



Pius Engelbert, OSB

Sant'Anselmo in Rome

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College and University

From the Beginnings to the Present Day



Pius Engelbert, OSB

Translated by Henry O'Shea, OSB



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Laudemus viros gloriosos et parentes nostros in generatione sua.

[Let us sing the praises of famous men, our ancestors in their generation.]

—Sirach 44

Eine Chronik schreibt nur derjenige,

dem die Gegenwart wichtig ist.

Über Geschichte kann niemand urteilen,

als wer an sich selbst Geschichte erlebt hat.

[Only he can write a chronicle

to whom the present is important.

No one can make a judgment on history

except one who himself has experienced history.]

—Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen*



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Foreword

The first edition of this book was titled *History of the Benedictine College of St. Anselm in Rome*. Although this was an accurate title when applied to the first decades of Sant'Anselmo, given that the college and university were a single entity, it cannot now be considered appropriate in light of the actual situation of both institutions. In addition, the original title would be misunderstood were the study to be seen as dealing only with the college.

The new edition is the response to a suggestion from the EOS-Verlag at the Archabbey of Sankt Ottilien and its energetic director, Fr. Dr. Cyrill Schäfer, OSB. From the beginning, it was clear to me that there could be no question of a simple reprint of the 1988 book. It is true that, apart from some small corrections, the main part of the book remains unaltered. (I simply did not have the energy to do more.) But it was absolutely necessary to bridge the gap between 1988 and the present day. This section appears under the title "Epilogue." The resulting history, "from the beginnings (1888) to the present time," is not an official history approved by the authorities of Sant'Anselmo but my personal view of events that occurred and persons active on the Aventine. Clearly, the historian not only has to base his writings on his sources and interpret these correctly but also must strive to formulate a just assessment of a past whose way of thinking is very difficult for us to understand today. I was always conscious of both of these demands.

Before my study appeared, historians had already concerned themselves with the beginnings of the college. Suffice it to mention here the history of the foundation of Sant'Anselmo in the third volume of the monumental *Aus der Rechtsgeschichte benediktinischer Verbände* by the first abbot of Gerleve, Raphael Molitor OSB, a pioneering work firmly based on multiple sources. The extent to which the picture I presented can become even clearer by the consideration of new sources is demonstrated by Fr. Ádám Somorjai's article, "Leone XIII e la fondazione di S.Anselmo nell'Urbe," in *Archivium Historiae Pontificiae* 47 (2009): 41–61.

Other periods of Sant'Anselmo's history can and ought to be brought into higher relief by further research.

Special thanks are due to Fr. Cyrill Schäfer for the provision of illustrations for this book.

Pius Engelbert, OSB
Abbot Emeritus of Gerleve
Rome
November 20, 2011

From the Foreword to the First Edition (1988)

This book is a commissioned work. It had been planned to produce a historical overview of the last hundred years for the *festschrift* on the occasion of the centenary of the International Benedictine College of Sant'Anselmo. During the writing of this projected article, the material available to the author grew and grew. If unpublished documents that would be of use to future historians were to be included, the framework of an article would not have been adequate. Colleagues encouraged me not to shorten the work but to tell the history of the unique Benedictine institution which is Sant'Anselmo in all the detail that would help the many former alumni of the college to understand that institution. Further, I was encouraged to provide illustrative examples and, if possible, to be entertaining. In keeping with this, the book does not provide a list of all the professors who taught at Sant'Anselmo for longer or shorter periods, nor of the cellarers and lay brothers without whose work the house could not have survived. There is no analysis of administrative procedures, but, rather, an attempt to present burning issues and events in the history of Sant'Anselmo and to describe trends. What was the guiding spirit among professors and students in the different periods of Sant'Anselmo's existence? To what ideal did one feel oneself committed? How did one live in the college? But also: what influence did the Benedictine Confederation, represented by the Congress of Abbots and Synods of Abbots President have in promoting, helping, correcting, or in some cases, disturbing the life of the college itself.

Again, Sant'Anselmo's own tradition is expressed most clearly in the work, example, and limitations of its most important professors. For this reason, biographical sketches of these professors are included. An exception, however, has been made in the case of professors who are still alive. The personality and influence of persons who are still alive are not material for historical research.

The last two decades of Sant'Anselmo's history have only been summarized briefly and the last few years completely omitted. The reasons

for this omission are easily surmised. In addition, the separation of college and university that has taken place since the late 1960s—despite the fact that both institutions have to cope with sharing the same buildings—requires a different style of presentation than the one chosen for this study which attempts to do justice to the original unity of a monastic college and an academic institute.

Fr. Pius Engelbert, OSB
Rome
January 4, 1988

From the Foundation of the College to the Transfer to the Aventine

1. The Foundation and Its Prehistory

The International Benedictine College of Sant'Anselmo was established on January 4, 1888.¹ The institute was a new foundation but juridically was considered the successor of the homonymous college of the Cassinese Congregation, which had ceased to exist only a few decades before.² On February 20, 1887, Pope Leo XIII, under whose

¹The work of Raphael Molitor is essential for the history of the establishment of the new Sant'Anselmo. Molitor (1873–1948) was the first abbot of the Abbey of St. Joseph at Gerleve in Westphalia. An expert in canon law, his most important work is: *Aus der Rechtsgeschichte benediktinischer Verbände—Untersuchungen und Skizzen*, vol. 1: *Verbände von Kloster zu Kloster* (Münster, 1929); vol. 2: *Verband und Exemption* (Münster, 1931); vol. 3, *Unionsversuche im 19. Jahrhundert. Die Leonische Konföderation aller Kongregationen der Benediktiner* (Münster, 1933). All further references to Molitor will provide the author's last name and page number. For a one-sided account, see T. Leccisotti, *Il Cardinale Dusmet* (Catania, 1962), 125–63. Further, see G. Locher, "Eröffnung und Konstituierung von Neu-St. Anselm," *BenM* 20 (1938): 216–23; Philibert Schmitz, *Histoire de l'Ordre se Saint-Benoît* (Belgium, 1942–1956). All further references to Schmitz will provide the author's last name and page number; T. Leccisotti, "Gli inizi del rinnovato Collegia di S. Anselmo e della Confederazione benedettina," *Ben.* 23 (1976): 65–88; Renner 232–50. A useful—but incomplete—collection of sources is: L. T. Della Marra, *Il Collegio S. Anselmo in Roma e il Cardinale Dusmet* (Catania, 1901). A study containing no new source material: G. Oesterle, "70 Jahre Kolleg St. Anselm in Rom," *BenM* vol. 34 (1958): 43–56; see also Oesterle, "Beuron und die Anfänge des Studienkollegs St. Anselm in Rom," in *Bueron 1863–1963. Festschrift zum Hundertjährigen Bestehen der Erzabtei St. Martin* (Beuron, 1963), 268–80.

²Founded in 1687 and housed in the Abbey of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, the college was abolished by the French in 1810 and, following a brief restoration, finally came to an end in the 1840s. An attempt to reopen the college in St. Paul's city monastery of St. Callisto in Rome on the orders of Pope Pius IX ended with the



dogged insistence the college was reestablished in a new form, had announced to the Roman prelates who had come to congratulate him on the ninth anniversary of his election to the papacy that he did not wish to delay the establishment of the college until new buildings could be provided, but that he had arranged for temporary accommodation in a part of the Palazzo dei Convertendi. This stately building was located on the Piazza Scossa Cavalli between the two streets of Borgo Nuovo and Borgo Vecchio which led to St. Peter's. In the summer of 1937, when the Via della Conciliazione was being laid out, the building was demolished and rebuilt on the right-hand side of the new boulevard. Today it houses the offices of the Congregation for Oriental Churches. The old building was called "Dei Convertendi" (House of the Converts) because in earlier times converts from Protestantism were housed here in a kind of spiritual quarantine before being released into the Catholic population of Italy. In his *Les Confessions*, Jean Jacques Rousseau painted a grim picture of a similar institute in Turin.³

Leo XIII had ordered the preparation of temporary accommodation for the new Sant'Anselmo on the third floor of this building. The only access was via a not very convenient stairs of over one hundred steps. With a keen instinct for publicity, the archbishop of Catania, Msgr. Giuseppe Benedetto Dusmet, OSB, to whom Leo XIII had entrusted the refoundation of Sant'Anselmo⁴, invited cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and abbots. "The modest rooms of the Scossa Cavali presented the picture of a Benedictine council in miniature."⁵ Archbishop Dusmet gave the formal address and with Sicilian verve encouraged all the Benedictine Congregations, and in particular the Cassinese, actively to respond to the expectations and generosity of the pope. He concluded with the words, *Nihil arduum est humilibus, nihil asperum mitibus* (Nothing is too hard for the humble nor too difficult for the gentle). At the conclusion of the celebration, all repaired to the house chapel situated

occupation of Rome in 1870. S. Bäumer, "Das Collegium des hl. Anselm vor 200 Jahren," *StudMitt* 8 (1887): 239–45. T. Leccisotti, "Il collegio di S. Anselmo dalla fondazione alla prima interruzione," *Ben.* 3 (1949): 1–53.

³J.-J. Rousseau, *Les Confessions* (Paris, 1964), 65–75.

⁴On Dusmet, see the biography written with a view to the prelate's beatification by Leccisotti, *Il Cardinale Dusmet*. See also R. Rios, *Menschen, die Gott gefunden. Benediktiner von heute*, ed. P. Böllmann (Salzburg, 1945), 90–109; A. Schmitt, "Kardinal Joseph Benedikt-Melchior Dusmet, OSB. Erzbischof von Catania 1818–1867–1894," *BenM* 33 (1957): 179–207, 279–91; R. Baurreis, *LThK* 3 (1959): 616.

⁵Locher, *Eröffnung und Konstituierung von Neu-St. Anselm*, 216–23; cf. p. 216. M. K(inter), "Das neueröffnete Benedictiner-Collegium S. Anselmi in Rom," *StudMitt* 9 (1888): 159–63.

on the ground floor, some distance from the actual rooms of the college, where a thanksgiving *Te Deum* was sung.

The words of Leo the Great with which Dusmet concluded his address were also intended to encourage the small community of the new college. In fact, the beginnings were modest enough, the furnishings of the rooms shabby, and, above all, the lack of books the most serious deficiency. Most of the students had arrived only after Christmas. When lectures began on January 5, there was a total of fourteen students. A further two arrived in February. They were young men from all over the world, the youngest being nineteen years old (Joseph Wenninger from the Beuronese Abbey at Prague, later prior of the monastery on Mount Sion in Jerusalem), the eldest were twenty-six years old or a little older. St. Vincent in Pennsylvania alone had sent three students, two came from Monte Cassino, two from S. Giuliano in Genoa (Subiaco Congregation), two belonged to Emmaus/Prague, one to Maredsous in Belgium (the later canonist Pierre Bastien), and one each from Seitenstetten and Göttweig in Austria. The remainder came from Belloc (France), Montserrat (Catalonia), Fort Augustus (Scotland), and Douai (a monastery of the English Congregation in France).⁶

The rector of the tiny community was titular Abbot Gaetano Bernardi from Monte Cassino, his representative and prior being Fr. Adalbert Miller from St. Vincent. Dusmet had been able to obtain the services of seven Benedictine professors. In addition to Bernardi and Miller, already mentioned, these were Wilfrid Wallace from the Beuronese monastery of Erdington in England, who taught church history, scriptural exegesis, and Greek; Fr. Chrysostomus Stelzer from Emmaus/Prague—soon to become one of the pillars of Sant'Anselmo—taught dogma and moral theology;⁷ Fr. Robert Monroe from St. Vincent taught philosophy and mathematics; and Fr. Gerard van Caloen (Maredsous) taught liturgy and was prefect of clerics. Fr. Wilfred Corney of Downside taught Gregorian chant and acted as cellarer. The abbot-rector himself taught Italian

⁶ AAt, Matricola 1888/1937, nos. 1–29.

