The Economy of Cistercian and Carthusian Monasteries in Slovenia

In discussing the economy of medieval monasteries, which was based primarily on cultivation of the land, it is important to consider the signifance of manual labor to a medieval society. In the Middle Ages, people were divided into three groups: those whose main occupation was prayer (*orantes*), those who were in the service of armies (*bellantes*), and manual workers, who belonged to the bottom social stratum. However, we must also consider the manual labor of monks, who were otherwise totally dedicated to spiritual life. We know that some groups of Eastern hermits rejected manual labor completely. Their view was based on the following words from the Bible: "Do not cease to pray." But the apostle Paul also introduced a proverb: "He who shall not work, shall not eat (Tes.I,5,17 and II,3,10)". Many hermits managed to adhere to both rules by being involved in activities which enabled them to pray and work at the same time (basket-making, for example and suchlike), which helped them earn some money. Even St. Pachomius (c. 287-347) and St. Basil the Great (c. 330-379), the organizers of Eastern monasticism, had to comply with both these rules. A more positive view of manual labor in the West was expressed by St. Augustine (354-430) in his book "De opere monchorum", which he wrote in A.D. 400. He criticised those monastic orders which devoted themselves to prayer, contemplation, and singing, to the exclusion of manual labor. The foundation of Western monasticism was laid by St. Benedict of Nursia, known as "the father of Western monasticism". His *Regula* from A.D. 534 set standards that were observed by all subsequent founders of monastic orders. Prayer and reading of the Holy Bible were central to spiritual life in his communities. Spiritual wholeness was to be obtained through prayer, brotherly love, obedience and work, and less through asceticism. The first principle of monastic life should be religious duty (*opus dei*), the second, work. They liked to use the saying: "*Ora et labora!*" These words are from St. Benedict's *Regula* (Chapter 48): "Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore monks should divide theire time between manual work and reading of the Bible." Thus the Benedictines devoted a part of each day to prayer, and a part to manual labor, which took up more hours at times of sowing, harvesting, and constructing buildings. However, when the scope of the Benedictines' religious duty widened – more time was spent on teaching young boys and copying texts – less and less time was available for manual labor. Their atittude towards manual labor changed accordingly.

A completely different attitude towards work and the acquisition of worldly goods was expressed by Cistercians and Carthusians – two orders that were established during a time of spiritual unrest und the spring of monastic reform. Numbers of the community of the disciples of St. Bernard and St. Bruno wished to be economically independent of their surroundings. They were willing to work for their living (*manibus et sumptibus*) and to divide surplus produce among others. In *Apologia*, a book he wrote between 1123 and 1125, St. Bernard says that work is as valuable as fasting, silence, and nightly prayer. He emphasized that the monks should be economically self-sufficient, and not a burden to anyone else. Groundrules for the economy of monasteries were given in the first Cistercian regulations. Their agrarian orientation was emphasized. Regulations decreed that the monks should work for their livelihood or employ paid workers, so they were in need of land and livestock. Monasteries were allowed to have forests, vineyards, waters, pastures, and arable land for their own use, but their estates had to be far from other human settlements. Regulations prohibited monks from living off other people, or from accepting handouts. They were also not allowed to possess churches, nor to collect fees from altars, burials, nor to possess settlements with bread ovens, mills, and other similar things. Regulations

stated that such conduct would be "contrary to the purity of the order" and not in harmony with the order's purpose. The Carthusians, who are known for their strictly eremitic monastic life, also valued work highly, and tried to be as self-sufficient as possible. At first, this order also rejected the idea that they could live off the labor of other people. Because of their special way of life, monasteries were divided into two "houses": the upper house (*domus superior*) and the lower house (*domus inferior*). The upper house was inhabited by monks who dedicated their lives to contemplation and intellectual work. They never worked in the fields, even though they were required to do chores within the confines of their house. The lower house belonged to lay brothers (converts), who laboured on the land and tended the livestock. The lower house was the economic center of every Carthusian monastery.

Both monastic communities, the Cistercians and the Carthusians, observed this division into monks and laymen, mentioned in Cistercian regulations as early as the 12th century. In order to be as self-sufficient as required of them, the Cistercians had to develop their own economy. Since there was a lot of manual work to be taken care of, only little time could be devoted to religious duties (*opus dei*). Religious duties were thus left to the pious monks, manual labor to laymen (converts). But even monks had to lend a hand at times of sowing, planting, harvesting, and constructing new buildings for the monastery. The division of the community into monks and laymen did not have any social significance at first, it was merely practical. Converts were people from lower social strata, peasants and craftsmen. This is understandable, because they came from an environment in which life was oriented almost entirely around manual labor. These workers brought to the monasteries certain skills that people of a higher social origin lacked.

The economic success of the Carthusians and Cistercians was due to the institution of laymen and the sound way in which the estates were managed. Having sufficient land was a primary necessity for any monastery. New monastic communities with scant income and a meager estate were not accepted into the order. The land donated was usually far from villages or other settlements, often on marshy and forested terrain. New communities first had to drain the marshes and fell the forests in order to make land suitable for farming. "Give these monks barren marshes or untamed forests, and in a few years you will find not only churches, but human dwellings as well", is what Girald of Wales wrote about the Cistercians in 1188. The Cistercians organized their estates into special economic units called "granges". Granges were already envisaged in regulations from 1134. These units were not to be farther than a day's walk from the monastery. They were cultivated by laymen and hired hands. There were about 150 to 210 hectares of land to a grange. Crops best suited to the quality of the soil were planted. This type of farming yielded large crops at minimum expense.

