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Benjamin Louviere

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BEER AND SPIRIT: A CONFLUENCE OF MEDIEVAL TRADITIONS IN BREWING AND
MONASTICISM

by

Benjamin Louviere

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the History

Moore, Michael E
Thesis Mentor

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All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
History have been completed.

Park, Alyssa
History Honors Advisor

Beer and Spirit

A confluence of medieval traditions in brewing and monasticism

*-- Softly shall they taste, and fair,
Drink that may their heads impair,
Like mighty wine or noble ale,
For the wise man tells this tale:
'Wine when mighty and when strong
Gets smart men to work all wrong.'
Let be by all this law embraced:
Wine or ale softly to taste.'*

Benjamin Louviere

Honors Thesis in History

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Advisor: Professor Michael E. Moore

¹ Passage from a tenth century English poetic rendering of a version of Saint Benedict's *Rule* reformed to incorporate affordance of beer, translated from Old English to modern by Max Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage: A History of Beer in Ancient Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 112.

Abstract

This essay argues that the famed beer brewed by the Trappist order of Catholic monks today is a reflection of two abundantly rich traditions: brewing and monasticism. Initial examination of these two traditions finds their linkage a conceptual paradox, and my essay proposes that their reconciliation lies in a legacy of the Middle Ages, in which a uniquely spiritual ambition defined the labor practices of these brewing monks. Over the course of history, Benedictine thought has imbued the lives of a sizable demographic with practical meaning – that is, the men and women of prayer who have taken the monastic vocation; and, within the tradition of brewing, such monastic thought has advanced brewing and in Carolingian Europe even allowed for the early and unprecedented flourishing of beer at an industrial scale. The confluence of monastic organization with brewing practice reveals a distinguished understanding of work and life characterized by, on one hand, the perennial pursuit of holy ideals and, on the other, the evolving social role of monastic institutions in European society over time.

A number of the most significant components of this understanding – the ideals of monastic observance and the social and material conditions under which they are expressed – I argue, formed over the course of the Middle Ages and have endured since, though continually transforming amidst the dynamic phenomena of political, economic, and cultural life. My essay attempts to unite scholarly sources of modern historical literature on brewing and on monasticism, along with several primary medieval sources. With what is common amongst them, I have built a story of how and why medieval monks came to brew. Above all, the primacy of the spiritual ambition represented in the monks' performance of the Divine Office, a "busy leisure," has historically given meaning to monastic brewing and continues today to actively define the labor by which these beers are a byproduct, indeed producing a delightful sensorial result. The production of Trappist beers today is borne of this uniquely idealized relationship between work and leisure, devoted to Benedictine doctrine, and it evinces a remarkably enduring confluence of two traditions -- beer and spirit -- both of whose origins are deeply embedded in historical life and human experience.

Introduction – Intent behind Trappist beer today

To commence this study, which I might most simply and appropriately describe as an exploration: the most apprehensible means by which to warrant for the reader and for myself a purpose in proceeding hence is to begin at the intended end – that is, at the present. Over the course of this essay, I will attempt to retrieve an array of movements, ideas, and themes embedded in a vast geographic and temporal frame – Christian Europe from the medieval to modern period – in hopes of assembling a richer understanding of the past, made by reawakening to the present the many men and women whose lives are embraced in its broad scope. However, I must also begin with an admission to the distinctly male-centric dimension inherent in this scope of my study. Christian history is often paternalistic, and given the historic separation of the sexes into respective cloisters – male monks in monasteries and female nuns in convents – and the impetus for this study lying in beer, brewed today exclusively by the brothers, it will lean disproportionately toward a telling of history focused on monks. Indispensably, however, these concepts of labor and the production of physical and metaphysical fruits by way of monastic life and thought can and surely must be transposable unto the existence of history’s nuns. It appears that only around the seventeenth century at the earliest did brewing come to be generally predominated as a masculine practice. This is a fundamental lens, with the consideration of which the study must proceed and strive to recall. In short, upon any instance of the term "monks," the reader should interpret it to mean nuns as well. Using an open-minded approach in representing and applying these ideas of the past, by the essay’s conclusion I hope to arrive with the reader at a more thoughtful, joyful glass of beer.

“Trappist” monks, known formally as the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (O.C.S.O.), take their name from La Grande Trappe, the French abbey where, in 1664, a

movement for reform began within and branched from the Cistercian order – itself having emerged in 1098 out of reforms within the Benedictine order. Simply put, Trappists are reformed Cistercians, who are themselves reformed Benedictines, all of whom in common structure their institutions by the precepts for Christian monastic life enumerated in *The Rule of St. Benedict* – a highly significant text whose substance has found influence in innumerable lives since its origin, composed in sixth century Italy. Nearly one and one-half millennia since the first monasteries independently guided by Benedict’s *Rule* emerged, the Trappist order as it is organized today exists in regions in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, Latin America, and Oceania. Around the globe, 102 Trappist monasteries are established to which over 1,700 monks belong, alongside 76 Trappistine convents to which over 1,500 nuns belong.² Secluded and generally situated within rural landscapes, the space around and within the monastery is most readily characterized by bucolic simplicity and, in contrast to the bustling noise of cities, great silence. The movement of the monks passes at a deeply rhythmic pace, turning daily in adherence to certain liturgical hours called the *horarium*, or the "Divine Office," prescribed in *The Rule of St. Benedict* whereby the monks convene seven times per day, and once at night, before sunrise, to pray together.³ Clothed identically in robes known as habits, and speaking as little as possible – when not sleeping, eating, reading, or meditating alone in contemplation nor praying collectively – the monks engage in daily work. Their work, in whatever form it takes, like all their activity, is always said to be predicated on the same faith which inspired *The Rule* itself – faith in the

² “Statistiques Moines - Monks - Monjes 31/12/2018,” and “Statistiques Moniales - Nuns - Monjas 31/12/2018,” accessed September 12, 2019, <https://www.ocso.org/monasteries/current-statistics/>

³ Benedict, *The Rule*, 16.1-5, (44); abbreviated "RB" hereafter.

Christian God, the works of the Bible, and the quest for Heaven, on which begins Benedict to his listener:

We must, then, prepare our hearts and bodies for the battle of holy obedience to [the Lord's] instructions. What is not possible to us by nature, let us ask the Lord to supply by the help of his grace. If we wish to reach eternal life, even as we avoid the torments of hell, then – while there is still time, while we are in this body and have time to accomplish all these things by the light of life – we must run and do now what will profit us forever.⁴

Overall, at the monastery, striking for its serene quietness and the clockwork of activity under rules which govern obedient daily behaviors, at an immediate glance, such lives are palpably otherworldly to the modern urbanite.⁵

Distinguishing the Trappists in a regard of particular interest for this essay is their relationship with brewing and selling beer today – one product of their daily work at a number of monasteries.⁶ The Trappists are most directly and doctrinally related to the above-mentioned, older branches, Cistercians and Benedictines; these orders, too, exist today, and, like the Trappists, aim to observe a lifestyle which, among its explicit intentions, incorporates some manual labor, for as Benedict defines, “When they live by the labor of their hands, as our fathers

⁴ RB, Prologue 40-44, (18).

⁵ Preceding description and tone in this paragraph is partly derived from my own observations at the Trappist monastery of New Melleray Abbey, situated in the countryside of Peosta, Iowa; my analysis is an extrapolation, but one I would not think particularly objectionable.

⁶ Among a variety of other Trappist artisan products are cheese, bread, wine, liqueurs, candies, jams, honey, olive oil, mushrooms, religious vestments, and cleaning products. The monks at New Melleray, for instance, specialize in wooden caskets handcrafted at their workshop; see <http://www.trappistcaskets.com>.

and the apostles did, then they are really monks.”⁷ Indeed, one may generally find across historical records that monks have activated this principle in one select way by brewing beer in their monasteries since the early Middle Ages. Such brewing has thus, in turn, furthered monastic life, so to speak, by way of material subsistence, as beer has been made “by the labor of their hands” – that is, if one assumes the beer to have been useful to “live by” in some regard or another; in any case, it appears to be a conceptual matter that invites inquiry. Most broadly, at a glance, the mutual shaping of these two traditions appears to have endured to present day, and relevantly so, for Trappist brewing in particular has come to maintain a remarkable character.

The International Trappist Association, which today unites fourteen monasteries (mostly in the Low Countries of Europe) whose enterprise involves brewing beer, expresses as the grounds to be inspiring their monks’ beers that they are not brewed to be of great quality inherently, but only as a material means to economically sustain the operation of the monastery only as is necessary and sufficient toward its ultimately spiritual goals.⁸ The purported purpose of these beers is essentially one of simple self-sufficiency. This warrants further exploration especially, because from such a singular precept, it follows that these prayerful brewers do not then set their sights to win persistent acclaim worldwide in communities of beer enthusiasts entirely separate from monastic life – however, they famously do. Trappist beers are venerated in the world of beer today, holding a place of consistently high ratings and praise yearly in beer-related consumer associations and publications, standing out for their style and taste among a vast company of beers from secular origins. Within the general celebration Trappist beers

⁷ RB, 48.8 (69).

⁸ International Trappist Association, <https://www.trappist.be/en/about-ita/atp-label> (accessed November 5, 2019).

receive, one beer – named the Westvleteren XII, brewed at Saint Sixtus Abbey in Flanders (the Dutch speaking portion of Belgium) – has more than once over recent decades been considered the best beer in the world.⁹ It is then, however, in light of such Trappist purposes, as if this has all occurred incidentally – with this beer of great remarkableness existing merely as a byproduct of extraordinarily different considerations.

It is here that the dilemma of my essay comes to the fore, for a certain paradox is now at hand: the notoriously worldly versus the patently otherworldly. That is, the convivial and corporeal drink of beer – carrying with it an attachment to material and sensorial pleasure, not to mention possible associations with disorder and immorality – has long been created, even preeminently so, by such austere and cloistered-away seekers of a holy life and devout moral order, repudiating of the material world and its sinfulness, and characterized by a voluntary detachment from Earth and a desire for Heaven. However, the tree of monastic tradition, with its aged limb of branches ascending from the organization of Benedictines to Cistercians to Trappists, lives within temporal historical space; therein, monastic integration into the larger sociohistorical landscape sees an inevitable overlap of these opposed worlds. That overlap, specifically, is where these institutions have factored into an economy. Within the medieval economy, it is the historical development of work at monasteries, focally that of brewing, and the expressed *intention* upon which labors of brewing engaged by monks are said to be predicated, including and yet beyond mere subsistence, by which spiritual motives are called upon to justify worldly actions, that here serves as a location from which we may grasp at the untenable: the

⁹ Stephen Castle, “Monks who make world's best beer pray for quiet life,” *The Independent*, August 10, 2005; see also: “Top Beers at RateBeer,” RateBeer.com, <https://www.ratebeer.com/Ratings>; “Top Rated Beers” BeerAdvocate.com, <https://www.beeradvocate.com/beer/top-rated/>.

field of spirituality. Our understanding of this field as we approach it historically is that its nature is based in human “experience,” both individual and collective, impulsive and intentional, internal and universal, believed and transmitted to the world by deed.

