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ST. ALBERT'S BROTHER HENRY OF LAUINGEN O.P.

BY
JOHN B. FREED

Nearly fifty years ago, Heribert Christian Scheeben established in his biography of Albertus Magnus, written in conjunction with Albert's canonization in 1931, that the saint did not belong to a comital family named Bollstadt, a non-existent title in the thirteenth century, but rather that he referred to himself both in documents and on his first seal as Albert of Lauingen¹. He identified himself in 1251, for instance, as "Frater Albertus de Loginge, lector fratrum domus ordinis Predicatorum in Colonia"². In his old age Albert recalled how he had observed as a boy in his hometown large schools of fish in the Danube³. Lauingen is situated on the Danube; Bollstadt is not. Moreover, the Dominican historians, Henry of Herford (d. 1370)⁴ and Johannes Meyer (1422-1485)⁵, described Albert as a Swabian of knightly origin, born in Lauingen in the diocese of Augsburg. It was apparently Rudolph of Nijmegen in the *Legenda litteralis Alberti Magni* (Cologne 1490), who first connected Albert with Bollstadt, perhaps because a Hans Lauinger, a burgher of Nördlingen, had purchased property in the nearby town of Bollstadt in 1409⁶. If Albert had been linked in any way with Bollstadt, there is no obvious reason why he should have so consistently associated himself with Lauingen, which is located thirty

¹ Heribert Christian Scheeben, *Albertus Magnus* (Bonn 1932), pp. 20-21. Henceforth referred to as *Albertus Magnus*. The scholarly apparatus was published separately in Scheeben's *Albert der Grosse: Zur Chronologie seines Lebens, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland*, 27 (Leipzig 1931), pp. 4-7. Henceforth referred to as *Chronologie*.

² *Oorkondenboek van het Sticht Utrecht tot 1301*, ed. F. Ketner (The Hague 1949), III, n. 1240.

³ Scheeben, *Albertus Magnus* (n. 1 above), p. 22.

⁴ Henry of Herford, *Liber de rebus memorabilioribus sive chronicon Henrici de Hervordia*, ed. August Potthast (Göttingen 1859), p. 201.

⁵ Scheeben, *Chronologie* (n. 1 above), Anhang, n. 26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

kilometers away. In spite of Scheeben's work, the idea persists that Albert was the scion of a noble family named Bollstadt ⁷.

The designation Lauingen can refer either to Albert's birthplace or to his family. Scheeben opted for the former alternative since he could find no family named Lauingen ⁸. In actual fact there were a number of prominent burghers in Augsburg and Donauwörth who called themselves Lauingen in the thirteenth century. In 1280 the Lord Marqwart of Lauingen purchased from the imperial ministerial Henry of Stauffen some tithes which the Lord Hartmann the Bavarian of Lauingen had previously held in fief from Henry. The Lord Henry the Elder of Lauingen headed the witness list ⁹. In 1290 Marqwart was among the burghers of Augsburg who obtained from Bishop Wolfhard (1288-1302) a confirmation of the city's privileges ¹⁰. Marqwart was dead by 1318 ¹¹. A Henry of Lauingen, perhaps the same man who witnessed the transaction involving Marqwart, was specifically called a burgher of Donauwörth in 1280 ¹². He may well have been identical with the Henry of Lauingen who witnessed in 1253 in Donauwörth the gift of some property to the Cistercian nuns in Zimmern ¹³. A Walter of Lauingen was already associated with Donauwörth in the 1230s ¹⁴. Albert presumably could have watched the behavior of fish in the Danube at Donauwörth as well as in Lauingen. In that case Lauingen would have been his surname rather than the name of his birthplace.

Henry of Herford's and Johannes Meyer's assertion that Albert belonged to a knightly family makes it virtually certain that Albert was not a nobleman since nobles were generally described in thirteenth-century German documents as *nobiles*, while *miles* was reserved for the non-noble ministerials and burghers who had adopted a knightly life

⁷ See, for instance, John W. Baldwin, *The Scholastic Culture of the Middle Ages, 1000-1300* (Lexington, Massachusetts 1971), p. 2. Baldwin writes: "Albert the Great was a son of the Swabian counts of Bollstädt (sic)...".

