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In search of the perfect wilderness. Anchoritism in Cistercian art and spirituality

At the turn of the 12th century, a reform of monastic life, hitherto regulated by the rule of St. Benedict, was initiated. The change was the work of a new community. The Cistercian Order implemented a unique observance of the rule and became one of the most important European orders in religious and cultural life. The rule followed by the Cistercians assumed cenobitic as opposed to eremitic life. However, looking at documents concerning Cistercian spirituality and their works of art, we may conclude that retreating to a secluded place and an eremitic streak have always been present and laid foundations for their congregations. This has already been the subject of research which led to several publications. In his panorama of Cistercian architecture in the British Isles, Richard Ferguson refers to their heritage as "architecture of solitude."[1] The question of isolation and retreat to the desert appears in Georges Duby's work on the influence of St. Bernard on Cistercian art. The author traces Cistercian anchoritism back to the *contemptus mundi* approach present in Christianity since it inception. He emphasises the significance of spiritual struggle, one which is waged by Cistercians not alone, but in a community. He interprets isolated locations of Cistercian monasteries and defines their nature as *claustrum et eremum*.[2] Terryl Kinder stresses certain aspects of solitude and isolation in Cistercian architecture and calls it "architecture of contemplation."[3] Janet Burton and Julie Krery noticed and emphasised the departure of Robert of Molesme and his companions to a new place of practising life and contemplation in the community.[4] They also captured

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[1]   R. Fergusson, *Architecture of solitide. Cistercian abbeys in twelfth century England*, Princeton, NJ 1984, *passim*.
[2]   G. Duby, *Saint Bernard. L'art cistercien*, Paris 1979, p. 71–100.
[3]   T. Kinder, *Cistercian Europe. Architecture of contemplation*, Grand Rapids 2002, *passim*.
[4]   J. Burton, J. Kerry, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 2011, p. 9–20.

the moment when Cistercian monks settled in new regions and the saw choice of the location for the monastery as a natural consequence of the original anchoritic attitude. Interpreting the Bernardine vision of salvation, Mette Bruun described the Cistercian monastery as *paradisus claustralis* remaining in opposition to the surrounding world.[5] Emilia Jamroziak devoted the first chapter of her monograph of the Cistercian Order in the Middle Ages to the early days of the order and its clear eremitic tendency.[6] Nevertheless, an exhaustive study of the relationship between the eremitic lifestyle of the White Monks and the art which they created is still missing. The present article does not aspire to answer all questions arising from research on Cistercian anchoritism. Its purpose is rather to draw certain lines which would point other studies in relevant directions.

Robert of Molesme and its retreat to the hermitage of "Cistercium"

In 1098, when a group of monks led by Robert was leaving the monastery in Molesme, no one could imagine that this event would become a stimulus for the emergence of a powerful monastic movement that would spread all over what was then the Latin world. First, however, Robert and his people appeared before the Archbishop of Lyon and pontifical legate. They complained about low standards of observance in their own abbey and permission to leave their home monastery, and, having received it, set on a journey to the Châlon diocese (near Dijon) to set up a new community in a secluded location far from any human settlement. In the early years it was called the *Novum Monasterium*, but later the name Cîteaux stuck.[7]

This departure in search of better living conditions according to the rule of St. Benedict could already be treated as the foundation of a new order. Still, even more important was to address the question how the Cistercians themselves interpreted that event. A primary source to interpret their original motivation

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[5]   M. B. Bruun, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the landscape of salvation*, [in:] *A companion to Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. B. P. McGuire, Leiden–Boston 2011.

[6]   E. Jamroziak, *The Cistercian order in Medieval Europe 1090–1500*, London–New York 2013, p. 13–42.

[7]   J. Burton, J. Kerry, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, op. cit., p. 10.

is *Exordium parvum*.[8] In its first article, we only find an account of Robert's visit to Hugh of Die, Archbishop of Lyon and pontifical legate. However, article three reveals a number of motives and attitudes of the original group. It says that the monks without delay arrived at the hermitage (*ad eremum*) called the *Cistercium*. Due to thorny thicket and wild animals the place was unfit for a human dwelling. Surprisingly, having arrived there, inspired by deep religious motives, they concluded that the environment was most suitable for living a life as prescribed by the Gospel, as not only for its seclusion but also the abundance of thorny bushes it was difficult to discover and inaccessible to outsiders. So it became the place in which they chose to build their monastery, empowered by the pontifical legate. An important message contained in the *Exordium* is the group's motivation. The monks, inspired by the divine grace, exposed the breach of the rule of St. Benedict in their home monastery; they were opposed to such practices, and seeing themselves as willing to faithfully serve the monastic rule and escape the perpetrations, they decided to leave in order to establish their own congregation. Fully following the rule was the very reason they arrived at the hermitage.

