The Virtual Library of the Charterhouse of Gaming

When the Charterhouse of Gaming in Lower Austria was shut down by Emperor Joseph II in 1782, a part of the books – especially precious medieval manuscripts and incunabula – was brought to the Hofbibliothek (Court Library) in Vienna. Many printed books of scholarly and scientific value were taken over by the library of the University of Vienna. However, many manuscripts and printed books were also lost in the course of these events. The rooms of the library – decorated with a great fresco cycle by Wenzel Lorenz Rainer representing the triumph of the sciences and the arts – still exist in the charterhouse, but are now devoid of the baroque bookshelves and the books.

The virtual reunion of the charterhouse's manuscript holdings and the exploration of Gaming's library history are the aims of this research project.

The heterogeneous constellation of manuscripts –

some extant, some of unknown whereabouts, and some certainly lost – does not allow a classical manuscript catalogue with standardized descriptions. However, it is possible to process the different layers of information in a database.

Summarizing the situation of the former library holdings, there exist

1. Manuscripts from Gaming still preserved in different libraries (cf. 2 & 3, 10).
2. Texts preserved only in Baroque editions based on sources from Gaming (cf. 7a & 7b).
3. Texts preserved in copies and transcriptions of the 18th century (cf. 4).
4. A lot of information can also be found about manuscripts from Gaming which are lost today (cf. 5).

Facts and figures

Full project title
The Virtual Library of the Charterhouse of Gaming. Digital reconstruction of the library holdings of the former Charterhouse of Gaming in Lower Austria.

Project team
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Research partners
• FWF-START project "Monastic Enlightenment and the Benedictine Republic of Letters"
• Austrian National Library
• Department for Palaeography and Codicology of the Institute for Medieval Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Christine Glassner)
• Analecta Cartusiana (James Hogg)

Aims of the project

1. Construction of the Virtual Library of Gaming as a database.
2. Accompanying publications dealing with
   - the history of the library of Gaming
   - the work of the librarian Leopold Wydemann
   - Austrian historical research in the first half of the 18th century.
3. A partnership with the FWF-START project "Monastic Enlightenment and the Benedictine Republic of Letters" for the purpose of cooperation regarding the edition of the correspondence of the librarian Leopold Wydemann with the brothers Pez.
4. Exploration of Wydemann's other correspondences (e. g. letters to the Jesuit Anton Steyerer).
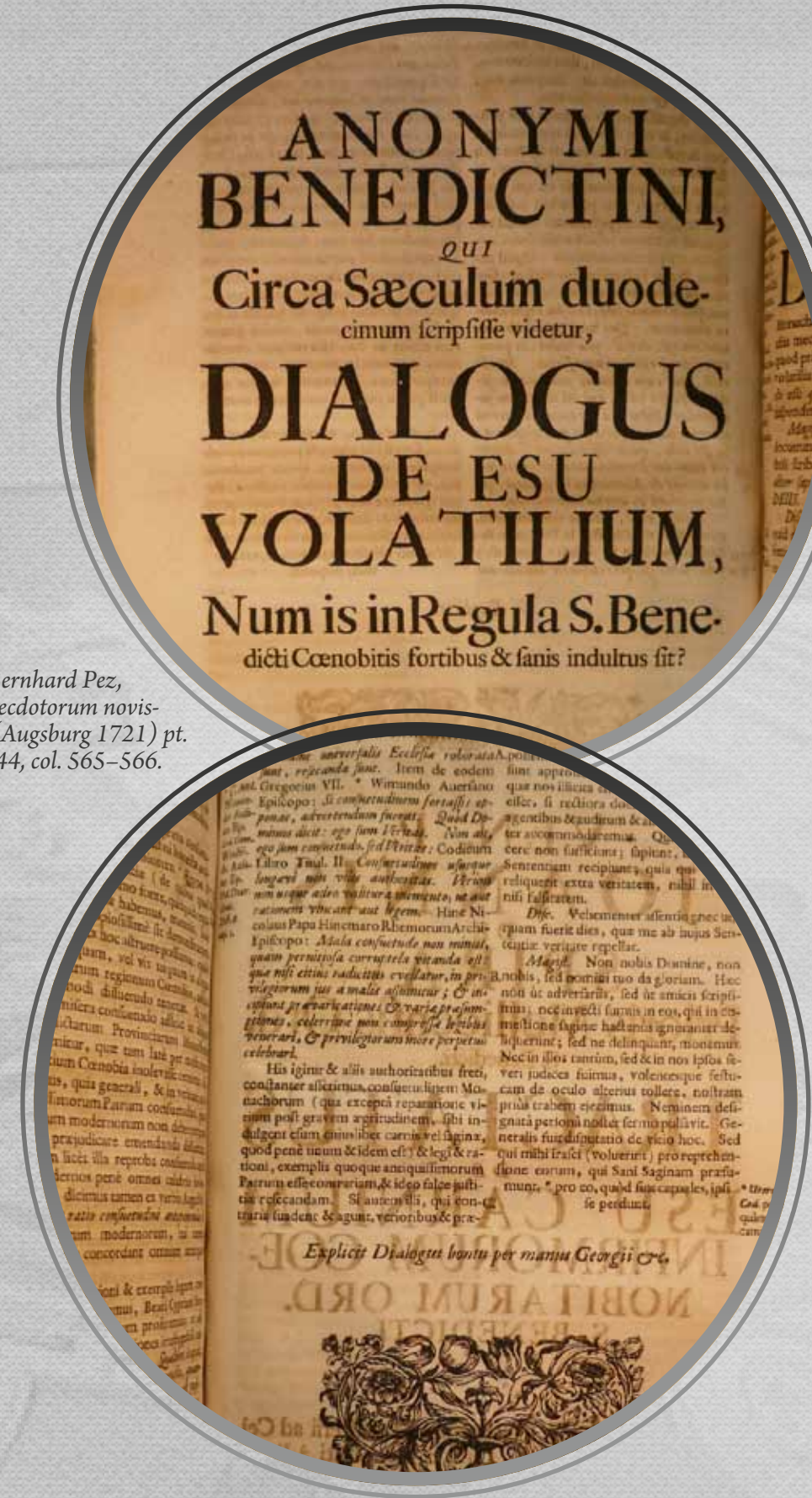
Historical importance of the library of Gaming

