

CARTHUSIAN LEGISLATION UNDER DOM INNOCENT LE MASSON

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From the Priorate of Noyon, the charterhouse of his native city which he had entered at the age of nineteen, Dom Innocent Le Masson was elected Prior of the Grande Chartreuse on October 20th 1675, at the age of forty-seven¹. He followed the long rule of the aged Dom Jean Pégon, a rule of twenty-five years, during which, as Dom Augustin Devaux notes, the General Chapter had come no longer to exercise its legislative functions, the Visitor's role had been reduced to that of supplying information, the visitations of the Grande Chartreuse had become interrupted, and no remedy had been applied to the spiritually disquieting situation of some of the Spanish and Italian houses; moreover, the charterhouses of « hereditary states » of the Holy Roman Emperor were practically independent of the mother house².

Within six months of his election, on April 10th 1676³, the Grande Chartreuse was devastated by a fire, the eighth in its history, and a radical re-building was necessary⁴. Dom Le Masson had previous experience of the re-construction of a charterhouse during his Priorate at Noyon where, drawing ideas from the design of a local château which had itself been designed by the greatest French architect of the day, he had with the help of a *donatus* of Notre Dame des Prés planned a charterhouse which was authentically, « keeping only the beauty which comes from symmetry and proportions »⁵.

In the face of Renaissance exuberance legislation had earlier been introduced into the *Nova Collectio Statutorum* to ensure that Cartusian building – and re-building – conformed to the spirit and ideals of the order, legislation which, from time to time, required to be re-stated and reinforced.⁶ At the General Chapter of 1676 an ordinance re-stated earlier legislation, pointing out that through licences indeterminately obtained ornate buildings (*curiosa*), excessive or superfluous buildings (*superflua*), and buildings which were foreign to Carthusian simplicity had been erected; in future no-one – that is, no Prior – should use a general licence to build, unless that plans had first been inspected in detail by the Visitors in an accordance with the Statutes, and then approved by the Reverend Father; from this point, nothing significant should be added, taken away or changed without express licence (of the Reverend Father), on pain of deposition from

¹ 1. On Dom Le Masson, see Dom Augustin Devaux, O. Cart., 'Innocent Le Masson' in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, T. 9 1976, col. 572-583, with list of Le Masson's works and bibliography to date. Jacques Martin, *Le Louis XIV des Chartreux : Dom Innocent Le Masson*, Paris 1975. Dom Augustin Devaux, O. Cart., *Dom Innocent Le Masson, Général des Chartreux : Correspondance réunie et présentée, Analecta Cartusiana* 206 (4 vols), 2003-2005. There is a provisional bibliography in A. Gruys, *Cartusiana. I : Bibliographie Générale. Auteurs Cartusiens*, Paris 1976, p. 121-123, which has been replaced by Dom Augustin Devaux and Dom Gabriel van Dijck (eds.), *Nouvelle bibliographie cartusienne*, CD-Rom, Grande Chartreuse 2006, where a more complete and updated listing can be found.

² Devaux, 'Innocent Le Masson', col. 573.

³ Dom Devaux, 'Innocent Le Masson', *D. Spir.* col. 574, gives the date as April 9th; *La Grande Chartreuse par un chartreux*, 17th edition, Bellegarde 1998, gives it as 10th April. I follow *La Grande Chartreuse* here.

⁴ *La Grande Chartreuse*, par un Chartreux, 17th edition, La Grande Chartreuse 1998, p.151-154.

⁵ Dom A. Devaux, O. Cart., 'Dom Le Masson et l'Architecture Cartusienne' in Daniel Le Blévec and Alain Girard, *Les Chartreux et l'Art : XIV^e-XVIII^e Siècles*, Paris 1989, p. 347-361, esp. P. 351-352. The same author's, *L'Architecture dans l'Ordre des Chartreux*, which contains many references to Dom Le Masson, has since been published, *Analecta Cartusiana* 146 (2 vols.), Sélignac/Salzburg 1998. On the charterhouse of Noyon, see A. Gallois, *Essai sur l'Histoire de la Chartreuse de Noyon.....*, Compiègne 1894, reprinted Noyon 2001.

⁶ Devaux, 'Dom Le Masson et l'Architecture Cartusienne', p. 349.

office. In due course this would be included in the new edition of the *Nova Collectio* issued in 1681⁷.

Dom Le Masson took the occasion not simply to rebuild the Grande Chartreuse on the old plan, but to re-design it, incorporating some of the ideas from Noyon, but this time taking his inspiration from an even more up-to-date building, a château constructed between 1656 and 1660 by a leading architect. He was aided significantly by Frater Antonius, a *donatus* of the monastery. The work has been fully described by Dom Devaux⁸; for the present purpose it is enough to note that while *superfluitas* was avoided, practicality and a certain degree of *commoditas* were taken into account. Running water to the monastery was provided. In particular, to obviate the risk of future disastrous fires, slates were obtained from the nearest quarry for the roof, instead of timber. The Prior-General's cell was sited within easy reach of the Library and of the Archives, and the cells of other officials were grouped near to his. The aesthetics of the Grande Chartreuse are based upon a functional symmetry, not upon unnecessary ornament. At a later point, Dom Le Masson would give a reasoned defence of the decisions that he now made, not to the members of his own Order, but in answer to criticisms made or implied by Abbé de Rancé of La Trappe⁹.

From the outset of his priorate, Dom Le Masson attached fundamental importance to the *Statutes*. (i.e. the *Nova Collectio* approved in 1582). Accordingly the General Chapter of 1676 ordered that each monk should have in his cell a complete copy of the *Statutes*, so that he should not only hear them read, but should himself read them and mull them over, with a view to conforming all his actions to them. This ordinance would soon be incorporated in the revised edition of the *Statutes*¹⁰.

Singularity is traditionally seen in monastic life as a vice; uniformity and conformity to the common practice of the order is seen as an expression of renouncing one's own will. No doubt, in the wake of the Council of Trent, there was a general sharpening of emphasis on uniformity, but the General Chapter of 1677 in any case issued a sharp ordinance requiring the elimination in all charterhouses of anything that was a variance with the common usage of the Order and which might open the way to singularity¹¹.

A directive of 1678 addressed what was clearly a long-standing and recurrent problem, with which readers of the *chartae* will be familiar – extended absences of some officials from their monastery on the pretext of monastic business. Dom Le Masson and the General Chapter refer to a directive of Pope Innocent X to the Reverend Father in 1652, that no monastic officials were to live permanently in granges or other dependencies of the monastery, but should only go there when business required, and not prolong their stay beyond this; Visitors were to watch this matter particularly, and were

⁷ *Nova Collectio Statutorum Ordinis*, Editio Secunda, pars secunda, Correriae 1681, cap. 12, p. 115-116; reprinted with introduction by James Hogg, *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes from the Consuetudines Guigonis to the Tertia Compilatio*, Documents: Vol. 5, *Analecta Cartusiana* 99, Vol. 5, Salzburg 1992. Also found in Dom Maurice Laporte, O. Cart., *Ex Chartis Capitulorum Generalium: Ab initio usque ad annum 1951*, In Domo Cartusiae 1953, p. 19, n. 51 (1676). – I am indebted to Professor James Hogg for allowing me to consult his copy of this invaluable compilation.

