Cistercian Identity between Invention and Exploration: The Austrian Abbey Wilhering in the Nineteenth Century

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The Nineteenth Century Rediscovers Cistercians

By examining nineteenth-century vesting ceremonies for novices in Wilhering Abbey and placing the events in the context of contemporaneous discoveries about the Cistercian tradition, this article attempts to document a growing commitment to Cistercian identity among monks of the Common Observance. The developments in Wilhering, an Upper Austrian Abbey located on the Danube just eight kilometers west of the city of Linz, show how Cistercians were developing a monastic profile, step by step, in the course of a generation. Wilhering had been founded in 1146 and survived for seven centuries without being suppressed, but monastic observances like silence and enclosure had nonetheless been decimated by the Enlightenment and anti-monastic imperial decrees. Re-establishing a Cistercian identity at the abbey was a dynamic process subject to certain influential personalities in the community. These, in turn were influenced by paintings, the scholarly study of architecture, celebrating jubilees, and—perhaps most of all—new biographies of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

Paintings of abbey ruins by English and German artists, many of them Protestants, exerted a strong influence in the early nineteenth cen-

tury. Desolate monasteries depicted in the paintings of Joseph William Turner, John Constable, and David Caspar Friedrich grew in popularity.[1] Friedrich especially is famous for the monks he painted. Educated Europeans of both Christian denominations felt a certain duty to rejuvenate the desolate monastery grounds closed down by their forefathers. While it is true that in Austria, monasteries like Wilhering had survived the purges of the Reformation and Enlightenment, they had lost much of their monastic identity. Most Austrian Cistercians in the nineteenth century were parish priests living outside of their monasteries, and there were no nuns left at all.

Medieval architecture, in Wilhering at least, had been consistently adapted, covered up, or even replaced by a series of contemporary styles as the Austrian abbeys progressed in age and times changed. In the period from 1400 to 1800, not a few Cistercian abbots in Austria ordered the dismantling of medieval buildings in order to build new abbey churches and ever-grander representational spaces. As a result, a broader range of historical epochs and concomitant cultural profiles was available than in England or Northern Germany. In the Austrian tradition, a Cistercian was not necessarily a "medieval" person; he could also be understood as a theologically orthodox defender of the faith after the Reformation, or a conscientious priest and teacher belonging to an order, serving his parish according to Enlightenment ideals. Not all of these Cistercian identities, however, were equally attractive to the Romantics of the nineteenth century.

The 1800s were an era in which "emotional approaches and irrational mythical narratives"[2] were being applied to monastic sites. There was even a patriotic dimension in appreciating medieval architecture: it counted as part of the national patrimony for some, and this had its advantages. According to Jens Rüffer, patriotic motives encouraged a more profound engagement with the history of Cistercian monasteries. Historical societies and their journals, travel guides, and other visual and print media all played a role in the transferal of monastic "ideals" to a

1. Paul Zucker, "Ruins: An Aesthetic Hybrid," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20.2 (1961): 119–30, at 125–26.

2. Jens Rüffer, "Von der Ruine zum Denkmal. Die Klöster Lehnin und Chorin im 19. Jahrhundert," *Die Zisterzienser. Konzeptionen klösterlichen Lebens*, ed. Joachim Werz (Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner, 2017) 289–304, see esp. 299–304, quote at 299.

popular audience, which overlapped, as a group, with monastic readers. The increase in educated middle-class tourism certainly contributed to the popularization of the Cistercian heritage. In time, serious historical research followed.

After 1850, books about Cistercians appeared with ever-increasing frequency. Few of them fulfill our current expectations for historical analysis, but they exerted an influence on the self-perception of the Order. Towards the end of the century, the intensity of scholarly engagement increased. Several examples, explained below, will show that the authors achieved considerable results, even if they were often working in isolation and had limited access to archival sources.