⁸ Scheeben, *Albertus Magnus* (n. 1 above), pp. 20-21; and *Chronologie* (n. 1 above), p. 6.

⁹ *Die Urkunden des Hochstifts Augsburg 769-1420*, ed. Walther E. Vock, Schwäbische Forschungsgemeinschaft bei der Kommission für bayerische Landesgeschichte, Reihe 2a, *Urkunden und Regesten 7* (Augsburg 1959), nn. 114, 115.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 141.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, n. 220.

¹² *Württembergisches Urkundenbuch*, 11 volumes (Stuttgart 1849-1913), 8, n. 2949.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5, n. 1249.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11, *Nachtrag*, n. 5575.

style¹⁵. Indeed, in southeastern Germany, especially in the duchy of Austria, *miles* became the standard designation for the servile vassal of a ministerial¹⁶. If Albert had been a nobleman who had joined an order committed to a life of apostolic poverty, it is not likely that later Dominican hagiographers would have forgotten or overlooked this fact. The persistent tradition that Albert was of knightly ancestry receives some support from the fact that a Henry of Lauingen was the commander of the Knights Hospitalers in Mergentheim between 1285 and 1296¹⁷. Scheeben himself concluded from this fragmentary evidence that « Der Vater Alberts war also wohl Beamter in Diensten der Staufer und verwaltete für sie das Lauinger Lehen »¹⁸. The description of Albert's father as a *Beamter* is anachronistic; ministerial would be more appropriate. This evidence is not as contradictory as it seems since it has been repeatedly demonstrated that many German patrician families were of ministerial origin¹⁹. Members of a Hohenstaufen ministerial family in Lauingen could thus very well have become burghers in Augsburg and/or Donauwörth. It is of course impossible to tell, given the nature of the evidence, where precisely Albert himself fits in.

Albert had a brother named Henry, who was the prior of the Würzburg Dominicans, when Albert appointed him in 1278 as one of the executors of his will²⁰. It was presumably Henry who negotiated the following year an agreement with the city council of Würzburg permitting the friars to enlarge the area they had at their disposal for preaching²¹, an indication that Henry, like Albert in Cologne²², had established a friendly working relationship with the municipal authorities.

¹⁵ John B. Freed, "The Origins of the European Nobility: The Problem of the Ministerials", *Viator* 7 (1976), 228-229, 232.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹⁷ *Hohenlohisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. Karl Weller (Stuttgart 1899), 1, nn. 456, 462, 582.

¹⁸ Scheeben, *Albertus Magnus* (n. 1 above), p. 20.

¹⁹ Freed, "Origins" (n. 15 above), 233-237.

²⁰ Gabriel M. Löhr, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des kölnen Dominikanerklosters im Mittelalter*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland, 16-17 (Leipzig 1922), n. 58.

²¹ *Urkundenregesten zur Geschichte der Stadt Würzburg (1201-1401)*, (Regesta Herbipolensia, I.), ed. Wilhelm Engel, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg*, 5 (Würzburg 1952), n. 45.

²² John B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century*, *The Mediaeval Academy of America*, Publication n. 86 (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1977), pp. 99-105.

Like Albert, Henry had adopted Lauingen as a surname. In 1274 a Dominican, Hainrich de Lougingen, witnessed a charter for the Dominican nunnery in Rothenburg²³, which was at that time under the supervision of the Würzburg Dominicans²⁴. There is one other possible reference to Henry. On December 4, 1264, Albert settled a dispute in Würzburg between the collegiate church of St. John's in Haug and its advocate, Godfrey of Hohenlohe. Among the witnesses were three Dominicans: the prior and brothers Henry and John²⁵. Scheeben suggested that this Henry was Albert's brother and that Albert may have chosen to live in Würzburg between 1264 and 1267 in order to be close to his brother²⁶. This is all the definite evidence we possess about the Dominican, Henry of Lauingen. The remainder of this paper will be concerned about providing some possible additional information about him, which may indirectly shed some more light on Albert's familial background.

