

ANALECTA CARTUSIANA**EDITORS:****James Hogg,****Sylvain Excoffon, Alain Girard, Daniel Le Blévec****291****A Life of Research devoted to the Carthusians James Hogg****Notes inédites de dom Calmet sur la chartreuse de Rettel Gilles Banderier****Manuscript on the Vesuvius Eruption of 1631
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Laurea di Giovanni Tedeschi di Serra San Bruno (1913) Laureato il 6 dic.
1914 all'università di Catania D. Basilio Caminada de la Chartreuse de
Calabrie.****2017****FB ANGLISTIK UND AMERIKANISTIK****UNIVERSITÄT SALZBURG, UNIPARK****ERZABT KLOTZSTRASSE 1****A-5020 SALZBURG****AUSTRIA**

Grande Chartreuse : Spaciement (Escudero)



Assistants to the Editors in Salzburg:
Pierre-Aelred Henel & Andreas Schachermayr

ISBN: 978-3-903185-06-7

BIBLIOTHEEK VAN HET
RUUSBROECCGENOOTSCHAP
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ANALECTA CARTUSIANA

James Hogg

Fraham 9

A-5164 Seeham

AUSTRIA

Tel.: 0043 6217 7084

e-mail: james.hogg@sbg.ac.at

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A Life of Research devoted to the Carthusians

James Hogg

After my studies in medieval history and my conversion to Roman Catholicism I became increasingly interested in the history of the Religious Orders, – particularly the monastic Orders. At that time I stood in close contact with the Trappists of the Scottish Abbey of Nunraw in Scotland, – a community sent from Roscrea in Ireland, which, after the Second World War, settled in a predominantly Presbyterian area. I also spent nine months with the English Benedictines at Prinknash Abbey in Gloucestershire, a community which had converted from Anglican Church in the early twentieth century. I began my research for a dissertation after correspondance with Dom Andrew Gray of the charterhouse of Parkminster. In 1960 I was granted a scholarship for a year at the University of Fribourg, where I studied under the direction of Professor Heinrich Schmidinger Senior, who was particularly interested in the history of the Religious Orders. In March and April 1961 I spent two months in the French Trappist Abbey of Tamié, high up in the mountains of Savoy, where I worked so hard in the gardens that I rubbed the skin off my hands. One of the monks informed me about a Carthusian who lived practically alone in the dilapidated charterhouse of Portes. In May I took the bus to Tenay-Hauteville, and wandered up the hillside to the isolated charterhouse, where Dom Emmanuel Cluzet, former sub-procurator of the Grande Chartreuse, received me kindly. He was much occupied with liturgical research, – a subject about which I knew very little at that time. Two days later he sent me in a very ancient automobile to the charterhouse of Sélignac.

In Sélignac I was welcomed by the Prior, Dom Marie-Paul Chapeau, who was highly interested in the history of the Order. A few days later, he asked me whether I would not like to stay at Sélignac. Spontaneously I replied: "Yes". So was a vocation born! However, we agreed that I would try to finish my dissertation first. I lived in the Great Cloister in the cell K and followed the office both during the day and night. After several months it was clear to me that I could not finish the dissertation in the near future. One evening I burnt all the research papers in the stove and entered the noviciate. With the first Novice Master, Dom Ange Helly, all went excellently. I dismantled the stove in my cell,

although in winter the temperature in the unheated church sometimes fell to minus 16° celsius. At the night office I had on occasion difficulty in turning the pages in the antiphony. After three years I found there was a point in the Great Cloister where one could obtain hot water. The Novice Master had forgotten to tell me. As I did not have a shaving mirror, the weekly shaving was so catastrophic, that the Prior repeatedly admonished me to take more care. For four years I never saw my face.

