

The Life and Afterlife of Anna Katharina Emmerick:  
Reimagining Catholicism in Modern Germany

By

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To my parents, John and Beth Painter, whose love has sustained me

and

To my teachers and professors, whose knowledge and passion have inspired me

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## THE LIFE AND AFTERLIFE OF ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK: A TIMELINE

- 1774 Anna Katharina Emmerick born outside Coesfeld, Westphalia on September 8
- 1803 Emmerick professes final vows as an Augustinian nun, Agnetenberg convent, Dülmen, Westphalia
- 1811 Dülmen and much of surrounding region annexed directly by France in Napoleonic wars
- Agnetenberg convent secularized, November; Emmerick continues to live in abandoned convent until following spring
- 1812 Emmerick becomes permanently bedridden and unable to eat anything but the Eucharist, November
- Emmerick's stigmata discovered, late December
- 1813 Emmerick's stigmata become publicly known, March
- Emmerick is observed around the clock for ten days as part of Church investigation, June
- 1815 Napoleon's final defeat; Westphalia officially becomes a province of Prussia
- 1818 Clemens Brentano first meets Emmerick in September
- 1819 State investigation of Emmerick, ordered by Prussian administration and carried out by Münster civic government, August
- Emmerick's stigmata wounds, which had originally bled every Friday as well as on other Catholic feast days, now bled only a few times a year
- 1824 Emmerick dies on February 9
- 1833 Brentano publishes *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*
- 1842 Brentano dies on July 28
- Das Leben der heilige Jungfrau Mariä*, prepared by Brentano, is published posthumously
- 1858 Donations from Emmerick admirers abroad finance the erection of a large stone cross above her grave, as well as a surrounding fence and kneelers

- 1858 (cont.) Fr. Karl Eberhard Schmöger publishes volumes 1 and 2 of *Das Leben unsers Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi nach der Gesichten der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick, aufgeschrieben von Clemens Brentano*
- Fr. Thomas à Villanova Wegener OESA, of Coesfeld, Westphalia, begins recording his fellow Westphalians' memories of and veneration for Emmerick
- 1860 Fr. Schmöger publishes vol. 3 of *Das Leben unseres Herrn und Heilandes....*
- 1870 Fr. Schmöger publishes a two-volume biography of Emmerick, *Das Leben der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich*
- 1875 Fr. Wegener petitions Bishop Johannes Bernhard Brinkmann of Münster to start formal beatification proceedings for Emmerick, but is told the process cannot go forward because of the *Kulturkampf*
- 1877 Due in large part to Fr. Wegener's initiative, Emmerick's last apartment, containing her deathbed and other original furniture, is saved from demolition and opened to the public
- 1887 A group of French and German clergymen living in Ephesus, Turkey, using the detailed geographical descriptions of the Virgin's Mary's home after the Crucifixion, discover a structure dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE which they allege to be "Mary's House"
- 1891 Fr. Wegener publishes a biography of Emmerick, *Das wunderbare inner und äußere Leben der Dienerin Gottes Anna Katharina Emmerick aus dem Augustinerorden*
- 1892 Fr. Wegener successfully petitions Bishop Hermann Jakob Dingelstad of Münster to open formal beatification proceedings for Emmerick
- 1898 Fr. Wegener oversees the establishment of the Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Haus in Dülmen, which houses Emmerick's last apartment as well as other relics; lay Augustinian sisters manage the site, acting as docents for visitors and managing correspondence from Catholics asking for prayers to be offered at Emmerick's deathbed or grave on their behalf, or to report prayers answered through Emmerick's intercession
- The diocesan commission convened to consider Emmerick's case for beatification by Bishop Dingelstad of Münster concludes its work, and her case is brought before the Congregation of the Sacred Rite (later renamed the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints)