⁷ In Bernardi's letters, Fr. Chrysostomus Stelzer always receives high and unconditional praise. Stelzer, born on February 7, 1855, in Sigmaringen, pursued his theological studies in Innsbruck, where he was ordained priest in 1878 and obtained a doctorate in theology *cum acclamatione*. After several years of pastoral work in the diocese of Würzburg, in 1883 he entered the monastery of Emmaus/Prague. From 1888 to 1892 he was a professor and for a time master of clerics at Sant'Anselmo. In 1892 he became prior of Beuron. In 1904 Archabbot Placidus Wolter sent him as first prior to the newly founded monastery of Gerleve. He died unexpectedly in Bonn on February 2, 1905, following an operation. ArchGerleve, "Totenchronik Chr. Stelzer," *AOSB* (1893–1908): 201.

language and literature; his prior, natural sciences and Hebrew.

In addition, there were five lay brothers all aged about forty and all belonging to the Beuronese Congregation. These were: Brothers Alexius Keller, Engelbert Kniedler, Johann Baptist Nutz, Columban Abt, and Paulin Beil. The latter was the shortest of the brothers and served Sant'Anselmo faithfully for twenty-five years—he died in 1931—and remained in the memory of hundreds and thousands of Old Anselmians as a model of the saintly religious.⁸

Before considering life in the first year of the new college and recounting the efforts of the rector in this and subsequent years to find suitable accommodation, we should like first to take a look backward and ask what the factors were that led to the refoundation of Sant'Anselmo.

From the beginning of his pontificate, Leo XIII showed a lively interest in the renewal of the old orders and in particular the Benedictines. In July 1878, he said,

It happens to me often that I seem to hear the voice of God in me saying: remember the Orders! They have taken the life of the Church to themselves, the Church must give it to them again. The worse the times, all the more must one reach out to the Orders, the old as well as the new, because they are all necessary, in the North and in the South, in East and West. I must even remember the old Basilians. With regard to the Order of St. Benedict: the sap of this old tree has not dried up. We shall experience proofs of this.

Again, in November 1883:

I often think of the Benedictine Order. Having given the Church so much, may it still do great things for her. It is the Order that enjoys great trust everywhere. I have been able to establish that this reaches even to the East . . . I need the Order particularly in Greece. Black Monks of the old Order, learned monks, would overcome all obstacles there; everything seems to point toward a preparation of this movement.⁹



Abbot Gaetano Bernardi
(1827–1895)

⁸Locher, *Eröffnung und Konstituierung von Neu-St. Anselm*, 219.

⁹F. Cabrol, *Histoire du Cardinal Pitra* (Paris, 1893), 330f. Molitor, 81f.



Fr. Adalbert Miller
(1832–1906)

The pope was already thinking of the training of co-workers for the great goal of which he dreamed: the reunification of the Church of the East with Rome.¹⁰ At the end of 1886, Leo XIII said at an audience for French abbots: “The East will be brought back to the unity of the Church only through the Black Benedictines. Up to now, no Order has been able to acquire such an influence in the East as the Benedictines. Eastern bishops whom I have asked about this, confirm that it is so.”¹¹ The pope’s plan was that, starting from Rome, the influence of the Benedictines should radiate once more to East and West, for the good of the Church. In the pope’s mind, Sant’Anselmo should be more than only a reestablishment of the defunct Cassinese college, more than an international house of studies for

Benedictines from all over the world; it should resurrect the ecclesiastical-cultural role of the Benedictines of the Middle Ages. Without a doubt this goal was not only conceived in a spirit of restoration but also was too ambitious. Disappointments were inevitable. The pope became aware of this already in the first years of Sant’Anselmo even though to the end of his life he took a lively interest in the development of the college.



Fr. Chrysostomos Stelzer
(1855–1905)

As early as 1885, the pope took the first concrete steps toward the realization of his plan when he summoned a council of Cassinese abbots in Rome to discuss three issues: regular observance, monastic studies, and the reopening of the Collegium S. Anselmi, the latter of which should be open to young monks of other Congregations. At the request of Abbot President Morcaldi, Leo XIII nominated the Benedictine bishop Dusmet as chairman of the conference. Since the immediate issues concerned only the Cassinese Congregation, it is easy to understand why Leo XIII did not entrust the task to the Benedictine Cardinal Pitra, who was living in Rome, but to the archbishop of Catania.

¹⁰ R. F. Esposito, *Leone XIII e l’oriente cristiano* (Rome, 1961), 606ff. Also, W. De Vries, “Leo XIII und die Orientalen,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 169 (1961–1962): 375–79.

¹¹ A. Houtin, *Dom Couturier, abbé de Solesmes* (Angers, 1899), 236L.

Dusmet, himself a Cassinese, lived as a monk surrounded by monks in his modest house. As archbishop he had participated in 1882 in the conference of abbots that prepared an edition of the constitutions of his Congregation.¹²

On December 4, the gathering of abbots that had been meeting since the end of November 1886 in the Palazzo San Callisto in Trastevere issued a report on the reopening of Sant'Anselmo, which already went into great detail and in particular outlined precise disciplinary regulations for the projected house of studies.¹³ Clearly the Cassinese abbots had not grasped that the pope was interested in more than a new version of the old Sant'Anselmo. This became clear to all, however, by January 4, 1887, when Leo XIII responded to the work of the Cassinese conference in a solemn papal brief addressed to Archbishop Dusmet.¹⁴



Giuseppe Cardinal Dusmet
(1818–1894)

The brief is not simply an approval of the preceding congress. It summons Archbishop Dusmet to oversee the beginnings of the college. More: it outlines a program through the realization of which Leo XIII wishes to restore the Benedictine Order to its former greatness. . . . For this reason it is one of the most important documents in the recent history of the Order. It is an act the consequences of which . . . are, directly, the international college on the Aventine and, indirectly, the connection between all Benedictine Congregations.¹⁵

The brief *Quae diligenter* in the Italian version “Abbiamo appreso” of January 4, 1887, is, in fact, the foundation charter of Sant'Anselmo.

The pope first recalls the glorious past of the Benedictine Order, particularly in Italy (Monte Cassino is mentioned), and adds the wish that the Cassinese, despite the unfavorable circumstances of the times, would maintain the seriousness of their monastic discipline and their tradition of scholarship. The pope's view, however, reaches further: Since strength comes from a shared purpose, more can be hoped for the future only if

¹² Molitor, 84; Leccisotti, *Il Cardinale Dusmet* (appendix 5), 133–37.

¹³ Molitor, 230–32. Still earlier, *StudMitt* 8 (1887): 100ff.

¹⁴ Ed.: Leonis XIII P.M. Acta, vol. 7 (Rome, 1888), 1–6; Molitor, 232–37.

¹⁵ Molitor, 89.

the members of the Order, spread throughout the world, grow together to form one *body* with uniform laws and a uniform leadership (*quasi in corpus unum coalescerent, unis iisdemque legibus, una eademque rectione*).

The pope does not, however, dwell further on this topic but turns immediately to what had been the main topic of the Cassinese Congress in Rome: studies. He expresses his wish that the College of Sant'Anselmo, founded two hundred years before by Innocent XI, would be reopened. He praises the suggestions of the abbots that in addition to canon law and a full course in theology (with Church history, biblical exegesis, patristics, Christian archaeology, Greek, and Hebrew) the students should study Thomistic philosophy as well as physics and mathematics. He states that today philosophy is indispensable for the defense of the light of reason and of belief: knowledge of the natural sciences should not be left to the "enemies" alone.

The new college, continues the pope, should, like the old college, be open to all Cassinese students, but not only to them: to achieve the goal of a greater unity of the Order, the other Benedictine monasteries should be invited to send their younger monks to Sant'Anselmo. These include the American-Cassinese Benedictines, the monasteries in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Germany, England, Bavaria, and other countries.

Thus the pope concludes his letter, "You know how close this matter is to our heart. At the same time it helps to achieve other goals, in particular the well-being of the Church of the East [*praesertim ecclesiae orientali profutura*]." He will do all in his power to help financially and otherwise trusts that Dusmet will establish the college in accordance with the pope's wishes and vision.

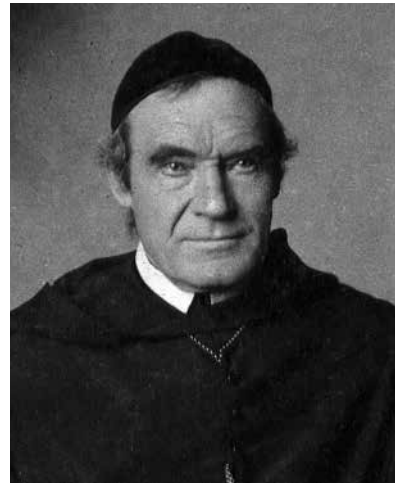
The surprise among Benedictines was great. Pleasure at the honor shown to the Benedictine family by the words and deeds of the pope was mixed with the worry that the latter's objective might be the centralization and uniformity of Black Monks which, in fact, a short time later, Leo XIII demanded of the Franciscans and the Trappists.

Despite such suspicions, however, the short-term goal, i.e., the opening of the college, was less problematic. Without delay, Dusmet sent the papal brief and the recommendations of the Cassinese abbots of 1886, along with an accompanying letter, to all the Benedictine abbots of the world. The aim was to waken interest and participation within the whole Order to realize the pope's farsighted plans. Replies, however, were slow in coming, and while most of these accepted the basic idea, practical reservations predominated. Many monasteries were, in fact, not in a position to provide funding, professors, or students for the proposed college. Most monasteries were poor, others had insufficient

vocations and were overburdened by excessive work. In some countries, particularly in Austria-Hungary, the monasteries were under strict state supervision. Solesmes was suffering the effects of the anticlerical legislation of the 1880s.¹⁶ Again, the Beuronese, following the end of the *Kulturkampf*, were going through a phase of hectic development that required the deployment of all available personnel.

Worried by the lack of effective response from the abbots, Archbishop Dusmet, having consulted the pope, decided to immediately send Anselm O’Gorman, abbot president of the English Congregation and well-known in Rome and among the Cassinese and Subiaco Congregations, on a visit to the non-Italian Benedictine monasteries in Europe in order to explain the papal brief and rally support for the planned college.¹⁷ Archabbot Boniface Wimmer of St. Vincent received a similar letter of recommendation from the secretary of state, Cardinal Jacobini, asking him to make the pope’s plans known to the American abbots.¹⁸

On February 3, 1887, in the middle of an unusually long and harsh winter, Abbot O’Gorman set out on his way north.¹⁹ A thirty-four-hour journey brought him to Vienna on the night of February 4. From the Alps to the imperial city there was snow, snow everywhere, deep snow. In Vienna he met the Benedictine cardinal prince-bishop Ganglbauer and the abbot of the Schottenkloster, as well as the abbot of Melk in the latter’s townhouse in Vienna. Signs were already evident of the many difficulties that stood in the way of the realization of the pope’s plans. “All help willingly when they can,” reported O’Gorman, “the problem is, however, how much they are able to help.” The journey continued to Pannonhalma and from there to Admont. Continuing to Graz, the traveler arrived there in the dark and surrounded by mountains of snow. A thermometer at the railway station



Abbot Benedikt Braunmüller (1825–1898)

¹⁶ V. Kessler, “French Benedictines Under Stress,” *AbenR* 17 (1966): 314–33.

¹⁷ Edward Anselm O’Gorman (1833–1901) was Irish by birth. He was one of the first foreigners to make profession under Abbot P. Casaretto in Subiaco (1850). Later, he was part of the founding group in Ramsgate but in 1858 transferred to the English Congregation, of which he became president from 1883 to 1888. See Molitor, xvi.

¹⁸ ASV, Segr. Di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 30–31 (O’Gorman’s commission dated January 27, 1887), ff. 38–39 (Wimmer’s commission for the United States).