⁸ Devaux, *Dom Le Masson et l'Architecture Cartusienne*, p. 354-358.

⁹ In the *Disciplina Ordinis Cartusienensis*, printed in 1687.

¹⁰ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 1, p. 14. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 129, n. 573 (1676).

¹¹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 117, n. 515 (1677): *Semper in Ordine sollicitè curatum fuit ut uniformitas ubique servaretur, et maximi momenti est ut a nostris monasteriis eliminetur quicquid huic tam laudabili uniformitati adversatur, alias enim ab exactitudine illa, qua usuum communium Ordinis observantia servanda est, recederetur, et inde aperiretur ostium ad singularitates quae semper Ordinibus regularibus nocivae sunt.*

to make written records of any absences of officials, so as to be able to account for them at the following General Chapter¹². As part of the same ordinance, there is a restriction on the creation of any new external offices without special licence of the General Chapter or of the Reverend Father, and a pruning of any superfluous external offices where such at present exist ; if superfluous officials (*superflui*) are discovered, the Visitors are directed to restore the number to what is necessary as soon as possible¹³.

The search for uniformity was applied to the dietary practice of charterhouses in the Provinces of mother house and of Burgundy, which could no doubt be closely observed and supervised. It was forbidden again in 1678 that this houses on days where there were two meals there should be a larger number of dishes than at the Grande Chartreuse, and on fast days there should be no more than a piece of salt fish with vegetables¹⁴.

Another ordinance of 1678 – to be incorporated in the *Statutes* – directed that a confessor extraordinary should be provided for the nuns, in accordance with the Council of Trent¹⁵.

There is a stream of fresh legislation in the years 1679 and 1680, leading up to Dom Le Masson's major legislative achievement – the publication of the new edition of the *Nova Collectio* in 1681.

The 1679 legislation will be substantially incorporated in the revised edition of the *Nova Statuta*. None of the 1680 ordinances will be included, because they will not have had the opportunity to be confirmed by two successive General Chapters before an ordinance could assume permanently binding force.

The *Statutes* had been dear to Dom Le Masson's heart since the beginning of his priorate, and the 1679 General Chapter announced the preparation of this revised edition, *juxta exemplar a Reverendo Patre correctum et a Capitulo Generali visum, examinatum et approbatum*, with notes to explain the more obscure places. Some more recent ordinances, revised and examined which seemed to be useful or necessary, were to be added. This ordinance would be printed at the very beginning of the new edition in 1681¹⁶.

Another ordinance of 1679, which will be inserted in the new edition after the prologue, elucidates the authority of the *Statutes*, and the quality of the obligation that they entail. They are designed for edification, not for destruction – as notable means to the attainment of perfection in the religious state. A simple Statute – one that is not bound up with a precept – does not oblige under pain of blame (*culpa*), but only of punishment which is itself a means to maintaining monastic discipline. But transgression of a Statute does become sinful if it is committed through negligence, or if it gives a bad example to others ; if it is done through contempt, or if habitual transgression causes grave scandal, then it is gravely sinful. A marginal note supplied by Dom Le Masson in the *Nova Collectio* will refer to St. Francis de Sales, to Turrecremata on the *Rule of St. Benedict*, to St. Thomas Aquinas, and to the noted canonist Martin Navarrus¹⁷.

¹² *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 24, p. 239. Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 88-89, n. 374 (1678).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Laporte, *Ex Chartis...*, p. 32, n. 110 (1678) : *Prohibemus in domibus Provinciarum Cartusiae et Burgundiae, ne plura fercula ministrentur in coenis dierum binae refectionis quam in ipsa domo Cartusiae ministrantur, ne etiam diebus abstinentiae deputatis, aliud in prandio pro pitantia ministretur quam pars piscis salitii cum leguminibus, sub poena absolutionis quoad officiales ; Piores vero qui contra fecerint, velut observantiae regularis et Cartusianae sobrietatis parum zelatores per Capitulum Generale condigne venient puniendi.*

¹⁵ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Tertia, cap. 23, p. 342.

¹⁶ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, p. 3-4.

¹⁷ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., p. 10. Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 130, n. 574 (1679).

An ordinance of 1679 makes a refinement on the provision made by the Statutes for the election of a Prior ; the Vicar of a house is to have a vote in the election , even if he be not professed of the house which is making the election ; nevertheless the election cannot proceed without the additional assistance of four professed members of the house. In other matters of business it is confirmed that the Procurator and Sacristan are to have a vote, even if they are not professed of the house¹⁸.

Another ordinance clarifies the position of the Procurator ; where there is more than one Procurator in a house, the direction in the Statutes apply to them all¹⁹.

The procurator had responsibility for the lower houses of a monastery where the lay-brothers lived ; an ordinance notes that such lower houses are now rare in the Order, but directs that either the Statutes be observed in them to the letter, or else those houses be abolished, lest they become places of relaxed religious life, and be turned into simple granges²⁰.

The Carthusian identity and ideal is strongly maintained in another ordinance of the same year. Carthusians share in the privileges granted to other regular Orders, according to a Bull of Gregory XV. But the Holy See did not grant these privileges without qualification. So Carthusians should be mindful of the actual intention of the Holy See and of the mind of the Order, and none should claim privileges or dispensations granted to other Orders which are not expressly contained in the Carthusian Statutes, without the knowledge and consent of the Reverend Father or of the General Chapter²¹.

Another ordinance deals with confession in the Chapter of faults. The absence of the Prior is no excuse for not confessing one's faults ; the Statutes give the Vicar or *antiquior* authority to impose penances on the Prior's behalf²².

Since the Counter-Reformation, the formation of novices had been a particular concern. Now again the matter is seen as of the highest priority. In former days, examiners for the novices had been appointed in each Province, just as now there are Visitors. The Visitors are to watch over the formation of novices, and to ensure that only those are admitted as postulants and novices, whose vocation is tested, and who are fit in body and soul to undertake the observances of the Order. Any Priors who are found remiss in a matter or such moment are to be reported to the Reverend Father or the General Chapter. The same ordinance goes on to speak of a *Directorium Novitorum* which is to be prepared for printing on the basis of the Statutes²³.

Inflation is not a new problem. The *Statuta Nova* of 1368 had estimated three Turonian sous as a considerable sum, and the possession of the same a sin of *proprietas* and a matter for excommunication ; with the change in the value of money this sum is updated to contemporary values in the various currencies²⁴.

Access by women to the Carthusian monastic enclosure was strictly forbidden both by the Statutes and by Papal decrees. References to this in the *chartae* over many years show that this prohibition was not always successfully enforced ; the prohibition is re-affirmed in 1679²⁵.

¹⁸ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 2, p. 19.

¹⁹ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 6, p. 61.

²⁰ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 6, p. 68 : *De Procuratoris Officio in domo inferiori*. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 187, n. 1215 (1679).

²¹ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 7, p. 80. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 106, n. 454 (1679).

