

HUGH OF AVALON, CARTHUSIAN AND BISHOP

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In May 1186, and so just eight hundred years ago, Hugh of Avalon was elected bishop of Lincoln, and on 21 September he received consecration.* He occupied the see until his death on 16 November 1200, as the last of the truly great and saintly foreigners who, in the wake of the Norman Conquest of 1066, ruled medieval English dioceses. Hugh was not only a foreigner, born at Avalon in Burgundy not far from the frontier with Savoy, but also a Carthusian monk and so a member of the strictest and most withdrawn monastic family of the twelfth-century western church. The purpose of this paper is to inquire how a Carthusian, born not far from Chartreuse, could become a diocesan bishop in far-distant England, and do so in a manner that, in his own eyes as well as those of contemporaries, fulfilled rather than contradicted his Carthusian vocation.

I

The Carthusians had been founded in 1084 by St Bruno, and between 1121 and 1128 Prior Guigo I had written down the Customs that governed their life.¹ Many features of the Carthusian order made it *prima facie*

* The following abbreviations are used:

<i>Colloque</i>	<i>La Naissance des Chartreuses. VIe Colloque Internationale d'Histoire et de Spiritualité Cartusiennes, 1984</i> (Grenoble, 1986)
<i>Coutumes</i>	<i>Guigues I^{er}, Coutumes de Chartreuse</i> , ed. by a Carthusian, SC 313 (Paris, 1984)
<i>Lettres</i>	<i>Les Lettres des premiers Chartreux</i> , 1: <i>St Bruno, Guigues, St Anthelme</i> , 2: <i>Les Moines de Portes</i> , ed. by a Carthusian, SC 88, 274 (Paris, 1962-80)
<i>Magna vita s. Hugonis</i>	<i>The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln</i> , edd. D.L. Douie and H. Farmer (2 vols., London, etc., 1961-2; repr. with corrections, Oxford, 1985)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>Recueil</i>	<i>Recueil des plus anciens actes de la Grande-Chartreuse (1086-1196)</i> , ed. B. Bligny (Grenoble, 1958)
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>
<i>Vita s. Hugonis</i>	Guigo I, <i>Vita sancti Hugonis Gratianopolitani</i> , PL 153. 761-84

¹ *Coutumes*. Bruno's own conception of the eremitical life is stated in his letters

unlikely that it would develop into what it quite rapidly became – a nursery of outstanding diocesan bishops. It was founded and grew up in the context of the *crise du monachisme* to which, at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries, proximity to the world had brought the black monks, including the Cluniacs. A number of new foundations, including the Carthusians' younger sister-order the Cistercians, removed themselves from the habitations of men to a distant *eremus*, or desert place; but the Cistercians, for example, acquired extensive lands and far-flung granges. The Carthusians, by contrast, carried the search for seclusion to its practicable limit. In a memorable phrase, Dom David Knowles commented upon their 'logical formality and uncompromising strength', in which he saw a quintessential expression of the French genius.² The Carthusian *eremus* was to be as complete and as uncompromising as human resourcefulness could make it.

It would be wrong to envisage the *spaciosa heremus* which Prior Bruno established in the high mountains behind Grenoble,³ as if it were a piece of the Sahara incongruously transported into France, or a mere hankering after the fourth-century Egyptian desert of St Antony. It was a solitude which here and now could provide all the spiritual and material necessities of a small and austere community of men who were single-mindedly dedicated to penitence and meditative prayer. Chartreuse, and in principle its first five dependent Charterhouses which were founded under Guigo I – in 1115 Portes, and in 1116 Les Écouges, Durbon, la Sylve-Bénite, and Meyriat – are each set in a high mountain valley which forms a natural cul-de-sac. The sole, easily controlled entry leads first to a lower house of the *conversi* or lay brothers, and only then to an upper house of the monks themselves. From the very beginning the Carthusians were anxious to set strict boundaries (*termini*) to the patrimony of their houses. Those of Chartreuse itself were established by stages between 1084 and 1129.⁴ Within their *termini* – here, Knowles's 'logical formality' is particularly evident – the Carthusians possessed everything; outside them they were to possess nothing. As nearly as possible the *termini* were to be impervious

to Ralph le Verd (1096/1101) and to the Carthusian community (1099/1100): *Lettres*, 1. 66-89.

² D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 375-391, at p. 380. I have also particularly used the following: B. Bligny, *L'Église et les ordres religieux dans le royaume de Bourgogne aux xi^e et xii^e siècles* (Paris, 1960); *ibid.*, 'Les chartreux dans la société occidentale du xii^e siècle', in *Aspects de la vie conventuelle aux xi^e-xii^e siècles* (Lyons, etc., 1975), pp. 29-58. A Carthusian and J. Dubois, 'Certosini', in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, 2 (Rome, 1975), cols. 782-821. J. Dubois, *Histoire monastique en France au xii^e siècle* (London, 1982), nos. VII-X; *ibid.*, 'Le désert, cadre de vie des chartreux au Moyen-Âge', *Colloque*, pp. 15-35.

³ *Recueil*, no. 1, pp. 1:8; see also Guibert of Nogent, *De vita sua*, 1. 11, Guibert de Nogent, *Histoire de sa vie*, ed. G. Bourgin (Paris, 1907), pp. 32-6, and Peter the Venerable, *De miraculis*, 2. 28, *PL* 189. 943-5, esp. col. 944BC.

