

Augustinian Canons

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1. Historical Evolution

In contrast to many other orders of the Catholic Church, Augustinian Canons (Canons Regular of St. Augustine, *Canonici Regulares Sancti Augustini*, CRSA) cannot be traced back to an individual founder or to a particular founding group. They are more the result of a process that lasted for centuries. Because of their manifold roots they have undergone various forms in medieval and modern Europe.

The basic idea of the Augustinian Canons centers around the life style of the Apostles, the *vita apostolica*. Whole communities of priests living in common, the *vita communis*, wanted to imitate this common life of the early Christians.

The designation “*Chorherr*” (or “canon” in English) is derived from the *Chor* (choir) of the abbey church and indicates the assembly room of the chapter members, so that a *Chorherr*/canon can be considered a voting member of the community gathering. The name of St. Augustine was added because since the High Middle Ages his Rule has been considered the determining principle of their life. However, by no means was uniformity attained within the order by means of these very generally binding regulations.

Canons were originally those clerics who were directly under the bishop, however not under the abbot of a monastery or the owner of a proprietary church, and therefore were registered in the official list (“canon”) of the permanent staff of clergy of an episcopal city. The members of those clerical communities who, since the Church reform of the 11th and 12th century and the canonical reform associated with it, took their direction from the Rule of the Church Father Augustine and made these regulations the basis of their community life were henceforth called canons regular in contrast to the non-reformed secular canons.

Bishop Eusebius of Vercelli (c. 283-371) is the first known bishop who led a common monastic life with the clergy who were subject to him based on the principles of Christian monasticism. Aurelius Augustinus (354-430), the great Doctor of the Church and Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa, put into effect a similar monastic community life with his clergy. By so doing he succeeded in forming a good synthesis of priestly and monastic life.

Through the generally binding and fundamental regulations on poverty, celibacy and obedience and on common prayer and praise of God, the Rule of Augustine later on proved to be a very well suited basis for many other religious communities. Even the Rule of St. Benedict took whole sections from it. Not only did the canons base their life on this rule, but also the Premonstratensians, Dominicans, Augustinian Hermits and Discalced Augustinians organized their way of life according to the Rule of St. Augustine.

In the course of the Early Middle Ages there arose various rules for clerics. Among these rules that of Bishop Chrodegang of Metz attained special significance. In

Augustinian Canons

the year 816, as the Rule of Aachen, it was elevated to the status of law in the Carolingian Kingdom under Emperor Louis the Pious (778-840). It was to be introduced into all cathedral churches within a year.

In the course of the Church's renewal movement of the Gregorian Reform the question of private property of canons became a central point of criticism. More and more, private ownership was seen as the basic evil from which many communities of canons as well as the whole Church suffered. The Lateran Synod of 1059 was also of this opinion. The statutes of Aachen were actually not banned at that time; nevertheless community of property (*vita communis*) was impressed on the communities of clerics. The clergy "in the churches for which they are designated – as befits pious clerics – should eat in common, sleep in common and have all their income in common" and they should endeavor, according to their ability, to attain "to the apostolic, that is the common way of life" (can. 4). These regulations of the Lateran Synod of 1059 can be called the "foundation date" of the canons regular. All communities of clerics, which subjected themselves to these regulations, were designated as "regulated". The introduction of the three vows (obedience, poverty, chastity) took its starting point in France and promoted the consolidation of the communities.

The reform movement of the canons, which very quickly took hold of and expanded throughout all of Europe, by the middle of the 12th century, had already reached more than 150 foundations. As reform centers in France there were the foundations of the canons of St. Ruf near Avignon, St. Victor in Paris, Arrouaise, Aureil and St. Quentin in Beauvais. In Italy Sta. Maria in Porto near Ravenna in particular and in England Sempringham, which was founded c.1131 by St. Gilbert, should be considered. In Germany Rottenbuch in Bavaria (1073) should be mentioned as the first center. Important impulses came also from Marbach in Alsace (1089), where the early scholastic Manegold of Lautenbach (c.1030-1103) served as provost. Important also were Springiersbach (1107) in the Archdiocese of Trier, Klosterrath near Aachen, Hammersleben and Steinfeld in the Eifel. The cathedral chapter of Salzburg (since 1122) holds a special place as a reform center in the archdiocese of the same name, where reform foundations existed in great numbers.