- 1921 The Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Bund, a laypersons' organization devoted to campaigning for Emmerick's beatification, is founded in Dülmen
- 1923 Fr. Winfried Hümpfner OESA, an Augustinian priest tasked with researching Emmerick's life in support of her beatification case, publishes his controversial book *Clemens Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit in seinen Emmerick-Aufzeichnungen*
- 1924 Numerous festivals throughout Germany staged by the Emmerick Bund celebrating the centenary of her death
- 1928 Emmerick's beatification cause is suspended by the Congregation for the Sacred Rite in Rome because of concerns over the authenticity of material in Brentano's published books on Emmerick's visions
- 1938 construction of Heilig-Kreuz Kirche, a new parish church in Dülmen designed by Dominikus Böhm expressly as a shrine church for Emmerick's remains, is completed
- 1945 Coesfeld and Dülmen are severely destroyed by Allied saturation bombing, but Emmerick's remains and many relics associated with her escape destruction
- 1973 Bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg of Münster, with the support of the rest of the German congregation of Bishops, successfully petitions Rome to reopen Emmerick's beatification case ahead of the two-hundredth anniversary of her birth
- 1982 A revived Emmerick Bund, in conjunction with the Diocese of Münster, holds the first in a series of scholarly symposia about Emmerick's life and cult
- 2004 Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*, based in part on *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*, premieres on February 25
- Pope John Paul II beatifies Anna Katharina Emmerick on October 3

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

### *Anna Katharina Emmerick and her Immediate Circle*

ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK (1774-1824), peasant woman from Dülmen, in the Münsterland region of Westphalia; visionary since childhood; Augustinian nun 1802-1811; stigmatic, bedridden, able to survive without food from Dec. 1812; dies 1824; beatified, 2004

Clemens Brentano (1778-1842), Romantic poet, novelist, translator, and theater critic, of wealthy, urban background; enthusiastic Catholic after rediscovering his baptized faith, from ca. 1817; becomes Emmerick's self-appointed amanuensis, recording her visions of biblical history, from late 1818 until her death; later edits and publishes Emmerick's Passion visions as *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*, 1833

Gertrud Emmerick (ca. 1778-?), younger sister of Anna Katharina Emmerick, who lives with her and acts as her caretaker after she is forced to leave the convent in 1813, sleeping with her in the same bed; fights frequently with her sister and is disliked by everyone else around Emmerick, including Wesener and Brentano in particular; very little known about her

Abbé Jean Martin Lambert (1753-1821), priest, refugee of the French Revolution who settled in Dülmen; Emmerick's closest confidante since her time in the convent; shares rented apartment with Emmerick after secularization of Agnetenberg convent

Fr. Alois Josef Limberg OP (1782-1852), Dominican monk, moves in with family in Dülmen when his monastery is secularized; Emmerick's confessor from 1802; described as simple-minded and provincial by others

Fr. Bernhard Overberg (1754-1826), cathedral dean and head of *Normalschule* in Münster; renowned teacher, school reformer, and publisher of books on pedagogical theory; asked by Vicar General Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering to interview Emmerick several times as part of Church investigation and becomes her lifelong friend

Clara Söntgen (1785-after 1858), Emmerick's closest female friend, entered convent of Agnetenberg with her in 1802; serves as a secret informant for Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering during his investigation of Emmerick in 1813

Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener (1782-1832), practical physician in Dülmen; treats Emmerick and becomes one of her closest friends and admirers from 1813; writes volumes of notes and manuscripts on Emmerick but publishes none of them

*Other Significant Figures in Anna Katharina Emmerick's Life*

Dr. (Johann) Bernhard Bodde (1760-1833), physician and professor of Chemistry at University of Münster; visited Emmerick briefly in 1813; published pamphlet arguing Emmerick's stigmata were fake and that she and/or others around her were perpetrating a public fraud, 1816 (originally in Dutch; translated into German by 1817); engaged in "pamphlet war" with Fr. Rensing about Emmerick, 1818-19

Dr. Clemens Maria Franz von Bönninghausen (1785-1864), born in Netherlands, career civil servant as well as botanist and pioneering scholar of homeopathic medicine; leads Prussian state investigation of Emmerick in August 1819 and publishes a series of books about its findings

Dr. Christian Brentano (1784-1851), physician with interests in animal magnetism, younger brother of Clemens Brentano; examines Emmerick in an extended visit to Dülmen in 1817 and discusses her supernatural phenomena at length with Dr. Wesener, with whom he forms a close and lasting friendship; When Dr. Wesener takes exception to Clemens' monopolization of Emmerick's time and energy, Christian agrees to try and dissuade his brother from spending any more time in Dülmen

Vicar General (later Archbishop) Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering (1773-1845), Vicar General and acting head of the diocese of Münster from 1810, in the absence of a sitting bishop; orders Church investigation of Emmerick, April-June 1813; would later become Archbishop of Cologne

Dr. Franz Ferdinand von Druffel (1763-1857), medical doctor, participant in the *Münsterscher Kreis*, member of the faculty of the University of Münster, and Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering's personal physician; asked by Droste-Vischering to investigate Emmerick; publishes the first medical article about her in 1814

