Peter NISSEN

TOPOGRAPHY OF SOLITUDE

PLACES OF SILENCE IN EARLY CARTHUSIAN SPIRITUALITY

Anyone approaching the gate house of the former Charterhouse at Calci near Pisa from the village is at once hit in the eye by the famous words emblazoned on the gable: '*O beata solitudo, o sola beatitudo*' ('O happy solitude, o only happiness'). Visitors to the beautiful monastery, now a national monument, may not immediately realise that they are faced with evidence of Dutch input in the Carthusian order, in two respects.

Firstly, during the last decades of its existence (the order abandoned it in 1969) the monastery at Calci, dedicated to Our Lady and St John the Evangelist when it was founded way back in the 14th century, was occupied by a community comprising mainly Dutch and Flemish brethren. They lived there from 1946 to 1961, preparatory to establishing a house in the Netherlands, which in the end never happened.[1] Secondly, the far famed motto, '*O beata solitudo, o sola beatitudo*', is itself of Dutch origin. It derives from a poem published in Antwerp in 1566, *Solitudo sive vita solitaria laudata*, written by priest and poet Cornelius Musius (1503-1572), rector of St Agatha monastery in Delft. It is a eulogy to solitude comprising over 300 six-line stanzas. The quoted line was promptly seized upon as the motto of the Carthusian order and, apart from the monastery at Calci, it appears on innumerable other relics from the history of the order from the 17th century onwards.[2]

It expresses what those who enter the monastery are seeking: blessed solitude, leading to the only happiness. In the self-understanding of Carthusians solitude is the cardinal element of their vocation and religious lifestyle. It constitutes their uniqueness among the many forms of religious community life that the

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1 Peter J.A. Nissen, 'Nederlandstalige kartuizerauteurs uit de 19de en 20ste eeuw', in: F. Hendrickx (Ed.), *De kartuizers en hun klooster te Zelem*, Diest 1984, 146-156, esp. 151-154.

2 The poem in its entirety appears in B. Tromby, *Storia critico-cronologico-diplomatica del P. S. Brunone et del suo ordine cartusiano*, Naples 1775, vol. 2, appendix, p. ix-xix. For Musius's book, see André Bouwman, 'The prayer book of Cornelius Musius', in: *Quaerendo* 33 (2003), 30-53.

Christian tradition has known over the centuries to this very day. But what does solitude mean to those who want to live according to St Bruno's tradition? The word 'solitude' has different associations for different people. To some these are romantic: solitude as an escape from the hurly-burly and stress of society. In that case the physical place where solitude is experienced has distinct pastoral overtones, as in some 19th century paintings of hermits.[3] To others solitude has a forlorn connotation: abandonment, isolation, being thrown back on yourself. That kind of solitude is experienced in crowded places, in the midst of modern cities. The one kind of solitude is an enticing prospect, the other an ominous fate.

What did solitude mean to Bruno of Cologne, founder of the Carthusian order, and to the early generations of his followers? And how did it further the consecrated lives that he and his disciples sought to live? The article tries to find answers to these questions.

Solitude and the discovery of the individual

In 1988 the French medievalist Georges Duby wrote in one of the volumes of *A history of private life*: 'Carthusianism represents the least anarchic form of the aspiration to solitude that spread like wildfire in the years following Saint Bruno's conversion'.[4] This quotation makes two points. Firstly, according to Duby the Carthusian way of life was clearly a system that was in the air in Bruno's days; and secondly, the phenomenon as such was new. In the history of monastic life the Carthusians, with their accent on solitude, represent a novelty, one that has to be understood against the background of the spirit of their age.

The British church historian Colin Morris aptly describes the hallmark of that age as 'the discovery of the individual'.[5] Individuals emancipated themselves from the collective: they detached and discovered themselves. The emphasis on the individual gives the notion of solitude a different meaning and imbues it with different values. Instead of the stark fact of physical aloneness, solitude becomes a dynamic component of interpersonal communication, of an exchange of meanings, hence a communicative phenomenon[6] – not just a one-

[3] Hans Ost, *Einsiedler und Mönche in der deutschen Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Düsseldorf 1971.