Since the reform of the canons was undertaken by individual canonries and there was no central direction there developed a great variety within the canonical reform. Only the ideals of the *vita apostolica* and the *vita communis* were held in common by them. The implementation of these ideas could fall to the initiative of bishops or clerics, or even of laymen. Thus four types of reforms can be distinguished: reform of an existing chapter, new foundation by groups of clerics, foundations of hermits or hospitals.

Within the various trends of Augustinian canons there began an intense dispute over the text of the Rule, which consisted of two parts (*praeceptum* and *ordo Monasterii*) that were not easily harmonized. In the course of these debates those groups of communities of canons, which viewed only the stricter *ordo monasterii* as authoritative, broke away. In the following period the direction they took was designated as the *ordo novus* and they considered Norbert of Xanten (1082-1134), the founder of Prémontré near Coucy, their ancestor. Since that time, the Premonstratensians, with their strong centrally organized order structure, in addition to the Augustinian Canons, form the most significant order of canons regular.

Augustinian Canons

In the Romance language regions, in contrast to the German speaking, there developed, even since the 12th century, congregations, i.e. the banding together of houses of canons having the same reform movement. This included regular general chapters. By so doing the maintenance of the statutes and order regulations was better guaranteed. In France the Congregations of St. Ruf and St. Victor originally formed the most important mergers. Since the modern era, however, the Congregation of St. Genevieve in Paris – also designated as a French congregation – has taken the place of the older ones. In Italy, after the unions of Sta. Maria in Porto and S. Frediano in Lucca had lost significance, the Congregation of Sta. Maria del Reno and especially the Congregation of the Lateran Canons stepped into the foreground. This latter group looked after the Lateran Basilica in Rome for a long time and in the course of the centuries added numerous houses to itself from all over central Europe. In England, the Gilbertines – named after their founder, Gilbert of Sempringham (1083/89-1189) – experienced vigorous growth. In Portugal, the Congregation of Coimbra held sway; in Switzerland, those of St. Maurice and the Great St. Bernard and in Alsace, the Congregation of Marbach. On the other hand, in Germany, first of all there was no development of congregations, rather the Augustinian houses of canons of a reform circle had only very loose personal contacts among themselves, which frequently are substantiated through prayer fraternities.

In addition to these, there arose various congregations, which dedicated themselves to the care of the sick, such as the Hospitallers and the Antonines who spread from France over all Europe. There were these as well as the various denominations of Crosiers who cared for the sick in their hospitals in Italy, Holland and Belgium, Bohemia and Poland.

The Church reform of the 11th and 12th century was not restricted only to the clerical communities but embraced the rest of the social groups as well. Thus many laymen also thronged to the reformed houses of canons. Therefore lay brothers, the so-called *conversi*, were admitted into almost all the houses. It was similar with the women, who likewise wanted to enter the reformed houses. Thus numerous houses of canons, especially in the Rottenbuch and Salzburg reform circle, were founded as double monasteries in Bavaria and Austria. The canonesses lived under the direction of a *magistra* with strict enclosure in a house of their own within the monastery complex. Nevertheless, for the most part, they remained hierarchically and economically subordinate to the men's monastery. Their duties were the praise of God and manual work in the form of embroidery of vestments. Because of a variety of difficulties these dependent institutes of canonesses only rarely outlasted the first century after their foundation. Frequently these establishments functioned also as institutes of care for the female members of the founder's family. However, there also developed, especially outside of Germany, numerous congregations of independent houses of canonesses, which for the most part formed an autonomous addition to the respective congregation of canons (Lateran Canonesses, Canonesses of the Holy Sepulcher, Canonesses of St. Victor, Hospital Sisters, etc.).

