

## THE MAURIST CORRESPONDENCE OF ABBOT ROBERT BOOTZ OF HIMMEROD

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THE reformed Benedictine congregation of St. Maur had its origin in France about the year 1613.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the 200 years of its existence it had some amazing achievements to its credit. The strict observance of the rule of St. Benedict brought in its train a late blossoming of the monastic life; the stress laid on the promotion of learning and study calls to mind the great days of Benedictine cultural achievement. The members of the Order received an excellent ascetic and professional training which fitted a not inconsiderable number of them for imperishable performances in the field of learning. In addition to theology the Maurists turned their attention to secular history and became founders of important subsidiary historical sciences (Diplomatic, Palaeography, Chronology). Men like Mabillon—named by his contemporaries the “Prince of Scholars”—d’Achéry, Tarisse, Durand, Martène, Montfaucon, Bouquet, Ruinart, and others investigated systematically the archives and libraries of the monasteries and cathedral chapters of their time. The fruits of their labours they gave to the world in huge compilations whose value is still unchallenged in our day.

As late as the second half of the seventeenth century Himmerod had still not come within the purview of the Maurists. In the year 1667, however, Dom Luc d’Achéry turned to the Eifel abbey when seeking material for a large-scale life of the saints.<sup>2</sup> The abbot of that time, Johannes Post (1654-85), who

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Martène, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, published by G. Charvin (Ligugé, 1928); Philibert Schmitz, *Histoire de l’Ordre de S. Benoît*, tome iv (Maredsous, 1948), 31-52.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Besse, “Les correspondants Cisterciens de Dom Luc d’Achéry et de Dom Mabillon”, in *Revue Mabillon*, 8 (1912-13), p. 311 no. XXXVI; p. 314 no. XXXIX.

shortly before had assisted the Jesuit father Masenius at Trèves with similar works,<sup>1</sup> promised active aid. Dom Edmond Martène (1654-1739),<sup>2</sup> a pupil of d'Achéry, came into closer contact with Himmerod in 1718. The occasion for this was offered by a scholarly research expedition which he undertook, in the company of his fellow monk, Dom Ursin Durand, to libraries in France, the Netherlands and Germany.<sup>3</sup> In the course of their journey they visited Himmerod between 10 and 16 December 1718.<sup>4</sup> In addition to valuable information on the Romanesque church and monastery of Himmerod, they recorded their personal impressions of Abbot Robert Bootz of Grosslittgen (1685-1730). This highly cultured prelate, "himself an inspired friend of the sciences",<sup>5</sup> gave the two Maurists the warmest of receptions and magnanimously granted them permission to make use of the library as they thought fit. True, robberies and burnings had materially reduced the stock of manuscripts, once so important; <sup>6</sup> yet, according to the testimony of the Maurists, he produced several rarities. From the Himmerod manuscripts the scholars published two hitherto unknown writings—the "Praefatio Haimonis ad venerabilem Patrem Wilhelmum"<sup>7</sup> and the "Proemium ad amena penitentiae nos inuitantis".<sup>8</sup> Some years later they were followed by eighty-four unknown letters of St. Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179).<sup>9</sup> So that the extracts made from it at Himmerod might be complete Abbot Robert sent the valuable codex itself to Germain-des-Près

<sup>1</sup> Browerus-Masenius, *Antiquitatum et Annalium Trevirensium libri XXV* (Lüttich, 1671).

<sup>2</sup> On Martène cf. *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, tome x (Paris, 1928), pp. 179 ff.; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Bd. VII (Freiburg, 1935), Sp. 3-5.

<sup>3</sup> They published the account of their expedition in the two-volume *Voyage littéraire de deux religieux bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint Maur* (Paris, 1717-24).

<sup>4</sup> Ambrosius Schneider, "Maurinerbesuch in Heisterbach und Himmerod", in *Cistercienser-Chronik*, 51 (1939), 81-6; "Skriptorium und Bibliothek der Cistercienserabtei Himmerod" in *BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY*, 35 (1952), 164 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Voyage littéraire*, II, 277.

<sup>6</sup> Schneider, "Skriptorium", p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> Martène-Durand, *Veterum Scriptorum et monumentorum ecclesiasticorum amplissima collectio*, I, (Paris, 1724), col. 510.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* col. 508.