Between August 1232 and February 1241, a secular canon, Master Henry of Lauingen, witnessed a number of charters for Archbishop Eberhard II of Salzburg (1200-1246)²⁷. This Henry was a member of the collegiate church of St. Bartholomew's in Friesach, Carinthia²⁸, which had been founded by Archbishop Adalbert III (1168-1177, 1183-1200) sometime between 1183 and 1187²⁹. Master Henry of

²³ Hohenlohisches Urkundenbuch (n. 17 above), 1, n. 344.

²⁴ Hieronymus Wilms, *Das älteste Verzeichnis der deutschen Dominikanerinnenklöster, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland*, 24 (Leipzig 1928), pp. 69-70.

²⁵ Hohenlohisches Urkundenbuch (n. 17 above), 1, n. 289.

²⁶ Scheeben, *Chronologie* (n. 1 above), p. 78. Referring to the document cited in the previous footnote, Scheeben called Henry the prior of the Würzburg convent in 1264; but this is clearly wrong since the witness list reads: « prior, frater Henricus et frater Johannes ordinis fratrum Predicatorum ». In addition, we know that an Arnold was the prior of the Würzburg Dominicans the following year. Scheeben, *Chronologie*, Anhang, n. 7. Actually, Scheeben contradicted himself in identifying this Henry as Albert's brother. On p. 7, fn. 27, he denied the identity.

²⁷ *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, ed. Willibald Hauthaler and Franz Martin, 4 vols. (Salzburg 1898-1933), III, nn. 860c, 885, 907, 910, 963, 967.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, nn. 885, 963.

²⁹ Innocent III indicated that Archbishop Adalbert had founded the collegiate church, to which he had given a hospital which had belonged to Admont. *Ibid.*, n. 535. Adalbert had compensated Admont for the loss of the hospital on December 15, 1187. *Ibid.*, II, n. 447. Thus the foundation of St. Bartholomew's could only have occurred before that date. Adalbert was first elected as archbishop in 1168, but proved unable to maintain his position in the archdiocese during the Alexandrine

Lauingen should not be confused with a contemporary member of the same house, Master Henry, the archiepiscopal notary and scholastic³⁰. As a member of the court of Archbishop Eberhard³¹, Henry accompanied the archbishop on his journeys through the archdiocese and witnessed charters in Friesach³², Krieglach in the Mürz Valley in Styria³³, Leibnitz, Styria³⁴, Brežice, Yugoslavia³⁵, and Salzburg itself³⁶. There is no way of knowing for certain that the Friesach canon was the same person as the prior of the Würzburg Dominicans, but the brother of Albertus Magnus, who had joined the Dominicans in Padua in 1229³⁷, could very well have been by 1232 a secular canon in Friesach. In addition, it is likely that the prior of a major Dominican house, let alone the brother of St. Albert, would have been a university graduate. Since it is hard to believe that there would have been two contemporary university graduates named Henry of Lauingen, especially since a German cleric had to go to France, Italy, or England to obtain a university education in the thirteenth century, it seems more probable than not that the secular canon and the Dominican prior were the same person. If the canon of St. Bartholomew's was Albert's brother, he probably joined the Dominican house in Friesach, the oldest convent in the province of Teutonia³⁸. The only other priory in the archbishopric in the 1240s was Pettau, now Ptuj, Yugoslavia; the nearest German houses outside the archbishopric were Regensburg, Krems, and Vienna³⁹.

Schism; and at the peace negotiations in Venice in 1177, he was replaced as archbishop by Cardinal Conrad of Wittelsbach, the exiled archbishop of Mainz. After Conrad was transferred to Mainz in 1183, Adalbert regained his former dignity. It seems likely that Adalbert was only in a position to found a collegiate church during his second tenure as archbishop. See Hans Widmann, *Geschichte Salzburgs*, 3 vols., *Deutsche Landesgeschichten*, 9 (Gotha 1907-1914), 1, 272-278.

³⁰ *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, III, nn. 967, 1072-1074, 1099, 1100a. It is clear that the two men were not identical because in n. 967 both Master Henry of Lauingen and Master Henry, a canon in Friesach and the archiepiscopal notary, appeared as witnessed in the same charter. It is not clear which Master Henry, canon of Friesach, witnesses n. 840 in 1229.