The significance of the Augustinian Canons is especially revealed through recent research in an ever-greater degree for its origins in the High Middle Ages. At this time of the "emergence" of the new social, economic, political, spiritual and religious forces, it was above all the movement of the canons regular, which offset the legitimate points of criticism against the Church with its new way of life, the *vita apostolica*. The success of

Augustinian Canons

the movement, however, was essentially accounted for by the fact that these new ideas could gain acceptance even in the Roman Curia. Distinguished canons were Haimerich (†1141), the French-Burgundian chancellor of the Curia, and Popes Honorius II (1124-30), Innocent II (1130-43), Anastasius IV (1153-54), and the Englishman Nicholas Breakspeare as Pope Hadrian IV (1154-59). In the 12th century this religious way of life still expanded throughout Europe, including Iceland, and even in late medieval Greenland there were Augustinian Canons.

The original reform enthusiasm, however – as with all movements of this type – lasted only a certain time, which is why barely a century after the order arose new reforms were necessary. Thus annual general chapters and regular visitations were prescribed by the 4th Lateran Council (1216) and by a constitution of Pope Benedict XII (1339). The effects of these regulations varied a lot in the individual lands. In England they actually produced a renewal. In Italy as well the Lateran Congregation with its strong centralism created favorable conditions for a flourishing which reached its high point in the 16th century. For South Germany and Austria on the other hand, the statutes of Raudnitz (founded 1333), an Augustinian house of canons in Bohemia, were authoritative. The introduction of these statutes brought a noticeable renewal of the life of the order.

For the North German region renewal came from the so-called Windesheim Congregation. Through the spiritual organization in the framework of the *Devotio moderna* the monasteries of this congregation were totally geared toward a contemplative life that fostered the cultivation of books. Subsequently there developed a rich literary activity, which reached a high point in the work of the Augustinian canon, Thomas a Kempis (1379/80-1471).

On the eve of the Reformation the Augustinian Order of Canons with its over 1600 establishments all over Europe were one of the largest and also culturally important. The religious clashes of the 16th century eventually brought the downfall of all the establishments in the Protestant areas from England across the Netherlands and North Germany as far as Scandinavia. These great clashes of faith also plunged the rest of the German monasteries into a serious crisis, from which they quickly recovered in regions in which the Catholic Counter Reformation was successful. In Lorraine it was Peter Fourier (1565-1640) who, with his “Congregation of Our Savior”, made progress with the reform of the Order. This congregation spread over Lorraine to France and Savoy. In the rest of France also, canonical houses flourished with the Congregation of St. Genevieve in Paris. In the German and Austrian houses of the Augustinian Canons in the 17th and 18th centuries there is a noticeably pronounced upswing in pastoral care as well as in the area of science. The splendid new monastery buildings from this period underscore the newly attained self-assurance.

The social currents of the late 18th century were on the whole unfavorable for the monastic landscape in spite of the splendid achievements of many houses of the order. In the Habsburg lands under the enlightened Emperor Joseph II (1741-90) all houses of Augustinian Canons but six were suppressed and their property confiscated. The next catastrophe followed a few years later in Western Europe as the revolution in France swept away all the establishments of the canons. The great secularization in the year 1803 eventually brought an end to all houses of Augustinian Canons all over Germany,

Augustinian Canons

especially in Bavaria, so that the Order was almost completely annihilated. The entire landed property of the monasteries was confiscated and sold to private citizens. The same thing also happened with the various almost new monastery buildings, which were used for different purposes by the new owners and frequently demolished. For the most part only the monastery church remained of the abolished monasteries to be used as the present day parish church and perhaps a small part of the monastic buildings to serve as the rectory. Only in Catholic Poland and in Italy, where the Napoleonic wars also brought about great destruction, did the houses of Augustinian Canons remain standing.

