



LES SOURCES DE VOUGEOT
BOURGOGNE

Historical overview of Gilly Castle



A TUMULTUOUS PAST

6th century

A Benedictine priory was established in Gilly.

In the 6th century, the extensive region of Gilly, traversed by the Roman road connecting Chalon-sur-Saône to Langres, was owned by a wealthy Gallo-Roman from Autun named Eleuther, whose son was Germain, who would later become Saint-Germain, the Bishop of Paris.

It is thus not unexpected that following his death, the lands he had inherited were passed on to the Benedictine monastery that would evolve into the influential Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

The monks of Saint-Germain established a priory in Gilly. Germain continued to be the patron saint of the village and lent his name to the church.

12th century

In the 12th century, the Cistercians took control of the priory of Gilly.

Not far from Gilly, the Cîteaux Abbey, established in 1098 by Robert of Molesmes, underwent significant expansion, gradually leading the monks of Gilly to find themselves encircled by its holdings (farmland, forests, vineyards...) and disputes became frequent between the two communities.

The distance from their mother abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, along with its unstable circumstances, prompted the Benedictines to transfer ownership of their priory to the monks of Cîteaux.

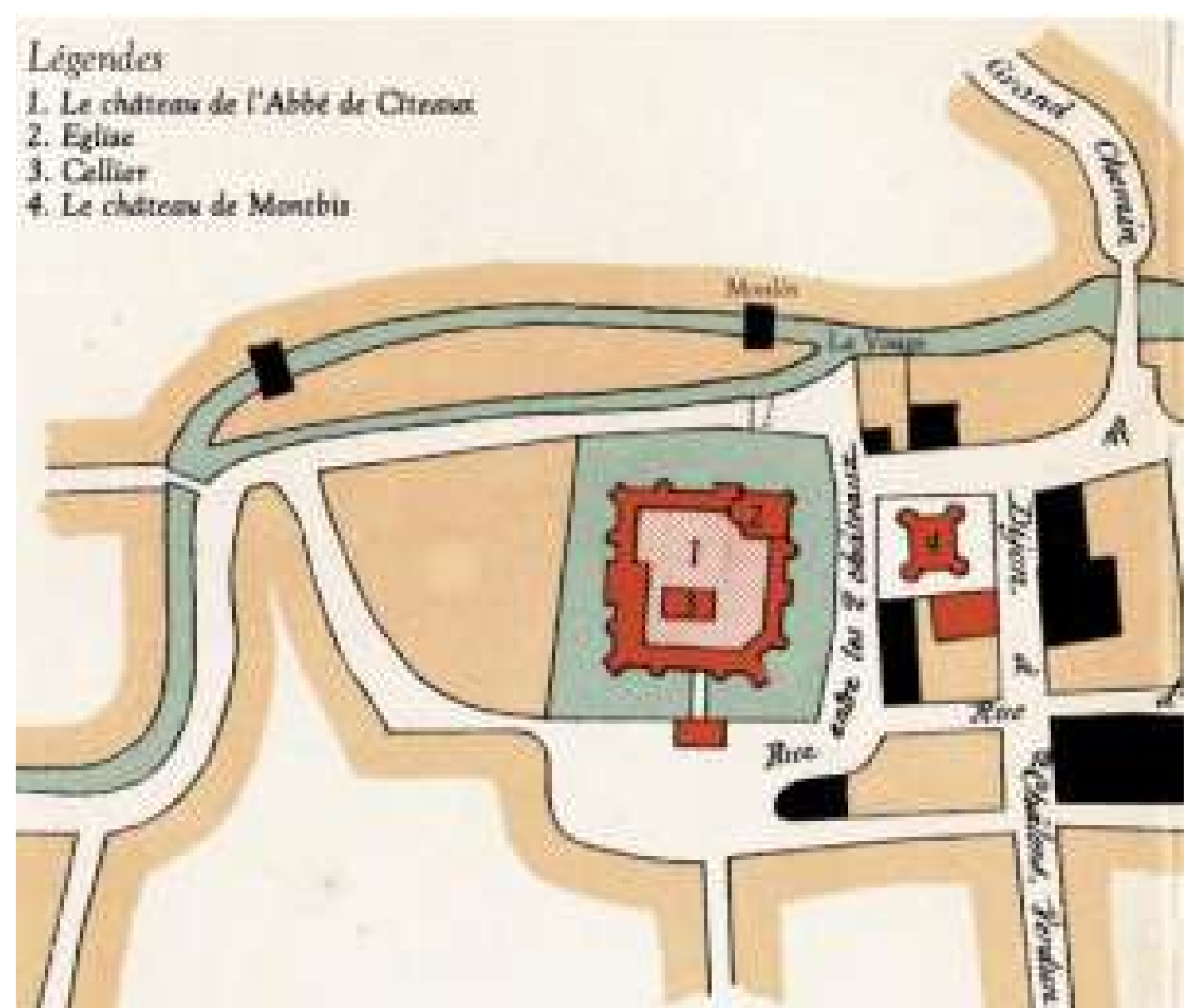
14th century

The priory transforms into a fortress.

During the "Hundred Years' War," the Cistercian monks chose to strengthen the priory of Gilly to ensure they had a safe haven and could protect their belongings if necessary.

The abbot of Cîteaux, Jean de Bussières, executed these fortifications from 1367 to 1369.

Plan of Gilly Castle created in the 15th century



The priory was converted into a castle featuring six square towers and a keep, encircled by ramparts, at the base of which deep moats were supplied by the waters of the Vouge.

14th and 15th centuries

Two strongholds in Gilly

(Refer to nos. 1 and 4 on the 15th-century map of Gilly)

During the 14th and 15th centuries, the village of Gilly was home to two equally significant fortified castles: on one side, the fortress of the Cistercians, and opposite it, the castle of Montbis, owned by the noble family of Vienne.

Relations being less than amicable, the monks swiftly seized the opportunity to purchase the castle when Guillaume de Vienne offered it for sale. They acquired it on January 20, 1469, and promptly demolished it entirely. Consequently, the Cistercian castle remained the sole one in Gilly.



17th century

A house of pleasure

With tranquility reinstated, the 51st abbot of Cîteaux, Nicolas Boucherat, chose to construct a charming country residence for the abbots on the remnants of the fortress...

He renovated the moat and drawbridge and, instead of the old ramparts, had seven square pavilions constructed, situated at the four corners and in the center of each of the curtain walls on the east, west, and south sides. Following his death on May 25, 1625, his successor, Pierre de Nivelles, finished the work that had been so well initiated and dedicated all his efforts to enhancing and beautifying the interior of this residence.

Within a few years, the castle transformed into a grand residence adorned with intricate and valuable decorations.

16th century

The fortress yields to the conflicts.

In the 16th century, the castle suffered devastation, looting, and destruction by fire. It was ultimately dismantled in 1591 under the orders of the Duke of Nemours, with only the kitchen and the cellar in the courtyard being preserved, and then it was completely demolished in 1595.



18th century

The castle was designated as national property in 1790.



After the French Revolution, the assets of the Cistercian monks (including the Abbey of Cîteaux, the Château and Clos de Vougeot, the Château de Gilly, among others) were designated as national property on May 14th.

1790: "The historic castle of Gilly, encircled by deep moats and reinforced by walls, features drawbridges and fixed bridges, along with barns, stables, a dovecote, cellars, a storehouse, sheds, a courtyard, and outbuildings, excluding the cemetery and the parish church of Gilly."

On January 17, 1791, the members of the district directory granted to citizen Focard, a timber merchant in Paris, the castle of Gilly, the lands, the enclosure of Vougeot, and the farm of Bretigny.

19th and 20th centuries

The castle changes ownership frequently.

The ownership changed multiple times: Messrs. Ravel and Tourton, Parisian bankers, Gabriel Ouvrard, the Rochechouard family, the Grangier family...

