

## ***"Transeuntes ad alium Ordinem."***

### **The position of Cistercians and Carthusians in the Middle Ages<sup>2</sup>**

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Monks and nuns, who – deliberately or forced – wandered around in the secular world, or moved from one monastery to another have often been seen as a particular problem in monastic communities and Orders.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly true for the late Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, when we are confronted with quite a large number of "*evagationes*" and "*fugitivi*".<sup>4</sup> In the forced form, we can find them, e.g., in connection with the Hussite wars, when many monks and nuns had to move away from their communities, mainly to other houses of their Order, were often rejected there, moved onwards to a third monastery, were rejected again, moved on to the fourth community, and so on.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Maurice Laporte, *Ex Chartis Capitulorum Generalium ab initio usque ad 1951*, (Grande Chartreuse: typoscript, 1953), 393-397: "*Transitus de alia Religione ad nostram*".

<sup>2</sup> Revised version of a paper delivered at 'Heremitae, Monachi, Fratres. International Conference on the Interactions of Medieval Monastic Orders', Pannonhalma (Hungary), March 21-23, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gerhard Jaritz, 'Monastische Kommunitäten und räumliche Mobilität in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit', in *Migration in der Feudalgesellschaft*, ed. G. Jaritz, A. Müller, (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1988), 157-178 (lit.).

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e.g., Kaspar Elm and Peter Feige, 'Der Verfall des zisterziensischen Ordenslebens im späten Mittelalter', in *Die Zisterzienser. Ordensleben zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit*, (Bonn: Rheinland-Verlag, 1980), 237-238.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gerhard Jaritz, 'Cistercian Migrations in the Late Middle Ages', in *Goad and Nail. Studies in Medieval Cistercian History X*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder, (Kalamazoo/Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1985), 191-200.

Another problem with regard to ignoring or having to ignore monastic stability were those monks or nuns who changed the Order. This could certainly be judged and evaluated rather differently, depending on the situation if they joined one's own Order coming from another one or if they moved away. Already the Rule of St. Benedict stated that an abbot should avoid to take over a monk from another monastery without a letter of recommendation of his own abbot.<sup>6</sup> Such agreements of abbots also played an important role in later periods. They got often connected with the wish of monks to change to a more rigorous community. In 1097, Cluny received the privilege of pope Urban II to accept monks from other monasteries without caring about objections of their original houses, if those changes happened *pro vitae melioratione*.<sup>7</sup>

Those who left were at least seen as suspicious and dangerous, and the authorities of Orders, e.g., General Chapters, regularly dealt with them generally or concerning specific cases. Again, mainly the fifteenth century was the period, in which many of those cases and difficulties obviously occurred. We are, in some statutes, on the one hand, confronted with the necessity to keep up the position of one's own Order against the others. On the other hand, we sometimes find compromises and/or permissions, either initiated by various supporters of individual monks and nuns who wanted to change, or out of the wish of the authorities of an Order to keep up the connections to other Orders in a positive state without major disturbances.

In this paper, I would like to try to show the importance, the developments and the changes of those problems in the Middle Ages with particular references to the position of Cistercians and Carthusians.

In the early periods of the Cistercian Order we are often confronted with the positive connotation of and position towards members of other Orders who joined the new communities.<sup>8</sup> This can be seen to a higher degree than for the

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<sup>6</sup> Regula Benedicti, c. 61: *Caveat autem abbas, ne aliquando de alio noto monasterio monacho ad habitandum suscipiat sine consensu abbatis eius aut litteras commendaticias; quia scriptum est: Quod tibi non vis fieri, alio ne feceris* [Regula Benedicti. Die Benediktusregel lateinisch/deutsch, (Beuron: Beuronischer Kunstverlag, 1992), 214]. Cf. Adriaan H. Bredero, 'Das Verhältnis zwischen Zisterziensern und Cluniakensern im 12. Jahrhundert: Mythos und Wirklichkeit', in *Die Zisterzienser. Ordensleben zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Ergänzungsband*, ed. K. Elm, (Köln: Rheinland-Verlag, 1982), 51.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bredero 50.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the taking over of already existing monasteries by the Cistercians like, e. g., in mid-twelfth century that of the reform congregation of Savigny [Louis J. Lekai, *The Cistercians. Ideals and Reality*. (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1977), 36].