This field opens up for us an exploration by which we may go forth to further define the "intent" of traditional monastic brewing and how it came to be. Benedictine thought, which belongs to an expansive tradition of monastic expressions, is the force that has historically imbued the lives of a sizable demographic with practical meaning – they are the men and women of prayer who have taken the monastic vocation, alongside the laity that participated in life surrounding monastic institutions; and, within the tradition of brewing, such monastic thought has advanced brewing and even allowed for the early flourishing of beer in Europe at an industrial scale. Monks indeed civilized a European society of the beer industry. At monasteries, they established brewing carried out at unprecedented levels of quantity and quality, effectively advancing the practice formerly confined to household production. The confluence of monastic organizations with brewing practices reveals a distinguished understanding of work and life characterized by, on one hand, the perennial pursuit of holiness and, on the other, the evolving social role of monastic institutions in European society over time. In other words, my search is one for an understanding of works made by that of “what wells up from the depths: the mystery of the living God within often obscure and anonymous men and women of prayer” – a figurative description of such a past as given by the modern monastic scholar Jean Leclercq.¹⁰ With such considerations in mind, I will trace the origins of both brewing and monasticism in the West, unearthing the various relevant strata, which took discernable shape mainly across the Middle

¹⁰ “The Roots of Modernity,” *The Spirituality of Western Christendom, II: Roots of Modern Christian Tradition*, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1984), xiii.

Ages, to build a model of how the work of monastic brewing came into form, function, and understanding; I will then present today's acclaimed Trappist beer as a stand-out item which distinctively reflects these rich, enmeshed, and enduring traditions.

While many histories of the Church and medieval monasticism exist, I am unaware of any such having been applied as a lens with which to refract the object of brewing and its own history, nor vice versa, with the respective history of brewing limited to its unique development at monasteries. This novel application reveals that the two practices have been uniquely compatible in the nature of their overlap within the social fabric of history, for their respective utilities have transferred in tandem outward to the world from within the cloister – on the one hand contributing materially and structurally, and on the other, spiritually and inwardly, to the winding steps of history. I will unite scholarly sources of modern historical literature on brewing and on monasticism, along with several primary medieval sources. With what is common amongst them, I will build a story of how and why monks came to brew in the Middle Ages. The main components of this understanding are two concepts: leisure and austerity. Furthermore, then, by examining the character and impacts of external signs of monastic spiritual-motives, I hope to above-all exhibit the inherited monastic practice of brewing as the endurance of an ideal Benedictine model: that is, the engagement with the material as a form of work ambitiously idealized as a secondary concern, necessitated by the constraints of temporal being, and regarded as less than to the engagement with a supreme primacy: the possibility of timeless, metaphysical, spiritual experience. In concluding, I hope that by the forthcoming exhibition the reader may understand more clearly the unique history of brewing, monasticism, and their confluence within a transcendent spiritual ambition that the particular product of Trappist beer persistently expresses today.

Establishing monastic brewing in Europe: geography and ideology

The history of beer alone is far too unfeasibly immense in scope to attempt relating here. The line tracing humanity's connection with the drink vanishes into Neolithic prehistory.¹¹ What is historically defined as beer is broad and rather inconsistent, yet the essential, unchanging stages of brewing necessary to create beer form a tradition of crafting that predates written record.¹² The story is likewise too multifaceted, invoking any number of social, economic, technical, industrial, gastronomical, as well as moralistic dimensions, which a variety of amateur and professional historians alike have taken interest in – seeming increasingly so over recent decades. In lieu of a comprehensive study of beer, I will attempt to relay its most important characteristics for understanding brewing as coming to be a traditional monastic practice in the medieval period. Those fundamental characteristics are, chiefly, the development of ideological perspectives on alcohol, the medieval geographical context and the social utility of beer, and early Irish culture, which was receptive both to brewing and then to monasticism, all given as a precursor to forthcoming innovations and a transformation of medieval Christendom. To focus this history of beer into considerations simultaneously relevant both to the present and to

¹¹ For a concise summary on preceding beer traditions, see "Beer Before the Middle Ages: Mesopotamia and Egypt" chapter in Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 15-20; see also, Max Nelson, *The Barbarians Beverage: A History of Beer in Ancient Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 9-21.

¹² These five unchanging steps: "The first stage is to malt the grain and then grind it very coarsely. The second is to pour hot water over the malt to create the mash. Wort is the liquid extract taken off from the mash. ... In the third stage, the wort is boiled, usually in the presence of some additive or additives. In the fourth, after clarification and cooling, the boiled wort is fermented by yeast. In the fifth and final stage, after maturation and clarification, the beer is packaged ... [in any sort of vessel]," quoted in Richard Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 4; see also, Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture & Economy of, & Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 1: 261.

medieval monasticism also warrants a brief analysis of any such historical perspective used with beer today.

Today, particularly with college campus culture, beer (in tandem with alcohol generally) indeed carries with it notably prevalent associations to disorder – that is, social boisterousness, lawlessness, and immorality.¹³ Around sporting events, concerts, on holidays, and with nightly and weekend gatherings at bars, taverns, and breweries, generally, beer sees a reception in the leisurely domains of contemporary social life. It is necessary that we refrain from falling into a certain sort of presentism in this instance, presuming beer to have always occupied such a place. To be sure, any from among the diversity of traditional predecessors of the West, if summoned up, may remark that the present, perhaps particularly with American observance, maintains today what would be a rather dysfunctional relationship with alcohol on the bases of both context and indulgence. That is to imply, then, that there has been something like an established “functional” relationship, and this is assuredly the case when determined according to the regard with which beer has been held for a sizable portion of European history. As Richard Unger, a seminal historian of beer, admonishes with his analysis of its history across the Middle Ages and Renaissance period, the mistake of presentism in looking back at beer “makes it difficult for

¹³ To augment the paradox at hand (above, p.7), as stated in a 1993 study on alcohol’s socially-adverse effects: “...criminal statistics link alcohol to violence in a pattern that is large in magnitude; consistent over the years; widespread in types of aggressive and violent acts; massive in cost to individual, family, and society; and serious in suffering and harm. ... Alcohol is associated with at least half of all murders, rapes, sexual violence such as incestuous offenses, family violence, and felonies,” Miczek, Weerts, and DeBold, “Alcohol, Aggression,” 83, quoted in A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Violence, and Disorder in Traditional Europe*, (Kirksville: Truman State University, 2009), 5. Notably, though, Martin as the author then proceeds to contrast the above with another study, which determines, “...alcohol does not produce a pharmacological trigger for violent or aggressive behavior, and people are far more likely to be jovial, agreeable, and sociable while drinking than the reverse,” Pernanen, *Alcohol in Human Violence*, 200-201; and Heath, *Drinking Occasions*, 132, paraphrased in Martin, *Alcohol and Violence*, 6.

many to comprehend a world where beer was a necessity, a part of everyday life, a drink for everyone of any age or status, and a beverage for all times of the day from breakfast to dinner and into the evening.”¹⁴ Such a pattern of life and its coming to be in the Middle Ages – in which the indispensable role of monastic thought and institution became infused – is unique to Europe, manifold in cause, and borne out of preceding forces of ideology that sufficiently require exposition.

As the work on ancient brewing of historian Max Nelson has demonstrated, usage of beer and accompanying attitudes surrounding it have fluctuated over time with the movement and contact of peoples in the Western space. According to Nelson, the earliest discernable basal stratum from which emerged a distinctly European beer-culture is an ancient Greek assumption that beer was inferior to wine, as beer-drinking was an extant practice of their barbaric neighbors in the north (namely the Thracians and Phrygians), while wine was the drink of classical society’s elite.¹⁵ Early accounts indicate that the drink of the north was seen by the Greeks as unfavorably “effeminate” as well as troublingly “corrupted” by the usage of yeasts.¹⁶ The geographical distinction indeed persisted for centuries that wine, produced nearer to Mediterranean civilization, was superior to the beer and other intoxicants more prevalent further north. Until late antiquity, beer – generally drunk by populations of Celts, who inhabited the space of Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Britain – saw a general decline in reputation and usage with increasing acculturation to a succeeding Roman ideology, which, like the Greeks, was

¹⁴ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, xiii.

¹⁵ Nelson, *The Barbarian’s Beverage*, 16-21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

similarly condemning of beer -- or at the very least condescending -- as the empire expanded into those regions.¹⁷

The way in which this ideology came to crumble, paving the way for Catholic-monastic brewing, was twofold. In the first aspect, the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine (c. 312) caused a dramatic transformation following the advent of Christianity, as the religion of a scattered early church subsequently became integrated into a vast imperial structure. As wine ascended to an even higher, now sacred status as a holy instrument of the Eucharist, negative attitudes toward beer remained in the Roman realm. Prominent early Christian figures such as the imperial-church historian Eusebius (c. 260-340) and Saint Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444) disavowed beer as a harmful product of Egyptian paganism.¹⁸ These attitudes were clearly not conducive to Christian beer-making – and they would not last much longer. The proliferation of European Christendom, the greater theme to which those actors belonged, would in fact embrace beer on the whole as it enveloped new intersections of thought and culture over the coming centuries. That is to invoke the second, subsequent aspect to the crumbling beer-ideology: the stretch of Christian influence reaching far into the north – specifically to Ireland, where, although wine was perhaps occasionally imported, grapes failed to grow, and the Roman empire failed to reach.

As far back as around 300 B.C., when the Greek explorer Pytheas sailed to the British Isles and called the drink made by the region's residents *curmi*, there existed the brewing of beer.

¹⁷ Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage*, 7-8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 75; find here an interesting issue of the *Septuagint's* Greek translation of Isaiah 19:8-10, which includes a foretelling of “grief” and distress unto Egyptian beer-craftsmen not present in the original Hebrew nor the later Latin Vulgate texts.

In parts of Ireland that name, *courmi*, was retained into the eighteenth century.¹⁹ As far as ideological trends went, around the fifth century Christian belief began to permeate Ireland; yet, now geographically far-removed from the locus of Mediterranean cultural ideology, a Roman beer-condemnation to accompany Christianity was nonexistent; such a thought would be entirely incompatible with the new structures of cultural customs into which this Christian religion began to infuse -- brewing deeply embedded among them. The patron saint of Ireland who heralded early Christianity on the island, Saint Patrick (c. fifth century), was said to have had a brewer in his household.²⁰ Such household brewing prevailed across northern Europe in general as a standard practice, where the cultivation of wheat and barley was essential for the development of sedentary agrarian life. In this northern cultural zone of Europe, at the time of Saint Patrick, the making of beer from ground cereals was always carried out at the level of a regular household task, one often accomplished by women, as a part of chores and preparing food.²¹ However, upon the infusion of Christianity into such patterns of life, in large part through contributions specific to monastic thought that developed traceably in Ireland and spread then to the continent, dramatic changes to the scale and character of beer-brewing were on the horizon.