Luise Hensel (1798-1876), poet; daughter of Berlin Protestant pastor who converted to Catholicism at age 20; unrequited love of Clemens Brentano; visited Emmerick a handful of times and maintained a relationship with her through letters; journals and letters, many of which discussed Emmerick and Brentano, published in decades after her death

Dr. Peter Krauthausen (1750-1820), Anna Katharina Emmerick's physician from entering the convent in 1802; asked by Vicar General Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering to observe Emmerick and try to heal her stigmata as part of Church investigation; becomes frustrated with Emmerick's attitude toward his treatments and resigns as her physician in June 1813, at which point Dr. Wesener becomes her doctor

Father Bernhard Rensing (1760-1826), parish priest in Dülmen; key player in Church investigation of Emmerick in April-June 1813; defends Emmerick in "pamphlet war"

with Dr. (Johann) Bernhard Bodde, 1818-19; later becomes increasingly skeptical of Emmerick's supernatural phenomena.

Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg (1750-1819), nobleman, poet, historian, famous Catholic convert; met Emmerick in July 1813 and published his favorable impressions of her shortly thereafter

Oberpräsident Ludwig Freiherrn von Vincke (1774-1844), Prussian administrator and reformer, first Oberpräsident of Prussian province of Westphalia; orders state investigation of Emmerick in response to growing controversy about her in German press; rejects Vicar General Droste-Vischering's proposal for a "mixed" investigation involving clerical as well as state officials

*Figures Significant in the Later Development of Anna Katharina Emmerick's Cult*

Fr. Clemens Engling (1936-), Dr. theol., ordained priest 1964; served as pastor of Heilig-Kreuz Kirche in Dülmen 1980-2001; vice-postulator of Emmerick's beatification cause; co-organizer of several scholarly symposia on Emmerick in the 1980s and 1990s; author of three books on Emmerick published in the 2000s

Fr. Winfried Hümpfner OESA (1889-1962), born in Aidhausen, Bavaria; entered Augustinian order 1909 and was ordained priest in 1914; researched Clemens Brentano's several volumes of original notes from his time with Emmerick and published *Clemens Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit in seinen Emmerick-Aufzeichnungen* in 1923, demonstrating the extent to which Brentano expanded, embellished, and added whole new passages to her visions in the published books; released two anthologies of primary sources connected with Emmerick's life in 1926 and 1929; went on to become high-ranking member of Augustinian order in Rome from 1931 to 1947

Fr. Karl Eberhard Schmöger C.Ss.R (1819-1883), from Ehingen, Baden-Württemberg, ordained priest 1842, enters Redemptorist order 1850; becomes lecturer in theology and exegesis in seminary in Altötting, 1853; is given the task of editing and publishing Brentano's unfinished Emmerick manuscripts; releases three volumes of Brentano-Emmerick material, 1858-1860; publishes 2-volume biography of Anna Katharina Emmerick, 1870; also known for serving as spiritual advisor to alleged ecstatic visionary and stigmatic Louise Beck

Fr. Thomas à Villanova Wegener OESA (1831-1918), born Theodor Kaspar Heinrich in Coesfeld, Westphalia; ordained priest 1855; began collecting evidence of Emmerick veneration, 1858; begins petitioning for Emmerick's beatification and becomes deeply involved in researching and preserving memories and artifacts of her life, 1870s; joins

Augustinian order, taking the name Thomas à Villanova, 1885; publishes biography of Emmerick, 1891; opens Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Haus, 1898; serves as first postulator of Emmerick's beatification cause until his death in 1918

## INTRODUCTION

### *Anna Katharina Emmerick's Enduring Cult: A Red Thread to Follow through German History*

Before March 1813, Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774-1824) had been a tenant-farmer's daughter, and later a cloistered nun.<sup>1</sup> After March 1813, she became a public spectacle. Pious peasants and skeptical doctors, princes of the Church and Prussian officials alike traveled to the Westphalian town of Dülmen to seek her out. They found her in what had become her home after the secularization of her convent: a rented room above an inn. She would live out the rest of her days in the public eye. Before her death she was already fodder for newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, a topic of debate in Austrian medical journals, the subject of books in France and the Netherlands, and a focal point of discussion in many German-language books, articles, and pamphlets.<sup>2</sup> Even her death, at age fifty, in 1824 brought no respite. Following Emmerick's burial, disturbing rumors spread through Dülmen that a Dutch businessman had stolen her body, intending to display it for the paying public. Concerned friends secretly opened her grave, six weeks after her death, to make certain her remains were still there. Days later, the mayor of Dülmen and a few city councilmen did the same, unaware that the previous exhumation had