While the Cistercians developed an intensive type of agrarian economy on their granges, often far from the monasteries, the Carthusians, in contrast, were faced with two difficulties. The rules of the Carthusian order limited the number of members at each station and forbade the possession of land outside the official borders of the monasterial estate. Numerous laymen (converts) in the early days of the Cistercian order allowed the intensive economic development and self-sufficiency of each station. Up until the 13th century, the number of laymen in most Cistercian monasteries exceeded the number of monks. For example, around 1150, the monastery in Clairvaux had 200 monks and 300 laymen, while Carthusian stations only had thirteen monks and sixteen laymen

at first. The *Statuta Guigonis*, from 1127, allowed the admittance of an additional monk. Subsequent regulations permitted a station to accept more members if some in the convent were unable to participate in religious duties and manual labor. Regulations from 1259 permitted seven more laymen to be accepted. In this way, the number of members in a community increased a little, but not significantly. We do know of an exception. The monastery in Gaming, Lower-Austria, belonged to the same Upper-German province of the order as our Charterhouses, but had double the number of monks and laymen originally permitted (*Doppelkloster*). The second thing that hindered the economic development of the Carthusian order was the prohibition of acquiring land beyond the official borders of the monastic estate. This regulation had been effective ever since the establishment of the second settlement of St. Bruno, Santa Maria della Torre, in Calabria. It was surrounded by two square miles (about 15 hectares) of land. The aforementioned regulation of the great prior, Guigo, from 1127, states that the Grande Cartreuse "should not have any land outside the confines of its desert". No fields, no vineyards, no gardens, no churches, no graveyards, nor contributions, or anything similar, which could lead to greed and a craving for material possessions and worldly goods. Men who founded monasteries, in concern for the economic stability of their endeavours, often donated incomes and their own land, even if it was beyond their community's borders. The charterhouses were reluctant to give up these acquisitions, especially if the land was fertile and promised a good profit. Every change in the estate had to be approved by the order's General Chapter, as was laid down in rules from 1259.

The basic property, meaning land and the annual income of a station, was donated by the founder, but contributions were also donated by the secular nobility. In return, these individuals were granted the right to be buried in the churches or monasteries of the recipient monastic order. Certain religious ceremonies, especially on anniversaries of their death, were carried out for the benefit of their departed souls. The superiors of the orders at first decreed that indulgences should not be granted in exchange for financial contributions, but later moderated their position, since even Cistercian and Carthusian stations refused to give up the material benefits of donation deeds with obligations attached. Because some stations became quite wealthy, the General Chapter in Citeaux in 1191, for example, did not permit its stations to buy additional real estate. This prohibitive motion was put in effect again in 1206, but exceptions were made, if the Chapter itself or the abbots of neighbouring stations gave their consent. In 1214, the General Chapter strictly forbade Cistercian stations from buying land, vineyards, bread ovens, and mills, but still permitted them to acquire land and income based on contributions, as long as there were no obligations attached to them. In 1224, the General Chapter in Citeaux permitted the monasteries to lease land to peasants, if this would benefit the stations, but an individual abbot could do so only with the consent of his community, his superior abbot or visitator. He also had to reach an agreement with the local bishop on the matter of the annual tithe peasants were obliged to submit. Authorities within the Carthusian order at first resisted this development, because it was contrary to their primary goal of earning their own living, but the changes could not be stopped. Exceptions, which were earlier granted to individual stations by the priors gathered at the General Chapter at the Grande Chartreuse, soon became the norm for the whole order. The extent of monasterial estates diminished, and they were soon reduced to the area surrounding the monastery buildings. Stations of both orders began to dissolve granges, and to divide arable land into plots and offer them to peasants, who in return for a lease had to submit

a part of their crop or income. Monastic superiors first leased plots for a limited time, later for the duration of a renter's life-time, and finally sold them in accordance with secular commercial law. In this way, ecclesiastical institutions, as lords over lands, became a part of the feudal system, and strayed from their primary purpose. It must be born in mind that even monastic orders were set in a particular time and space, and were subject to influences from their environment. As regards their economic welfare, the superiors of the orders had to find a balance between the demands of their primary ideals and everyday reality.

The Cistercians and Carthusians, in contrast to the Benedictines, originally rejected various sources of income, even the acceptance of the tithe peasants normally submitted to the Church. The collection of the tithe, which was originally a privilege of the Church, and later also of secular lords, was a source of dispute even in the first hundred years of the existence of the two orders. Some Popes were also involved in these disputes. In 1132, Pope Innocent II granted the Cistercians a privilege that released them of their obligation to submit a tenth of all proceeds from land which was cultivated by the monks themselves, and also from livestock they raised themselves. This ordinance was later modified several times, since secular feudal lords wished to exact a tithe from monasterial estates, too. The question of taxes was raised at the 4th Lateran council (1215), headed by Pope Innocent III. This council is an important milestone in the development of the Cistercian order and ecclesiastical law on the tithe in general. Monastic obligations, in this respect, were finally clarified. Monasteries were no longer obliged to pay a tithe from land they cultivated themselves. Their position regarding exacting a tithe was now the same as that of secular feudal lords. The main economic necessity for monastic communities was to acquire sufficient arable land. Founders donated not only arable land, but also land which had yet to be prepared for farming. Marshes had to be drained, forests cleared. The latter was always carefully planned, because forests gave timber for construction and wood for heating, as well as fodder and litter for the livestock. Clearings were turned into arable land, pastures, and vineyards. The Cistercians in particular were successful in raising crops of a single culture over extensive areas of land. All monasteries had vineyards if the climate and the quality of the soil were right. Wine was not needed just for drinking, but also for religious ceremonies. Surpluses in wine, crops, and livestock enabled them to trade. Close cooperation among individual monastic stations resulted in new sorts of wine, fruit, vegetables and livestock. Livestock was important to the economy of any monastery, especially the breeding of horses, cattle and sheep. Cattle provided milk, and hides to make parchment and leather. In the 13th century, the motherhouse of the Cistercian order had about 900 head of cattle. Monastic communities in some countries, especially those in Flanders and England, had big herds of sheep. The monks needed plenty of wool for their clothing, and for trade. Fishery was also very important to most monasteries. We know that a diet of fish was allowed to monks of any order, including the strict Carthusians. Most monasteries had fish ponds almost from the start. In some places, a special monk, called *magister piscium*, was put in charge of the ponds. The abbey of Walsassen in Bayern had as many as 159 fish ponds in 1571.

