

## TEXTS AND IMAGES OF CARTHUSIAN FOUNDATION

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### Introduction

This essay considers the interest which Carthusians of the late Middle Ages had in the concept of foundation; the foundation of their order in general, and that of individual charterhouses. A distinctive aspect of a more general order-consciousness which pervades Carthusian discourse of the period, this foundation-awareness is revealed in both texts and images. I will discuss examples of both, although I do not aim to review all of the available evidence.<sup>1</sup> While I will look at material from both English and Continental charterhouses, my main interest lies in setting English survivals, which are comparatively few and have never been considered synoptically, in broader geographical and conceptual frameworks. Intrinsically important and more voluminous though it is, the Continental evidence reviewed below is intended here primarily to supply context for what existed in pre-Reformation England.

The discussion is in two parts. To begin with I examine two examples of text-image amalgamation relevant to the order as a whole and familiar to many who specialise in Carthusian history. The first is the so-called 'Bruno cycle', a narrative sequence of images, usually annotated and based on a purely Carthusian tradition, which chronicles the foundation of the Grande Chartreuse by St Bruno and his companions in 1084. There are minor iconographic variations between surviving cycles, but the intention to communicate the circumstances and importance of the order's founders and foundation in an easily comprehensible way is constant. The second example to be considered is what I will call

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<sup>1</sup> The text-image combinations to be discussed were complemented sporadically by verse and prose works such as Heinrich Egger of Kalkar's, *Ortus et decursus ordinis cartusiensis* (1398), and the Venetian monk Zacharias Benedictus's, *De origine sacri ordinis cartusiensis* (1509): see for example H. RÜTHING, *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Egber von Kalkar 1328–1408* (Göttingen, 1967), pp. 92–102; A. GRUYS, *Cartusiana: un instrument heuristique*, 3 vols (Paris, 1976–8), vol. 1, p. 85.

the Tree of St Bruno.<sup>2</sup> This shows in a more abstract but no less graspable manner the growth of the order from the devout heart of its founder, following the pattern established by the Tree of Jesse, a common medieval image representing Christ's genealogy springing from the heart (or, following Isaiah 11:1, loins) of the father of King David. The importance of both Bruno cycle and Tree of St Bruno in the eyes of Carthusian officialdom is amply demonstrated by their inclusion in the *Tertia compilatio statutorum ordinis carthusiensis*, compiled in 1509 at the behest of the general chapter, published in 1510 in Basel by Johannes Amorbach, and quickly and widely distributed (figs 1, 2).<sup>3</sup> Through the statutes, these 'official' combinations of text and image must have become, as was intended, familiar to many, if not most Carthusians, and also to those outside the order who used the volume.

In the second, briefer, part of the discussion I turn to evidence which exists for attitudes to the foundation of individual English charterhouses (though I do not consider diplomatic material). Such evidence, which includes domestic chronicles, founders' tombs, inscriptions, and heraldry, was of mostly local significance, and a broader European context does not need to be established for it. While this may be regarded as an essentially separate subject, I wish to suggest that both general and particular manifestations of interest in foundation can usefully be understood as aspects of a single phenomenon. This phenomenon, which for the sake of convenience I will refer to as the commemoration of foundation, was widely experienced in the high- and late-medieval Church, and is a distinctive aspect of monastic culture in particular. In the context of any religious order, the foundation of an individual house was an event to be absorbed, meditated on, and commemorated by its later inhabitants as a manifest link not only with local history but also with the circumstances, personalities and values which had given rise to that order in the first place, and which remained constant in such things as the colour and cut of vestments, the profile of customaries and calendars, and the type, structure and degree of daily activity. The association can be understood in terms of the relationship between universals and particulars, each new foundation shaped and identifiable by its participation in both the physical and the abstract characteristics of a highly

<sup>2</sup> As opposed to the Tree of the Carthusian order, represented by the early sixteenth-century 'Kartausenstammbaum' now in Nuremberg (to be discussed below).

<sup>3</sup> The existence of manuscript copies, including the partial facsimile now Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis Palatinus 4737, suggests that the *Tertia compilatio's* distribution was wider than the number of surviving volumes which can be provenanced might lead one to think.

esteemed original. Where the Carthusians were concerned, Bruno's foundation of the first charterhouse, a wilderness peopled by devout monks and lay brethren seeking greater spiritual and physical proximity to God through self-denial and seclusion, furnished a paradigm for the foundation of so many subsequent 'deserts', whether in town or country. (Indeed, the existence of this metaphysical proximity to the motherhouse seems to have helped monks and their patrons to justify locating charterhouses in urban areas.) These daughter houses conformed to an architectural and ritual blueprint established and maintained by the Grande Chartreuse, which became the spiritual 'Heimatkloster' of all Carthusians, indelibly marked with the strength, devotion and simplicity of Bruno and his heroic companions.<sup>4</sup>

While this universal-particular relationship can be identified in the culture of other medieval monastic orders and might be thought endemic to that of centralised ones, it is indicated with unusual clarity in the Carthusian record. In particular, no other context provides a parallel for the uniformity and dissemination of the Bruno cycle.<sup>5</sup> Urs Graf's woodcuts for the *Tertia compilatio*, and the text *De origine ordinis cartusienis brevis annotatio* printed on the verso of the volume's Bruno cycle (see fig. 3), show that Carthusians were expected to familiarise themselves with the origins of their order and the history and character of its founder, just as they were obliged to know about the circumstances under which their own monasteries had been established. Indeed, these texts and images are as much a part of the Carthusian rule which they introduce as the painted Bruno cycles examined below were of the eremitic architecture they embellished. They informed the receptive mind of the historical basis of its vocation as clearly as did the commemoration offered for founders and benefactors at the altars of individual monasteries.

<sup>4</sup> From an architectural point of view, provincial charterhouses of the Middle Ages did not need to resemble the Grande Chartreuse exactly to be construed as copies of it. Cf. R. KRAUTHEIMER, 'Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture', in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), pp. 1–33.

<sup>5</sup> A general parallel is found in the Carmelite order, whose corporate identity was at times urgently bound up with its (putative) foundation history, was advertised through image as well as text. See e.g. R. KOCH, 'Elijah the Prophet, Founder of the Carmelite Order', in: *Speculum* 24 (1959), pp. 547–60; J. CANNON, 'Pietro Lorenzetti and the History of the Carmelite Order', in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987), pp. 18–28.

## The Bruno cycle

Louis RÉAU, the great French iconographer of Christian art, wrote that the depiction of St Bruno “est un exemple frappant de l’influence déterminante de la date de canonisation sur l’iconographie des saints.” Though never formally canonised, Bruno was finally enrolled in the calendar of saints in 1623, his cult having been authorised for Carthusian observance in 1514 by Leo X. It is certainly the case that the majority of known images of St Bruno are post-medieval, but more examples than RÉAU recognized survive from the 150 years after 1400 (he listed only two medieval cycles). Moreover, in light of the widespread destruction and updating of medieval art in charterhouses between the Reformation and the early nineteenth century, it is reasonable to suppose that numerous examples have been lost. RÉAU’s overstatement is indicative of a lack of scholarly engagement with Carthusian art in general which has persisted to this day.<sup>6</sup> With the exception of the attention given to the most familiar medieval example, that in the *Belles Heures* of Jean, duc de Berry, only scholars writing in German – principally, Margrit FRÜH, Ulrike MADER, Werner BEUTLER, and Rudolf RIGGENBACH – have contributed substantially to the medieval history of the Bruno cycle.<sup>7</sup> Jessica BRANTLEY, in her recent book on London, British Library, MS. Additional 37049, has also discussed the subject, but to date she is unique among Anglophone historians.<sup>8</sup> Of the above-named scholars, only FRÜH, whose knowledge of surviving examples was incomplete, has attempted a general synthesis. The development of the Bruno cycle and its place in medie-

<sup>6</sup> L. REAU, *Iconographie de l’art chrétien*, 3 vols in 6 (Paris, 1955–9), vol. 3:1, pp. 249–50. The *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. E. KIRSCHBAUM / W. BRAUNFELS, 8 vols (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1968–76), vol. 5, pp. 448–9, lists no pre-Reformation Bruno cycles at all.

<sup>7</sup> M. FRÜH, ‘Bilderzyklen mit dem Leben des Heiligen Bruno’, in: *La Naissance des Chartreuses*, ed. B. BLIGNY / G. CHAIX (Grenoble, 1986), pp. 161–78; U. MADER, ‘Heiligenverehrung als Ordenspropaganda. Zur Interpretation eines Bilderzyklus aus der Kölner Kartause’, in: *Die Kölner Kartause um 1500. Aufsatzband*, ed. W. SCHÄFKE (Cologne, 1991), pp. 275–90; W. BEUTLER, with a contribution by M. HUISKES, ‘Die elf Stifter des spätmittelalterlichen Brunozyklus für die Kölner Kartause. Eine Spurensuche’, in: *Die Kölner Kartause um 1500*, pp. 291–328; IDEM, ‘Die beiden Brunozyklen der Kölner Kartause St. Barbara’, in: *Die Kartäuser und ihre Welt*, Bd. 3, ed. J. HOGG, *Analecta Cartusiana* 62:3 (Salzburg, 1993), pp. 118–212; R. RIGGENBACH, ‘Die Wandbilder des Kartause’, in: *Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Basel-Stadt*, Bd. 3: *Die Kirchen, Klöster, und Kapellen*, ed. C. H. BAER (Basel, 1941), pp. 580–91. See also H. M. BLÜM, ‘Ursprung und Geschichte der Ordensstatuten der Kartäuser’, in: *Die Kartäuser. Der Orden der schweigenden Mönche*, ed. M. ZADNIKAR / A. WIENAND (Cologne, 1983), pp. 38–49, at 40–4.