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Katharina (or Anna Katherina, or Anne Catherine) Emmerick's name is spelled multiple different ways in both primary and secondary literature. In particular, Emmerick is often Emmerich, which may be a mistaken association of Anna Katharina with the Westphalian town of Emmerich. Alternatively, Emmerick with a "k" may be a *Plattdeutsch* (Low German) variation of Emmerich with an "h." Emmerick's signatures on documents appear to use the "k" spelling, which will also be used here.

<sup>2</sup> For German articles from Emmerick's lifetime, see "Über die Nonne zu Dülmen," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger* (Dortmund), Aug. 23, 1815; "Die Nonne von Dülmen mit den blutenden Wundmalen des Kreuzes. Ein Wunder—oder keins," *Das Sonntagsblatt* (Minden), July/Aug., 1817; "Die Nonne von Dülmen," *Wünschelruthe* (Göttingen), June 29, 1818; "Tagesgegenstände: Resultate der Untersuchung über die Nonne zu Dülmen," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger*, Nov. 3, 1819. Books and articles from Emmerick's lifetime published outside Germany include J. F. Bährens, "Der animalische Magnetismus etc. etc.," *Medicinish-chirurgische Zeitung* (Vienna), Feb. 28, 1820; "Miracles," *Literary Gazette* (London), Sept. 25, 1819; "Miracles in 1819!," *London Monthly Magazine*, Oct. 1819; "Miracles in 1819!," *Christian Watchman* (Boston), Jan. 15, 1820; *Echte afbeelding van Anna Catharina Emmerich, werkzuster in het voormalig klooster der Augustinessen, Agnetenberg te Dulmen* (Amsterdam: Schievenbus, 1815); Louis Silvy, *Relation des faits miraculeux concernant la révéende mère Emmerich, religieuse du couvent des augustines de Dulmen en Westphalie, avec les témoignages qui constatent ces faits subsistant depuis onze années* (Paris: Beaucé, 1820).

occurred. To date, she has been disinterred five times. On the next-to-last occasion, in 1974, her bones were displayed for photographers before being returned to their unquiet grave.<sup>3</sup>

Emmerick did not become a sudden celebrity, and the object of a lasting popular fascination, merely because she was a nun who had been forced out of her convent and into the world. That was a fate she shared with many. In March 1813, Europe was in the midst of a continental war. Napoleon Bonaparte's army had invaded and dismembered the Holy Roman Empire, bringing with it the rhetoric of "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*," and the reality of military occupation. The hundreds of loosely confederated territories which made up German-speaking Europe suddenly coalesced into three dozen, their borders frequently shifting with the fortunes of war. Emmerick's own town of Dülmen changed hands three times, its inhabitants forced to billet Prussian, then French soldiers, and eventually Prussians again.<sup>4</sup> In this time of unprecedented challenges and revolutionary ideas, many rulers secularized the church lands and monastic houses within their domains. Reaping benefits from the sale of lands thus released from the "dead hand of the Church," governments turned thousands of German nuns and monks out of their doors.<sup>5</sup>

Yet even though she was one among these thousands, Emmerick attracted unusual, intense, and lasting attention. In the words of a contemporary German poet:

This woman, who as a youth had prayed day and night before the Stations of the Cross and before the wayside crosses, had herself been made like a wayside cross. By one

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<sup>3</sup> K. Hegemann, *Grabstätte Anna Katharina Emmerick in der Krypta der Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche Dülmen*, n.d., D110 Historische Sammlung A2, doc. 21, Bistumsarchiv Münster (hereafter BAM). Please note: document numbers for all archival sources from BAM are assigned by the author for ease of reference, and refer simply to the order of the documents in each folder.

<sup>4</sup> Clemens Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich: Anna Katharina Emmerick historisch und theologisch neu entdeckt* (Würzburg: Echter, 2005), 77-79.