<sup>9</sup> Migne, *P.L.* 197, col. 281-382.

in 1720, as Martène in the preface to his edition gratefully acknowledges.<sup>1</sup>

The associations thus initiated by the occasion of the visit to Himmerod were intensified in the following years by an interchange of letters between Abbot Robert Bootz and Dom Martène.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this correspondence fresh light is thrown on the formative influences exercised by Himmerod. The letters, written throughout in good Latin, contain mainly literary queries and requests for books. At times they pass on news of the well-being of the abbot and his tasks as vicar-general of the lower German Province of the Order. The prelate also reports to the interested Maurists on repaired books and on the new arrangement of the convent library, which—as he much regrets—had not been completed at the time of Martène's visit.

The requests for books reveal the many-sided interests of Abbot Robert Bootz. Martène acted as intermediary for the acquisition of important patristic and historical literature for Himmerod. Paris at that time was a centre of the book market for scholarly works. In this way the works of Mabillon, d'Achéry, Martène, Pez, and Tissier came to the Eifel abbey. From the Cistercian bookseller Mariette in Paris, Bootz, through the good offices of Martène, obtained for himself and for the abbots of the lower German Province liturgical books such as the *Graduale*, *Psalterium*, *Rituale*, and *Directorium*. Then, too, the Trier suffragan Bishop Johannes Matthias von Eyss (1708-29), as a consequence of his visit to Himmerod, made use of his meeting with the Maurist. In common with Abbot Robert he placed orders for the works of St. Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>3</sup> And, finally, Martène was of great help in paying for the books, a

<sup>1</sup> "Nos longe plures [epistolae S. Hildegardis] invenimus in optimae notae codice Himerodensis monasterii. Codex, ab annis circiter quingentis exaratus, varia Hildegardis continet opuscula . . . Porro has epistolas debemus humanitati reverendissimi et amplissimi abbatis Himerodensis, qui eas non modo ex suo manuscripto transcribere permisit, sed codicem etiam ipsum nobis sponte Parisios transmisit." (Ibid. 281, Monitum); cf. also the Letters I-III.

<sup>2</sup> I am most grateful to M. A. Vernet, Secretary of the *École Nationale des Chartes* at Paris, for kindly drawing my attention to the correspondence. The letters are in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Paris, MS. Fr. 19662, fols. 170-5 and 25538, fols. 253-264<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter I.

matter complicated by the foreign currency. For this service Abbot Robert was exceedingly grateful and offered corresponding services in return. In most of the letters the abbot does not forget to send greetings to Dom Ursin Durand, Martène's travelling companion.

Letters of the Abbot of Himmerod to the Maurists, apart from those now made public for the first time, have up to the present remained unknown. The correspondence gives us an insight into the association between Himmerod and St. Maur in the eighteenth century. In the solitary Eifel abbey the literary publications of their fellow monks in France were followed with keen interest and, in addition, attention was directed to the most recent historical and theological works. In this way the correspondence with Martène stirred the spiritual life in the monastery at Himmerod in fruitful fashion. The letters, moreover, are valuable contributions to our knowledge of Abbot Robert Bootz, undoubtedly the greatest of Himmerod's abbots. They show very clearly how highly he was valued by the two Maurist scholars. In his own way, too, the Cistercian abbot, in providing source materials, had his own share, even if a modest one, in the famous Maurist researches.

TEXTS<sup>1</sup>

## I

1719, November 3.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 25538, fols. 253-254 (In the hand of the Secretary,<sup>2</sup> with the Abbot's signature)

Admodum reverende et eximie domine,

Gratissimas litteras admodum reverendae dominationis vestrae de 6<sup>ta</sup> proxime elapsi mensis octobris tandem 28<sup>va</sup> eiusdem recte accepi ex quibus cum innotuerit tertiam editionem Operum sancti Bernardi publici juris factam, et reverendam admodum paternitatem vestram pro his aliisque procurandis mihi suam operam offerre, ego eandem hisce rogare praesumo, ut sequentes libros latori harum domino agenti domini Comminott, mercatoris Trevirensis, in bona

<sup>1</sup> The letters published here for the first time are not in Thierry Réjalot, *Inventaire des lettres publiées des Bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint Maur*, Ligugé, 1933-43.