On the opposite geographic and cultural pole, Saint Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-547) rose to prominence and acclaim as a man of God in Italy, and from there emerged the compelling formulation for Christian life attributed to his name. Arriving in the tumultuous period following

¹⁹ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 23-24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 26-27. Beer is commonly called "liquid bread" for its value in carbohydrates and calories, which indeed gave rise to its early dietary prominence. However, it is a misconception that beer was safer than and consumed in lieu of water in the Middle Ages due to boiling involved in the brewing process, which removed bacteria. Although beer was indeed more socially ubiquitous and had a greater role in nutrition than today, medieval Europeans generally understood what made for healthy water and drank it regularly.

the collapse of the Roman empire in 476, in his lifetime Benedict established twelve monasteries in the region of Subiaco outside of Rome, and then the famous monastery of Monte Cassino where he lived out his remaining years. Indeed, most enduringly from Benedict emerged his *Rule*, one which he calls "a little rule we have written for beginners;"²² it is a brief but elaborate series of chapters providing both spiritual and administrative precepts for communal life in an ideal monastery modeled on a routine of prayer, work, and study.²³ Within the text, one short chapter outlines the proper amount of "drink" for the monks at the monastery; it suggests:

...we believe that a half bottle of wine a day is sufficient for each. ... [The superior] must, in any case, take great care lest excess or drunkenness creep in [to the monks]. We read that monks should not drink wine at all, but since the monks of our day cannot be convinced of this, let us at least agree to drink moderately, and not to the point of excess, for *wine makes even wise men go astray* (Sir 19:2). However, where local circumstances dictate an amount much less than what is stipulated above, or even none at all, those who live there should bless God and not grumble.²⁴

The *Rule* presumes the existence of wine and wine-drinking such as was prevalent in Benedict's contemporary Mediterranean cultural zone; yet, as is characteristic of the *Rule*, an allowance is made for ambiguity of circumstances in which an abbot may find his monastery, and to whom proper judgement of observance is deferred to with recourse to the *Rule's* overarching principles of moderation, humility, and balance.²⁵ Despite such allowance for adaptations, though, the *Rule* of Benedict did not gain immediate acceptance, nor implementation, even in Italy. Not until the

²² RB, 73:8.

²³ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 33.

²⁴ RB, 40:3-8.

²⁵ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 21.

Carolingian period under the reign of Charlemagne would *The Rule* be promulgated exclusively as the valid monastic observance in a European setting of the ninth century. In the meantime, increasing numbers of Christian monasteries arose in an "age of the combined rule," in which a dynamic spread of missionary activities with a variety of monastic figures and inspirations proliferated across the whole of the European landscape.²⁶ One particularly prominent of such figures was Saint Columbanus, whose successive episodes of "local circumstances" certainly involved contact with beer and its drinkers.²⁷ Columbanus was a missionary who developed a monastic rule of his own and founded numerous monasteries while he made his way across Europe, whose life brought him southward across Gaul and into Italy; his travels commenced, indeed, from Ireland.

Saint Columbanus (c. 540-615) was an exceptionally influential and successful monastic leader who left his home country of Ireland and established monasteries in the Frankish and Lombard kingdoms under their patronage in present-day France and Italy, respectively.²⁸ Along with several of his own surviving works, a particularly significant account of Columbanus's life has come down to us that was composed two decades after his death by Jonas of Susa. With respect to beer, Jonas's concise account of Columbanus's life reveals a remarkable prominence in

²⁶ *Benedict of Aniane, The Emperor's Monk: Ardo's Life* translated by Allen Cabaniss, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2008), 5; see also, Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 46-48.

²⁷ For further discussion on the dietary differences dividing the Mediterranean and "barbarian" zones of early medieval Europe, including changes transmitted by monasticism, see Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clarke, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), 17-23.

²⁸ Michael Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages: The abiding legacy of Columbanus*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), 20. For a brief discussion on the adoption of monastic institutions under the patronage of the barbarian courts, see the chapter "Wandering saints and princely patrons" in Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 36-49.

the role played by the drink. When Columbanus was acting under the patronage of the Frankish Merovingian court (indeed before he was expelled from Burgundy for his outspokenness concerning the sex-life of the young King Theodoric), Jonas retells that Columbanus came upon a situation at the monastery of Fontaines, which proceeded like this:

[Columbanus (called also 'Columban')] found sixty brethren hoeing the ground and preparing the fields for the future crop. When he saw them breaking up the clods with great labor, he said, "May the Lord prepare for you a feast, my brethren." Hearing this the attendant said, "Father, believe me, we have only two loaves and a very little beer." Columban answered, "Go and bring those." The attendant went quickly and brought the two loaves and a little beer. Columban, raising his eyes to heaven, said, "Christ Jesus, only hope of the world, do Thou, who from five loaves satisfied five thousand men in the wilderness, multiply these loaves and this drink." Wonderful faith! All were satisfied and each one drank as much as he wished. The servant carried back twice as much in fragments and twice the amount of drink. And so he knew that faith is more deserving of the divine gifts than despair, which is wont to diminish even what one has.²⁹

Jonas wrote this *Life of Columbanus* at Bobbio Abbey in the north of Italy, south of Milan, the final monastic colony founded by Columbanus and at which he died, which reflects the great geographic sweep made by Columbanus's energizing monastic influence from Ireland across the region of Gaul. It is the latter region, within the northern European cultural zone, in which the above episode involving sixty monks takes place; this reveals not only that Gallic monasticism had begun to flourish here, as historian C.H. Lawrence describes, "The impact of [Columbanus's]

²⁹ Jonas and Dana Carleton Munro, *Life of St. Columban*, (Philadelphia: Dept. of History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1895) 17.

advent upon the religious life of Gaul was like that of a spring tide bursting into a stagnant pool;"³⁰ it also reveals that beer was expected to be at hand in these monasteries, as it remained a staple for dietary subsistence in these regions, and the suggestion certainly arises that it had already begun to be brewed regularly in these monasteries; and even more, the exalting tone of Jonas's text, directed at the glorification of Christ, serves to indicate that the drink of beer, in this instance, could be and was compatibly incorporated into Christian thought. That is to say, this account is one that idealized as memorable virtue the worthy deeds attached to Columbanus's life and faith; thus, the renowned memory of his holy personage, including positive association to this miraculous creation of beer, was, to some degree, a consideration that was perpetuated in monastic communities, at least insofar as Jonas's account of Saint Columbanus was read and retold. Indeed, here plenty of beer was the providence of God.

Not all beer was brewed equally as such, however. Later, Columbanus came upon a group of Swabians, Germanic people native to southern Gaul, who were preparing to make a "heathen offering." Columbanus saw that they had prepared a large cask filled with beer. Upon asking what it would be used for, Columbanus was told that this beer would be, as Jonas recounts, used in "making an offering to their God Wodan (whom others call Mercury)." The ensuing upheaval proceeded as follows:

When [Columbanus] heard of this abomination, he breathed on the cask, and lo! it broke with a crash and fell in pieces so that all the beer ran out. Then it was clear that the devil had been concealed in the cask, and that through the earthly drink he had proposed to

³⁰ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 38. For a discussion on Columbanus, whom historian Peter Brown calls a "vivid Irishman," and his severe style of monasticism, see Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 248-266; see also, Michael Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages: The abiding legacy of Columbanus*, 24-48.

ensnare the souls of the participants. As the heathens saw that, they were amazed and said Columban had a strong breath, to split a wellbound cask in that manner. But he reproved them in the words of the Gospel, and commanded them to cease from such offerings and to go home. Many were converted then, by the preaching of the holy man, and turning to the learning and faith of Christ, were baptized by him. Others, who were already baptized but still lived in the heathenish unbelief, like a good shepherd, he again led by his words to the faith and into the bosom of the church.³¹

The label of "the earthly drink" used for beer when prepared for such pagan ritual intents is particularly curious, as such a description is employed in the very account that earlier attributed beer at the monastery to be a miraculous gift, one whose creation reflected an abundance of faith in Christ. On a moral register, as far as monks were concerned, such considerations as the "intent" behind beer appeared to factor into its production quite early on in the Middle Ages.

In any event, on the whole across the gradient of agricultural affordances and cultural considerations in Europe at this time, a deeply extant dietary tradition in brewing and a now-developing spiritual tradition in monasticism were coming into regular contact, and a patently new pattern of life was at hand.³² Columbanus was among a variety of other seekers of holy life who contributed to a color of Christian thought now saturating Europe in various shades, which offered to men and women a provisional enclave of peace and order now amidst "the debris of

³¹ Jonas and Dana Carleton Munro, *Life of St. Columban*, 31-32.

³² Historian Max Nelson rather boldly remarks that beer "only came to prominence in continental European monasteries through the influence of Columban," in *The Barbarians Beverage*, 103. I argue for less restrictive language, and that the legacy of Columbanus's relationship to beer instead typifies the rise of monastic institutions that were, more or less, conditioned by and absorbent of extant agricultural traditions of beer making in northern Europe.

classical civilization, in a world grown barbarous, violent, and unpredictable, [...]."³³ Shortly preceding the arrival of Columbanus to the continent, in the south, the Lombard armies had broken into and devastated the Italian peninsula, and in 577, thirty years after his death, Benedict's famed monastery at Monte Cassino was burned down.³⁴ It remained deserted for the next one hundred and forty years and would not be re-established until 718 under the Catholic papacy. Throughout that period, scattered monastic life consisted in the prevailing form of a "combined rule," mainly between those of Benedict and of Columbanus, observed independently over the seventh and eighth centuries.³⁵ Then, as the Carolingian line of Frankish kings emerged and steadily rose to immense power in Gaul, European monasticism underwent a great renovation.

From the time of Pepin III (r. 751-768), Charlemagne's father, the Carolingian dynasty developed significant relations with the papacy in Rome, which had sought political alliance with these mighty Franks while under threat of the Lombard presence in Italy. In 754, Pepin had himself and his sons consecrated in Saint-Denis by the pope, a maneuver which brought about the return of biblical kingship, strengthened the prestige of the monarchy, now a Christian leader, and had deep and lasting impact upon the shape of a hierarchical order embedded in Europe and its politics.³⁶ The papacy by that time had begun to endorse Benedict's *Rule* much more exclusively in monastic communities, and this trend was amplified by the Carolingian kingship in its alliance with the Church and its promotion of monasticism. Indeed, with the rise of

³³ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁵ *Benedict of Aniane, The Emperor's Monk: Ardo's Life* translated by Allen Cabaniss, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2008), 6-7.

³⁶ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, 30.

ecclesiastical and temporal authority, powerful new dynamics were coming to play upon the European stage as the Middle Ages began to unfurl, and from these forces the existing monasteries were hardly withdrawn. In the ninth century, monastic institutions were met with the "primitive and cumbersome apparatus of the Carolingian state," a process which nonetheless succeeded in large degree to standardize monasticism on the sole basis of Benedictine principles.³⁷ However, the result was a departure in the scale and character not only of early Benedictine monasticism, but of early European beer production as well.