²² *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 8, p. 86. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 28, n. 93 (1679).

²³ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 17, p. 144. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 83-84, n. 353 (1679).

²⁴ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 19, p. 153-154

²⁵ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 20, p. 160. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 77, n. 320 (1679).

The avoidance of *superfluitas* meant that monasteries should not build up excessive wealth for themselves. So in 1679 it was directed that no monastery which in the judgement of the Visitors had enough to sustain twelve monks *honeste et pacifice*, should make any new acquisition of wealth without previous examination of the need for this by the Visitors and their written approval, and without the special licence of the Reverend Father and the General Chapter. If any monastery had wealth beyond its need, this should be given away in alms, or else offered to the Reverend Father and the General Chapter to be given to needy charterhouses.²⁶

Regular visitation is demanded ; visitation of the monasteries of the Visitors should never be less than every four years ; that of the Grande Chartreuse never less than every six years, except in compelling necessity²⁷. Detailed directions are given for the visitation of the Grande Chartreuse²⁸.

In some houses the religious life of the lay-brothers had grown luke-warm and their observance of the Statutes had notably declined ; it was now ordered that in any houses where the directions of the Third Part of the Statutes pertaining to the lay-brothers was not fully observed, no more lay-brothers should be admitted, but only *donati*, until in the judgement of the Visitors this part of the Statutes was properly observed. The same ordinance warns against any seeking for the higher place among the lay-brothers and *donati* ; they should all come together into the church, into the chapter, and into the refectory, mindful of Christ's teaching that he who would be first should be the servant of all ; only, the *antiquiores* among the *donati* might follow the last of the lay-brothers²⁹.

The announcement of the revised edition of the *Nova Collectio* was made even more forcefully in the Acts of the General Chapter of 1680, in a letter in the name of the Reverend Father and the Diffinitory. The letter begins by declaring that for Carthusians nothing was more necessary, after the Gospels and Holy Scripture, than the *Statutes*, of which the new edition was to be thoroughly emended and brought up to date to conform with modern practice and the requirements of the Holy See. This book, which Carthusians were bidden to consider as the most important after the Gospels – this declaration is repeated, this time without the wider reference to holy Scripture – Carthusians are to peruse diligently and chew over as their daily bread. Each monk is to have a copy, and there will be an edition of the Third Part in the vernacular for lay-brothers and nuns³⁰.

To ensure the proper rendering of the Divine Office, there is an ordinance in 1680 that in the smaller houses which are not yet of conventual status the monks should always arise at the proper hour for Mattins, and that Mattins, Mass, and Vespers should be sung in the correct tone³¹.

The Statutes do not refer to *antiqui*, nor give any title to the senior monks. Accordingly, one monk alone in each monastery should be designated *antiquior*. Nor should any licence or privilege be given to the senior monks in general. This ordinance will be incorporated as a marginal note in the new edition³².

²⁶ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 21, p. 172. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 95-96, n. 408 (1679).

²⁷ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 23, p. 204. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 149, n. 660 (1679).

²⁸ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 23, p. 223.

²⁹ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Tertia, cap. 1, p. 266-267. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 199, n. 1286 (1679). – Cites the latter part of this *ordinatio* only.

³⁰ *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., p. 4-6. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 130-131, n. 575 (1680).

³¹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 90, n. 380 (1680) : *In parvis domibus nondum conventualibus semper de nocte surgatur ad Matutinas, competenti hora dicendas, et tum Matutinae, tum Missa, tum Vesperae quotidie saltem recto tono dicantur.*

³² *Nova Collectio*, ed. cit., Pars Secunda, cap. 5, p. 60-61, in margin. Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 116, n. 509 (1680).

Mass stipends were a potential problem for the Carthusian practice of poverty. A practice had grown up in some houses of reserving Mass-stipends and distributing them among particular monks. Referring to a lamentable report that has been received from the *Referendarii* on this matter – relating to the Spanish Provinces –³³, the Chapter of 1680 refers back to an ordinance of 1631 and to others of later years. Monks offering Mass for particular requests and intentions should do so according to the *tabula* made up by the Sacristan, and the stipend applied to the common needs of the monastery. In the accounts of the monastery, the Mass-stipends were to be entered as a single whole, and Priors and others were expressly forbidden to dispose of them except in accordance with the *Statutes*³⁴.

Again, any money received for flowers or fruits from the monks's gardens, or from other work undertaken by them, was to be put to the common fund for the benefit of all monks, and any licences from the Prior or Visitors to the contrary was revoked³⁵.

Some Priors had been referring needs of the parents or relatives of monks to the General Chapter ; again referring to the Spanish Provinces, any decisions about giving alms in such cases is now reserved to the Reverend Father by the General Chapter.

³³ The report is found in Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 133, n. 580 (1680) : *In relatione referendariorum pro eadem causa, in 1680 scriptum est : Cum per tot annos radicans evelli nequiverit illa nequissima corruptela reservandi et distribuendi per se eleemosynas Missarum per particulares monachos et in eorum particularibus usibus, aut abusibus erogandi, nec unquam sufficere viderentur ordinationes toties repetitae, commissum fuit tale negotium tribus Prioribus, scilicet : de Paulari, Burdigalae, et Montis Hilaris, ut serio causam talem tractantes declarent quid secundum Deum facere licuerit. Qui attente pensato negotio decreverunt : Totaliter opponi talem consuetudinem puritati voti paupertatis Cartusiani, utpote res cuius objectum fundamentale esset proprietas, et dominium circa talia emolumenta a monachis culpabiliter retenta, Ideoque posse delinquentes cogi poenis proprietariis impositis in Statutis. Nam paupertatis votum Cartusianum pendet absque dubio ab obedientiae voto, sub qua inclusum illud omnes profiteremur solemniter. Insuper talis obedientia est simplex, absoluta, et non limitata, sicut expresse testatur V. noster Dionysius Rickel in *Tractatu de Commendatione vitae Solitariae*, etc. (Approbatum in Diffinitorio). (Pro duabus Provinciis Hispaniae).*

³⁴ Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 131-132, n. 577 (1680) : *Audita cum multo dolore relatione Patrum Referendariorum, visis, lectis, et mature discussis quae in ea continentur, tam pro veritate facti, conformitate Statuti, cum Ordinatione Capituli Generalis anni 1631 et aliarum subsequentium, quam pro explicatione mentis Ordinis et voti paupertatis, ipsam relationem in omnibus his partibus approbantes, Statuimus et ordinamus ut in posterum Missae eleemosynariae, tam fundatae quam adventitiae, dicantur ordine tabulae a singulis sacerdotibus per Sacristam assignandis, quia aequum est et justum ut onus conventuale dictarum Missarum ab omnibus supportetur, pro utilitate domus cui pertinet quidquid quilibet monachus per dictas Missas artes aut labores acquirit. Omnis autem pecunia quae proveniet ex celebratione dictarum Missarum ita cum effectu singulis redditibus singularum domorum, ut in computis earum singulis annis fit mentio specialis summae totalis praefatae pecuniae, ex qua et ex caeteris redditibus, conflata una massa, nemini liceat eam separare aut distinguere ; prohibentes propterea Visitoribus, Prioribus, officialibus et conventibus de ea disponere, nisi modo infra praescripto, juxta Statutum, aut sub alio quocumque supra expresso in relatione Patrum Referendariorum, aut non expresso, cognito aut incognito, sub poena absolutionis quoad Visitatores, Priores, et alios Praesidentes, qui licentias dederint, consenserint aut scienter toleraverint, vel sibi aliquid de dicta pecunia Missarum, sub quocumque etiam praetextu, retinuerint, et carceris quoad subditos qui aliquid contra praesentem dispositionem attentaverint, aut rebelles in executione fuerint.*