<sup>2</sup> Father Robert Strasser (1666-1734).

compactura Parisiensi, quanto fieri poterit, citius extradere dignetur, receptura ab eodem agente solutionem competentem: imprimis Opera sancti Bernardi in duplo, semel pro nostro monasterio et semel pro reverendissimo suffraganeo Trevirensi quem in receptione litterarum vestrarum habebam hospitem; deinde Bibliothecam Cisterciensem in 2 tomis;<sup>1</sup> ac demum Anecdota vestra<sup>2</sup> in 5 tomis.

Epistolae sanctae Hildegardis, propter fertilem vindemiam et libros in bibliotheca nostra jam perfecta in ordinem redigendos, necdum ex integro extrahi potuerunt; curabo tamen ut saltem hac hijeme fiat. Multo plura inveniuntur manuscripta quam in praesentia admodum reverendarum dominationum vestrarum visa fuerint, quae optassem tunc in ordinem redacta fuisse ut majorem inde fructum colligere potuissent. Humanissime resaluto dominum Ursinum Durand meque reciproce ad quaevis grata servitia in his partibus offerrens permaneo in vera Christi charitate admodum reverendae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas in Himmenrode

V. G. [Vicarius generalis]

Ex Himmenrodio 3. novembris

1719

## II

1720, Februar 4.—Himmerod

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 19662, fols. 170-171<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie domine,

Humanissimis litteris vestris de 12<sup>ma</sup> decembris elapsi anni eo usque respondere distuli, donec recepissem libros sua mihi cura et sollicitudine procuratos, qui cum praeter expectationem in via detineantur, ultra obligationi meae deesse non possum quin gratias eidem referrem maximas pro exhibitis hac in parte et alias fraternis servitiis, meque reciproce ad paria charitatis obsequia offerrem.

Epistolas sanctae Hildegardis cuidam ex nostris religiosis, ut alias scripsi, extrahendas tradideram, sed cum ipse ob antiquas notas et abbreviationes in pluribus deficeret, mihi ob emergentia negotia vix possibile esset eidem assistere, cogor ipsum manuscriptum hisce transmittere, et eo usque concredere reverendae admodum dominationi vestrae donec ea quae in editis desiderantur extracta fuerint.

Adjungo pariter hisce elenchum quorundam Sermonum Caesarii [scil. Heisterbacensis], qui utrum in Bibliotheca Patrum Cisterciensium editi sint, sub iudice lis sit. Dum ego me meosque tam reverendae admodum paternitatis vestrae quam reverendi domni Durand piis precibus recomendo, et in

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Tissier, S.O. Cist. (1610-70), *Bibliotheca Patrum Cisterciensium* (Paris, 1660-9).

<sup>2</sup> Martène, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum* (Paris, 1717).

vera Christi charitate permaneo admodum reverendae et eximiae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus  
F. Robertus Abbas in Himmenrode

Ex Himmenrodio 4.<sup>ta</sup> februarii  
1720

[Address : In the hand of the Secretary]

Monsieur  
Monsieur le Reverend Père Dom Emond [sic] Martène du monastère  
et abbaye royal de St Germain des Prez de la Congrégation de St.  
Maure ord. S. Benoit prêtre et religieux très digne  
à Paris

III

1721, Juli 12.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 25538, fols. 255-256<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie pater  
domine confrater plurimum colende.

Litterae vestrae de 22 aprilis sub initium mensis maii huc perlatae sunt, et non longe post manuscriptus codex, dum ego pro functionibus Ordinis versus Rhenum profectus, 22<sup>da</sup> maii gravi et periculosa infirmitate correptus, per 6 septimanas Confluentiae detentus fui, a qua mihi et monasterio meo per gratiam Dei utcunque restitutus, reverendam admodum dominationem vestram de hac receptione informandam duxi, et quia nullum hactenus a domino Mariette, bibliopola Cisterciensi, responsum recipio, cogor uti opera reverendae paternitatis vestrae pro constituendis libris in adjacenti schedula notatis. Ego dicto domino adhuc debeo 18 libras, qui si mihi in antecessum credere et mittere vellet libros ordinis, possem omnes in his partibus distrahere et solutionem successu temporis per cambium remittere, prout hisce receptis omne pretium cum sumptibus solvere non omittam, qui me ad quaevis grata servitia reciproce offerens, suisque ac domini Ursini precibus unice commendans permaneo in vera Christi charitate admodum reverendae paternitatis vestrae

paratissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas in Himmenrode

Ex Himmenrodio 12. julii  
1721

[In the hand of the Secretary]<sup>1</sup>

Admodum Reverendo et eximio in Christo patri domino Edmundo  
Martène regalis monasterii S. Germani a Pratis e Congregatione Sancti  
Mauri presbytero et monacho benedictino domino colendissimo  
à Paris

<sup>1</sup> This address is repeated in the letters which follow.