In the 19th century there was once again a slight recovery of the Order through the Lateran Congregation, newly founded in 1823, and the Congregation of the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception (1871). In 1907 there was a successful foundation of an Austrian Congregation to which all six abbeys of the Monarchy belonged (St. Florian, Herzogenburg, Klosterneuburg, Reichersberg, Vornau and Neustift near Brixen). The Congregation of Windesheim/St. Victor was reestablished in 1961. In 1971 the Congregation of Mary was founded with its motherhouse in the Diocese of Laval. In addition there are also the two Swiss Congregations of St. Maurice and the Great St. Bernard. All seven of these congregations form the Confederation of Augustinian Canons, which was established in 1959. This is a loose union of all Augustinian Canons constituted under an Abbot Primate. Today the Order of Augustinian Canons numbers about 100 establishments with about 850 members, hardly a twentieth of its strength compared to its prime in the 15th century.

2. Spirituality

The new spirit, which was manifested in the rule and activity of the Augustinians in pastoral care since the 12th century, demanded a strict view of priestly life and personal integrity. Through this heightened view of the priesthood and the *vita apostolica* the canons came into close contact with the mobile, religiously motivated masses in the city and countryside and with their spirituality. This pastoral commitment from time to time could extend to more radical demands depending on the piety of the whole clergy as well as a reform of the papacy. In the case of Arnold of Brescia (†1154) this led to his falling into disfavor with the official Church because of his rebelliousness and as a consequence led to his death as a heretic.

However, the Augustinians were usually little inclined to general extremes, but rather led a life whose day, as in the monastic house, was determined by liturgical arrangement, especially by the canonical hours of prayer. Between the times of prayer -- on the keeping of which great value was laid -- the canons went about their various tasks inside (study, writing of books, school, maintenance of the monastery) and outside (work in the field, pastoral care, care of the sick) the monastery. Nevertheless, common meals, sleep and prayer were obligatory.

Solemn liturgy and Marian piety, in the spirituality of the Augustinian canons, hold exactly the same position as learned theological studies. Since in the Middle Ages they were already priests, as opposed to the early Benedictines, pastoral care played a far greater roll for them than for the contemplative orders. Nevertheless, even canons regular do not exclude the *vita contemplativa* from their lives, as the mysticism for example of the Victorines or the members of the *Devotio moderna* show.

Augustinian Canons

3. *Organization and Habit*

Simply from the numerous congregations of the Augustinian Canons alone one may suppose how varied the inner structure of the establishments in the individual reform circles could be. The variations begin even with the title of the house superior. In the romance language countries he was called “abbot” by analogy to the monasteries of monks. In the German speaking lands he was called “provost”. His deputy in the romance language countries had the title “prior”, and in the German speaking lands the title “dean”. Likewise the prior, in the romance language countries, and especially in England, could be the superior of either an autonomous or a dependent monastery. The superior for the most part was chosen in a free election by the fully incorporated members of the chapter. Many houses early on had this right of election confirmed by the popes.

Originally the habit of the Augustinian canons consisted for the most part of a white cassock with a white alb worn over it, which was later shortened to a rochet. The capes that they wore were called an almutium (in the winter, of fur) and mozzetta (in the summer, of wool). Toward the end of the 18th century the black cassock was generally adopted and the rochet, especially in Bavaria, Austria and Switzerland, was reduced to a long narrow band of white linen.

4. *Theology and the Humanities*

Hugh of St. Victor (†1141) must be mentioned as the greatest personality from the circle of canons regular and generally as one of the greatest theologians and philosophers of the 12th century. His person and his numerous writings have, as none other, influenced the spiritual life of his time and even the theological discussions of the following centuries. In addition, it was due to Hugh – a teacher much in demand – that the school of St. Victor in Paris attained world renown. Richard of St. Victor (†1173) created a mystical theology, which focused on the love of the Persons of the Trinity. Gerhoh of Reichersberg (1092/93-1169) should be mentioned as a contemporary historical theologian, who busied himself especially with the end time.