Carthusians. Concerning Carthusians, the necessity of general stability in any form is of major and special importance and is shown in regular statutes of the General Chapter that mainly forbade to change from one monastery to another house of their Order.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the position of the Carthusians is generally stricter. Concerning the actual change of the Order, those monks occur more regularly who intend to move from other Orders to the more rigorous Carthusians. Already in 1156 the Carthusian General Chapter decided not to accept any members of the Cistercian or of the Premonstratensian Order, "*propter ipsorum reverentiam et pacem*".<sup>10</sup> This was a statute to be changed in 1180 when it was decided to accept Cistercians and Premonstratensians with recommendation letters, "*si fuerint notae personae, et idoneae et sine infamia ... non tamen passim et leviter*".<sup>11</sup>

In the Cistercian Order the change from one monastery to another community of the Order was already dealt with in the *Summa Cartae Caritatis* of before 1120: "None of us shall dissuade any man who wishes to enter any other one of our abbeys, nor entice anyone to our own abbey; but rather each of us shall retain that one who chooses of his own accord, after a change of mind, to remain. If after arriving at the place of his choice he should regret his decision before the completion of the period of probation, he shall be free to leave if he so desires."<sup>12</sup> The *Summa Cartae Caritatis* also gives orders concerning fugitive members of communities. "If a monk, or laybrother, secretly flees from one of our monasteries to another, let him be persuaded to return. If he refuses, he shall not be permitted to stay in that place for more than one night. If he is a monk, he shall be deprived of his habit, if he is wearing it, unless there is evidence that he had been a monk before he entered our Order."<sup>13</sup> Concerning those monks of other Orders, it is, from the Cistercian side, stated in 1195 not to accept any Carthusian without the agreement and consense of this Order, "*pacis charitatisque gratia*", and the Carthusians were not supposed to accept any Cistercian without the Cistercian General Chapter's consense.<sup>14</sup> In 1222 we find

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<sup>9</sup> Laporte 124-126, 375-381 (*stabilitas*).

<sup>10</sup> Laporte 393, n. 2653: "... *Quod constitutum si quis nostrum fuerit transgressus, etiam professum expellere cogatur et a toto Ordine separare.*"

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., n. 2654.

<sup>12</sup> Lekai 447.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 447-448.

<sup>14</sup> Josephus-Maria Canivez, *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, I, (Louvain: Bureau de la Revue Ecclesiastique, 1933), 187-188. See note 27.

the Carthusian statute that Cistercians, who had afterwards made their profession in a Carthusian monastery, should not be allowed to hold any office in the monastery without the acceptance of the Carthusian General Chapter.<sup>15</sup>

Particularly in the second half of the thirteenth and in the fourteenth centuries we are mainly confronted with the problem of Mendicants obviously wanting to join the Carthusian Order. In 1261, they are still combined with the Cistercians. Without the dispensation of the Carthusian General Chapter it is again not allowed for monks, who had first professed in the Minorite, Dominican or Cistercian Order, to hold an office in a Charterhouse.<sup>16</sup> Those restrictions with regard to offices, especially of former Mendicants, we again find in very similar ways in statutes of the Carthusian General Chapter in 1309, 1319, 1363, 1368, 1404 and 1434;<sup>17</sup> moreover, there are statutes touching any kind of monks of other Orders (1368, 1391),<sup>18</sup> such coming from the Cannelites (1496)<sup>19</sup> or a number of mentioned other Orders (1391).<sup>20</sup> In 1368 it was stressed by the Carthusian General Chapter that secular priests or members of other religious communities who would not know the Carthusian kind of service and regular life or, among others, would not be acquainted to the solitary way of living, should not be admitted because a lot of scandals in the Order had arisen through such persons.<sup>21</sup> 1363 the statute was given that former Mendicants should not have any vote in the Carthusian community.<sup>22</sup> But in 1386 a monk of the Charterhouse of Strasbourg, who had come from another Order, was allowed to take over offices, except from becoming prior.<sup>23</sup> From the Cistercian point of view, we do not find

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<sup>15</sup> Laporte 394, n. 2655: *Cisterciensibus nec post factam in nostris Domibus Professiones, nisi de licentia Capituli Generalis, obedientia non committantur.*