## IV

1721, August 28.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 25538, fols. 257-258<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie domine  
domine confrater plurimum colende,

Pergratae mihi fuerunt ultimae litterae admodum reverendae dominationis vestrae, quae cum existimet Spicilegium veterum monumentorum<sup>1</sup> sequenti anno edendum bibliotheca nostra dignum esse, includo hisce cambium 114 librarum, ut inde 54 libras pro dicto Spicilegio in antecessum solvere et ex nomine subscribere dignatur dominatio vestra; item pro Analectis Mabilonii<sup>2</sup> servient 15 librae et pro Operibus sancti Anselmi 20 librae. Reliquum de dicto cambio solvi poterit domino Mariette ad computum pro libris mittendis, qui si moram fecerit in iisdem transmittendis, juste timere posset ne forte abbates Germaniae libros ordinis extra Galliam praelo subjicere cogantur. Libri Haymonis sunt sub manibus, quos tamen nonnisi circa festum S. Michaelis transmittere poterō, cum crastino die pro functionibus ordinis ex mea infirmitate hactenus intermissis versus Rhenum proficisci et integrum mensem iisdem impendere debeam. Dignabitur interim reverenda admodum dominatio vestra me quantocius certiore facere de solutione et receptione cambii, meque consuetae suae ac domini Ursini Durand benevolentiae commendatum habere, qui sum et maneo in charitate non ficta admodum reverendae et eximiae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas in Himmenrode

Ex Himmenrodio 28.<sup>va</sup> augusti  
1721

## V

1721, Oktober 24.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 19662, fols. 172-173<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie pater  
domine confrater colendissime,

Ad instantiam domini Cominott denuo mitto litteras cambiales nuper remissas, pro quibus ipsemet dominus Cominott jam tum scripsit domino Le Grand, proindeque spero reverendam paternitatem vestram hac vice recepturam pecunias. Interim dominus Mariette, his non attentis, mittere poterit libros petitos Metas "à Monsieur Louis Michellet", sub inscriptione domini domini Cominott transmittendos, cum Metis Treviros usque fere singulis septimanis mitti possint.

<sup>1</sup> Jean Luc d'Achéry (1609-85), *Spicilegium sive collectio veterum aliquot scriptorum*, 13 vols. (Paris, 1655-77); <sup>2</sup>1723.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Mabillon (1632-1707), *Vetera Analecta*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1675-85); <sup>2</sup>1723.

Habeo prae manibus *Thesaurum anecdotorum novissimum* hoc anno a domino Bernardo Pezio benedictino et bibliothecario Mellicensi in tribus tomis fol. Augustae Vindelicorum editum,<sup>1</sup> quem propterea se "novissimum" nominare asserit, ut post *Novum* a reverenda dominatione vestra evulgatum suus *Thesaurus* "novissimi" titulum assequatur. Non ita mihi placet sicut vester, cum de solis rebus benedictinis tractet.

Descriptio Haymonis nondum ex toto est absoluta, quam tamen proxime mittam ad dominum priorem sancti Vincentii Metensis, dum interim me meosque suis suique fidelissimi sodalis precibus et sacrificiis unice commendans permaneo in charitate non ficta

admodum reverendae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas

Ex Himmenrodio 24.<sup>ta</sup> octobris  
1721

## VI

1722, Januar 22.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 25538, fols. 259-260<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie pater  
domine confrater colendissime,

Misi sub finem proxime elapsi mensis et anni Sermones Haymonis ad dominum priorem Sancti Vincentii Metensis et novissime inde recepi libros a domino Mariette bene compactos, pro quorum solutione reverenda admodum dominatio vestra proxime recipiet ab alio mercatore summam 213 librarum et 10 solidorum, ex qua summa et dominus Mariette juxta computum suum habebit 124 libras 10 solidos, residuae 89 librae servient pro aliis libris mihi jam pridem recommendatis; optassem dominum Mariette libris transmissis adjunxisse saltem unum *Directorium Cisterciense* pro hoc anno, quod alia vice fieri poterit. Ignoscat mihi, rogo, admodum reverenda dominatio vestra quod eandem ulterius molestare praesumam, cum aliam viam satisfaciendi non inveniam, qui me reciproce ad quaevis grata servitia paratum offerro, et cum humanissima salutatione domini sodalis sui Ursini permaneo usque ad aras admodum reverendae et eximiae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas in Himmenrode

V. G.

Ex Himmenrodio 22. januarii  
1722

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Pez, O.S.B. (1683-1733), an important historical writer in the abbey of Melk, Austria, was also in correspondence with Martène. He was editor of the *Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimum*, 6 vols. (Augsburg, 1721-9).