¹⁹ Regarding what follows, see Molitor, 99–104.

showed twenty-one degrees below zero on the Réaumur temperature scale. The journey to St. Lambrecht in an open carriage lasted one-and-a-half hours. "I had to cover my face and ears with my traveling rug, otherwise I would have become a second version of Lot's wife." At ten o'clock on the following morning, O'Gorman had a meeting with the abbot of St. Lambrecht. "He is eighty-six years old, does not need spectacles, has a beard, and takes cares of all of the abbey's correspondence on his own. Nevertheless, he is too old and showed at once the reticence, mistrust, and fear of having to give something, typical of someone of his age." On February 26, O'Gorman was in Gries; on March 4, in Einsiedeln, where on the following day he explained the project to the abbot. On March 6, O'Gorman reported to Dusmet²⁰ that the prince-abbot of Einsiedeln praised the pope's idea and thanked him for his benevolence toward Benedictines. "But we do not need such an institute, because we are concerned only with Switzerland (I allowed myself to remark that the matter under discussion was not just a question of what Switzerland needed but concerned the College of Sant'Anselmo)." In the opinion of the prince-abbot, such a college should be established at Monte Cassino. The necessary accommodation was in place and the new activities would also result in attracting vocations to Monte Cassino itself. Furthermore, it was the practice in Einsiedeln to train all of its monks in the monastery itself. "I permitted myself the observation that this was the case almost everywhere." The Einsiedeln abbot continued, "It is true that our numbers are large, but we also need many monks." In the matter of money, he complained that they had the reputation of being rich, but it was just that, a reputation! "I could send one or two students for a year or two but never for six years! We have good professors and, naturally, we want to keep them." I said to him that if all monasteries were to think in this way, then nobody would go to Rome. "So, Most Reverend Lord," O'Gorman concluded, "where I had expected much, I received only promises."

Abbot Basil Oberholzer once more emphasized his position and that of the Swiss monasteries in a letter to Archbishop Dusmet on December 20, 1887.²¹ The letter did little more than bemoan the difficult situation of the monasteries and the impossibility of doing anything for Sant'Anselmo. He agreed that it was true that Engelberg sent its students to Salzburg for theology, but they did this only because they could live

²⁰ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I C/3.

²¹ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I E/3.

virtually for nothing in Sankt Peter in return for participating in the Divine Office in choir.

O’Gorman went from Einsiedeln to St. Stephan in Augsburg, a monastery with a large secondary school, and from there to Metten, where he arrived on March 17 in the middle of a violent snowstorm. On April 4, traveling via Salzburg, Lambach, and Kremsmünster, he reached Vienna. Cardinal Ganglbauer had summoned the Austrian abbots by telegraph, despite the fact that Holy Week was fast approaching. “The planned visits to Maredsous or to other Beuronese monasteries did not take place, partly because of the distances involved and partly the expense that such visits would entail was too great and again, partly because the congregation had already promised to help.”²² On April 6, O’Gorman was once more in Rome.



*Prince-Abbot Basilius Oberholzer
(1821–1895)*

Although the abbot could not hide his disappointment over the meager results of his journey, it had, in fact, not been for nothing. It showed the Benedictine monasteries how serious the pope was about the college. Again, the journey made the Roman authorities aware that many obstacles were not to be overcome by mere ordinances, but only by enthusiasm for the project. In a long letter in Latin dated December 15, 1887, Benedckt Braunmüller, abbot of Metten and president of the Bavarian Congregation, made this unequivocally clear to Archbishop Dusmet.²³ The abbot explained that in Bavaria, state legislation required that those who were to teach in the monastery’s secondary school must have completed a full university course in the subjects to be taught and this in a local university. Indeed, at this time, Metten had to employ—and pay—four laypersons in the secondary school because there were not sufficient monks who could be employed as teachers. In a school of 350 pupils, three of the monks who taught were already over eighty

²² Molitor, 102.

²³ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 1 D/4: “Curet quaeso Sanctitas Sua atque id agat, ut in patria nostra nos monachi ad maiorem libertatem pertingamus, us scilicet post studia etiam Romae persoluta facultatem docendi grammaticam saltem accipiamus. Sed ne Doctoribus Theologiae quidem haec facultas datur remisso examine philologico, et si quis ex nostris Romae per sexennium summis studiis se dederit, reversus in patriam aliquot denuo annos in aliqua universitate debet incumbere ad studia philologica. Credere non possum, Sanctitatem Suam rite de his causis nostris informatam jubere velle quae jussi exequi nequeamus.”

years of age; another two were already seventy. The Holy Father, wrote the abbot, not without a certain acidity, should concern himself with obtaining more freedom for the Bavarian monasteries. Then they too could send students to Rome!

The rather sobering, if not disillusioning, impression made on O'Gorman during his two-month journey in Austria, Bavaria, and Switzerland, along with the evasive replies or outright rejections received from other abbots in the course of 1887, ought surely to have disheartened the pope and Dusmet.²⁴

It seems, however, that the mounting difficulties had the effect of strengthening the pope in his purpose. On July 10, 1887, Leo XIII sent a new brief to Dusmet ("Già altra volta"), in which he pushed for the immediate opening of the college and offered temporary accommodation in the Palazzo dei Convertendi close to the Vatican.²⁵ The brief

²⁴ On July 27, 1887, the abbot general of the Subiaco Congregation, Nicola M. Canevello, and the procurator general, Romarico Flugli, wrote directly to Pope Leo XIII: "Noi Cassinesi P.O., non ostante il desiderio che nutriamo vivissimo di secondare le sapientissime mire della Santità Vostra, sentiamo di non potere prendere parte, a cagione delle circostanze a quest'opera benche se in medesima così bella, utile e grandiose." The reasons they give are (1) the poverty of the monasteries; (2) dangers to monastic observance; (3) fears regarding the preponderance of the Cassinese and the *Anglo-Benedictines*, i.e., two Congregations "that have always been our enemies." ASV, Segr. Di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 40–41. Also, f. 42, a reply of July 14, 1887: the pope does not agree with the reservations expressed; in matters of discipline Sant'Anselmo will be immediately subject to the Holy See. Similar rejection of the pope's plans are to be found in "Notes sur le Collège de S. Anselme" (by Dom Couturier?): ASV, Segr. Di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 10–16. The author argues (1) Sant'Anselmo as planned is not consonant with the Rule of St. Benedict nor with monastic tradition; (2) there will be no choral office at Sant'Anselmo; (3) the college would be completely dependent on support from other monasteries, hence its existence would not be guaranteed; (4) "il n'est généralement pas populaire dans l'Ordre, et cela pour plusieurs motifs: a) in ne répond pas à un vrai besoin, au point de vue des études, cells-ci se faisant actuellement mieux et à moins de frais dans les monastères ou dans les Congrégations respective; b) la partie observante et monastique de l'Ordre craint de voir ses jeunes moines perdre l'esprit monastique, étant privés de ce qui fait l'essence de la vie du moine, à savoir, la vie de famille et la liturgie; c) la partie non-monastique de l'Ordre craint, au contraire, que ses jeunes religieux ne soient gagnés aux idées monastiques par le contact des autres." Thus the author, following an attack on the Cassinese, proposes a meeting of abbots in Rome to consider the matter of reform of the Order. He has no desire to have a central college but a real abbey in Rome with a scholasticate attached, to which other monasteries and Congregations could send young monks for the purpose of studies.

²⁵ Printed in Molitor, 237. Dusmet's circular letter dated June 12, 1887, announcing the opening of the college: *StudMitt* 8 (1887): 435–37.

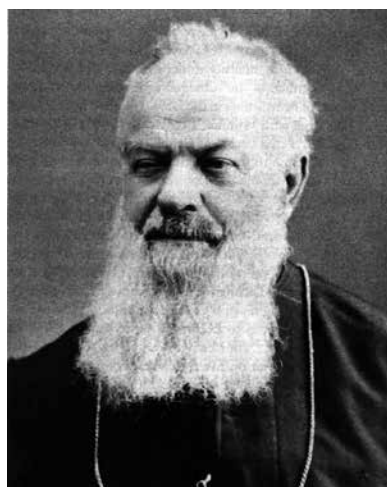
appointed Archbishop Dusmet, up to then responsible only for the preparatory work, superior of the new college. At the same time, he was given the right to appoint a monk of his choice as his plenipotentiary and representative, particularly for the periods during which he, Dusmet, would be absent from Rome because of the demands of his own diocese in Sicily.

Dusmet chose Getano Bernardi, an already elderly monk of Monte Cassino and respected for his abilities as a teacher. In December 1887, the pope, following Dusmet's suggestion, appointed Bernardi abbot and rector of Sant'Anselmo.²⁶

2. The First Years in the New College

Already on January 18, 1881, a few days after the opening of the college, Dusmet compiled a comprehensive report on what had been achieved to date. This report was addressed to Msgr. Gabriele Boccali, *Uditore di Sua Santità*, a true friend of the new college, who in the years ahead became the intermediary between Sant'Anselmo and the pope. Dusmet's report was, of course, intended for the pope himself.²⁷

Dusmet begins with a list of financial help actually received or definitely promised by the monasteries. In the first place he praises the swift response from the geographically most distant Benedictine Congregation, the American-Cassinense, whose founder, Boniface Wimmer had, sadly, died on December 8, 1887. Dusmet refers to Wimmer as a "passionate protagonist" (*appassionato fautore*) of the college. As early as the 1860s, Wimmer had established a college in Rome for American Benedictine students, the College of St. Elizabeth, close to the church of S. Andrea della Valle. From there, the students attended lectures at the Gregoriana. The college had to be closed following the occupation of Rome by Italian troops.²⁸ As a consequence, Wimmer reacted



Abbot Boniface Wimmer
(1809–1887)

²⁶ ASV, Cong. Ep. Er Reg., Posizioni Regolari, Agosto-Dicembre 1887: Nomination decree of Abbot G. Bernardi (ex Audientia SSmi on December 21, 1887) dated December 26, 1887 (Prot. 8207/13).

²⁷ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I D/6. Partly printed by Della Mara (appendix 1) 43–47.

²⁸ The Collegium S. Elisabethae in the via dei Chiaveri, founded in 1865, closed in 1870, reopened in October 1880, but had to be definitively closed in August

enthusiastically to the notion of a Benedictine college in Rome. Not only did he immediately send two professors to Rome along with three students, but he also made a donation of 40,000 lire, the real value of which can be gauged from the fact that the cost per year of keeping a student in the college was 1,000 lire. The Cassinese Congregation gave 40,000 lire; the Beuronese, 20,000 lire. The Congregation of Solesmes, represented by Cardinal Pitra, approached the pope with a request—which was granted—to be dispensed from sending money or students to Sant'Anselmo for the duration of their exile. Clearly displeased, Dusmet reported that he had replied to the cardinal that he expected to hear from him as soon as the situation of the Congregation of Solesmes improved. In fact, Dom Couturier, the abbot of Solesmes, had no intention of sending monks from his Congregation to Sant'Anselmo. In his view, one does not leave the world in order subsequently to acquire the intellectual means of conquering that world. Above all, he was worried about monastic observance. Would monks not return to their home monasteries with liberal and worldly attitudes and habits? Training for the priesthood could, he argued, be provided at home by the monks of the Solesmes Congregation themselves. They had no need of Sant'Anselmo for this. Without a doubt, Dom Couturier would have immediately obeyed a direct papal order to send the young French monks to the new college. In the absence of such a command, however, the Congregation of Solesmes kept its distance from Sant'Anselmo.²⁹

The Swiss abbots had informed the archbishop that *hoc saltem tempore nec aptis personis nec pecuniis Collegium adiuuare posse* (that at least for the time being they could not support the college either by sending suitable monks or with money). Following a decision by his chapter, Archabbot Claudius Vaszary of Pannonhalma promised 1,000 Austrian gulden per annum, “for as long as the College of Sant'Anselmo exists and as long our circumstances permit us to do so.” He regretted, however, that for the time being, because of the pressure of state-school regulations, he was not in a position to send any students.³⁰ The Austrian monasteries contributed 8,270 Austrian gulden.

1883, a victim of a road building program. J. Oetgen, *An American Abbot, Boniface Wimmer, OSB, 1809–1887* (Latrobe, PA, 1976), 222, 283. The house and the church of S. Elisabetta dei Fornari—which remained until 1886—was the property of the German bankers' guild in Rome. For the documents concerning the letting of this property to Wimmer, see A. Schmidt, “Das Archiv des Campo Santo Teutonico, nebst geschichtlicher Einleitung,” in *RQ. Suppl. Bd. 31* (Freiburg, 1967), 54, 209f.

²⁹ A. Houtin, *Dom Couturier, abbé de Solesmes* (Angers, 1899), 237ff.

³⁰ APr, Arch. Dusmet I i E/2: “quoadusque Collegium S. Anselmi florebit nobisque per adiuncta licebit.”