<sup>5</sup> Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-40.

passerby she was mistreated; by a second greeted with tears of penitence; by a third, regarded as an object of artistic or intellectual curiosity. . .<sup>6</sup>

Emmerick had indeed become “like a wayside cross,” and not only metaphorically. In March 1813, the public learned that she bore the stigmata: wounds in her hands, feet, side, and forehead similar to those Jesus received during the Crucifixion. In addition to these miraculous wounds, which bled every Friday, Emmerick also subsisted almost entirely on Communion wafers. Eyewitness reported that she could see into the future and distinguish authentic holy relics from false ones. In her waking and her sleeping hours, she claimed to experience ecstatic visions of angels, demons, and scenes from the lives of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. Local tongues wagged and distant readers wondered. Church factions, government officials, and medical experts competed for control of Emmerick and her public image. Once hidden in a convent, Emmerick was now exposed to public debate, having become a symbol that could be appropriated and interpreted by friend and foe alike – “like a wayside cross.”

The poet who coined this phrase was Clemens Brentano. He was one of the many pilgrims, investigators, and curiosity-seekers to travel to see Emmerick in Dülmen. Not long after first meeting her in September 1818, he decided to leave the salons of Berlin behind and permanently install himself at her side. He was convinced that he had been charged by God with a divine mission: the recording of Emmerick’s life, wounds, and especially her visions to inspire the renewed devotion of Catholics. Brentano’s notes on her visions of the Passion became *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi (The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ)*,

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<sup>6</sup> “So war sie, die so viele Stunden ihrer Jugend bei Tag und Nacht vor den Stationsbildern des Leidenweges Christi und vor den Kreuzen am Wege gebetet hatte, nun selbst wie ein Kreuz am Wege geworden, von dem Einen mißhandelt, von dem Andern mit Thränen der Buße begrüßt, von dem Dritten als Gegenstand der Kunst und Wissenschaft betrachtet. . .”. Brentano, “Einleitung und Lebensumriß der Anna Katharina Emmerich, Augustinerin des Klosters Agnetenberg zu Dülmen in Westphalen,” *Das Bittere Leiden unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, nach den Betrachtungen der Gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich, Augustinerin des Klosters Agnetenberg zu Dülmen, nebst dem Lebensumriss dieser Begnadigten. Durch die Mittheilungen über das letzte Abendmahl Vermehrte*, second edition, *Clemens Brentano Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, Frankfurter Brentano-Ausgabe* (hereafter abbreviated as FBA) vol. 26, ed. Bernhard Gajek, (Frankfurt: Kohlhammer, 1980), 32-33.

published in 1833. Other volumes drawn from his Emmerick material would follow Brentano's death in 1842.<sup>7</sup>

These books, and especially *Das bittere Leiden*, became the ur-text of Emmerick's public and private veneration in modern Germany. They helped attract thousands of visitors each year to her childhood home, her grave, and her carefully preserved deathbed, stops along what had become by the late nineteenth century the Anna Katharina Emmerick Pilgrim Trail (*Pilgerweg*).<sup>8</sup> They caused an international sensation when, in 1887, clerics used these detailed visions as a sort of Baedeker's guide to the Holy Land and discovered "the Virgin Mary's house" near Ephesus, Turkey.<sup>9</sup> Their readers swelled the numbers of Germany's nation-wide Anna Katharina Emmerick Association (*Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Bund*), which led a vigorous public campaign to have her declared a saint.<sup>10</sup> Having now run through countless editions in sixteen different languages, *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi* has inspired multiple popular

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<sup>7</sup> The only other volume of Emmerick's visions prepared from start to finish by Brentano himself was *Das Leben der heil. Jungfrau Maria, nach den Betrachtungen der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich, Augustinerin des Klosters Agnetenberg zu Dülmen, aufgeschrieben von Clemens Brentano* (Munich: Literarisch-artistische Anstalt, 1842), which appeared in the same year as Brentano's death. Subsequently, Redemptorist priest Karl Eberhard Schmöger published three volumes of visions covering the ministry of Jesus based on Brentano's Emmerick papers, from 1858 to 1860: *Das Leben unseres Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi, nach den Gesichtern der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich, aufgeschrieben von Clemens Brentano* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet).

