

# A Note on the Origins and Subsequent History of *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*

by

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As we turn the page to a new chapter in the history of *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* with a change of editorship, it seems appropriate to reflect on the genesis of this journal's thirty-eight years of existence. In 1965 the Board of Directors of *Collectanea, O.C.R.* (which first appeared in 1934, commemorating the eight hundredth anniversary of the death of Saint Stephen Harding) decided to separate the articles in English from those in French and have two journals. At first the idea was to have the same articles in both reviews, but soon it was felt better to have original articles as well as translations in English in *Cistercian Studies* and articles in French in the newly named *Collectanea Cisterciensia*. The first suggested choice of an editor for the English journal was Thomas Merton, but in August of 1965, after many years of desiring a more eremitical form of life, Fr. Louis was granted permission to live fulltime in a hermitage at Gethsemani, and so his abbot of many years, Dom James Fox, felt this special vocation precluded him from being editor of the journal.

The first issue of *Cistercian Studies* appeared in the fall of 1966 (only two numbers were published in that year), describing itself as a "quarterly review dealing with monastic spirituality published in collaboration with *Collectanea Cisterciensia*," under the editorship of Dom Samson (James) Wicksteed, abbot of Caldey Abbey in Wales, and under the administration of Fr. Charles Dumont. In addition to Dom Wicksteed, the editorial board consisted of Dom André Louf, Dom John Morson, Dom André Fracheboud, and Fr. Maur Standaert.

The table of contents of this first number of *Cistercian Studies* (Volume 1, 1966:1) reads as follows:

1. The Purpose of a Monastic Review—*André Louf*
2. The Biblical Foundations of Monasticism—*Claude Peifer*
3. The Theology of Silence in Adam of Perseigne—*Basil De Pinto*
4. The Heritage of Celtic Monasticism—*Patrick Hart*
5. The Rule of Saint Benedict and the Contemplative Life—*Adalbert de Vogüé*
6. *Poenitentiam agere*: A Study of Penance in Monastic-Patristic Writings—*James McMurry*

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7. Saint Bernard on Spiritual Joy—*Conrad Greenia*
8. Bonhoeffer and Monastic Life—*John Morson*
9. Book Review (Josef Pieper: *In Tune with the World*)—*Louis Merton*

The printing was done on letter-press by Bertrand Hoste of “De Windroos” in Beernem, Belgium and continued to be printed by this excellent firm even after the journal was transferred to the United States in 1981, following the resignation of Dom James Wicksteed, the death of Fr. Aelred Williams, and a short interim editorship by Br. Richard Summers of Caldey.

In 1981 Abbot Thomas Davis of New Clairvaux Abbey in California, who was president of the United States Region, was approached by Frs. Charles Dumont and Maur Standaert regarding the possibility of *Cistercian Studies* being published in the States. At first it was considered a possibility to have it edited at New Clairvaux Abbey, but after some consultation in the Region it was finally decided to bring it to the Abbey of Gethsemani with Br. Patrick Hart as editor. There it remained for the next decade.

Abbot Timothy Kelly took a lively interest in the journal and marshaled an impressive editorial board consisting of Fr. Michael Casey of Tarrawarra Abbey in Australia, Sister Elizabeth Conner of St. Romuald's in Canada, and Fr. Cornelius Justice of Mount Melleray in Ireland. In this way the English-speaking Cistercian world was represented. Several monks of Saint Joseph's Abbey at Spencer handled the financial administration during these years.

After ten years of operation at Gethsemani, it became necessary to find a new editor and home for the journal. The name was changed to *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, since there was a conflict with the Cistercian Studies Series published by Cistercian Publications at Kalamazoo. In 1991, the journal under the new title was transferred to New Clairvaux Abbey with Fr. John-Baptist Porter as editor. At this time a new advisory board was chosen, including some previous members but adding a number of well-known lay Cistercian scholars from the universities both in this country and abroad. Sister Sheryl Frances Chen of Santa Rita Abbey undertook the financial administration during this period. After several years, when she transferred to Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey in Dubuque, Iowa, the administration was moved to that abbey, where it has remained.

After four years of New Clairvaux sponsorship the journal was taken over by Holy Trinity Abbey at Huntsville, Utah, under Fr. Charles Cummings's editorship, with Dr. Marsha L. Dutton as associate editor and Dr. Michael Downey as book review editor (Sister Colman O'Dell replaced him after a couple of years). In 1997, Denise Levertov became the poetry editor of *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, followed in subsequent years by Dr. Charles Fishman and Sr. Bernardette McCarrick, RSM. In 2002, the journal made a full circle, returning to Gethsemani under the joint editorship of Fr. Charles Cummings and Br. Patrick Hart during the interim period preceding the General Chapter in October 2002, during which Br. Elias Dietz was chosen to be the new editor of the journal. He had just completed four years of service as the abbot

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general's secretary. He took over the helm beginning with the first number of 2003, which turns out to be the 850th anniversary of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's death. Dr. Marsha L. Dutton continues to be associate editor with Br. Patrick Hart as book review editor and Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey providing the indispensable service of financial administration.

In the opening article of the first number of *Cistercian Studies* in 1966 Dom André Louf wrote insightfully in regard to the purpose of a monastic review, concluding with the following paragraph:

From now on, therefore, the Review will necessarily have as its prime object the inner life—one might say, the theological life—of contemporary monasticism, with its problems and its hopes. There, it will listen to the requests of the Spirit, will welcome them, and try to formulate them and make them heard. It will be dull and insipid to our taste if we do not read in it what we have most at heart . . . if it does not hand on to us the living Word for which the monk has left all things.

May *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* continue to show forth that spirit in the years to come.

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