Architectural history led the way. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) published a ten-volume encyclopedia of French medieval architecture with sophisticated illustrations, beginning in 1854. Edmund Sharpe (1809–1877) published an admirable book on Cistercian architecture in English in 1874.[3] Significantly, Viollet-le-Duc was responsible for the "restoration" of the abbey church of Vézelay monastery, completed in 1840. Vézelay, constructed in the 1100s, plays an eminent role in the reception history of Saint Bernard because it is the very place where the abbot of Clairvaux had called for more crusades. It is difficult to imagine in today's French politics, but Vézelay was the first restoration of a medieval church paid for with public funds by a secular government![4]

A second approach, common to France, Protestant Prussia, and Catholic Austria, was the patriotic reappraisal of the Cistercian tradition. The immensely productive diocesan priest and writer Sebastian Brunner (1814–1893), himself a graduate of a Benedictine school in Vienna, was devoted to studying monastic heritage. His anti-liberal views were accompanied by patriotic pride. Through his position as a preacher at the University Church in Vienna (1853–1856), the founding of Vienna's archdiocesan newspaper, and his networking in the conservative Catho-

3. E. E. Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, 10 vols. (Paris: Morel, 1854–1868); E. Sharpe, *The Architecture of the Cistercians*, 2 vols. (London: E. et F.N. Spon, 1874). Both are cited in Thomas Coomans, "Cistercian Architecture or Architecture of the Cistercians?" *Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, ed. Mette Birkedal Bruun (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013) 151–69 at 151 n 2.

4. "Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com; Annunziata Maria Oteri, "Viollet-le-Duc, l'Ottocento e noi," *ArcHistoR* 1 (2017): 6–29.

lic camp, Brunner reached many readers who liked his passionate rejection of the Enlightenment. Monasteries played a major symbolic role for Brunner: he particularly valued the old monastic orders and used them in his counter-program to Josephinism. He published monographs on Benedictines (1880), Cistercians (1881), and canons (1883). His work as a conveyer of monastic culture went far beyond history; he also wrote novels and art history. For decades, Brunner's works served as a popular transmission of monastic knowledge to a broad audience that included Cistercian priests and seminarians.[5]

The third influence is still active today. In 1889, Wettingen-Mehrerau Abbey founded the journal *Cistercienser-Chronik*. The periodical was the Cistercian response to the *Studien und Mitteilungen,* launched earlier (1880) by Benedictines. The Mehrerau periodical was edited for decades by Fr. Gregor Müller (1842–1934), and more than a century after its first issue it was still considered "indispensable for research on the history of the Order" and "a treasure trove for regional studies."[6] Many of the articles published in it on special questions of Cisterciensia remain unsurpassed in the secondary literature. Furthermore, older issues of the publication serve today as valuable primary sources, since they document news from the individual monasteries, be they members of the Common or the Strict Observance. Finally, the journal documents its own subscriber base, since payments and donations to the journal were conscientiously recorded by the editor. This makes it possible to check not only which monasteries subscribed to it, but also which pastors or theologians living outside of the abbeys.

Lastly, there were two jubilees in the decade before 1900 that contributed significantly to strengthening Cistercian identity. The 800th anniversary of Bernard's birth (1891) and the founding of Cîteaux (1898) generated considerable activity. In many places, veneration for Saint Bernard was deepened and made more popular as a result. As an example, consider the impact of a Bernard statue in a Dijon town square: French philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861–1949) witnessed the celebrations surrounding the unveiling of the statue and consequently read many works

5. Ernst Alker, "Sebastian Brunner," *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 2 (1955): 683f., www.deutsche-biographie.de.

6. Hermann Josef Roth, "100 Jahre Cistercienser-Chronik," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 27 (1992): 357–58, at 357.

by the Cistercian, whom he later called "the great teacher of the faith, the great mystic, the great man of action." And the liberal Protestant church historian Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) declared Bernard in this context to be "the religious genius of the twelfth century."[7]