<sup>8</sup> J. BRANTLEY, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 28–46.

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val thought, Carthusian and otherwise, has thus not been comprehensively considered.

This is strikingly apparent in the literature on the earliest surviving example, found in Jean de Berry's *Belles Heures*, a manuscript made between 1405 and 1408/09. In this case little effort has been made to explain the significance of the foundation of the Carthusian order to late medieval France's most celebrated patron of the arts: the manuscript's Bruno cycle is usually thought an enigmatic novelty.<sup>9</sup> Executed in either Paris or Bourges by Paul and Jean de Limbourg, on a separate gathering inserted into the manuscript (fols 94r–97v) immediately before the Office of the Dead, it comprises eight full-page miniatures, each presented above a paraphrase from an early Life of St Bruno.<sup>10</sup> In the opening scene, a scholarly and apparently blameless canon of the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, supposedly an associate of Bruno, expounds the scriptures from behind a desk, while the text beneath announces his credentials and his death in 1084.<sup>11</sup> In the second and third images the canon proclaims from his coffin that he has been judged, sentenced and damned, while the fourth scene shows Bruno and his learned companions, horrified by the dead man's *dolorosa et terribili* cries, preparing to abandon Paris for the purifying reaches of the wilderness.<sup>12</sup> The fifth scene shifts to the bed-chamber of Hugh of Châteauneuf, bishop of Grenoble, who dreams of seven stars which symbolise Bruno and his followers, shining over a remote and deserted location. In the sixth, Hugh tells the kneeling company that the site they are to inhabit has been divinely revealed to him; scene seven shows the travellers exchanging their old garments for white Carthusian tunics as they enter their new abode; and the

<sup>9</sup> M. MEISS, *French painting in the time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their contemporaries*, 2 vols (New York, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 125–7, makes some attempt at explanation. See also idem, with E. H. BEATSON, *Les Belles Heures de Jean duc de Berry* (London, 1974), fols 94r–97v; E. KÖNIG, *Die Belles Heures des duc de Berry* (Stuttgart, 2004), pp. 88–93; *The Limbourg Brothers: Nijmegen Masters at the French Court 1400–1416*, ed. R. DÜCKERS / P. ROELOFS (Nijmegen, 2005), pp. 104–6, 362–3. Jean de Berry's interest in and patronage of the Chartreuse de Champmol in particular is discussed in R. PROCHNO, *Die Kartause von Champmol: Grablage der burgundischen Herzöge, 1364–1477* (Berlin, 2002), especially pp. 127–8, 248–9.

<sup>10</sup> The full text of this thirteenth-century *Vita antiquior* is printed in: *Acta Sanctorum, Octobris Tomus Tertius* (Paris/Rome, 1868), pp. 703–6. For a yet older Bruno *vita* see A. WILMART, 'La Chronique des premiers Chartreux', in: *Revue Mabillon* 16 (1926), pp. 77–142.

<sup>11</sup> This canon, Raymond Diocrès (the celebrated Cenodoxus of seventeenth-century tradition), is not actually named in the text, nor in the *Tertia compilatio* cycle.

<sup>12</sup> *Acta Sanctorum* (note 10 above), p. 703 (quotation).

final miniature presents a view of the Grande Chartreuse from the south-east, its church dwarfing the eremitic cells and the whole set in mountainous, forested country. The monastery is shown in its later medieval guise, with double the number of cells usual in a charterhouse. It thus telescopes the order's history in a manner which suggests the immutability of Carthusian virtue, an idea which will receive further emphasis below.

With only minor variation, this iconography is repeated in the nine-scene cycle of the *Tertia compilatio*, where it occurs under the title *Origio ordinis cartusien-sis* on the volume's third leaf (see fig. 1). Here again, three images are dedicated to the dead canon's ghostly warnings – the so-called 'Miracle of Paris'.<sup>13</sup> As the catalyst for Bruno's decision to flee urban life, and thus the first cause of the whole Carthusian order, this was considered a critical element of the story. Bruno's departure from Paris (here showing the 'Visit to the Hermit', an event suggested only generally in the corresponding *Belles Heures* miniature), the dream of St Hugh, and Hugh's audience with Bruno and his companions are all reproduced. The final three scenes show St Hugh guiding the would-be monks to their dwelling-place, the seven, now vested as Carthusians, building their habitation, and the monastery with its church, cells and precinctual wall complete and emblematic of Carthusian self-sufficiency and isolation. This is the narrative reproduced, *mutatis mutandis*, in all other surviving medieval Bruno cycles. The similarities show that the Limbourgs, for all their creative genius, did not invent the scenes found in the *Belles Heures*. Arguing that they did would entail belief that Carthusians subsequently obtained access to the manuscript, or an unknown, lost copy of it, and appropriated its iconography wholesale; a most unlikely scenario. Rather, the Limbourgs, probably through Jean de Berry's agency, must have found the iconography represented in a pre-existing manuscript or monumental cycle. The unverifiable but credible tradition that mural-paintings of the life of St Bruno were executed in the little cloister at the Paris charterhouse in the mid-fourteenth century may well account for the subject-matter of the Limbourgs' work.<sup>14</sup> That the thirteenth-century *vita* of Bruno on which the cycle is based locates the catalyst for the entire order's foundation

<sup>13</sup> Or, otherwise, the *damnatio Parisiensis*. For Diocrès's notoriety as a ghost see J.-C. SCHMIDT, *Les Revenants: les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris, 1994), pp. 43–4.

<sup>14</sup> A.-L. MILLIN DE GRANDMAISON, *Antiquités nationales ou recueil de monumens*, 6 vols (Paris, 1790–9), vol. 5, p. 35, note 32: "L'Histoire de Saint Bruno a été peinte trois fois dans le petit cloître. La première, l'an 1350, sur les murailles. La deuxième, sur toile, l'an 1510. Et enfin, la troisième, en 1648, sur bois, par Eustache Le Sueur." I thank Berthold KREB for obtaining this reference, its source being unavailable to me at the time of writing.

in Paris must have been attractive to that city's Carthusians, and it is perfectly possible that they devised a cycle of images advertising the connection.<sup>15</sup> Alternatively, as Margrit FRÜH has proposed, the earliest example may have existed at the Grande Chartreuse itself, in which case the cycle's original dissemination will have been a top-down phenomenon, as it later became with the publication of the *Tertia compilatio*.<sup>16</sup> In any case, at least one such cycle, iconographically mature and in an accessible location, must have existed by the beginning of the fifteenth century. The likelihood is that there was more than one.

Jean de Berry's *Tres Riches Heures*, which the Limbourgs began to illuminate c.1411, but never completed, also contains a Bruno cycle. In this case the scenes are concentrated on one page (fol. 86v), and incorporated into the Office of the Dead rather than preceding it. At the beginning of the *Dirige* is a large image of the canon crying out during his obsequies, corresponding to the second scene in the *Belles Heures* cycle. This is surrounded by historiated border-medallions containing the rest of the scenes, interspersed with macabre subjects more typical of the illustration of the Office. While the work was done during the second half of the 1480s by Jean Colombe, the principal miniature at least was planned by the Limbourgs.<sup>17</sup> The presence of Bruno cycles in these two high-status prayer-books exerted only limited influence on non-Carthusian artists and patrons.<sup>18</sup> The illuminator of a fifteenth-century French copy of Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale*, now Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS. 722, was familiar with the cycle, and painted St Hugh of Grenoble praying for divine guidance (a variant on his dream), meeting with Bruno and his companions, and ushering them into the Grande Chartreuse on fol. 247r.<sup>19</sup> Overwhelmingly, however, the cycle became a Carthusian preserve. The foundation history next appears at the charterhouse of St Margaret at Basel, where a ten-scene cycle was executed

<sup>15</sup> In fact there is no independent evidence that Bruno ever so much as visited Paris.

<sup>16</sup> M. FRÜH, 'Bilderzyklen' (note 7 above), p. 161.

<sup>17</sup> C. SAMARAN / J. LONGNON / R. GAZELLES, *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (Chantilly, 1969), fol. 86v and facing page; M. FRÜH, 'Bilderzyklen' (note 7 above), p. 162; *The Limbourg Brothers* (note 9 above), p. 219.

<sup>18</sup> In formal and semantic terms the Bruno cycle is apparently related to so-called "Thebaid" imagery, which enjoyed a contemporaneous and more widespread vogue in Italy: see A. MALQUORI, 'La "Tebaide" degli Uffizi: Tradizioni letterarie e figurative per l'interpretazione di un tema iconografico', in: *I Tatti Studies* 9 (2001), pp. 119–37, and the literature cited at p. 119, note 1.

<sup>19</sup> Illustrated in *Les Ordres religieux: la vie et l'art*, 2 vols (Paris, 1979), I, p. 638.

c.1441 on the walls of the little cloister during a period of intensive building and embellishment.<sup>20</sup> This work coincided with the Council of Basel (1431–48), an event which brought the fledgling monastery to the attention of many distinguished participants, a number of whom subsequently chose to be buried in its church and cemetery.<sup>21</sup> Locating the Bruno cycle in the little cloister, where potential benefactors could have seen it, suggests its perceived effectiveness as a vehicle for self-advertisement.