On the one hand, the importance of the library of Gaming is owed to the charterhouse's role as a centre of spiritual erudition in the Late Middle Ages. Several Carthusians from Gaming like Konrad of Haimburg or Nicholas Kempf were active as authors. On the other hand, the charterhouse houses the tombs of Duke Albert II of Austria and his wife Joanna of Pfirt, who were commemorated by the monks. As a consequence, many historical sources on the early generations of the Habsburgs in Austria could be found in Gaming.

In the 18th century, scholars like the Jesuit Anton Steyerer or the brothers Pez contacted the librarian Leopold Wydemann and asked for source materials and information about the early Habsburgs.

• On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the charterhouse in 1732, the history of Gaming was published in the *Pandectae seculares*. Based on the historical materials collected and edited by Leopold Wydemann, the book was written by the court poet Johann Karl Newen von Newenstein.

• Anton Steyerer published a veduta of the charterhouse of Gaming in his *Commentarii pro historia Alberti II. ducis Austriae cognomento Sapientis*.

8 *Pandectae seculares, dum sacratissima familia Carthusiana, quae Gemnici floret in Austria Inferiore, primum antistitis jubileum et quartum seculum totum ad exemplum sacrorum veterum gemina felicitate celebraret (Vienna 1732), title.*

9 *Anton Steyerer, Commentarii pro historia Alberti II. ducis Austriae cognomento Sapientis (Leipzig 1725) tab. XXI.*

2 & **3** *Austrian National Library, ÖNB Cod. 12811, fol. 10r and 144v.*

ÖNB Cod. 12811 as an example of a manuscript from Gaming.
The manuscript ÖNB Cod. 12811 was created in the charterhouse of Gaming and consists of several different texts.

Among them is a beautiful calendar with astronomical annotations and solar dials for calculating the phases of the moon and the zodiac signs. In addition, the codex contains several necrologies and a list of the priors of the monastery.

According to a note in the manuscript where the scribe, Brother Wilhelm Hoffaer from Landshut, mentions himself, the codex was compiled between 1446 and 1480.

7a & **7b** *Bernhard Pez, Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimus, vol. 1 (Augsburg 1721) pt. 2, col. 543–544, col. 565–566.*

Printed editions of texts from Gaming manuscripts
The pictures show the edition of a high medieval ascetic text *"De esu volatilium"* in the Thesaurus.

Leopold Wydemann and Bernhard Pez edited the text on the basis of a codex from Gaming and one codex from Melk.