Monastic communities did not try to be self-sufficient just in producing their own food, but also when it came to craftsmanship. Monastic craftsmen were mostly converts: weavers, cobblers, blacksmiths, tailors, carpenters, builders, etc. They represented all the basic crafts. Craftsmen were already mentioned in Benedict's Regula, which also contained instructions concerning workshops and the sale of products. Many such

regulations can be read from the records of the General Chapter's meeting in Citeaux and Grande Chartreuse. Converts, sometimes helped by hired workers, fashioned clothes and shoes from material available at a station. Blacksmiths made tools needed for work in the fields and in the houses. Brickmakers were responsible for bricks, quarries were exploited for stone and lime. In an age when the exchange of produce was prevalent in trade, monasteries could easily satisfy their needs and maintain self-sufficiency as envisaged in St. Benedict's *Regula*.

Excess stocks of crops and wine, livestock and manufactured objects, and, of course, the fact that money was hard to come by, enabled, if not forced, monastic communities to start trading with the outside world. Of course, there were regulations to consider. The Benedictine and Cistercian monks could visit village fairs, but the Carthusians could not. The Cistercian General Chapters originally forbade monks from visiting fairs in places which were more than a three or four days walk away. Only two monks or two converts were allowed to go. The superiors often complained at the order's General Chapters about the dangers of such ventures. At first, monasteries tried to avoid trading on their own doorstep, because people were noisy and disturbed the peace of the monastery inhabitants. They prefered to sell their goods in market places. "Whenever a community's goods are sold, let those who oversee their handling beware of any misconduct... When setting the price do not be greedy. Always sell cheaper than peasants can manage." This is from Benedict's *Regula* (chapter 57). Monasteries were intensively involved in the wine trade. Some monasteries, especially in France and Germany, derived most of their income from the sale of wine. By the end of the Middle Ages, the Cistercian station in Eberbach could sell as much as 400,000 litres of wine in Cologne if the harvest was good. However, monasteries also sold their wine retail, in taverns (*tabernae*) outside their monasterial buildings. The Cistercian station of Rein by Graz already had a tavern in the 12th century, even though the order's regulations originally prohibited such endeavours. Regulations from 1134 clearly state that these activities are not to be undertaken by monks or converts, nor by anyone else acting on their behalf. Mention should also be made of the so called "free houses" which most monasteries possessed in nearby towns or along main roads in the Middle Ages. Feudal lords granted certain privileges to these free houses. On their premises, free trade was guarranteed, storing stock was possible, trade fees were not collected, and annual taxes that would usually go to the city authorities in whose bounds such houses stood, were not demanded. These privileges caused competition and fuelled disputes between monks and city merchants. There was, for example, a dispute between the Rein community and the citizens of Maribor, which occured at the end of the Middle Ages. The community had a vineyard in the near vicinity of Mariobr and successfully competed with other wine merchants, who eventually raised so much fuss that the abbot decided to sell these vineyards and buy new ones in Radgona and Ljutomer.

By the end of the Middle Ages, seven monastic stations had been established on Slovenian territory. These include four Charterhouses, two Cistercian abbeys, and one Benedictine abbey. They are known as the old orders. Our oldest monastery is the abbey in Stična, established by Patriarch Peregrine of Aquileia in 1136. This is our oldest and the most important institution in the spiritual, religious, ecclesiastical and cultural senses. It also played a significant economic role. Patriarch Peregrine also established an abbey in Gornji Grad (1140) designating to it the same role in the region of Styria, as Stična had in Lower Carniola. In the second half of the 12th century, two Carthusian monasteries were "born". A Carthusian monastery in Žiče was established around 1160 by Count

Otakar III of Traungau, from Styria, and a monastery in Jurklošter (around 1170) by Bishop Henry of Gurk. In the 13th century, we gained another two institutions. In 1234, Bernard Spanheim established a Cistercian monastery at Kostanjevica, on his estates along the Krka river. In 1255, a Charterhouse was established in Bistra near Vrhnika. The deeds of establishment were issued by Ulrich III, Bernard's son, in 1260. The last Carthusian house here was established in Pleterje by Herman II of Celje, who was later buried in its church.