Half a century later, between 1486 and 1489, another monumental Bruno cycle was painted on canvasses inserted into the arches of the little cloister at the charterhouse of St Barbara at Cologne. It included at least eleven scenes, some of which commemorated incidents after Bruno's death: fragments are held in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum at Cologne, the Hessischen Landesmuseum at Darmstadt, and the Louvre, while others at Bonn and Breslau were destroyed in World War Two.<sup>22</sup> This ambitious cycle had a socle zone with painted inscriptions, angels holding shields of arms, and eleven portraits of contemporary rulers, some of them benefactors of St Barbara's and other charterhouses, with whom the monks wished to be associated.<sup>23</sup> Here again, the location, plus the incorporation of the portraits, suggests at least a quasi-public function. If Werner BEUTLER is right that the Cologne paintings in particular were in part a response to foundation imagery displayed in religious houses with which the Carthusians were competing for benefaction, then the suggestion is confirmed, and Ulrike MADER'S term "Ordenspropaganda" for the Bruno cycle does not over-state the case.<sup>24</sup> While the Basel and Cologne cycles,

<sup>20</sup> This work (but not the Bruno cycle itself) is detailed in *Basler Chroniken*, hg. von der Historischen und Antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Basel, Bd. I, ed. W. VISCHER / A. STERN (Leipzig, 1872), pp. 294–97. For the cycle see R. RIGGENBACH, 'Die Wandbilder' (note 7 above), pp. 577–94; *Monasticon Cartusiense Vol. II*, ed. G. SCHLEGEL / J. HOGG, *Analecta Cartusiana* 185:2 (Salzburg, 2004), pp. 701–3 (plates).

<sup>21</sup> W. BEUTLER, 'Die elf Stifter' (note 7 above), pp. 308–9, justifiably describes the Basel charterhouse as a "Grablege des europäischen Hochadels", and lists the significant burials (p. 326, note 97).

<sup>22</sup> U. MADER, 'Heiligenverehrung als Ordenspropaganda' (note 7 above), *passim*; M. BEUTLER, 'Die elf Stifter' (note 7 above), p. 291.

<sup>23</sup> Some aspects of the relationship of these figures to St Barbara's, and the reasons for their inclusion in the cycle, are unclear: see M. BEUTLER, 'Die elf Stifter' (note 7 above), pp. 304–7; IDEM, 'Die beiden Brunozyklen' (note 7 above), pp. 141–2.

<sup>24</sup> M. BEUTLER, 'Die elf Stifter' (note 7 above), p. 310; R. PROCHNO, *Die Kartause von Champmol* (note 9 above), p. 236, speaks of Carthusian 'Bilderpolitik' in this period (without direct reference to the Bruno cycles), while Heinrich RÜTHING describes Heinrich of Kalkar's history



like the Duc de Berry's prayer-books, did not have any measurable effect on non-Carthusian art, they may well have exerted an influence on hearts and purses, and if so then their purpose was at least partially fulfilled.

A twelve-scene Bruno cycle on panel of c.1500 (now Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie), attributed to an Augsburg artist, extends our knowledge of the media and formats considered appropriate for this aspect of Carthusian piety and self-advertisement.<sup>25</sup> There are thus surviving medieval examples in manuscript, wall, panel, and canvas painting as well as the woodcuts of the *Tertia compilatio*. Stained glass, often used for representation of historical imagery, also suggests itself as a likely medium for the cycle's display, although the closest survival in chronological terms, in the widows of the little cloister at the charterhouse of Florence, dates from 1558–61.<sup>26</sup> Evidence of Netherlandish Carthusian interest in the Bruno cycle is found in an unprovenanced manuscript of the late fifteenth century containing partial vernacular texts of the order's statutes (fols 1r–28v, 72r–78v) and works by Jan van Ruusbroec. This book, now British Library, MS. Additional 25042, has a total of twenty-four images, nineteen of them accompanying the statutes.<sup>27</sup> Among these is a gathering of ten full-page miniatures (fols 8r–12v), beginning with the miracle of the dead canon, and proceeding via the departure from Paris, St Hugh's dream, reception and guidance of Bruno, to end, as elsewhere, with an elevated view of the completed, pristine Grande Chartreuse.<sup>28</sup> In an apparent attempt to suggest elision of the order's first founders with contemporary convents, the artist has represented twelve monks rather than seven on fol. 11r, all habited in white and kneeling in adoration of the wilderness to which St Hugh has directed them (see fig. 4). Seven gold stars float on the surface of this remarkable landscape-cum-'Andachtsbild', indicating

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of the order's foundation as a "Verteidigungsschrift"; see *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Egber* (note 1 above), p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> U. MADER, 'Heiligenverehrung als Ordenspropaganda' (note 7 above), p. 288, fig. 57.

<sup>26</sup> M. FRÜH, 'Bilderzyklen' (note 7 above), p. 163.

<sup>27</sup> The textual contents alone are described in W. de VREESE, *Die Handschriften van Jan van Ruusbroec's Werken* (Ghent, 1900–2), pp. 518–24.

<sup>28</sup> This miniature is discussed in J. BRANTLEY, *Reading in the Wilderness* (note 8 above), pp. 38–9, as a generic illustration of a charterhouse with forinsec, non-Carthusian buildings added to suggest enclosure from the secular sphere. Taken alone, it can be read thus, but as the last image of a Bruno cycle it must represent the Grande Chartreuse, with buildings for lay brethren constructed against the precinctual wall.

the number of the founding fathers, and highlighting the artist's concern with spirit over letter. More prosaic, but certainly more widely accessible, is the printed ten-scene Bruno cycle published in Paris in 1524 as part of Jodocus Badius Ascenius's edition of St Bruno's *Opera omnia*, a work which included the Carthusian Francois de Puy's *Vita Beati Brunonis primi institutoris ordinis cartusiensis* (first published in Basel in 1515).<sup>29</sup> Here is evidence to place alongside the *Tertia compilatio* of Carthusian exploitation of printed illustrations for dissemination of a cherished and edifying aspect of their history; a medium similarly used by other religious orders of the period.<sup>30</sup> Only shortly before this, in 1510, it is recorded that the fourteenth-century Bruno cycle at the Paris charterhouse was replaced with a new version painted, as at Cologne, on canvas.<sup>31</sup> Provided that this is true, a connection between Ascenius's woodcuts and these canvasses seems likely: the later cycle, based on an entirely different model than the scenes in the *Tertia compilatio*, would hardly have been produced in ignorance of such a fresh, local set of images.

Only one English example can be added to these Continental Bruno cycles, and it is incomplete. This, as previously mentioned, is in British Library, MS. Additional 37049, at fol. 22r (see fig. 5). The manuscript, a religious miscellany of the mid-to-later fifteenth century, is well known for its short, vernacular texts and expressive images.<sup>32</sup> It cannot be attached to a specific location, but the northern dialect of its main scribes (there were four in all) suggests manufacture at either Axholme (Lincolnshire), Beauvale (Nottinghamshire), Kingston-upon-Hull (Yorkshire, East Riding), or Mount Grace (Yorkshire, North Riding) charterhouse. Its colourfulness, the fact that it is written almost entirely in the vernacular, and the parity it gives to image and text, which is unique in an English Carthusian book, suggest that it could have been made not exclusively for monastic use, but also for the edification of lay brethren and other relatively uneducated people who visited, lived in, or were dependent upon a Carthusian community. As a compendium of the order's interests and values, it would have

<sup>29</sup> M. FRÜH, 'Bilderzyklen' (note 7 above), p. 163 and fig. 2; A. GRUYS, *Cartusiana* (note 1 above), vol. 1, p. 54.

<sup>30</sup> Compare e.g. M. J. ZUCKER, 'Early Italian Engravings for Religious Orders', in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1993), pp. 366–84.

<sup>31</sup> See note 14 above.

<sup>32</sup> The bibliography on this manuscript is vast. J. BRANTLEY, *Reading in the Wilderness* (note 8 above), provides a sensitive and cogent synthesis of much of this material.

made a striking impression on any contemporary user. Its Bruno cycle represents clearly the place of foundational history in those interests.

The text of the cycle does not take the form of captions above or beneath the images, but rather a fifty-eight-line vernacular poem on the foundation and strengths of the Carthusian order (fol. 22r-v).<sup>33</sup> This skips the Parisian episodes and starts with St Hugh's divinely inspired dream about the seven stars; it explains the stars' significance, the resort which Bruno and his *sex felos* had to the holy bishop, the inspirational example set them by hermit-saints such as John the Baptist and Antony of Egypt, and St Hugh's journey with them to the site of the Grande Chartreuse. It then proceeds to conflate the achievement and example of the founding fathers with those of latter-day monks: the honour and prestige of the Carthusian order, the singular holiness of its conduct, and the overriding virtues of the eremitic life are all announced. The images stand at the head of the poem. There are five scenes in four compartments, all familiar from other surviving Bruno cycles and showing that the much-discussed textual links between English and Continental Carthusians extended, as might be expected, to images. The first compartment contains the flight of Bruno and his companions from Paris and the dream of St Hugh, the two scenes being separated by the seven stars. Following this, the reception of the seven by St Hugh (notably like the corresponding image on fol. 96v of the *Belles Heures*, minus the latter's elaborate architectural setting), Hugh's journey with them into the wilderness, and their installation in the completed Grande Chartreuse are presented in separate compartments. St Hugh is present in the last image, recalling his place in the cycle at Cologne, where he is shown habiting the monks, and thus supplying saintly involvement at all stages of the order's foundation. (Bruno, of course, was not canonized.)<sup>34</sup> On fol. 22v is a separate image of a monk reading outside a cell.<sup>35</sup> This is not obviously an historical image, and is absent from other Bruno cycles. It was inserted by the artist to illustrate the eulogy of the order found in the second part of the poem, and as such it represents a Carthusian of any age from Bruno's day to the time in which it was exe-

<sup>33</sup> Edited by R. H. BOWERS, 'Middle English Verses on the Founding of the Carthusian Order', in: *Speculum* 42 (1967), pp. 710-3. See also R. BOYER, 'The Companions of St. Bruno in Middle English Verses on the Foundation of the Carthusian Order', in: *Speculum* 53 (1978), pp. 784-5.