⁴ i. 1084: *Recueil*, no. 1, pp. 1-8. ii. Before 1103: *ibid.*, no. 8, pp. 22-4. iii. 1103: *ibid.*, no. 9, pp. 24-7. iv. 1107/9: nos. 10-11, pp. 27-30. v. c. 1112: *ibid.*, nos. 12-14, pp. 30-4. 1129: *ibid.*, nos. 15-17, pp. 35-45.

in both directions. They were to contain no habitations save those of the monks and the *conversi*. Women and armed men were strenuously excluded from entry, as were hunters, fishers, and graziers. When some iron miners tried to resume their operations at Chartreuse, a former land-owner who had given them leave to do so was speedily made to repent and to affirm that henceforth he would grant no more concessions, even if not just an iron mine but a gold mine were discovered there!⁵ In his Customs, Guigo prescribed the complement to this so far as the monks were concerned: 'To exclude so far as possible every occasion of greed, we order that those who dwell in this place shall possess absolutely nothing outside the boundaries of their desert (*extra suae terminos heremi*) – no fields, no vines, no gardens, no churches, cemeteries, oblations, tithes, or anything of that kind.'⁶

To ensure physical sustenance in the high mountains even for a manner of life marked by *vilitas et asperitas*,⁷ the Carthusians strictly limited numbers within their houses: Guigo allowed only thirteen or fourteen monks and, normally, sixteen *conversi*.⁸ Guests were bluntly warned to expect no provender for their horses; above all, Guigo ruled out the monastic almsgiving that elsewhere was a universal obligation. He explained himself with further Gallic directness: 'We did not flee to the solitude of this desert in order to undertake the material care of other men's bodies; we did so to seek the eternal salvation of our own souls. Therefore let no one marvel if we offer greater friendship and solace to those who come here rather for the good of their souls than of their bodies. Were it otherwise, we would have done better from the start to have established ourselves somewhere by a public highway, not in a savage, remote, and well-nigh inaccessible place.' For, as Guigo insisted, the Carthusians followed the way of Mary, not that of Martha.⁹

Indeed, they took the way of Mary almost, but not quite, to the extreme, practising a form of eremitical life tempered by a little common life.¹⁰ The ideal of the Carthusians was the *vita solitaria*; the place of its habitual conduct, whether in prayer, work, or recreation, was the individual cell. Of the daily offices, only Matins and Vespers were recited in community; the remainder were said in the cell. In the early decades there was not even a daily mass. Social recreation and conversation were allowed only occasionally. Except on Sundays and greater festivals, meals were taken alone in the cell, though here as so often Carthusian austerity was applied with good sense; on the day when a Carthusian was buried, his brethren were not bound to keep to their cells, but to provide solace (*consolationis gratia*), unless it were a major fast they twice ate together.¹¹ Thus, occasional meetings for prayer, meals, or recreation punctuated the prevailing

⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 6, 18, pp. 16-20, 45-7.

⁶ *Contumes*, cap. 41.1, p. 244.

⁷ *Ibid.*, cap. 22.1, p. 212.

⁸ *Ibid.*, caps. 78-9, pp. 284-6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, caps. 19-20, pp. 204-10.

¹⁰ Cf. *Lettres*, p. 20.

¹¹ *Contumes*, cap. 14.2, p. 194.

solitude. But the strongest bond of common life was the vow of stability and obedience that bound the Carthusian to the direction of his prior, as the head of Chartreuse was called.¹² Guigo prescribed for the novice that from the time of his profession 'he should consider himself so alien from all things of the world, that without the prior's leave he has power over nothing whatever, not even his own self. Although [Guigo commented] obedience should be maintained with great zeal by all who have undertaken to live under a monastic rule, it should be practised the more devotedly and carefully by those who have embraced a stricter and more severe vocation.'¹³

One might think that a final commitment to a life of solitude and seclusion, lived under obedience within the carefully drawn boundaries of a Charterhouse, could not be more categorically stated, nor could a progression to the episcopate be more categorically debarred. But there was another side to the Carthusian monasticism into which Hugh of Avalon was admitted c.1163. From its very beginning and increasingly as time went on, Chartreuse inevitably interacted with the surrounding church and world much as did other parts of western monasticism. It owed an incalculable debt to succeeding bishops of Grenoble – Hugh I (1080-1132), Hugh II (1132-48), and then, after the transient Othmar, Geoffrey (1151-63) and John I of Sassenage (1163-1220). Their advice and protection were essential for the establishment and protection of Chartreuse's *eremus*, which lay entirely within their diocese. In his *Life of Hugh I*, Prior Guigo recalled how the bishop had helped Bruno with the foundation of his house.¹⁴ The early Carthusian *acta* document the continuing debt. Thus, in 1086 at a diocesan synod, Hugh confirmed the gift of the original *spaciosa heremus* by a number of local lords and by Abbot Seguin of la Chaise-Dieu, one of whose priories, Saint-Robert-du-Mont-Cornillon, had certain rights there. In 1090, after Bruno's departure to Italy had led to the dispersal of the community and the return of its lands to Seguin, Pope Urban II charged Archbishop Hugh of Lyons and Bishop Hugh of Grenoble to reinstate them. It was Bishop Hugh who, some ten years later, by a mandate to the clergy and laity of his diocese, prohibited the circulation within Chartreuse's *termini* of women and of armed men.¹⁵ Again, it was Bishop Hugh who warded off the intrusion of iron miners and haymakers.¹⁶ As the *termini* were gradually extended between 1099 and 1129, almost every stage took place through donations made in the bishop's presence and fortified by his confirmation.¹⁷ Even a matter so domestic to the order as the emergence of the Carthusian general chapter took place under close episcopal guidance. In 1141, when Prior Anthelme convened the first true general chapter of himself and five other priors besides himself, he did so upon Bishop Hugh II's advice; the bishop

¹² *Ibid.*, cap. 23.1, p.214; cf. *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 1.7, 10, vol. 1.22-4, 31-4.

¹³ *Contumes*, cap. 25.2, p.218.

¹⁴ *Vita s. Hugonis*, 2.11, cf. 5.23, *PL* 153.769-70, 778.

¹⁵ *Recueil*, nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, pp.1-8, 11-14, 16-20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, nos.18-19, pp.45-50.