Understandably, in the matter of the internal organization of the only recently established college, Dusmet confines himself to a few remarks. Thanks to the help of the Beuronese Congregation, it has been possible from the very first day to entrust all domestic services in the house to lay brothers. Dusmet states, "You, Monsignore, will easily understand what a great help this is toward the maintenance of discipline, silence, and order in the house and providing the best care for professors and students." It was too early to make a judgement on how studies were progressing but: *Le scuole vanno bene* (teaching is going well), "The professors are happy with the students and vice versa."

For the most part, the regime of the house and the study plan were in accordance with the recommendations of the Cassinese Abbots' Conference of 1886. In a letter dated February 26, 1888, Fr. Chrysostomus Stelzer describes the timetable as it applied then to lecturers:

We rise at five o'clock; there follows a long pause after which at 5:30 there is common meditation in the chapel. Prime follows meditation (to which the *Capitulum culpae* is added twice a month). Then I have to wait for half-an-hour before I can say Mass. After breakfast I prepare the morning's lecture which takes place at 9:30. Then I recite the remaining Small Hours, which is usually followed by further study until 11:15. After recreation I recite Vespers, and follow this with the preparation of the afternoon lecture, which at present takes place at 3:30, but, depending on the time of the Ave Maria, can be postponed until later toward evening. This is usually followed by a *disputatio* or a kind of *colloquium*, for purposes of revision. This is followed every day by a walk—this being Lent, we usually visit the stational churches if they are not too far away. Following the walk I say the Rosary; then there is Compline in common, followed by a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; after that a half-an-hour of study before supper which takes place at 7:30. On three days of the week I also have (at present) a kind of *privatissimum* for two clerics who are more advanced in dogmatics and are not following the general course. Following recreation we have common *recollectio* and evening prayer, after which one can do some more work or anticipate [Matins?] or go straight to bed.³¹



Archabbot Claudius Vaszary
(1832–1915)

³¹ Quoted from Molitor, vol. 3.



Dom Charles Couturier
(1817–1890)

It is clear from the letter that in the beginning only a small part of the Liturgy of the Hours was prayed in common, namely, Prime and Compline. The full Office was prayed in choir only on Sundays and feast days, on which, if possible, Vespers was sung. The daily meditation, however, was held in the chapel, a practice which may reflect an old Cassinese tradition. Twice a week there was a spiritual conference, one on Sunday from the abbot-rector for the whole community and another during the week from the Master of Clerics for those entrusted to his care. In accordance with Church practice at the time, all nonpriests attended the daily Conventual Mass but received Communion only on Sundays and feast days. Special permission was needed in order to receive

Communion more frequently. Students were permitted to leave the house only in groups and no one could leave the house in the evening. The porter was required to give the keys to the superior after supper.³²

The course of studies in the first statutes of the college takes up no more than half-a-page in the printed text and appears as *Declaratio II* to the Rule of Benedict chapter 48.1 (*certis horis in lectione*). According to this *Declaratio*, the six-year course was to include two years of scholastic philosophy as well as mathematics and natural sciences. In the subsequent four years the following subjects were taught: dogmatic-scholastic theology, Hebrew and Greek, interpretation of the Bible, patristics, moral theology, church history, canon law, liturgy, Christian archaeology, and Gregorian chant. The students had four hours of instruction every day. Professors had to recite the creed of the Council of Trent “according to the formula of Pius IV with the additions of Pius IX of blessed memory.”

More can be learned about studies from a report from Abbot Francesco Leopoldo Zelli, abbot of St. Paul Outside the Walls, to Archbishop Dusmet, dated April 2, 1888.³³ Zelli had been appointed *Ispettore e Visitatore delle Scuole del Collegio di S. Anselmo*. In this capacity he participated on Monday of Holy Week 1888 in the *disputationes* which were usual at that period and for a long time after. In the *disputationes*, the students were expected to expound independently on the material that had been presented in the lectures. At a time when seminars did not yet exist,

³² Cf. appendix 4 of this work.

³³ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 A/b. Zelli's next report is dated December 15, 1888: APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 A/a.

this was certainly a useful instrument for deepening and enlivening the topics studied.

In the theological-dogmatic *disputationes* in which Zelli took part, the subject was the possibility and provability of Christ's miracles, the resurrection as a proof of Christ's divine mission, and the power of the witness of the martyrs to and for the faith: all theses with an apologetic thrust which was commonplace following the First Vatican Council. The visitator intervened personally in the philosophical *disputatio* held in the afternoon which dealt with the divisions of the powers of the soul on the basis of action and according to the object toward which they were essentially ordered. In his intervention, the visitator emphasized the significance of this thesis for the refutation of the "false teachings" of Rosmini. As one can see, from the beginning Sant'Anselmo was firmly neoscholastic.

Despite all of his praise, the visitator nevertheless stressed to Dusmet the need to increase the number of professors in order to leave teachers more time to perfect their skills and knowledge in their areas of specialization. This exhortation was as justified as it was difficult to implement, a fact which was soon to become evident.

Disputationes and visitations were a kind of supplement to the examinations that were held all together at the end of the academic year. The "students of the theological classes" had a further opportunity to demonstrate their learning in the sermons they had to preach twice a year in the refectory in the presence of the professors and fellow students.³⁴

The private audience granted to the college by Leo XIII on July 1, 1888, was a particular mark of esteem and the crowning of the first year of the new Sant'Anselmo. Abbot Bernardi speaks about this in his first annual report to the abbots of the Order on July 24, 1888. His letter to Dusmet, however, written on the evening of the audience itself—which took place at 4:30 in the afternoon—is much livelier and informative.³⁵

³⁴ Regarding the sermons Bernardi writes in a circular letter dated July 20, 1892: "Quoad disputationes, visitationes, examina, eadem servata est methodus, quam plurimum annorum experimentia jam comprobat. Solummodo studiis hucusque usitatis addebantur publica artis oratoriae exercitia. Festis nempe principalioribus Alumni Theologi sermones in refectorio habebant de materia sive dogmatica sive ascetica libere selectis." In the first years the (oral) examinations were held before the whole teaching body. Each professor had a certain number of white and black balls. A student's final mark was determined by the number of white balls received. Cfr. AAt, *Annale scolastico 1888–1928/1929*, f. 4.

³⁵ Bernardi, circular letter dated July 24, 1888. Letter to Dusmet, in APr, Arch. Dusmet I 1 F.

The pope made a brief speech in Latin, addressed primarily to the students: "Read the history, the glorious history of your Order! It has given the Church many popes and a great number of cardinals, bishops, saints, and scholars. Take these as your example and say to your superiors, abbots, priors, and rectors that the pope desires this of the Order of St. Benedict, that monks be strong defenders of truth and goodness." His one regret is that Sant'Anselmo still has no fixed and worthy accommodation, but he would like to help in this matter. He had done what he could, and this willingly, but he expects that on their side the Benedictines would gladly do what remains to be done,

ne vana evadant desideria nostra, et ne opus quod aggressi sumus pereat (so that our desires might not remain unfulfilled and the work we have begun not perish).

The audience ended with an episode which today, several decades after the Second Vatican Council, is difficult to understand, but which is easily reconcilable with the ecclesiastical and social ambience of the late nineteenth century.

Gaetano Bernardi was indeed the abbot of Sant'Anselmo, but had not, however, received the abbatial blessing, which was not usual among the Cassinese. Furthermore, the Cassinese abbots, with the exception of the ordinaries, wore the pectoral cross only on certain Church occasions. At

the audience Bernardi asked the pope for permission to wear the pectoral cross always, both inside and outside the college. In addition, he asked to receive the abbatial blessing. The pope granted both requests immediately. He conferred the abbatial blessing, however, simply by using the usual formula of blessing, *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis*, etc. This was, perhaps, somewhat of a disappointment for Bernardi. What at first sight may appear as ridiculous vanity on the part of the first rector of Sant'Anselmo was in fact symptomatic of a desire to raise the prestige of the college by means of the usages common in the society of the time: Bernardi immediately approached the Curia to have this privilege confirmed for future superiors of Sant'Anselmo.³⁶

The "Studien und Mitteilungen aus dem Benedictiner- und dem Cistercienser-Orden," which in the years before the First World War saw itself not only as an academic journal but also as a newsletter, commu-



Fr. Paul Schindler (1838–1908)

³⁶ Indult dated July 12, 1888: cf. appendix 3.

nicated already some minor changes in the teaching body in the second academic year: “Fr. Wilfrid Wallace from the Beuronese congregation was replaced in the subjects of ecclesiastical history and introduction to the Bible by Fr. Augustin Haudeck from St. Martinsberg (Pannonhalma). Fr. Paul Schindler from Einsiedeln became responsible for moral theology. The role of spiritual director of the students was assumed by Fr. Chrysostomus Stelzer who at the same time became professor of dogmatics in place of Fr. Gerard [van Caloen] from the Beuronese congregation.”³⁷ The correspondent noted regarding the content of the studies, “This year, too, a theological and philosophical course was begun. Dogmatics started with Tractatus V. de Deo Uno with diligent use of the Summa of St. Thomas (every student had received a copy of the latest edition of this, Romae, ex Typographia Senatus, volumina VI); lectures in ecclesiastical history began with Constantine; in moral theology the course started with Praeceptum III; the introduction to the Bible began with the Tractatus de SS. Scripturae Textibus.”

From outside everything seemed to have gotten off to a good start. Bernardi’s letters, however, reveal the worries that had quickly begun to trouble the rector. On May 3, 1888, Bernardi complained to Abbot Hildebrand de Hemptinne of Maredsous about Fr. Gerard van Caloen, who by the back door and without informing any of his superiors in the Order, asked permission from the Curia to found a Congregation for the missions or an Oriental college.³⁸ Bernardi stated that the archabbot of Beuron should immediately forbid this. Further, he, the archabbot, should order that Fr. Gerard “should never again set foot on Roman soil.” Rather, he should be summoned to Beuron “where his frivolous and erratic character” (*suo carattere leggiero e incostante*) can be remedied. In fact, Archabbot Maurus Wolter immediately removed van Caloen from Rome, putting him in charge of the Maredsous house of studies at Louvain—but here, too, things did not go well for long.

More serious was the loss of the young professor of philosophy, Fr. Robert Monroe from St. Vincent, who died of smallpox on January 26, 1889, after a few days’ illness. He was buried in the cemetery of Campo



Fr. Robert Monroe (1850–1889)

³⁷ *StudMitt* 9 (1888): 674f.

³⁸ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 1 G/6. On Gerard van Caloen: cf. N. N. Huyghebaert, *Bibliographie nationale . . . de Belgique*, Supplément III (Brussels, 1961), 151–61.

Verano.³⁹ This death not only immediately caused near panic among the residents but also forced the rector to find a new professor. For the time being, a secular priest from the "Appollinare" (today's Lateran University) was engaged to help with moral theology.

At the end of May the number of students sank to thirteen. By the end of the academic year the whole community consisted of twenty-five persons. In the following year, 1889–1890, there were only twenty, a frighteningly small number, even if "St. Joseph, St. Benedict, and St. Anselm hurried to fill the gaps."⁴⁰ One can understand that under such circumstances, Bernardi had more than once during his period as rector to battle with discouragement and bitterness. There is no clearer expression of the cares that plagued him than his letter of December 2, 1889, to Hildebrand de Hemptinne. Given the gravity of the opinions expressed concerning Sant'Anselmo in this letter, it is here quoted at length:

Having been constrained to accept the nomination as abbot of this college, I had a long confidential conversation with Msgr. Boccali. This was eighteen months ago. I used this opportunity to express to him my little faith in the future of the college, because of a grave mistake made right at the beginning. The mistake was the following: When the Holy Father wished not only to reestablish the college founded by Innocent XI for the Cassinese Congregation but also to open it to the other Benedictine Congregations, *nigris coloris*, all the Italian and foreign abbots should have been summoned and given the opportunity to discuss the basis of the renewed institution and principles on which agreement could be reached. Thus, all would have had an interest in the life and future of the college and we should never have lacked either professors or students to fill that college every year. The good prelate agreed with my opinion and asked how this mistake could be rectified. Understandably, I replied: by doing what had not yet been done. I added, however, that one should also consider how one might achieve the other goal of the Holy Father, namely, to gather the scattered forces of the Order into a powerful unity.