<sup>34</sup> Compare U. MADER, 'Heiligenverehrung als Ordenspropaganda' (note 7 above), p. 280, fig. 49. Hugh of Grenoble was canonized by Innocent II in 1134, only two years after his death.

<sup>35</sup> J. BRANTLEY, *Reading in the Wilderness* (note 8 above), p. 30, fig. 2.1.

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cuted. That the monk looks no different from his counterparts in the last scene of the Bruno cycle underlines the conflation of past and present evident in the poem.

The only other Bruno cycle for which there is definite English evidence is that in the *Tertia compilatio* (fig. 1). Although no surviving copy of the statutes can be assigned to a specific monastery, it is known that they were eagerly anticipated even as they came off the printing-press, for a letter sent from Beauvale to the London charterhouse in 1510 prays for a copy of *the new compilacions if ye have receyued hem*.<sup>36</sup> The *Tertia compilatio* probably made its way to all nine English houses during the second decade of the century, and its Bruno cycle, with its accessible, 'comic strip' mise-en-page and accompanying abbreviated foundation chronicle, must have become familiar to many monks of the *Provincia Angliæ*.<sup>37</sup> It may be that some English monks already had access to pictorial versions of the foundation story, although the general lack of material and antiquarian evidence means the hypothesis cannot be tested. It is at least reasonable to speculate that the northern English makers of MS. Additional 37049 obtained the model for their Bruno cycle from the London charterhouse rather than directly from the Continent (London being the main distribution-centre for materials from mainland Europe), and thus that the established version of the cycle was known there too. London, and for that matter Sheen, were wealthy and copiously embellished double monasteries, with links to numerous Continental charterhouses besides the Grande Chartreuse. It would not be surprising to discover that they had Bruno cycles of their own.

Indeed, some suggestive evidence in this direction survives from Sheen. At the head of notes on the charterhouse made in 1480 by the early antiquary William Worcestre († c1480/85) are four lines of verse reading *Anno milleno quarto quoque si bene penses / Ac octogeno sunt orti Cartusienses / Hijs ortum tribuit excellens Bruno magister / Consul et inde fuit pape pariterque minister*.<sup>38</sup> Worcestre then de-

<sup>36</sup> *Syon Abbey with the Libraries of the Carthusians*, ed. V. GILLESPIE / A. I. DOYLE, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 9 (London, 2001), pp. 626–7.

<sup>37</sup> Examples discussed in D. KUNZLE, *The Early Comic Strip: Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c.1450 to 1825* (Berkeley, CA/London, 1973), pp. 11–39, provide interesting contemporary context for the *Tertia compilatio* cycle. The possibility that some houses received unillustrated manuscript copies of the printed volume cannot be discounted.

<sup>38</sup> John HARVEY's metrical translation preserves the spirit and functionality of the original: "In 1084, if you rightly surmise/ The monks of the Charterhouse first did arise/ Bruno their founder, a master excellent/ Later to the pope was counsel and servant." See *William*

scribes the cloister and church of the monastery, noting in particular that the nave was hung with “many devotions and good reminders of devotion and the arousing of all Christian souls to God, [on] both smaller and larger tables [...] to the number of about 34”. It thus seems fairly clear that he recorded the verses at Sheen, from a table in either the cloister or the church. (That he took it from a manuscript, or heard it recited, are other possibilities.) While perhaps no more than a short mnemonic rhyme, these verses could also have introduced a longer poem like that in Additional 37049, perhaps displayed upon a wall and similarly associated with a cycle of foundation-images.<sup>39</sup>

### The Tree of St Bruno

In contrast to the image-cycles discussed above, the Tree of St Bruno seems only to exist in the *Tertia compilatio*. It occurs twice, at the beginning of the second section, the *Statuta antiqua*, and at the head of the fourth, containing copies of the *Privilegia ordinis cartusiensis*. In the first instance the left and lower margins are filled, in the manner of a gloss, with a text explaining the succession of priors of the Grande Chartreuse up to 1267, some of whom appear on branches of the Tree.<sup>40</sup> Portraits of seventeen popes (one for each province of the order) who had granted or reconfirmed special Carthusian dispensations surround the second Tree (see fig. 2): the arrangement suggests the indulgenced woodcut images of the *Imago pietatis* framed by compartments containing the instruments of the Passion, to which the Carthusians had a special attachment.<sup>41</sup> At the base of a rectangular compartment, Bruno reclines, Jesse-like, on his elbow, the trunk of a tree growing out of his heart. To his left and right stand the heavenly patrons invoked by Carthusian monks in their vow of profession, the Virgin Mary, holding her infant Son, and the eremitic John the Baptist with the *Agnus*

*Worcester: Itineraries*, ed. and trans. J. H. HARVEY (Oxford, 1969), pp. 270–1. Another English copy of these verses is found in BL, MS. Cotton Tiberius A. IX, at fol. 102r.

<sup>39</sup> A briefer, more conventional expression of interest in the order’s foundation at Sheen is found in that house’s surviving *Polychronicon*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Hatton 14. In the margin of fol. 158v *nota bene de origine Cartusiensis* has been written, and the rear paste-down has another memorandum of the event.

<sup>40</sup> H. M. BLÜM, ‘Ursprung und Geschichte’ (note 7 above), pp. 44–6, provides a German translation of this text.

<sup>41</sup> J. BRANTLEY, *Reading in the Wilderness* (note 8 above), pp. 169–78; J. M. LUXFORD, ‘Precept and Practice: The Decoration of English Carthusian Books’, in: *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J. M. LUXFORD (Turnhout, 2008; in press).

*Dei*.<sup>42</sup> Another great Carthusian guardian, the wilderness, which, as noted previously, is shown as an object of veneration in MS. Additional 25042 (fig. 4), stretches away in the background. Bruno is conventionally habited, with cowled head and a mitre and crosier at his feet, symbolising his rejection of the archbishopric of Reggio di Calabria, which was offered to him in 1090. In his great humility, he points upwards, exhorting viewers to dwell not on him, but on the ten bust-length figures growing out of the branches above. Here is, literally, the flower of the Carthusian order. As King David occupies the lowest central branch of his father's eponymous Tree, so Prior Guigo I († 1136), spiritual son of Bruno and author of the first Carthusian statutes, is positioned here. Other figures represented higher up include the honorary Carthusian St Hugh of Grenoble, who harks back to the Bruno cycle, and, at the apex (because most recent), the Blessed Cardinal Niccolò Albergati († 1443).<sup>43</sup> St Hugh of Lincoln († 1200), the first of his order to be canonized, is placed near the top. To his right, a tonsured *Sanctus Stephanus* who looks like the Protomartyr is probably intended for St Stephen of Chatillon († 1208). St Anthelm of Belley († 1178), seventh prior of the Grande Chartreuse, also appears. That the two latter figures, neither canonized until after the Reformation, are identified as saints, while Bruno is quite deliberately not – the prefix *Sanctus* is conspicuously absent in the identifying label *Bruno primus cartusiensis* –, suggests respect for contemporary efforts to have the founder canonized (his cult was authorized for Carthusian observance four years later). It may also have been intended to imply his surpassing humility. The closer to earth, the greater, literally, the humility; in this particularly Carthusian sense, the Tree of St Bruno gives the highest place to the lowest.

As the general chapter which sanctioned it must have realised, this was a modish form of self-representation.<sup>44</sup> The visualization of religious orders in the form of quasi-genealogical trees was popular at the end of the Middle Ages. An early example is found in the Tree of St Benedict in the Sherborne Missal, made in south-west England around 1400, and there is another Benedictine

<sup>42</sup> *Coutumes de Chartreuse (Consuetudines Cartusiae)*, ed. and trans. M. LAPORTE, Sources Chrétiennes 313 (Paris, 1984), p. 214; BL, MS. Cotton Nero A III, fols 130r, 166r.

<sup>43</sup> For Hugh of Grenoble as a quasi-Carthusian see H. E. J. COWDREY, 'Hugh of Avalon, Carthusian and Bishop', in: *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. M. G. SARGENT (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 41–57, at 48–9.

<sup>44</sup> The artist, too, was modish. On Graf (c.1485–1527×29) see E. MAJOR / E. GRADMANN, *Urs Graf* (London, 1947). There has never been an adequate monograph on his printed oeuvre.

example in a manuscript of Jean de Stavelot's *Vita Beati Benedicti* dated 1437.<sup>45</sup> The idea was also taken up by the Dominicans and the Franciscans, and survives in monumental painting and tapestry as well as book-illustration.<sup>46</sup> As an easily digested epitome of a religious order's history and principles, the tree was an effective mnemonic device. It collapsed time and space, suggesting continuity between a pure, heroic past and an often-exigent present. And it provided a devotional focus centred wholly on the order to which, typically, the viewer belonged: the resonances were thus associative and hortatory. The obvious resemblance to the tree of Christ's genealogy endowed it with further devotional overtones, as the form was one which pious viewers were used to contemplating, and which was immediately correlated with sanctity. From a specifically Carthusian point of view, the Tree at the beginning of the *Tertia compilatio* acknowledges, in a more forceful and sophisticated manner than a single-figure image of St Bruno could have, the respect due to a founder who left no Rule or statutes of his own. The Tree of St Bruno, the Bruno cycle, and the accompanying text *De origine*, combine to dispel the otherwise possible impression that Guigo I, as the author of the 'Rule' and first agent of Carthusian expansionism, was effectively the *fons et origo* of the order.