[4] Georges Duby, 'Solitude: 11th to 13th century', in: Philippe Ariès & Georges Duby (Eds.), *A history of private life*. Vol 2: *Revelations of the medieval world*, Cambridge 1988, reprint 2003, 509-533, quotation 516.

[5] Colin Morris, *The discovery of the individual 1050-1200*, Toronto etc. 1987 (1st ed. 1972).

[6] The same point is made in the various articles in the collection by Michel Certeau & François Roustang (Eds), *La solitude: Une vérité oubliée de la communication*, Paris 1967.

dimensional fact. It becomes either an ideal or a horrible threat; at any rate, it is no longer neutral.

Cultural historians have pointed out that in the early and high Middle Ages people were rarely if ever on their own. They were always part of a group, under 'pressure' from a collective. Belonging to a group was what gave them their identity. Even in their day-to-day physical activities they were hardly ever alone. At home they invariably shared a room with several people. There were no separate bedrooms: one slept in the same room with other people. Literary descriptions indicate that this applied even to moments which, in subsequent ages, came to be occasions of supreme intimacy and privacy, namely sexual intercourse. That took place at night when the others were asleep, or under a cloak or behind a partition. While others were not supposed to watch, they were nonetheless present. Hence couples making love were not alone, even though they sought privacy. In the midst of the group surrounding them they still wanted a private space. Thus the emergence of individuality in the high Middle Ages culminated in the 'discovery of love'.[7] Love, like solitude, was stripped of its physical neutrality. It became fraught with meaning, values, emotions. These ranged from experiences of an intense, intimate love encounter with God, unknown – at least in this form – in religious literature up to the 12th century, to the discovery of erotic refinements.[8] But even in its most sophisticated form – courtly love, known to us inter alia from the poetry of the high Middle Ages – human love, as Duby puts it, remained 'a society game, played in the midst of a group'.[9]

The home – and the same may be said of monasteries – was a place for intimate life secluded from public view, but even there one was virtually never truly alone. The same applied when people left their homes. In the early and high Middle Ages they were not alone then either. They always travelled in groups of two or more, partly for security reasons. When they went on pilgrimages they did so in the company of other pilgrims heading for the same destination, with whom they formed, so to speak, an artificial family for the duration of the journey. Pilgrims were identifiable as members of the same group by virtue of certain attributes and their clothing. In addition their transient travel family prefigured the pilgrimage fraternity, which most of them entered on their return and which in its turn was supposed to extend and stabilise the temporary experience of the journey.[10]

[7] Peter Dinzelbacher, 'Über die Entdeckung der Liebe im Hochmittelalter', in: *Saeculum* 32 (1981), 185-208.

[8] Dinzelbacher, 'Über die Entdeckung', 197, 205.

[9] Duby, 'Solitude', 519.

[10] P.-A. Sigal, 'Pelgrims als bijzondere groep in de samenleving', in: J. van Herwaarden (Ed.), *Pelgrims door de eeuwen heen: Santiago de Compostela*, Utrecht 1985, 148-186.

When people left their home to reside elsewhere they rarely did so alone, but usually moved in a group. That happened even when they left their homes (parental or otherwise) to enter a monastery. The most famous example is undoubtedly Bernard of Clairvaux, who in May 1113 presented himself at the gates of the abbey of Cîteaux along with some 30 companions, some of them relatives. Conversions of sometimes entire noble families were nothing unusual in the 11th and 12th centuries. In that case the family relocated en masse from one life domain – their family castle – to another, the monastery; or they might simply transform their existing home into a religious house by turning it into a monastery. But even those who, by opting for monastic life, broke with *domus* or *familia* – the home or domestic circle to which they originally belonged – proceeded to look for a new family, a new group of like-minded people. That was in fact what Bernard of Clairvaux did from the time of his conversion in 1111-1112 till his group entry into Cîteaux in May 1113.[11]

Bruno, too, did not travel alone to the places where he wanted to lead a life consecrated to God. When (probably) in 1081 he left Reims, where he was master (*magister*) and canon, to go to Sèche-Fontaine, the place assigned to him by Robert of Molesme, founder of the Cistercian order, he was accompanied by two pupils, Peter and Lambert. And in 1084, when he proceeded to Grenoble where bishop Hugh had allocated him a deserted spot in the valley of Chartreuse, his entourage was even bigger. This time he had six companions: master Landuin; two former canons, Stephen of Bourg and Stephen of Die; the chaplain Hugh; and two laymen, Andrew and Guérin.[12] They set out in a group to find solitude.