Nor did I forgo the opportunity to point out the need for an adequate financial endowment for the Abbey of Sant'Anselmo, so that this abbey would be in a position, apart from covering extraordinary expenses, to acquire the books which are needed by

³⁹ Molitor, 111.

⁴⁰ "Ma S. Giuseppe, S. Benedetto e Sant'Anselmo si sono affrettati a far riempiere le lacune." Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated November 5, 1889, APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 A/a.

a house which promotes the wide-ranging and important study which is theology.

The prelate replied that he would submit my suggestions to the judgment of the Holy Father, so that he could take care of the issues. I said at once that I did not think that this was the right time to act, so soon after the opening of the college. One should wait for a favorable opportunity. This opportunity, I suggested, could present itself when a start had been made on building the college, at the laying of the foundation stone and not before. Otherwise it might appear that one was trying to correct the work that had been done by the Congress of the Cassinese Abbots under the chairmanship of H. E. Dusmet. Good, the prelate replied, remind me of these things when you think the time is right and I will present them to the Holy Father who will certainly agree.⁴¹

⁴¹ "Costretto di accettare la nomina di Abate in questo Collegio mi accadde, diciotto mesi fa, di avere un lungo colloquio confidenziale con Monsignor Boccali e fu in questa occasione che io gli espressi francamente la mia poca fiducia nell'avvenire del Collegio, perché era stato commesso un grave errore sin da principio; e l'errore era questo, che, avendo voluto il Santo Padre non soltanto risuscitare il Collegio fondato da Innocenzo XI per la Congregazione Cassinese, ma ampliarne il beneficio a tutte le altre Congregazioni Benedettine, *nigri coloris*, sarebbe stato conveniente radunare tutti gli Abati italiani e forestieri. E lasciar discutere da essi le basi da dare alla rinnovata Istituzione, e i capitoli di un accordo. Per tal modo tutti si sarebbero interessati alla vita e all'avvenire del Collegio, e non sarebbero mai mancati Professori ed Alunni da riempierlo ogni anno felicemente. Il degno Prelato si mostrò persuaso di questa mia osservazione, e mi chiese in che modo si sarebbe potuto riparare a questa omissione. Gli risposi, naturalmente, che bisognava ripararvi col fare appunto quello che non era stato fatto. Ma soggiunsi, che conveniva altresì di studiare il modo come si sarebbe potuto raggiungere l'alto fine vagheggiato dal Santo Padre, di raccogliere cioè in una poderosa unità le sparse forze dell'Ordine. Gli feci anche notare l'anormalità di un Abate, *paterfamilias*, senza una sua propria figliolanza, tanto più necessaria in una Istituzione come il nostro Collegio Sant'Anselmo, nel quale bisognava creare una buona e sicura tradizione della disciplina e delle costumanze della Casa; il che non potrebbe ottenere, senza il beneficio di una famiglia stabile e veramente conservatrice. Né trascurai di accenargli anche la necessità di una discreta dotazione alla Badia Anselmiana, affinché si fosse in grado di provvedere, oltre che ai bisogni straordinari, anche all'acquisto dei libri indispensabili a una casa di studi tanto larghi e importanti, quali sono appunto gli studi sacri! Gli disse anche parecchie altre cose importanti, che qui è inutile di riferire. Mi rispose allora Monsignore, che ben volentieri avrebbe sottomesse al giudizio del Santo Padre queste mie considerazioni, affinché si fosse potuto provvedere. Ma io gli ragginsi, che non era il momento di agire dopo così breve tempo trascorso dall'apertura del Collegio, e che bisognava cogliere un'occasione opportuna. Questa occasione, conclusi, poteva offrircela l'edificazione del Collegio, quando sarebbe stato scelto e fissato il luogo dove porre la prima pietra, ma non prima, per non

3. The Search for a New Home

The pope had foreseen the rooms in the Palazzo dei Convertendi only as a temporary solution to the question of accommodation. Thus, from the beginning Abbot Bernardi was on the search for a new and suitable site for the college. In addition, the small community had to leave the Palazzo dei Convertendi sooner than expected. The above-mentioned death from smallpox of Fr. Robert Monroe raised the fear of infection. For this reason, on the very evening of Fr. Monroe's death, the community fled in great haste to the completely empty hospital of S. Marta situated behind the Vatican Sacristy. Some years before, the hospital had been prepared by the pope in preparation for any eventual outbreak of cholera in Rome. The proximity of the Campo Santo Teutonico had the effect that eight students of the College of St. Boniface, established in the Campo Santo for German student priests, attended lectures at Sant'Anselmo. In return, Msgr. De Waal, rector of Campo Santo, gave lectures to the Benedictines on Christian archaeology.⁴²

Although the community was able to return to the Palazzo dei Convertendi after a few months, the incident demonstrated the urgency of finding healthier and more spacious premises.

There was no lack of plans and ideas. The short list included a delightfully situated villa on the Via Nomentana between the Porta Pia and the church of S. Agnese, which belonged to an elegant widowed German duchess known personally to the pope. In fact, the pope himself took the matter in hand and spoke with the lady. To Bernardi, who had expressed certain doubts, the pope said, "Relax, your college is a duty to which I am in honor bound. Just leave the care of this matter to me and tell all the middle-men that the pope himself is behind this matter and so they should keep out of it." The project to buy the villa came to nothing, however, because of the unacceptable demands of the pious lady to sell only part of the land attached to it.⁴³

There were already concrete proposals to make S. Saba on the Aventine the seat of the college. The idea recommended itself immediately

dare a vedere che si voleva emendare l'opera già compiuta dagli Abati Cassinesi nella Dieta presieduta dall'Emo Dusmet. Ebbene, ripigliò Monsignore, quando a Lei piacerà, mi ricordi queste cose, e io le riferirò al Sante Padre, al quale riusciranno certamente assai gradite." Letter from Bernardi dated December 2, 1889: APr, Arch. Dusmet I I G/6.

⁴² APr, Arch. Dusmet I I F: Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated January 28, 1891. On A. de Waal, cf. E. Gatz, "Anton de Waal (1837–1917) und der Campo Santo Teutonico," in *RQ Suppl. Bd. 38* (Rome, 1980).

⁴³ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I F: Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated June 24, 1889.

because of its apparent persuasiveness. S. Saba was an ancient Roman church, an ancient Greek monastery—which had been dissolved for a long time and the buildings assigned to the Collegium Germanicum as a summer residence (*villegiatura*)—and in a picture-book location. All this seemed to recommend S. Saba. At relatively little cost, so it appeared, Sant’Anselmo could find a new home here. At Bernardi’s request, P. Gislain de Béthune came from Maredsous to draw up plans for the conversion of the house. He was the first to have an unfavorable impression of the chosen site and he made no secret of this. In his opinion, S. Saba, at that time an isolated spot, would soon be surrounded by busy streets. He learned this from the city’s plans for the laying out of streets. In addition, a conversion of the house presented difficulties, and neighbors had little good to say about the terrain.⁴⁴ Finally, S. Saba was classified as a *Monumento nazionale* and as such was under state supervision. Nevertheless, Cardinal Rampolla was enthusiastic about the



The basilica of St. Saba

idea and the architect’s plans, as was Dusmet. Thus Béthune, despite being increasingly plagued by doubts, continued his work. The sale of the site required not only the agreement of the Collegium Germanicum but also of the Italian authorities. The necessary steps were taken and success seemed assured but finally everything collapsed. This was a bitter experience which later superiors of Sant’Anselmo were also to have with Italian bureaucracy.

Thus Bernardi continued his search. The fact that after several vain attempts, a site on the side of the Aventine finally became a possibility is attributable to Abbot Zelli of St. Paul’s. He was the “happy Columbus who discovered this site that, as it were, had been staring all in the face” (R. Molitor). Already once before, Zelli had brought Bernardi’s attention to the site, but the latter had demurred because of the high cost of laying foundations. In December 1889 the matter suddenly reached a new juncture. Count Alessandro Barbiellini Amidei—whom Zelli did not know—visited the abbot and presented himself as the owner of the site and of the house contained in the fortifications of Paul III on the Aventine. He, the count, had heard that the College of Sant’Anselmo was

⁴⁴ Molitor, 115.

searching for a site on which to build and that, being a great friend of the Benedictines and their history, he was prepared to sell the property.⁴⁵

The wedge-shaped site on the western peak of the Aventine was separated from the property of the Knights of Malta by a steep path that ran from the Tiber, past the church of the Maltese priory, and on to the Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta. The boundaries on the two other sides were the Via della Marmorata, directly under the sharp drop of the hill, and the Via di S. Maria del Priorato, today's Via di Porta Lavernale. The site of 43,000 square meters was a vineyard. At the level of the present Aula III stood the house of the tenant who worked the vineyard. Indeed, following the purchase, it was only with difficulty that it was possible to remove the man and his family from the site.

Bernardi was correct in describing the site as "one of the most beautiful situations in Rome from which one has a marvelous view" of the city, the Tuscan hills, and as far as Ostia. The apartment blocks of Testaccio did not yet exist.⁴⁶

In fact, Bernardi could not have found a more suitable site in Rome. Only half-an-hour on foot from the busy Piazza Venezia, even today the property is a relatively silent oasis in the middle of the deafening Roman traffic. Again, despite the polluted air of the city, what Jotsald, a monk of Cluny, wrote in the eleventh century is still true, "This hill has finer houses than the rest of the city, overlooks them from the summit, makes the summer heat more bearable because of the constant breeze, thus creating a pleasant environment for its residents."⁴⁷

Negotiations with Count Barbiellini were concluded quickly. A first audience of the count with Leo XIII lasted a full hour-and-a-half. On April 21 Bernardi was already able to report that all aspects were covered, even if investigations regarding the foundations still had to be undertaken.⁴⁸ On July 14, Bernardi reported that at the wish of His Holiness, it was planned that the sale be made in the name of the son of the Marquess Sachetti.⁴⁹ In a circular letter a few days later, on July

⁴⁵ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 A/b: Letter from Zelli to Bernardi dated December 16, 1889.

⁴⁶ Apr, Arch. Dusmet I 1 F: Letter to Dusmet dated April 21, 1890.

⁴⁷ "In monte Aventino, qui prae ceteris illius urbis montibus aedes decoras habens, et suae positionis culmen in altum tollens, aestivus fervores aurarum algore tolerabiles reddit, et habilem in se habitationem facit." Jotsaldus, *Vita S. Odilonis* II, 9: PL 142, 923 C.

⁴⁸ ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 45–60. Correspondence on the survey of the ground under Sant'Anselmo, in particular the Tiber aquifer.

⁴⁹ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 1 F.

26, he was able to inform all Benedictine abbots that the long-desired site for the college had at last been found. "It is on the Aventine Hill on which our St. Odo [of Cluny], thanks to the generosity of Alberich from the family of the Counts of Tusculum, built a monastery and church in honor of Mary; the hill on which the Abbey of Saints Augustine and Alexius flourished." He then mentioned Gregory VII, who had spent his youth in a monastery here and closed with the words, "Of all the places in Rome what better place could we have wished for!"⁵⁰

Bernardi had no part in the negotiation of the sale. Nor was he told how much had been paid. A commission under the chairmanship of the cardinal secretary of state, Rampolla, decided in February 1892, that the property should not be registered in the name of a private person but under the title of the *Sacri Palazzi*, i.e., the Vatican.⁵¹ This remains the situation to this day.

Originally, Bernardi had thought of P. Ghislain de Béthune of Maredsous as architect. For personal reasons, however, the latter was no longer a candidate. He was replaced by the artistically gifted Hildebrand de Hemptinne, who had only recently in Monte Cassino received the abbatial blessing as abbot of Maredsous.⁵² Bernardi had known Dom Hildebrand since 1888 when he had visited Maredsous for the consecration of the abbey church. Already in May 1890, without having seen the site, Hemptinne made a first sketch for a college on the Aventine. Clearly, the pope knew of this when on October 11 he granted an audience to Archabbot Maurus Wolter and the newly blessed abbot of

⁵⁰ Bernardi's circular letter dated July 26, 1890. Instead of "ubi Abbatia Sanctorum Augustini et Alexii floruit," the writer should have said, "Sanctorum Bonifatii et Alexii floruit."