Generations of farmers cultivated the 100 hectares linked to the castle farm. The monks' commons served as stables, housing dairy cows, draft horses, pigs, and poultry.

"The anonymous masterpieces, the overdoors sculpted by the lay brothers of Cîteaux, the remarkable frescoes, and the murals have vanished beneath the whitewash of contemporary painters or are deteriorating under the passage of time," we find in Chalmandrier's "History," written in 1894.



1987

A four-star castle hotel

After the theater, it's now time for the hotel! The Côte-d'Or department is selling the property, perfectly situated for a hotel venture, to René.

Traversac, the founder of the "Grandes Étapes Françaises" hotel group, initiated significant restoration and renovation efforts on December 22, 1987. The four-star hotel welcomed its first guests in 1988.



1978

The headquarters of the Théâtre de Bourgogne

In the 1970s, a troupe of actors directed by Michel Humbert outlined a cultural decentralization initiative that captivated both national and regional officials. Ultimately, the former residence of the abbots of Cîteaux was acquired by the Côte-d'Or department in 1974.

A 220-seat auditorium was established within the structure that contains the cellar and the attic. The Gilly-lès-Cîteaux castle-theater was officially opened on January 12, 1978. However, gradually, the frequency of unsuccessful performances rose, culminating in Beaumarchais's *The Barber of Seville*, which marked the final show on the evening of July 29, 1985.

2022

The purchase of the Les Sources group

At the beginning of the 2020s, Château de Gilly entered a new era when the Les Sources group decided to invest in its future. Once the home of the Cistercian abbots, the estate, located in the heart of Burgundy, is steeped in a history characterized by discipline, tranquility, and the preservation of traditions.

For Les Sources, Gilly represents the equilibrium among a territory, architecture, and spirit. The Cistercian lines, the robustness of the stones, and the tranquility of the cloister illustrate a pursuit of harmony between humanity and nature, remaining true to the group's principles.

Here, the objective is not to transform, but to unveil. To restore without obliterating and to foster a dialogue between modern comfort and the memory of the location, with the intention of providing genuine hospitality, grounded in respect for heritage.

GUIDED OUTDOOR TOUR



- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| 1 | Lobby | 8 | The Orangery |
| 2 | Spa Caudalie | 9 | Access to the Vogue runway |
| 3 | The Castle Tavern | 10 | The Gristmill |
| 4 | The Cîteaux Inn | 11 | Pool |
| 5 | The restaurant Le Clos de la Tour | 12 | Tennis |
| 6 | Seminar rooms "Roots" and "Wings" | 13 | Parking |
| 7 | The Pavilion of Days | | |

ONE FAÇADE, THREE PERIODS



1 The former commons

This section contained the common areas or dependencies of the abbots of Cîteaux.

Since that time, changes have been implemented to facilitate their conversion into comfortable hotel rooms: the establishment of a corridor for circulation, the addition of a new floor, the opening of windows, the installation of skylights in the roof, the provision of running water...

The spacious rooms in the tower, close to the Vouge, have preserved their stunning fireplaces.



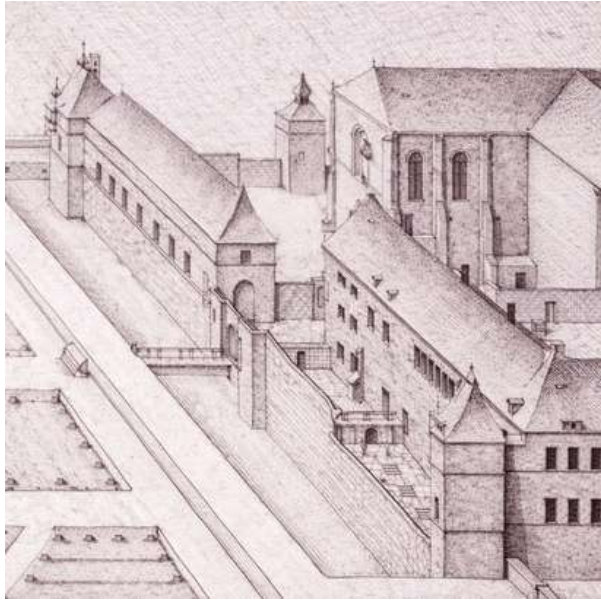
The commons of the past...



... Today.

2

Core section



1719

During the era of the abbots, this central area was nonexistent. Instead, there stood a wall featuring a large gate, which also safeguarded a small inner garden, now referred to as the "fountain terrace."

1988



Until 1987, the common areas on the left were distinctly separated from the apartments.

The construction was carried out in 1988 to allow communication from one end of the chateau to the other. This modification was approved by the Historic Monuments administration (the chateau was listed in the supplementary inventory of Historic Monuments in 1978). Today, the breakfast service area is located in this part of the building.

3

The Belvedere Suite



In the 17th century, the abbots of Cîteaux established their residences in this area, which was enhanced by a stunning staircase that crosses the moat (the intricately designed ironwork, created without welding, was incorporated in the 18th century). The feeling of primitive austerity had, over time, diminished... and if we are to trust the subsequent descriptions, the residence was opulent: "The interior features spacious halls and rooms, adorned as richly as they are illuminated by large windows. This castle would, in my view, be deserving of being the home of a king." Description by Méglinger, Swiss delegate to Cîteaux in 1667. Today, the Belvédère Suite is located on the ground floor.