¹⁷ As n.4; the exception is nos.10-11.

was present and himself received the priors' promise of obedience to the chapter. In 1155 under Prior Basil, when general chapters assumed settled form and became regular occasions, Bishop Geoffrey fulfilled a similar role as guardian of the Carthusian order.¹⁸ As late as 1196, Bishop John of Sassenage could allude to the 'good customs' which by agreement had admitted himself and his predecessors to a place in Carthusian affairs; only if a bishop of Grenoble were persistently to transgress these customs should the Carthusians' papally conferred exemption be invoked against him.¹⁹

For during the first hundred years of Carthusian history the papacy, too, had become deeply concerned and reinforced Chartreuse's liberty. Its involvement began as early as with Pope Urban II, who in 1090 remedied the problems that Bruno's departure had occasioned by persuading Abbot Seguin of la Chaise-Dieu to restore Chartreuse to its returning monks so that it might remain *in libertate pristina*; in 1091 he took it under papal protection and approved the election of Landuin, the second prior whom Bruno had designated.²⁰ In 1133 Pope Innocent II followed (as he said) the example not only of Urban II but also of his successors Paschal II, Calixtus II, and Honorius II, by approving Carthusian constitutions and customs as well as by giving papal protection to all Carthusian possessions both present and future; his bull included a detailed description and guarantee of the *termini* of Chartreuse, with the observation that the *sacer ordo eremiticus Cartusienensis ... ad honorem sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae ... omnino devotus est*.²¹ It was particularly after 1163, when Bishop Geoffrey of Grenoble was deposed for having adhered to the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and his antipope – an episode by which the Carthusians themselves were not directly compromised – that the popes frequently and comprehensively protected the Carthusians and their interests. Their acts protected the Carthusians' lands and privacy, developed their exemption, and confirmed the statutes of their general chapters.²² The papacy became more important than the bishops in giving the Carthusians the protection that they needed; inevitably they themselves reciprocated by sharing papal aspirations and by being drawn into papal service and papal affairs.

They began to be so involved from very early days. Bruno, the first prior, had formerly been *scholasticus* of the cathedral of Reims where Odo of Châtillon, the future Pope Urban II, had been his pupil. Urban remem-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 21-2, pp. 53-64.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 67, pp. 180-1. The bishop of Grenoble's part in Carthusian deliberations is illustrated by the discussions that preceded Hugh of Avalon's departure for Witham: *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 2.3-4, vol. 1.53-9.

²⁰ *Recueil*, nos. 2-5, pp. 9-16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, no. 20, pp. 50-3. No *acta* of Paschal II, Calixtus II, or Honorius II survive, but for a reference to a lost papal letter, see *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 1.10, vol. 1.33.

²² Alexander III: *Recueil*, nos. 25 (1164), 29-30 (1173/6), 31 (1176), 32 (1177), pp. 70-2, 83-94. Lucius III: *ibid.* nos. 37-9 (1184), 40-2 (1185), pp. 103-20. Urban III: *ibid.*, nos. 44-5 (1186/7), pp. 126-8. Clement III: *ibid.*, nos. 46-7 (1188), 51-2 (1190), pp. 129-36, 144-7. Celestine III: *ibid.*, 53-7 (1192), 58 (1193), pp. 147-64.

bered his master and c.1090 he called him to the service of the apostolic see; although Bruno, having refused the pope's offer of the archbishopric of Reggio/Calabria, quickly withdrew to found a new eremitical community at La Torre. There, in 1100, his successor at Chartreuse, Landuin, came to consult him; on his return journey he died while a captive of the antipope Clement III's partisans.²³ A generation later, like Bernard of Clairvaux, Prior Guigo I of Chartreuse became deeply committed to Pope Innocent II and his cause in the Anacletan Schism of 1130-9. As early as 1131 he wrote to Innocent and exhorted him to steadfastness in the afflictions of the Roman church. He strongly condemned the leader of the French Anacletans, Bishop Gerard of Angoulême, and he pleaded with Duke William X of Aquitaine to abandon his support of Bishop Gerard. Most important was his cordial contact with the papal chancellor, Cardinal Haimeric, to whom he wrote after the cardinal had recently visited Chartreuse. Guigo deplored the *cruenta scissio* which rent the Roman church. He traced its spiritual origins to pride in the mind and indulgence in the body (*elatio in mente et voluptas in corpore*); the consequence had been the arming of Christian against Christian. Guigo proceeded to his most considerable discussion that survives of how Christians should interact with the rulers of this world. With an allusion to the dangers that lurked in the notion of a bishop's *regalia* to which the concordat of Worms (1122) had given prominence, he urged that it was better that churches should give laws to kings' palaces than that palaces should give laws to churches. Kings should receive sackcloth from churchmen, rather than churchmen receive the purple from kings. 'It better serves them,' Guigo commented, 'to borrow our poverty, fasts, and humility, than it serves us to borrow their greed, delicacy, and pride.'²⁴ Guigo's letters make it clear that Chartreuse had its spiritual and moral message for transmission to churchmen and to kings.

After the Anacletan schism had thus served to extend Chartreuse's horizons of concern far beyond its own *eremus*, the process of dialogue with those outside developed in three especial ways. First, loyalties engendered during the schism led to the Carthusians' maintaining close spiritual and personal contacts, especially through letter-writing and confraternity, with other monastic families – notably the Cluny of Peter the Venerable and the Clairvaux of St Bernard.²⁵ In 1128 Guigo wrote to Hugh of Payns, grand master of the Templars, exhorting him to spiritual

²³ For the lives of the early priors of Chartreuse, see A. Wilmart, 'La chronique des premiers chartreux', *Revue Mabillon*, 16 (1926), 77-142. For the letter that Landuin was bringing back, *Lettres*, no. 2, vol. 1.82-8.

²⁴ *Lettres*, nos. 3-5, vol. 1.166-95. The special greeting at the end of no. 5 for Cardinals Matthew of Albano and John of Ostia is further evidence for Guigo's contact with the papal curia.