The jubilees produced publications, among them the *Bibliographia Bernardina*, published in 1891 in Vienna by Leopold Janauschek (1827–1898). He was a monk of Zwettl Abbey who taught at the monastic seminary in Heiligenkreuz. Janauschek was already famous in Cistercian circles as the author of the monumental *Origines Cistercienses* (1877), a compilation of the filiation of all male Cistercian abbeys since the beginnings of the movement. Though no longer the last word in Cistercian research, the reference book remains unsurpassed in many respects to this day. Janauschek's Bernardine bibliography was equally ambitious. It aimed to cover all relevant publications up to the year 1890. It was 575 pages long. The result of contributions from 85 librarians and archivists, it included editions of Bernard's works, adaptations thereof, longer and shorter biographies, historical treatises on the saint, and prayers, litanies, hymns, songs, and visual art representing his life. The work listed 129 manuscripts and 2761 printed works on Bernard's work and person. In a review, a Cistercian writer called the work "a monument unique in its kind" and considered it a resource that was hitherto "unequaled in its layout and perfection." The printing of both of Janauschek's monuments—the *Origines* and the bibliography—was subsidized by Austrian Cistercian abbeys and sold for less than the usual commercial price.[8]

Janauschek was a scholar read by scholars, but popular biographies reached more readers. Théodore Ratisbonne's (1802–1884) extensive biography of Saint Bernard,[9] first published in France in 1840, was one of the most influential Cistercian books of its day. It was not the first Bernard biography in the nineteenth century, but certainly the most important internationally. Before Ratisbonne there was August Neander (1813) and after that Elphège Vacandard (1895), as well as other titles with smaller print runs.[10] Vacandard's opus surpassed all previous books on Bernard

7. Both quotes in Jean Leclercq, *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Entschiedenheit in Demut*, trans. Willy Helg, ed. Alberich Altermatt, Meister des Glaubens, vol. 3 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1991) 130.

8. "Cistercienser-Bibliothek," *Cistercienser-Chronik* 4 (1892): 94–95.

9. Théodore Ratisbonne, *Histoire de saint Bernard* (Paris: Périsse frères, 1840).

10. Elphège Vacandard, *Leben des Heiligen Bernard von Clairvaux,* trans. Matthias Sierp

in terms of historical clout, but Ratisbonne's work was more popular: it was published more often, translated into more languages, and reached a wider readership. In addition, readers were fascinated by Ratisbonne as a person. He was a convert from Judaism, became a priest, and had a zeal for the Catholic cause that can be compared to Saint Bernard's fervor. Accordingly, Ratisbonne's Bernard appeared as a fisher of souls and a fighter for the papal cause.

Shortly after the first French edition, Ratisbonne became even more famous when in 1842 his brother Alphonse converted to Catholicism. He too became a priest. The Ratisbonnes hailed from a prominent banking family. Many considered the brothers' conversion to confirm the Marian apparition in Paris concerning the Miraculous Medal in 1830.[11] Théodore had founded the women's congregation called Our Lady of Sion, whose main task was to lead Jews to Catholicism. They held dramatic group baptisms of Jews, with newspapers reporting on them. Coverage of the controversial Ratisbonnes was widespread in the years immediately before and after the German translations of Théodore's Bernard biography appeared in 1842–1845.[12] Saint Bernard's intense promotion of the Crusades matched the missionary zeal of the convert brothers, and some of the Cistercian saint's apostolic initiatives focused on the Holy Land, as did Ratisbonne's. For his book on Bernard, Théodore even received personal thanks from Pope Gregory XVI.[13]

There was not only one German translation of Ratisbonne's Bernard biography, there were two. Well-worn copies of the books are preserved in the novitiate libraries of many men's and women's monasteries in Austria to this day, particularly among the Cistercians.[14] The two translators—Carl Borromaeus Reiching (1853–1900) and Michael Sintzel (1804–1889)—curiously must have been working on their translations at the same time. Reiching also translated a biography of Saint Francis of

(Mainz: Kirchheim, 1897–1898).

11. A. Richartz, "Katharina Labouré," *Marienlexikon* 3 (1991): 699.

12. Thomas Kselman, "Turbulent Souls in Modern France: Jewish Conversion and the Terquem Affair," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 32.1 (2006): 83–104, at 92–93.

13. H. Wahle, "Alphonse Ratisbonne," *Marienlexikon* 5 (1993): 411; H. Wahle, "Théodore Ratisbonne," *Marienlexikon* 5 (1993): 411–12.