The Pavilion of Days

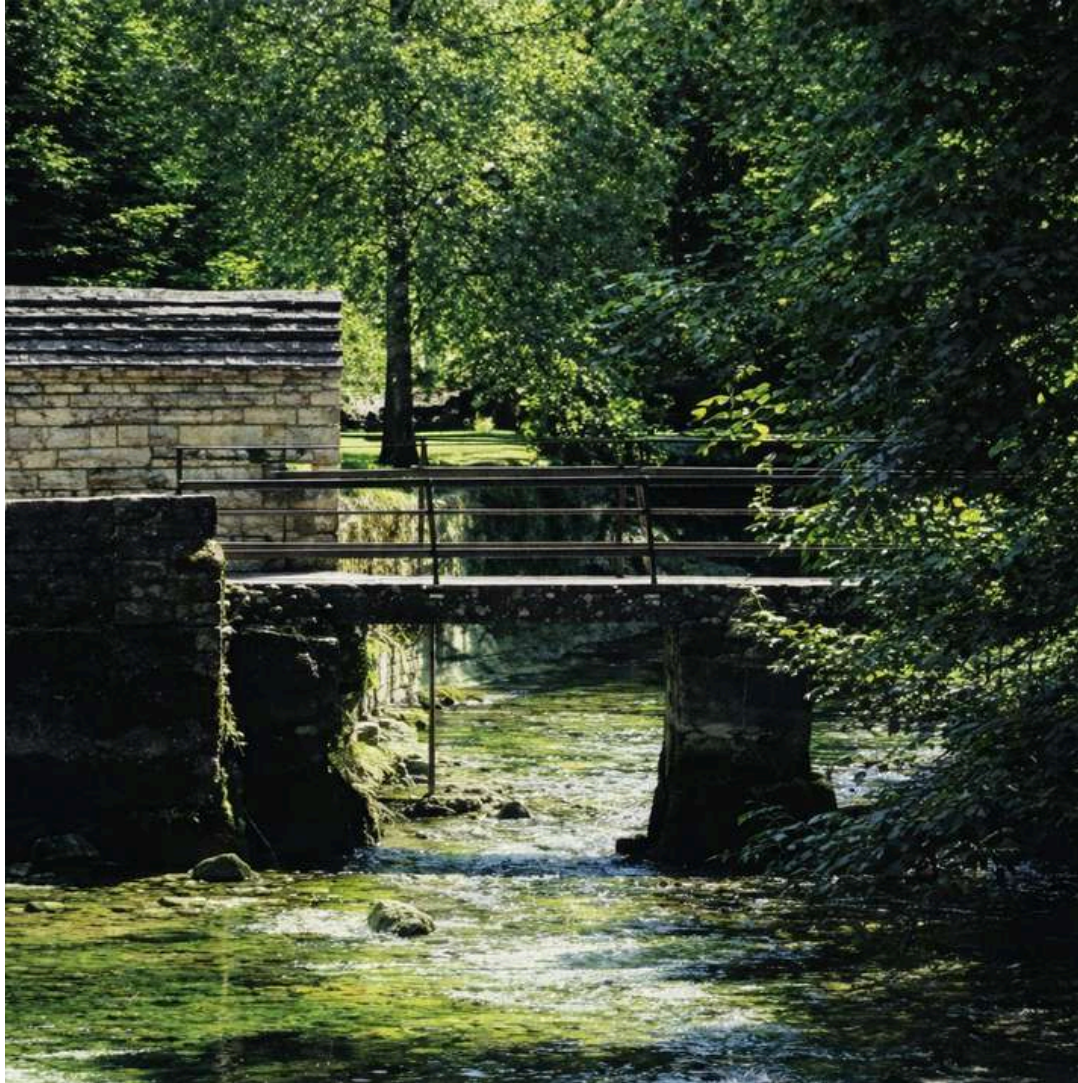


This pavilion, situated in the southwest corner and intentionally distanced from the abbot's quarters, served as the courtroom for Gilly.

Today, it has transformed into Le Pavillon des Jours and now accommodates three of our hotel rooms.

AT THE PARK

La Vouge



The Vouge River runs through the grounds of Gilly Castle.

From the Celtic Voug, Wog, Vog: stream, river flowing from a hill, from a rock. The Vouge that traverses the park of the castle originates nearby, at an elevation of 250 meters, at the "Clos des Amoureuses" in Vougeot.

It starts by traversing the village of Vougeot and proceeds through Gilly-lès-Cîteaux, passing through the castle park to further encompass the Cîteaux abbey.

The river extends for 33 km in the Côte-d'Or department before merging with the Saône (right bank), which connects with the Rhône at Lyon.

The pond for trout

Given the importance of water to religious communities, the monks had, out of necessity, acquired the skills to utilize it. Consequently, they redirected a portion of the river's water to supply this basin where they cultivated trout and other river fish.

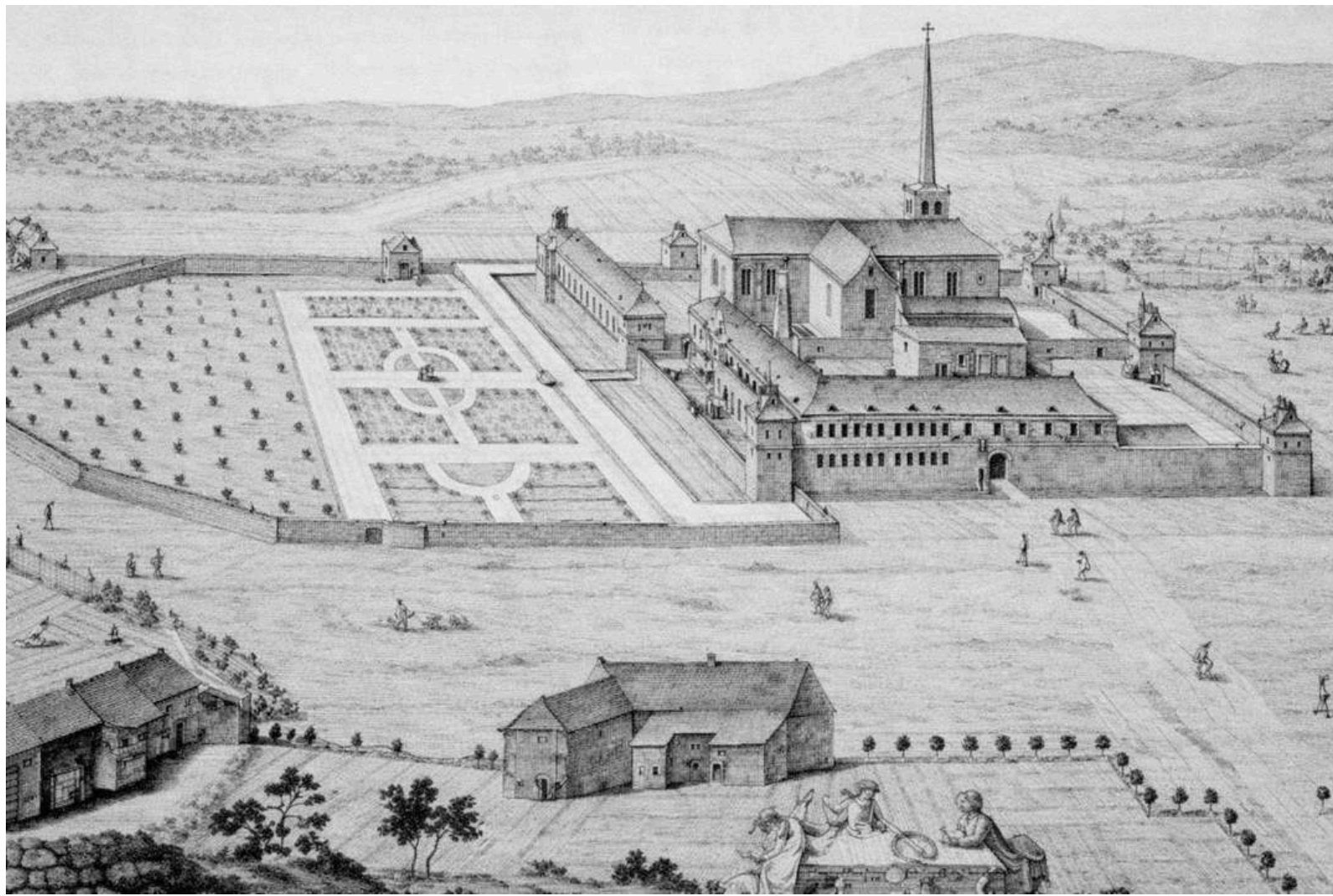
Having to "eat lean" frequently, particularly during Lent (which lasted several months for them), they relied on this resource for their daily sustenance.



The Abbot's Pavilion

On November 2, 1751, Jean Caristie, a contractor from Dijon, entered into a contract to proceed with the construction of the terrace above the pond along the Vouge River, as well as to build a pavilion at its end, "featuring a vaulted greenhouse below and a gallery in the style of a pavilion above." It is said that the abbot would retreat to this location for prayer and meditation. He was referred to as a "retreat" or a "solitary man." Today, this site is known as Le Moulin, our private, quintessentially Burgundian residence. A lovely duplex apartment offers the opportunity to enjoy the serenity, the closeness to the river, the garden view, and to genuinely feel isolated and distanced from the outside world.

The garden in the French style



Gilly "In the Presence of the Bird" - 1719 Lithograph by Sagot

After the establishment of the initial utilitarian gardens, which featured aromatic and medicinal herbs as well as vegetables, an ornamental garden was developed in the 17th century.

A bird's-eye view illustration from 1719 depicts the geometric, French-style garden that inspired the present garden. At its center, a well is visible, which was replaced by a fountain in 1988.

The pond of reeds



In contrast to the tranquil beauty of the French garden, the pond, where modest reeds thrived in disarray, had been commissioned by the abbots of Cîteaux and was consistently nourished by water sourced from the river.