The Tree of St Bruno, combined with the list of Carthusian provinces and houses which appears at the end of the *Tertia compilatio*, seem to have influenced a remarkable variation on this pictorial theme, the Tree of the Carthusian order. While its iconography smacks of official concern with the order as a whole, there is apparently no evidence for any example other than that in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum at Nuremberg, which seems to have been made for Buxheim charterhouse and is datable on internal evidence to c.1507–11 (but surely postdates publication of the statutes).<sup>47</sup> It takes the form of a large trip-

<sup>45</sup> British Library, MS. Additional 74236, p. 488, illustrated in J. BACKHOUSE, *The Sherborne Missal* (London, 1999), p. 1; P. BATSELIER, *Saint Benedict: Father of Western Civilization* (New York, 1981), pp. 79–80 ('Tree of St Benedict' of Jean de Stavelot). On the iconography of such trees in general see S. RITCHEY, 'Spiritual Arborescence: Trees in the Medieval Christian Imagination', in: *Spiritus* 8 (2008), pp. 64–82.

<sup>46</sup> See e.g. British Museum, Dept. of Prints and Drawings, *Woodcuts and Metal Cuts of the Fifteenth Century, Chiefly of the German School* (London, 1914), pl. 18 ('Tree of St Dominic', German, 1473); C. KLAPISCH-ZUBER, *L'Arbre des familles* (Paris, 2003), pp. 158–60 ('Trees' of St Francis and St Dominic, respectively Flemish, 1471–82, and German, 1501); *Berns große Zeit: Das 15. Jahrhundert neu entdeckt*, ed. E. J. BEER et. al. (Bern, 1999), p. 495 ('Tree of St. Dominic', fifteenth-century).

<sup>47</sup> W. MÖSSNER, 'Das Tryptichon mit den Kartäuserklöstern des gesamten Erdkreises', in: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums Nürnberg* (1977), pp. 55–66; F. STÖHLKER, 'Das Kartäu-

tych on panel, 164×186 cm when open: its artist, either Bernhard Strigel († 1528) or a close follower, was clearly both technically gifted and skilled at moulding established artistic ideas into novel and effective forms of pictorial expression. St Bruno and St Hugh of Lincoln, accompanied by kneeling donor figures, occupy the exteriors of the wings. Thus, when closed, it looks just like a conventional late medieval altarpiece, though it seems unlikely to have been intended for church display. When open it shows the seventeen provinces of the Carthusian order as they are listed in the *Tertia compilatio* arranged in horizontal registers, five across each wing and seven across the central panel. Large demi-figures of monks personify the provinces, and 191 charterhouses are individually represented and named on white scrolls. Branches run beneath each province, supporting the diminutive monasteries and the monks who, as in the Tree of St Bruno, emerge from buds. As both a work of art and an *aide-mémoire* it is as uneconomical as the Tree of St Bruno is epitomic, the individual depiction and labelling of monasteries encouraging lengthy perusal. And while the visually simpler image functions to contract time and space, this is an essentially cartographic composition which illustrates the order's topographical extent at a specific point in its history.<sup>48</sup> Yet despite these differences, it relates closely to the practical and spiritual concerns with foundation evident in the *Tertia compilatio*, in its collocation of the provinces and monasteries with the figures of Bruno and Hugh of Lincoln (the latter, as a saint, redolent of the papal sanction emphasized in the *Privilegia* of the 1510 volume). The viewer must go 'through' these saints, literally and metaphorically, to comprehend the Carthusian order in its totality. Like the cycle, it also emphasises the order's outgrowth from the Grande Chartreuse, which is given a prominent place in the central panel. The use made of architecture, landscape and the white habit as emblems of foundational integrity is a further point of correspondence.

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senstammbaum-Triptychon im Germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg und sein Abhängigkeits- und Funktionsverhältnis zum Basler Statutencodex des Jahres 1510', in: *Spiritualität Heute und Gestern*, Bd. 4, ed. J. HOGG, *Analecta Cartusiana* 35:4 (Salzburg, 1984), pp. 21–41; O. AUGE, 'Frömmigkeit, Bildung, Bücherliebe – Konstanten im Leben des Buxheimer Kartäusers Hilprand Brandenburg (1442–1514)', in: *Bücher, Bibliotheken, und Schriftkultur der Kartäuser: Festgabe zum 65. Geburtstag von Edward Potkowski*, ed. S. LORENZ (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 399–421, at 420–1. The charterhouses depicted include Las Fuentes, founded in 1507, but not Rodez, founded in 1511; but 1511 is not, *pace* STÖHLKER ('Das Kartausenstammbaum-Triptychon', p. 24), a definite *terminus ad quem*.

<sup>48</sup> Again, the composition recalls "Thebaid" imagery (see note 18 above), except that in this case the viewer was expected to pay attention to the location and form of a series of eremitic monastic complexes rather than a series of hermit-saints.



### The commemoration of foundation at English charterhouses

Unlike the case of Basel, where a Bruno cycle was painted in conjunction with a charterhouse's construction, there is no proof that the attitudes to order-foundation outlined above ever overlapped with the commemoration of foundation of an individual English charterhouse. St Bruno and his companions are not mentioned in the surviving chronicles of the London and Coventry charterhouses, and there are no artistic representations of them which can be linked to the construction of a Carthusian monastery. But the concerns implicit in the cycles and Tree of St Bruno, coupled with the generic topographical, architectural and demographic similarities between local foundations and the original Grande Chartreuse (at least, as it is represented in later medieval sources), and also the pride in moral and ideological equivalence with the founding fathers which survives in the claim *numquam reformata quia numquam deformata*, suggest that provincial convents did perceive a universal-particular relationship between the monastery established by St Bruno and their own. This is the basis on which a link can be made between the birth of the order and that of particular monasteries. Just as the foundation of the Grande Chartreuse was worth commemorating as an act of extraordinary virtue, which had borne especially propitious fruit, so acts of local foundation might be commemorated not simply in relation to particular intercessory obligations, but also for their role in affirming and participating in the ongoing task which Bruno and his companions had begun.

This link can be reinforced by emphasizing the specifically Carthusian nature of the artefacts which commemorated local foundation: chronicles, images, tombs, heraldry etc. Most of these texts and objects now seem no more intrinsically Carthusian than do similar artefacts surviving from houses of other orders. This is because modern scholarship tends to classify objects according to form or content rather than institutional context. In fact, this context is ignored at the expense of historically rooted understanding. Any such artefact is profitably considered as part of a totality which comprised the spiritual, intellectual and historical bases, as well as the physical and human elements, of the institution it belonged to: it is as comprehensible outside this context as is a well-used coin in a numismatic display. To the extent that the institutional totalities represented by provincial charterhouses derived identity, meaning and justification from membership of the order to which they belonged, artefacts of the type to which I now turn may be considered distinctively Carthusian. By extension, insofar as the order as a whole relied on and identified with its origins, these artefacts can be associated with the history of Carthusian foundation in general.

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The charterhouse of St Mary, St John the Baptist, and All Saints at Witham in Somerset, officially founded in 1182 by King Henry II, was prominent in Carthusian history as the monastery of St Hugh of Avalon, the first effective prior (1180–86) and, as noted, first of his order to be canonized (in 1220).<sup>49</sup> Nicholas Love expressed his pre-eminence for later English Carthusians by referring to him as *firste Monke of þe ordre of Chartous*: he meant this in a chronological sense, but it also carries a suggestion of hierarchy.<sup>50</sup> Hugh had entered the Grande Chartreuse as a novice in 1163, and became procurator there c.1175. As a long-standing, imaginative and learned Carthusian, who probably knew monks alive in Guigo I's time, he would have been steeped in the traditions of his order's pioneers by the time he reached England. In 1186 he refused the wealthy bishopric of Lincoln, just as Bruno had refused Reggio di Calabria a century earlier: he subsequently accepted the see in obedience to the prior of the Grande Chartreuse. While his canonization recognized his achievements as bishop of Lincoln (1186–1200) as well as his monastic virtues, papal acknowledgement of his sanctity was interpreted as an early affirmation of Carthusian holiness in general. Hugh, noted above in the Tree of St Bruno and the triptych at Nuremberg, was thus a common figure in the order's iconography, and the general chapter solemnized his feast – the order's highest grading – in 1339.<sup>51</sup> His celebrity and his status as builder of Witham were commemorated locally by later medieval monks through preservation of a cell bearing his name.<sup>52</sup> This is mentioned in an inscription in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc. 154, one of at least sixty-nine books given to Witham by the royal chaplain John Blacman after he entered the charterhouse as a *cleri-*

<sup>49</sup> Witham was colonized c.1178, but its foundation charter was not issued until January 1182. The first two priors, Narbet (c.1178–9) and Hamo (c.1179–80), were sent from the Grande Chartreuse, but the monastery was only completed and fully functioning under Hugh. Recent condensed histories of the English houses mentioned below are contained in *Monasticon Cartusiense Vol. III*, ed. J. HOGG / G. SCHLEGEL, *Analecta Cartusiana* 185:3 (Salzburg, 2005), pp. 361–566 (text by Brother Anselm Joseph GRIBBIN, OPrem.). For other reliable accounts see E. M. THOMPSON, *The Carthusian Order in England* (London, 1930) and C. B. ROWNTREE, *Studies in Carthusian History in Later Medieval England* (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of York, 1981).