Which salient characteristics of the story does the *Exordium* emphasize? First and foremost, it underlines the departure from has hitherto been the fabric of their life; the act of leaving takes place at the consent of the pontifical legate, i.e. in agreement with the community of the Church. The departure entails abandoning monastic civilization to embrace the desolation and wilderness. The emptiness and wilderness, an non-civilised area, are made even more prominent by the image of thorny bushes and wild animals. The third characteristic is the motivation for the departure and looking for a new place. It is consists in obedience to the rule. All these traits can be described as Robert's spiritual gift as a founder or, in a broader sense, the gift of the original founding group.

Vita Prima sancti Bernardi is another important source. What I am referring to now is the seventh chapter of the first book by Wilhelm of Saint Thierry.[9] The author writes of the hermitage as a place where monks follow in the footsteps of their fathers, i.e. Egyptian monks. He compares the valley in which they lead their lives in isolation to the cave which held St. Benedict, found by shepherds. Wilhelm describes those who follow the path of their predecessors as the ones who live in perfect isolation, hailing them as the crown of solitude. For them

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[8] *Exordium parvum*, published by C. Noschitzka, "Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis" 6 (1950), p. 6–22.

[9] Guillemus sancti Theodorici abbas, *Sancti Bernardi vita et res gestae*, [in:] *Patrologia latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 185, col. 245–248.

the valley became the desert. The same hagiograpby described Clairvaux as an erstwhile den of thieves which had been converted by the monks into God's temple and house of prayer. The document gives prominence to the monks' awareness of their own roots and beginnings. References to Egyptian anchoritism and to the life of young St. Benedict seems to substantiate the validity of the choice made first by Robert and his people, and then by the group who founded Clairvaux. Astoundingly, a reversed evangelical contradiction was used in the description of Clairvaux. One should mention here the episode in which Jesus cleanses the temple, contained in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48) and from the gospel of John (J 2:13–22). Jesus accused the merchants of turning the Jerusalem temple and house of prayer into a den of robbers. The Cistercian monks of Clairvaux, i.e. the first group following the Robert's founding group, transformed wild backwoods, which could have well served as a den of robbers, into a house of prayer, thus restoring the harmony that had been disturbed.

Two most important features of those documents stress the eremitic approach. The first one concerns the departure from civilization and declining normal support, assistance and security. The attitude is accentuated by the image of a place overgrown with thorns, a den of robbers, and wildlife. Another trait is the quest for original piety and faithfulness. The departure is not an end to itself. Its purpose is staying faithful to the rule and searching for God. This is why the quest required transforming what had previously been a desert [in Polish: *puszcza* = wilderness, cf. Polish *pustynia* = desert].

Eremitic architecture or architecture in a hermitage

The first striking issue of the reception of hermitic thought and attitude in Cistercian art is the problem of the shape of the congregation. Has the anchorite type of the Cistercian church ever been present? What spatial type of the congregation church was adopted by Cistercian anchoritism? Finding answers to these questions is extremely difficult. On the one hand, we should consider the unusual pluralism of spatial types of White Monk's churches, captured and perfectly ordered by Matthias Untermann.[10] On the other hand, one should also

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[10] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis. Die mittelalterliche Baukunst der Zisterzienser*, München–Berlin 2001, *passim*.

take into account the evolution of Cistercian architecture traced by Janet Burton and Julie Kerry.[11] A tempting solution would be to return to the early days of the community and to their original establishments in Burgundy, i.e. back to the first decades of the 12th century, and to look at the churches erected at that time. What would we find there? First Cistercian churches took a distinctive shape: three-aisle basilicas with a transept, chapels attached to eastern walls of transept and an elongated, rectangular presbytery, confined with a straight wall. Clairvaux II, the original Pontigny church, reconstructed as a basilica with a low transept and a presbytery culminating with a straight wall, as well as Fontenay (fig. 1), according to latest research by Stuart Harisson built in 1140–1160, and also Hautrive, built in 1138–1162–1250, set a certain benchmark for a building designed for contemplation.[12] This type of churches were termed "Bernardine plan churches." The term is used by Mathias Untermann.[13] It caught the attention of Roberto Cassanelli, who derives it from the architectural thinking in terms of a module. In fact, he points out that Cistercian churches were built on a layout designed *ad quadratum*. This, as a consequence, led to the creation of the Bernardine plan. A similar outline was described by Villard de Honecourt as the Cistercian plan.[14]

The concept of a cruciform church, a working name we may use to describe the churches mentioned above, was continued in the second generation of Cistercian temples, which Untermann says were built in the years 1145–1180. They include the church in Eberbach, consecrated in 1186, in Fossanova (fig. 2–3), consecrated in 1208, building commenced in 1171/72.[15] A third generation of cruciform churches is represented by the church in Casamari (consecrated in 1217), the Tuscan San Galgano (consecrated probably in 1288), Arabona near Chieti, whose construction started in 1208, and Haina on the Rhine, which was consecrated in 1224.[16] This group is should include the original (built ca. 1280) church in Lubiąż and four churches established as Morimond colonies in Lesser Poland, namely in Jędrzejów (fig. 4; consecrated in 1210), in Koprzywnica (fig. 5–6; built

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[11] J. Burton, J. Kerry, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, op. cit., p. 75–81.