14. Marie-Joseph Louis Théodore Ratisbonne, *Geschichte des heiligen Bernhard,* trans. Carl Borromaeus Reiching (Tübingen: Laupp, 1843); M.-J. L. T. Ratisbonne, *Geschichte des heiligen Bernhard,* tr. from the second ed. by Michael Sintzel (Regensburg: G. Joseph Manz, 1843).

Assisi and Cardinal Manning's *Fabiola or the Church of the Catacombs,* and other biographies of famous medieval personalities and martyrs.[15] Reiching translated books of a similar style, accentuating Catholic missionary successes and the "great men" of the Curia. The other German translation of Ratisbonne's book was by Michael Sintzel, considered "the most prolific manufacturer of devotional and prayer books of the nineteenth century."[16]

Ratisbonne's portrayal of Saint Bernard clearly belongs to the literary category of devotional literature. It is tendentious at times, for example in his suggestion that the seventeenth-century abbot of La Trappe, Rancé, had inherited Bernard's charism for cultivating the true spirit of Saint Benedict's rule. Ratisbonne asserted that monastic observance at La Trappe Abbey "was most consistent, without contradiction, with the original spirit of the Benedictine Order." He describes rows of imposing monastic figures, uniform in liturgical (or is it martial?) rank and file. Ratisbonne argued that La Trappe was the school in which one learned how to become a Christian (1:306–7). Ratisbonne's objectivity as a source on Cistercian history is certainly questionable according to the standards of the current scholarship. Rancé is not considered to be the founder of the Strict Observance, and his atonement-focused spirituality is controversial. Some admire his style of monastic life, but it was not characteristically Benedictine or Cistercian.

Although Ratisbonne was not trained or qualified as a historian of the Cistercian movement, his book on Bernard must nevertheless be taken seriously. He cites an above-average number of sources and secondary literature that place him in a certain popular tradition, and he contributed to re-awakening traditional perceptions about the famous monastic movement. For example, there was the claim that Bernard's cowl was still—in the nineteenth century—"kept in the monastery of St. Victor in Paris" (1:304). The biography is not historically reliable from today's perspective, but it remains an immensely valuable orientation for understanding Bernard's position in French Romanticism and patriotism.[17] The

15. Andreas Wollbold, "Katholische Literatur, die man wirklich lesen kann," www.awollbold.de.

16. Heinrich Reusch, "Johann Michael Sintzel," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 34 (1892): 408; see www.deutsche-biographie.de.

17. Adriaan Bredero, *Bernhard von Clairvaux zwischen Kult und Historie* (Stuttgart: Franz

book's ten French editions and two German translations were firmly anchored in the libraries of Austrian monastic communities. Ratisbonne's popular account contributed to their search for a Cistercian identity.

Vacandard's two-volume Bernard biography appeared in French in 1895; the German translation followed in 1897.[18] A later expert on the works of Saint Bernard, Jean Leclercq (1911–1993), called Vacandard's book a "monument of scholarship."[19] It takes its place in a development that includes Viollet-le-Duc and his aesthetic lexicon, Sebastian Brunner and his anti-liberal patriotic books, and finally the initiatives of the *Cistercienser-Chronik* and the Janauschek reference books.

These resources and the ideals that inspired them were known to Cistercians in the roughly dozen Austrian abbeys that had survived, but the Austrian context was different from the French. The Strict Observance had never gained much of a foothold in Austria, although some Trappist books and periodicals made their way into Austrian monasteries. South German and Austrian Catholics, however, were familiar with an altogether different type of Cistercian: the Baroque monastic.[20] The Cistercian Father, often a parish priest or teacher, stood for continuity and tradition, but also for the historical ups and downs that had shaped monastic life for centuries. He did not necessarily fit into the Trappist mold described above.

DEVELOPMENTS AT WILHERING ABBEY

HOW DID THE fragmented European rediscovery of the Cistercian patrimony manifest itself in an ancient Austrian abbey on the Danube seven hundred years after its foundation? The following pages provide relatively rare archival evidence from the ceremonies of initiation into monastic life (homilies held during ceremonies in which novices were vested) and final departure from it (death notices).