## VII

1722, Juli 3.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 19662, fols. 174-175<sup>v</sup> (cf. No. I)

Admodum reverende et eximie domine  
domine confrater plurimum colende,

Summo me gaudio affecerunt litterae vestrae de 16<sup>ta</sup> proximi elapsi mensis, praesertim cum a facta mense januario Treviris solutione 213 librarum cum dimidia nihil hactenus audiverim, et ego interim a Paschate usque huc gravi infirmitate detentus, exterioribus parum intendere potuerim. Nunc mihi ab aliquot diebus utcunque restitutus exspectabo Opera sancti Anselmi cum Analectis Mabillonii quibus si adjungi posset unum Graduale Cisterciense fol. cum cantu in albis gratum foret. Ut primum editio Spicilegii completa et soluta fuerit, pro Collectione veterum monumentorum<sup>1</sup> sollicitus ero, qui esse in sancta quaeque commendo esseque reciproce ad quaevis grata servitia offerens permaneo in vera Christi charitate admodum reverendae et eximiae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas

Himmenrodii 3.<sup>tia</sup> julii  
1722

## VIII

1722, September 18.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 25538, fols. 261-262<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie domine  
domine confrater honorande,

Litteras vestras de 26.<sup>ta</sup> julii die 12.<sup>ma</sup> augusti recte accepi, et haud longe post Opera sancti Anselmi per dominum Michelet Metensem, per eundem proxime exspectans Graduale et Rituale Cisterciense pro quibus etsi reverenda dominatio vestra in dictis litteris suis scribat de consignato et misso Psalterio Cisterciensi, ego credo esse errorem calami, cum ego in meis sub 3.<sup>tia</sup> julii petierim Graduale Cisterciense. Ut ut sit, ego nihilominus Psalterium retinebo, et alia occasione Gr[ad]uale exspectabo, si hac vice non fuerit missum. Interim bibliotheca nostra redacta est in ordinem, et his diebus admissus fuit bibliopegus, qui aut corruptos libros reficiat, aut de novo compingat. Ignoscat mihi reverenda admodum dominatio vestra, si forte abutar correspondentia vestra, nam charitas fraterna me urget, in qua finio, meque ad quaevis sancta recommendo, qui sum

admodum reverendae dominationis vestrae

obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas

Ex Himmenrodio 18.<sup>va</sup> septembris  
1722

<sup>1</sup> Martène, *Veterum Scriptorum et monumentorum collectio nova*, Rouen, 1700.

## IX

1724, Juni 13.—Himmerod.

Paris, Bibl. nat. fr. 25538, fols. 263-264<sup>v</sup> (Autograph)

Admodum reverende et eximie domine  
domine confrater colendissime

Ignoscet, spero, reverenda admodum dominatio vestra, tarditati meae, nam praeterquam quod ab ineunte vere variis itineribus et functionibus praepeditus fuerim, nolui eandem utilioribus pro re litteraria studiis occupatam inturbare. Mox tamen post receptas sub initium mensis martii litteras vestras per campsorem Trevirensis misi pecuniam debitam domino Mariette, a quo propediem exspecto quittance solutionis factae. Interim etiam per urbem Metensem recte accepi Spicilegium et Analecta Mabillonii, e quibus summam voluptatem haurio, quantum tempus et senium permittunt, sed pro aliis tomis jam tum praelo commissis propter nummorum raritatem et graves patriae impositiones me in praesens resolvere non possum, qui feliciora tempora exspectans me vivum et mortuum suis suique fidissimi sodalis precibus commendo et in vera Christi charitate persevero

admodum reverendae et eximiae dominationis vestrae  
obsequiosissimus servus

F. Robertus Abbas

Ex Himmenrodio 13.<sup>ta</sup> junii  
1724