Unfortunately for me the nephew of the Novice Master entered Sélnac and the Novice Master resigned, becoming Vicar, then Prior in the charterhouse of Montrieux, but was later given leave of absence to found the Hermitage of St. Bruno, where he sought with three companions to relive the original experience of St. Bruno in total poverty and simplicity, – a heroic adventure which scarcely attracted vocations. With his successor as Novice Master, a young Carthusian, I was less enthusiastic. I could not accept some of his ideas and he found my sense of humour tasteless. Finally there was a special visitation to regulate the affairs of the noviciate. Shortly afterwards, on 22 November 1965, I was sent as a monk with simple vows to the charterhouse of Farneta near Lucca. On Monday I sang the night office in Sélnac, on Tuesday in Farneta.

I found life in Farneta rather different to that in Sélnac, – not only because the wine ration was a liter a day, as against half a liter in Sélnac. Although I had to accustom myself to a somewhat less severe interpretation of the Rule, at first all went well for me. Then unfortunately I was bed-ridden for five months with rheumatic fever, caused by the humid climate. The local doctor came daily without fee and promptly informed the Prior that the situation was serious and that I might die, but thanks to his untiring efforts I gradually recovered and was able to follow the observance again, so that the Prior, Dom Anselm Gontier, told me in March 1967 that I would make the solemn profession on 14 June, the Feast of John the Baptist. I wrote a few letters announcing the good news. Unfortunately the Prior was almost blind and at the General Chapter in May 1967 he was relieved of his priorate. Although Dom Anselm told the new Prior, Dom Albert Häne, who was transferred from the Charterhouse of Marienau, that he had accepted me for the solemn profession, Dom Albert listened more to Dom Maurice Laporte and Dom John-Baptist Porion, Procurator General of the Order, who expressed doubts concerning my vocation. My simple vows were prolonged for a further year, but it was soon clear to me that Dom Albert did not wish to receive me to the solemn profession.

He maintained that my interest in the history of the Order was excessive and not compatible with a Carthusian vocation. Alas, I could do nothing right in his eyes. Although I believed that my conception of Carthusian life was not different to that of Dom Augustine Devaux, Dom Gerard Posado or even Dom Maurice Laporte, it was all to no avail, and I had to reconcile myself to the fact that I must plan my future elsewhere. I considered the two possibilities, – either to try again with the Camaldolese monks or endeavour to find a niche in the world. I had never really worked in the world, except for eight weeks during a summer vacation, when I was employed by Cadbury's chocolate factory in Birmingham on the night shift, packing chocolates into boxes. The foreman was kind, but duly thankful when the eight weeks were over. At thirty-seven, it seemed to me too great a risk to try my vocation again. What sort of recommendation could I expect from the Prior of Farneta? I thus decided to return to the world, with which I had had virtually no contact since 1960, – no newspapers, no radio or television, not even visits from my family. In Sélnac the Prior told me that Churchill had died, that Kennedy had been assassinated, and a monk told me on the weekly walk that General de Gaulle was in power in France. Later, the procurator of Farneta informed me that Fanfani was President, but I had never heard of Fanfani. The rest was silence ...

The Order was generous and promised to help. I decided to resume my studies with Professor Schmidinger, who in the meanwhile had been appointed Director of the Austrian Institute in Rome and Professor in Salzburg. For three years the Order paid all my expenses and I was promoted *summa cum laude* in June 1971. As I only learnt German in Salzburg, I realised that it would be impossible for me to teach medieval history in Geman. A post at an English University at my age and without experience seemed highly improbable. Fortunately Professor Schmidinger was able to convince the Head of the Department for English Studies with the remark that "he is the most industrious person on earth" that he should engage me for his Institute. The Rector, who had examined me in Austrian History and kindly overlooked my ignorance, advised me to make myself indispensable. As the Professor for English Studies was more interested in social life than research, I did just that. For over twenty years I played the grey eminence of the Department, – sometimes I had to examine candidates for ten hours a day ...