²⁵ Peter the Venerable: *Recueil*, nos. 23-4, pp. 64-9; *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, ed. G. Constable (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1967), nos. 24, 48, 132, vol. 1.44-7, 146-8, 333-4. St Bernard: *S. Bernardi Opera*, 7-8, *Epistolae*, edd. J. Leclercq and H. Rochais (Rome, 1974-7), nos. 11-12, 153-4, 250, vol. 1.52-62, 359-61, vol. 2.145-7.

rather than military valour, but also calling down upon him divine aid *in spiritualibus quam etiam in corporalibus praeliis*.²⁶ Secondly, the expansion and development of the Carthusian order, which by 1200 numbered some thirty-nine foundations, also fostered its interaction with the world outside. It did so in many ways. When a new house was established at a distance, the goodwill of the local bishop might need to be secured.²⁷ When monks were dispatched to institute new houses, they might come up against and feel bound to contend for the church's wider needs. Thus, when the Carthusian monk Einhard, who set up many Charterhouses, once heard of the Albigensian heretics' brazen blasphemy (as Adam of Eynsham described it) against all the sacraments of the church, he did not stand idly by. 'White-hot with zeal against such godless men,' Adam wrote, 'he went to the nearest Catholic magnates and aroused them to take up arms against the heretics, slaying many of them, and a preacher of so damnable a heresy never again appeared in the neighbourhood.'²⁸ Besides the foundation of new houses, the regular holding of general chapters of all Carthusian priors involved Chartreuse in larger expenditure than its infertile *eremus* could sustain. Therefore the Carthusians came to welcome grants of fiscal privileges, rights of pasture, and other benefits from magnates and kings. In 1192 Pope Celestine III vindicated against local 'tyrants' their right to receive testamentary bequests; it is noteworthy that the pope appealed, not to Carthusian traditions and customs, but to natural human justice and the norms of canon and civil law.²⁹ As a result of such contacts with magnates and kings, Carthusian values were impressed upon kings, as when the future Carthusian *conversus*, Count Gerard of Nevers, shamed the idleness of the French royal court under King Louis VII and showed the Carthusian life to be a better route to Jerusalem than the Second Crusade upon which the king was about to embark.³⁰ In 1133 Prior Guigo I heard of an attack on the reforming bishop of Paris, Stephen of Senlis, and joined the ageing Bishop Hugh I of Grenoble to write a letter urging the council of Jouarre to deprive perpetually of their benefices the clerks who had been involved.³¹ Thirdly, if Chartreuse had its windows to the world, outsiders came to Chartreuse and stayed with its monks. For although it discouraged visits from those seeking merely material alms, it was always welcoming to those who came for their spiritual benefit. Bishops were especially admitted to benefit from, and also contribute to, life at Chartreuse; this is well illustrated by the frequent spiritual retreats there of the Cistercian Archbishop Peter of Tarentaise (1142-75), during which he also instructed Hugh of Avalon when a young monk.³²

²⁶ *Lettres*, no. 2, vol. 1.154-61.

²⁷ *Lettres*, no. 9, to Archbishop Reynald of Reims (1136), vol. 1.224-5.

²⁸ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 4.13, vol. 2.62-9, esp. 65-6.

²⁹ Fiscal privileges: *Recueil*, nos. 33-5, 61-2, 65-6, pp. 94-100, 169-71, 175-9. Gifts: *ibid.*, nos. 34, 36, 50, 59, 60, pp. 96-8, 100-2, 142-4, 164-9. Celestine III's bull: *ibid.*, no. 53, pp. 147-9.

³⁰ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 4.12, vol. 2.55-8.

³¹ *Lettres*, no. 6, vol. 1.201-2.

³² Visitors might come on a surprisingly large scale, as during Hugh of Avalon's

In view of Chartreuse's long history of interacting in such ways as these with the world outside, it is not surprising that, from an early date, its priors and monks did not regard the episcopal office as being alien to the Carthusian vocation. On the one hand, bishops who were not themselves Carthusians might so behave as to reflect and propagate Carthusian principles; on the other, a Carthusian vocation might itself lead on to the episcopate.

The figure of Bishop Hugh I of Grenoble was of the utmost importance in leading the Carthusians to adopt this view. Two years after he died in 1132, Pope Innocent II canonised him and imposed upon Prior Guigo I the task of writing his Life. Innocent's stated reasons were that God should be honoured in his saint, and that the clergy who read and the laity who heard his Life might give God glory and have the benefit of Hugh's intercessions.³³ Since Hugh was already canonised, Guigo had no need to rehearse his miracles. He could present him as an exemplary monk-bishop according to a pattern that the Carthusians understood and approved: he was torn between his desire for the monastic or eremitical life at its most demanding, and his zeal for the well-being of his diocese and its people as required by contemporary reforming aspirations and by pastoral necessities. Guigo set out Hugh's Life in six chapters. The first concerned his parents, education, and years as a canon of Valence. It featured Hugh's father, Odo of Châteauroux, a knight of virtuous life who upon his second wife's death entered Chartreuse and became an exemplary Carthusian. At Valence, Hugh attracted the notice of Pope Gregory VII's standing legate in France, Hugh, then bishop of Die and later archbishop of Lyons. Hugh of Die enlisted the young man as his helper against the prime targets in France of the papal reform – laymen who held churches, tithes, and cemeteries; married priests; and simoniacs. Secondly, Guigo described how, in 1080, Hugh became bishop of Grenoble at the age of twenty-seven: at Hugh of Die's council of Avignon, the clergy of Grenoble requested him as its bishop; he refused episcopal consecration from his metropolitan, Archbishop Warmund of Vienne, on grounds of his simony, and received it instead at Rome from Gregory VII himself. Guigo dwelt upon Gregory's pastoral care of the young man when he encountered severe temptation, and upon the continuing favour that he showed him. He described the parlous state of the new bishop's diocese, which arose from its married clergy, the prevalence of simony, the churches, tithes, and cemeteries in lay hands and so subject to secular jurisdiction, and the wasting of church property. Thirdly, Guigo showed how, after becoming a bishop, Hugh experienced a deep longing for the monastic life. In 1082 he completed a noviciate and made his profession at la Chaise-Dieu which he admired for its *paupertas* and *humilitas*; but Gregory VII himself intervened and ordered him to resume his pastoral care. In 1084 when Chartreuse was founded, Hugh was Bruno's adviser and helper, and he

last journey: *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 5.14, vol.2.164-6. For Peter of Tarentaise, *ibid.*, 1.13, vol.1.38-40.