When a journey was undertaken alone, it was simply a transition, a rite of passage, to enter a new collective. That happened in the case of prospective priests and monastics: they entered a school. Youths who left their parents' home to become knights likewise joined a school, where they were trained and to which they were inseparably bound for life. In his rule Benedict used the term to indicate what a monastic community aspires to be: 'therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service' (*Rule of St. Benedict* [further abbr. RB] Prol. 45). In Benedict's day and for many centuries afterwards a school denoted a place where a group assembled. They could be soldiers of the same company, artisans amalgamating in a guild, or students congregating round their teacher. In due

[11] Peter Dinzelbacher, *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Leben und Werk des berühmten Zisterziensers*, Darmstadt 1998, 15-20.

[12] Peter Nissen, 'Bruno van Keulen: Geroepen tot vriendschap en eenzaamheid', in: *Benedictijns Tijdschrift* 45 (1984), 78-97, especially 84-85; Gerardo Posada, *Der heilige Bruno, Vater der Kartäuser, ein Sohn der Stadt Köln*, Köln 1987, 97-99.

course the name of the place was transferred to the group.[13] The premises where the collective gathered were the place where its members formed a school.

Everywhere, then, both in the privacy of the home and in the public domain, people's identity was defined by group membership and they were subjected to collective discipline. This applied at both a mental and a concretely physical level: one was rarely if ever really alone. Even the so-called private world was collective; there was no such thing as an individual private world.

Those who insisted on secluding themselves would – it was commonly assumed in the early and high Middle Ages – be tempted by evil, for one succumbed to the devil more easily when alone than when in the company of others; or they were already stricken by evil, hence possessed or insane. Journeying alone was considered a symptom of lunacy. Places where people lived outside a community were regarded as demonic. There life was dehumanised, since it was not regulated by group codes. Such areas – forests, heaths and marshes – were the fairytale world of folklore. There fairies, goblins, savages and elves foregathered: semi-human figures that disdained social group codes and wandered around on their own. Those who fled the collective and sought seclusion – criminals, heretics, lunatics – were likely to come up against one of these dreaded loners. And for those who sought solitude when still in their right minds the only counsel was: leave those foreign parts and return to the safety of a gregarious existence.[14]

In the 11th and 12th centuries a complexity of economic and social changes radically changed the Western mentality. The most important element, as mentioned already, was what Colin Morris called the discovery of the individual.[15] There was a craving for individual autonomy. The individual recognised herself, discerning herself and disentangling herself from the group. Thus from the 11th century onwards – and both written sources an archaeological finds attest this – there are more and more references to keys, coffers and purses. Evidently there was a desire to keep something for oneself, stash it away and lock it away from others. A comparable development was probably the growing need 'to live on one's own' that surfaced in the 12th century. Sons of noble families married at a younger age and preferred to set up home on their own. Canonical communities were dissolved, or rather fell apart. Canons had their own houses round the collegiate church. Initially these were still built in the cloister of the college complex, but eventually they were at some distance from it.[16] From

[13] Esther de Waal, *A life-giving way: A commentary on the rule of St. Benedict*, London-New York 1995, 11-12.

[14] Duby, 'Solitude', 511.

[15] Morris, *Discovery of the individual*, 158.

[16] Duby, 'Solitude', 511-514.

about 1125 free-standing statues made their appearance in church architecture and towards the end of the 13th century portraits became a feature of sculpture: a striving for a likeness, in which the individuality of the model was the key factor.[17] In music individual voices broke free from the choir; the introduction of a second voice by the Parisian Notre Dame choir masters, Léonin and Pérotin, gave birth to polyphony. In literature there was a revival of a genre that had all but vanished since the early Middle Ages – the autobiography, the most famous 12th century examples being Peter Abélard's *Historia calamitatum* and Guibert of Nogent's *Monodiae* (Solitary songs), better known as *De vita sua*. In these works the individual is master of his own memories, which he arranges with a view to determining his own place in events of which he was sometimes a witness, sometimes a victim.