³⁵ Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 132, n. 578 (1680) : *Idem servari volumus, mandamus, et praecipimus pro pecuniis quae proveniunt ex hortorum floribus et fructibus, conspiciliis et perspiciliis, aut aliis laboribus monachorum, non obstante quacumque licentia Visitorum aut Praesidentium, quam iterum irritamus et nullum declaramus. Provideatur autem de necessariis subditis universis juxta mentem Ordinis, de communi massa reddituum conflata, ut supra, secundum dispositionem n. 6, 7, et sequentium cap. XIX. Iae Partis *Statutum*. Pauperes etiam sublevantur juxta n.1 cap. XX dictae Partis.*

bearing in mind frequent abuses by Priors and others in this respect in the past, and referring to previous legislation on this matter³⁶.

The *spatiamenta* and their limits are a regular topic in the *chartae*. Again in 1680 there is a tightening of regulations. Any licences granted to particular houses before the previous *Statutes*, whereby at certain times monks might take their recreation outside the fixed limits, are revoked; moreover neither the weekly duty priest (*sacerdos hebdomarius*), nor any other monk, is permitted to go to any grange of the monastery to celebrate Mass for the farm-workers. This is applied to the two Spanish Provinces³⁷.

The Spanish Provinces could clearly show a spirit of independence. In the same year it was noted that on the pretext of the right of appeal allowed by the Council of Trent, some monks in the Spanish Provinces were writing tracts defamatory of the Order, or of superiors and other persons; this was to cease, and such monks were to conform to the procedure provided by the Council, on pain of imprisonment³⁸.

1681 saw the publication of the heralded new edition of the *Nova Collectio*³⁹. Dom Le Masson had the new edition published without waiting, as was customary when legislation was to be made permanently binding, for the approbation of the Diffinity of two successive General Chapters⁴⁰. The new edition included a considerable amount of fresh material added at the foot of pages, and clarifications in marginal notes, in the *Second Part*, which was concerned with monastic offices, life, and discipline, and rather less in the *Third Part*, concerned with the lay-brothers and *donati*, with the nuns, and with novices. (The First Part had been a separate entity as the *Ordinarium Cartusiense* since 1582, and was not part of the present plan).

³⁶ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 132-133, n. 579 (1680): *Parentes vero monachorum et egestatem eorum describant singuli Priores Reverendo Patri, cui soli per Capitulum Generale reservatur facultas eleemosynarum pro dictis parentibus sublevandis; non enim potest Capitulum Generale, post tantos abusus Priorum et subditorum, hanc curam in posterum comittere Visitoribus, quia facultas illa sublata est ab eis per ordinationem Capituli Generalis 1627 (pro duabus Provinciis), neque Prioribus, quia potestas illis concessa revocata est et irrita per ordinationem anni 1666 (idem) et praesertim anni 1679 (idem); ...et abscindatur omnium cavillationum et tergiversationum praetextus, qui irrepererat in executione Ordinationis Capituli Generalis 1631. In qua executione tam Priores quam subditi erraverunt, et multi Priores poenas absolutionis incurrerunt, plures vero subditi poenas carceris; quas tamen omnes misericorditer condonamus, et in poenitentias salutare a Prioribus in singulis domibus suis subditis imponendas convertimus. Cartusiae, sedente Capitulo Generali, 22a Maii 1680. (Pro duabus Provinciis Hispaniae).*

³⁷ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 346, n. 2304 (1680): *Omnes et quasumque licentias quibusdam domibus ante posteriorem Statutorum compilationem de recreationibus extra limites certis vicibus in anno a monachis capiendis, revocamus et abolemus; quae, si aliquo rationabili fundamento nitebantur, antequam spatiamenta singulis hebdomabibus concederentur in Ordine, nunc cessat omnino, cum per praefata spatiamenta supereffluenter suppleantur, ac proinde ne deinceps assumantur prohibemus, neque etiam sub quolibet praetextu sacerdos hebdomarius neque quivis alius monachus permittatur ire ad quamlibet grangiam domus, ut ibi celebret Missam agricolis... (In duabus Provinciis Hispaniae).*

³⁸ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 191, n. 1239 (1680): *In Provinciis Cataloniae et Castellae: Quia sub praetextu reclamationum quae sunt intra quinquennium concessae a Sacro Concilio Tridentino, aliqui monachi componunt libellos diffamatorios contra Ordinem, Praelatos aut personas eiusdem, statuimus et ordinamus ut omnes personae Ordinis, quae voluerint uti beneficio reclamationis, ita se conforment omnibus quae sunt in Sacro Concilio Tridentino praescriptis, ut, si defecerunt in probatione, incarcerationentur ad Ordinis voluntatem; si autem rationes iniuriosas Ordinis, Praelatis, aut personis eiusdem induxerint, ad propositum suum stabilendum aut tuendum, poenis dispositis in n. 56 cap. XXII. Iae Partis subiaceant sine ulla restrictione.*

³⁹ *Nova Collectio Statutorum Ordinis Cartusiensis*: Editio Secunda 1681, Printed at The Correrie. The edition in *Analecta Cartusiana* 99, Vol. 5-6, Salzburg 1992, with introduction by James Hogg, in the sub-series *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes from the Consuetudines Guigonis to the Tertia Compilatio*, is a photographic reprint of the same.

⁴⁰ J. Hogg, *op. cit.*, vol. 5, p. vi.

In the new edition nineteen ordinances enacted by the General Chapter at various dates between 1597 and 1648 were included, so as to assume binding force⁴¹. There were also the sixteen ordinances already noted, which had been enacted between 1676 and 1679 since Dom Le Masson's election as Prior-General⁴²; of these last, no less than twelve formed part of the 1679 legislation of the General Chapter⁴³.

The *Directorium Novitiorum*, for both monks and nuns, which had already been published by Dom Le Masson in 1676, was printed as an appendix to the *Statutes*, together with an *additio* for the nuns, and a series of Papal Bulls cited in the *Statutes*. While the *Directorium* did not have legislative force, it did embody the Salesian spirituality of Dom Le Masson. Particularly, as Dom Augustin Devaux remarks, it replaces the primacy of the memorising of the Psalter with the adaptation to the Carthusian way of a spirituality founded on methodical prayer after the contemporary manner⁴⁴.

As to the promised vernacular edition of the *Third Part* for the lay-brothers and nuns, a French edition was duly printed in 1683⁴⁵, and extracts of this again were printed in 1690⁴⁶. A Spanish version was printed in 1691⁴⁷.