³³ *Vita s. Hugonis*, PL 153.761-2.

always maintained familiarity with the Carthusians. 'He was with them not as lord and bishop,' Guigo wrote, 'but as one of themselves and as a most humble brother.' When he stayed with them, Bruno sometimes had to drive him back to his flock and counsel him to moderate his austerities. Fourthly, Guigo exhibited Hugh as a model in respect of custody of the senses and of the tongue. His fifth chapter concerned his external actions as bishop – his almsgiving, his refusal of gifts for himself and his other virtues, his zeal as peacemaker and preacher, and his services to the papacy in 1111 when the German Emperor Henry V descended upon Rome as well as during the Anacletan schism. Guigo concluded with an account of Hugh's last sickness, death, and burial. Overall he provided the Carthusian model of a saintly bishop, to whom Chartreuse owed a great debt, who aspired to the monastic life and lived by its standards, but who also measured up to the spiritual, moral, and political demands of Gregory VII, his agents, and successors, no less than to the standards of the Carthusians.

Because the Carthusians had so clear a model of the episcopal life and office, it is not surprising that Chartreuse and other Carthusian priories became an important source of bishops for the provinces that lay in their vicinity.³⁴ At Grenoble, Guigo's *Life of Bishop Hugh I* relates that, in his declining years, a monk of Chartreuse became his coadjutor, and in due course succeeded to the see as Bishop Hugh II.³⁵ The remaining twelfth-century bishops of Grenoble – Othmar, Geoffrey, and John of Sassenage – were all Carthusians.³⁶ In 1148, Pope Eugenius III translated Hugh II to the archbishopric of Vienne, although after a troubled period he withdrew in 1155 to the Charterhouse of Portes. It was the Charterhouse of Meyriat which, in 1121, had provided the first Carthusian bishop in Pons II of Belley; this see for most of the remainder of the twelfth century had Carthusian bishops, chief among whom was the subsequently canonised Anthelme (1164-78) who had been prior of Chartreuse itself (1139-51) and then of Portes. Between 1130 and 1200 the see of Maurienne had three Carthusian bishops, as did Die; Geneva and Valence each had one. There were also archbishops: Arles received a Carthusian in 1137, Tarentaise in 1174, and Embrun in 1194.

Thus, by 1186 when Hugh of Avalon became bishop of Lincoln, the Carthusian bishop was a familiar figure in the provinces of the church that were adjacent to Chartreuse. One may doubt whether there was any derogation of *Cartusia nunquam reformata quia nunquam deformata*.³⁷ Without abandoning its original vision, Chartreuse found its place, as new developments in western monasticism have usually done, in the wider context of the church and of society. From the first, Bruno, the friend of

³⁴ The following details of Carthusian bishops are taken from Bligny, *L'Église*, pp. 310-15, and 'Les Chartreux', pp. 45-6.

³⁵ *Vita s. Hugonis*, 5.33, PL 153.784A.

³⁶ Upon Hugh II's departure in 1148, Noel, a Carthusian from Portes, was rejected as a candidate for the see of Grenoble on account of objections from Chartreuse itself.

³⁷ But cf. Bligny's opinion: 'Les Chartreux', p. 38. The Latin citation is, of course, of much later origin.

Pope Urban II, began the process tentatively and somewhat clumsily; especially when the Anacletan schism called so many in the newer orders of monks and canons to the support of Pope Innocent II, Prior Guigo I made it definitive and fruitful. In ideal through Guigo's *Life of Bishop Hugh of Grenoble* and in practice when Carthusian monks themselves accepted the episcopal office, the monk-bishop became a frequent and characteristic means of Carthusian influence.

II

Hugh of Avalon's own progress from the community of Chartreuse to the see of Lincoln was thus well prepared within the development of the Carthusian order. Hugh's novice-master's prediction that 'now you will become a priest and afterwards, in God's good time, a bishop', and Adam of Eynsham's observation that by his austerities at Chartreuse 'he was being prepared by God for the highest grade of priesthood [that is, the episcopate]', have the ring of *ex eventu* wisdom; yet they are not incongruous with the outlook at Chartreuse.³⁸ His eventual monastic office of procurator, with charge of the lower house of the *conversi* and consequent administrative duties that led Guigo I to describe the procurator as the Martha of the Carthusian community, was also a preparation for a more active life.³⁹

Hugh's coming to England was facilitated politically by England's place in the Angevin Empire of King Henry II (1154-89), to whose cousin Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester (1129-71) Chartreuse accorded exceptional liturgical benefits.⁴⁰ Henry II's Empire extended so far to the south-east as the county of Auvergne, and in 1172-3 he was negotiating an abortive marriage settlement for his youngest son John with Count Humbert of Maurienne. His interests thus embraced Burgundy and its vicinity. In the 1160s, his quarrel with Archbishop Thomas Becket brought about contacts between the Carthusians and adherents of both parties. They included the dispatch from Chartreuse in 1167 of a reproving letter to the king, and in 1168 Prior Basil of Chartreuse and his predecessor in office Anthelme, now bishop of Belley, visited Henry in France as bearers of a papal letter.⁴¹ According to an unconfirmed Carthusian tradition, Henry's foundation c.1178/9 of the first English Charterhouse at Witham (Somerset) was part of his commutation of a vow of pilgrimage to the

³⁸ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 1.11-12, cf. 2.3-4, vol.1.36-7, 54-7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.14, vol.1.41-4. For the procurator's duties, *Coutumes*, caps. 16, 18, pp.200-5.

⁴⁰ *Recueil*, no.24, pp.67-9; cf. the decree of the Carthusian general chapter of 1156: *PL* 153.1128D-1129A.

⁴¹ *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, edd. J.C.Robertson and J.B. Sheppard (7 vols., London: Rolls Series, 67, 1875-85), 6, nos.289, 404, 424, pp.165-6, 394-6, 438-40. See also H.E.J.Cowdrey, 'The Carthusians in England', *Colloque*, pp.345-56.