This reflection on personal history corresponds with a desire for self-knowledge and introspection, which manifested itself in various spheres.[18] In moral and religious life it finds expression in the examination of conscience and growing emphasis on the intention of moral acts. In dealing with sin and forgiveness the objectivism of the old penance books made way for the subjectivism of psychological ethics.[19]

Radicalisation of solitude

According to Georges Duby the 11th and 12th centuries saw the defiance of group pressure by two explicit lifestyles. The one existed only in literature, the other occurred in real life as well. The first was that of the knight errant. He roamed far from hearth and home, especially in lonely forests which, we have noted already, were known to be hazardous, demonic places. There he had to contend with fairies and fight savages. So once again he was not totally alone. Stories about knights errant live by the power of the contrast between fiction and reality and the interplay of extreme poles: forest versus courtly life, solitude versus the collective, unspoilt nature versus human society.

The other lifestyle characterised by deserting the collective was that of hermits. As a result of the aforementioned changed mentality of the 11th and 12th centuries this lifestyle had an unprecedented revival. Eremitic experiments mushroomed all over Europe. Whereas in past centuries a hermitic lifestyle was

[17] Morris, *Discovery of the individual*, 86-95; Arnold Angenendt, *Geschichte der Religiosität im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 1997, 259-260.

[18] Morris, *Discovery of the individual*, 64-86.

[19] See the by now classic six volumes by Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Louvain-Gembloux 1942-1960.

something of a rarity, for example as the consummation of a long monastic life, the desire for solitude suddenly became widespread in the 11th century. Peter Damian, a Camaldolian monk himself, wrote in his 11th century *Vita* of Romuald, founder of the eremite community of Camaldoli, that the whole world appears to have become one great hermitage.[20] Henrietta Leyser compared a series of examples of this new eremitic zeal and summed up the common features.[21] Her conclusion is that they were all passing experiments, prompted by dissatisfaction with prevailing forms of monastic life and aimed at a renewal of religious community life. In the Middle Ages renewal meant re-sourcing: returning to an earlier, better form. Since the monks knew that their lifestyle was rooted in that of hermits, they chose this as the way to renew monastic life. The new hermits of the 11th and 12th centuries wanted to emulate and resuscitate the model of the early apostolic church (*vita apostolica*) and the first monks. To this end they were looking for a good rule of life and strict discipline. In this search hermitic life was a means, not an end. The reversion to that lifestyle was temporary and was meant to effect a return to a disciplined, authentic form of community life.[22]

In most instances that was what happened: the monastic experiments duly dropped the eremitic element and the accent on solitude and adopted a new form of organised community life, which left considerable scope for silence, but not for solitude. Occasions for silence were demarcated in time, not space. In other words, monks and nuns were not physically alone, but at certain times they were 'on their own', namely times of day set aside for silence, reading and personal prayer. But they spent these moments of silence in places simultaneously occupied by others.

In the Carthusian order, however, the monastic experiment culminated in a radically different lifestyle, in which – in contrast to other monastic traditions – physical solitude acquired overriding significance. Among them not only times for being 'on one's own' were delimited, as in other orders born of the monastic revival of the high Middle Ages. Carthusians were also actually and physically alone a lot of the time. Hence among the entire range of monastic families in the Christian West the Carthusian tradition is the most eremitic and in that variegated world it is the most organised form of hermitic life. With some justice Duby calls it, as mentioned already, the least anarchistic form of the widespread desire for solitude in Bruno's day.

[20] Giovanni Tabacco (Ed.), *Petrus Damiani: Vita beati Romualdi*, Rome 1957 (Fonti per le Storia d'Italia 94), 78.

[21] Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the new monasticism: A study of religious communities in Western Europe, 1000-1150*, London 1984.

[22] Leyser, *Hermits*, 22.