<sup>50</sup> *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Full Critical Edition*, ed. M. G. SARGENT (Exeter, 2005), p. 229.

<sup>51</sup> J. HOURLIER / B. du MOUSTIER, 'Le Calendrier Cartusien', in: *Études Gregoriennes* 2 (1957), pp. 151–61, at 160.

<sup>52</sup> For Hugh as Witham's builder see *Magna vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. and trans. D. L. DOUIE / D. H. FARMER, 2 vols (Oxford, 1985), I, pp. 60–74.

*cus redditus* c.1463. On fol. 1r is a memorandum of Blacman's gifts which includes a donation *circa diuersas reperationes factas in cella sancti Hugonis*.<sup>53</sup> No more information exists about this building, but given the preservation of architectural 'relics' at English monasteries of other orders (a notable example of which was Glastonbury abbey's *Ealdechirche*), it is reasonable to speculate that it was an actual or supposed architectural remnant of his priorate.<sup>54</sup> In any case, it commemorated the foundation of the monastery and the convent's early links with the Grande Chartreuse through the person of its most illustrious monk; a task fulfilled in greater detail, but surely no more evocatively, by Adam of Eynsham's *Magna vita Sancti Hugonis*.

Chronicles of foundation survive from both the London and Coventry charterhouses. London's extends from the middle of the fourteenth century, when a religious house was first planned for the urban site, through the official foundation of the charterhouse in 1371, down to 1481, when the monastery had become the nerve-centre of the English Province.<sup>55</sup> It is thus more than a foundation history, but its very detailed explanation of the beginnings of the house, informed by archival research, is ample evidence of the monks' special interest in their origins. Of the two principal founders, Sir Walter Manny († 1372), a soldier and administrator under King Edward III, is given more attention than Michael Northburgh, bishop of London († 1361), who died before the first monks were introduced, but who was responsible for arguing the merits of the project to the priors of Witham and Hinton. As it is described here, Manny's piety and enthusiasm for the order establish his credentials as a model secular patron. His zeal (no doubt whetted by anxiety about his advancing age, though this is not stated) led him to write directly to the general chapter in 1370, begging them to sanction the residence of monks on the charterhouse site before buildings existed to accommodate them. When he died, his tomb was set up in the conventual church before the high altar step, where generations of monks

<sup>53</sup> *Syon Abbey with the Libraries of the Carthusians* (note 36 above), p. 632.

<sup>54</sup> On Glastonbury's *Ealdechirche*, destroyed by fire in 1184 but commemorated with a special brass plate, see J. A. GOODALL, 'The Glastonbury Abbey Memorial Reconsidered', in: *Antiquaries Journal* 66 (1986), pp. 364–7. Another local example of such a 'relic' is the Romanesque chapter house of St Augustine's abbey at Bristol.

<sup>55</sup> It is contained in the register now Kew, The National Archives, Exchequer, Land Review Miscellaneous Books 61, and was extensively published by W. H. St J. HOPE, *The History of the London Charterhouse from Its Foundation to the Suppression of the Monastery* (London, 1925).

encountered it during communally celebrated offices and Masses.<sup>56</sup> The chronicle complemented this monument as a stimulus to commemoration of the founder, and also reminded its readers of intercessory obligations to others. Of particular note is an *Ordo cellarum cum nominibus fundatorum earundem*, which would have been easy for monks to memorize and call to mind in solitude.<sup>57</sup> The implied goal of commemorating individuals involved in the establishment of the monastery is part and parcel of commemorating the foundation in general as an historical and spiritual enterprise of the highest significance. Even the choice of an urban site, which would have perturbed Bruno or Hugh of Lincoln, is disarmingly justified with reference to original documents.<sup>58</sup>

Of the Coventry chronicle only a fragment survives, dealing exclusively with the foundation of the charterhouse of St Anne. The original manuscript is lost, but extracts from it were printed in William DUGDALE's *Monasticon Anglicanum*.<sup>59</sup> These suggest that its format and content were originally similar to that from London, viz. a documented chronology of a protracted foundation process. After relating the ultimately frustrated aspiration of William, Lord Zouche, of Haringworth († 1382), to establish a charterhouse to the city's south, it emphasizes the involvement of King Richard II and his queen in the project. Richard, it says, laid the first stone of the conventual church with his own hands in 1385. He is proudly declared the *principalis fundator*, who dedicated time, good will and resources *ad instantiam specialem Annæ reginæ*.<sup>60</sup> There is also an itemized account of the buildings and other infrastructure (such as fishponds) paid for by local benefactors. As at London, a mayor of the city is remembered for a particularly large benefaction, while the founders of individual cells are again listed, along with the amounts they contributed. Where the Coventry narrative departs from London's is in its emphasis on Carthusian agency. (Had he wished, the London chronicler could have made more of this.) Particularly, a monk of the London charterhouse named Robert Palmer is recognized

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>59</sup> *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. W. DUGDALE, rev. J. CALEY / H. ELLIS / B. BANDINEL, 6 vols in 8 (London, 1817–30), I:1, pp. 16–7, nos 1–4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 16–17; W. H. St J. HOPE, *History of the London Charterhouse* (note 55 above), p. 35.

as *primus motor et causa* of St Anne's.<sup>61</sup> This element of the story is isolated and developed in another account of Coventry charterhouse's origins contained in Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS. B X 30 (fol. 92v), a fifteenth-century religious miscellany from the Basel charterhouse.<sup>62</sup> Highly prestigious and important though it was to Coventry's monks, all mention of royal patronage is omitted here, and the foundation represented as a purely Carthusian initiative. Robert Palmer is described as a hermit and devout priest, and it is claimed that *incepit unum monasterium [...] in honore sancte anne et laudibiliter perfecit*. Coventry is never mentioned by name, and the date given for the foundation (c.1400) is a couple of decades too late. These facts, and the occurrence of the story in a manuscript owned and apparently written at a Continental charterhouse (presumably Basel itself), shows that the purpose of this version was glorification of Carthusian virtues through the egregious merits of Palmer (among other things it is noted that *in vita sua multa fecit miracula, et inter cetera mortuum suscitavit*). As such, the text was almost certainly composed somewhere other than Coventry itself. That it draws on the domestic history of St Anne's indicates both the dissemination of that history within the order and also the selective exploitation of one provincial charterhouse's foundation narrative by another during the later Middle Ages.<sup>63</sup> The two versions of the Coventry chronicle illustrate different approaches to commemoration of Carthusian foundation, the first addressing local exigencies through stress on royal involvement and the monastery's place in a regional patronage network, the second claiming monastic self-sufficiency so as to evoke the independence of St Bruno and other pioneers of the order.

A letter of confraternity granted in 1459 to King Henry VI by the Coventry charterhouse explains that, while love, the root of all virtue, obliged Carthusians to intercede for the good of everyone, "it binds us particularly to those who

<sup>61</sup> Palmer became the second prior of St Anne's, but, like St Hugh at Witham, seems to have been the first effective ruler. His rule lasted until 1409: see *The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales III: 1377–1540*, ed. D. M. SMITH (Cambridge, 2008), p. 356.

<sup>62</sup> *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel*, ed. G. MEYER / M. BURCKHARDT, 3 vols (Basel, 1960–75), vol. 2, p. 739. The account is printed in G. MORIN, 'A travers les manuscrits de Bâle: notices et extraits des plus anciens manuscrits Latins', in: *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 26 (1926), pp. 175–249, at 203–4. I thank Dominik HUNGER for helping me to obtain a photograph of fol. 92v.

<sup>63</sup> Unless, as seems possible, the text in the Basel manuscript was disseminated from the Grande Chartreuse.

[...] have shown a greater devotion and affection towards us and our order".<sup>64</sup> In accord with this sentiment, commemoration of secular founders through words, heraldry and images must once have been common to all English charterhouses. Excavation has shown that conventual churches like those at Beauvale and Coventry contained glazed paving tiles displaying founders' and benefactors' heraldry.<sup>65</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that as well as having a decorative function, these reminded monks of the benefaction on which their institution was grounded. The general cartulary of Beauvale, composed in 1486 at the behest of prior Nicholas Wartre, contains another such *aide-mémoire* in the form of a descent (it is headed *discensio*) of the charterhouse's founder, Sir Nicholas de Cantelupe, embedded among charters detailing local property entitlements.<sup>66</sup> Strictly speaking the document is not, as DUGDALE called it, a *Successio progenitorum Nicholai de Cantilupo*, but rather a descent of entitlement to the manor of Ilkeston in Derbyshire and its soke, which included Greasely, where both the charterhouse and the Cantelupe *caput honoris* stood.<sup>67</sup> It covers the period from the Norman Conquest down to 1355, the year in which Nicholas de Cantelupe died. Appropriately for a cartulary, the text is forensic in tone, mentioning, for example, certain entitlements *ut in rotulo curiæ de Ilkeston inuenitur*. However, in terms of classification it is a highly unusual and perhaps unique example of such a document in a monastic cartulary, suggesting that it was a carefully considered insertion rather than a response to convention.<sup>68</sup> Its value for the monks presumably lay both in its legal status and in the prestigious and justificative link it advertised between Nicholas de Cantelupe and the great period of political renewal and land redistribution under King William I. It served

<sup>64</sup> *Cum virtutum omnium mater et radix caritas omnibus generaliter nos obliget et debitores efficiat illis, tamen specialius nos astringit [...] qui ad nos nostremque ordinem maiorem deuocionem ac caritatis affectum habere se ostendunt*; London, Westminster Abbey, Muniment 650, lines 2–3.