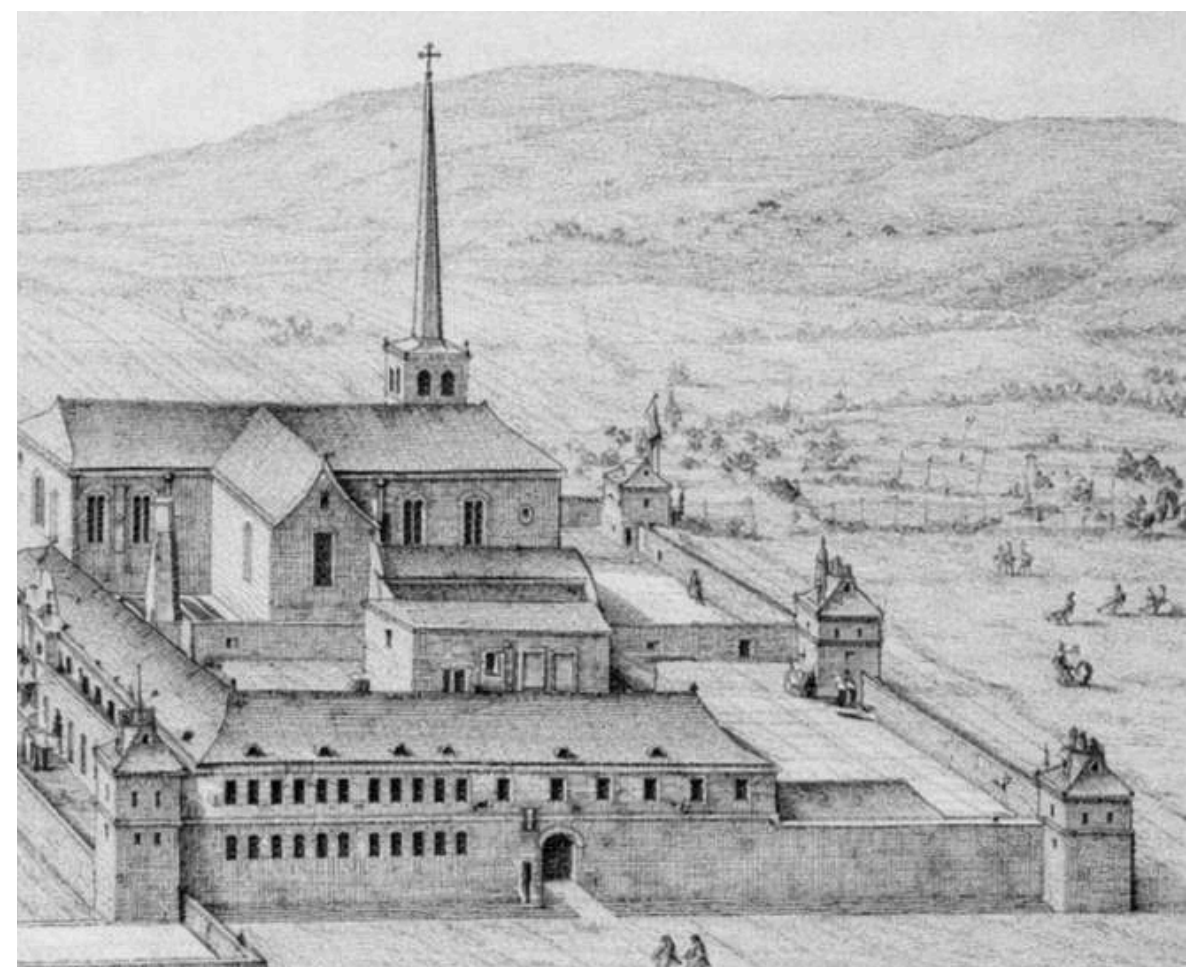
The monks aimed to commemorate the founders of their abbey, brave and modest monks who cleared and drained the marshlands. The reeds, known as "cistels," derived from the Latin term *cistellum* meaning gorse, are believed to have inspired the name of the abbey of Cîteaux.



The ancient drawbridge

In the 14th century, a drawbridge situated at this location was the sole means of crossing the remarkable moats filled with water from the Vouge and accessing the fortress.

The fortified castle was protected by a palisade, consisting of hedges and wooden partitions, which safeguarded the gatekeeper's cottage. Following this was a second line of defense, a boulevard made of stone and wood situated at the edge of the moats. Behind this second line lay the moats, which were excavated to a trough-like bottom.



The drawbridge served as the sole access point to the castle.

These ditches, which still exist today, were perpetually filled by the swift waters of the Vouge. They were traversed via a drawbridge and a plank that led to a wicket gate." Description recorded by the historian J.E. Chalmandrier.

This drawbridge was demolished in 1868.

The structure, upheld by tall buttresses that are irregularly spaced and adorned with a striking timber frame, presents a very attractive appearance.

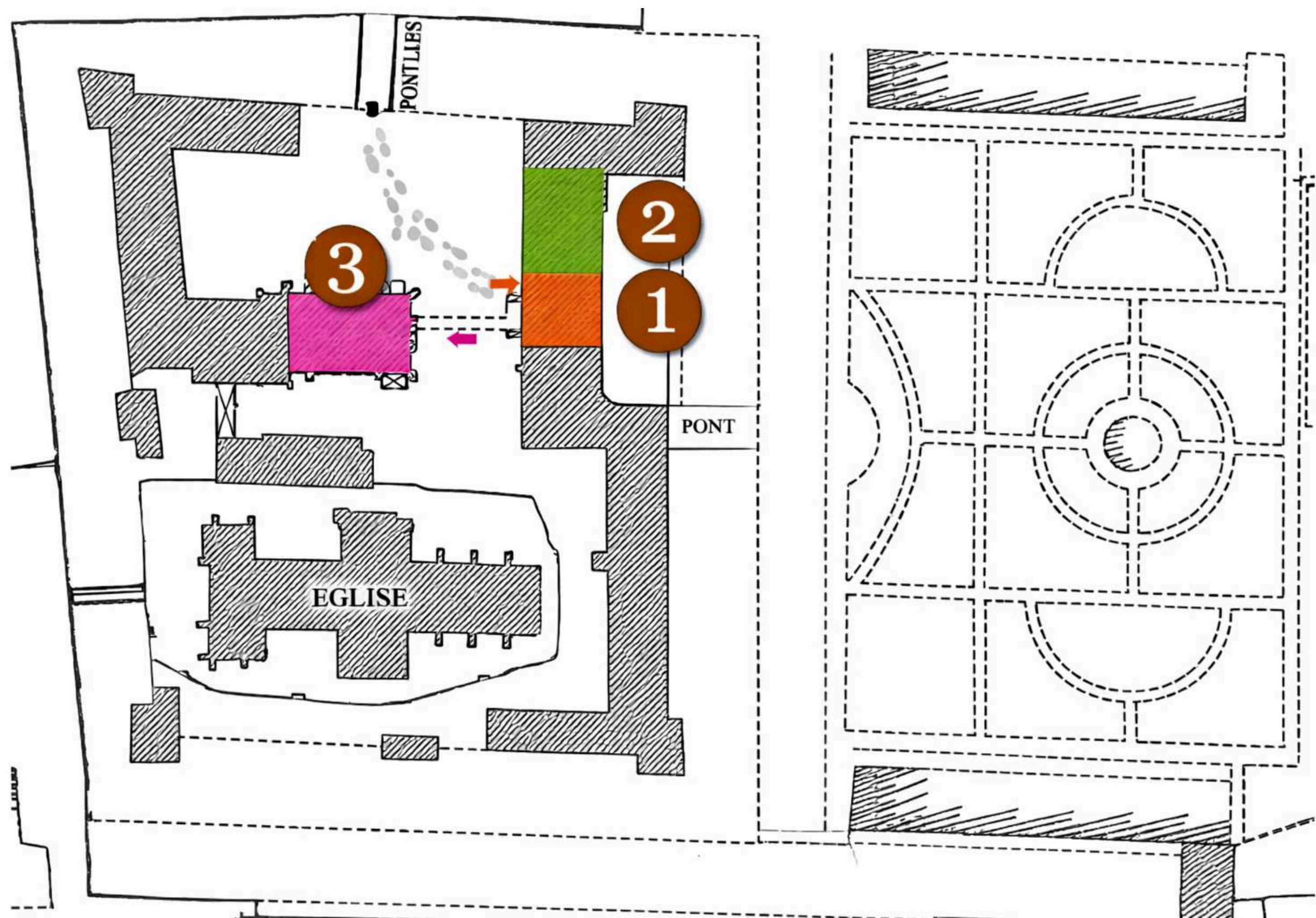
The upper section of the structure, previously a grain granary featuring mullioned windows, should be differentiated from the lower section, which served as a former cellar for the monks. The construction of this lower part, occasionally dated to the 13th century, has also been credited to Abbot Jean Vion in the 15th century. The cellar windows were quite narrow. They were enlarged in 1988.