Special attention was given to historical studies. Canon Paul of Bernried (†before 1156) in Bavaria wrote the first biography of the reform pope Gregory VII in Germany. Rahewin († c. 1170/77), Provost of St. Vitus in Freising, continued the *Gesta Friderici* for the years 1156 to 1160. This was begun by Bishop Otto. The English historian and canon, William of Newburgh († c. 1198), left us his *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* in five books. Because of its moderate judgment and the depth of thought, this proved to be an excellent source of history for the later 12th century. To these historically oriented personalities should be added the great preacher Jacques de Vitry (1160/70-1240), Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum, who composed a *Historia orientalis* (History of the Crusades) and a *Historia occidentalis* (History of Europe). His sharply pointed, close to reality, narrative examples for the sermon are classic texts in the literature of examples. Walter Henningford (†1347) composed a Chronicle of the English Kings until 1346; Canon Andreas of Regensburg (c. 1380-1438), author of numerous historical works, was described by Aventinus as “Bavarian Livy” because of his *Chronica de principibus terrae Bavarorum* (Chronicle of the Bavarian Princes).

Augustinian Canons

Further personalities among the Augustinian canons in the field of humanities and theology from the Late Middle Ages are Jan van Ruysbroek (1293-1381), the great Flemish mystic and co-founder of Groenendael, a monastery of Augustinian canons near Brussels, and Thomas a Kempis, the most well-known ascetical-spiritual writer in the Windesheim congregation. His *Imitatio Christi* (Imitation of Christ) is, after the Bible, the most frequently printed book of Catholic Europe. The goal of this edifying book is to lead man to humility and inner peace through contempt of everything worldly, through will power and remorse of heart, with a view to death and the last judgment so that he will be worthy of the Kingdom of God. Only the friendship of Christ can make this arduous way through an earthly life full of temptation bearable. Johannes Busch (1399-1479/80), the successful renewer of the north German houses of canons in the spirit of the Windesheim Congregation, and Johannes Mauburnus (c. 1460-1501) should be mentioned as authors of this renewal movement.

In general the *Devotio moderna* of Gerhard Groote (1340-84), a pietistic movement, which bound together interiority and practical sense, and the Windesheim Congregation, which stemmed from it, brought about a flourishing monastic life throughout all north Germany. Quite consciously much value was attached to the promotion of books, i.e. to copying and binding, so that precisely in this field outstanding achievements in art and history were accomplished. Because of great radical changes at the time of the Reformation and the destruction of almost all establishments, however, very few of their creations are preserved. In the realm of the Windesheim Congregation the later famous humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469-1536) also came in contact with the Augustinian canons, to which he belonged, even if reluctantly, from 1487 to 1491. His teacher, Synthius at Deventer recognized his great gift and put him in contact with the spirit of Humanism.

The Reformation, especially in Germany, signified a serious break as well as intellectual and cultural stagnation for the houses of Augustinian canons, in so far as they did not perish. The new intellectual upswing toward the end of the 16th century is indicated not only by the greater influx to the monasteries, but is very clearly seen in the development of so many monastery libraries. Thus the library of Polling, a house of Augustinian canons at Weilheim in Bavaria, which never belonged to the specially large and wealthy houses, and numbered only a few books from the middle Ages, grew until 1631 to about 1400 books. A century later the number had increased tenfold to about 15,000 volumes. With the election of Franz Töpsl (1711-96), the most important representative of the Catholic Enlightenment, as Provost in 1744 the extraordinary increase of the Polling monastery library began in earnest. At the time of Töpsl's death in 1796 the contents of the library had increased to 80,000 volumes. And so, in the entire south German area only in the Vienna Hofburg and in the Munich Residenz were there more books. Content wise the Polling book collection included among other things, in addition to the fields of theology and history, all the areas of natural science. Even the literature of the Enlightenment was extensively represented, and the first copy of the French Encyclopedia in Bavaria was found in Polling Monastery.