In the Carolingian period, the *Rule* of Saint Benedict became the exclusively endorsed model for monastic communities and effectively prevailed in Europe. The highly devout and scholarly monk Benedict of Aniane (c. 747-821), often called the "Second Benedict," ascended to favor under Charlemagne (r. 768-814) and his son, Louis the Pious (r. 813-840). Arriving at the political seat of the Carolingian court in the north of Gaul, at Aachen, Benedict of Aniane founded a monastery and became head of a council of abbots, who then strove together to unify and standardize all monastic practices accordingly under the *Rule* of the original Benedict.³⁸ The effort to promulgate the Benedictine model as the official doctrinal ideal, espoused as the epitome of monastic organization, produced a substantial impact all its own. Under the auspices of the temporal, now-Christian kingship and thereby made compulsory for abbots, Benedict of Aniane's work was the catalyst for monasticism as organized on the Benedictine model to dominate Europe in the Carolingian period, essentially as an arm of theocracy.³⁹ Of the decrees

³⁷ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 70.

³⁸ *Benedict of Aniane*, 1-2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 79-81; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 70-71. The two major doctrinal works of Benedict of Aniane are the *Codex Regularum* and the *Concordia Regularum*. Both substantial undertakings of authoritative monastic scholarship, they fell into relative disuse after the death of Louis the Pious; however, their impact on the organization of monasticism on the model of

made at the very first of the synods at Aachen in August of 816, the original Benedict's ration of drink at the monastery in the *Rule* was supplemented; the prescription for one half pint (*hemina*) per person remained, and if wine was lacking, twice as much beer, (a pint [*sextarius*]) would suffice to drink.⁴⁰ Beer was understood by the council to be a standard drink available at monasteries and was expected to be the default to wine, as such . The same synod also required that the brothers perform the work in the bake-and-brewhouses of monasteries, which, as we shall see, would have an especially transformative effect on the principle of "work" performed by monks.⁴¹ Overall, the "Carolingian renewal on monastic culture" was imbued with a monastic obedience to a compound of original Benedictine doctrinal principles, those both spiritual and administrative, yet as newly elaborated to be the theocratic standard of monasticism. At the dawn of a great rise in prestige and scale of monastic institutions in European society, its organizational dogma now incorporated beer.⁴² An immense growth in the scale of brewing that simultaneously took place in Europe was imbued with these same principles of obedience, arising indeed from within the walls of the monasteries.

To briefly summarize: after Christianity had spread far to the north, a characteristically-Irish movement of monasticism traveled back to the continent through lands and cultures steeped in centuries of beer and met with resurfacing Benedictine thought in the area of Frankish Gaul. It was within this space that brewing was poised to truly flourish in monastic institutions. To

Benedict's *Rule* in the West was long lasting, as it was this Benedictine model as transmitted by Benedict of Aniane that arose at Cluny and elsewhere in the tenth century; see Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 76-77.

⁴⁰ Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage*, 101, 164.

⁴¹ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 29. See also, *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeienses*, Appendix II in Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 3: 111,

⁴² Leclercq, *The love of learning and the desire for God*, 43.

apprehend this phenomenon, as the concept and character of monasticism was standardized under temporal power and became deeply enmeshed with an emerging “feudal” structure in the early European economy, such a task warrants a look through another, markedly different lens -- that is, Benedictine monastic culture from its origins in the West and the transformation of its character into the Carolingian period; within that evolution, indeed, was a development of monastic institutions that civilized European brewing on a newly industrial scale. The uniqueness of monastic institutions as especially receptive and conducive to brewing in a Carolingian manorial economy was due to the prominence in the role of at least two ideals held in monastic life: the first among them is the ideal of "leisure," which was integral to Benedict's *Rule* and to the organization of labor, both manual and spiritual in variety, at monastic estates; the second ideal of notable influence is that of monastic origins in austerity and poverty, which played a recurrent part in inspiring monastic culture and influenced its tendency toward reform in the West, namely with the Cistercian return to origins in the form of economic asceticism. Over the Carolingian period, the various degrees of adherence to the purity of these ideals was especially transformative to the shape and character of monasteries in the medieval economy and, consequently, to the scale and quality of European beer production.

Manorial monastic culture as an economic predisposition to a brewing industry: the evolving Benedictine ideal of leisure

Alongside prayer, studious learning (*Lectio Divinia*) was a definitive component of the Benedictine *Rule*, both parts of the ideal model from which emerged a unique monastic culture

and an economic situation principally based upon "leisure."⁴³ In the medieval context, to speak theoretically, it is a practically evident deduction that one may generally read, write, and study -- among what may be considered relatively leisurely activities, together with prayer and contemplation -- only when surplus time is afforded beyond the immediate concern of survival. In other words, sheer survival must be sufficiently tended to as a necessary means for the enjoyment of leisure of any such kind. That much said, the activities of writing and study were indeed concentrated in monastic institutions, mainly for purposes of piety and spiritual edification, almost exclusively in Europe from the early medieval period to roughly the twelfth century (at which point, universities as centers of learning boomed alongside the rise of towns, while the extant tradition of monastic education generally proceeded as it had).⁴⁴ At monasteries, as the *Rule* of Benedict upholds in the performance of the Divine Office, the maintenance of a frequent and regular routine of prayer to commune with God meant the true fruition of monastic life; yet, in an economic sense, it would seem that prayer has no productive value for material subsistence. Thus, as a class defined by leisure, monks had great need to manage a means of adequately living if they were to continually pray and study, and that they did.

Especially before this rise of urban life, by and large, the Middle Ages were a world in which life was fragile, reliant on the intensely demanding labors of subsistence agriculture, and housed provisionally in the clearings of a deeply wooded European landscape.⁴⁵ The threats of societal instability and the harshness of nature were immanent and wholly palpable. Monasteries were, in a broad sense, efforts toward ordering the chaos of a barbarous and inhospitable world.

⁴³ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 11-22, 67; Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 55-56.

⁴⁴ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, 126.

⁴⁵ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 80

It was in such a context that the regulatory system of Saint Benedict served as an ideal model for livelihood and took hold over the course of the early Middle Ages.⁴⁶ Several centuries later, the evidence of large and sophisticated Carolingian monastery buildings themselves, built and maintained as institutions devoted to prayer and spiritual learning, complete with scriptoriums and preeminent libraries, then indirectly but surely attests to the efficacy with which matters of mere survival were attended to, indeed so as to yield an opportunity for such a "leisurely" lifestyle as that of a Benedictine monk.

Not only for monks, but for everyone, all of life in the Middle Ages was "steeped in religion;"⁴⁷ thus, in a world in which monasteries served as the lightning rods of contact with God in their local vicinity, their estates must be understood as fundamentally integrated into the total sociohistorical landscape.⁴⁸ This was a dynamic, diverse, and complex arrangement of exchanges in which the Church became a powerful player, and by the Carolingian period monasteries invariably factored into nearly any local economic system.⁴⁹ Predicated on

⁴⁶ Charles W. Jones, paraphrased from the introduction to his translation of *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeiensis*, Appendix II in Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 3: 95.

⁴⁷ Phrase of Le Goff, who adds, "in fact, religion was so omnipresent that there was no word to distinguish it," *The Birth of Europe*, 200.

⁴⁸ Historian Peter Brown describes that by the sixth century, there was "the emergence of the belief that entire convents and monasteries possessed a collective power of prayer that was somehow stronger than the prayers offered by any one holy person. It is a subtle but decisive shift. Convents and monasteries came to be seen as more than sheltered places where individuals sought holiness. They were treated as holy places in themselves. A well-organized monastery could function as a powerhouse of prayer on behalf of the community as a whole. Hence the growing importance placed, in monastic rules all over Europe, on those qualities which rendered the community gathered in a monastery or convent capable of collective holiness and, hence, of effective collective prayer," *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000*, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 226.

⁴⁹ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 37, 55-56; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 70. It is additionally important to note the fundamental Benedictine precept that private ownership be entirely abolished at the monastery: "Above all, this evil practice must be

perpetuating their unique culture, in which leisure was a necessity, monastic institutions and their economic situation paved the way for the emergence of an early brewing industry in Carolingian Europe, and this was accomplished directly through their administration of such manual labor and the organization of yields of resources accumulated at their estates. In this process, most interestingly, the specific task of brewing within the monastery retained a unique status as a service to be done only by the brothers; however, this specification must be elaborated in light of the total medieval-Benedictine economic system, indeed as the demands attached to this task of brewing transformed substantially into the Carolingian period.

Considered in the medieval economic system, to organize labor and resources for purported purposes of the soul consisted in two different but overlapping registers: material and spiritual. The issue here is most clearly encapsulated by the Benedictine notion of "work," the particularly amorphous meaning of which had undergone significant evolution by the Carolingian period, which dramatically affected both the organization of monasticism and of a new brewing industry.⁵⁰ The history of a universal *intention* upon which labors engaged by

uprooted and removed from the monastery. We mean that without an order from the abbot, no one may presume to give, receive or retain anything as his own, nothing at all -- not a book, writing tablets or stylus -- in short, not a single item, especially since monks may not have the free disposal even of their own bodies and wills. For their needs, they are to look to the father of the monastery, and are not allowed anything which the abbot has not given or permitted. *All things should be the common possession* of all, as it is written, *so that no one presumes to call anything his own* (Acts 4:32)," quoted in RB 33:1-6, (56). Essentially, the collective power and responsibility of the monastery's material and financial wherewithal was centralized in the person of the abbot. Thus the notion was intended to be nullified that any works of the individual were for his or her own temporal prosperity.

⁵⁰ The historic notion of "work" is an especially ambiguous one for European history in general. Historian Jacques Le Goff describes, "For [medieval] monks, obligatory work was an act of penitence. The Book of Genesis declared that God punished original sin of Adam and Eve by condemning them to work. Monastic penitence, in the form of work, was thus also a kind of atonement. In this way, a notion of the value of work appeared. Given that in the early medieval society monks enjoyed great prestige, the very fact that they worked somewhat paradoxically

monks have ever and always been inwardly predicated is impossible to consider; but at least with early forms of Benedictine monasticism, doctrinally speaking, all manual labor was to have been intended as a means of self-sufficiency, done by the brothers and directed toward preserving their true vocation, simply enough, as monks. This vocation was reciprocal of a culture whose objectives were "solicitude for safeguarding a certain spiritual leisure, a certain freedom in the interests of prayer in all its forms, and, above all, authentic contemplative peace."⁵¹ This ambition of leisure, which was itself considered a form of "work" in a spiritual sense, a "busy leisure," was indeed paramount to Benedict's original vision of monastic life.⁵² The original distribution of leisure and work made by farming at the monasteries did not last, however.

