. Dalgairns' claim was not completely incorrect, but it was overdetermined. Because his biography of Stephen was published so often and in several translations, the portrait it painted of Stephen Harding proved remarkably influential.

1. *Martyrologium Romanum*, p. 452.

2. C. STERCAL, *Stephen Harding*, p. 24.

3. Michael ERNST, « Der hl. Abt Stephan Harding von Cîteaux und seine Bibel im Kontext der Vulgata-Texte und Vulgata-Revisionen bis zum 13. Jh. », in *Aktuelle Wege der Cisterciensenforschung*, Alkuin Volker SCHACHENMAYR (ed.), Heiligenkreuz, Be&Be Verlag, coll. « EUCist Studien, 1 », 2008, p. 55-87.

4. PETRUS DAMIANUS, *Epistolae* 2, 13 (*Patrologia Latina*, vol. 144, col. 284-285) cited in : Gilbert DAHAN, « Juifs et chrétiens en Occident médiéval. La rencontre autour de la Bible (XII^e-XIV^e siècles) », in *Revue de Synthèse*, 110 (1989), p. 3-31, here 8.

5. G. DAHAN, « Juifs et chrétiens », p. 9-10, cited in : M. ERNST, « Der hl. Abt », p. 67 ; see also several articles on a « Cistercian hermeneutic » in : *L'exégèse monastique au Moyen Âge (XI^e-XIV^e siècle)*, Gilbert DAHAN (ed.), Paris, Institut d'études augustiniennes, 2014.