[12] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 306–312; S. Harisson, *Dating the abbey church of Fontenay. A reassesment of the evidence*, "Citeaux. Commentarii Cistercienses" 61 (2010) no. 2–4, p. 99–124.

[13] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., *passim*.

[14] R. Cassanelli, *Saint Bernard, a builder? The problem with the "Bernardin plan"*, [in:] *The Cistercian arts. From 12th to the 21st Century*, eds. T. N. Kinder, R. Cassanelli, Montreal–London 2014, p. 76.

[15] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 317–377.

[16] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 481–487.

in the 1st third of the 13th century), in Wąchock (fig. 7–8; built in the 2nd quarter of the 13th century) and in Sulejów (fig. 9–10; consecrated in 1232) and in Bélapát-falva, Hungary (built before 1241) alike, albeit considered by M. Untermann as churches of reduced Bernardine plan.[17] The tradition of the plan continued in the churches in Mogiła, consecrated in 1266 and in Rudy Wielkie, completed in the early 14th century.[18]

Such review, however, should be undertaken with circumspection, as the tendency to build churches according to the Bernardine, cross-shaped or cross-formed layout proves only one of several architectural trends in Cistercian architecture of the 12th and 13th century, and, more importantly, neither the dominant one nor associated with the most exquisite architectural accomplishments. Still, only this form of the church building appeared to be accepted as fully compliant with the ideas of anchoritism. What is the source of this conviction? An answer to this question could be that such churches were deemed suitable for hermits, as they were characterised by austerity, simplicity and restraint, as well as the ascetic renunciation of ornaments. Besides, the Cistercian requirements concerning the simplicity of furnishings were presented in *Exordium parvum*.

The issue of the Cistercian church, in particular the so-called "Bernardine" plan, became the subject of research by many scholars. Ernst Badstübner traced the plan and the pointed vault of the Fontenay church back to the Saint Lazaire Cathedral in Autun.[19] Richard Ferguson located the origins of the cruciform plan in Burgundy and found it located within the zone of direct impact of the Cluniac architecture.[20] According to Fergusson, this type of layout is a reduction of the Burgundian church building of the Cluniac congregation. Roberto Cassanelli claimed that Cistercian churches in the times of St. Bernard were built on the basis of the *ad quadratum* module. Stressing the precedence of the plans with rectangular presbytery and chapels on the arms of the transepts in Clairvaux II and Fontenay, he came to the conclusion that the hypothesis of drawing inspiration

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[17] M. Unterman, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 499–501; E. Łużyniecka, Z. Świechowski, R. Kunkel, *Architektura opactw cysterskich. Małopolskie filie Morimond*, Wrocław 2008, p. 57–199; Z. Świechowski, *Katalog architektury romańskiej w Polsce*, Warszawa 2009, p. 129–142, 175–190, 492–511, 588–605.

[18] M. Unterman, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., *passim*; E. Łużyniecka, *Architekturaklasztorów cysterskich. Filie lubiąskie i inne cenobia śląskie*, Wrocław 2002, p. 108–125, 168–181.

[19] E. Badstübner, *Kirchen der Mönche. Die Baukunst der Reformorden im Mittelalter*, Wien 1980, p. 207.

[20] R. Fergusson, *Architecture of solitude…*, op. cit., p. 13–14.

from St. Bernard for such plans is hard to verify.[21] It transpires, however, that there was a spatial type of the church with a rectangular presbytery, albeit surrounded with an ambulatory – Morimond (1180/90 – 1220/30, consecrated 1253), Ebrach (1200–1252), Ridaghshausen (1216–1240/50), Lubiąż (ca. 1300).[22] At this point a question appears whether this type of church carries any reference to the Cistercian anchoritic attitude? What is the link between the original Burgundian plans and Cistercian churches with an absydial enclosure in German-speaking regions (Altzella, consecrated 1198 Sittich/Stiĉna, between 1180 and 1200), Spain (Valbuena, after 1143, Huerta, commenced in 1179), Aquitaine (Flaran, 3rd quarter of the 12th century) or Italy (Faleri, 4th quarter of the 12th century)[23]? What is the relationship between Burgundian concepts and churches with a cathedral presbytery with multi-lateral ambulatory and a ring of chapels – Orscamp in Picardy, Veruela, Poblet in Catalonia, built in 1140–1180, Portuguese Alcobaça, French Vaucelle and Longpont, Royaumont, Swedish Varhem or Altenberg on Rhine erected in the period from 1180 to 1240[24]? Would an assertion that such churches are an effect of the departure from original ideas and neophyte zeal be an adequate explanation for the origin of those elaborate structures? Does everything need to boil down to abandoning anchoritism as a whim removed from reality? The answer seems to be negative, as anchoritism was still manifested in various ways of life and spiritual practices of Cistercians. This attitude involved searching for different spatial forms for monastic churches depending on local architectural tradition. It is thus unreasonable to ascribe only one architectonic formula to anchoritism. Considering the richness of the form of Cistercian churches, one should also question the simplicity and austerity in their narrow sense as a fundamental virtue of Cistercian architecture. What would then be such fundamental value?