Benedict's *Rule* upholds, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, the brothers should have specified periods for manual labor as well as for prayerful reading."⁵³ Based on this principle, early Benedictine monasteries were generally rooted in an equilibrium of prayer, study, and work, in which the necessary agricultural work was the responsibility of the monks, who often farmed their fields themselves in the interest of self-sufficiency.⁵⁴ In this original observance of the *Rule* of Benedict, if the monks ever did harvest grains that were brewed into beer, the ambition accordingly seems to have been one that included the fulfillment of a need for the dietary subsistence of the monks; and, principally, their bodies were thus at leisure to engage

conferred upon work a positive value. [...] However [by the High to Late Middle Ages], manual labor was increasingly despised over other, more honorable forms of work emerged (that of university teachers and merchants) [...]. Overall, general European attitudes toward work were ambiguous," quoted in *The Birth of Europe*, 147-148. On work as penance, see also RB, Prologue:35-38.

⁵¹ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 19.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ RB 48:1.

⁵⁴ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 30.

in matters of the soul. However, the scale of any such brewing conducted at early monasteries, often relatively small and isolated, did not approach the horizon of industry. In the emerging feudal structure of Carolingian period and its theocratic monastic reforms, which ordered an increasing elaboration of the monks' time devoted to the business of prayer, monastic estates increasingly factored into a manorial economic situation in which they proportionally amassed greater levels of grains, which were indeed brewed at the monastery.

By the Carolingian period, largely through the reforms of Benedict of Aniane, the "leisurely" dimension of prayer became the almost exclusive occupation in the lifestyle of a monk.⁵⁵ By the ninth century, many Benedictine communities sought to provide a service of ceaseless prayer. The primary purpose of monks became committed to a perfect execution of the liturgy and the singing of divine praises, a practice which was generally supported by wealthy lay benefactors.⁵⁶ Thus, monasteries began to increasingly employ servants for the tasks of manual labor to support the institution as the liturgical service burgeoned. As the monks' specialized function became further devoted to prayers for the living and the dead, monastic estates came to hold increasing shares of land due to a regular flow of gifts from lords and aristocrats as patronage precisely for that reason, with material sacrifices to Divine authority exchanged for such spiritual favor.⁵⁷ It was in the interest of amplifying the leisurely vocation of

⁵⁵ The effect of the Aachen decrees as described by historian C.H. Lawrence: "In addition to the sevenfold office of the day, monks were now required to chant additional psalms before the night office and visit the numerous altars in procession, and to recite the office of the dead daily. Besides these services, the community or chapter mass was now celebrated daily after the office of terce, [...]. The elaboration of the liturgical prayer meant that a lengthening part of the monks' day was spent in choir. [...] In this way the old equilibrium between prayer, work and study, that the Rule advocated, was destroyed," *Medieval Monasticism*, 70-71.

⁵⁶ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 70-71.

⁵⁷ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 55-56.

the monks, whose business with matter of souls was paramount, that monastic estates became prevailing manorial centers of social and agricultural organization. It is in such a context that the historian of beer Richard Unger claims, “Monasteries were the only institutions with quantities of surplus grain on any kind of scale, so they were alone in having resources which would allow for large-scale brewing. [...] Carolingian monastic records indicate that certainly by the ninth century, and possibly earlier, northern Europeans had mastered brewing on a large scale.”⁵⁸ In what appears to be a proportional increase between a specialization in spiritual leisure and seigneurial prominence, monasteries amassed large stores of resources, including grains, from dependent farms in conjunction with obligatory parochial tithes.⁵⁹ In this process, monasteries pioneered in the practice of bookkeeping and estate management, and their facilities became increasingly sophisticated. The handling of grains, which indeed were stored and ground at the monastery and brewed by the monks at a caliber of operation unprecedented in Europe, is reflected in the remarkable ninth century manuscript that is the St. Gall Monastery Plan.

The subject of extensive study by medieval historians, the architectural plan of St. Gall was drafted by an anonymous author at its eponymous abbey in Switzerland shortly after the synods of Aachen.⁶⁰ The building laid out by the plan was never actually constructed; however,

⁵⁸ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 27.

⁵⁹ On tithes -- one tenth of annual produce or earnings given to support the clergy -- which often included portions of agricultural yields and livestock, Peter Brown writes, “no tax in the history of Europe can compare with tithes in length of duration, extent of application and weight of economic burden,” in *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 453; see also a ninth century example of community tithing expectations set forth by Adalhard at the monastery of Corbie, which include hops, supposedly for beer, in Charles W. Jones, *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeienses*, Appendix II in Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 3: 112-113.

⁶⁰ Interestingly enough, the St. Gall monastery -- at which the architectural plan was produced and reflected sophisticated brewing facilities -- was founded in the year 673 at the site of the hermitage erected by Saint Gall, who was a faithful companion of Columbanus and traveled with him from Ireland to the continent; see Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 38.

according to the comprehensive work of analysis conducted by Walter Horn and Ernest Born, the ambition of the Plan was predicated on the Carolingian quest for norm and unity under Benedictine rule, and its character indeed conditioned the course for all future developments in monastic planning.⁶¹ Thus, the Plan has been considered to be that of a "paradigmatic Carolingian monastery," an idealized model representative of the European realm whose monasteries numbered 650 in the kingdom of the Franks alone, not including those in Italy, and many of which were favored with large royal donations.⁶² The St. Gall Plan models a considerably large monastery and reveals three separate breweries for the production of beer, one for distinguished guests, one for pilgrims and paupers, and, the most elaborate, one for the monks. Such brewery and baking facilities were nearly always installed in the same building; this was a patently medieval and monastic architectural arrangement, with no parallels in Greco-Roman life; Horn describes this as a newly developed symbiosis of baking and brewing "at least in all those cases where there was a need for the production of bread and beer in quantities that required using industrial techniques, as inevitably was so in a monastic community."⁶³ The efficiency of this arrangement reflects the ingenuity of monks as administrators and architects; and by the ninth century, they were brewing beer at a caliber unprecedented in Europe, produced at stunning quantities.

⁶¹ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 1: ix-xi.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1: x.

⁶³ The Roman tradition of combining milling and baking in the same facility was not transferred to the Middle Ages as milling became an increasingly specialized function and a guarded feudal privilege of landowners; *ibid.*, 2: 250-251.

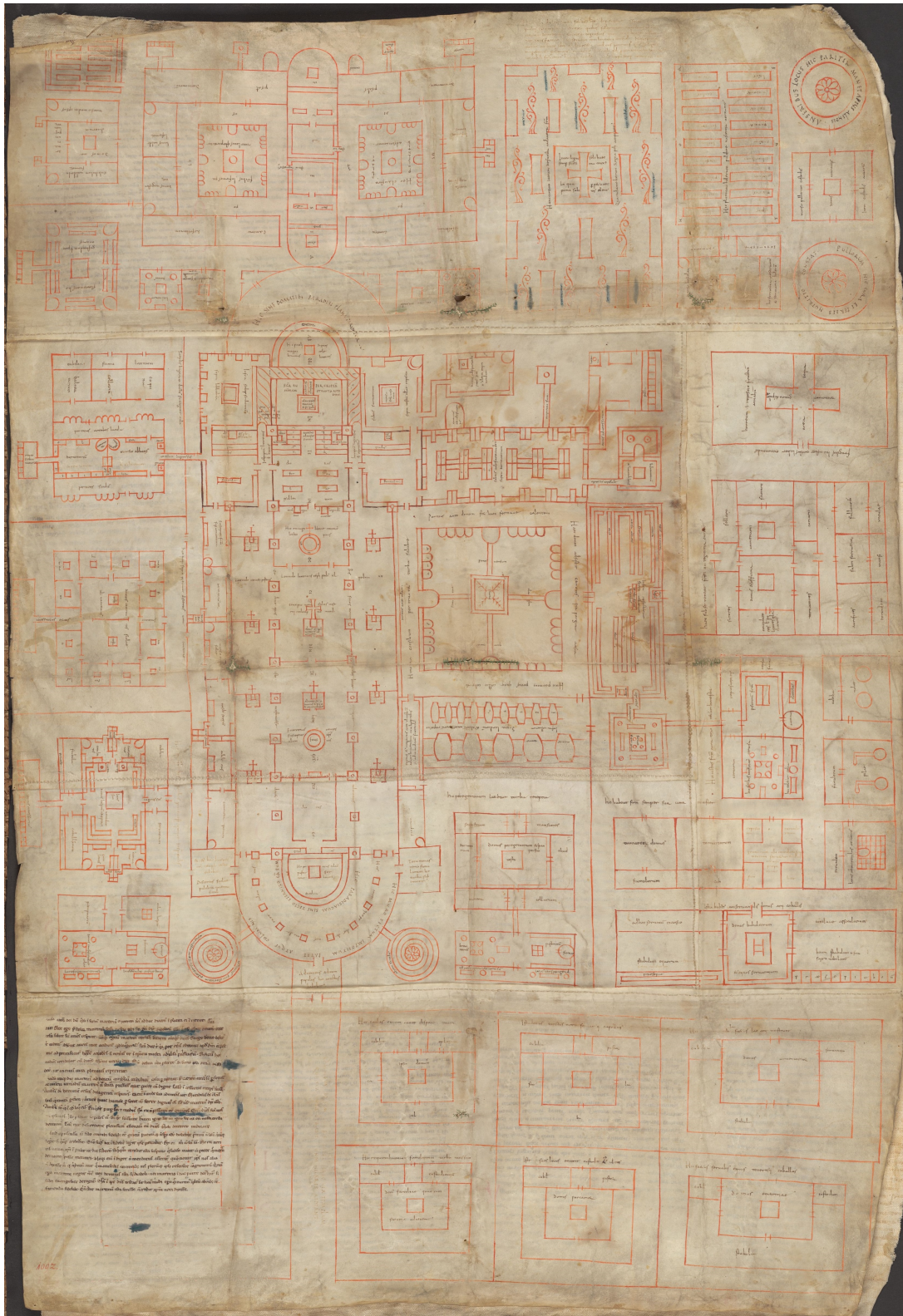


Figure 1 – Original Saint Gall manuscript, reproduced in: Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*; available in the public domain.