Even before Provost Töpsl, his teacher Eusebius Amort (1692-1775), with his *Philosophia Pollingiana* (1730), had become the forerunner of the early Catholic Enlightenment. Together with his student Töpsl he made the Polling Augustinian house

Augustinian Canons

of canons into one of the most important scientific locations in Bavaria and at the same time a place of strong piety. Töpsl played a decisive role in setting up the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. He established contact with very many houses of Augustinian canons throughout Europe, e.g. with Canon Pierre François LeCourayer (1681-1776) from the French abbey of St. Genovefa, with Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli (1722-93), a canon of St. Salvatore in Bologna, or with Abbot Johann Ignaz Felbiger (1724-88) of the monastery of Augustinian canons at Sagan in Silesia. In his chief work, the *Scriptores ordinis canonici regularis Sancti Augustini* (The Writers of the Order of Augustinian Canons), Töpsl intended to draw up a collection of biographies of famous canons regular. That work, which is preserved today in the Bavarian State Library, was never printed, although it contains much interesting material.

With these examples from the Bavarian monastery of Polling the general development in the south German area during the baroque period can be sketched out. The rest of the Bavarian and Austrian houses of Augustinian canons also set up impressive libraries in the 17th and 18th centuries, but certainly in more modest proportions. In addition there were in almost all monasteries interesting collections of physical and astronomical gadgets, which indicates openness to the branches of the natural sciences. The Bavarian Augustinian canons were the ones also who published the periodical *Parnassus Boicus* (1720-44). This is considered the first literary periodical of Bavaria and served as the initial spark for many successive learned periodicals.

Worthy of mention as leading personalities in the area of theology and historical writing are – in addition to the ones already mentioned – Adam Scharrer of Klosterneuburg (†1681), Augustin Erath (†1791) and Franz Petrus (†after 1725) of Wettenhausen. Ivo Salzinger (1669-1728), a canon of Reichersberg on the Inn, through his deluxe editions of the writings of Raymund Lull, became better known. Also significant are the historian Aquilin Caesar (1720-92) a canon of Vorau, and the orientalist Sebastian Seemiller (†1798), a canon regular in Polling. These personalities, in addition to their scientific activity, were also active as teachers in the monastery schools and gave these educational institutions an equivalent standard.

5. Architecture and Art

The monastery structure of the medieval Augustinians compares in principle to those of the other order (Benedictine), without developing its own style. Nevertheless many monasteries contributed significant aspects to the history of art through works that are typical of the times. As an example Neustift near Brixen should be mentioned. Its late gothic cloister frescos are considered among the most important in South Tyrol (among others are the works of Michael Pacher). Most are individual segments of construction or works of art preserved from the Middle Ages, e.g. the famous Verdun altar in Klosterneuburg, a principal work of Romanesque enamel art. These enamel panels made in 1181 by Nicholas of Verdun as a covering for a pulpit balustrade were reworked in the 14th century into a winged altar. Today it is the tomb altar of St. Leopold.

With the new intellectual flourishing of the houses of Augustinian canons since the 17th century, it reached a point, especially in the south German and Austrian area, where there was a need for a definite image that resulted in extensive building plans in

Augustinian Canons

the style of the Bavarian-Austrian baroque. This was analogous to the rest of the monasteries of the prelate-orders such as the Benedictines, Cistercians and Premonstratensians. Thus the provosts of the houses of Augustinian canons, along with the Benedictine abbots, were the most important clients in the ecclesial area for builders, craftsmen and artists. The building plans could be splendid general concepts and totally new buildings, which replaced the Romanesque and gothic structures or completely changed them. Thus the monastery of Klosterneuburg was altered since 1730 according to the plans of Donato Felice d'Allio along the lines of the Spanish Escorial. Carlo Antonio Carlone and, after his death in 1708, Jakob Prandtauer created the splendid arrangements in St. Florian near Linz as one of the most glittering achievements of Austrian Baroque. External catastrophes such as fires and devastations were sometimes the occasion for a complete new building (e.g. Au on the Inn), mostly however the building plans of the Baroque were gradually extensions to the whole monastery complex. It was begun normally with the new building (Dießen, Beuerberg, Weyarn, Dietramszell, Rohr) or renovation of the old abbey church (Polling, Rottenbuch, Beyharting, Baumburg, Bernried, St. Nikola near Passau). In the case of the monastery buildings, new constructions are detected without exception, in which great value was placed on prestigious spaces. Thus the prelate's quarters are richly decorated with stucco; rooms for the emperor, prince, or guests are consciously splendid complete art works of stucco artists or fresco painters. The intensification of scientific work in the houses of Augustinian canons brought plans for the extension of the monastery library along with it. Separate halls and wings with rich furnishings were created to house these collections (Polling 1775-78, St. Florian 1744-50). For the special collections of the monastery, such as cabinets for minerals, coins and engravings, separate structural solutions were also created (St. Florian, Beuerberg).