The *Analecta Cartusiana* was founded in Berlin in 1970 and in 1971 transferred to Salzburg. The *Salzburg Studies in English Literature* followed in

1971 in order to justify my post in the Department. The idea of founding the *Analecta Cartusiana* came to me in 1966 in the charterhouse of Farneta. My new novice master, Dom Benedict Wallis, was modestly interested in the history of the Order, as was the Prior, even if less engaged than Dom Marie-Paul Chapeau. Therefore I was able to occupy myself with with the manuscript treatises of two English Carthusians, Richard Methley († 1528) and John Norton († 1522). During my years in Sélignac I noticed that some of the monks, who were passionately interested in the history of the Order, duplicated their research in four or five copies to send them to other houses of the Order. I thought that it would be good to found a series for such studies, even though only for circulation within the Order. In my naivety I sent copies of my transcripts to the Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, little thinking I was furnishing ammunition for my critics The dream of the *Analecta Cartusiana* became actual during my studies in Salzburg and the first two volumes appeared in 1970-1971, – unfortunately in dreadful German. The series was then conceived rather for university libraries than the charterhouses and the echo in the Order was not encouraging. Several charterhouses refused to take the *Analecta* and informed me that such a series could only be issued with the specific approbation of the Order. One Prior, however, took the *Analecta* with him when his charterhouse was closed! The Prior of the Grande Chartreuse sent me one of his dreaded letters, informing me that the Order would not be responsible under any circumstances for the anticipated deficit and ordering me to send him a copy of my autobiography, *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, containing my reminiscences of my life in the charterhouse, which he understood had just been published by the Oxford University Press. I was able to inform him that, although I was certainly a sinner, I was not a justified sinner, and that I was not the author of the book, which was the work of a nineteenth century namesake. The Prior wrote back that he had been unfortunately misinformed and sent me a subsidy for the *Analecta*. Thereafter a cheque came each year with the visiting card of the Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, though I do not believe he was ever very enthusiastic about the venture.

At first I printed 200 copies of each volume, which sold out over the following decades. Unfortunately the economic crisis then came and libraries had less funds at their disposition and the *Analecta* then appeared to be a luxury. The subscriptions sank from 1980 onwards, so that today one must be content to dispose of 150 copies.

Alongside the *Analecta* came the academic Carthusian Conferences from 1979 onwards. The first was convened by the Cistercian Dr. Hermann Josef Roth, splendidly organised in the former charterhouse of Cologne. In the following year Dr. Gerhard Jaritz, Dr. Ernst Englisch and I organised a conference in the former charterhouse of Aggsbach, the success of which was largely due to Professor Karl Thir and his sympathetic wife Margit, whom the mayor of Aggsbach, Anton Draxler, had asked to help us with the organisation on the spot. Alfons Maderna contributed to the success of the conference by permitting those attending to visit the charterhouse of Aggsbach, his private residence, a concession which his widow has kindly continued. With the aid of the Thir family the numerous following conferences in Aggsbach were not only academic events, but also a spiritual enrichment for many of us. Professor Meta Niederkorn of the University of Vienna, has now taken over the academic direction of the conferences, thus assuring future events. Professor Karl Thir has borne the burden of the organisation in Aggsbach since 1981 and has become an exemplary spiritual devotee of the Carthusian Order, founding the Museum in the charterhouse and more recently the Meditation Garden. The Association for the reanimation of the former charterhouse, launched by Professor Thir, has published numerous booklets elucidating its history and Carthusian spirituality. He has clearly the gift of motivating others to contribute to these numerous activities, among whom the Nussbaumer family has made significant contributions. The Association has been important also in obtaining financial support for conferences from the Provincial Government of Lower Austria and varied contributions from the the civic authorities in Aggsbach Dorf.