Every founder was obliged to provide a sufficient material foundation for the new institution. He had to donate enough land and annual income for the station to develop and prosper. The supreme authorities were inclined to accept a new stations into the folds of the order only when a visitator pronounced that all regulations were being observed by the new community. Of course, the founder too, had to observe regulations which decreed that the monastery and its estate be as far from other human settlements, and also other monastic communities, as possible. Land had to be arable, or at least capable of being prepared for farming in the future. Cistercian monasteries were usually built at the end of a secluded valley. Such a location protected them from disturbances from the outside, and was usually fertile enough to provide food for the monks. Estates and granges developed in close proximity to the monastery. Whenever a Carthusian monastery was established, two houses had to be built. The "upper house" which stood at the very end of the valley and was the home of the monks, and the "lower house", which guarded the entrance to the valley. Brothers laymen (converts) who lived there could keep an eye on visitors and travellers, and decide whom to let through to the monastery. The lower house was the economic center of the monastery. A procurator was chosen to oversee the converts and work on the estate. The Benedictines had a saying about how Benedict liked heights (*Benedictus montes amabat*), so they always looked for hills on which to build their monasteries.

When Patriarch Peregrine was searching for a location for a new Cistercian monastery, he chose a place called Sitik, at the end of a fertile valley. An estate was located near the monastery and a grange was organized on territory near present-day Ivančna Gorica. Both estates were active up to the 18th century, when the monastery was closed. Peregrine donated vineyards in the vicinity of Novo mesto. From the start (1136), a "villa Wingarten" is mentioned in official papers, which indicates that this area was at least partly cultivated even then. It is here that the Stična monastery built a wine house called Bajnof (*Weinhof*), that became the economic center of their wine-growing manor. Peregrine also contributed land near the Temenica river in Lower Carniola. This monastic estate expanded greatly through contributions and purchases made by its priors. The oldest land register, from 1505, shows that there were more than two hundred subordinate peasant farms, twenty mills and several other economic units. Bajnof and a manor in Bodendorf by Murau were special economic units. In 1643, Bajnof had over two hundred farms rented to peasants, eighteen tenants and three mills. Bodendorf had about fifteen farms and two taverns. The monastery in Stična was also among the biggest landowners compared to other monastic communities, and certainly the biggest landowner in Lower Carniola. Kostanjevica, the second Cistercian monastery in Lower Carniola, was established about a hundred years later than Stična. By then, some of the strictest rules concerning the establishemnt and management of monasteries had been moderated. Bernard Spanheim built the monastery near his settlement in Kostanjevica. This would have been impossible in the 12th century. In the 13th century, granges started deteriorating, land was divided

into plots and these were rented to peasants. During its existence, Kostanjevica had several estates, on which they raised cattle and stored their crops. The estate at Imenje in the basin of Šentjernej was originally probably a grange, which was later divided into seven farms. In the 18th century, the farms were deserted, some of the land was set aside for pastures and later turned into a stockbreeding estate, and some for fish ponds. In 1731, the estate was divided into four farms. Kostanejvica also had wine houses (in Raka, Carina, and near the monastery itself) on their vine-growing territory along the Krka. The oldest land register, from the middle of the 14th century, shows 357 inhabited farms and twelve abandoned farms. It should be remembered that Bernard donated 220 farms in 1249. The land register from 1625 shows only 303 farms, in spite of many donations and purchases. From the second half of the 15th century on, many farms were abandoned because of the devastation caused by Turkish raids. In the first half of the 16th century, the monastery had to hand over more than a hundred farms to the prince of the province, who gave them to the Uskoks – settlers who helped defend these parts in times of war.

Both Carthusian monasteries in Styria, Jurklošter and Žiče, were established when building two houses was still compulsory. Count Otakar Traungavec chose a location at the foot of Konjiška gora. The only access to this monastery was from the direction of Žiče village. Otakar's choice of this estate near Konjice, "which is surounded by high hills, and therefore suitable for Carthusians", was recorded in official documents in 1165. The upper house was built at the end of the valley; the lower house stood at its entrance, near present day Špitalič. The economic center was at the lower house, which was surrounded by some manor land farmed by converts and hired workers. The original borders of the estates owned by the Carthusian monastery in Žiče went north to the Drava river and the vineyards in Počehova, from there to the vineyards at Mestni vrh by Ptuj, from whence they ran to the Volgajna river, then to the Savinja river, from the Savinja towards Vitanje, across Pohorje, and again to the Drava river. The monastery in Žiče had granaries and cellars on its manor in Skedenj near Špitalič. Kumen near Špitalič, Kapunov dvor on Pohorje, and the manor in Suhadol were devoted to raising cattle. The oldest land register, from 1564, shows a count of 449 serfs. In addition, the monastery had several vineyards and land in the vicinity of Maribor and beneath Pohorje.

When Henry I, Bishop of Gurk, was looking for a place to build a monastery, he chose the narrow valley of the Gračanica river, which he thought would be perfect for the settlement of Carthusians. The upper house and the Church of St. John the Baptist were built at a location near the present day parish church. The remains of the original Carthusian monastery still exist. The lower house and the Church of Mary were built in Marijina vas – a village called after this church. The main access to the monastery was from the direction of Planina. This Carthusian house was not successful for long. In 1208, Leopold VI, Duke of Babenberg, established a new monastic station. This time the lower house probably stood on the opposite side, with acces from Laško, perhaps on the site of present day Jurklošter. Records from 1542 show that this estate was divided into three units, and that it occupied the territory between the Sava and Savinja rivers. However, most of their land was north of the Gračanica. At that time, this Carthusian estate had about 285 serfs and about 170 farms, 60 independent farms, and a mill.

In the 13th century, Bernard Spanheim, Duke of Carinthia and the feudal superior of Carniola, established a Carthusian monastery in Bistra.