Holy Land that he made after Becket's murder.⁴²

The king himself brought about Hugh's coming to England after the first two priors had proved themselves unequal to the task of setting up the new priory. Henry, who crossed to the continent in mid-1180, there questioned an unnamed *nobilis* from Maurienne about the Carthusians, and received the advice that their procurator Hugh was the only man for the task. He thereupon sent to Chartreuse an embassy headed by Reginald, bishop of Bath, in whose diocese Witham was situated; with Bishop John of Grenoble's strong support he procured Hugh's dispatch.⁴³ During the next six years or so, Hugh, whom Adam of Eynsham described as Witham's *fundator et institutor*,⁴⁴ resolved successfully the problem that had defeated his two predecessors, by establishing Witham's exclusive patrimony within inviolable boundaries. Backed by the king's authority, he offered the peasantry who must be displaced the alternative of receiving lands and habitations comparable with those that they must vacate upon royal manors of their choice, or of emancipation from villeinage; they also received from the king financial compensation for the loss of their homes. The contact with Hugh that was involved in establishing Witham led Henry to adopt him as his especial spiritual counsellor. A belief that Hugh's intercessions saved him from shipwreck reputedly made Henry determined to endeavour to make him a bishop.⁴⁵

Thus Hugh came to the English episcopate. His work as bishop of Lincoln is most fully set out by Adam, monk of Eynsham, who was his chaplain and companion during the last three years of his life. Adam referred to Bishop Hugh I of Grenoble as Hugh of Lincoln's model only once, when he spoke of him as 'the inheritor alike of [Hugh of Grenoble's] name and of his sanctity'.⁴⁶ But his principal model was his patron St Martin (c.316-97), whose Life by Sulpicius Severus depicted an ecclesiastical cursus from life as a solitary monk to being abbot of Ligugé and eventually bishop of Tours. St Martin was one of the most powerful influences upon French monasticism during the middle ages and upon conceptions of the monk's place in the episcopate; Hugh of Lincoln saw in him, above all others, a pattern to adopt and imitate.⁴⁷

But literary models were less important for Hugh of Avalon as Adam of Eynsham presents him than the traditions of Chartreuse. His own

⁴² C. le Couteux, *Annales ordinis Cartusiensis ab anno 1084 ad annum 1429*, 2 (Montreuil-sur-Mer, 1888), 449-52.

⁴³ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 2.1-4, vol.1.46-60. Bishop Reynald of Bath had been consecrated in 1174 at Maurienne by Archbishops Richard of Canterbury and Peter of Tarentaise.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1, Prol., vol.1.3.

⁴⁵ Hugh's years as prior of Witham are the subject of Adam of Eynsham's second book: *ibid.*, vol.1.45-89.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.9, vol.2.43-4; but for Hugh's own use of Guigo's Life, see 4.12, vol.2.55.

⁴⁷ For references to St Martin, see *ibid.*, 1.7, 4.9, 5.17, 19, vol.1.24, vol.2.43, 199-206, 217, 219, 223-4. The Lives of Martin and Hugh of Grenoble appear together in Lincoln Cathedral MS 107 which may be associated with Hugh of Lincoln: R. M. Woolley, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Oxford, 1927), pp.70-1.

commitment to Chartreuse was always strong. He accepted the see of Lincoln only under obedience from its prior, Jancelin;⁴⁸ he never ceased to wish to return there, and in 1200 he paid a final, memorable visit.⁴⁹ Whenever possible he returned to Witham once or twice a year and shared its life to the full; indeed, he seems to have retained formal authority over it until the end of his life.⁵⁰ In his everyday conduct he is reminiscent of Guigo I's admonition to Cardinal Haimeric that churchmen should not borrow kings' greed, delicacy, and pride, for he maintained a Carthusian life-style so far as he could; like Bishop Hugh of Grenoble he kept careful custody of his senses.⁵¹

By his references to Bishop Hugh of Grenoble's travels with Hugh of Die and to his favour with Pope Gregory VII, Guigo I had established the freeing of churches from lay lordship and jurisdiction as a due part of a bishop's activities. In his dealings with the Angevin kings of England, Hugh of Lincoln strongly asserted it. In 1186 he would not accept the see of Lincoln otherwise than by free election. Throughout his episcopate he championed the freedom of the church in all its forms: 'God forbid,' he once exclaimed, 'that ecclesiastical liberties and privileges should be infringed by decree of any layman!'⁵²

Like Hugh of Grenoble, Hugh of Lincoln was also conspicuous for his performance of external good works, for which his duties as procurator at Chartreuse had in some measure prepared him.⁵³ Adam of Eynsham made much of his assiduousness in ministering to children and in performing confirmations and burials, and he took especial care for lepers and for the sick.⁵⁴ He was deeply concerned for the reform of clerical morals and for the edification and instruction of his clergy, both in his cathedral and throughout his diocese.⁵⁵ He defended the vulnerable against the rapacity of his own archdeacons and rural deans no less than that of the king's foresters.⁵⁶ He was a distinguished papal judge-delegate;⁵⁷ yet, just as Guigo I in his letter to Cardinal Haimeric was deeply critical of standards in the papal entourage, so Hugh warned Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury against recourse to Rome: 'You will be exposed to the pride and aggravation of the Roman curia,' he said, 'and to the host of high and mighty

⁴⁸ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 3.3-5, vol.1.98-102.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.5, 5.13, 14, vol.2.99, 149, 164-7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.9, 10-14, vol.2.44-5, 49-73. See also A. Wilmart, 'Maître Adam, chanoine Prémontré devenu Chartreux à Witham', *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, 9 (1933), fasc. 3-4, 209-32, at p.231.

⁵¹ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 3.5, 13, 5.16, vol.1.102-3, 125-7, vol.2, 195-7.