Especially the known Italian families like the Carlone and D'Allio were busy in Austria (St. Florian, Klosterneuburg, Herzogenburg, St. Nikola near Passau), but the Austrian Baroque builders who became famous such as the elder Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Jakob Prandtauer and Johann Michael Prunner (Herzogenburg, St. Florian, St. Nikola) were also busy. For the frescos, frequently Bartolomeo Altomonte (St. Florian), Johann Michael Rottmayr and Daniel Gran (Klosterneuburg) were brought in. In the Bavarian region local builders were increasingly engaged such as Johann Michael Fischer, Franz Alois Mayr, Magnus Feichtmayr, Joseph Schmuzer, Egid Quirin Asam or Matthias Bader (Dießen, Baumburg, Dietramszell, Rottenbuch, Bernried, Rohr, Polling). Only few foreigners such as the Grison Lorenzo Sciasa or the Brothers Zuccalli from Roveredo (Weyarn, Gars, Au) could get larger commissions. Matthäus Günther (Rottenbuch, Indersdorf), Johann Baptist Zimmermann (Dietramszell) and Johann Georg Bergmüller (Dießen) were especially sought after as fresco painters. The brothers Feichtmayr from Augsburg (Dießen) and several masters of Wessobrunn proved themselves to be prominent stucco artists.

These great building achievements were only possible through a well-ordered and efficient management. Nevertheless a few houses, through the all too great building burdens, came into serious financial straits, which for example proved the undoing of the Abbey of Indersdorf, which was rich in tradition. It ended with its suppression in 1783.

Augustinian Canons

6. Sciences

As scientists (astronomy and mathematics) the following should be mentioned: Florian Ulbrich (†1800) of Klosterneuburg and Gelas Karner (†1816) of Rottenbuch. Provost Mößmer of Rottenbuch (†1798) built the meteorological observatory on the Hohenpeißenberg, and Sigmund Adam of St. Zeno/Reichenhall in 1803 invented the ink roller and the machine to draw lines. Many of these learned Augustinian canons also found their way to the universities and worked – at least for a time – for a larger public. The canonical houses in Austria, which had not fallen victim to the Secularization, continued this activity. Thus Canons Daniel Tobenz (†1819), Petrus Fourier Ackermann (†1831) and Jakob Ruttenstock (†1844) of Klosterneuburg were university professors in Vienna. In addition, a private educational establishment was set up in Klosterneuburg in 1815, which was considered on a level with the theological faculty of the University of Vienna. This remained in existence until the confiscation of the abbey by the Nazis in 1941. Not only did other houses of Augustinian canons send their men there for study but many Austrian Benedictine monasteries sent their men to be educated there as well.

7. Education System

The Augustinian canons from the very beginning devoted great attention to education. Thus the elite schools in the early 12th century were shaped by the school of St. Victor in Paris and the Cathedral School of Chartres, which under Bishop Ivo (c. 1040-1116) rose to be the leading institution in the entire West. In addition to these important education centers each house of Augustinian canons set up its own school, frequently divided into an internal and an external department. The purpose of the first was primarily the training of their own vocations for the tasks of order life, especially to prepare them for ministry. The external school served the education of the nobles and later the elite citizenry. The previously mentioned Töpsl, a member of the Catholic Enlightenment, made a name for himself under Maria Theresa especially as a reformer of the Austrian school system.

Translated by Theodore J. Antry, O. Praem.

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