His work was finished by his son Ulrich III. The existance of this station was first recorded in 1257, when Pope Alexander IV granted them all the rights and privileges of their order. Ulrich donated more than a hundred farms, at three locations south of Ljubljana, and on the left bank of the Sava river. The order's supreme officials approved of these borders (*termini passessionum*), which in 1265 ran along the bank of the Ljubljanica, past Podpeč between Ljubljana and Vrhnika, and the village of Kamnik, towards present-day Rakitna, and westward to Cerknica, from there straight towards to north-west, over Borovnica to Tunjica, and finally from Vrhnika back to the starting point. Bistra recieved many donations of land in the following centuries, especially vineyards. The borders of its estates expanded towards Vipava and Koper. The land register from 1659 shows that, in addition to the land surrounding the monastery, the Carthusians from Bistra had real estate in Ljubljana, cellars in Vipava, and vineyards in Solkan, Podnanos and Ajdovščina. The core of their estate was at two locations. First, nine parishes in the vicinity of Borovnica, Cerknica, Vrhnika, and Golo. Second, four parishes on the left bank of the Sava river.

Pleterje was the last Charterhouse to be established on Slovenian soil. Herman II of Celje, who was buried near the main altar of the Carthusian church, was the founder of this community. Settlement in Pleterje started in 1403, it was officially established in 1407, and accepted into the order in 1410. When this monastery was founded, the building of lower houses was no longer obligatory, so converts were moving into the upper houses. It was already hard to find wilderness land far from other human habitation. In 1429, the Carthusian order acknowledged the borders within which the monks were allowed to possess land: in a radius of approximately 50 kilometers around the monastery. It is also significant that this monastery was established at a time when patrons were hard to find. Most of the land was donated by the founder, Herman II and his sons, Frederik II and Ulrich II. The land register from 1507 says that the Pleterje estate was divided into six units, located around the monastery itself, on both banks of the Krka river, in Žužemberk, Bela krajina, Suha krajina, and in Styria between Planina by Sevnica and Šentjur by Celje. Vast vineyards in Lower Carniola were also in their possession. In 1507, Pleterje had 394 inhabited and 70 abandoned farms, five manors, twenty-three mills, and some manor land around the monastery. There were also 83 plots of barren land and 600 plots of land in hilly terrain.

Monasteries initially acquired land and annual income from their founders, but there were other patrons from the ranks of the nobility, prosperous citizens, and by the end of the Middle Ages, even individual peasants. The most generous patrons of monastic institutions were members of our most prominent aristocratic families. Among them were the noble families of Celje, Ptuj, Walsee, Auersperg, Svibno, and Čretež. Donors usually came from the region in which a particular monastery stood, or from the near vicinity. Many of them earned the right to be buried in the churches of the relevant order, and a promise that religious sevices would be held for them after their death. The monastery in Stična was showered with such obligatory donations throughout the Middle Ages. From the onset of the general social, economic, and spiritual crisis in the 15th century, the number of donations declined, until they stopped almost completely by the beginning of the 16th century. This trend had its effect on the economy of monastic stations. When the last Count of Celje died in 1456, the monastery in Pleterje lost its chief patron and protector. Patrons did not donate only land and annual income, they also gave large amounts of money (for example, Virida of

Milan to Stična, at the beginning of the 15th century) for new buildings, real estate, and inventory. Monastic superiors even bought land with this money. Many patrons gave land wherever they happened to have it. Sometimes it was too remote, and these estates were often sold or exchanged for more suitable locations. The results of this strategy were already evident in the Middle Ages. By then, most monasteries had succeeded in getting rid of remote property, rounding up their estates and strengthening their cores.

The supreme authorities of any order watched closely over the property of their monasteries. The sale of land was permitted only as an exception. Between 1414 and 1417, the General Chapter of the Carthusian order reinstated an old regulation that "less useful" land could not be sold. A prior could sell such land only with the consent of his chapter or at least one visitator. The money was then immediately used to buy new, better land. The order also wanted to have control over the economy of monasteries. In 1495, the General Chapter in Grande Chartreuse (the Carthusian mother house) demanded that every monastery submit an annual financial report, which was revised by a vicar, procurator, and at least two monks. It is evident from the minutes of General Chapters, whether Carthusian or Cistercian, that they were as concerned with the economic state of their monasteries as with religious matters.

"Free houses" and certain other privileges prove that our monks traded their produce soon after their stations were established. Trade routes can be reconstructed from official documents stating that certain monasteries do not have to pay trade dues. Most monasteries earned the privilege of transporting their goods, and those bought for their own consumption, through all the main regional cities. The monasteries in Stična and Bistra were both allowed to transport their goods to the coast without paying any tolls. This route was very important for both monasteries. We know that Stična sold wheat and bought fish in Rijeka at least from the 17th century on. Free houses attest the economic orientation of our monasteries. The Carthusian monastery of Žiče had free houses in Maribor and Graz. The free house in Maribor (Lent) was a storage house for goods and also a resting place for travelling monks. We know that Žiče owned property and land in the city and in its vicinity (Dravsko polje). Wine produced on the hill of present-day Piramida and by Trčova was sold in Maribor, just as wheat was. Monasteries earned some money from selling produce at fairs organized in front of their gates, where great crowds gathered on special church occasions.