⁵² Lincoln: *ibid.*, 3.1-3, vol.1.92-8. Freedom of the church: *ibid.*, 2.7, 3.9, 4.7-8, vol.1.71-2, 114-15, vol.2.34-7, 39-41.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1.14, vol.1.41-4.

⁵⁴ Children: *ibid.*, 3.14, vol.1.129-33. Confirmations: *ibid.*, 1.13, vol.1.127-8. Burials: *ibid.*, 5.1-2, vol.2.75-85. Lepers and the sick: *ibid.*, 4.3, vol.2.11-15.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.11, 5.5, vol.1.119-21, vol.2.95-8.

⁵⁶ Archdeacons and rural deans: *ibid.*, 4.7, vol.2.37-8. Foresters: *ibid.*, 3.9, 4.5-6, vol.1.114, vol.2.26-8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.12, 5.13, vol.1.121-3, vol.2.149-52.

men who are to be found there.⁵⁸ Deeply though Hugh venerated Thomas Becket as a martyr, he deprecated his practice during his lifetime of taking monetary fines from spiritual offenders.⁵⁹ He reserved his sharpest criticisms for the Angevin kings and their ministers, earning himself the sobriquet 'hammer of kings (*regum malleus*)'.⁶⁰ While still prior of Witham he admonished Henry II about the conduct of episcopal and abbatial elections. Throughout his episcopate he spared no words in rebuking Henry's sons Richard I and John, as well as their ministers, amongst whom he especially took to task Archbishop Hubert Walter who was for long the royal justiciar. Hugh was particularly insistent in refusing to provide Richard I with military service beyond the shores of England from the resources of the see of Lincoln.⁶¹ One recalls the strictures of the future Carthusian, Count Gerard of Nevers, upon the court and the Crusading plans of King Louis VII of France. Overall, Hugh's manner of life and his public attitudes and activities as bishop of Lincoln were well grounded in the Carthusian tradition and ran true to it.

Yet Hugh was a bishop of such stature that, in the episcopal office, he was not constrained by that tradition, but was very much his own man. In this respect it would be wrong to eulogise him uncritically. There are sides to his episcopal activity that do not immediately commend themselves to the modern observer. Two examples are his use of his powers of anathema and his conduct as a collector of relics. Adam of Eynsham gloried in how many men and women 'he gave over to a wretched death by the power of his excommunication alone', and how, by contrast with the sanctions deployed by less saintly bishops, the mere threat deterred royal officers from seizing his goods because they dreaded it as quite literally a death sentence. But it was not only the over-mighty whom it struck down. Even an adulterous Oxford girl of burgher origins suffered death for her disobedience:

'As you have refused my blessing and have preferred my curse [said Hugh to her], lo! my curse will seize you.' She went home still defiant, and during the few days that God allowed her for coming to a better mind, her heart became more hardened and impenitent. She was smothered by the devil, and suddenly exchanged her illicit and perishable delights for eternal and just torments.⁶²

If Hugh's use of his anathema may seem excessive and vindictive, his zeal in collecting relics was greedy and even deceitful. Thus, when he visited the abbey of Fécamp which possessed a relic of St Mary Magdalen's arm-bone, he was not allowed to see the relic itself. So he took a knife from one of his notaries, cut the thread that bound it, and himself undid its wrappings. After contemplating it and kissing it he tried to prise a piece

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.12, vol.1.122.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.7, vol.2.38.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.4, 5.20, vol.1.56, vol.2.231-2.

⁶¹ Henry II: *ibid.*, 2.7-8, 3.9-10, vol.1.68-74, 114-19. Richard I: *ibid.*, 5.1, 5-6, vol.2.78-9, 98-106. John: *ibid.*, 5.11, 16, 19, vol.2.137-44, 188, 225. Hubert Walter: *ibid.*, 3.12, 5.5, 7, 16, vol.1.123, vol.2.98-100, 110-14, 188-9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4.4-6, vol.2.19-33.

off for himself with his fingers, but unsuccessfully. So he bit it, first with his front teeth and then with his back ones, breaking off two fragments which he handed to Adam of Eynsham. The abbot and monks were beside themselves: 'What an outrage!' they exclaimed; 'we supposed that the bishop asked to see this relic out of devotion, but look! he has gnawed it with his teeth like a dog!' To calm them, Hugh observed that he had not long before handled the body of the Lord of the saints with his fingers and bitten it with his teeth; for his welfare, why should he not similarly treat the bones of the saints and, when he had a chance, acquire them?⁶³ In such respects, Hugh was, perhaps, all too much a child of his day and age.

But not in other, far more important respects, in which he rose far above them. He did so because he understood with exceptional clarity that to different men and women, different modes of the Christian life are appropriate. Hermits and monks, clergy and laity, have their several and very different callings. The very austerity of Hugh's Carthusian background, which he well knew that only rare individuals could support, made him aware of this truth, as St Bernard, for example, seems never to have understood it. An elderly Carthusian had put the point of the Carthusians' exceptional vocation to him in unforgettable words when, still a young regular canon, he had first sought admission to Chartreuse. 'My dear boy,' he had said, 'how can you ever think of coming here? The men you see inhabiting these rocks are harder than any stones; they take pity neither upon themselves nor upon those who live with them. This place is dreadful to look at, but our way of life is harder by far. ... The rigour of our discipline would crush the bones of one so tender as you seem.'⁶⁴ Hugh never forgot that the Carthusian life is for the very few who are personally fitted to receive it, and that it is not a model even for most monks to copy. Thus, when an abbot went beyond the Rule of St Benedict in compelling his monks to abstain from meat, Hugh was far from praising his zeal; instead, he warned him of the danger of hypocrisy and scrupulosity, saying,

I do not eat meat, not because of my own judgement, but because that is the decree of the order to which long ago I made myself subject. It has so very few members, because it was not designed for a lot of people, all of them made differently. You, however, have been set over a large community; as your Founder decreed you must take account of many different sorts of men and condescend to many kinds of weakness and human need.⁶⁵

Because Hugh knew exactly where he himself stood as a Carthusian, he could perceive clearly the roles and duties of other kinds of people, and point them out with firmness and charity.