Steiner Verlag, 1996) 157.

18. Elphège Vacandard, *Leben des Heiligen Bernard von Clairvaux,* trans. Matthias Sierp (Main: Kirchheim, 1897–1898).

19. Leclercq 130.

20. Hermann Josef Roth, "Die deutsche Spätromantik und die Mentalität der Zisterzienser," *Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses* 32 (1981): 289–304, at 304.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, references to a deceased order priest's religious order are rare in obituaries. Pre-printed forms with blanks to be filled out for death notices from the Cistercian monastery of Heiligenkreuz (Lower Austria), for instance, erroneously list the order abbreviations as "O.S.B." (used by Benedictines) after the name of the deceased monk's monastery. The forms were filled out and sent to other monasteries, but the O.S.B. error was crossed out.[21] When the prior and school prefect of the Cistercian Neukloster Abbey (Wiener Neustadt), Fr. Marian Stadler, died in 1826, he was given a three-page obituary. It contains not a single reference to the Cistercian Order, but the Jesuit school he had attended is mentioned. This shortcoming in Stadler's obituary is particularly striking because, although the notice refers to the exemplary character of the deceased, it never explicitly relates his personality traits to his existence as a monk; rather, Jesuits are mentioned as having been influential in his life. Neither the headings nor the location information in this death notice indicate that Stadler's home abbey was Cistercian.[22] The same applies to another death notice from Neukloster, dated 1831.[23] Such omissions also occur in Benedictine obituaries of the time, for example at Vienna's Schottenstift.[24]

Awareness of what it meant to be a Cistercian of the Common Observance began to change in the middle of the century, at least in Wilhering. The 1850 obituary for Wilhering's abbot Johannes Baptist Schober looks back on the day he was vested as a monk in 1801 and explains, "*Divi Patris Bernardi veste indutus est*" ("he was clothed with the robe of Holy Father Bernard").[25] The reference to Saint Bernard is a start. The death notice for Abbot Alois Dorfer, written in 1892, describes Dorfer's vesting (1829) with, "*humili prece S. Bernardi habitum petens*" ("praying humbly, he asked for the habit of Saint Bernard"). In another passage, the obituary writer describes the monastic life as "*continuum monasticae perfectionis*

21. Death notice for Konrad Schernberger. Hs. A 604, fol. 14, Archives Archabbey St. Peter, Salzburg.

22. Death notice for Marian Stadler, Hs. A 597b, fol. 133, Archives Archabbey St. Peter, Salzburg.

23. Hs. A 597b, fol. 134, Archives Archabbey St. Peter, Salzburg.

24. Hs. A 597b, fol. 150, Archives Archabbey St. Peter, Salzburg.

25. Death notice for J. B. Schober, Hs. A 599, fols. 152–53, Archives Archabbey St. Peter, Salzburg.

studium" ("a continued study of monastic perfection").[26] The times were clearly changing.

Dorfer served as abbot for more than forty years (1851–1892) and remained devoted to learning more about Cistercian heritage. Since the principles of filiation and visitation were particularly prominent in the first Cistercian era, Dorfer is said to have sought to emulate these administrative structures by encouraging more connections among Austrian abbeys. He was for the establishment of an Austrian Province for Cistercian abbeys in the Austrian monarchy in 1859; this province was not a proper filiation in the historical sense, but at least it was a unifying network.[27] The impetus for such reform measures, however, was not the search for genuine filiation. That would have meant regular abbatial visitation from the historical mother monasteries of Rein or Ebrach. Wilhering's ties to these monasteries had broken away centuries ago. Furthermore, the actual impetus for Wilhering's joining the Austrian Province in 1854 came from outside the Cistercian ranks, after a visitation in Wilhering held by the secular cleric August Hille (1786–1865). He was the bishop of the neighboring Diocese of Leitmeritz.