When posed with such problem, we may use the assistance of distinguished researchers of the Cistercian culture. For example, Terryl Kinder noticed that subtly diffused light enlivened the interior of a Cistercian church. What she particularly had in mind was the first generation of churches.[25] The quality of the interior created suitable conditions for contemplation. Meanwhile, Megan Cassidy claimed that the interior of Cistercian churches constituted a kind of vision.

[21] R. Cassanelli, *Saint Bernard, a builder?…*, op. cit., p. 75–78.
[22] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 451–458.
[23] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 451–458.
[24] M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis…*, op. cit., p. 451–458.
[25] T. Kinder, *Cistercian Europe…*, op. cit., p. 219, 385–386.

Its background was the structure and the space within an east-facing church. The vision was flooded with light and carried many meanings. What was important for members of the community is that everybody should understand the vision. Its basic content was eschatological fulfilment, i.e. heaven, salvation and the view of the divine image. This luminous vision was therefore a consistent extension of the project of the spirituality of "grey monks."[26] This kind of light illuminates e.g. in the interior of the Fontenay church. After all, light organizes contemplative space in Cistercian churches in Lubiąż, Ebrach or Altenberg. It symbolizes the presence of the supernatural, encourages concentration, contemplation and search. Maybe it is searching that constitutes the essence of anchoritism. The space within the Cistercian church was then the space of spiritual quest. What was the purpose of such quest?

The book and the spiritual warfare

A miniature on sheet 1r of the Cîteaux Codex – *Commentarii in Danielem* by St. Hieronymus (fig. 11; Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale 132) demonstrates a symptomatic situation of deep significance. It shows St. Hieronymus, the author of the commentary, sitting on the throne and handing the Codex over to two pious women.[27] The act of handing in a book is not new, as it has been the subject of many excellent presentations in the Carolingian and Ottonian art of miniature; however, in the context of the Cistercian book it is paradigmatic to the eremitic movement – note that the commentary was made for the Citeaux community in the 1st third of the 12th century. For Hieronymus, offering the book is placed within an enormous trend of Middle-eastern and Mediterranean eremitic tradition. This should not come as a surprise, for this great philologist and exegete had an eremitic episode in his life. However, it seems rather insignificant in the context of the miniature. It is the book itself that is crucial. The offered book appears to be the hermit's basic tool, his distinguishing mark and a basic means of communication. The book as then central to anchoritic life, although this conclusion has not been so far been sufficiently highlighted. To reveal the significance of the book in the Cistercian life, one simply has to carefully read

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[26] M. Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic spaces and their meanings. Thirteen century English Cistercian monasteries*, Turnhaut 2001, p. 74–75.

[27] Y. Zaluska, *L'enluminures et les scriptorium de Cîteaux au XIIe siècle*, Cîteaux 1989, p. 215–217.

and analyse in the entire context but one sentence of *Apologiae ad Gulielmum* by St. Bernard: *Caeterum in claustris coram legentibus fratribus quid facit illa ridicula monstruositas, mira quaedam deformis formositas, ac formosa deformitas?* (*Apologia ad Gulielmum*, XII, 29).[28] This sentence expresses two traits of anchoritism. The first one is reading, or more precisely reading the Bible with emphasis on the monk's personal experience of the Word, i.e. *lectio divina*, and mastering a system of instructions and imperatives of inner life, referred to in literature as monastic tropology.[29] Another one is the creation of external conditions which would prove conducive to such reading. The presence of the latter condition seems to substantiate St. Bernard's objection to the monstrosity, shapelessness and inappropriateness of monastic art, as expressed by his Apologiae ad Guglielmum.[30] However, this subject is beyond the main focus of present discussion and should become the object of other studies.

One should also note the specifically monastic, strongly individualistic method of reading the Bible. This method could be referred to as the anchorite way. The reason for this is that it corresponds in many ways to the way in which spirituality was practiced by hermits; it was called *ruminatio*, i.e. "chewing". Hermits chose a passage of text: a word, a sentence or a set of sentences, and meditated ("ruminated") on it, memorised it, attempting to uncover the meaning, looking for what they called spiritual nourishment. Little wonder that not only the Bible, but also the patristic commentaries on the Bible – by authors such as St. Hieronymus, St. George the Great or Cassian – were the object of their meditation. The above theologians reflected on the act of reading and laid foundations for the mediaeval practice of *lectio divina*.[31] Today they are considered the creators of the monastic way of reading the Bible. The reading bore fruit in a distinctive type of mediaeval exegesis, i.e. monastic exegesis, lacking in later orderliness and cursoriness, oriented towards anthological selection and personal needs of the reader.[32]

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[28] S. Bernardus, *Apologia ad Gulielmum abbatem*, [in:] *Patrologia latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 182, col. 915D–916A.

[29] G. Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible en occident médievale XIIe–XIVe siècle*, Paris 1999, p. 86.

[30] S. Bernardus, *Apologia ad Gulielmum abbatem*, op. cit., col. 914B–916B.

[31] D. Robertson, *Lectio Divina. The Medieval experience of reading*, Gollegeville, Minnesota 2011, p. 63–64, 77–81, 82–88.