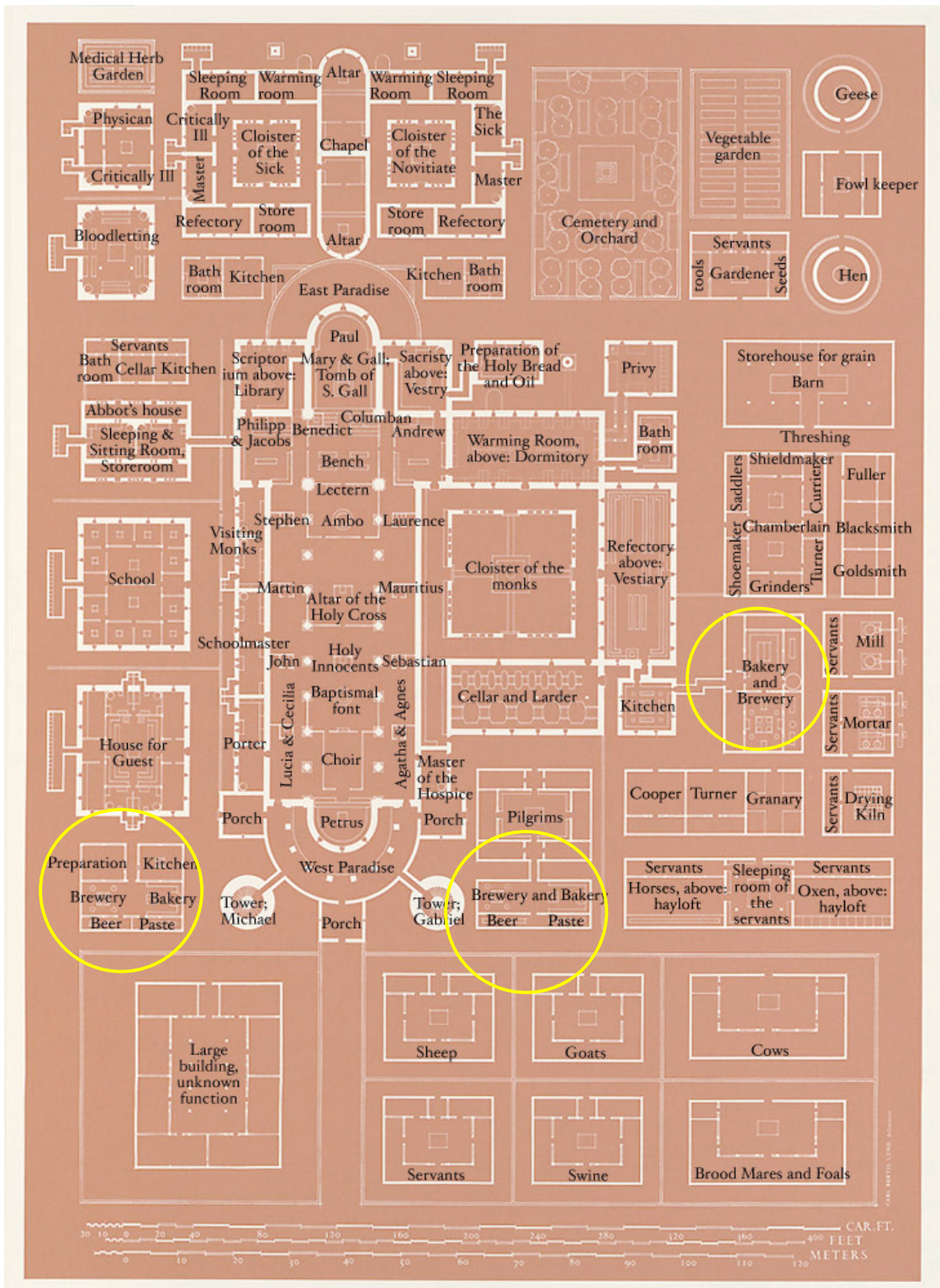


Figure 2 – "Diagram of St. Gall Monastery Plan" based on original manuscript, available at stgallplan.org. Notice three separate bake-and-brewhouses for the hospitality of pilgrims and paupers (center circle), for distinguished guests (leftmost circle), and for the monks (rightmost circle) attached to their kitchen; each separately analyzed in Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, Vol. 1, 132-154.

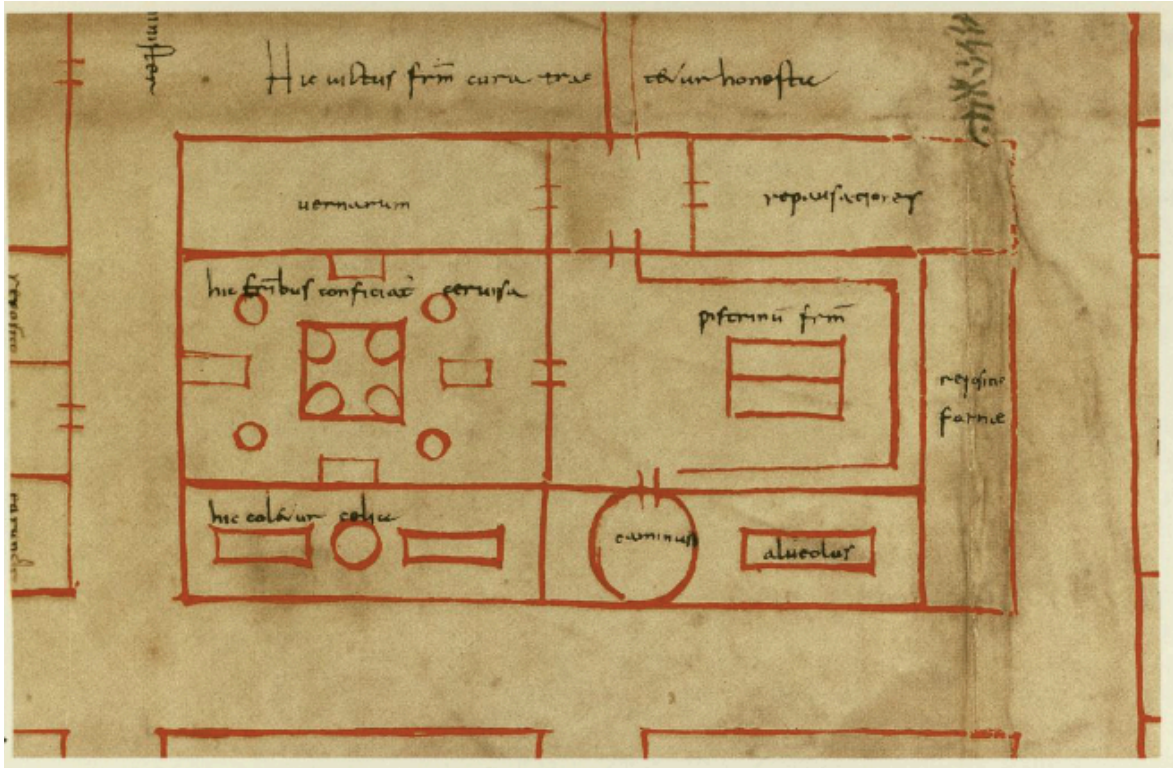


Figure 3 -- Detail of the monks' bake and brewhouse from the St. Gall Plan, the brewery on the left labeled: *hic fribus conficiat ceruisa*, "here let the beer for the brothers be brewed," taken from Richard Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 28; image reproduced in: Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 2: 254

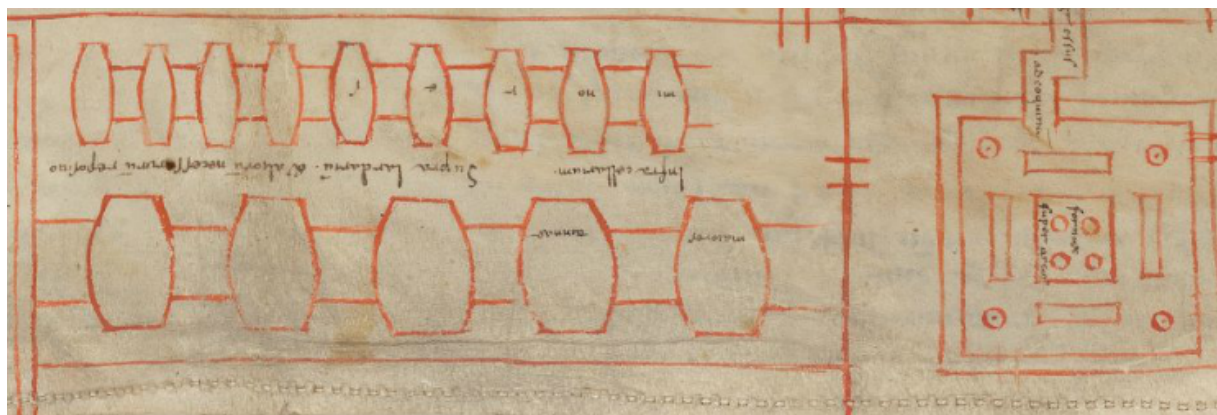


Figure 4 -- Detail of the cellar barrels (left), attached to the kitchen (right), from the St. Gall Plan; image reproduced in: Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 2: 278.

Based on the ideal Plan of St. Gall, a monastery around that size would have had to produce on average near 350 to 400 liters of beer each day.⁶⁴ These quantities of beer were stored in barrels in the nearby cellar. Yet, as laid out in the schematic of the Plan, it is unclear as to what volume of beer would be stored in relation to wine, stored here as well. In any case, the combined capacity of the nine topmost barrels (Figure 4), labeled "the smaller ones" (*mi no res*), has been estimated to perhaps 5,000 liters; that of "the large barrels" (*maiores tunnae*) was perhaps 30,000 liters.⁶⁵ On the character of monastic brewing facilities reflected by the Plan, the remarks made by Walter Horn are entirely congruent with the aims of this study and are worth quoting in full. He writes:

It would be a grave mistake to overlook in this context the impact the medieval monastery had on modern viticulture [...]: the art of moving, storing and ageing wine in quantities sufficiently large to guarantee to every member of the community the daily ration of wine permitted by St. Benedict. And it would be an even greater mistake to overlook the contribution the monasteries made to modern brewing industry, by producing this beverage on a scale that had no parallels in the secular world, where beer was in general brewed in the home, and for the consumption of small groups of people. Nor can one disregard the effect which monastic wine and brewing industry had on the cultivation of that highly specialized and proficient skill of manufacturing for the transportation and storage of these liquids, those large and ingeniously constructed casks which in addition of being perfectly tight, when filled, and of resisting considerable

⁶⁴ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 29.

⁶⁵ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 3: 41; Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage*, 104.

internal pressure during fermentation, must also be capable of bearing the strain of transportation to great distances.⁶⁶

To elaborate on the reason for this high scale of production at monasteries, it should be considered that these major units of organization were, in a broad sense, something like medieval "social institutions" whose shared principles included providing local hospitality.⁶⁷ In the great medieval trend of pilgrimage, definitive stages and networks of pilgrimage routes crisscrossed medieval Europe increasingly and especially into the later Middle Ages, in which monasteries always played a key role as checkpoints.⁶⁸ Another central feature of monasteries, also evident in the St. Gall Plan's brewery for pilgrims and paupers, was their ritualized function of regular care for the poor in the distribution of alms, beer included.⁶⁹ Indeed, to uphold their end of the feudal exchange as centers tasked with generating favor between the community and God, all of the constant traffic at the gate of the monastery required the monks to have at the ready such quantities of beer as to be an industry, which had taken shape in their bake-and-brewhouses. Thus, to speak a bit fancifully, in this economic arrangement the role of the monk was defined by and supported on the principle of ritualized care for the feudal realm, of both body and soul.

This returns us to the issue of the ambiguous status of "work" in relation to monks as a class defined by leisure and predicated on self-sustenance, or at least self-perpetuation. We

⁶⁶ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 2: 352.