In the 1990ies I appointed Professor Alain Girard and Daniel Le Blévec co-editors to assure the continuation of the *Analecta* after my disappearance from the scene. Professor Girard made great efforts to increase the circulation of the *Analecta* in France. Twenty years later I am – rather surprisingly – still active and it is now Professor Sylvain Excoffon of the Centre for the study of the Religious Orders at the University of St. Etienne, who will bear the main burden of continuing the *Analecta*. Unfortunately I have been suffering from severe skin cancer since December 1999, and although the situation deteriorated in 2010, and more markedly in 2015-2016, the specialists at the Salzburg University Clinic have worked wonders over the years to keep me on my feet. I still hope to finish the *Monasticon Cartusiense*, although France and the French-speaking provinces of Switzerland with their 102 charterhouses still offer major difficulties, as many of the provisional contributors still have not sent their texts,

although the deadline was 2005. Otherwise I hope to continue work on the *Chartæ* of the General Chapter and with the expert cooperation of the Reverend Dr. John Clark work on medieval texts of English Carthusians, started in the charterhouse of Farneta as long ago as 1967. I am extremely grateful to all those who have helped the *Analecta Cartusiana* since 1971 by their scholarly contributions and enthusiasm, rendering the *Analecta* a forum for the study of Carthusian History and Spirituality.

Notes inédites de dom Calmet sur la chartreuse de Rettel.

Gilles Banderier

Il existe peu de témoignages anciens relatifs à la chartreuse de Rettel (France, département de la Moselle)¹. Dans sa bibliographie², Albert Gruys signale que dom Augustin Calmet (1672-1757), abbé de Senones, grand historien bénédictin, mentionne cet établissement dans son *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Lorraine* (Nancy, Jean-Baptiste Cusson, 1728), mais Albert Gruys omet un autre ouvrage de dom Calmet, dérivé de l'*Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Lorraine*, la *Notice de la Lorraine*, où il se trouve un article consacré à Rettel³. L'abbé Charles Hoffmann a fait usage de l'un aussi bien que de l'autre dans sa monographie⁴.

Cependant, ni Albert Gruys, ni l'abbé Hoffmann n'ont signalé la version préparatoire de l'article, conservée parmi les papiers de dom Calmet (Bibliothèque Municipale de Saint-Dié, manuscrit 73).

L'abbé de Senones occupa des responsabilités importantes au sein de la congrégation religieuse à laquelle il appartenait (Saint-Vanne et Saint-Hydulphe) ; elles lui imposèrent de voyager afin de participer aux chapitres généraux. Il ne se contenta pas de visiter des monastères bénédictins et consigna, par exemple, une longue description de l'abbaye cistercienne de Clairvaux, où il s'était rendu le 22 octobre 1719⁵. Nous ignorons, en revanche, quand il passa à Rettel.

Le savant Bénédictin eut sans doute, à un moment ou à un autre de sa vie, le projet de publier en volume les notes prises à l'occasion de ses différents voyages⁶, suivant le modèle de son maître dom Mabillon et de ses épigones, qui

¹ Le monastère qui se nomma successivement *Rotila* (893), *Ruthela* (1195), *Ruttila* (1218) fut fondé vers 800, selon la tradition. Il devint une chartreuse en 1432, fut supprimé en 1792 et démoli vers 1860.

² « *Cartusiana* ». *Un instrument heuristique*, Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977, tome 2 (« Maisons »), p. 349b-350b ; voir en outre le volume II du *Monasticon Cartusiense*, éd. Gerhard Schlegel et James Hogg, Salzbourg, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik (= *Analecta Cartusiana*, 185/2), 2004, p. 623-629.

³ *Notice de la Lorraine*, Lunéville, George, 1840, t. II, p. 277a-278a.

⁴ *Das Kloster von Rettel*, Metz, P. Even, 1908 ; traduction française *Le Couvent de Rettel*, Morhange, Éditions du Passé Simple Rodalbe, 1994, p. 3-8.

⁵ « Une description inédite de l'abbaye de Clairvaux, par dom Calmet (1719) », *La Vie en Champagne*, n° 83, juillet-septembre 2015, p. 5-9.

⁶ Pierre Petitmengin, « Notes de dom Calmet sur des manuscrits conservés en Lorraine et dans les pays voisins (avec le premier catalogue de Sélestat) », « *Nova de Veteribus* ». *Mittel- und*