<sup>8</sup> Contemporary pamphlets and newspaper articles describing the early development of Emmerick pilgrimage sites include: *Catharina Emmerich* (Recklinghausen: J. Bauer, 1878), Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 1, BAM; Thomas Wegener OESA, "Eine Stube Anna Katharina Emmerich," *Dülmener Zeitung, Dülmener Anzeiger - Dülmen-Halterner Volkszeitung mit der Sonntags-Beilage Liboriusblatt*, September 1900, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 doc. 12, BAM; F.W., "Im Wohnhause der gottsel. Anna Katharina Emmerich zu Dülmen," *Mescheder Zeitung, Amtliches Kreisblatt für den Kreis Meschede*, November 23, 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 31, BAM. Twenty-first-century pilgrims can plan their own trek down the Emmerick *Pilgerweg* by downloading the latest brochure online: [www.lamberti-coe.de/images/ANDREAS/PDF\\_Dokumente/anna\\_katharina\\_pilgerweg.pdf](http://www.lamberti-coe.de/images/ANDREAS/PDF_Dokumente/anna_katharina_pilgerweg.pdf) (Accessed May 12, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Some contemporary articles describing the event include: "Ein merkwürdiger Fund im hl. Lande," *Beilage zur Nr. 23 des katholischen Sonntags-Blattes*, June 5, 1887, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 2, BAM; "Panagia-Capuli, Das Haus der hl. Jungfrau bei Ephesus," *Illustrierte Unterhaltungs-Beilage des Westfälischen Merkur*, June 15, 1902, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 doc. 14, BAM.

<sup>10</sup> For a succinct summary of the Emmerick-Bund's original organization and goals, see its mission statement from 1921: "Emmerickbund, Laienvereinigung deutscher Katholiken zur Förderung des Seligsprechungsprozesses Anna Katharina Emmericks," Board of Emmerick-Bund, Dülmen, September 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 26, BAM. The present-day Emmerick-Bund, which continues to promote her veneration through regular biannual newsletters and events, maintains a webpage: <[http://www.heilig-kreuz-duelmen.de/kreuz12/jupgrade/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=116&Itemid=83](http://www.heilig-kreuz-duelmen.de/kreuz12/jupgrade/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=116&Itemid=83)> (accessed May 12, 2018).

biographies and novelizations of Emmerick's life, as well as a German made-for-tv biopic.<sup>11</sup> A twenty-first-century iteration of its unique vision of Jesus' crucifixion reached millions when Mel Gibson used *Das bittere Leiden* as inspiration for his film *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).<sup>12</sup> That same year, Emmerick attained a different kind of global exposure when Pope John Paul II presided over her beatification, the last step on the road to full sainthood.<sup>13</sup> Her canonization cause remains open.

In short, Emmerick's life has been followed by a long and equally dramatic "afterlife." This is a fact that needs explaining. While a select few go down in history as revered saints or notorious heretics, most alleged mystics, visionaries and stigmatics cause a brief sensation before fading into obscurity. Emmerick was one of several people, for example, who claimed to experience miraculous phenomena in Napoleonic and early Restoration Europe. The French laborer Thomas Martin, for instance, claimed to be receiving messages for Louis XVIII from the archangel Raphael.<sup>14</sup> In Italy, an alleged apparition of the Virgin Mary at Arezzo, and dozens of weeping, talking, or luminescent Marian images, helped inspire native resistance movements

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<sup>11</sup> To date, *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi* has been translated from its original German into Czech, Dutch, English, French, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovenian, and Spanish. For some relatively recent popular biographies, see includes Jeanne Danemarie, *Anne Catherine Emmerick and Stigmatisation*, trans. Georges Goyau (Devon: Augustine Publishing, 1986); Paola Gioveti, *La monaca e il poeta: storia dell'incontro tra Anna Katharina Emmerick, monaca stigmatizzata, e Clemens Brentano, il più importante rappresentante del romanticismo tedesco* (Milan: San Paolo, 2000); Joachim Boufflet, *Anne-Catherine Emmerick: Celle qui partagea la passion de Jésus* (Paris: Presses de la renaissance, 2004). German novelizations of Emmerick's life include Georg Veit, *An den Enden der Treppe: Ein Roman um Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Münster: Waxmann, 2008); Kai Meyer, *Das Gelübde: ein Roman* (München: W. Heyne, 1998). The latter was made into a film of the same name, *Das Gelübde*, directed by Dominik Graf (Strasbourg: ARTE, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> For discussions of Emmerick as the inspiration for Gibson's film, see Andrew Weeks, "Between God and Gibson: German Mystical and Romantic Sources of *The Passion of the Christ*," *The German Quarterly* 78, no. 4, Focus on Film (Fall 2005), 421-440; Alison Griffiths, "The Revered Gaze: The Medieval Imaginary of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*," *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 2 (Winter 2007), 3-39; Clemens Engling, "Brentano 'rettet' nicht mehr 'als ein paar arme Lappen': Mel Gibsons *Die Passion Christi* und die Visionen nach Emmerick/Brentano," *Emmerickblätter* 2 (2004), 8-16.