³¹ He was specifically called a member of the archbishop's curia in n. 885.

³² *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, III, nn. 915, 963.

³³ *Ibid.*, n. 885.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 907.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 967.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 910.

³⁷ Scheeben, *Albertus Magnus*, (n. 1 above), p. 36.

³⁸ Freed, *Friars* (n. 22 above), p. 32.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-214.

We can only speculate why a man born in the diocese of Augsburg, which was not even part of the metropolitan province of Salzburg, should have become a canon in Friesach, Carinthia. The best explanation is, perhaps, that a university graduate who belonged to a petty ministerial family found employment wherever he could. Henry may have been especially attracted to Salzburg because Archbishop Eberhard was himself a Swabian, a member of the noble family of Regensburg in the Thurgau⁴⁰ and a staunch imperialist⁴¹, a consideration which may have been of some significance to a Hohenstaufen ministerial.

Another factor may also have influenced Henry's decision to go to the archdiocese. There is one other tantalizing reference to a native of Lauingen in the Salzburg sources. In approximately 1176 in Laufen, Upper Bavaria, Counts Albert III of Bogen and Liutold III of Plain handed over to Liutold's father, Count Liutold II, some property located northwest of Petzenkirchen on the Erlaf in Lower Austria. Liutold II was expected in turn to give it to the Benedictine monastery of Michaelbeuern, situated about twenty-three kilometers north of Salzburg, for the benefit of the souls of Count Gebhard I of Burghausen, his wife Sophia, and their children. Before Liutold II carried out this commission, his wife Countess Ita, the daughter of Count Gebhard of Burghausen and the mother of Liutold III, gave her consent to the donation in the castle of Plain, which was situated west of Salzburg. Only then did Count Liutold II discharge his obligation in Michaelbeuern, where Gebhard was buried⁴². Michaelbeuern had been reformed in 1072 by Ita's ancestors, who had given their family monastery to the pope, while retaining the hereditary advocacy for themselves⁴³. The Plains acquired the advocacy at the beginning of the thirteenth century as part of Ita's inheritance⁴⁴. The intriguing thing from our point of

⁴⁰ Willibald Hauthaler, «Erzbischof Eberhard II. von Salzburg-nicht von 'Wald-burg', sondern von 'Regensburg'», *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für salzburger Landeskunde*, 29 (1889), 245-254.

⁴¹ Widmann, *Geschichte* (n. 29 above), 1, 293-315.

⁴² *Salzburger Urkundenbuch* (n. 30 above), I, Traditionen von Michaelbeuern, n. 85.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, n. 1. See also *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, II, n. 178, and III, n. 593.

⁴⁴ Count Conrad IV of Peilstein, a member of another branch of the family which had reformed the monastery in 1072, still possessed the advocacy in 1190. *Traditionen von Michaelbeuern*, n. 107. The first reference to the Plains as advocates of Michaelbeuern occurred in 1213. *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, III, n. 661. For further information about Michaelbeuern, see Michael Filz, *Geschichte des salzburgischen Benedictiner-Stiftes Michaelbeuern* (Salzburg 1833); and Beth

view about this particular gift by the Plains to Michaelbeuern is that a Henry of Lauingen, who could have been Albert's and Henry's father or grandfather, witnessed both Ita's consent to the donation in Plain and Liutold II's actual transfer of the property in Michaelbeuern.