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., n. 2656; *The Chartae of the Carthusian General Chapter*. Cava Ms. 61, *Aula Dei: The Louber Manuale from the Charterhouse of Buxheim*, ed. J. Hogg and M. Sargent, (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität, 1982), 31 (*Analecta Cartusiana*, 100: 1).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 394-396, n. 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2668, 2670.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 394-395, n. 2661, 2665.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 396, n. 2671.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 395, n. 2666.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 394, n. 2661: *Sacerdotes et caeteri qui de saeculo vel altera Religione veniant ad Ordinem, si in Missarum celebratione et observantiis regularibus formae Ordinis se noluerint conformare, vel in sustinenda opinione sua fuerint obstinati, vel in modo vivendi singulares, ad Professionem nullatenus admittantur, quoniam per tales personas olim multa in Ordine scandala pervenerunt.*

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., n. 2659.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., n. 2662.

such severe statutes. We sometimes come across monks of other Orders having changed to the Cistercians, and becoming abbots there: A former Dominican became, though illegally, abbot of the Cistercian house of Aiguebelle in 1441, until he was deposed in 1448 and excommunicated in 1450.<sup>24</sup> Benedictines were elected at Benisson-Dieu in 1419, at Septfons in 1419, at Les Pierres in 1436 and at Dalon in 1443.<sup>25</sup>

The general position of Cistercians concerning the acceptance of monks of other Orders proves to have been more compromising. Already in 1182, one deals with the problem and makes it very much connected with matters of outer appearance. Those monks of other Orders who appeared in secular dress should have probation for a whole year. If they came in their monks' dress or if this had been taken away violently, it should be the decision of the abbot to accept them as monks or to have them in probation.<sup>26</sup> Such a general statute was, as we have already seen, restricted concerning Carthusians in 1195.<sup>27</sup> Again, there arose the problems regarding Mendicants. The Cistercian General Chapter decided in 1223 that those monks or laybrothers of their Order who changed to the Dominicans or Minorites should be judged as "*fugitivi*".<sup>28</sup> And in 1266, to keep peace with Minorites and Dominicans and "*ad remotionem scandalorum*", it was stated that no person of those Orders should be accepted without the specific licence of the Cistercian General Chapter.<sup>29</sup> Again in the form of prohibition, we find the

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<sup>24</sup> Lekai 99-100.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 100.

<sup>26</sup> Canivez I, 90: "*Monachus de alio Ordine, si antequam sit benedictus, ad nostrum Ordinem venerit, si venerit in habitu saeculari, sit in probatione per annum integrum; si in habitu monachali, vel forte per violentiam ei ablatus fuerit habitus, in abbate sit ipsum admittere inter monachos aut ponere in probationem; benedictus in Ordine alio inter monachos recipiatur.*"

<sup>27</sup> Canivez I, 187-188: "*De Cartusiensibus pacis charitatisque gratia, statuimus, ut nullum de eorum Ordine sine ipsorum licentia recipiamus, et ipsi de nostro sine assensu nostro nullum recipiant.*"

<sup>28</sup> Canivez II, 24: "*Monachi vel conversi qui ad Ordinem Praedicatorum vel Fratrum Minorum transierint, habeantur pro fugitivis.*"

<sup>29</sup> Canivez III, 37-38: "*Ad conservationem pacis et remotionem scandalorum, quae possent inter Ordinem nostrum et Ordinem Fratrum Minorum et Praedicatorum in posterum suboriri, statuit et ordinavit Capitulum generale ut nulla persona illorum Ordinum recipiatur ad nostrum Ordinem, nisi de Capituli licentia speciali, etiam si habeat litteras commendatitias vel suorum licentiam praelatorum, maxime cum viderimus litteram sanctissimi patris domini Clementis Papae inhibitionem huiusmodi continentem.*"

dealing with that problem still in 1515.<sup>30</sup> Those and some other examples of the Carthusian and Cistercian Orders show that there is a general and regular negative connotation in connection with Mendicants. When leaving the monastery legitimately for some travel, there was the danger that particularly Carthusians showed an outer appearance being unlike for them; In 1441, e.g., it was emphasised by the Carthusian General Chapter that, if they wore the wrong, not Carthusian-like dress like a secular coat ("*chlamys secularis*"), etc., they, by that, "*potius Mendicantes quam Cartusienses ab omnibus judicantur*"<sup>31</sup>