⁵¹ ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 5–7. Legal opinion by Giordani on the legal representatives in the sale of Sant'Anselmo (April 28, 1892). In the matter of the sale price, cf. ASV, Segr. Di Stato 1901, rubr. 9, fasc. 2, f. 61. Note dated July 12, 1890. The total cost of the *orto Barbiellini all'Aventino* was 270,000 lire. Of this sum, 120,000 lire came directly from the pope himself and he had advanced 150,000 lire. On July 18, 1890, a telegram of thanks was sent by Dusmet to Rampolla. Cf., however, 54 below.

⁵² Regarding the origins of the former officer of the papal zouaves, Félix-Pierre-François-Joseph de Hemptinne, see A. de Riemaeker, *Histoire et généalogie de la Famille de Hemptinne* (Ghent, 1894), 14f. Also, biography by H. de Moreau, *Dom Hildebrand de Hemptinne, abbé de Maredsous, premier primat de l'ordre bénédictin (1849–1913)* (Paris, 1930). German edition, *Hildebrand de Hemptinne, Mönch von Beuron, Abt von Maredsous, erster Primas des Benediktinerordens 1849–1913*, trans. H. Kiene (Beuron, 1938); Ph. Schmitz, *Biographie nationale . . . de Belgique*, Supplément III (Brussels, 1961–1962), 445–51.

Maredsous.⁵³ Leo XIII raised the matter of the purchase of the expensive site and underlined his willingness, despite his straitened financial circumstances, to finance the building. He had commissioned Cardinal Rampolla, the architect Sig. Vespignani, and a Franciscan architect to survey and assess the site. Archabbot Maurus Wolter drew attention to Hemptinne's capabilities and remarked that a Franciscan would have difficulty grasping what was fitting for our Order. Leo XIII reacted immediately to this hint and commissioned Hemptinne to join Rampolla and the two architects in the assessment of the site.

As soon became clear, this audience was decisive for the choice of Hemptinne as architect of the new college. Vespignani, a well-known and self-confident architect, declared himself willing to cooperate with Hemptinne and only with Hemptinne for the technical execution of the plans. The pope asked for a building for eighty students and twenty professors. The church should serve only the needs of the college, though be open to visitors who, it was envisaged, would be few.

Hemptinne set to work with great enthusiasm.⁵⁴ At the same time and with astonishing energy, he prepared the plans for the women's Abbey of St. Scholastica at Maredret, close to Maredsous in Belgium. As early as January 1891, he was able to send his drawings for the future college to Rome. Bernardi presented these immediately to the cardinal secretary of state. On the morning of June 6, 1891, Hemptinne had the opportunity of presenting and explaining the plans to the pope himself in the presence of Cardinal Rampolla and Bernardi. We know how the audience went from a letter of Hemptinne to his prior and also, in greater detail, from a report of Bernardi to Cardinal Dusmet.⁵⁵ The pope had the plans spread out on the large table in his private library and examined every detail. "Bene, bravo, ottimamente," was his comment. When he saw the drawing of the grandiose facade on the Via Marmorata side he exclaimed, "Magnifico, bellissimo, monumentale! Ma Lei è

⁵³ G. Ghysens, "Dom Hildebrand de Hemptinne, architecte de Saint-Anselme, premier Abbé-Primat de l'ordre bénédictin," *Lettre de Maredsous* 1 (1979): 4–8; 2 (1979): 5–15; 3 (1979): 10–12.

⁵⁴ ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 18–20. Hemptinne's letter to Bernardi dated December 26, 1890, "Ho fatto tutto per esprimere coi mattoni le intenzioni del Sommo Pontefice che mira a fare di Sant'Anselmo un centro intellettuale potente nel nostro Santo Ordine non meno che un incentivo di vita monastica e di santità nello medesimo." Because the choral office does not have the importance it should have in every abbey of the Order, the college church must be so constructed that the liturgy can be celebrated there in an exemplary manner.

⁵⁵ ArchMaredsous, Hemptinne's letter to Prior Basilisu de Meester dated June 9, 1891. APr, Arch. Dusmet I I F, Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated June 10, 1891.

architetto vero!" (Magnificent, beautiful, a real monument! But you are a true architect!). Hemptinne replied modestly, "I am a mere dilettante, but the thought that I was serving the Holy Father strengthened my abilities." The pope wanted at once to keep the Belgian abbot in Rome but Hemptinne pointed out that he had duties in Maredsous and also that it was not necessary that he be constantly present during building operations on the Aventine.

Once again, Leo XIII availed himself of the opportunity to present his vision of the renewal of the Benedictine Order. Referring to the name of the college, he recalled St. Anselm's life as a monk at Bec under Abbot Herluin and in Lanfranc's school, saying, "When the college is filled with young students and has an abbot such as Herluin and professors such as the Blessed Lanfranc, the Benedictine Order will once more give the Church great and holy monks such as these who spread Christian teaching and culture all over the world. I bless your task and work already begun. May God make it to prosper!"

In spite of the pope's enthusiasm, the execution of the plans began slowly. Indeed, Bernardi, who tended toward pessimism, feared for a while that the building would never materialize. The pope had appointed Cardinal de Ruggiero as chairman of the building committee. Supervision of building operations and technical management were entrusted to the architect Sig. Vespignani.⁵⁶ The original estimate amounted to 1,750,000 lire. The pope impressed on the cardinal that he could not give more than 1,200,000 lire. The project must be tailored to take this into account. In fact, the result was not only a reduction in the size of the building but also—as became painfully clear later—in the inadequate finishings of the interior. In addition, Cardinal de Ruggiero was anxious to have the whole sum promised by the pope at once. He was afraid—and not without reason—that were the pope, who was nearly ninety years old, to die suddenly, both the funds and the enthusiasm to finish the project would evaporate. He had, however, to be satisfied with 300,000 lire for the first year.⁵⁷

Everything seemed to have been agreed upon, but still nothing happened on the actual building site because the Vatican had not yet given the go-ahead. Bernardi was justifiably uneasy. At the beginning of January 1892, he pressed Cardinal Dusmet urgently to come to Rome. The college had many enemies in the Curia who appeared even to have the ear of the

⁵⁶ ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 69–71. Letters from Vespignani to Cardinal Rampolla regarding the building site at Sant'Anselmo.

⁵⁷ APr, Arch. Dusmet I F: Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated July 18, 1891.



Hemptinne's building plans (1891/1892)

pope.⁵⁸ When Bernardi visited the pope on the day before Christmas Eve 1891, for the usual expression of Christmas good wishes, he found him changed. Instead of the usual questions to the abbot about the college, he simply gave him his blessing and dismissed him. Rumors were rife in the city that the pope wanted to give the college another, less costly, premises.

But that is not all. The Holy Father has not only noticed with disapproval that the Cassinese Congregation has only one student at the college. He is also aware of the tensions in Monte Cassino between the monks and their superiors and between the monks

⁵⁸ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 A/a. Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated January 6, 1892.

themselves. In addition, he knows about the appeal by five monks of Cava to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious against their Abbot. . . . Presumably he also knows that fifteen or sixteen Benedictines, mostly Austrians, some from Bavaria, are studying at the University of Innsbruck. For these reasons, it would be no cause for wonder, if in justifiable anger he were to consider—if he has not already done so—not throwing away so much money, a gift that is apparently so unwelcome to so many abbeys (*buttar via tano danaro per un beneficio assai sgradito a molte Badie*), and which we Benedictines so little deserve!⁵⁹

It had been possible for him, Bernardi, to gloss over matters with the pope and the Curia, but he wanted to say openly to Dusmet that he had received hardly any replies to the circular letters that he had sent personally to every abbot. In addition, there was the precarious financial position of the college. The fees paid by the students did not cover expenses. It was true that, at the opening of the college, abbots had promised to help, but one could not place any faith in such promises, “because those who were supposed to give make the excuse that they are not able.” In the meantime he was forced in June of the previous year to obtain a loan of 6,500 lire from the Schmidt Bank—of which to date only half had been repaid. The cellarer was shortly going to need more money, “and I do not know where I am going to find it. One must also concern oneself with these financial problems which give me shivers down the spine!”

Did there really exist in the papal entourage, as Bernardi suspected, powerful people who were trying to persuade Leo XIII not to build a new college and instead give Sant’Anselmo an existing building in the city? By way of ascertaining whether or not the pope still supported the plan to build, Bernardi asked for permission to hold an official *Benedictio loci* (blessing of the site). This permission was granted.

⁵⁹ Ibid. The Italian original reads: “E non è tutto. Il Santo Padre, oltre che non vede di buon occhio che la Congr. Cassinese abbia nel Collegio un solo alunno, conosce i malumori che ripassano in Montecassino tra i Monaci e i Superiori, e tra gli stessi monaci tra loro. Conosce anch il ricorso di cinque Monaci di Cava presentato alla S.^a Congr. De’VV. e RR. Contro il loro Abate . . . Credo finalmente che il Santo Padre non ignori che quindici o sedici Benedettini, di Austria i più, e qualcuno di Baviera, siano alunni dell’Università di Innsbruck. Per tutte queste ragioni non sarebbe da meravigliare punto ch’Egli, giustamente disgustato, pensasse di smettere, o avesse già smesso il pensiero di buttar via tanto danaro per un beneficio assai sgradito a molte Badie, e così poco meritato da noi Benedettini!”

On the morning of April 21, 1892, the feast of St. Anselm, professors, students, and some guests arrived in brilliant sunshine at the future building site, drew up in two lines as for the choral office, and sang the psalms foreseen by the *Rituale* as well as the Te Deum. This was followed by a modest reception in the three rooms of the Casino in the sixteenth-century fortifications on the edge of the property.⁶⁰

Actual building work did not, however, begin until July 1.⁶¹ But then things went quickly. At any one time there were five hundred workers on site. When the foundation stone was laid nearly a year later, the walls of the college already reached beyond the first floor.

It will be remembered that already on December 2, 1889, Bernardi had spoken about the need to summon the Benedictine abbots to Rome to make clear to them their common responsibility for Sant'Anselmo. It was thanks to Bernardi's zeal and the preparatory work he had done that led to the brief of Leo XIII, dated December 9, 1892, addressed to Cardinal Dusmet in which the latter was empowered to invite the abbots to Rome for the laying of the foundation stone of Sant'Anselmo. This gathering would also present an excellent opportunity for the participants to discuss matters of common concern and of benefit to the whole Order.⁶² The cardinal fulfilled this commission in a circular letter addressed to the abbots dated February 19, 1893, and sent to all on that same day.⁶³

"Livy once said, 'Trust awakens further trust.' The letter of convocation was so formulated that it did not constitute a strict command but, rather, a pressing invitation. One was in suspense to see what effect the expression of a mere wish would have."⁶⁴ The subject matter of the discussions was not announced. While the occasion of the invitation was the laying of the foundation stone on the Aventine, the establishment of a Benedictine Confederation quickly became the primary task of the congress.

⁶⁰ APr, Arch. Dusmet. I 1 F; Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated May 1, 1892.

⁶¹ APr, Arch. Dusmet. I 1 G/6; Letter from Bernardi to Hemptinne dated July 2, 1892.

⁶² Brief "Quae Nobis cura" dated December 9, 1892; APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 B. Printed in Leonis XIII P.M. Acta 12 (Rome, 1893), 349f. Cf. Molitor, 239f.

⁶³ APr, Arch. Dusmet I 2 B, 2. Printed in *StudMitt* 14 (1893): 282.

⁶⁴ B. Adlhoch and M. Kinter, "Die Plenar-Versammlung der Benediktiner-Aebte zu Rom vom 16. April bis zum 2. Mai 1893," *StudMitt* 14 (1893): 279–301; here, 282.

4. Laying the Foundation Stone of the College and the Nomination of the First Abbot Primate

As the appointed day approached, about half of those invited by Dusmet came personally to Rome.⁶⁵ Most of the others sent representatives. Apart from the abbot of Atchison, who was ill, all the North American abbots came as did all the English. "Similarly, all the Belgian, French, Swiss, Italian, and Prussian [abbots] came. Of the Spanish abbots, only one was missing and from Bavaria, if one wishes so to name it, the youngest of the abbeys was not represented, i.e., Sankt Ottilien." At that time, however, Sankt Ottilien was not recognized as a Benedictine monastery and was not an abbey. Apart from the cardinal, there were sixty participants with the right to vote. Most of the abbots were lodged in the Palazzo S. Callisto in Trastevere, where the meetings also took place. The remainder of the abbots, mostly in Congregational groups, were accommodated in various houses in the city. There was no printed program, but this did not dampen the generally upbeat feeling of the participants.