[32] G. Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible…*, op. cit., p. 76–91; M. Casey, *The monastic art of Lectio Divina*, [in:] *The Cistercian arts…*, op. cit., p. 215–222.

Please note that this kind of reading is very personal, inward-oriented and requires that the reader is alone. As such it offers unique experience, which is expressed by the miniature, a paradigmatic work. Specifically, in the codex, in Hieronymus's commentary to the Book of Daniel (fig. 12; Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale 132) on sheet 2v, initial I (*n tertio regni*) we find a miniature depicting Daniel troubled by two lions.[33] This image of Daniel, threatened and crying out to God, is the prototype of a monk grappling with the reading of the Scriptures and subjected to spiritual distress. The reading monk, in the act of *lectio divina*, is placed in a sort of spiritual desert, devoid of any spiritual or material support. The idea of the desert is expressed by Bernardine postulates calling for the removal of ornaments and ambiguous symbols from the church space, contained in *Apologia ad Gulielmum*.[34] The miniatures in the Citeaux Codexes define the situation even more deeply and clearly. The opening initial of the codex – Volume 1 of *Moralia in Iob* by St. George the Great (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 168), R(*everendissimo*) 4v contains the depiction of a man piercing the body of a dragon with a spear.[35] Initial Q(*uamvis annes*) (fig. 13; Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 173) on sheet 29r *Moralia in Iob* by St. George shows an image of a man tearing apart a lion's maw.[36] Initial Q(*ui textus*) on sheet 52r of the 2nd volume of *Moralia* (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 168) presents a man attacked by a monster and defending himself with an axe.[37] All these miniatures reveal a conflict of a person with evil in a visible form. This is spiritual warfare, fought personally, individually and in the absence of any resources, support or help by a monk in his own spiritual life. Although the background of this fight has its own the community, the monk struggles with the reality of external evil, but the very essence of the spiritual conflict is the confrontation with negative tendencies, pursuits and streaks in his personality and his inner self. Meditating and "ruminating" on the Word of God will enable the monk to face his own elements and tendencies within himself. It is the most salient as well as the innermost part of what we call the Cistercian anchoritism.

Presumably the most accurate, relevant and pertinent presentation of the spiritual warfare of a Cistercian monk whose life is filled with meditating on the Word and spiritual struggle is a set of images in initial A(*d te levavi*) in a Cistercian

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[33] Y. Zaluska, *L'enluminures et les scriptorium de Cîteaux…*, op. cit., p. 215–217, fig. 14.

[34] S. Bernardus, *Apologia ad Gulielmum abbatem*, op. cit., col. 915B–916B.

[35] Y. Zaluska, *L'enluminures et les scriptorium de Cîteaux…*, op. cit., p. 200–203, fig. 86.

[36] Y. Zaluska, *L'enluminures et les scriptorium de Cîteaux…*, op. cit., p. 203–204, fig. 95.

[37] Y. Zaluska, *L'enluminures et les scriptorium de Cîteaux…*, op. cit., p. 200–201, fig. 88.

gradual from Kamieniec (Wrocław University Library, IF 411).[38] It shows a man fighting a beast which is devouring him, a singing David accompanied by a harp and a monk in his praying posture.

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What is then the perfect Cistercian wilderness referred to in the title? Is it the secluded location of the monastery? Is it the selected architectural type of the church building? Having analysed the selected examples of architecture and miniature art, we may conclude that such wilderness and desert is the internal, personal situation of the monk struggling in the face of the Word he meditates upon, alone with his inner weakness. Anything else – the architecture, the seclusion, a book with its illuminations – only help create conditions and reveal, visualise what really happens in the wilderness – in the desert within.

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1. M. Untermann, *Forma ordinis. Die mittelalterliche Baukunst der Zisterzienser*, München–Berlin 2001, fig. 138, 195, 196 [Figures 1–3].
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3. Bibliothèque Municipale, Dijon [Figures 11–13].

Abstract

The anchoretic trend in Cistercian spirituality has always been the subject of many studies. Cistercian anchoritism has been analysed by researchers such as George Duby, Terryl Kinder, Janet Burton and Julie Krery, Mette Bruun and Emilia Jamroziak. *Exordium parvum* and *Vita Sancti Bernardi* are basic sources containing key information on the origins of the Cistercian order. They describe the departure of Robert of Molesme and his group as a journey to the wilderness (*ad eremum*) in order to find better conditions for practising the rule of St. Benedict and following forefathers – Egyptian monks. Clairvaux II, Pontigny and Fontenay – first Burgundian churches of the Cistercians took form of a three-nave basilica with a transept (1130–1160). The temples were supposed to provide the best setting for contemplation. The so-called "Bernardine plan" was applied in the second generation of Cistercian churches, e.g. Fossanova, San Galgano, Casamari, Arabona, Haina (1148–1180). However, the plan was not the only architectural solution concerning Cistercian churches. There were also transept churches containing a presbytery culminated with a straight wall, surrounded with an ambulatory: Morimond, Ebrach, Ridaghshausen, Lubiąż; churches with an apsidal enclosure: Altzella, Sittich/Stična,Valbuena, Huerta, Floran, Faleri or churches with multi-sided cathedral presbytery with an ambulatory and a circle of chapels: Ourscamp, Veruela, Poblet in the period from 1140 to 1180, Alcobaça, Vaucelle, Longpont, Royaumont, Varhem or Altenberg in the period from 1180 to 1240. Terryl Kinder and Megan Cassidy noticed the key factor shaping the significance of the Cistercian church space – the light. An important aspect of anchoritism is *lectio divina*, in which a monk finds himself in a kind of spiritual desert, facing the Word on his own. A consequence of such attitude in spiritual warfare as expressed in a number of miniatures depicting human struggle with a threatening beast in Cistercian codexes – *Commantarii in Danielem* by St. Hieronymus (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale 132), *Moralia In Iob* by St. Gregory the Great (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 168), (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 173). An exceptional message is found in the initial A(*d te levavi*) on a Cistercian gradual from Kamieniec (Wrocław University Library, IF 411), presenting the biblical figure David playing music and a kneeling monk with his arms raised.