The second half of the nineteenth century brought several opportunities for Austrian monasteries to strengthen their identity.[28] A provincial chapter (not general chapter) in 1859 promoted Cistercian self-understanding, and the 1869 chapter in Rome was another step in that direction.[29] It was not until 1869—after 18 years of abbacy—that Dorfer established personal contact with the Cistercian Visitor General (or *Praeses*), Teobaldo Cesari.[30] Wilhering's ties to the administrative leadership of the Order strengthened even more when Leopold Wackarž, the abbot of the neighboring Cistercian Hohenfurth Abbey (Vyšší Brod), became

26. Death notice for Alois Dorfer, Hs. A 603, fol. 374, Archives Archabbey St. Peter, Salzburg.

27. 'P.M.' [Obituary], *Cistercienser-Chronik* (1892): 92–94.

28. Hans Bruno Schneider, "Neue Quellen zur Entstehung der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Zisterzienserkongregation (1849–1897)," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 42 (1986): 3–264.

29. Meinrad Josef Tomann, *Österreichische Zisterzienserkonstitutionen: Zeitdokumente einer Kongregation, ihre Geschichte und Entwicklung 1859–1984,* Heiligenkreuzer Studienreihe 6 (Heiligenkreuz, 1987).

30. Pius Maurer, "Generalabt Teobaldo Cesari (1804–1879), sein Leben und Wirken," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 63 (2013): 37–401.

abbot general in 1891.[31] The German-speaking Bohemian was 82 years old. Dorfer died just months after Wackarž took office.

The title Abbot General alternated with that of Vicar General. Neither of these titles was authentically Cistercian, but the office emerged as the Order struggled to find practicable modern administrative structures. This leadership position developed only centuries after the Cistercian movement started. All of the first three incumbents after 1800 (Cesari, Bartolini, and Wackarž) had to invent themselves to a certain degree. Especially as a leader of the Common Observance seeking cooperation with the predominantly francophone Strict Observance and (after 1892) with the newly-founded Trappist Order, the Common Observance abbot general was faced with particularly vexing challenges.[32]

Dorfer's obituary presents him as successful in implementing reform efforts, citing the following ascetic practices he introduced as evidence for a more monastic way of life in Wilhering: annual spiritual retreats, daily meditation, Eucharistic adoration, examination of conscience, the Loreto Litany daily after Vespers, frequent recitation of the rosary, and rigorous examination of the confreres' lists of personal possessions, which were to be submitted annually. Dorfer's death notice also mentions increased library acquisitions, care for the monastery's physical plant, and church renovations. He is said to have paid equal attention to the renovation and development of the abbey's numerous incorporated parishes and their vicarages; the obituary mentions eight parishes by name, confirming the high status of parish work as the eminent job assignment for Wilhering's *patres*.

Death notices are read by monks from many monasteries, by secular clerics outside the monastic context, and of course by interested laity. Homilies given at monastic vesting, on the other hand, are delivered orally and addressed to a smaller audience. Notes for such liturgical sermons are preserved in Wilhering. They are rarely accessed archival documents that allow a close focus on concrete historical moments in the long his-

31. Hans Bruno Schneider, "Neues zur Frühgeschichte der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Zisterzienserkongregation (1859–1880). Die Wahl von Leopold Wackarz zum Generalvikar und ihre Folgen," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 52 (1996): 136–203.

32. Polykarp Zakar and Alcuin Schachenmayr, "Union and Division: The Proceedings of the three Trappist Congregations at their General Chapter in 1892," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 56 (2006): 334–84.

tory of this monastery on the Danube. Vesting ceremonies were not open to the public, and they took place early in the morning. They are special moments because they represent a tangible beginning of monastic life. Therefore, they play a distinctly formative role in defining monastic ideals and explaining Cistercian patrimony—to the young monk who is joining, but also to the older members of the community. An obituary is similar, but different: it comes at the end.