The number of laybrothers (converts) started to decline in the 13th century. New orders, especially if they were mendicant, were more appealing. Fewer converts meant fewer workers to tend the monastic estates. This was felt especially hard by the Cistercians. Priors tried to deal with the problem by hiring workers and servants, but these were not prepared to work just for food and a roof over their head, as the monks and converts did. Managing and maintaining estates became expensive. Monasteries started accepting familiars (*familiares*), pious laymen whose status was somewhere between converts and hired workers. Abbots also accepted laymen, who did not wear monastic garb, and were not bound by religious vows. They only had to swear obedience to the prior and the estate manager. Converts in monasteries became fewer and fewer over the centuries. In the second half of the 17th century, the Cistercian mother house in Citeaux had only fifty converts, and by the end of the 18th century, only ten. We do not know how many converts were in our Cistercian monasteries during the Middle Ages, but we do know that there were thirteen monks in Stična in 1275. Kostanejvica was estab-

lished at a time when the number of converts was already diminishing. We can assume, though, that our Carthusian houses had sixteen converts each, according to the order's regulations. In the 17th and 18th centuries, each of our Cistercian monasteries and the stations in their vicinity only had one or two converts. It is thus understandable that estates became smaller, granges were dissolved, and arable land rented to peasants.

The 15th century was the onset of a general economic and spiritual crisis that also left its mark on the lives of monks and the economy of their estates. Our monasteries, especially in Lower Carniola, were continuously exposed to Turkish raids from the second half of the 15th century on. In 1471, the Carthusian monastery in Pleterje and the abbey in Stična were burned down. The fields were devastated, and peasants taken into slavery. Constant raids weakened the monastic economy. Many farms were abandoned at this time, as seen in town records of 1505 (Stična) and 1507 (Pleterje). Of the 915 farms owned by Stična Abbey, 240 were abandoned, and of the 464 of Pleterje Charterhouse, 70 were abandoned. Monasteries had to contribute to the cost of fortifying their buildings. We know that after the raid in 1471, most monasteries spent large amounts of money to fortify their stations. Both Church and secular authorities tried to help our Cistercian monasteries by incorporating some parishes. The monasteries could collect more income in this way. In 1474, the parish of the Holy Cross was incorporated in the monastery in Kostanejvica. Two decades earlier (1454), the monastery in Stična received the parish of St. Andrew in Bela Cerkev, and the parish of Šmarje by Ljubljana in 1497.

The most critical moments of this economic and spritual crisis came in the 16th century. A general economic crisis and the devastation left behind by Turkish raids (in 1529 and 1532) reduced monastic income to a minimum and eroded their material foundation. Less income caused a reduction in the number of converts and monks. All this had an effect on religious life in monasteries. After the battle at Mohacs (1526), money had to be given for fortification and defence. Monasteries contributed the following in 1541: Pleterje 1000 florins, Bistra 600, Kostanejvica 200, and Stična 1500 florins (1544). It is clear that the demands made by Ferdinand I greatly undermined their material foundation and drew their economy into a vicious cycle. Lacking money, priors had to borrow it from the nobility and citizens. Arable land and annual incomes were offered as collateral. Monastic superiors were afraid of loosing property permanently, so they took out new loans to cover the original ones. Because treasuries were empty, monks could not pay taxes, so their property was siezed and rented out to individuals from the ranks of the nobility or citizens. In 1529, the authorities demanded that monasteries submit money to the amount of one quarter of the total value of their land. Ferdinand I was the first to reach for Church (monastic) valuables. Many feudal lords and landowners then followed his example.

From the second half of the 16th century on, the country's princes frequently meddled in the religious and economic affairs of monasteries. Rich monasteries provided a constant income for the princes, who demanded ever more money for defense against the Turks. So they saw to it that monasteries were managed by competent men, who took care not to spend too much on the monks, their servants, and guests. We know that many superiors treated monasterial property as if it belonged to them, to use as they pleased. Many spent a great deal of money to provide the comfortable and luxurious life that the nobility had. It is not therefore surprising that secular authorities, with the approval of the church authorities, regulary sent visitators to monasteries, to inspect the

state of religious as well as economic affairs. Their records mention incompetent superiors and mirror all the shortcomings of the monastic economy in the 16th century. In 1567, Cardinal Frančišek Commendone visited many monastic communities and condemned the squandering of money and unnecessary expenditure he found there. It was not unusual for the superior's relatives to become wealthy at the expense of the monastery. The prince also provided guidelines on how to run monastic estates. Superiors were responsible for competent business, and they were supposed to have a complete overview of expenses, income, and stocks. Their inferiors had to submit financial reports several times a year. Our monasteries were visited by Francesco Barbaro of Aquileia in 1593. He praised Laurence Zupan, the abbot at Stična, but found a dismal situation elsewhere. The state of affairs in both Carthusian monasteries in the middle of the 16th century was such that the prince, archduke Charles II, prohibited the two priors from managing the property of their monasteries. Both stations came under the government of Cardinal Zacharias Delphin, who tried to drain them financially as much as possible. From 1589 to 1891, the two Charterhouses were managed by Abbot Jurij Freyseisen of Rein; from 1591 to 1593, they were in the hands of the Jesuit order stationed at Graz. During this time, all the income went to be used for their collegium. In 1595, an agreement between the Carthusian and Jesuit orders was reached. Accordingly, the Carthusian houses of Žiče and Bistra stayed with the Carthusian order, Jurklošter went to the Jesuits from Graz, and Pleterje went to the Jesuits resident in Ljubljana.