Keywords

Abstrakt

**W poszukiwaniu doskonalej puszczy. Anachoretyzm w duchowości i sztuce cystersów**

Nurt anachorecki w duchowości cysterskiej był przedmiotem rozważań wielu badaczy. Cysterskiemu pustelnictwu uwagę poświecili George Duby, Terryl Kinder, Janet Burton i Julie Krery, Mette Bruun i Emilia Jamroziak. Podstawowymi źródłami do odczytania początków zakony cysterskiego są *Exordium parvum* oraz *Vita Sancti Bernardi*. Opisują one odejście Roberta z Molesme i jego grupy jako udanie się na pustynię (*ad eremum*) w celu znalezienia lepszych warunków wiernego praktykowania reguły św. Benedykta i naśladowania ojców – mnichów egipskich. Pierwsze, burgundzkie świątynie cystersów – Clairvaux II, Pontigny, Fontenay, przybierały formę trójnawowej bazyliki z transeptem (1130–1160). One miały ustanawiać kształt świątyni najlepiej sprzyjający kontemplacji. Plan, zwany roboczo bernardyńskim, stosowany był w drugiej generacji świątyń cysterskich – Fossanova, San Galgano, Casamari, Arabona, Haina (1148–1180). Jednakże plan ten nie był jedynym architektonicznym rozwiązaniem cysterskim. Pojawiły się również kościoły transeptowe z prostym zamknięciem prezbiterium okalającym obejście – Morimond, Ebrach, Ridaghshausen, Lubiąż, kościoły z zamknięciem absydialnym – Altzella, Sittich/Stiĉna,Valbuena, Huerta, Floran, Faleri, czy kościoły o wielobocznym prezbiterium katedralnym z obejściem i wieńcem kaplic – Ourscamp, Veruela, Poblet w okresie 1140–1180, Alcobaça, Vaucelle, Longpont, Royaumont, Varhem czy Altenbergu w okresie 1180–1240. Terryl Kinder i Megan Cassidy dostrzegły zasadniczy czynnik kształtujący znaczenie cysterskiej przestrzeni kościelnej – światło. Ważnym aspektem anachoretyzmu jest *lectio divina*, w którym mnich znajduje się na swego rodzaju pustyni duchowej, stając sam na sam wobec Słowa. Konsekwencją tej postawy jest walka duchowa wyrażana w szeregu miniatur ukazujących zmaganie człowieka z zagrażającą bestią w kodeksach cysterskich – *Commantarii in Danielem* św. Hieronima (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale 132), *Moralia In Iob* św. Grzegorza Wielkiego (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 168), (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 173). Wyjątkową treść niesie inicjał A(*d te levavi*) cysterskiego graduału z Kamieńca (Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka IF 411), który przedstawia scenę walki, muzykującego Dawida oraz klęczącego i wznoszącego ręce mnicha.