Hugh's perceptiveness, and the maturity and confidence to which it conduced, enabled him, in sharp contrast to Thomas Becket, resolutely to

⁶³ Hugh and relics: *ibid.*, 5.13, 14, vol.2.153-4, 167-73.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.7, vol.1.23-4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.16, vol.2.196-7; cf. Rule of St Benedict, cap. 2.

defend what contemporary reformers understood by the liberty of the church, and to act as a *regum malleus* in reproving kings, without ever sacrificing his personal relationship with them – even so difficult a line as the Angevins of his time. His sureness of pastoral touch was early manifest in his handling of Henry II, when the king was offended by his refusal, couched in terms reminiscent of Prior Guigo I's letter to Cardinal Haimeric, to collate a royal nominee to a prebend of Lincoln cathedral. 'Ecclesiastical benefices,' Hugh said, 'should not be conferred upon courtiers but upon ecclesiastics, and their holders should not serve the court (*palatium*) or treasury or exchequer but, as Scripture teaches, the altar.' When the king sulked publicly and called for a needle and thread to play at repairing a finger-stall that he was wearing, Hugh impudently mocked him: 'How like you are to your Falaise cousins!' Henry himself explained to his courtiers Hugh's allusion to his own great-great-grandfather William the Conqueror's being the bastard of a supposedly leather-working family at Falaise. Relishing the joke, he came round to Hugh's point of view.⁶⁶ Again, Hugh shrewdly made use of the kiss of peace at mass to be reconciled to Richard I after his refusal of overseas military service.⁶⁷ Although Hugh fruitlessly drew attention to the sculpture of the Last Judgement over the porch at the abbey of Fontevraud to warn John of his sins, John visited him on his deathbed and at his funeral carried his coffin.⁶⁸ Hugh was exceptional in maintaining the highest standards of the episcopal office under such kings, and yet in preserving his friendship with them.

He rose no less far above the generality of his contemporaries in his attitude to women. He differed even from Carthusian tradition. Not only were women rigorously excluded from the *termini* of Chartreuse but, in his Customs, Guigo I drew upon many Old Testament examples to drive home how hard it was to escape their flatteries and deceits. His exemplary bishop, Hugh of Grenoble, always ministered faithfully to them, but only once did he allow his eyes to settle upon a woman's face, and then for an urgent pastoral reason.⁶⁹ Hugh, on the other hand, had a profound regard and care for women. He did not hesitate to follow the general custom of bishops by occasionally admitting matrons and widows to eat at his table. His regard for women was based upon his understanding of Christ's Incarnation. 'Almighty God,' he used to say to them, 'well deserves to have women love him, for he did not disdain to be born of a woman. He thereby conferred a splendid and truly fitting privilege upon all women. For to no man was it granted to be, or to be called, the father of God; but a woman was allowed to become the mother of God.'⁷⁰

Above all, Hugh exhibited his personal stature and uniqueness by the

⁶⁶ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 3.9-10, vol. 1.114-19. Cf. E. M. C. van Houts, 'The Origins of Herleva, Mother of William the Conqueror', *English Historical Review*, 101 (1986), 399-404.

⁶⁷ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 5.5, vol. 2.100-02.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.11, 16, 19, vol. 2.138-44, 188, 225.

⁶⁹ *Coutumes*, cap. 21.1-2, p. 210; *Vita s. Hugonis*, 4.15, PL 153.772-3.

⁷⁰ *Magna vita s. Hugonis*, 4.9, vol. 2.48.

high value that he set upon the life and witness of ordinary lay Christians. He was far from holding the conventional view, that only a few would be saved, and most of them would be monks. When lay persons praised his own Carthusian style of life and conventionally deplored the hindrances of life in the world, so long as he knew them to have no calling to the monastic life he would assure them of the sufficiency for salvation of their own state:

Monks, not to mention hermits and anchorites [he used to say to them] will not be the only ones to inherit the kingdom of God. When God comes in judgement upon every man, he will upbraid no one for not being a hermit or a monk; but he will dismiss from himself those who have not been true Christians. Three things are required of every Christian; if one of them is lacking when he meets his judgement, the mere name of Christian will not help him. No, rather, the name without the practice will do him harm, because falsehood is all the more blameworthy in one who makes profession of the truth. A man must bear Christ's blessed name both in fact and in truth; therefore the true Christian carries love in his heart, truth on his lips, and chastity in his body.

And so married people, even though they never changed their state for a single life, had the virtue of chastity and would share an equal heavenly reward with virgins and celibates. In recording this teaching, Adam of Eynsham added that Hugh was no less adept in explaining the Christian life to simple folk than to the learned.⁷¹

Hugh of Avalon was one of those rare individuals whose personal qualities raise them above whatever background or environment, however admirable, that they may have had. Nevertheless, the foundation of his episcopate was always his Carthusian life and training, and he manifested and built upon its best characteristics of spiritual and human wisdom. For the historian, his significance is, perhaps, threefold. First, he is the supreme example in Angevin England of a model diocesan bishop, ruling his diocese, shepherding all its people, and discharging a bishop's national role resolutely but acceptably to kings and magnates even when he most strenuously reprovved them. Secondly, his conduct as a bishop warrants the conclusion that the relationship which the Carthusians from the first began to form with the wider church and world did not contradict or detract from their primary call to the eremitical life; it was a proper and authentic complement to it. Thirdly, Hugh of Avalon, as champion of the liberty of the church and of its moral reform, must be understood within the long sequence of Carthusian links with the episcopate which began with the paradigm figure of Bishop Hugh I of Grenoble, who was himself the favoured disciple of Pope Gregory VII. Tangible links between Gregory and the twelfth century are remarkably few and difficult to observe. Hugh of Avalon, Carthusian and bishop, stands within a living

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.9, vol.2.46-7.

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tradition of episcopal spirituality and activity that Gregory was concerned to foster. He continued it until Pope Innocent III, the most effective of all the medieval reforming popes, had ascended the papal throne.