Roughly 40 texts from medieval manuscripts of the Gaming library were printed and published in baroque editions, particularly by Bernhard Pez' *Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimus* and *Bibliotheca ascetica antiquo-nova*, but also in Hieronymus Pez' *Scriptores rerum Austriacarum* and Johann Burkhard Mencke's *Scriptores rerum Saxonicarum*.
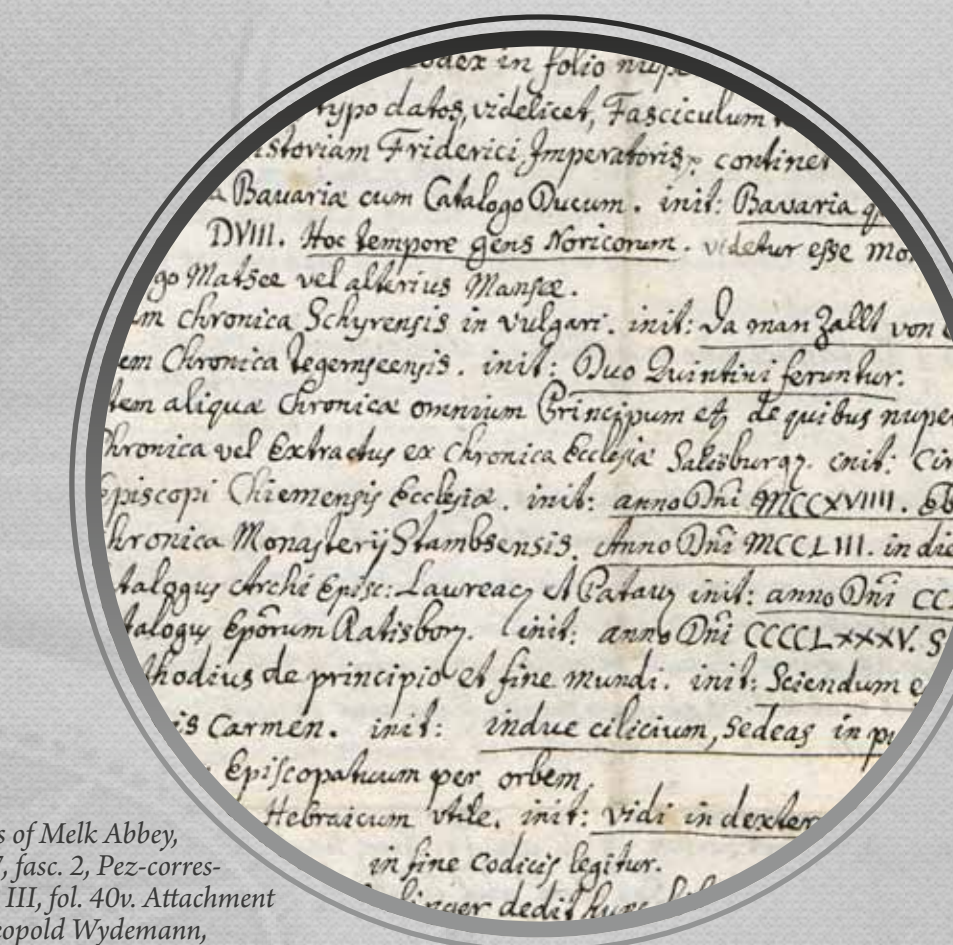
Several still extant transcriptions of medieval texts were prepared for print but were never published.

4 *Archives of Melk Abbey, Kt. 7 Patres 10, fasc. 5, nr. 1, "Gaminger Codex", fol. 9r.*

Transcription of a medieval prior list from the 18th century.
This transcription shows the interest of historians of the 18th century in medieval manuscripts and their content.

The monks and scholars were especially attracted to prosopographical and genealogical information which could be found in necrologies or lists of priors. This transcription was probably created at the order of the librarian Leopold Wydemann by an assistant and then sent to the abbey of Melk.

5 *Archives of Melk Abbey, Kt. 7 Patres 7, fasc. 2, Pez-correspondence vol. III, fol. 40v. Attachment to letter by Leopold Wydemann, 1718-01-01.*

Correspondence of Leopold Wydemann.
The letters of Leopold Wydemann (1668–1752), librarian of Gaming, constitute a crucial source of information on the former manuscript holdings, offering vital clues for targeted searches in libraries in Austria and abroad.