<sup>13</sup> Pope John Paul II's homily on the occasion of Emmerick's beatification on October 3, 2004, can be found on the website of the Holy See: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2004/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_20041003\\_beatifications.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2004/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20041003_beatifications.html) (Accessed May 12, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Claude Guillet, *La rumeur de Dieu: Apparitions, prophéties et miracles sous la Restauration* (Paris: Imago, 1994).

against the French occupiers.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, Northern Switzerland and Austria, particularly the Tirolian region, saw a rash of stigmatics – at least seven – in the 1810s through the 1830s.<sup>16</sup> Even if one restricts one’s gaze to Westphalia and the Rhineland, there is no shortage of examples. In Birgden, another Westphalian village, French occupiers tried and failed to suppress veneration of a supposedly miraculous wayside cross where the Virgin Mary had appeared to praying schoolchildren.<sup>17</sup> Another rumored stigmatic emerged in Aachen, and a third at Brüggem near Cologne.<sup>18</sup> At Stromberg in Rhineland-Palatinate, God supposedly manifested his displeasure with the invasion with a plague of caterpillars.<sup>19</sup> Yet in contrast with Emmerick, there are no novels, biopics, blockbusters, or officially approved cults for any of these mystics or miraculous events.

Even those that achieve beatification or canonization are by no means guaranteed a lasting cult of veneration. For every Francis of Assisi or Thérèse of Lisieux, there are countless

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<sup>15</sup> Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 195.

<sup>16</sup> This number includes Josepha Kümi, Magdalena Gschirr, Bernadine Ledergerber, Margaretha Stoffel, Maria von Mörl, Domenica Lazzari, and Maria Agnes Steiner. Laurenz Burgener, *Helvetia sancta, oder Leben und Wirkken der heiligen, seligen und frommen Personen Schweizerlandes, aus den bewährtesten Quellen gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Benziger, 1860); "Curatpriester," *Die Stigmatisierten des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts: Anna Katharina Emmerich, Maria von Mörl, Domenica Lazzari, Juliana Weiskircher, Josepha Kümi, Bertina Bonquisson, Bernarda vom Kreuze, Maria Rosa Adriani, Maria Cherubina, Clara vom Heiligen Franziskus, Louise Lateau, Helena von Rosawatta, Margaretha Bays und Esperanza von Jesu* (Manz, 1877); P. Justus Landolt, *Die gottselige Josepha Kümi, Klosterfrau zu Wesen im Gaster . . . : Eine Biographie nach den Quellen bearbeitet* (Altweg-Weber zur Treuburg, 1868); Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La Stigmatisation: L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs* (Paris: L. Bellet, 1894); Dominique de Courcelles, *Stigmates* (Paris: Ed. De l'Herne, 2001); Eduard Braun, *Wunderbare und merkwürdige, zum Theil schon eingetroffene Prophezeihungen, der Somnambule Margaretha Stoffel, zu Ehrenthal in Tyrol, über die Zukunft der Jahre 1848 bis 1856* (Brixen, 1848); Nicole Priesching, *Maria von Mörl, 1812-1868: Leben und Bedeutung einer „stigmatisierten Jungfrau“ aus Tirol im Kontext ultramontaner Frömmigkeit* (Brixen: A. Weger, 2004); Johannes Baur, *Die Kreuzträgerin: Die Ehrw. Dienerin Gottes Maria Agnes Klara Steiner von der Seitenwunde Jesu, Stifterin d. Gemilderten Klarissen 1813-1862; Geschichte eine Passionsblume d. Heimat; Dem Volke erzählt* (Brixen: Athesia, 1942); Josef Innerhofer, *Die Kirche in Südtirol, gestern und heute* (Brixen: Athesia, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> Justus Hashagen, *Das Rheinland und die französische Herrschaft: Beiträge zur Charakteristik ihres Gegensatzes* (P. Hanstein, 1908), 152; "Ausstellung: Die Geschichte der Wegekreuze," *Aachener Zeitung*, November 17, 2011; Peter Jansen, "Unsere Heimat," *Beilage der Aachener Volkszeitung*, January 1949.