The radicalisation of monastic life entailed by this Carthusian focus on solitude becomes evident if we trace the changing meaning of the word '*cella*'. In early monasticism the word, derived from the Greek '*kellia*' or '*kellion*', signified the individual, secluded residence of hermit monks: a hut or cave in which a person lived by himself.[23] In the *Rule of St Benedict*, however, it regularly refers to places where monks live together. Thus the dormitory – 'if possible all are to sleep in one place' – is called *cella* (RB 22,3-4), like the quarters where the nurse lived with indisposed brothers (RB 36,7). Guest quarters (RB 53,21; 58,4) and those of novices (RB 58,5; 58,11), too, are called *cella*, as is the gatekeeper's lodge (RB 66,2). Among these spaces the porter's lodge was probably the only one where a monk could occasionally be alone. In short, rather than connoting the accommodation of a hermit, *cella* came to indicate places where monastic community life took place. In the early Middle Ages the word crops up frequently, for instance in chronicles and records, where it refers to an entire monastery. Initially it appears to have been confined to smaller houses – appendages, as it were, of larger abbeys, but big enough to accommodate at least six monks.[24] But eventually size no longer played a role and the name appears to have been applied to any monastery. Place names ending in -zell or -celle or starting with Kil- indicate settlements that developed at or near a monastery.[25]

In early Carthusian texts, on the other hand, the word '*cella*' regained its original meaning:[26] that of the space in which a monastic hermit was physically alone. In the *Consuetudines cartusiae*, the house practices of the Grande Chartreuse – written by Guigo I, fifth prior of the monastery, at the request of the priors and other Carthusians between 1121 and 1128 – the *cella* is the principal venue of the order's monastic life. It features in a great many of the eighty short chapters of the *Consuetudines*, as a rule casually in descriptions of diverse practical arrangements, but sometimes with explicit reference to the place where Carthusians must seek and hold on to their solitude. Chapter 31 even invokes a patristic maxim, also known from Athanasius's *Vita* of Anthony and the *Verba seniorum*, where it is attributed to both fathers Anthony and Moises:

[23] Louis Gougaud, ' Cellule', in: *DSp* 2 (1953), 396-400.

[24] Gougaud, 'Cellule', 396.

[25] Ibidem, and Karl Suso Frank, 'Cella', in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche.* Vol. 2, Freiburg etc. 1994, 987.

[26] Gaston Hocquard, 'Solitudo cellae', in: *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Age dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen*, Paris 1951, 323-331. Cf. also, by the same author, 'La solitude cartusienne d'après ses plus anciens témoins', in: *Bulletin des Facultés Catholiques de Lyon* 5 (1948), 5-15, and 'La solitude cartusienne et la cellule', in: *La Vie Spirituelle* (1950) no. 355, 227-240.

> The cell resident (*habitator cellae*) must zealously and carefully guard against devising or permitting pretexts to leave the cell, apart from the appointed occasions. He should rather regard the cell as equally necessary for his salvation and his life as water is to fish and the fold is to sheep. And the longer he remains there, the more he will love living there. But if he gets used to it and often leaves it for trivial reasons, he will soon come to hate it. He is therefore enjoined to request his needs at the appointed times and to conserve what he receives with great circumspection.[27]

The *cella* is the solitary abode in which Carthusians spend the greatest and most important part of their monastic life. They must cherish it and the solitude they experience there and not be driven from it for trifling reasons. Carthusians were once again the loners that the desert monks used to be.

Those who fulfilled special functions in the Charterhouse and were therefore compelled to leave their cells regularly, such as the prior and the procurator of the lower house, were advised to return as speedily as their business permitted to their cells, being the safest, most peaceful part of the harbour.[28] Bruno himself used the metaphor of a harbour several decades before to indicate the place of solitude that God's votaries should seek out. In a letter to his Reimian fellow canon Radulphus the Green, provost of the college at Reims, who also proposed opting for a solitary life, he urges him: 'flee, my brother, from these unending miseries and disturbances. Leave the raging storms of this world for the secure and quiet harbour of the port'.[29] And in a letter written to the brothers at Grande Chartreuse in about 1100, hence towards the end of his life, from his second establishment, the Charterhouse of La Torre in Calabria, he reiterates his counsel: 'Rejoice, for you have reached tranquil, safe anchorage in a sequestered harbour that many want to come to, and many strive arduously to reach without arriving there'.[30] Far from being a fearful threat, to Bruno and Guigo solitude had become a safe harbour.