On this page, which is the attachment to a letter, Wydemann informs the Benedictine scholar Hieronymus Pez about the different chronicles contained in a medieval manuscript.
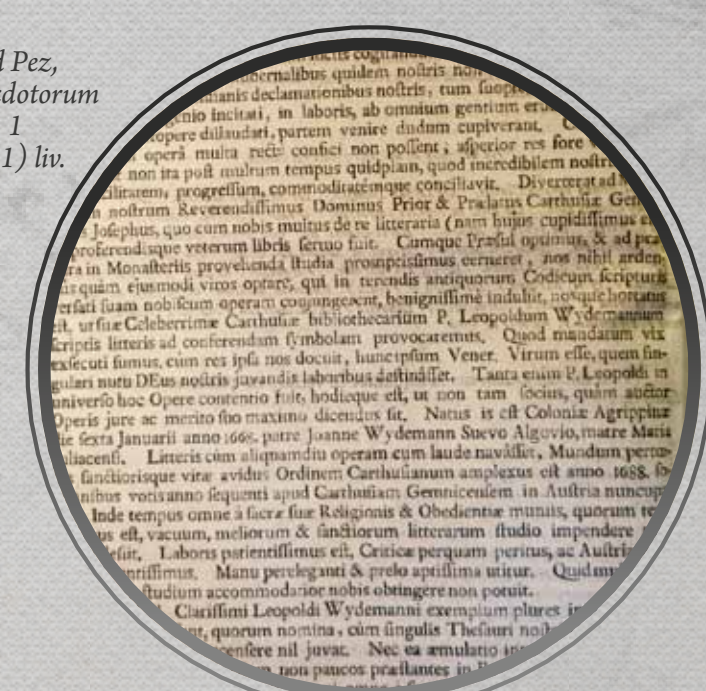
10 *Austrian National Library, ÖNB Cod. 13740, book cover.*

How to identify manuscripts from Gaming
Manuscripts and printed books from Gaming can be identified by several characteristics. For instance, some books contain typical small sheets with shelf marks combining a letter and a numeral (e.g. H 5, 16, N 2). Another way of identifying books from Gaming are the book covers. Sometimes it is necessary to look for very particular ornaments, but in this case the identification is easier: the manuscript ÖNB Cod. 13740 (dating from later than 1427) is bound in a particularly artful leather book cover with the painted coat of arms of the Charterhouse of Gaming.

6 *Bernhard Pez, Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimus, vol. 1 (Augsburg 1721) lin.*

Leopold Wydemann. *Librarian and scholar*

Born and educated in Cologne, Leopold Wydemann (1668–1752) became a Carthusian monk in Gaming in 1689. By 1706 at the latest, he can be identified as the librarian of the charterhouse. Later he also became vicar and even served as Imperial administrator after prior Joseph Kristelli was dismissed on account of the monastery's high debt. As librarian, Wydemann made a new catalogue of the charterhouse's medieval manuscripts, which unfortunately is lost today. He also established active literary exchanges with many European charterhouses and other scholars, and in his letters conveyed much information about the library holdings. Wydemann's contact and friendship with the brothers Bernhard and Hieronymus Pez from the abbey of Melk led to his cooperation in the edition of roughly 200 medieval exegetic, ascetic and historiographical texts. Moreover, he trained some of his fellow monks in palaeography and engaged them in transcription work for the edition projects of Bernhard Pez: The *Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimus* and the *Bibliotheca ascetica antiquo-nova*.

In the preface to the first volume of the *Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimus*, Bernhard Pez praises his co-operator Leopold Wydemann and provides some information about his biography.

Publications
related to the project

Patrick FISKA–Severin MATIASOVITS, Die virtuelle Bibliothek der Kartause Gaming. Bericht über ein Jubiläumsfonds-Projekt der Oesterreichischen Nationalbank. *biblos* 62 (2013/2) 85–92.

Patrick FISKA, Geschichtsforschung aus der Kartause für die Welt. Zur gelehrten Tätigkeit des Gaminger Kartäusers Leopold Wydemann (1668–1752), in: Kartäusisches Denken und daraus resultierende Netzwerke vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit. Internationale Tagung: Kartause Aggsbach 23. – 27. August 2011. Zum Anlass des 80. Geburtstages von James Hogg, ed. by Meta NIEDERKORN-BRUCK (Analecta Cartusiana 276, Salzburg 2012), vol. 1, 207–244.

Patrick FISKA, Kartäussische Geschichtsschreibung und die *Chartae capituli generalis*, in: Die Brüder Pez und die barocke Gelehrsamkeit im Stift Melk, ed. by Cornelia FAUSTMANN–Gottfried GLASSNER–Thomas WALLNIG (Thesaurus Melicensis 2, Melk 2014) 113–120.

Patrick FISKA–Gabriela WINKLER, Leopold Wydemann als Gelehrter und Gärtner, in: Die Brüder Pez und die barocke Gelehrsamkeit (cf. above) 60–65.

ANONYMI BENEDICTINI, qui Circa Sæculum duodecimum scripsisse videtur, DIALOGUS DE ESU VOLATILIUM, Num is in Regula S. Benedicti Cœnobitis ferribus & fanis indultus fit?