Słowa kluczowe

cystersi, duchowość cysterska, architektura cysterska, plan bernardyński, pustelnia, anachoretyzm, lectio divina, walka duchowa, światło w architekturze, mistyka światła, kontemplacja
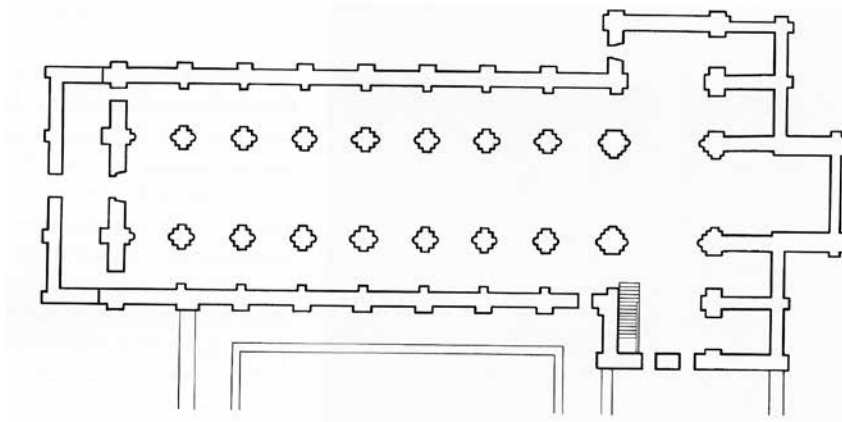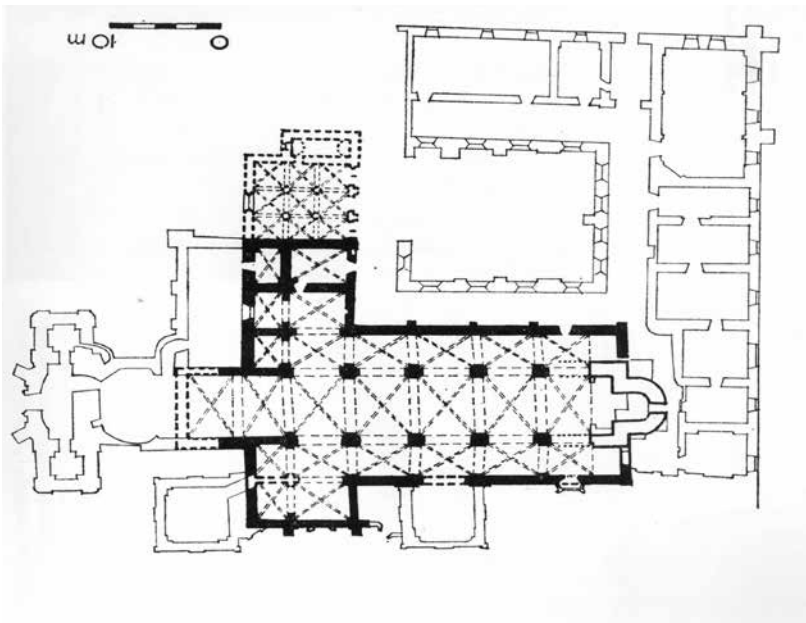
1. Fontenay, abbey church, plan, 1140–1160
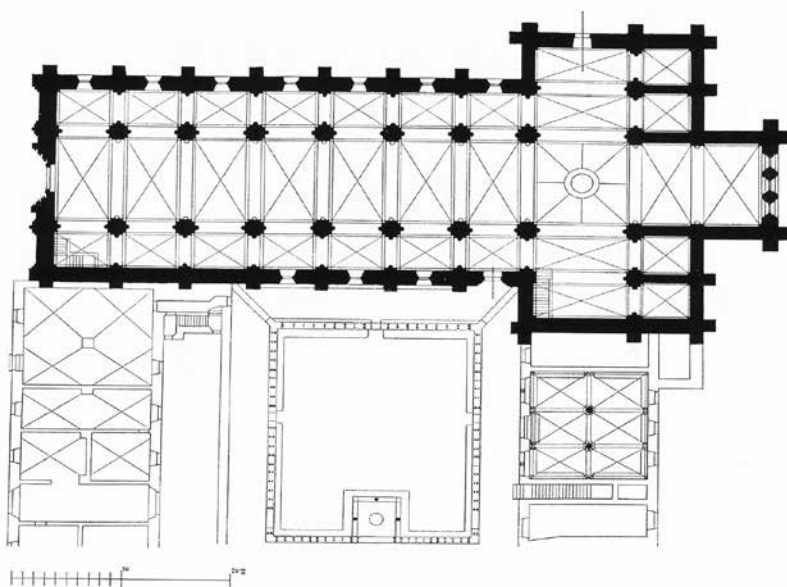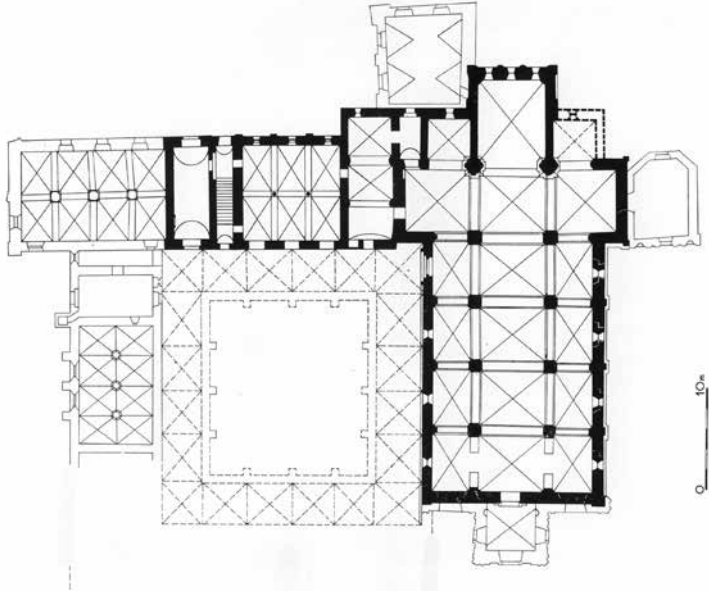