Dynamic topography of solitude

The Carthusians' accent on solitude was not the result of an excessive striving for individuality in the modern sense of the word. Although a product of the discovery of individuality in the 11th and 12th centuries, the word had a different import

[27] Un Chartreux (= dom Maurice Laporte), *Guigues Ier, prieur de Chartreuse, Coutumes de Chartreuse*, Paris 1984 (SC 313), 232-233 – our translation; German translation in Posada, *Heilige Bruno*, 300. The last sentence can also be found in cap. 28,6.

[28] *Coutumes de Chartreuse*, 200-201 (cap. 16,2). Cf. cap. 15,4, 15,6 for the prior.

[29] Un Chartreux (= dom Maurice Laporte), *Lettres des premiers chartreux I: S. Bruno, Guigues, S. Anthelme*, Paris 1962 (SC 88), 74-75; Gisbert Greshake (Ed.), *Bruno, Guigo, Antelm: Epistulae Cartusianae, Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, Freiburg etc. 1992 (Fontes Christiani 10), 60-61.

[30] *Lettres des premiers chartreux*, 82-83; *Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, 70-71 (our translation).

from its modern meaning. In reactions to the previously cited book by Colin Morris it was pointed out correctly that individuals discovering themselves at that time did not conceive of themselves as the absolutely autonomous, unique beings that the modern concept of individuality conveys.[31] Individuals in the high Middle Ages did not regard themselves as independent, even atomistic persons that shape their lives according to their personal choice with as little impediment or obstacle as possible. They perceived themselves fundamentally in relation to others and the Other, whom they knew determined and constrained them. Their individuality was relational. In autobiographical writings, for instance, human beings look for knowledge of themselves as beings created in the image of God. The emergence of human individuality was in fact a movement towards God and the pursuit of self-knowledge ultimately served to bring them to knowledge of God.[32] That means that humans who discovered their 'selves' in the high Middle Ages even in their solitude were never alone. Just as the solitude of the knight errant was still characterised by encounters with others, with fairies and savages, so the solitude of the hermit and the Carthusian was marked by encounter with God. In other words, the Carthusian's solitude was not void: it was solitary togetherness. It meant being on one's own in order to be with God.

For to Carthusians the cell has never been purely a place for physical solitude. It forms part of what one could call a topography of solitude and introversion. This topography is marked by a centripetal dynamics, that is an inward movement directed to the centre.[33] This movement comprises three successive stages like concentric circles that focus the monk increasingly on the essence of his monastic life: the search for God. His solitary search is fundamentally a search for God. The three places where the Carthusian finds solitude are the Charterhouse, the cell and his inner being. All three are mentioned in chapter 20 of the *Consuetudines*, which deals with the poor and alms giving. There it says the Carthusians have not retreated to this 'sequestered desert' (*in huius heremi secessus*; 20,1) in order to see to the temporal welfare of others, but for the sake of their own souls' salvation; their vocation lies in their cells (*in cella mea*; 20,4); and they embark on it in their own inner selves (*in sinum suum*; 20,2). *Eremus,*

[31] Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Did the twelfth century discover the individual?', in: Idem, *Jesus as mother: Studies in the spirituality of the high Middle Ages*, Berkeley etc. 1982, 82-109; S. Bagge, 'The autobiography of Abelard and medieval individualism', in: *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993), 327-350; Aaron Gurevich, *The origins of European individualism*, Oxford-Cambridge 1995.

[32] Trudy Lemmers, *Guibert van Nogents Monodiae: Een twaalfde-eeuwse visie op kerkelijk leiderschap*, Hilversum 1998, 66.

[33] This images derives from the study by Bruno Rieder, *Deus locum dabit: Studien zur Theologie des Kartäuserpriors Guigo I. (1083-1136)*, Paderborn etc. 1997, 192.

cella and *sinus*; in other words, Charterhouse, cell and inner self: these are the three locations in the dynamic topography of Carthusian solitude.