Tuesday, April 19, 1893, was the day chosen for the laying of the foundation stone. One participant at the ceremony reported that the abbots, dressed in mozzetta and manteletta, along with the delegates and other monks, altogether one hundred persons, gathered in the church of the Order of Malta where they received Cardinal Dusmet. Then, "at about 9:30, all moved in procession to the building site. Just inside the entrance to the site, a richly decorated covered tribune had been erected for the guests and a second tribune for His Eminence, and the participants had been placed near the planned site of the church which had been outlined in yellow sand." Fr. Augustin Haudeck from Pannonhalma, professor of canon law at the college and representative of the Hungarian Congregation, who had been appointed chancellor of the gathering of abbots, read the foundation charter. Following the usual prayers from the ritual and the *Te Deum* sung on the site, the procession returned to the Order of Malta church, where the prior of Solesmes celebrated Mass "to implore the blessings of heaven on the building just begun."

⁶⁵ Cf. previous footnote for the following quotations. Further, "Nouvelles bénédictines, Rome," *RBén* 10 (1893): 279–84 (with list of participants). ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, ff. 97–104: Report by A. Haudek on the Congress of Abbots and the laying of the foundation stone, with the text of the charter of the latter signed by the presidents of the Benedictine Congregations. Charter printed in *StudMitt* 15 (1894): Supplement S. 3f.

The following days of the congress were devoted to the establishment of the union of the old Benedictine Congregations, suggested for so long and urgently desired by the pope. An important result for Sant'Anselmo was the decision that the *Repraesentans* of the Order who was about to be elected for twelve years (any title such as Primate was consciously avoided) should at the same time be abbot of Sant'Anselmo. He was to nominate a rector to be responsible for studies and for the discipline of the house but who could not act without the consent of the abbot-representative. In the event of the sudden death of the abbot, it would be the function of the rector to invite the abbots for a new election.⁶⁶

On May 2 the abbots had an audience with Leo XIII, during which the pope once more underlined the significance of the college for the Order and the Church:



Participants at the laying of the foundation stone on April 18, 1893, and at the following Congress of Abbots. Cardinal Dusmet in the middle.

⁶⁶*Deliberationes Praesidum et Abbatum Benedictinorum Atratorum Actae in Conventu habito Romae dieb. 20, 22, 24 April. 1893. Printed in Molitor, 243f.*

When you send young people there, they will be raised in the strictest monastic discipline and learning, as was the case under Lanfranc and Herluin, the holy abbots of Bec, who raised St. Anselm. The Order must supply outstanding professors of theology, philosophy, and the other disciplines. Thus, the young clerics, when they return to their monasteries, will bring with them the true monastic spirit and a deep learning. They will be a blessing for their homelands and guarantors of the full resurrection of the Order which is a cause so close to Our heart.⁶⁷

Within a few weeks, with the brief *Summum Semper*, dated July 12, 1893, the pope took the final step in the unification of the Benedictine Congregations.⁶⁸ The suggestions made by the Congress of Abbots were essentially confirmed but, instead of the consciously understated title of *Repraesentans* for the symbolic head of the Confederation, the pope wished that the clearer title of *Primas* be used. Instead of nominating Bernardi as first Primate, which many had expected, the pope nominated the abbot of Maredsous, Hildebrand de Hemptinne.⁶⁹ Bernardi himself, in view of his age and state of exhaustion, had asked not to be considered a candidate.⁷⁰ His time at Sant'Anselmo was coming to an end. His last circular letter, dated July 20, 1892, is signed as always, *Abbas et rector Collegii*. At that time the number of students was fourteen.⁷¹ In contrast, the next circular letter, dated July 10, 1893, was written by Adalbert Miller of St. Vincent, hitherto prior of Sant'Anselmo, and signed *O.S.B. studiorum Praefectus*.

⁶⁷ Cf. *StudMitt* 14 (1893): 300.

⁶⁸ For the text of the brief, cf. *ASS* 26 (1893–1894): 371–74. Also in Molitor, 245–48. For the decree “*Inaestimabilis*” of the Congregation for Bishops and Religious dated September 16, 1893, with additional provisions, see *ASS* 26 (1893–1894): 743–46, and Molitor, 248–50. On the legal aspects, cf. Molitor, 122–96, and Renner, 247–58.

⁶⁹ *ASV*, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, f. 131. The cardinals entrusted with the assessment of the suggestions made by the Congress of Abbots recommended the nomination of Hemptinne as Primate and abbot of Sant'Anselmo; cf. *ibid.*, f. 170–71 for the decree “*Inaestimabilis*” with Hemptinne’s nomination. Some Austrian abbots seem to have thought of Fr. Augustin Haudek as a possible Primate, cf. *Arch. Pannonhalma* 64, no. 3 and 67, no. 2.

⁷⁰ Letter from Bernardi to Abbot d’Orgemont of Monte Cassino dated May 18, 1893, printed in Leccisotti, *Ben.* 23 (1976): 77. Letter from Bernardi to Abbot Krug of Cesena dated May 18, 1893, printed in Leccisotti, *Ben.* 23 (1976): 78f.

⁷¹ On December 6, 1892, Bernardi sent his last reports on studies at Sant'Anselmo to the Curia. At that time there were eight professors, seventeen students, and three lay brothers. *ASV*, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 89–90. See also B. Adlhoeh, “*Jahresbericht über die Schuljahr 1891/92 und 1892/93*,” *StudMitt* 14 (1893): 472–79.

Because the number of students began to increase following the Congress of Abbots, while the accommodation in the Palazzo dei Convertendi was extremely restricted, the new Primate decided to



*Abbot Primate Hildebrand
de Hemptinne*

move the seat of the college elsewhere before the completion of building operations on the Aventine. He chose a house belonging to the Order of Malta in the Via della Bocca di Leone 68, close to the Piazza di Spagna. This was the former Hotel New York. On the instructions of the Primate, Fr. Gerard van Caloen of Maredsous, once more in Rome, this time as procurator-general of the Beuronese Congregation, rented the property from the Order of Malta for 14,000 lire per annum. The building had first to be adapted for Benedictine use.⁷² From autumn 1893 until the move to the Aventine in autumn 1896, this spacious house was the seat of the college and of the first Abbot Primate.⁷³

Under new leadership, and indeed as a result of the Congress of Abbots, the number of students increased rapidly.⁷⁴ In the academic year 1893–1894 there were twenty-eight, of whom six came from Maredsous alone. The following year the number grew to thirty-five. Following the departure of Bernardi, the new Primate appointed Laurentius Janssens of Maredsous—not yet forty years old—first as pro-rector and then as rector. Up to then, Janssens had taught at the school in Maredsous and had already been considered by Bernardi as a possible successor. Janssens, enormously talented with great artistic gifts, a linguistic genius, and a brilliant Latinist—the Primate's first letter to the abbots was in fact drafted by him⁷⁵—was a happy choice as rector of Sant'Anselmo. According to the brief *Summum Semper*, the Primate was also

⁷²Contract between G. van Caloen and Bailli Alessandro Capranica, *Ricevitore del Gran Priorato di Roma del Sovrano Ordine di Malta*, dated September 18, 1893, in *APr*, Collegio II II. Cf. also a letter from Bernardi to Abbot D. Krug dated September 2, 1893, printed by Leccisotti in *Ben.* 23 (1976): 84.

⁷³"Nouvelles bénédictines, Collège St-Anselme" in *RBen* 11 (1894): 38–43.

⁷⁴The following statistics are taken from Hemptinne's circular letters dated September 8, 1894, and August 15, 1895.

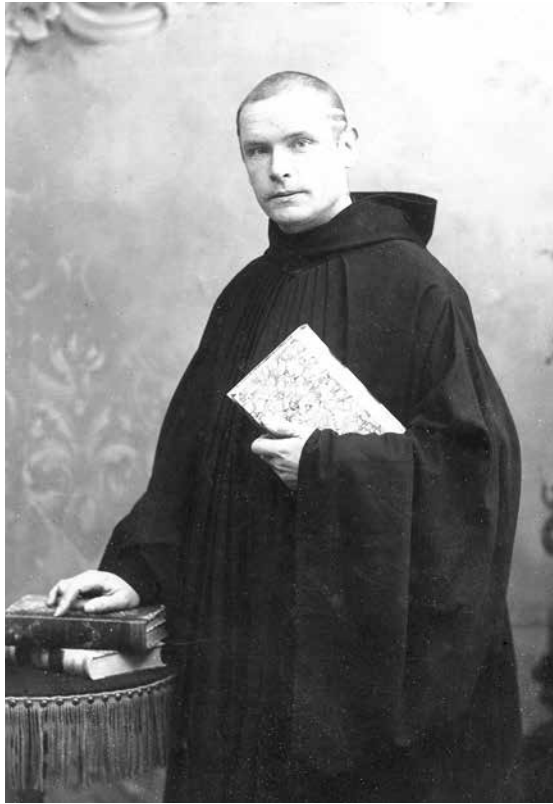
⁷⁵"Litterae caritative Abbatis Primatis" dated November 9, 1893, printed in *StudMitt* 15, Supplement (1894): 11–20. Cf. also, with a French translation, *RBen* 11 (1894): 145–68.

abbot of Sant'Anselmo with ordinary jurisdiction over the college. The rector, who was answerable to the Primate, was intended to support him in the running of the house and its discipline. It was also his function, with the consent of the Primate, to choose professors and "carefully to construct a suitable plan for studies appropriate to the needs of every Congregation."

As early as 1889, in a letter to Dusmet, Bernardi had touched on the problem of academic degrees in Sant'Anselmo. Prior Adalbert Miller and the canonist of the young college, Fr. Augustin Haudek, had doubts about whether the privileges granted by Pius IX in this matter to the Cassinese college, then housed in S. Callisto, were valid for Sant'Anselmo without a specific confirmation.⁷⁶ Two years later Bernardi was able to report that Leo XIII had commissioned Cardinal Zigliara to draw up a brief to address the matter of the conferring of degrees.⁷⁷ And indeed, on August 20, 1891, a rescript signed by Cardinal Zigliara was issued granting the college authority to confer academic degrees in theology. Regarding philosophy, power to grant doctoral degrees was to be

⁷⁶ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I F, Bernardi's letter to Dusmet dated July 24, 1889, "Aspetto una risposta su questo argomento [the finances of Sant'Anselmo] e sul conferimenti dei gradi, intorno ai quali me è parso conveniente sentire il parere di Lui [Msgr. Boccali], perché l'approvazione di Pio IX, se era validissima pel Collegio conceduta a san Callisto, non lo era per questo rinnovato Sant'Anselmo, tanto più, che nel Breve di Leone XIII non c'è nessuna esplicita dichiarazione sul proposito; e il Priore e D. Agostine, canonista, sostenevano che non si possono conferire gradi, senza esplicita facoltà del S.to Padre."

⁷⁷ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I F, letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated July 18, 1891, "Il Santo Padre accolse benevolmente l'istanza mia presentatagli da Mgr. Boccali per i gradi dottorali. Commise di redigere al Card. Zigliara il Breve di concessione, dicendogli di mettersi di accordo con me. Mi fece perciò chiamare l'Emo, e fu tutto concertato tra noi, ponendo un terzo anno al corso di Filosofia, come usa nell'Apollinare, nel Gregoriano e nel Domenicano, essendo questa una condizione *necessaria*. Redatto che avrà in Breve, me lo manderà, affinché lo discuta col Rmo. Ab. Zelli e poi lo presenterà al Papa, ridotto in quella forma che meglio piacerà a noi. Fu pieno di amorevolezza verso di me." [The Holy Father has graciously acceded to my request presented to him by Msgr. Boccali regarding doctoral degrees. He commissioned Cardinal Zigliara to draw up a brief conceding this right, instructing him to reach agreement with me. Thus, His Eminence summoned me and between us we agreed on everything, adding a third year to the course in philosophy as is the case in the Apollinare, in the Gregorian, and with the Dominicans, this being a *necessary* requirement. As soon as the brief is drawn up, the cardinal will send it to me so that I can discuss it with the Most Revd. Abbot Zelli. Following this the cardinal will present the brief to the pope, formulated in the form which is most acceptable to us. The cardinal was full of affection toward me.]