The prince of the province passed two regulations in 1563 which signified a considerable intervention into monastic economies. His documents prohibited monasteries from purchasing land and prohibited laymen from donating or bequeathing land to monasteries. The prince wanted to prevent priors from selling property and using the money for unnecessary expenditure. From then on, a prior had to ask the prince of the province for permission each time he wanted to sell property. Permission was granted in particular when the money was used to pay taxes demanded by the prince himself. Secular authorities also forbade the use of land as collateral when loans were taken. Monastic land could thus not be alienated permanently. These regulations were enforced twice again by Charles I, in 1574 and in 1587. It should be noted that from then on, our monasteries recieved no more donations of land. Patrons gave only money, which was invested with secular authorities at annual interest rates.

The situation improved greatly during the Catholic Counter Reformation at the beginning of the 17th century. Many new superiors came from the ranks of competent and trustworthy monks. To name just a few: George Urbanič (1603-1618) in Kostanjevica, James Reinprecht (1603-1626) in Stična, Vianus Gravelli (1595-1623) in Žiče, and Augustine Brentius (1597-1621) in Bistra. It must be said that individual superiors still rented out land for annual income, took loans, and used land as collateral, but not as frequently. Those that did, tried to pay their debts and get their property back as soon as possible. Secular authorities supervised the monastic economy, but superiors were mostly quite aware that they were only managers of estates that did not, in fact, belong to them. Abbot Thomas Bartholomew, who was reproached for his unfrugal management in 1593, is worth noting.

Because donations were rare in the 16th century, most monastic communities increased their income and property with small purchases, often buying only individual farms, vineyards, pastures, and real estate. Ne-

vertheless, records from the 17th century show that the general attitude towards donations was changing. Donations most often came in the form of money, exchanged for indulgences, or annual interest from money invested with the secular authorities. The material foundation of monasteries was also strengthened by bequests made by individual patrons. Larger amounts of money came into monasteries from novices, or rather, from their parents. Moristoni was an exceptionally generous novice. He gave Prestranek castle near Postojna to his monastery in Stična.

From the second half of the 17th century to the middle of the 18th century, many castles and manors were bought, and many monastic buildings were redecorated in the Baroque style. At this time, many superiors of our monasteries became immersed in debt. Consequently, one superior lost his right to manage his estate, another was removed from his post altogether. The secular authorities supervised the work of abbots and priors even more strictly. Superiors of noble birth, in particular, tended to spend too much on castles and extravagant dwellings. The monastery in Kostanejvica was the first to acquire a manor. In 1667, Abbot Janez bought a nearby manor. Later, in 1714, his successor, Abbot Alanus Millner, bought another manor, Radeljca near Bučka. This estate was sold by Abbot Rudolph in 1728. Abbot Anthony Baron Engelshaus bought the castle and surrounding estate of Klevevž by Šmarjeta. His successor, Rudolph, bought the manor of Mehovo-Ruperč vrh by Novo mesto in 1726. Abbot Alexander Baron Taufferer acquired the manor of Grundelj by Šentvid in 1753. Abbot Alexander also renovated his monastery in Baroque style, but simultaneously went into debt exceeding 50,000 florins.

Of all the abbots in Stična, Abbot Anthony Baron Gallenfels (1688-1719) was the most extravagant. He was responsible for the acquisition of the manor of Klevevž by Šmarjeta in 1693, for the purchase of Čatež by Mokronog in 1696, and Trebnje in 1699. Money for the purpose of buying this property was lent by the Church, by the nobility, individual citizens and even some peasants. Abbot Anthony contracted a debt of 200,000 florins. His successors were, understandably, in constant financial difficulties. Charles VI, feudal superior and the Emperor, decreed that a priority list of creditors be made and the repayment of debt be monitored. Secular authorities selected a commission to oversee the management of the estates in Stična, because Abbot Engelshaus was relieved of his duties for several years. This was certainly a precedent in the history of Stična Abbey. Successors dutifully repaid the debts, but still had sufficient funds to erect new buildings and renovate old ones. Abbot William Kovačič (1734-1764) and Francis Xavier Baron Taufferer (1764-1784) were especially good at this.