A similar situation as we had above in 1223 with regard to the Cistercians having moved to Mendicants and seen as "*fugitivi*", occurred in 1251 concerning other Orders. The General Chapter decided that Cistercian monks who moved to the Benedictines or to other Orders should be excommunicated.<sup>32</sup> Mainly the 15th century, though, became a period of recommendations, petitions, indulgencies and permissions for Cistercian monks to change the Order; e. g. for Thomas from Ihlo (*Schola Dei*, Eastern Frisia) who wanted to join the Carthusians in 1423 with the supplication of the Benedictine abbot of Termunten (*Mentema*; Netherlands),<sup>33</sup> for monks of Weiler-Bettlach (*Villerium*, Lorraine, diocese of Metz) who wanted to join another Order in 1426;<sup>34</sup> the same for two nuns of the German convent of Beuren (*Bure*, in the Eichsfeld) in 1426 with the help of a

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<sup>30</sup> Canivez VI, 470: *Praesens generale Capitulum debite informatum quod nonnulli abbates Ordinis, contra Ordinis privilegia, diffinitiones et statuta, imo iura communia et decreta Summorum Pontificum, religiosos Mendicantes in suos professos et monachos recipere non formidant, ex quo plurima Ordini incommoda, sicut docente experientia in praeteritum constat evenisse, ita in posterum formidandum est evenire; quare ... praedictum generale Capitulum, praedictas diffinitiones et statuta innovando, omnibus et singulis Ordinis abbatibus ... prohibet, ne de cetero quoscumque de Ordine Mendicantium in suos professos recipiant, ...*

<sup>31</sup> Laporte 231, n. 1479; *Chartae* (see note 16), 135; *The Chartae of the Carthusian General Chapter. Aula Dei: The Egen Mamale from the Charterhouse of Buxheim*, Oxford: Bodleian Library Ms. Rawlinson D.318, ed. M. Sargent and J. Hogg, (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität, 1983), 36, 166 (*Analecta Cartusiana*, 100:2); *The Chartae of the Carthusian General Chapter. Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale Ms. Latin 10887, part I*, ed. M. Sargent and J. Hogg, (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität, 1984), 81 (*Analecta Cartusiana*, 100:3).

<sup>32</sup> Canivez II, 361: *Cum grande periculum nostro Ordine posset evenire, si personae nostri Ordinis transeuntes ad nigros, sive ad alios Ordines, possent ibi remanere contra votum suum et privilegia Ordini indulta, praecipitur abbatibus universis ut regulari monitione praemissa excommunicent eos, et excommunicatos denuntient, et ea quae asportaverint efficaciter repetant, et eos ad se revocent, si sibi viderint expedire.*

<sup>33</sup> Canivez IV, 264.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 303-304.

petition of John, count of Lignigen and Rukosingen;<sup>35</sup> in the same year for frater Alardus of Ihlo who wanted to join the Carthusians.<sup>36</sup>

From about the mid-fifteenth century onwards the Cistercian General Chapter got very keen on being the only institution having the licence to allow monks of any monasteries of the Order to change to another one (1437; 1443 with special reference to Carthusians and dealing with the possibility of monks moving the other way round),<sup>37</sup> and to force those monks back who had joined another Order (1449).<sup>38</sup> There, e.g., is the example of the monk Johannes Ouban who had changed from the Cistercian monastery of Montheron (*Tela*; Switzerland, diocese of Lausanne) to the Benedictines, and the attempt to get him back to his former community [1451; a similar case in 1479 at La Merci-Dieu in France (*Misericordia Dei*)].<sup>39</sup> There is the case of the laybrother Gregorius de Lesines from the monastery of Igny (*Igniacum*, diocese of Reims), who had – against Cistercian statutes and without licence – moved to the Carthusian community of Bourfontaine (diocese of Soissons) and was punished by excommunication (1469; a similar case in 1485).<sup>40</sup> There is the strict attempt to recall a monk of Montpeyroux (*Mons Petrosus*, Auvergne) who had joined the Minorites (1494).<sup>41</sup> But there is still the position of compromise. In 1489 it is allowed for a monk of Trois-Fontaines (*Tres Fontes*, Catalonia) to move to the Benedictines;<sup>42</sup> also in 1511 for a monk of Le Miroir (*Miratorium*, diocese of Liège) with the recommendation of a secular nobleman and of the abbot of Le Miroir.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 303.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 307.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 434: ... *praesens Capitulum ... omnibus abbatibus et abbatissis Ordinis districe inhibet ne de cetero aliquibus ex suis monachis vel monialibus licentiam ad alium Ordinem pro quacumque causa transeundi conferant, absque generalis Capituli licentia speciali. ...*; ibid. 540.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 618: “*Praecipitur omnibus et singulis abbatibus Ordinis sub poena depositionis a statu et dignitate abbatali quatinus, si quod habeant religiosos, qui ad alium Ordinem transierint, ad sua propria monasteria infra proximum generale Capitulum secuturum faciant redire.*”

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 656; Canivez V, 391.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 234 and 501.