The basement structure



We accessed the attics via the door on the left and the cellar through the arched entrance.

GUIDED EXPLORATION OF THE INTERIOR



- 1 The lobby area is now located in the medieval kitchen
- 2 On the second floor, the La Vigne Rose Private Suite
- 3 A previous wine cellar, now the Spa

1

The previous kitchen



We can still appreciate the four vaulted bays supported by a central octagonal pillar and the two enormous fireplaces, which indicate that many individuals dined at the castle: the abbot and his guests, the lay brothers*, the cellarer, the farm workers...



The personal arms of Abbot Pierre de Nivelles: "Azure, a stag's head caboshed or surmounted by a cross patée or a five-pointed star." On the ground, glazed terracotta tiles were present; the star was utilized to prevent trampling on the cross of Christ.

Constructed in the 14th century as part of the castle's renovation by Abbot Jean de Bussières and finalized in the 16th century by Pierre de Nivelles, it stands as the sole room that remarkably survived the devastations of 1591 and 1595.



The lay brothers were distinct from the professed brothers in that their vows were simple rather than solemn. They served as individuals to whom the Cistercians could connect with the approval of the diocesan bishop. They were selected from among farmers and tradespeople. Despite this, they wore religious attire and dined at the communal table in the refectory.

The previous medieval kitchen now serves as the reception area, situated beneath the original elegant vaulted ceilings.

This location of transition and hospitality, once bustling with the operations of the ovens, now merges the grandeur of its historical architecture with the modern comfort of the furnishings, providing visitors with an initial experience of the estate's essence.

2

The Exclusive Suite - The Rose Vine

This splendid room is the best preserved, featuring ornaments commissioned by Pierre de Nivelles, Abbot of Cîteaux from 1625 to 1635. It served as the grand salon, where two interior sills and two painted overdoors remain visible.



A frieze featuring the number "LA" unmistakably alludes to Louis XIII and Anne of Austria...



Here, Jean Petit, who served as the abbot of the abbey from 1670 to 1692, merged his personal coat of arms on the right with that of Cîteaux Abbey on the left. These emblems are positioned beneath the wide-brimmed hat and tasseled cord, with the number of tassels indicating the abbot's rank, which is designated for clergymen. The mitre, adorned with two croziers turned outward, representing pastoral authority, was often utilized by abbots as external decorations on the shield.

The small adjacent room is a former study. It has preserved its intriguing painted decoration: two allegories set against a landscape composition, with panels that create the illusion of wainscoting.



The splendid painted beams were restored in 1988 by Joël Oliveres, Véronique Legoux, and Elisabeth Evangelisti. This room is now designated as a Historical Monument and houses rare artifacts of our heritage.

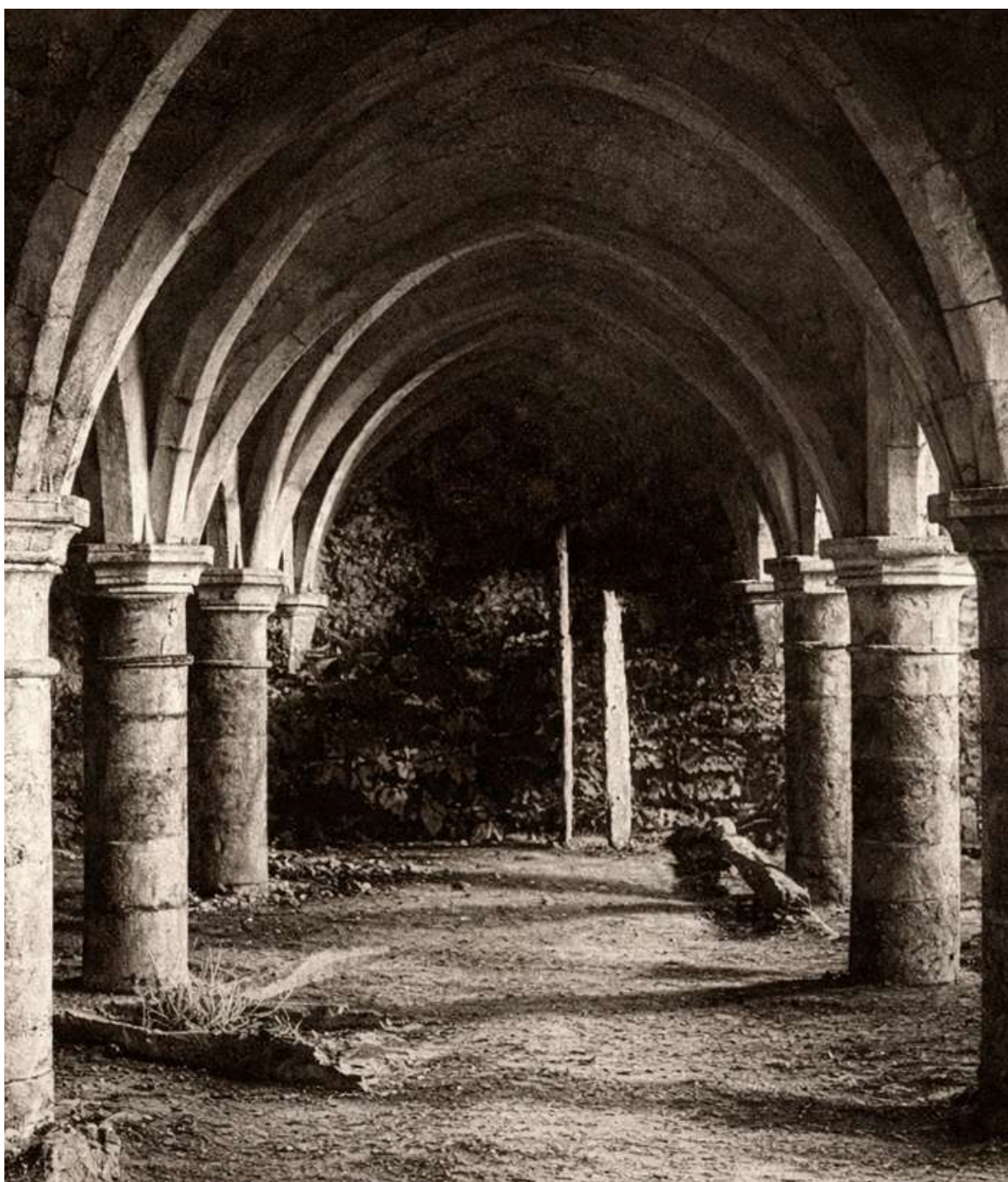
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Former wine cellar transformed into a spa