⁶⁷ It is important to make specific note of the role of hospitality as a key moral principle of the *Rule*, which requires, "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: *I was a stranger and you welcomed me* (Matt 25:35). Proper honor must be shown to all, *especially to those who share our faith* (Gal 6:10) and to pilgrims," RB 53:1-2.

⁶⁸ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, 25.

⁶⁹ Historian Georges Duby notes, "in Carolingian usage the word *pauper* ("poor") indicated submission to authority, and contrasted not with *dives* ("rich") but with *potens* ("powerful)," *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 233.

established that the Carolingian renovations to monasticism had largely done away with the "manual labor" as an original Benedictine principle formerly expressed in agricultural work -- the responsibility of which now had been delegated to the manorial farms attached to large monastic estates. However, brewing seemed to remain a central and definitive task of monks' daily "work." In this sense, brewing may have been understood by the monks to qualify among the few remaining expressions of the original principle of the *Rule* requiring manual labor, even at the Carolingian monasteries whose specialization in "leisure" had greatly increased from an elaborated liturgy, perhaps qualifying even especially so.⁷⁰ Considered in this regard, with the instance of monastic life at the model of St. Gall, Walter Horn writes, "Each day some major part of the cycles and processes for brewing and baking would be set in motion by monks assigned to such chores. The traffic in numbers of men, to say nothing of their burdens -- grain, buckets, barrows, sacks, baked bread -- achieved a density of use and compaction nowhere else found in the Plan."⁷¹ To further reconstruct the busy character of regular brewing, accomplished as the work of the monks themselves, we have the voice of Adalhard, the ninth abbot of the monastery of Corbie.

In January of 822 at the most important Carolingian monastery in Northern France, comparable with Saint-Denis, Saint-Gall, and Monte Cassino, Adalhard (c. 753-826) composed

⁷⁰ As the Carolingian style of Benedictine monasticism transmitted by Benedict of Aniane was subsequently augmented at Cluny, there is here a relevant connection to be made by George Duby; he notes of Cluniac monasticism by the eleventh century, "The manual labor prescribed by the rule was reduced to entirely symbolic tasks about the kitchen," *The Early Growth of the Medieval Economy*, 216. This notion supports that brewing did indeed yet constitute manual labor and reflects the significant transformation (which Duby calls a reduction) in the expression of the labor principle to which the great increase in the caliber of brewing was associated.

⁷¹ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 2; 254.

his *Directives* for the economic management of the abbey of Corbie. The *Directives* were prepared at the same historical moment as the Plan of St. Gall, and they represent a monastery of comparable aims and power. In terms of reconstructing medieval monastic life, "[o]ne could not conceive of two mutually more elucidating historical sources."⁷² In the text, Adalhard sets out the daily ration of beer to be distributed to the poor who arrive at the gate of the monastery:

With regard to drink, there should be given out each day a half modius of beer [or about 4.5 liters], that is, eight sesters. Of these, four sesters are divided among those aforesaid twelve paupers, so that each will receive two beakers. Then from the other four sesters is given one beaker to each of the clerical brothers who wash the feet and one beaker to Willeramnus the servitor. We leave to the discretion of the hospitaler the method of dividing any residue among the infirm or the other paupers.⁷³

Using this ration as a basis, per capita consumption of beer was more than 500 liters per person per year!⁷⁴ Regarding the preparation of such quantities of beer made by the monks -- for as mentioned above, the first synod at Aachen required monks themselves to work in the monastery bake-and-brewhouses -- Adalhard, who was in fact the cousin and schoolmate of Charlemagne, assiduously upheld this standard at Corbie. Concerning the rules of the kitchen, Adalhard specifies, "For the laymen, there is one clear statement: No one should enter the kitchen at any time that food is being prepared or the prepared food is being served."⁷⁵ It seems that with food preparation at the monastery, which here more than likely included brewing the beer, not

⁷² Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, 3: 99.

⁷³ Ibid., Appendix II: *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeienses*, trans. Charles W. Jones, 3: 105.

⁷⁴ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 29.

⁷⁵ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, Appendix II: *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeienses*, 3: 111.

otherwise specified, this was a responsibility of the monks themselves and a fundamental part of their daily rhythm. Adalhard outlines the procedure for a reliable routine of kitchen operations, emphasizing its importance for the sake of the monastery; "We explain these rules in such a clear and repetitive way that no one can claim ignorance, even the simpler -- or had I better say stupider -- monks."⁷⁶ The perceptive abbot also prescribes, in contrast to the general rule of silence, that in the kitchen the monks should sing the psalms, so that "the singing is not to be silenced for a moment."⁷⁷ It is certainly tempting to imagine the monks singing praises together as they brewed for themselves and the community.

Having discovered the demand to be had at monastic estates for brewing of such quantity and frequency, it seems a well-founded claim for beer-historian Richard Unger to make, that "[i]n [monastery] institutions the first signs of a new level of beer making included using more and better equipment and the best of techniques, as well as having artisans who developed special skills to produce beer."⁷⁸ As the original Benedictine notion of work became expressed less in the general planting and harvesting crops, but instead alongside the increasingly "busy

⁷⁶ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, Appendix II: *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeienses*, 3: 111.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3: 110.

⁷⁸ Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 26. One of the most important techniques certainly worth mentioning is the addition of hops as a preservative in beer; the earliest record of its usage indeed appears at monasteries. Unger writes, "Carolingians made beer with hops. The principal uses of the plant at least in the early Middle Ages appear to have been medicinal. [...] The abbey of St. Germain-des-Près had hops brought into the monastery from a number of estates. A late ninth-century document from the abbey of St. Remi also mentions hops, apparently being moved in sizeable quantities. So hops were widely known in western Europe by the eighth century, raised at the very least in the gardens of monasteries. [...] It appears that hopped beer brewing, at least on a large scale, began in the big monasteries of the Carolingian era," *ibid.*, 53-54. See also the tithe of hops expected in Adalhard's *Directives* in Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, Appendix II, *The Customs of Corbie: Consuetudines Corbeienses*, 3: 117.

leisure" of prayer, now more highly specialized in the chore of brewing, it is indeed likely that some of the monks became preeminently talented so as to be considered artisan brewers. The original *Rule* of Benedict corroborates the supposition that artisan talents emerged at the monastery, while making note of the following:

If there are any artisans in the monastery, they are to practice their craft with all humility, but only with the abbot's permission. If one of them becomes puffed up by his skillfulness in his craft, and feels that he is conferring something on the monastery, he is to be removed from practicing his craft and not allowed to resume it unless, after manifesting his humility, he is so ordered by the abbot.⁷⁹

Thus, while the monks became the leading makers of medieval beer, the craft remained for them a moral matter, as with all actions, at least insofar as proper observance of the *Rule* was concerned. The occasional "puffed up" monk may have been suspended from the brewhouse for a time by his heedful abbot. The stipulation to an artisan's humility in the doctrine above reveals the enduring thought of Benedict as to the deeper nature of the ideal monastery: that every component of the monk's life would be justified only so long as it was appropriately conducive of a cohesive, collective, eternal holiness, accomplished for the goodness of the love of God.

A short chapter in the *Rule* of Saint Benedict on "The Tools for Good Works" explains not the keys to success in an agricultural economy, though indeed that was increasingly had at monasteries. Instead, it encourages the love of God and neighbor, adherence to the Ten Commandments, forgiveness, truthfulness, humility, chastity, attentiveness, friendship, respect for elders and love for the young, the acknowledgement of death, the renunciation of bodily

⁷⁹ RB 57:1-3.

wants, along with warnings against hatred, jealousy, envy, quarreling, arrogance, and if one has a dispute, to make peace before the sun goes down. As Benedict describes, "The workshop where we are to toil faithfully at all these tasks is the enclosure of the monastery and stability in the community."⁸⁰ The ideal way of being as modeled in the *Rule* is of a truly spiritual character; the achievements of monastic life do not belong in the temporal world. In the words of Jean Leclercq:

According to St. Benedict, monastic life is entirely disinterested; its reason for existing is to further the salvation of the monk, his search for God, and not for any practical or social end -- which, incidentally, is never even mentioned. The *conversatio* of the monk is presumed to be a *conversio* similar to St. Benedict's which entails total renunciation with the intention of pleasing God alone.⁸¹

By the Carolingian period, the monastery was a central node in the arrangement of a manorial economic system that was embossed upon the European landscape. In short, the reality of monastic brewing was rooted in a rather blurry combination of, on the one hand, the perennial pursuit of true holiness and, on the other, corporate seigneurial exploitation of the vast peasant class under the auspices of a powerful centralizing tendency of a theocratic barbarian kingship; either aspect lent itself to the effective support and growth of monastic "leisure." This predisposition of religious and thus economic centrality was one by which the monasteries amassed large stores of grain, then brewed by the monks as a component of their vocation of sacredly-privileged service to the community and to God.

⁸⁰ RB 4:78.

⁸¹ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 18-19; (*conversatio* = "a devoted way of living," *conversio* = "conversion.")

In any case, housed in a doctrine of transcendent ideals and transmitted to reality in their observances, the history of the moral and economic situations of monks always appear to have been closely related in measure. Thus their overlap also seems to have been especially susceptible to critics of any certain bent. Following out of the Carolingian period, the great splendor conferred upon the liturgy and the lifestyle of substantial economic expenditure continually practiced by prevailing monastic estates was indeed objected to by a variety of the brothers from within its tradition. Their criticisms held that such seigneurial attitudes as that of the leading monastery-network of Cluny were a vexing deviation from the authentic standard of observance of Benedict's *Rule*. The most successful and influential of these reformers were the Cistercians, whose legacy has continually shaped the monastic tradition; and this memory of moral and economic fidelity to the vocation has indeed infused in the commercial brewing of Trappist beers from within the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance order today.

The ideal of austerity in an age of productivity: the call to original observance

The reforms of the Cistercian order in 1098 and, much later, of Order of Cistercians the Strict Observance in 1664, the "Trappists" themselves, are unfortunately beyond the scope of this study. My primary aim has been to present that a confluence of medieval traditions in brewing and monasticism came to civilize European brewing on the scale of industry, achieved on the basis of Benedictine thought and its practical application, which indeed was both substantially transformative and itself transformed in the Carolingian period. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Europe, the rise of towns and increases in population and agricultural productivity led to a developing secular and commercial brewing industry of urban specialists, which indeed

subsequently eclipsed the scale and distribution of monastic production.⁸² Yet, monasteries had set the precedent of brewing at a new and unique caliber of corporate organization in a distinctly rural economy, offered a constructive example to the emerging urban brewers, and have continued to brew within their walls ever since.⁸³

With that last consideration, I have also wished to indicate that the ongoing monastic brewing done today by the Trappist order reflects the legacy of the curiously paradoxical merger of material and spiritual concerns, and that the reconciliation of this dilemma lies in the enduring legacy of Benedictine thought as expressed in an economy, the expression of which is supposed to maintain a certain spiritual primacy. To live in the world while entirely "disinterested" from it invokes a significant component of this complete Benedictine model which has been missing from this study and ought now to be included: that is, in a word, austerity. It was in this aspect that the social and moral obligations to "needful asceticism" were a major criticism of the Cistercian reform to Benedictine monasticism;⁸⁴ this remains a tenet of Trappist spirituality, evinced in its brewing in the present age, which lends to the reconciliation of different but overlapping registers in the original Benedictine concept of monastic integration into an economy: the greater spiritual ambition of the monks is embodied by their continued performance of the Divine Office and *Lectio Divinia*, principles of sustained necessity which define their brewing and give it justification as a means oriented to holiness.