<sup>41</sup> Canivez VI, 78.

<sup>42</sup> Canivez V, 703.

<sup>43</sup> Canivez VI, 403.

Let us summarise: For both Orders the "*transitus ad alium Ordinem*" became a problem with regard to "*stabilitas*" and "*perseverantia in vocatione*". The statutes and the position of the General Chapters of both Orders regularly show the consciousness of the dangers of scandal and disturbance to occur in such cases, in those when members of one's own Order left, as well as in those when members of other Orders wanted to join. Nevertheless it can be seen that the Cistercians became on the one hand more willing to accept and compromise than the Carthusians; on the other hand, both Orders saw the authority of the General Chapters as determining in all cases, to decide between the role of monks as "*fugitivi*" and their acceptance. Neither the individual monasteries nor their abbots or priors were allowed to decide but only the General Chapters.

The compromises and permissions of the Cistercian authority mainly occurred in the 15th century, and they were often connected with supplications of secular and clerical petitioners. For both Orders, Mendicants seem to have been those concerning whom most arguments and prohibitions were necessary. Regarding the problem of "*transitus*" between Cistercians and Carthusians the explicit "peace" between the two Orders played its most important role as a part of the arguments in the 12th century. From then onwards, we are still regularly confronted with such situations, once more showing that from the Cistercian side the willingness to accept individual changes occurred more often, particularly again in the fifteenth century. We also find more Cistercians trying to change to the more rigorous Charterhouses than the other way round. As an example, in 1554/55, Johannes Fein, the Cistercian abbot of Neukloster in the Austrian town of Wiener Neustadt, asked the abbot of the mother monastery Rein and king Ferdinand I to accept his resignation. He would like to lead a harder and more severe life in the Charterhouse of Gaming, where the rule and observance would be held better: "*da man regularem vitam und Observantz halt*".<sup>44</sup> The stricter observance had remained a phenomenon that regularly attracted monks from other Orders.

Generally, for the Carthusians the "*mutatio domus*" and the problems occurring with it obviously played, as already said, a more important role than the "*transitus ad alium ordinem*". Great relevance is true for both Orders concerning "*evagationes*" and "*fugitivi*" generally. All of those problems together show that the realisation of monastic stability in medieval religious communities was something that could initiate a large number of difficulties, arguments and discussion.

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<sup>44</sup> Gerhard Jaritz, 'Das religiöse Leben in den niederösterreichischen Kartäusern im Zeitalter der Reformation', in *Die Kartäuser und die Reformation* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität, 1984), 87 (Analecta Cartusiana, 108).



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VON GERHARD JARITZ

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DES AMTES DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

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## Vorwort

Wir freuen uns, Ihnen mit diesem Heft verschiedene Beiträge vorlegen zu können, die von Mitgliedern und Freunden von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* verfaßt wurden. Sie repräsentieren in der Mehrzahl Forschungsergebnisse von osteuropäischen Kollegen aus Bulgarien und Polen, die dadurch einem internationalen Fachpublikum zugänglich gemacht werden sollen. Unsere Gesellschaft versucht somit neuerlich, ihrem Ziel einer Brückenfunktion zwischen östlicher und westlicher Geschichtswissenschaft gerecht zu werden.

Die Planungen für die nächsten Hefte von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* sind bereits abgeschlossen. Wir können Ihnen mitteilen, daß im September 1997 mit dem Erscheinen von Sonderband VI zu rechnen ist, der eine Arbeit von James Palmitessa (New York-Kalamazoo/Mich.) beinhalten wird, welche sich einer systematischen Analyse der Prager Bürgerinventare des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts widmet. Als letztes Heft des heurigen Jahres wollen wir die Ergebnisse einer Round Table-Diskussion präsentieren, die beim International Medieval Congress in Leeds im Juli des heurigen Jahres stattfinden und sich mit "History of Everyday Life: the Variety of Approaches" auseinandersetzen wird. Das erste Heft des Jahres 1998 soll ungarische Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Ernährung beinhalten, während die darauffolgende Publikation einer internationalen Gruppe von Archäologen Gelegenheit geben wird, sich mit Möglichkeiten ihres Beitrages zu einer Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters zu beschäftigen.

Gerhard Jaritz