<sup>65</sup> For the tiles at Coventry see I. SODEN et al., *Excavations at St. Anne's Charterhouse, Coventry, 1968–87* (Coventry, 1995), pp. 100–16; on Beauvale see *Monasticon Cartusiense Vol. III* (note 49 above), p. 386.

<sup>66</sup> British Library, MS. Additional 6060, fol. 28r–v. The genealogy is printed in *Monasticon Anglicanum* (note 59 above), vol. 6:1, pp. 13–4, no. 2.

<sup>67</sup> See T. FOULDS, 'Unpublished Monastic Cartularies of Nottinghamshire: A Guide to their Contents', in: *Transactions of the Thorton Society* 88 (1984), pp. 89–98, at 90.

<sup>68</sup> C. B. ROWNTREE, *Studies in Carthusian History* (note 49 above), p. 39, note 1, thought it unique, and I have been unable to find another example.

to remind them of the illustrious person and connections of their founder, and of their debt to him.

Humfrey Wanley († 1726), the librarian and pioneering scholar of English medieval manuscripts, has transmitted to posterity a memorandum of books attributed to the charterhouse of Kingston-upon-Hull, which a Continental correspondent had lately seen. These included “a Collection of Poems with Miniatures to the Memory of the Earl of Pembroke their Founder [in] fol.”<sup>69</sup> As Ian DOYLE (in a personal communication) doubts this reference, it would be foolish to pursue it; but there is ample evidence that Hull’s monks had other ways of commemorating their founders, and thus their foundation, through image as well as text. Their conventual church served as a mausoleum for the founding family, the de la Pole earls of Suffolk. Sir Michael de la Pole, who founded the charterhouse in 1377, was buried with his wife in the choir of the church after his death in 1389.<sup>70</sup> Michael had his father, Sir William de la Pole († 1366), interred in the church, no doubt under a monument befitting his high social and financial status. Exactly seventy years later, his grandson, also Sir William de la Pole († 1450), was buried in the same place, beneath an ostentatious tomb made with Purbeck marble and brass. (In his will of 1448 William had requested burial in the charterhouse beneath a tomb with stone images of himself and his wife, Alice.)<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the monks were also required, by an indenture of 1462, to have erected “in an eminent place in the refectory [...] for ever” two stone images, apparently life-sized, representing the younger William de la Pole and his wife. Each statue was to hold a disk in its right hand representing bread and fish, and an ale pot in its left. In a little piece of commemorative theatre, alms were to be distributed to two needy individuals in the ‘presence’ of these remarkable simulacra.<sup>72</sup> Although the charterhouse was not Wil-

<sup>69</sup> *The Diary of Humfrey Wanley 1715–1726*, ed. C. E. WRIGHT / R. C. WRIGHT, 2 vols (London, 1966), I, p. xlvi, note 7. This must refer not to the first founder but to William de la Pole (see below), created earl of Pembroke in 1447.

<sup>70</sup> His wife was buried in 1385, the founder in the 1390s. A pre-Reformation record of the important lay burials in Hull charterhouse is printed in C. G. Y. (full name not supplied), ‘Notices Concerning Religious Houses in Yorkshire, with the Names of their Founders, and the Persons Buried in Them’, in: *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica* 4 (1837), pp. 73–9, 128–133, at 131–2.

<sup>71</sup> J. A. A. GOODALL, *God’s House at Ewelme: Life, Devotion and Architecture in a Fifteenth-Century Alms-house* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 8 (Michael), 10, 297–8, 301, note 32 (William).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273–7 (full text of the indenture).

liam de la Pole's initiative, he was a grandson of the first founder, and continued the process of foundation through generous grants of land, including the manor of Rimswell in Yorkshire, referred to in the indenture regarding the statues. He was buried, moreover, beneath a large monument standing close enough to that of the first founder to have been comprehended together with it by anyone entering the east end of the church. As such, William was both a reminder of and a participant in Hull charterhouse's foundation.

Burials in showy tombs, whether two- or three-dimensional, were normal corollaries of ecclesiastical foundation which Carthusians, despite their desire for concealment from secular influence, could not avoid. Thus, at Hull, the monks shared their church with sculpted representations of armed knights and ladies lying on raised chests or set into dark, polished stone slabs. The situation was similar at Axholme and Mount Grace charterhouses. John Leland, the sixteenth-century antiquary, noted that at Axholme *one of the Mulbrais dukes of Northfolk was buried in a tumber of alabaster*. This could have commemorated either the founder, Thomas de Mowbray († 1399), or his son, John (V) de Mowbray († 1432), both of whom were buried there.<sup>73</sup> At Mount Grace the tomb of Sir Thomas Beaufort († 1426), whose generosity to the inchoate, struggling monastery gave him the reputation of second founder, was buried alongside the first founder, Thomas de Holland († 1400), in a raised tomb just to the west of the high altar.<sup>74</sup> These monuments are completely lost, but there survive two chunks of sculpted polychrome masonry from Sir Walter Manny's tomb-chest (they include little shields of his arms), which, as mentioned previously, stood before the high altar of the London charterhouse.<sup>75</sup> On top of this chest the alabaster effigy which Manny requested in his will must have lain.<sup>76</sup> This object, with which I will conclude, is formally both unusual and suggestive. It indicates that the chest of Manny's tomb had a series of niches on both sides, resembling the prayer-niches commonly incorporated into the bases of contemporary

<sup>73</sup> *The Itinerary of John Leland*, ed. L. T. SMITH, 5 vols (London, 1964), I, p. 37. In 1429 John (V) de Mowbray directed that his father's bones be brought from Venice and re-interred at Axholme.

<sup>74</sup> Both graves, and the base of Beaufort's monument, have been excavated: see G. COPPACK / M. ASTON, *Christ's Poor Men: The Carthusians in England* (Stroud, 2002), p. 66.

<sup>75</sup> See G. S. DAVIES, *Charterhouse in London* (London, 1922), p. 19 and plate (photograph); J. H. HARVEY, *Henry Yevele*, 2nd ed. (London, 1946), pp. 31, 33.

<sup>76</sup> Manny's wife Margaret was also buried in the church, along with other dignitaries: see the lists in W. H. St J. HOPE, *History of the London Charterhouse* (note 55 above), pp. 100–4.



saints' shrines. Only a small number of such tomb-chests are known to have existed in medieval England, most of them made, like Manny's, during the fourteenth century. In some cases they intentionally suggested the saintliness of the tomb's incumbent (e.g. the tombs of Robert Grosseteste at Lincoln, King Edward II at Gloucester – which also had an alabaster effigy – and Simon of Sudbury at Canterbury), and in all instances such niches implied the prestige, if not the aura, associated with sanctity.<sup>77</sup> I am not suggesting for a moment that Manny was thought in any way saintly. Neither do I suppose, however, that London's Carthusians were immune to the cultural influences which gave rise to such associations. The prestige of the founder, reflected in the crowd of dignitaries (including King Edward III) who attended his funeral, was perpetuated not only in the domestic chronicle and the epitaph it records, but also in the form and location of his tomb. When a monk knelt before the high altar, he did so in the shadow of the founder's monument. All eyes comprehended it, and it conditioned the flow of movement in front of the altar. Over and above the conventional Carthusian association of tomb and monastic cell, which at London charterhouse was publicized in some of the verses over the cell doors, the monument at the physical heart of the charterhouse stood as a perpetual reminder of the illustrious seed from which the convent had grown.<sup>78</sup> On this basis, the secular founder and St Bruno were affiliated.

\*

All monastic orders, collectively and as individual convents, took the history and commemoration of foundation seriously. The Augustinians, Benedictines and Carmelites did so, *inter alia*, to demonstrate chronological precedence, a matter of considerable practical and symbolic significance during the later Middle Ages. The Sherborne Missal, which, as noted, is Benedictine, displays a series of roundels inhabited by representatives of various orders, designed to inform viewers about religious history while emphasizing the primacy of the black monks. Each figure holds a scroll inscribed with the name and foundation-date of his order: the Carthusian appears on p. 369.<sup>79</sup> Their status as grist

<sup>77</sup> For known examples of such monuments see J. M. LUXFORD, 'The Monument of Sir Humfrey de Littlebury at All Saints, Holbeach', in: *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in King's Lynn and the Fens*, ed. J. MCNEILL, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 30 (Leeds, 2008), pp. 151–72.

<sup>78</sup> M. G. SARGENT / M. VILLALOBOS HENNESSY, 'The Latin Verses over the Cell Doors of London Charterhouse', in: *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism* (note 41 above).

<sup>79</sup> J. BACKHOUSE, *Sherborne Missal* (note 45 above), p. 37.

to a Benedictine mill would hardly have concerned contemporary Carthusians. The order's sense of achievement, justification, and purpose, insofar as it can be reified, was based on a distinctive approach to salvation which, although inspired by biblical and early Christian example, was sufficiently recently instituted (and thus clearly chronicled) to support the claim that its course had never wavered. For Carthusian monks of the later Middle Ages, the example set by Bruno was visible everywhere in the environment of the cloister. That some convents, and in time the general chapter, chose to underscore this living example by 'presencing' Bruno and his acts through art and text, emphasizes in a concrete way the extent to which the founder was thought to vouchsafe his order's reputation. Analogous to this was the 'presencing' of local founders through texts, images and objects, a practice fundamental to the reputation and entitlements of provincial charterhouses dwelling not in the ether of the high Alps but in the muddy and spiritually compromised reality of late-medieval urban and rural life. For all its ostensible incongruity, the collocation of St Bruno and the founders of individual charterhouses in the commemorative culture discussed here can help us to understand better the mental landscape of later medieval Carthusians.