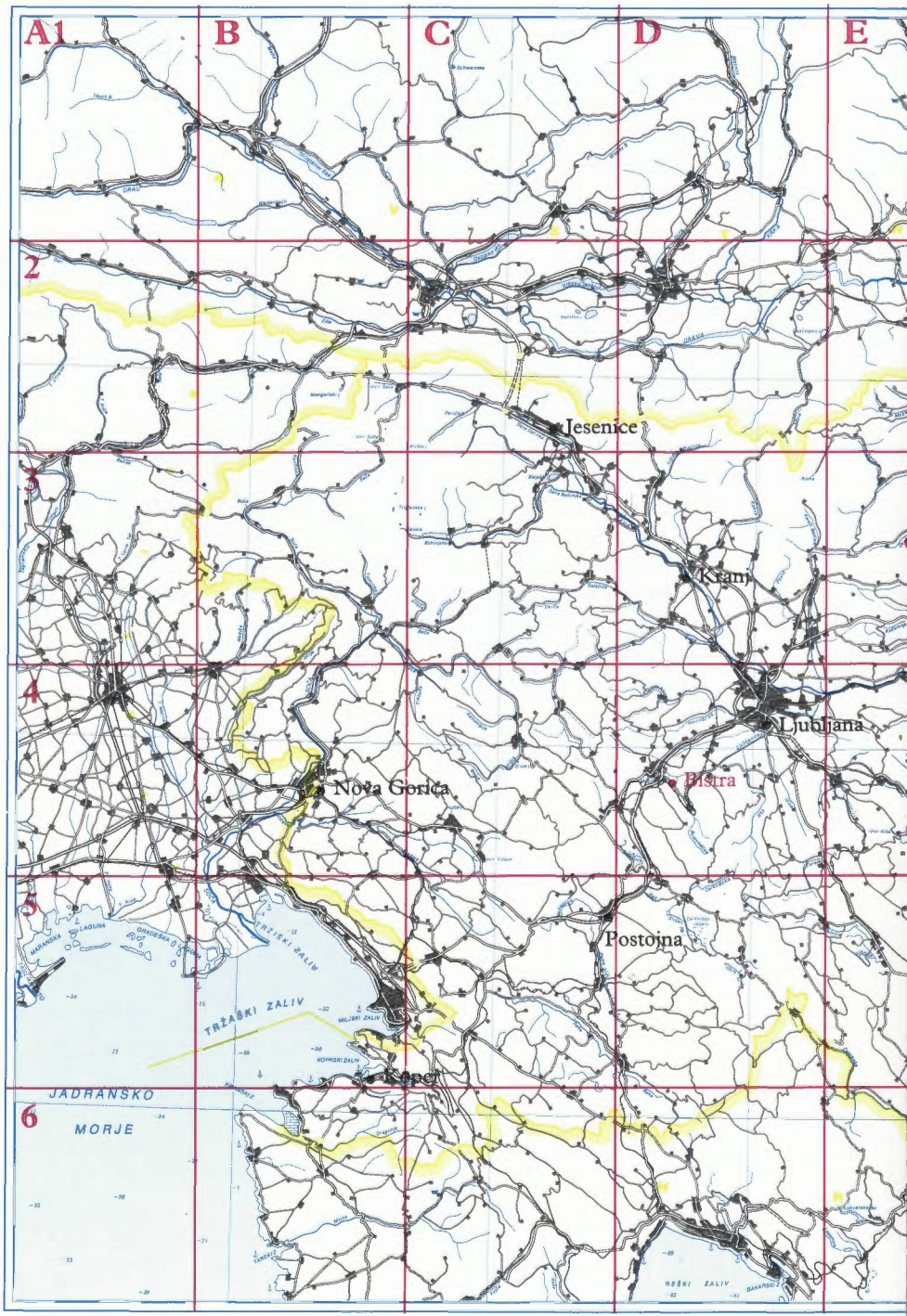
John the Baptist Schiller (1684-1698) was responsible for acquiring additional property and inventory for the monastery in Žiče. In 1692, he bought a manor in nearby Konjice, for 50,000 florins. In the middle of the 18th century, there were 575 serfs and many tenants on this estate. The prior incurred such a debt that he lost his post in 1698. His successor, Prior Caspar Ubitz (1698-1703) took over a debt exceeding 300,000 florins. In this case, too, the secular authorities decreed a priority list of creditors to be drawn up. Prior Caspar asked the order's supreme authorities, the Pope, and the Emperor for help. The Pope and Emperor helped by incorporating the prosperous parish of Konjice in the monastery in 1704. A part of the parish income went to the monastery in Žiče from then on. The priors in Bistra, too, did not lag behind when it came to buying castles and land. In 1662, Prior Lodovico Baron Ciriani bought the manor of Laško, by Cerknica, and other real estate from Jean Palmburg.

Even though some of the superiors here accumulated great debts, it cannot be said that they were bad managers of monastic estates in general. The large amounts of money they spent on building or repairing monasteries, on church furnishings, and on defence in times of war must be born in mind. It is known that our monastic stations had to pay annually several thousand florins in common and special taxes. Tax was also collected by the order's supreme authorities, for General Chapters, and for other administrative needs. Some monasteries tried to earn money by developing crafts, in addition to cultivating land and selling crops. The Charterhouse in Žiče established a glass-works at the beginning of the 17th century. This is the oldest glass factory in the Slovene part of Styria. Glassmakers from Žiče made objects for everyday use, for laboratories, and pharmacies. After the mineral spring was discovered in Rogatec (Rogaška Slatina) at the end of the 17th century, the monastery sold many bottles of this water. Records say that in 1726, they sold glass objects in their own shop in Maribor.

By order of Emperor Joseph II, both Cistercian and Carthusian monasteries were dissolved. In 1782, the emperor first dissolved the Charterhouses of Žiče and Bistra, the abbey of Stična in 1784, and the abbey in Kostanejvica the next year. Inventory records show that much of the debt of the most burdened monasteries was paid off by the eighties of the 18th century. By the time the monastery in Žiče was dissolved, its financial records showed only a little over 20,000 florins of debt. Assets were valued at 300,000 florins, liabilities at 34,000 florins. The value of the property in the Carthusian monastery in Bistra was over 200,000 florins. Even the abbey in Stična, which incurred a heavy debt at the beginning of the 18th century, showed more than 300,000 florins in assets and only 65,000 in liabilities. The assets of the abbey of Kostanjevica were valued at nearly 165,000 florins, liabilities at 100,000 florins. However the value of the manors in Kostanjevica (150,000 florins) must also be considered. The church fund to which all this property was diverted was enriched considerably.

Jože Mlinarič

Zemljevid Slovenije/Map of Slovenia



Legenda/Key

116 km Oddaljenost od Ljubljane/Distance from Ljubljana
B6 Zemljevid Slovenije, str. 50,51/Map of Slovenia, p.p. 50,51
194 A3 Atlas Slovenije, MK Ljubljana 1992/Atlas of Slovenia, MK Ljubljana