The largest circle in the dynamics of solitude is the Charterhouse, the monastic complex separated from the world by a wall. That is what Bruno and Guigo call a safe harbour. Another metaphor is that of the wilderness, the *(h)eremus*. That is what Bruno, in his letter to Radulphus, calls the place in Calabria where he lived 'with some brethren, some of whom are very well educated and they are keeping assiduous watch for their Lord, so as to open to him at once when he knocks'. This place, this wilderness, is 'far removed from habitation'.[34] In the *Consuetudines* Guigo, too, regularly uses the word '*(h)eremus*' to designate the Charterhouse.[35] It constitutes the infrastructure for the monk's solitary introversion. The distinctive architecture of the monastery serves to protect the Carthusians' solitude and should make it possible for them to be enticed from their cells as seldom as possible. Guigo I's *Consuetudines Cartusiae* contains practical arrangements that should ensure this as much as is feasible. It has implications for Carthusian liturgy, which is conducted in a way that interferes minimally with the hermitic character of their monastic life. The basic rule in this regard appears in chapter 14 of the *Consuetudines*: 'Mass is rarely sung here, since it is our principal object and intention to be free to enjoy silence and solitude in our cells, according to the words of Jerjemiah: "sit alone in silence"'.[36] This rule led to the assumption that in the initial period Carthusians celebrated mass only on Sundays and feast days. Daily mass was not introduced until 1222. In addition, from the outset right up to the present, a major part of the weekday offices were said by the monks in their own cells.

In other respects, too, Carthusian liturgy was (and is) marked by peculiarities stemming from a desire to safeguard the hermitic character of their lifestyle. In the *Consuetudines*, for example, Guigo I rejects all processions, because they are not compatible with the gravity of hermitic life (*eremitica gravitas*).[37] Carthusian liturgy is equally austere as regards the number of officiants, liturgical postures, form of the opening and closing rites of the eucharist, and the composition of the liturgical calendar. All these features have to do with the desire to preserve their introverted, solitary way of life.[38]

[34] *Lettres des premiers chartreux*, 68-69; *Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, 56-57.

[35] Nine times in all: 15,4; 19,1; 20,1; 23,1; 41,1; 41,2; 74,1; 78,1; 97,3.

[36] *Coutumes*, 196-197; Posada, *Heilige Bruno*, 288 (our translation).

[37] *Consuetudines Cartusiae* 6.1. From the 16th century onwards, however, certain processions did become parts of Carthusian liturgy. For Guigo's rejection of processions, also see Rieder, *Deus locum dabit*, 207-212.

[38] Peter J.A. Nissen, *Signum Contemplationis: History and revision of the Carthusian liturgy*, Salzburg 1999 (Analecta Cartusiana 140), 89-104.

The heart of a Charterhouse, as is evident from the foregoing, is the cells of the individual monks. They represent the second stage in the dynamic topography of Carthusian spirituality. In early Carthusian texts they are commended in every possible way as the place where a Carthusian is at home, as the actual workplace of spiritual life. Guigo I's *Consuetudines* ends with a long eulogy to solitude, which is in fact a eulogy to the *cella*.[39] In it Guigo summarises a series of revered models, all of whom sought solitude: from Isaac via Moses and the prophets to John the Baptist and Jesus, emulated in their turn by the monastic fathers Paul (of Thebes), Anthony, Hilary and Benedict.[40] What solitude gave all these models, Guigo avers, is the very value that is supreme in our way of life: peace, seclusion, silence and a longing for heavenly things.[41]

Round 1190 the British Carthusian Adam Scotus, also know as Adam of Dryburgh, a former Premonstratensian, wrote a book on the 'fourfold exercise of the cell' (*Liber de quadripertito exercitio cellae*).[42] Among the three great advantages that he sought in Carthusianism – sound external practice (call it ascèticism), total rejection of the world and the constant solitude of the cell – he saw the latter as indubitably the greatest.[43] Adam does not even hesitate to expound the diminutive *cellula* as a contraction of *caeli aula*: the cell is a forecourt of heaven.[44] To Bruno it was the place where Carthusians 'can acquire the eye that wounds the Bridegroom with love, by the limpidity of its gaze, and whose purity allows them to see God himself'. There, in his cell, the Carthusian devotes himself to a 'busy leisure' (*otium negotiosum*) and 'rest in quiet activity' (*in quieta actione*).[45] The image of *otium negotiosum* also occurs in a short letter on the solitary life that Guigo I wrote to an unknown friend.[46]

Even though Bruno himself used the image of paradise for the place of solitude, he was fully aware that the solitude of the cell was also a battleground. But those who came through 'the stern struggle' received the athlete's reward: 'a peace

[39] *Coutumes*, 286-295; Posada, *Heilige Bruno*, 317-319.