It is hard to explain this isolated and unlikely reference to a Henry of Lauingen in the entourage of the counts of Plain in 1176, but it may be linked to the Plains' support of Frederick Barbarossa during the Alexandrine Schism. At the imperial diet which had convened at Laufen, north of Salzburg, on March 29, 1166, the emperor had enfeoffed various laymen, most notably the Plains, with the regalia of the Salzburg church and had outlawed the clergy of Salzburg, including Archbishop Conrad II (1164-1168), for adhering to Pope Alexander III⁴⁵. Frederick had assigned the execution of this judgment to Count Liutold II and his brother Henry, who had burned the city of Salzburg on April 4, 1167⁴⁶. It is conceivable that the Lauingens as Hohenstaufen ministerials had been part of the imperial entourage in Laufen and had established some sort of more personal contact with the counts of Plain during these tragic events. Henry of Lauingen could have married, for instance, a ministerial of the counts of Plain. It is noteworthy in this regard that Henry of Lauingen was listed as a witness in 1176 immediately after Conrad of Högel, who is definitely known to have been a Plain ministerial⁴⁷. Such a marriage would account for Henry of Lauingen's presence in Plain and Michaelbeuern. The fact that Hartmann of Lauingen was called the Bavarian in 1280⁴⁸ — Lauingen was only acquired by the dukes of Bavaria in the fourteenth century⁴⁹ — may provide some additional support for this theory about the Lauingens' Bavarian connection. Such a tie to the Plains would also help to explain why the Henry of Lauingen whom we have identified as probably being St. Albert's brother became a canon in Friesach. The grandfather of Count Liutold II and the first count of Plain was Werigand (d. 1122/

Roth, "The Monastery of Michaelbeuern and the Rise of the German Nobility", unpubl. diss. (Illinois State University 1977).

⁴⁵ Karl Schambach, « Der Prozess des Erzbischofs Konrad von Salzburg (1165-1166) », *Historische Zeitschrift*, 122 (1920), 83-90.

⁴⁶ Widmann, *Geschichte* (n. 29 above), 1, 267-272.

⁴⁷ *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, (n. 30 above), 1, Traditionen des Domcapitels, n. 291.

⁴⁸ See above p. 64.

⁴⁹ *Handbuch der bayerischen Geschichte*, ed. Max Spindler (Munich 1969), II, 503.

1123), a kinsman of St. Hemma, the founder of Gurk, and the advocate of that Carinthian bishopric ⁵⁰. The Plains were in other words the descendants of the most powerful noble clan in eleventh-century Carinthia. Henry of Lauingen could thus have procured a prebend in St. Bartholomew's either through the Plains' influence and/or conceivably because his own family as retainers of the Plains had acquired their own interests in Carinthia. Indeed, it is even remotely possible that the Lauingens' association with Bavaria was a minor factor in Albert's selection as bishop of Regensburg in 1260.

The nature of the evidence has inevitably made this a highly tentative and speculative article, and I do not pretend that it can be said with complete certainty that St. Albert and his brother Henry were in any way linked to the counts of Plain. Still, it is possible to draw two conclusions. The first is that the Dominican Order provided capable men of non-noble birth with an excellent opportunity to advance their own careers. This was especially true in Germany where many of the most prestigious ecclesiastical foundations were still closed to ministerials at the beginning of the thirteenth century ⁵¹. Whatever Henry of Lauingen's familial connections, educational qualifications, and personal abilities may have been, he had only managed to obtain a prebend in an insignificant collegiate church. As St. Albert's own career reveals, the Dominicans offered totally new opportunities for such educated clerics. It is thus not very surprising that the Bl. Jordan of Saxony won so many university students, many of whom undoubtedly were Jordan's fellow Germans, for the Order in the 1220s and 1230s ⁵². Albert was one of them. On the other hand, the Church and medieval society as a whole profited from the hitherto untapped talents of men like Albert and Henry. There is no need to mention St. Albert's accomplishments in the scholarly realm, but it is worth noting that friars of ministerial and/or patrician origin, as Albert and Henry of Lauingen apparently were, were peculiarly sensitive and sympathetic to the needs of the urban population. The success of the thirteenth-century Church in meeting and overcoming the heretical challenge was due in no small part to that simple fact.

⁵⁰ Heinz Dopsch, « Die Stifterfamilie des Klosters Gurk und ihre Verwandtschaft », Carinthia I. Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Landeskunde von Kärnten, 161 (1971), 115-117.

⁵¹ Aloys Schulte, *Der Adel und die deutsche Kirche im Mittelalter*, 3rd ed. (Darmstadt 1958), *passim*.

⁵² Freed, *Friars* (n. 22 above), pp. 124-125.