⁸² Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 37-43.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁴ Phrase of Duby on the Cistercian reform; he describes, "They refused to live off rents or the labour of others. They simply owned land -- but not personal dependants, tenants, mills or tithes -- and farmed it themselves," *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 219.

In the final chapter of the *Rule*, Benedict recommends that "for anyone hastening on to the perfection of monastic life, there are the teachings of the holy Fathers, the observance of which will lead him to the very heights of perfection."⁸⁵ Specifically, Benedict prescribes reading the two major texts of John Cassian (c. 360-345), the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*. In transmitting monasticism to the West, Benedict himself had been inspired from the very origins of Christian monasticism as transmitted from the East by Cassian: that is, the ideas and practices of the Desert Fathers. By the third century, a spirit of Christian ferment had spread into the "ebullient countryside" of northern Syria and North Africa, and its radical expression took lasting hold on the Christian imagination.⁸⁶ Heralded by Saint Anthony the Great (c. 250-356), the Desert Fathers are remembered for their withdrawal into the harsh Egyptian desert in an ascetic pursuit of holiness, a severe expression of Christianity made by socially-detached, eccentric, celibate, roaming "wanderers" who owed nothing to the "world" and rejected its comforts in the name of faith, from which emerged an everlasting model of the Christian "hermit."⁸⁷ The Greek word *monachos* – meaning "lonely one" – soon became associated with such figures,⁸⁸ thus, the influence of this style of radical, secluded, ascetic expression of Christian practice – "monasticism" – emerged, gradually flowed into the West, and was regularly looked back to as a holy source of idealization. Over the centuries, these ideals of asceticism and poverty modeled on the Desert Fathers generated reforms by groups of monks compelled by a rejection of wealth, which could be, in a recurrent paradox, generated at the medieval monasteries. Indeed, by the eleventh century an incredibly contrasting material splendor had

⁸⁵ RB 73:2.

⁸⁶ Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 81.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 81; see also, Matt 6:25-34.

⁸⁸ Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 81.

reached its climax at the great monastic empire represented by Cluny, which had proliferated across Europe with hundreds of dependencies and associated houses.⁸⁹

Thus, the symbolic concept of the inhospitable desert and the heroism of enduring its physical tribulations, in which material comforts were sparse if any, yielded an understanding of spiritual freedom that for some monastic reformers became a recurrent exigency. The particular inspiration of origins in desert asceticism was basic, in particular, to the subsequent reforms of the Cistercians in the eleventh century and again to the Trappists in the seventeenth century.⁹⁰ The dilemma at the heart of this phenomenon was in the enduring link between spiritual ambition and material poverty, which, paradoxically, could yield economic success and growth for observant monasteries. The customs of the Cistercians forbade them to hoard treasure or to embellish their sanctuary, and they constantly dispelled of material surpluses in exchange for currency; as Georges Duby remarks, "[t]hus the ascetic bent was promoting economic growth; Benedictine monks of the new observance used their money basically to increase their capital. [...] Their 'granges' (*grangia*), subsidiary manorial centres on their estates, became more numerous everywhere."⁹¹ The generated capital directed to promote the Benedictine monastic model and its spiritual program found solidarity of observance in material austerity, in tandem

⁸⁹ C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 30, 70-77.

⁹⁰ Emilia Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe: 1090-1500*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 17-19; see also, Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 98-99. In the original reforms at La Trappe, a notable attachment to desert asceticism was evinced by the construction of two new chapels at the abbey in 1686, one of which was dedicated to Mary of Egypt, "a converted prostitute who withdrew into the desert and immersed herself in penitence," with an altarpiece that did not survive the French Revolution; cited in Mette Birkedal Bruun et al., "Withdrawal and Engagement in the Long Seventeenth Century: Four Case Studies," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 1, no. 2 (2014), 254-263.

⁹¹ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 212.

with the preservation of spiritual leisure. The legacy of these coinciding, occasionally-competing ideals are a notable inheritance of the Trappist order and their brewing today.

In an image, the Trappist order and its practices are a branch on a tree – that is, of the broader tradition of Benedictine monasticism, which has lived, grown, and transformed over many centuries of Western history. The Trappist brewing today, whose coming-to-be has been my inspiration for this study, specifically indicates beers brewed and sold with license granted by the International Trappist Association (ITA) to bear the label “Authentic Trappist Product” (ATP). Formed in 1998 intending to protect the Trappist name from commercial appropriation in that “The monastic life appeals to the imagination of many producers,” the ITA today unites twenty abbeys, chiefly in Belgium and the Netherlands, with one each in France, Spain, Austria, Italy, England, and the United States – thirteen of which brew beer.⁹² In order to obtain the brown, hexagonal label of “ATP,” these particular beers are reported to have met three strict criteria of provenance; they are described today by the ITA as follows: 1.) All products must be made within the immediate surroundings of the abbey; 2.) Production must be carried out under the supervision of the monks or nuns; 3.) Profits should be intended for the needs of the monastic community, for purposes of solidarity within the Trappist Order, or for development projects and charitable works. After an abbey has submitted its beer for approval, a procedure must be followed whereby a dossier is compiled describing how that Trappist community is involved in

⁹² International Trappist Association, <https://www.trappist.be/en/about-ita/atp-label> (accessed November 5, 2019). For a fascinating analysis of the issue of the "appeal" of monastic life, with great relevance to this study on Trappist beer today, see Isabelle Jonveaux, “Bière belge et image monastique,” *Ethnologie française* 2011/1 (Vol. 41), p. 117-130, (“Belgian beer and monastic imagery: an example of a charismatic economy,” translation from French to English available from Cadenza Academic Translations), https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_ETHN_111_0117--belgian-beer-and-monastic-imagery.htm.

work and management, as well as information on methods of production, quality control, channels of distribution, and the structures and character of external communication. After a visit from an ITA board member to the producing abbey to audit and ensure the meeting of label-criteria and traceability of the beer, only then will a vote be held within the ITA to award the beer the ATP label, which thereupon grants the license of use for five years before a renewal is required.⁹³

In short, this ATP-labeled beer is created under a system of extensive internal scrutiny by the order for the proclaimed purpose, not to produce beer of quality in itself, but as a means to maintain the order's self-sufficiency in promotion of the overall lifestyle and intentions held in their communities. The said Trappist lifestyle, then – promoted and maintained by measures of self-sufficiency – continues on, itself serving as the means toward an existence based on the original Benedictine principle of self-sufficiency, indeed as expressed at the original monasteries and renewed by the medieval Cistercian tradition.⁹⁴ This is an integral component to the entire performance of the community's intentions, rooted all in the endurance of an idea and wherewith a tradition to which these individuals collectively dedicate their faith – that is, the intention to seek and commune with God. It is indeed the case that “intention” here is not an unspoken, ambiguous, or implicit agreement correlating among disparate groups of people, but rather an explicitly defined set of precepts prescribing the existence for and within the Trappist

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ RB 2:35-36, 48:8. Historian of the Cistercian order Jamroziak corroborates, “[...] the link between poverty and simplicity was a key element of the original monastic programme and the economic practices of the early Cistercians were based on self-sufficiency and independence from the ‘feudal’ world; and the economic success of the Cistercian monasteries evident by the second half of the twelfth century was ‘an accidental by-product’ of self-sufficiency,” *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe*, 183.

community, based on doctrine and behavioral structures inherited and elaborated over centuries of history and human experience.

I must finally summarize what has been the inevitably inadequate proceeding of all that has constituted my study, now at breakneck pace. Perhaps the original germ of the practice of prayerful, institutionalized Christian brewing was in the original Irish monasticism of Saint Columbanus. However, the legacy of regular monastic brewing at an industrial level is a legacy of the Carolingian age. The meaning of monastic "leisure" transformed significantly with the theocratic renovations of Aachen. Monastic bake-and-brewhouses became the concentrated locus of the monks' manual labor. The preservation of their sacredly-privileged role in the community supported both their liturgical and studious devotions along with a newly coinciding caliber of brewing developed to supply the estate. Great quantities of resources from the manorial economy to which these monastic estates belonged generated substantial amounts of not only beer, but of wealth and feudal power. Calls for reforms based on measures of austerity and fidelity to observance of the original *Rule* of Benedict gave new shape to the monastic economy of the Cistercians in the performance of self-sufficiency. Thus, solidarity in the form of capital committed to the order's preservation of prayerful leisure in the form of the Divine Office and the *Lectio Divina*, accomplished while maintaining the principles of manual labor and material austerity, is a transmission of Benedictine thought reflected by the Trappist beers produced today.

It is a total disservice to arrive at the modern Trappist order without a respectively appropriate historical discussion. The history of the order and, indeed, the history of its own brewing are tremendously demanding of further exploration. The pursuit of the perfection of monastic life into modernity is a powerful story of exodus. A complete narrative of the

destruction and rebuilding of monastic breweries over the course of the past three centuries is in need of telling exactly so as to evince the remarkable indefatigability of the call to the monastic vocation. The life of a monk seems nevertheless to endure in the light of something perhaps simply ineffable, as reflected by the memorable Cistercian, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux:

And now someone may perhaps ask me what it is like to enjoy the Word. And I shall answer him: “Seek out, rather, someone who has had the experience and ask him. For if it had been given to me, even to such as me, to have that experience, do you think that I could express the inexpressible?” Hearken to the Apostle St. Paul who did have this experience: “For whether we be transported in mind, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you.” (2 Cor 5.13) In other words: “It is very different when I am alone with God, and when I am with you. What takes place between God and me, I can feel, but not express; when with you, on the contrary, I try to speak in a way that you will understand.” Oh you who are anxious to learn what it is to enjoy the Word, prepare not your ear but your soul; for it is grace that teaches it and not language. This secret remains hidden from the wise and the cautious, and is revealed to the little ones. Yes, my brothers, it is great, it is great and sublime, the virtue of humility which obtains the reality of what cannot be taught. It alone is worthy to receive from the Word and to conceive through the Word what it cannot explain in words. And why is that? Surely not because it deserves it but because such is the will of Him who is the Father of the Word, the bridegroom of the soul, Jesus Christ the Lord who is God blessed above all for ever and ever. Amen.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ From the last of Bernard's completed sermons on the Song of Songs, 85.14, quoted in Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 268-269.

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