[40] For a commentary on the series of models, see Gordon Mursell, *The theology of the Carthusian life in the writings of St. Bruno and Guigo I*, Salzburg 1988 (Analecta Cartusiana 127), 208-212. Cf. also Rieder, *Deus locum dabit*, 160-162.

[41] *Coutumes*, 290-291: 'quies, solitudo, silentium et superiorum appetitio'.

[42] Published in PL 153, 799-884, but there still ascribed to Guigo II. For the attribution to Adam, see A. Wilmart, 'Magister Adam Cartusiensis', in: *Mélanges Mandonnet*, Paris 1930, II, 145-161.

[43] PL 153, 806: 'probabilis externa exercitatio, jugis cellae solitudo, perfecta saeculi abjectio'.

[44] PL 153, 810. William of Saint-Thierry was to apply a similar etymology in his letter to the Carthusians of Mont-Dieu, *Epistola ad Fratres de Monte Dei*, cap. 19.

[45] *Lettres des premiers chartreux*, 70-71; *Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, 58-59.

[46] *Lettres des premiers chartreux*, 144-145; *Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, 106-107: 'sic est continua in otio, quod nunquam est otiosa'.

unknown to the world and joy in the Holy Spirit'.[47] Carthusians survive the struggle, Adam Scotus maintains, through the discipline of meditation. Although the monks actually practise it in the physical confines of their cells, in reality and ultimately it is enacted in the third location of the Carthusian topography of solitude: the inner self. In the final analysis, after all, the solitude of the cell serves the purpose of introversion. As Bruno puts it, the monk can immerse himself in his inner self or 'return' to it (*redire in se*) and 'live by himself' (*habitare secum*).[48] The outward cell then becomes an inward cell, an expression used by both Adam Scotus and William of Saint-Thierry in his letter to the Carthusians of Mont-Dieu.[49] The Carthusian's solitary place, like those in other religious traditions, is the place of encounter with God.[50] For, says Adam Scotus, the Carthusian is not alone in his solitude: he enters it in the intimacy of God's presence.[51]

In this third stage of the dynamic topography of solitude the inward movement changes into a paradoxical dynamics: introversion or descending into one's inner depths simultaneously becomes an extroverted movement of being lifted up beyond the self. In the *Consuetudines* Guigo expresses it in a paraphrase of Lamentations 3:28: 'he sits alone in silence, and raises himself above the self'.[52] Then the Carthusian is swept up in the dynamics of God's love. Being touched by this love is what Bruno wishes his friend Radulphus: 'I could only wish, brother, that you too, had such an exclusive love for her, so that lost in her embrace, you burned with divine love. If only a love like this would take possession of you!'[53] In this fiery love encounter the dynamic topography of solitude finds its consummation. That is when blessed solitude brings the sole salvation.

[47] *Lettres des premiers chartreux*, 70-71; *Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, 58-59.

[48] Ibidem. The image of 'living on one's own' derives from the biography of Benedict in the second book of *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great.

[49] PL 153, 810; *Epistula ad Fratres de Monte Dei*, cap. 52.

[50] Udo Tworuschka, *Die Einsamkeit. Eine religionsphänomenologische Untersuchung*, Bonn 1974, 322-328.

[51] PL 153, 850-851.

[52] *Coutumes*, 290-291; Posada, *Heilige Bruno*, 318 [our translation]. In the Vulgate the text reads: *sedebit solitarius et tacebit quia levavit super se*. For the importance of this verse in Guigo I's work, see Rieder, *Deus locum dabit*, 170-176 en 206-207.

[53] *Lettres des premiers chartreux*, 72-73; *Frühe Kartäuserbriefe*, 58-59.