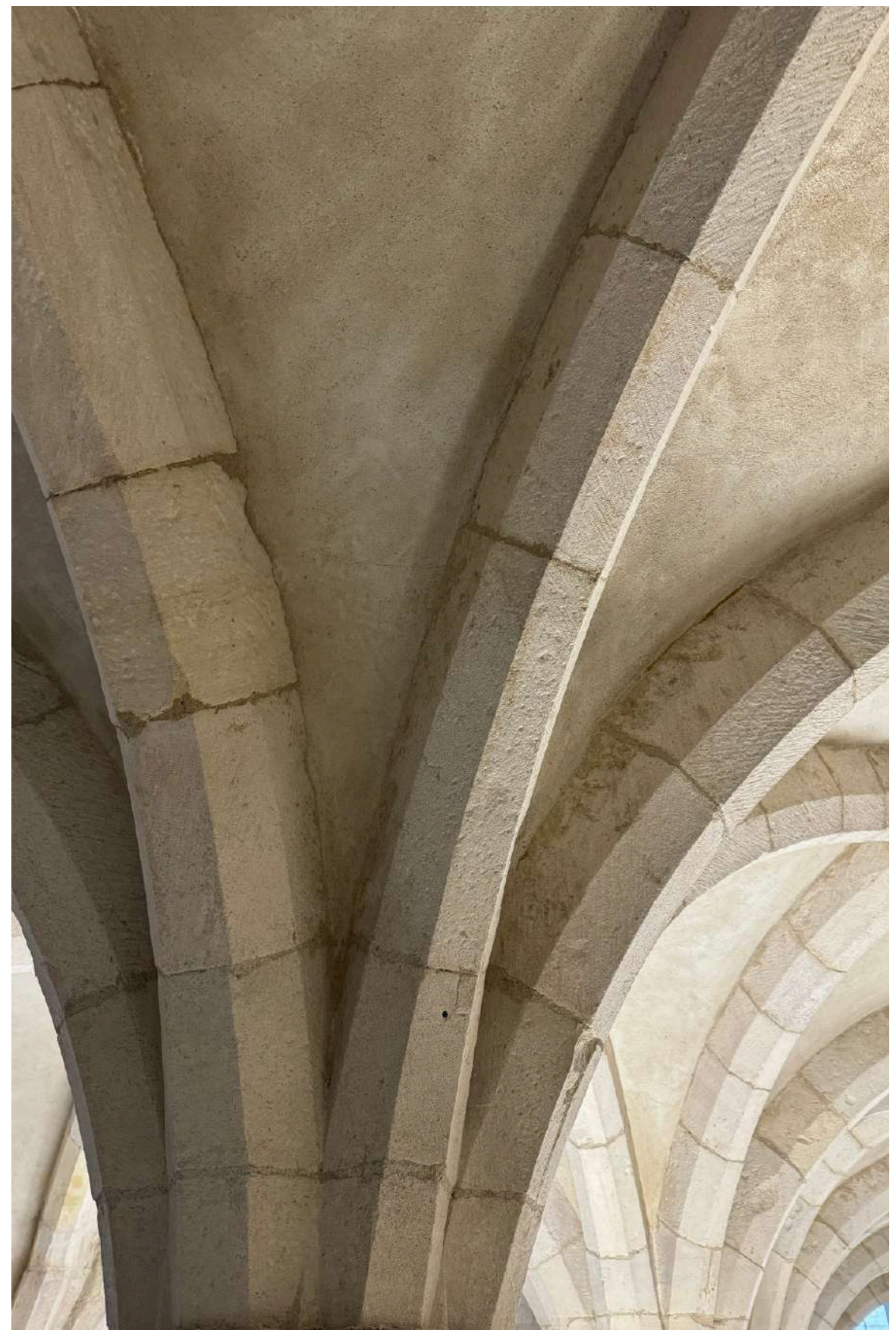
The term "prior" serves as a reminder of the Cistercian heritage of this cellar, which was likely constructed in the 13th century. Historians Chalmandrier and Rodier credit its creation to Jean Vion, the 40th abbot of Cîteaux, who held office from 1440 to 1458.

This former monks' cellar initially contained the wines from their vineyards in Clos Vougeot, Morey, Chambolle, and Flagey. This expansive room is separated into three naves by two rows of cylindrical columns that support ribbed vaults.

Throughout the centuries, wines were embraced here by the lay brothers and cellarers. The wine presses of Clos Vougeot and the barrels of Gilly evoked admiration.



"It is certainly the most stunning Gothic cellar in all of Burgundy and, for enthusiasts of true beauty, possibly one of the most exquisite structures in our entire province." Pierre Léon Gauthier



The previous cellar now accommodates the spa, established within this expansive space defined by its stone columns and ribbed vaults.

The original walls and medieval bays are maintained and complemented by the sleek lines of the pools and their reflections, creating an environment that is both historical and modern, focused on well-being.

Good wine: monks grow the vine

For these ascetics, wine was primarily vital for the celebration of Mass and the communion of the faithful. Consequently, they cultivated vines to satisfy their requirement for Mass wine, and gradually, to engage in trade.

The monks particularly excelled in viticulture, disseminating their knowledge wherever they established themselves.

In Burgundy region

In the Côtes de Nuits and Beaune, the Cistercians elevated the Burgundy vineyard to its pinnacle. The monks noted that each plot of vines, along with its soil, exposure, and location, imparted distinctive characteristics to the wine.

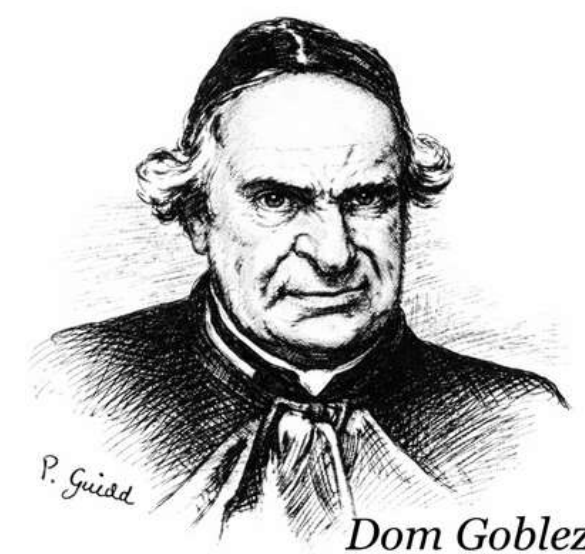
They separately harvested and vinified the grapes from various plots, which they referred to as "climats."



Dom Goblez, the final cellarer

The wine produced at Clos Vougeot

The Château du Clos Vougeot, constructed by the Cistercians on a 51-hectare vineyard, lacked its own cellar. Initially, the wines were stored there before being transported to the cellar at Gilly for aging under ideal conditions. The lay brothers carried the barrels from Vougeot to Gilly (2 km away), where, under the supervision of the cellarer monk, the wine was safeguarded from light and temperature variations.



Dom Goblez

"This renowned gourmet," remarked Baron de Cussy, "was compelled, with tears in his eyes, to depart from the precious cellars he had meticulously cared for, and he was unwilling to leave without taking a robust sample of the sacred fire with him."

The wines of Clos Vougeot were offered for sale following the French Revolution, when the Château de Gilly was designated as national property.

Dom Goblez, the final cellar master of Gilly and Vougeot, consented to lead the wine experts assigned to assess the wines held in the two châteaux. He stayed in Gilly until the conclusion of July 1791, after which he moved to Dijon, where he passed away in 1813.