In the Wilhering vesting homilies from 1810 and 1817, neither Benedict's Rule, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, nor the Cistercian Order is mentioned by name. The homilist did, however, note in detail the discipline of monastic life, the necessity of leaving the hustle and bustle of the world, and the path of perfection, but the abbot's address could just as easily have been delivered in a mendicant or missionary order.[33]

Abbot Alois Dorfer's speeches are different. The notes (beginning in 1852) are characterized by manifold direct references to the Order of Cîteaux and its specifically Benedictine rule. The Wilhering abbot frequently quoted from the Rule, for example in 1865, regarding Chapter 58.1 (whether the novice truly seeks God). He also emphasized the Marian dimension of the Cistercian vocation; on August 15, 1854, he reminded the monks present that all Cistercian monasteries are consecrated to Mary and that she has been the "greatest protector of our Order" and that she will "obtain for you graces and blessings."[34] In 1859, he told the novices that the Rule of Saint Benedict was the best guide for breaking the bonds of this world and arriving at the true freedom of the children of God. In multiple novitiate years, he repeated that it was the Holy Spirit who had inspired the young men to join the Cistercian Order in particular and not some other order. In 1867 he reminded them that they should see themselves as students of Saint Bernard.[35]

The Dorfer homilies are clear evidence of a Cistercian profile in Wilhering that gets stronger as the nineteenth century goes by. But we should beware of drawing predetermined conclusions.

33. Homilies for vesting ceremonies on 16 Sept. 1810 and 19 Oct. 1817, 18.C1, Abbey Archives, Wilhering.

34. Abbot Alois Dorfer, Homilies for vesting ceremonies, 1852ff., 18.C1, Abbey Archives, Wilhering.

35. Abbot Alois Dorfer, Homilies for vesting ceremonies, 1852ff., 18.C1, Abbey Archives, Wilhering.

First, the daily routine in the novitiate on the shores of the Danube was in no way Trappist. The novices were encouraged to gain familiarity with the vicarages of the abbey's surrounding parishes. They were to take a long walk together three times a week, visiting parsonages, but never private homes.[36] On a day-to-day basis, novices had access to the bowling alley, wore top hats, shot fish as a pastime, and received cigars, beer, and tobacco from their superiors. The beer tokens were among the highest monthly items in expense accounts that have survived.[37] Therefore, their lives had little in common with the vegetarian, non-alcoholic, and non-smoking asceticism of the Trappists.

Second, it is important to recall that historians don't know much about the details of interior prayer, no matter who the person praying is. The inner life of a praying person remains hidden in any epoch. This is evidenced by a prayer book from 1724 that was handed down in Wilhering through at least three successive generations of monks.[38] The book was dedicated to the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Lambach, Maximilian Pagl (1668–1725), by a Marian Sodality in the Jesuit High School in Linz. It reflects the strong Marian devotion of Jesuits in the Baroque period and contains Sacred Heart devotions. It was evidently passed down within the Wilhering Juniorate. Owners' notes indicate eighteenth-century *fratres*, but one of the men who used the book had it in 1886. The decidedly Baroque contents contrast with both the Enlightenment and historicism of the nineteenth century. The prayer book has no relation at all to Cistercian heritage. Nevertheless, it was appreciated and passed on among Wilhering's monks.

CONCLUSION

WITH ALL DUE respect to local variations, a clear development in explicit expressions of Cistercian identity is easy to document at Wilhering Abbey in the period from 1800 to 1900. In an ever-more-localized focus, this

36. Novitiate schedules ca. 1850–1900, 18.C1, Abbey Archives, Wilhering.

37. Novitiate invoices, Alberik, no. 1894/98, see also 1898/99 Alois, 18.C1, Abbey Archives, Wilhering.

38. *Pietas Quotidiana* (Linz: Johann Michael Feichtinger, 1724), 18.C1, Abbey Archives, Wilhering.

article has highlighted the international European trend towards greater respect for monastic sites, be they ruins or inhabited. There followed a short review of the spate of secondary literature on the Cistercian Order and its most famous abbot, Saint Bernard, in the nineteenth century. Finally, archival sources such as obituaries and vesting homilies showed how these intellectual developments made for concrete changes in one Austrian abbey of the Common Observance. These three different levels of evidence, moving from general to specific, offer points of comparison and contextualization for other monastic practices at the time.

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Weinerwald, Austria