The publication of the new edition of the *Statutes* did not bring immediate conformity. In Spain, a disposition for El Paular in the Province of Castille in 1682 affirms that customs regarding the lay-brothers that have been introduced contrary to the Statutes have no force. Lay-brothers and *donati* returning to the house after an absence are not to stay at the guest house (*hospitium*)⁴⁸.

In Italy in the same year, a monk who had been appointed as an additional Procurator at Magiani, contrary to the directive of the Statutes and of the General Chapter, was ordered to return to his cell in the monastery⁴⁹.

The Spanish charterhouses, chary of the tight control by the Reverend Father of the Grande Chartreuse, denounced to the King of Spain Dom Le Masson's somewhat authoritarian irregularity in publishing his edition without waiting for the approbation of the Diffinitory of the two successive General Chapters; they even referred the matter to the Spanish Holy Inquisition, and took the matter to the Roman Curia. However, Dom Le Masson weathered this storm and a revised edition of the *Statutes* published in 1688 at

⁴¹ *Secunda Pars*, cap. 1, ed. cit. p. 17 (1647); cap. 2, p. 34 (1647); p. 37 (1648); p. 38 (1623); p. 41; (1649); cap. 12, p. 109 (1648); p. 114 (1602); cap. 15, p. 131 (1610); cap. 17, p. 144 (1597); cap. 21, p. 172 (1627); cap. 22, p. 183 (1606); p. 200 (1634); p. 202 (1644; 1647); cap. 24, p. 230 (1621); cap. 25, p. 243 (1613). *Tertia Pars*, cap. 1, p. 267 (1636); cap. 17, p. 300 (1644); cap. 23, p. 336 (1648).

⁴² *Secunda Pars*, cap. 1, p. 14 (1676); cap. 2, p. 19 (1679); cap. 6, p. 61 (1679); p. 68 (1679); cap. 7, p. 80 (1679); cap. 8, p. 86 (1679); cap. 12, p. 115-116 (1676); cap. 17, p. 144 (1679); cap. 19, p. 153-154 (1679); cap. 20, p. 160 (1679); cap. 21, p. 172 (1679); cap. 23, p. 204 (1679); p. 223 (1679); cap. 24, p. 239 (1678). *Tertia Pars*, cap. 1, p. 266-267 (1679); cap. 23, p. 342 (1678).

⁴³ See note 250 above.

⁴⁴ Devaux, art. 'Innocent Le Masson' in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, col. 574.

⁴⁵ At the Corriere; translated by Dom Antoine de Vaucorbeil and Dom Charles-François Maurin. Gruys, *Cartusiana*, Vol; 1, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Gruys, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Gruys, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 212, n. 1384 (1682): *Consuetudines conversorum introductae contra Statuta in domo de Paulari nihil omnino habent roboris, sed merae sunt corruptelae, ideo penitus abscindendae. Conversi et donati ad domum redeuntes non habitent in hospitio. (Pr. Castellae).*

⁴⁹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis.....*, p. 337, n. 2250 (1682): *In domo Maggiani: Et ad minuendam multipliciter Procuratorum iuxta mentem Statutorum et Capituli Generalis, D. N... redeat ad cellam claustris. (Pr. Tusciae).*

Rome⁵⁰ has only minimal changes. A few concessions were necessary. Dom Le Masson had to allow that a single Novice Master should be appointed for all the novices in a house – an enactment of the Council of Trent which had been quietly ignored in the first edition⁵¹. A decree of the Sacred Congregation in 1685 ordered that any redirection of a monastery's excess funds should be to other monasteries of the same Order near home, and not to those of another Province or kingdom – closing a loop-hole in one of the ordinances of 1679⁵². There were some revisions on the questions of ecclesiastical censures and reserved sins, which the Holy See had long wished⁵³. Moreover, complete liberty to correspond with the Holy See, which Dom Le Masson had not included in the 1681 edition, had to be conceded⁵⁴.

On the other hand, the confirmation of the restriction of the title of *antiquior* to a single monk within the monastery – enacted by the General Chapter of 1680 – was a defeat for Dom Le Masson's Spanish critics. There were other minor modifications, including some relating to obsolete prescriptions in the *Statutes*⁵⁵.

Legislation in 1684 dealt with routine practicalities. The cost of sending letters had increased substantially, imposing a heavy burden on the General Chapter. Therefore members of the Order were requested to abstain from sending useless or superfluous letters (*inutilia aut superflua scripta*) to the General Chapter, in line with the *Statutes*; in future the Reverend Father should recoup from the house of origin the costs of any superfluous letters⁵⁶.

Mass stipends remained a problem. In the same year a long and forceful ordinance observed that these had in some cases been directed to the use of the monks celebrating, or of their friends or relatives, partly through the the weak-mindedness of superiors, partly through the guile of the monks in question. Reference was made to the *Statutes* and the Council of Trent, and Visitors and Commissaries were absolutely forbidden to grant any dispensations in such cases⁵⁷.

⁵⁰ Gruys, op. cit., p. 12. See further J. Hogg, introduction to *Nova Collectio, Analecta Cartusiana 99* (Vol. 5), p. vi.

⁵¹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 95-96, n. 408 (1679) :*ad distribuendam parvis aut pauperibus domibus Ordinis [ejusdem] Regni et Provinciae totum, ita ut redditus superabundantes monasteriorum nullatenus applicari possint, sub quovis titulo et quaesito colore, domibus alterius Provinciae et Regni, iuxta Decretum Sacrae Congregationis particularis Em. DD. Cardinalium ad examinandam praesentem Collectionem Statutorum deputatae, emanatum die 19. Martii 1685.] ut illarum inopia per aliarum abundantiam, iuxta Apostolicum praeceptum suppleatur...* - The addition is bracketed.

⁵² J. Hogg, op. cit., p. vii.

⁵³ J. Hogg, Loc. cit.

⁵⁴ J. Hogg, Loc. cit.

⁵⁵ J. Hogg, Loc. cit. See above, note 31.

⁵⁶ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 67-68, n. 262 (1684) : *Quia his temporibus sumptus pro delatione epistolarum ita creverunt ut iam et pretium mille scutorum annuatim ascendat, et inde notabile gravamen inferretur Capitulo Generali, cuius taxae augeri in dies deberent, nisi remedium apponeretur, hortamur personas Ordinis ut abstineant a mittendis super annum ad Cartusiam inutilibus aut superfluis scripturis, et iuxta formam Statutorum nostrorum ea tantum scribant, quae necessaria sunt aut utilia, succincte, iuxta n. 55 cap. XXII lae P. Si quid autem superfluum deinceps mittatur aut inutile, rogamus Reverendum Patrem ut curet sumptus delationum exigi a domibus Ordinis unde fuerit missum, ne ultra quam iustum est totus Ordo gravetur.*

⁵⁷ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 133-134, n. 581 (1684) : *Quia, experientia teste, didicimus quae et qualia damna Ordini evenerint in quibusdam locis ex celebratione quarundam Missarum quarum stipendia celebrantibus in propios aut parentum usus convertebantur, partim per superiorum pusillanimitatem, partim per subditorum astutias, qui per varias praetextuum et rationum excogitationes id sibi quasi licitum usurpabant; qui quidem abusus iam extirpatos esse videtur. Sed ne tale malum unquam in voti paupertatis perniciem et cupiditatis nutrimentum, quod propositi Cartusienensis pestis merito vocari meretur, quancumque domum Ordinis, sub quolibet praetextu ingredi valeat, aut in aliqua persona Ordinis tolerari,*

Dom Le Masson enforced the legislation in the *Statutes* against superfluous building. In the same year the Prior of Orléans, who had been in office for nineteen years to general satisfaction, was deposed, and returned to the Paris charterhouse as a simple monk. He had allowed himself to construct some stables, which were not included in the approved plans, and which were moreover unnecessary in a monastery which had no arable land⁵⁸.