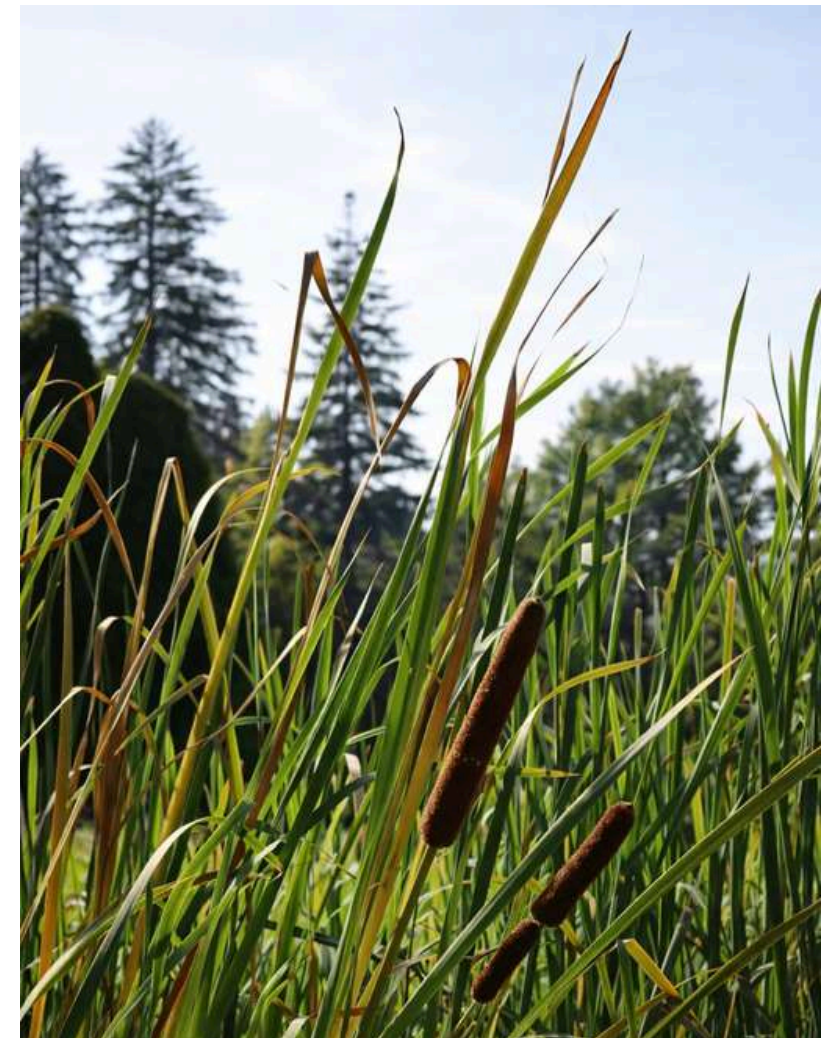
To gain further insight into Cîteaux Abbey

Establishment of Cîteaux Abbey: a new monastery

In the 12th century, the Benedictine monk Robert of Molesmes, disheartened by the realization that the rule of Saint Benedict was no longer practiced in its original form, chose to establish a new community aimed at returning to the foundational principles of monastic life: prayer, solitude, poverty, austerity, and manual labor.

With the approval of the Archbishop of Lyon, he and his companions enthusiastically cleared the unwelcoming lands, shrouded in dense forests and impassable marshes, which had been bestowed upon them by the Viscount of Beaune and the Duke of Burgundy.

In 1098, they constructed modest huts and retreated to them. These simple huts in the marshes marked the beginning of the influential Cîteaux Abbey. In 1109, the devoted Stephen Harding assumed the role of abbot and guided the monastery, which had been relocated 2 kilometers to the junction of the Coindon and Vouge rivers, because: "The monastery should, as far as possible, be arranged in such a way that it has everything necessary: water, a mill, a garden, and workshops." Saint Benedict.



The abbey is believed to have derived its name from the "cistels," the marsh reeds that provided shelter to the monks.



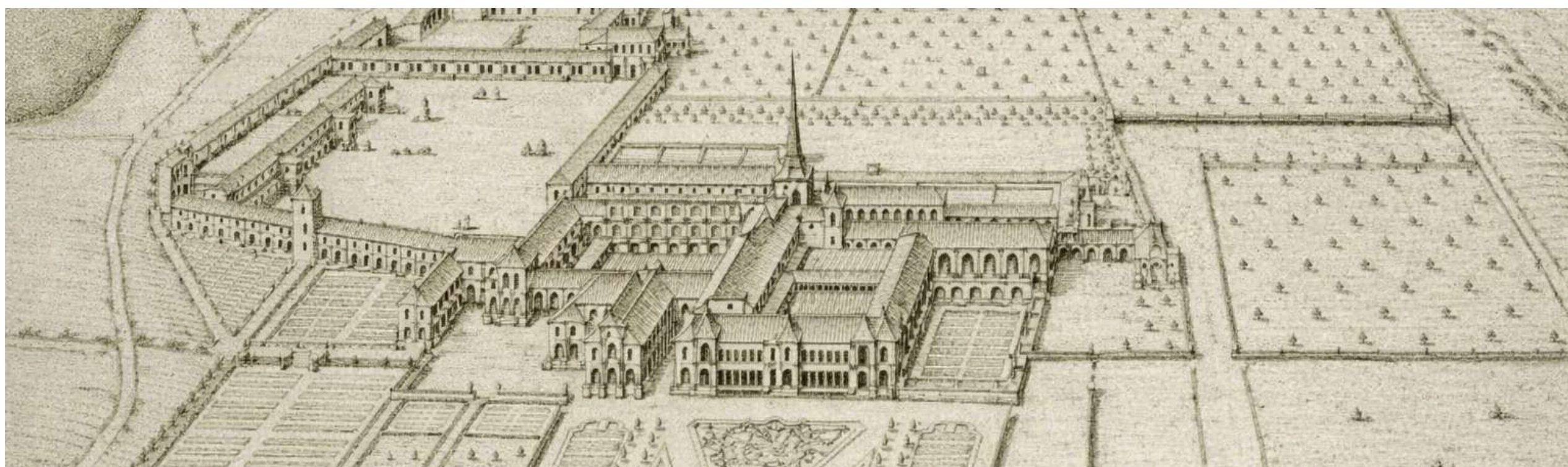
The Rule of Saint Benedict (circa 480 or 490-547) was formulated by Benedict, who was born into a noble family in Nursia, Italy. He created a guideline for monks residing in communities under the leadership of an abbot, emphasizing the importance of prayer and work, famously stating, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul." The rule advocated for four fundamental principles: moderation, seriousness, austerity, and gentleness. The monastic day was organized around the observance of eight liturgical offices.

The term "Benedictines" designates all monastic communities that follow the rule established by Saint Benedict. The Cluny and Cîteaux reforms in the 10th and 11th centuries contributed to the preservation of the Benedictine ideal.

The Cîteaux Abbey has been home to the Trappist Cistercians of the Order of the Strict Observance since 1898, who continue its tradition.



Representation of Saint Benedict



In the 17th century, Cîteaux was a small town surrounded by an extensive defensive wall. It was mostly destroyed in 1791.

