

Joseph Van House

**Alberic of Cîteaux**

DOI: [10.25716/amad-85340](https://doi.org/10.25716/amad-85340)

Lexikonartikel | Article in a reference book, 2022

**Empfohlene Zitierweise | Suggested Citation:**

Joseph Van House, Alberic of Cîteaux, in: Dictionary of Cistercian Saints, hrsg. von Mirko Breitenstein, Jörg Sonntag und Alkuin Schachenmayr, Frankfurt am Main: AMAD, 2022. DOI: [10.25716/amad-85340](https://doi.org/10.25716/amad-85340).



Dieses Werk ist lizenziert unter einer [Creative Commons Namensnennung - CC0 1.0 Universal \(CC0 1.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-CC0 1.0 Universal \(CC0 1.0\) Public Domain Dedication](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Gefördert durch

 Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft



hebis.

## **Alberic of Cîteaux** († 26 Jan 1108 or 1109)

1. Name variants: Albericus, Aubry

2. Places: Molesme, Cîteaux

3. Biography: “A learned man, well-versed in things divine and human, a lover of the Rule and the brethren,” (Exordium Parvum, chapter 9): A. may have been the main designer of the Cistercian way of life. He was the longtime prior under Abbot Robert at Molesme, where he was a driving force of monastic reform, to the point of being beaten and even imprisoned by resistant monks. He pushed hard for a group to secede and found a new monastery, obtaining his success with the departure of the abbot and 21 monks for Cîteaux in 1098. In the new location, A. continued as Robert’s prior for a little more than a year. After Robert and others returned to Molesme, the Cîteaux community chose A. in their first abbatial election. A. dispelled the uncertainties of turbulent beginnings and settled the Cistercian reform on firm foundations. He prohibited excesses in food and attire, safeguarded the solitude of the cloister, required work from all the monks, incorporated illiterate lay brothers into the monastic family, and firmly renounced regulation over churches, villages, and tithes as sources of income. He obtained papal protection for the new monastery, secured donations to ensure economic independence, built an abbey church, and cultivated the skills of Stephen Harding, his prior. Nevertheless, when A. died, Cîteaux had no foundations and vocations were scarce.

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: LENSSEN reports that epitaphs on the shared tomb of the first abbots of Cîteaux invoked their intercession. Today, a reliquary cabinet at Cîteaux contains mixed matter from the old cemetery and features an icon of the first three abbots.

b. Liturgical commemoration: 26 Jan; the pope first granted Alberic’s liturgical veneration to the Feuillants in 1701.

c. Patronage: Venerated with Robert of Molesme and Stephen Harding as co-founder of Cîteaux and the Cistercian order.

d. Attributes: White cowl and abbatial staff; holds the Abbey church of Cîteaux.

5. Fontes: Exordium Parvum, in: Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux, ed. C. WADDELL, Cîteaux 1999; Exordium Cistercii, in: Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux, ed. C. WADDELL, Cîteaux 1999; cf. also The Exordium Magnum, in: The Great Beginning of Cîteaux. A Narrative of the Beginning of the Cistercian Order, the Exordium Magnum of Conrad of Eberbach, Collegeville 2012, and the 12th c. Vita in: PL 157, 1269–1288; Das Leben des hl. Robert von Molesme. Eine Quelle zur Vorgeschichte von Cîteaux, ed. K. SPAHR, Freiburg 1944.

6. Literature: D.S. 1, Paris 1967, 276–277; DIP 1, Rome 1974–2003, 459; G. MÜLLER, Cîteaux under Alberic, transl. and adapted by B. LACKNER, Lafayette 2003; J.-B VAN DAMME, The Three Founders of Cîteaux, transl. N. GROVES, Kalamazoo 1998.

7. Illustrations: Alberic might be envisioned in early illustrations featuring a haloed abbot holding the church of Cîteaux (e.g. Cîteaux – Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 130, fol. 104, c. 1125) or the pope giving a bull to Cistercians (e.g. Cîteaux – Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 598, fol. 1, after 1342). Clear

images of a haloed Alberic become widespread around the end of the 15th c. (S. LENSSEN, *Hagiologium Cisterciense* 1, Tilburg 1948, 8). These often depict the legend, unattested by early sources, of Alberic's reception of the white cowl from the Virgin.

Joseph Van House