1686 saw the provision for Dom Le Masson's final great creative project in the field of legislation. The constant renewal of the Order required an awareness of its origins and a return to sources, in order to draw out authentic materials for shaping life in the present.

Earlier in the century Dom Nicolas Molin had compiled a remarkable pioneering *Historia* of the Order⁵⁹. But now this was to be superseded by a great historical undertaking, for which every charterhouse was bidden to provide materials from its records. The project was to be in three parts⁶⁰.

First, there was to be an exposition of the Carthusian ideal, with reference to the *Statutes* both old and new, together with ordinances of the General Chapter.

Secondly, there was to be a treatment of men of notable piety and religious observance in the Order. (Nothing is said about the nuns !).

Thirdly, there was to be a treatment of the history of individual charterhouses.

Dom Le Masson himself wrote the first part, which appeared in print already in 1687 and is now known as *Disciplina Ordinis Cartusienis*⁶¹. This is a formidably

declaramus quascumque rationes super hac re hucusque allegatas, frivolas esse et nullas, sed meras esse corruptelas a seminatore zizaniorum, in animarum perniciem superseminatas, cum personis Ordinis necessaria, iuxta propositi Cartusienis tenorem ubique per Priores sufficienter ministrari per statuta nostra praescribantur, et de facto ubique per Priores sufficienter ministrentur, et prohibemus omnibus personis Ordinis in virtute sanctae obedientiae, ne unquam talium stipendiorum lucra, sive palam, sive secreto, sibi procurent aut recipiant, vel in proprios usus applicent, sive per se, sive per interpositas personas, sub poenis contra inobedientes et proprietarios per Statuta ordinatis. Prioribus vero interdiximus ne id unquam permittant aut tolerant, sub poena absolutionis. Si quae autem devotae personae Missas pro se postulent celebrari, ad iussum Prioris, cui omnes ex vi voti sui, in his sicut in aliis obedire tenentur, per ordinem tabulae, sicut consuetum est apud nos, reddantur, et stipendia inde oblata, aliis conventus bonis incorporentur, iuxta mentem Concilii Tridentini, sess. 25, cap. 2 De reformatione, et iuxta cap. XIX lae Partis Statutorum nostrorum, atque Superiorum administrationi subiaceant, nec Visitoribus ordinariis aut Commissariis liceat ullo modo dispensare, sed insuper ea omnia quae in locis specialibus super hac re iam fuerint per Capitulum Generale disposita, volumus in suo vigore remanere.

⁵⁸ Devaux, *Dom Innocent Le Masson et l'Architecture Cartusienne*, p. 359-360.

⁵⁹ Dom Molin's *Historia Cartusiana* was eventually printed by the Carthusians of Tournai in three volumes, 1903-1906. On Carthusian annals and annalists, see James Hogg, 'Carthusian Annals' in *Spiritualität Heute und Gestern*, Bd. 14, *Analecta Cartusiana* 35/14, Salzburg 1991, p. 199-205.

⁶⁰ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 21-22, n. 58 (1686) : *Quia propositum iamdudum conceptum componendi et divulgandi Chronica Ordinis partum tandem vicinum est, et Reverendus Pater, evocatis ad se huius compositionis studiosis operariis, manum ad opus incunctanter missurus est, monentur omnes domus Ordinis ut infra annum singula curent memorialia rerum notabilium quas apud se a tempore memorabili evenisse nosset et huic operi inseri posse censebunt. Quod opus in tres partes dividetur, in quarum Prima Instituti nostri ratio, spiritum et firmitas enucleabuntur, ac per Statutorum veterum ac novorum ad invicem collectorum litteram, necnon per Ordinationes Capitulorum Generalium probabuntur. In Secunda : De viris pietate et observantia regulari claris agetur. In Tertia vero, historia texetur foundationis domorum et rerum notabilium quae in singulis per diversa tempora evenerunt. Quae succinte et observato in omnibus Cartusianae simplicitatis stylo scribentur ; non enim ad ostentationem composita esse volumus ; et maxime ad suscitandum semper in nobis zelum insequendi vestigia antiquorum Patrum, et ab ipsis nunquam aberrandi.*

⁶¹ The first edition, printed at the Correrie in 1687, was entitled : *Annales Ordinis Cartusienis, tribus tomis distributae. Tomus I, complectens quae ad institutionem, disciplinam et observantiam Ordinis spectant.* – Gruys, *Cartusiana*, Vol. 1, p. 121. *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes*...., ed. James

thorough exposition, beginning with Carthusian origins, which has substantial reference to the *Consuetudines* of Guigo I and to all subsequent legislation. The modern reprint includes in an appendix Innocent XI's approbation (in 1688) of the finally adjusted edition of Dom Le Masson's revision of the *Statutes*.

Dom Le Masson took the opportunity in the *Disciplina* to defend his ideals and policy in building, especially in the rebuilding of the Grande Chartreuse. In 1683 the Abbé de Rancé had published *De la Sainteté et des Devoirs de la Vie Monastique*. It is hardly to be supposed that he was directly taking the Carthusians to task for luxury of building, but he did present as the only true monastic norm the very restrictive principles of the early Cistercians, and especially of St. Bernard, with regard to religious art⁶².

Dom Le Masson upheld the *Statutes*' prohibition of *superfluitas* and *curiositas* – pomp and splendour – in building. But there is, he says, an *innoxius decor*, arising from proper ordering of places, proportions of windows, and the like, which give rise to certain conveniences (*commoda*). This is in accord with God's sense of proportion in creating the human body⁶³.

Secondly, *superfluitas* is quite distinct from what is designed having regard to the state and quality (*status et qualitas*) of persons, to usefulness (*utilitas*) and even necessity (*necessitas*). Hence it is quite appropriate that buildings should be constructed soundly and of good stone, and that running water should be provided.

Similarly, the provision of slate roofs for the Grande Chartreuse is simply a sound precaution against fire, which has in the past been a repeated disaster.

On such points, appeal is made to practice of St. Anthelme de Chigny⁶⁴.