2. Fossanova, abbey church, central nave

3. Fossanova, abbey church, plan

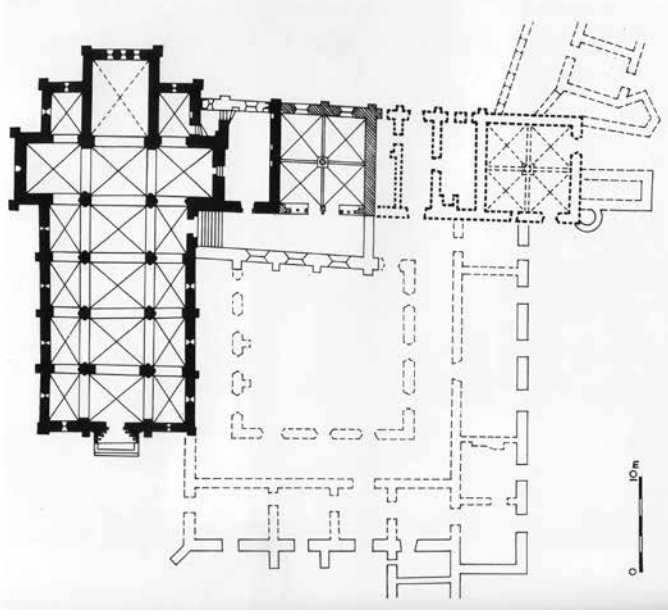4. Jędrzejów, Cistercian abbey church, plan

6. Koprzywnica, Cistercian abbey church, plan
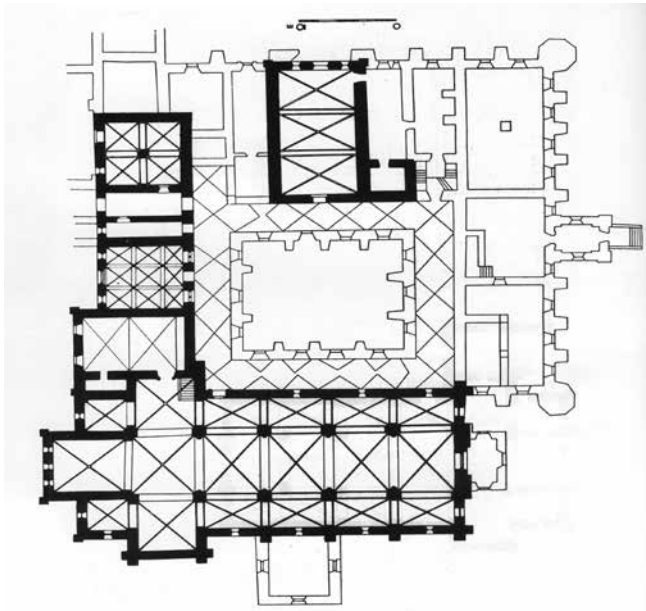

5. Koprzywnica, Cistercian abbey church

8. Wąchock, Cistercian abbey church, plan

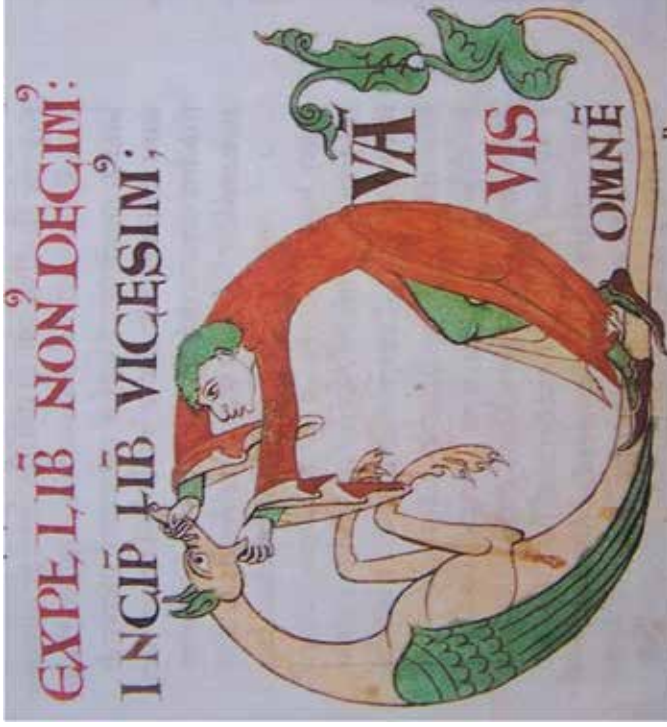7. Wąchock, Cistercian abbey church

9. Sulejów, Cistercian abbey church

10. Sulejów, Cistercian abbey church, plan

12. *Commentarii in Danielem* by St. Hieronymus
(Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale 132) I (*n tertio regni*) 2v,
Daniel in the lions' cave

11. *Commentarii in Danielem* by St. Hieronymus, Cîteaux
(Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale 132), 1r,
Hieronymus presenting a book

13. *Moralia in Iob* by St. Hieronymus, initial (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 173) Q(*uamvis annes*) 29 r, a man fighting a monster