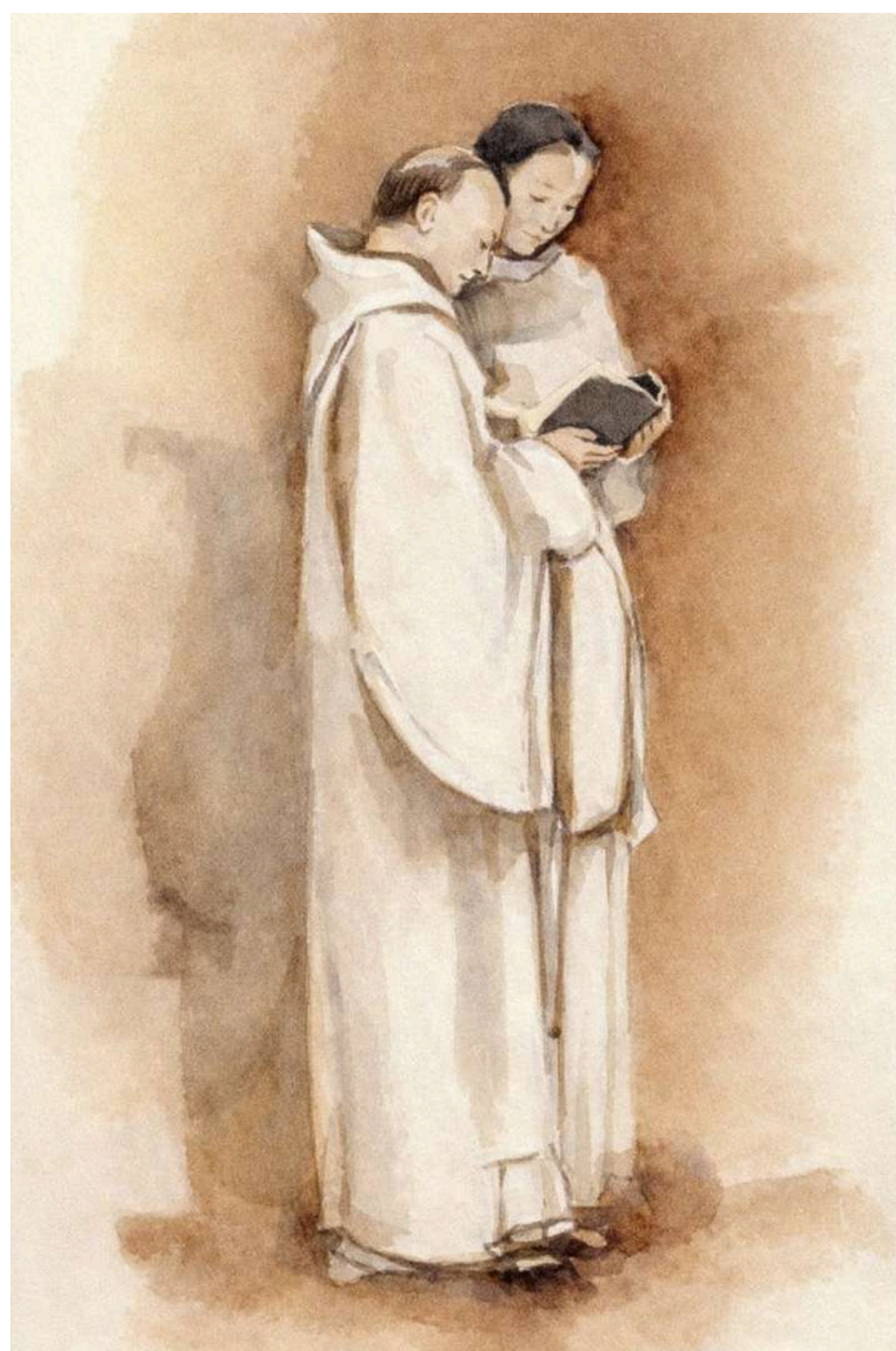
Remarkable expansion

A remarkable expansion. In the spring of 1112, a passionate 22-year-old, Bernard of Fontaine, sought to join Cîteaux, accompanied by 30 recruits from the most distinguished families of Burgundy. From the moment he arrived, the community experienced extraordinary growth due to his exceptional influence and efforts. The charismatic nature of Bernard, the acknowledged spiritual leader of Cîteaux, would significantly impact the history of the order. The Cistercian Order proliferated across Europe, ultimately establishing up to 762 monasteries, funded by donations from princes, affluent merchants, and later, kings. Bernard was appointed abbot of the newly founded Clairvaux Abbey (clear valley) and held this position until his death in 1153.

The white monks.

The Cistercians are referred to as "white monks" due to their tunics and cowls being crafted from undyed, natural wool, while the lay brothers opted for brown garments. In contrast, the Benedictine monks, known as "black monks," traditionally wore dark clothing.

During the era of Bernard of Clairvaux, the attire of the Cistercian monk included a tunic, a cowl, a scapular, a belt, stockings, and shoes—all characterized as "simple and inexpensive." The tunic was a durable woolen shirt that extended from the shoulders to the ankles, featuring long sleeves and a broad collar. The cowl served as the monk's customary outer garment, while the scapular was a lengthy black apron.



*The White Monks, Watercolor by
Micheline Reboulleau*

Sources:

To produce this work, we gathered our information from multiple sources:

"Chronicle of the village of Gilly-Les-Vougeot" J.E. Chalmandrier

"Nestled between Vougeot and Cîteaux, Gilly, a village in Burgundy" Jean Clerc

"The artistic embellishment of the castle of Gilly" Martine Plouvier

"Our charmingly obscure churches" Albert Colombet, excerpts from the Revue de Bourgogne (nos. 50, 51, 52)

The community of Gilly-les-Cîteaux

Gilly...

The name "Gilly," while occasionally Latinized (Gilliacus, Villa-Gillensis...), originates from the Celtic: Guil, Gwil, Gil, which signifies horse, pasture, plain, and Ly, meaning water, river. Thus, Gil-ly, Gilly, referred to a fertile area with abundant grass where herds could graze by the riverbank.



Saint Germain Church

The prominent church in Gilly also serves the adjacent villages of Vougeot and Saint-Bernard. It is dedicated to Germain, the Bishop of Paris from the 6th century, who is recognized as the village's patron saint. During the Middle Ages, the Cistercians received authorization to incorporate the parish church into their fortifications, resulting in various disputes between the clergy and the local residents. Historical records indicate that in 1500, the villagers took legal action against Abbot Jean Cirey, who was subsequently instructed to eliminate the barriers that hindered parishioners from accessing their church freely.

The church, after experiencing fires and devastation from wars, underwent several modifications but still retains its typical Cistercian characteristics: featuring a flat apse and prominent transepts.



We encourage you to wander through the village of Gilly to explore its extraordinary houses and landmarks and to encounter the "Gillotins."

The Laundry House on the Vouge

The sound of the washboards and the laughter of the washerwomen can still be faintly heard.



The Chevalier Bridge

Constructed on the Vouge in 1679 and renovated in 1770 by the Estates of Burgundy, it links Gilly-lès-Cîteaux to Flagey-Echezeaux.

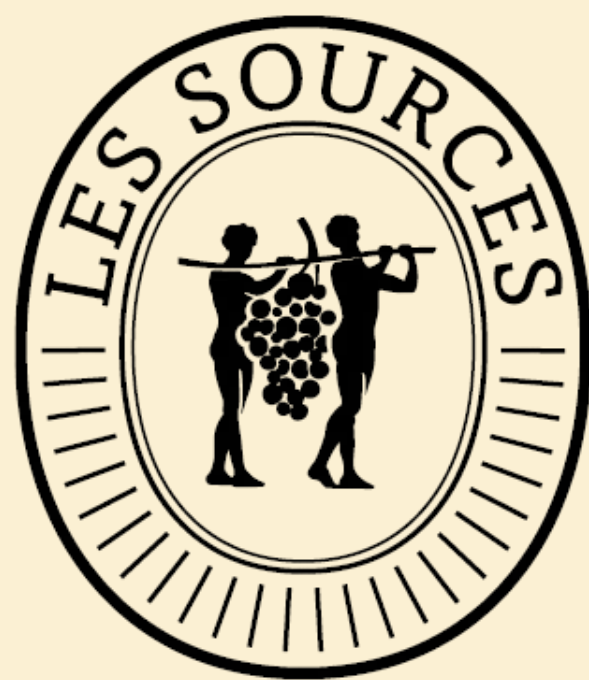
The turreted pavilion

Originally designed to accommodate the castle's officers and subsequently the postmasters, it was constructed by the Cistercians at the close of the 16th century following the destruction of Montbis Castle (some of the castle's outbuildings still exist). The elegant corbelled turret features three bas-reliefs illustrating galloping horsemen.



The barn of Saulx

The Saulx house still partially exists, but its barn, featuring a striking facade and monumental structure, stands as one of the village's proudest landmarks.



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