Thirdly, Dom Le Masson gives an extended defence of the developed pattern of Carthusian cells. One has to take account of change of times and places. Medieval royal palaces would nowadays be considered uninhabitable. The same principle answers the major objection, that the Carthusian cells provide facilities which go beyond the very basic life-style of a peasant. But a peasant has never known anything other than his current life-style, and he is adapted to it. Such a life-style is not that which most Carthusians have experienced. The Carthusian cell, with its places for reading and praying, for manual work, and its little garden, are appropriate to the Carthusian life-style. Dom Le Masson notes that the first Carthusian monks made a clear distinction between the lay-out of their churches and chapels, designed with a view to emphasising the dignity of worship, and the austerity of their cells and cloisters. He refers to Guigo I's *Consuetudines*, and the demand for stability, not simply in the monastery, but in the cell; the cell needs to have the resources to make such stability practicable, and only experience can determine what is appropriate for such a cell⁶⁵.

The biographies of individual monks were entrusted to Dom Léon Le Vasseur, professed of Bourbon-lès-Gaillon and a close associate of the annalist Dom Charles Le Couteulx, who after holding various charges was called to the Grande Chartreuse and nominated Scribe to the General Chapter in 1681 until his death in 1693. His *Ephemerides Ordinis Cartusienis* – a very valuable resource, partly reproducing existing

Hogg, Vol. 18-20, *Analecta Cartusiana* 99/18-20, Salzburg 1993, provides a photographic reprint of the edition of Montreuil, 1894.

⁶² Devaux, 'Dom Le Masson et l'Architecture cartusienne', p. 350. The relevant section in Dom Le Masson's *Disciplina* is in Liber Tertius, cap. 12 (ed. of 1894, repr. *Analecta Cartusiana*, p. 444 col. 2 – 448 col. 1, developing from the ordinance of 1676 on building, which is reproduced on p. 444 col. 1-2.

⁶³ *Disciplina*, ed. cit., p. 444 col. 2 – 445 col. 1.

⁶⁴ *Disciplina*, ed. cit., p. 445 col. 1-2.

⁶⁵ *Disciplina*, ed. cit., p. 445 col. 2 – 448 col. 1.

biographies from manuscript material and partly Dom Le Vasseur's composition – has only been printed in modern times⁶⁶.

The *Annales* were entrusted to Dom Le Couteulx, also professed of Bourbon lès Gaillon. In 1690 the first 144 pages were printed; only two copies are extant, at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, the rest having been subsequently suppressed. The printing of the *Annales* – which cover the history of the Order to 1429 – has again been effectively reserved for modern times⁶⁷. Le Couteulx was appointed prior of Rouen in 1694, much reducing his possibilities for further research. Despite the strictures of the redoubtable Bernard Bligny⁶⁸, Le Couteulx' *Annales* remains a superb achievement, and must provide the framework for the history of the earlier period of the Order.

The rest of Dom Le Masson's rule, until his death, was a period of consolidation, for which the legislation takes up generally recurring and familiar topics. In the same year of 1686 a *dubium* concerning terminology is settled for the charterhouse of Montelli. *Recreatio* have since the beginning of the seventeenth century often been used of the weekly *spatiamentum* permitted by the *Statutes* to take place outside the monastery; but *recreatio* proper, which is sometimes allowed in place of *colloquium*, is only to take place within the monastery⁶⁹.

Again in 1687 there is a hint of Spanish striving for a degree of independence of the Grande Chartreuse. The General Chapter sends a courteous but firm refusal to the request made through the Senate of Majorca, that a monk might be given licence to visit Rome to attend a canonisation; such a request is carefully to be considered, but to accede to it would gravely damage Carthusian observance⁷⁰.

In 1689 there is an eye to provision for proper procedure in the event of the Reverend Father's death. Because it is essential that the confidential affairs of the monasteries and of individual monks be kept secret, immediately upon the Reverend Father's death the Vicar, with other officials, is to enter the Reverend Father's cell and seal it, having first brought out those things which are thought necessary for the administration of the house; thereafter the Procurator is to keep the key⁷¹.

In the same year it is directed that the Scribe of the General Chapter and of the Reverend Father, even though he be not professed of the Grande Chartreuse, is to have a

⁶⁶ *Ephemerides* was printed in five volumes at Montreuil, 1890-1893.

⁶⁷ The *Annales Ordinis Cartusienis*, were printed at Montreuil 1887-1891, 6 vol. + vol. 7 (indices).

⁶⁸ Cf. J. Hogg, 'Carthusian Annals, p. 202, note 19.

⁶⁹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 111, n. 483 (1686): *Dubium ad nos a Patribus Commissariis pro domo Montelli remissum in anno 1683 resolventes, dicimus recreationis vocabulum in designatione terminorum spatiamenti anni 1637 usurpatum intelligi debere de spatiamento tantum in hebdomada semel a Statutis concessio, et prohibemus recreationes, quae loco colloquii quandoque conceduntur, haberi extra domum, omnia haec ad formam Statuti reduci volentes. In initio huius saeculi, saepe designabatur spatiamentum per vocabulum recreatio, unde fiebat confusio. (Pr. Tusciae).*

⁷⁰ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 254, n. 1625 (1687): *Visa petitione illustrissimi Senatus Maioricensis circa licentiam dandam D. N... pergendi Roman, ut ibi persequatur canonizationem unius Sanctae, optaret Capitulum Generale posse acquiescere propter reverentiam petentium, quos in omnibus possibilibus singulari veneratione prosequi intendit. At res ista, spiritui, praxibus et Statutis Ordinis sic opposita est ut non possit concedi absque notabili damno observantiae nostrae; quapropter committimus Patribus Visitoribus ut nos excusent apud praefatos Illustrissimos proceres, pro quorum sospitate, necnon pro totius Regni prosperitate, Deum rogabimus (Pr. Cathaloniae).*

⁷¹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 114, n. 501 (1689): *Cum maximi momenti sit ut arcana domorum et personarum Ordinis sub religioso secreto serventur, cum id ad ius naturale pertineat, quod est indispensabile, ordinamus et praecipimus ut, cum obitus Reverendi Patris advenerit, statim D. Vicarius, aliis officialibus comitatus, ianuas cellae eius et scrinii atque armariae ubi Chartae Ordinis servantur sedulo obseret et sigillo munit, extractis prius illis quae pro administratione domus necessaria censebuntur. Quibus peractis, claves cellae Reverendi Patris Procurator Cartusiae apud se servabit.*

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vote in the election of the new Reverend Father⁷². The Scribe was, of course, appointed by the Reverend Father!

The reinforced legislation against the multiplication of administrative offices, intended to reduce the absence of monks from the monastery, was evidently not everywhere effective; again in 1689 there was an ordinance forbidding Priors, without the consent of the Reverend Father, to make any exception for monks who had been relieved of their office on grounds of health, who might then be allowed to go out of monastic enclosure for the recovery of their health, and who might from that point become engaged afresh in the external administration from which they had been discharged, thus adding to the number of officials⁷³.

The Italian charterhouses evidently continued to show some independence in this matter; in 1699 the charterhouse of Florence was forbidden on any pretext to institute any new official above the number previously allowed; the like for the charterhouse of Pisa⁷⁴.