Support from Maredsous, the Abbot Primate's home abbey—left, Dom Gerard van Caloen 1853–1932; right, Dom Laurentius Janssens (1855–1925)

requested for each individual case.⁷⁸ On January 15, 1892, the first doctoral degree in theology, an honorary degree, was conferred on Fr. Augustin Haudek, former professor of canon law at the Anselmianum.⁷⁹

Fr. Augustin Haudek, born on November 24, 1852, in Apatin in the Bácska, entered Pannonhalma in 1871, from which he was sent for further studies to the University of Innsbruck. With a rare gift for language, “seemingly without effort, he learned English, French, and Italian, acquiring such a perfect command of these languages, both in speech and writing, as he had of his mother tongue.” He pursued additional studies at Lille where he learned Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. As secretary to Archabbot Claudius Vaszary, the young monk had an important influence on the administration of the Hungarian monasteries. In 1888

⁷⁸ APr, Collegio II 12 C, published with an accompanying letter from Cardinal Zigliara in appendix 5 below.

⁷⁹ The following is taken from the obituary in *StudMitt* 27 (1905): 397f. Haudek's personal remarks are to be found in *ArchPannonhalma* 64, no. 3 and 67, no. 2.



he went to Sant'Anselmo as professor of canon law and ecclesiastical history. Soon, however, he gained influence and respect in the Roman Curia where he worked to the advantage of the Hungarian Church. "His views were influential in the provision for several Hungarian bishoprics," a fact that won him enemies as well as friends in his home country. A Roman plan to raise Haudek to the archbishopric of Agram foundered on the objections expressed by Bishop Strossmayer and others. In 1891 he returned to Hungary where he became financial administrator of the Abbey of Zalavár. To the astonishment of all, he was an outstanding success in this role. When he was in Rome briefly in the winter of 1893, Abbot Bernardi and the professorial body of Sant'Anselmo thought that there could be no better way of honoring his extraordinary theological learning and his services to the college than conferring on him the title of doctor of theology. "The solemn academic act at which the certificate and doctoral hat were presented was presided over by the rector and Abbot Bernardi in the presence of all members of the college."⁸⁰ Haudek, whose whole personality seemed to have destined him to fulfill a greater role than that permitted him by contrary circumstances, died on September 1, 1904, in his fifty-second year.

This first honorary doctorate from Sant'Anselmo was followed by a second in 1901, this time in philosophy. The recipient was Fr. Maurus Kinter of Raigern, the intrepid editor of *Studien und Mitteilungen*.⁸¹ A third honorary degree—in theology—was conferred on Fr. Athanasius Staub of Einsiedeln in 1902.⁸² There followed a gap of fifty years until another honorary doctorate was conferred!⁸³

The first four ordinary doctorates in theology were conferred in 1893. One of those who received a degree on that day was Gregorio Grasso

⁸⁰Chr. St[elzer], *StudMitt* 13 (1892): 136. The conferral was justified in the following words, "pro eximia in S. Theologiae disciplinis doctrina atque eruditione, quam et dissertationibus publicis juris factis et disputationibus, necnon tentaminibus sat superque manifestavit: pro egregia S. Theologiam tradendi ratione, quam quum in ipso nostro Collegio per tres annos magisterii munere fungeretur singuli magnopere probabant: pro studio et amore denique qua tum Romanae Ecclesiae ejusque juribus tuendis, tum Sacro Ordini Benedictino et novis incrementis promovendis semper excellebat." Circular letter from Bernardi dated July 20, 1892.

⁸¹The certificate was backdated to November 10, 1900. Cf. *StudMitt* 22 (1902): 499f.

⁸²AAt, Matricola 1888/1937 notes with regard to no. 104 (D. Atanasio Staub), "Professore di teologia dogmatica, Maestro degli'Alunni da 1894 à 1902. Creato Dottore in teologia da S. Santità, ritornò nel proprio monastero in Luglio 1902."

⁸³On Fr. Matthäeus Rothenhäusler, see pp. 202–05 below, AAt, Acta Conc. Fac. Theol. 1933–1934/1957–1958, 94–94 verso.

from the Subiaco Congregation, later abbot of Praglia, subsequently of Montevergine, who died in 1929 as archbishop of Salerno.⁸⁴

5. Gaetano Bernardi, Abbot-Rector of Sant'Anselmo⁸⁵

Following the appointment of the first Abbot Primate, Bernardi had left Sant'Anselmo and Rome and had returned to Monte Cassino.⁸⁶ On the death in 1894 of Abbot Michele Morcaldi, president of the Cassinese Congregation, Bernardi succeeded him but after only a few months in office died on February 7, 1895, at Monte Cassino as a result of a stroke. He was sixty-nine years old. As first rector of Sant'Anselmo, Bernardi had not only wisely run the college and untiringly engaged himself on its behalf at the Roman Curia, and even with Leo XIII himself, but also made it possible to build on the Aventine, even though he was not to see its completion.

Bernardi came from the small town of Caramanico Terme in the Abruzzi, where he was born on October 29, 1827. Even when rector of Sant'Anselmo, he enjoyed returning to Caramanico regularly in the summer to take the waters. He pursued his studies at the seminary in Chieti, where from early on he distinguished himself through his talent for the humanities. The annalist notes that "already in his early years he achieved a rare perfection in his native language, so that he was one of the few who had the privilege of being able to boast of never having dishonored the beautiful, melodious Italian language either in speech or in writing." Later, in the early years of Sant'Anselmo, he taught Italian language and literature. His many letters to Dusmet witness to his stylistic capabilities and acute powers of observation.

⁸⁴ A. Schmitt, "Carlo Gregorio M. Grasso, Erzbischof von Salerno," *BenM* 3 (1955): 298–314.

⁸⁵ Obituary in *StudMitt* 16 (1895): 178–80 and 359–63; A. Capecelatro, "Commemorazione di Don Gaetano Bernardi abate presidente della Congregazione Casinese," in *Nuovi Discorsi, Omelie, Lettere, Pastorali e Prose varie* 1 (Rome, 1901), 13–65 (here, I quote the details given by Capecelatro); A. Jodice, "L'amicizia del cardinale Alfonso Capecelatro con i benedettini di Montecassino," *Ben.* 21 (1974): 259–89; on Bernardi, *ibid.*, 272–77. T. Leccisotti, "Gli inizi del rinnovato Collegio di S. Anselmo e della Confederazione benedettina," *Ben.* vol. 23 (1976): 65–88.

⁸⁶ ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, ff. 132–33; Nomination of Bernardi as titular abbot of S. Matteo *servorum Dei* and visitor of the Cassinese Congregation. Cf. also Dusmet's letter to Rampolla dated September 29, 1893 (ASV, Segr. di Stato 1901, Rubr. 9, fasc. 2, infra f. 179).

In 1848 Bernardi left the seminary. It would appear that he had abandoned the idea of becoming a priest. For a time he was a teacher at Sulmona but soon he returned, unemployed, to Caramanico. There in 1854, a Neapolitan nobleman, Alfonso della Valle, Marquess di Casanova, who was traveling through the Abruzzi, met Bernardi by chance. Casanova invited him to act as tutor to his young nephew and thus Bernardi came to Naples. In the houses of the Neapolitan nobility, he soon learned how to behave with tact and discretion while at the same time deepening his own literary education. From this time, and thanks to the influence of his friend Alfonso Casanova, his model both in speech and writing was Alessandro Manzoni. Bernardi was not a scholar in the nineteenth-century sense of the term, nor did he later become a great theologian. He could, rather, be considered one of the last literary figures in the style of the eighteenth century. It was not by chance that his main literary work, which he was only able to put on paper once he had returned to Monte Cassino, was titled *Avviamento all'Arte del dire* (Introduction to the Art of Speaking).⁸⁷

It was not, however, only his love of the Italian language and national literature that won friends in Naples for the rather brittle Bernardi. He soon proved his talents as an educator so that in 1866 he became a teacher at the Collegio Vittorio Emanuele. One of his pupils wrote later, "His classes were relaxed and even amusing. This led to an open and trusting thinking about, discussion of, and an examination of things not usually dealt with in school."

With his competent performance and his acute, practical understanding, along with his wide network of contacts, the way was clearly open for Bernardi to pursue a brilliant career. To the surprise of his friends, however, Bernardi asked for admission to Monte Cassino. He was able to be persuaded to remain for a further year in Naples as tutor to the young nobleman Francesco Antonacci, but at the beginning of October 1868 he finally moved for good to Monte Cassino. On October 4, in the chapel of the abbot's townhouse in the city of Monte Cassino, still known at that time as San Germano, he received the habit from Abbot Carlo de Vera.

De Vera decided wisely and deliberately that the forty-one-year-old should remain a postulant for a full year before accepting him into the canonical novitiate in September 1869. One year later, Don Gaetano made simple profession. He was already ordained a priest by September 5, 1872, while solemn profession did not take place until May 2, 1874. A second candidate for profession on that day was Fr. Anselm Caplet,

⁸⁷G. Bernardi, *Avviamento all'Arte del dire. Lezioni. Ad uso delle Classi Superiori del Ginnasio*, 5th ed. (Naples, 1882).



French by birth, who was to work in Sant'Anselmo from 1897 to 1907, first as professor of moral theology and then for many years as professor of ecclesiastical history.⁸⁸

At that time there were few monks at Monte Cassino and Don Gaetano's workload was not inconsiderable. He was put in charge of the monastery school and for many years he combined this charge with that of cellarer of the monastery. He worked for fifteen years at Monte Cassino until, on the advice of Archbishop Dusmet, Pope Leo XIII appointed him to lead the new Sant'Anselmo. In this position Bernardi was a brilliant success. Who could have foreseen that following his work in Rome he had less than three years to live?

The portrait of Bernardi in Sant'Anselmo shows him as an abbot wearing the *mozzetta*. He is short, strongly built but not obese. The face is benevolent, but the eyes behind the rimless spectacles are cool, indeed skeptical. Bernardi's natural friendliness won over those with whom he spoke, but he also knew how to behave at the same time with dignity and firmness. His letters reveal a sober, acute observer who tended toward pessimism rather than enthusiasm. The first letters from his Sant'Anselmo period contain mocking judgments on his collaborators, all of whom, to his sorrow, were non-Italians. Thus Prior Adalbert Miller is described as *stranissimo su tutti gli strani di là dell'Oceano* (the strangest of the strange from over the ocean). Bernardi wrote in July 1888 that the prior went almost daily to Tivoli to take the waters, *E mangia e beve, e beve e dorme, e si bagna e beve* (and eats and drinks, and drinks and sleeps, and bathes and drinks). Again and again he complains about the German cuisine of the good brothers from Beuron and longs for an Italian cook: "Your Excellency is furthermore aware of my views on *all* of our dear confreres from beyond the Alps and from overseas" (*la mia opinione circa i nostri cari Confratelli oltramontani e oltramaringhi*).⁸⁹ Such outbursts are, however, rare in Bernardi's letters. The longer he spent in Sant'Anselmo, the more he grew into his task. He overcame all obstacles with toughness and determination. In fact, Dusmet could not have found a more suitable candidate to fill the post of first rector of Sant'Anselmo than Gaetano Bernardi. With great self-denial he prepared the house for those from abroad who were to rule Sant'Anselmo after him. Reading his surviving letters to Dusmet, with their characteristic unchanging slanted handwriting, one's respect for the achievement and personality of the first and only abbot-rector of Sant'Anselmo grows and grows.

⁸⁸ Anselm Caplet, born April 30, 1836; professed April 21, 1871; died June 8, 1916. Cf. T. Leccisotti, *Montecassino*, 10th printing (Badia di Montecassino, 1983), 254.

⁸⁹ APr, Arch. Dusmet I I F, Letter from Bernardi to Dusmet dated July 19, 1888.



Postcard of Sant'Anselmo