Figures



Fig. 1: The Bruno cycle in the *Tertia compilatio statutorum ordinis carthusiensis* (Basel, 1510).

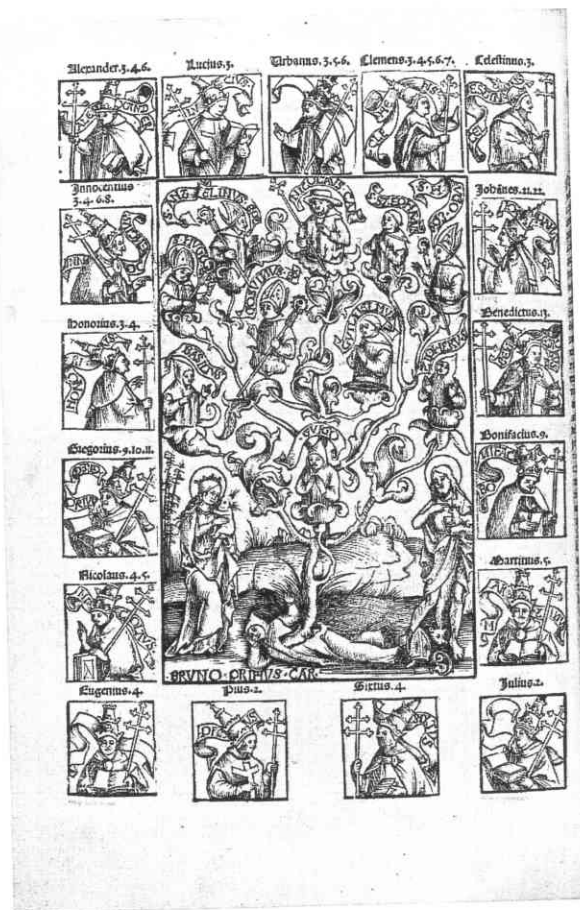


Fig. 2: The second Tree of St Bruno in the *Tertia compilatio statutorum ordinis carthusiensis* (Basel, 1510).

De origine ordinis cartusien. brevis annotatio.

Hen<sup>o</sup> miraculi vo-  
minis antonius  
sive episcopus flo-  
rentinus memori  
in summa sua spi-  
ritu per. ita. r. ca. 2.  
fol. circa l. 1000.

¶ In parisijs circa anni dominice incarnationis millesimo octogesimo  
secundo solenne factu florere: quid doctor: vita scientia & fama inter  
cetera pcpauo vltima pcurio infirmitate: die clausa extremi. Et sic ad 14  
et viri funerals officij sepulchra: tota vniuersitas parisiensis & doctor: &  
scholaru cõuenisse: subito cõuenit superibus: qui motus erat: deuoto capite  
sedit in feretro: et oibus audientibus alta & terribili voce clamabat: Iusto dei iudi-  
cio accusatus sum. duo dicit: redimato in feretri capite: ite: decubuit motus.  
Ad tam suspensũ itaq; miraculũ omnes qui aderat: territi: cadentes: obstruendi  
in aliter: vsq; diem statuerit: quo illucferent: cũ doctis pariter & indocto: maxi-  
ma cõuenit multitudine: quis plente & de eo qđ pcedenti die acciderat nõ sine admi-  
ratione disquiret: ecce defunctus rursus elinato capite: delictosa ac horribili vo-  
ce intonuit: Iusto dei iudicio iudicatus sum. Quã vocem omnes qui ad specta-  
culum conuerant: clare & intelligibiliter audierunt: qđ tam insoliti defuncti de-  
mores penderent: conquirentes: ipsam vsq; in crallinum diem nullatenus ianu-  
landum vnanimiter decreuerunt. Adhuc igit facte: quoniam tam suspensũ nota-  
tis fama totam ciuitatem puolauerat: conueniunt: scnes cum iunioribus: simul in  
vnum diues & pauper. Paratis aut: & ordinatis omnibus: iunus ad sepeliendum  
deportatur: tunc subito defunctus: in eam tertio alafimo & mestissimo clamore  
personat: dicens: Iusto dei iudicio condemnatus sum. Audita tam horribili et  
inopinata tanti viri damnationis certa sententia: omnes qui aderant: tremore su-  
mul & timore percussũ memora bant: qđ regius ppbeta decantauerat: Terribilis  
in conspectu super filios dominum: quia iudicia dei abyssus multa. Erat inter ali-  
os ibidem: venerabilis buno natione thetonicus: in ciuitate colonienũ: nõ ob-  
scure parentibus natus: ecclesie remensis canonicus: sacre theologie doctor: ex-  
minis: cum magistro lauduno: duobus stephanis burgeais & vicentis: sancti russi  
canonici: conuenerat: & illis sebugo quidam quem capellani cognominabant:  
eo qđ solus inter eos sacerdotis fungeret officio: & laici duo andreas & garnus: qđ  
omnes memora bant: & salubriter compuncta quodam sancto eremita interroga-  
tes: qualiter tam horrendum diuinum enadere possent iudicium audierunt: ecce  
elongauit fugiens & msi in solitudine. Vnanimiter igit amote solitudinis accen-  
si: adierunt sanctum hugonem: granopolitanũ ecclesie antistitem: pãres vt in eius  
diocesi: quę multis desertis montibus abundabat: congruum sui: ppositi locum  
concederet. Quos ipse nõ solum gratanter: sed & reuerenter suscepit: tractauit: et  
vori compotes fecit. Ipse namq; confidente & lauante: ac conuicant: cartusie  
solitudinem inuenerunt: atq; exierunt. Quidam etiam pius sanctus episcopus  
fornitum: in eodem solitudine dominum sue dignationi habitaculũ constituen-  
tem: stellas etiam septem ducatum sibi pãbentes: inuenit. hic igit sanctus pte-  
sul: pũc cartusie patronus & compluratus: intantũ eremum deuotus et sedu-  
luse incolabat: vt eum magister buno pũus cartusie pũus: nonnunqđ exire com-  
pelleret: ite dices: ite ad oues vestras: eisq; qđ debet: exoluit. ¶ Eumoni in pũ-  
dantũ successit dominus laudinus: supradictus: litteris vniuerso & humano opũ  
me eruditus. Post quẽ dominus petrus cognomento francus: domum cartusie  
regendam suscepit: Quia amote solitudinis et silentij: misericordiam penit & acce-  
pit. Cui in regimine substituit dominus iohannes. Post cuius obitum: in pũo-  
tu surrogat dominus guigo: litteris secularibus & diuinis admodum eruditus.  
hic cartusie: ppositi institutione & scripto digessit & exẽplo monstrauit: toto tẽ-  
pore vite sue vltens iuxta sequentũ statuto: formã & regulã.

fol. 45. et. 35.

fol. 54.

torum ordinis car-

Fig. 3: De origine ordinis cartusiensis brevis annotatio, printed on the verso of the Bruno cycle in the Tertia compilatio.

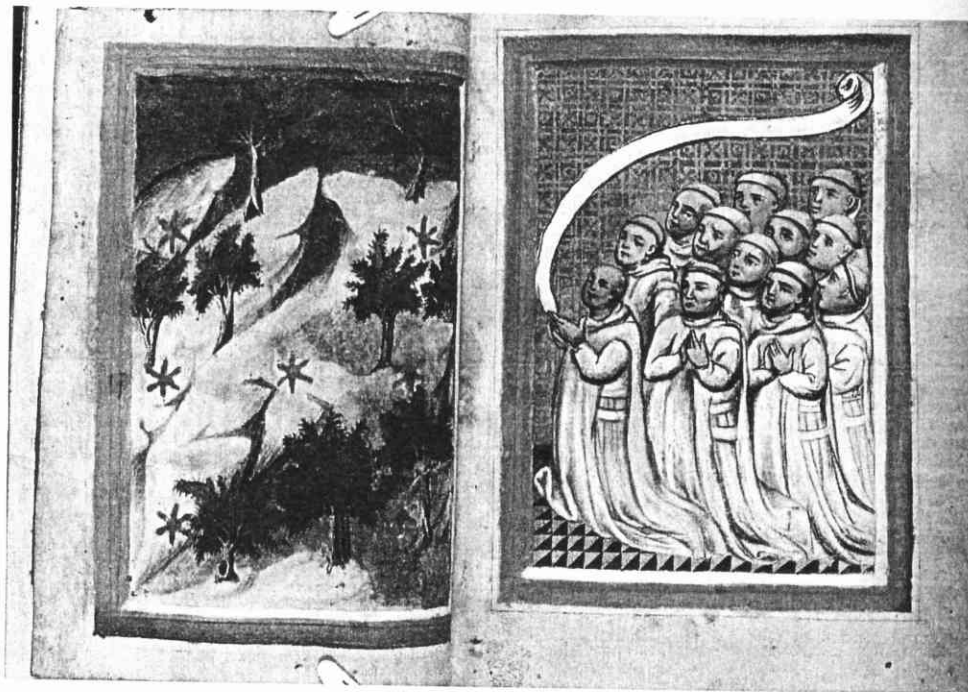


Fig. 4: London, British Library, MS. Additional 25042, fols 10v–11r. Carthusian monks adoring the wilderness of the Chartreuse.



Fig. 5: London, British Library, MS. Additional 37049, at fol. 22r. Abbreviated Bruno cycle from a northern-English charterhouse.