Recruitment to the Carthusian nunneries did not suffer a shortage in the seventeenth century any more than it had done in the sixteenth, where in the *chartae* there are frequent injunctions against exceeding the appropriate number. So in 1691 the General Chapter forbade the reception of girls on the commendation of secular or ecclesiastical dignitaries; the call to the religious life from God was what mattered. Postulants should wear secular dress for not less than eight months before being clothed with the habit of the Order, or for a whole year if the Reverend Father thought fit. Moreover, to save over-burdening the resources of the convents with guests and their equipages, the latter should as far as possible be persuaded to stay in neighbouring towns⁷⁵.

Again, the proper keeping of accounts is a matter that recurs in the *chartae*. In 1693 there was a complaint that in some Italian houses the Procurators had not been rendering their yearly accounts to the Prior; those who refused or cavilled should be dismissed, or else referred to the discipline of the Order⁷⁶. In 1695 a general ordinance of

⁷² Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 152, n. 672 (1689): *Scriba Capituli Generalis et Reverendi Patris, quamvis non sit professus Cartusiae, vocem habebit in electione novi Patris Cartusiae.*

⁷³ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 89, n. 375 (1689): *Ne abusus ex officialium ad externa multiplicatione oriantur, prohibemus singulis Prioribus absque consensu Reverendi Patris, aliquem monachum claustralem sive officialem absolutum et cellitam effectum, cuiuscumque aegritudinis levandae gratia e claustro educere et huiusce ita educti et ad exteriora vocati, facultatum inopiae praetextu, ad supplendos illius vices, alterum huic substituere et sic officialium numerum multiplicare; quod cum menti Ordinis et Capitulo Generali adversetur, omnibus interdicatur.*

⁷⁴ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 291, n. 1867 (1689): *In domo Florentiae: Prohibemus ne sub quolibet praetextu instuatur ibi novus officialis ultra numerum antea permissum? - Idem in domo Pisanum. - (Pr. Tusciae).*

⁷⁵ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 262, n. 1670 (1691): *Prohibemus ne admittantur puellae quae commendationibus magnatum aut quarumcumque personarum saecularium aut ecclesiasticarum uti vellent ad obtinendum ingressum aut receptionem in aliqua domorum nostrarum; non enim propter aliquam gratiam hominum nobis conciliandam usui recipiendarum dotium renuntiamus, sed ad maiorem Dei gloriam et Ordinis decorem, puellas Deo sacrandas vocatione coelesti praeventas ac conventualibus animi et corporis dotibus praeditas in domibus monialium nostrarum sic tantum admittere et non alias intendamus; et ut sedulo fiat illarum probatio, volumus ut in habitu saeculari non minus quam per octo menses probentur antequam ad habitum Ordinis admittantur, sive per annum integrum, quoties id Reverendo Patri expedire videbitur. Porro ut domus monialium commodius possint sustentari, caveatur ne equitaturis hospitum aut hospitiis graventur, sed quantum fieri poterit, ad vicinas villas divertere suadeantur.*

⁷⁶ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 139, n. 606 (1693): *Quia audivimus redditionem computorum singulis annis faciendam in quibusdam domibus negligi, nec a Procuratoribus reddi, Prioribus iniungimus ut statum illud stricte deinceps a singulis Procuratoribus servari studeant, et quos in hac re negligentes, recusantes aut*

the Chapter referred to the *Statutes* on this matter, requiring that all accounts should be made available to the Visitors, and that any defaulting Procurators should be dismissed⁷⁷.

The familiar rejection of superfluity is found in an ordinance of 1696, discouraging the waste of resources on unnecessary letters. The Procurator General and other superiors should not make any reply to letters which are simply greetings for Easter, Christmas, and the New Year⁷⁸.

Practicality, based on an appeal to the *Statutes*, allows in another ordinance of the same year a modification of the practice of a watch throughout the night with the body of a dead monk, to be followed by the office of Burial on the same day, where the monastery is small, or where there are several monks in bad health⁷⁹.

At Dom Le Masson's last General Chapter, in 1702, a directive to the three Italian Provinces refers to the abuses that have crept in through the sending of young monks to receive orders, in contradiction to the *Statutes*, and so forbids any concessions beyond what is permitted by the Visitors with the consent of the Procurator General and the subsequent approbation of the Reverend Father⁸⁰.

The legislation under Dom Le Masson bears witness to the Reverend Father's total commitment to Carthusian ideals, and his determination to seek constant renewal of the Order by drawing on the traditions of the past not in a mechanical but in a dynamic way, as traditions that embody a spiritual ideal, and so are to be applied without diminution, but yet are to be up-dated and where appropriate supplemented. The fact that he ruled in some respects in an authoritarian way, and on occasions exceeded his powers, does not lessen the value of what he has left to the Order.

tergiversantes invenerint, a suis officiis irremissibiliter absolvant, alioquin in eorum caput, tum in Dei, tum in Ordinis iudicio devolvatur. (Pro tribus Provinciis Italiae).

⁷⁷ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 139, n. 607 (1695) : *Stricte observent Visitatores n. 27 cap. XXIII Iae Partis Statutorum, ubi de computis singulis annis reddendis et de aliis ad hanc rem pertinentibus agitur ; et ideo computa illa sibi exhiberi iubeant in actu Visitationis, ut videant an omnia ibi sint recte peracta in bona forma et secundum mentem Ordinis, ut de statu domorum etiam in temporalibus bene informentur, et testimonium reddant Reverendo Patri et Capitulo Generali idque exequantur, quasi rationem Deo et Ordini reddituri ; et si qui Procuratores reperiantur in hac re negligentes aut tergiversantes, a suis obedientiis absolventur.*

⁷⁸ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 69, n. 273 (1696) : *Cum iuxta mentem Ordinis cavendum sit ab inutilibus expensis et superfluis delationibus litterarum, abstinenceatur de caetero a superfluis salutationibus pro solemnioribus festis Paschae, Natalis Domini, et in calendis januarii, et tum Procurator Generalis, tum alii Superiores ad similia nullum dent responsum, ut tempus redimant et sumptus.*

⁷⁹ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 91, n. 383 (1696) : *Quia saepe accidit ut in parvis domibus et etiam in aliis ubi plures monachi aliqua infirmitate praepediuntur, vel propter alias causas notabile gravamen conventui eveniat ex pernoctatione circa corpus defuncti, et ex officio sepulturae una eademque die integre faciendo, maxime in Quadragesima et in diebus festivis ; declaramus id quod in arbitrio Prioris ponitur in n. 29 cap. XXXIV Ordinarii, ad illud extendi, ut possit idem facere pro gravamine illo vitando, quod propter periculum n. 25 cap. eiusdem exprimitur.*

⁸⁰ Laporte, *Ex Chartis*....., p. 93, n. 393 (1702) : *Pro tribus provinciis Italiae : Quia novimus graves abusus irrepsisse in missione juniorum monachorum ad ordines contra n. 20 cap. III Iae Partis Statutorum, prohibemus Prioribus sub poena absolutionis a suis officiis ne quidquam concedant aut permittant praeter id quod a Visitoribus trium provinciarum cum scitu et consensu P. Procuratoris Generalis fuerit determinatum, et postea a Reverendo Patre approbatum.*

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