<sup>18</sup> T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolution in Germany: Occupation and Resistance in the Rhineland, 1792-1802* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 325-328; Engelbert Jos. Heiden, *Helena Wallraff von Brüggem, Pfarrei Kirchdorf bei Lechenich, die merkwürdigste Seherin am Rhein* (Fr. Kreuder, 1849).

<sup>19</sup> Blanning, *French Revolution in Germany*, 325-328.

all-but-forgotten saints like Dodo of Asch or Hyacintha of Mariscotti. For every pilgrimage site like Lourdes or Compostela, there are many more like Marpingen whose brief heyday is long past, sustained by a trickle of local devotees. Emmerick may not quite be a German Thérèse of Lisieux, but she is no Hyacintha of Mariscotti, either, and while her village of Dülmen may not be comparable to Lourdes, it continues to attract many pilgrims each year. What, then, has given her cult its staying power? How have Emmerick, her wounds, and her visions continued to create meaning and build community for so many Germans, maintaining their relevancy from the Restoration Era through unification and the Kaiserreich to the Third Reich and beyond? These are some of the questions this dissertation will address.

It is worth asking these questions because Anna Katharina Emmerick and her enduring, evolving cult of veneration are part of a larger story: the emergence, over the course of the nineteenth century, of a distinctly modern German Catholic community. Historians continue to debate how exactly this community coalesced, what its defining characteristics were, and when it finally weakened. There is even a lack of consensus on what to call it: a *Konfession*, a milieu, a subculture, or even (provocatively) a “ghetto.”<sup>20</sup> Since the 1990s, however, historians have agreed on one point: the history of modern Catholicism is a crucial part of the history of modern Germany. German Catholics, and the anti-Catholic attitudes of other Germans, decisively shaped the politics, society, and culture of what became the German nation-state in 1871. This influence

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<sup>20</sup> Articles providing overviews of the major debates in the historiography of German Catholicism over time include Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “Piety and Politics: Recent Work on German Catholicism,” *The Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 4 (Dec. 1991), 681-716; Eric Yonke, “The Catholic Subculture in Modern Germany: Recent Work in the Social History of Religion,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (Jul. 1994), 534-545; Oded Heilbronner, “From Ghetto to Ghetto: The Place of German Catholic Society in Recent Historiography,” *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 2 (June 2000), 453-495; Michael O’Sullivan, “From Catholic Milieu to Lived Religion: The Social and Cultural History of Modern German Catholicism,” *History Compass* 7, no. 3 (May 2009), 837-861. A good example of *Konfession* as a framework for understanding nineteenth-century German Catholics can be found in Olaf Blaschke, “Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Zweites Konfessionelles Zeitalter?,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26, no. 1 (Jan./Mar. 2000), 38-75. On the German Catholic community as a “ghetto,” see Heilbronner, “From Ghetto to Ghetto.”

continued through World War I and revolution, the tumultuous Weimar Republic, and the rise and fall of the Third Reich.

Anna Katharina Emmerick's life and cult can serve as a red thread through the labyrinth of German Catholic culture. As an alleged stigmatic with a popular following who emerged in the midst of Napoleonic occupation, Emmerick's experiences can provide an entrée into German Catholicism at the moment of its supposed transition from Enlightenment austerity to post-Revolutionary fervor. As a much-discussed medical curiosity, she reveals the wrestling of science with religion and faith with Enlightenment at the turn of the nineteenth century. As a convent-less nun at the center of ongoing, urgent discussions among village priests and diocesan officials, she can tell us something about how Germans' lived religion was shaped through interactions between men and women as well as the various levels of the clerical hierarchy.

The insights that can be drawn from an examination of her evolving cult are equally rich. For nineteenth-century Dülmeners, Emmerick was the kindly spirit whose intercession was invoked for everyday crises from ailing children to drunken husbands. In the decades around the turn of the twentieth century (following the aforementioned discovery of "Mary's House"), several authors saw Emmerick as the potential missing link between faith and science, comparing the dense volumes of her visions with archeological and literary artifacts in a quixotic quest to "prove" the miraculous. In the interwar period, her suffering became wedded to a self-pitying narrative of German victimhood, as Emmerick promoters dubbed her "a crucified saint for a crucified Volk." This gave rise to two modes of veneration, which continued to diverge after 1945: the officially-sanctioned, Vatican-approved Emmerick whose claim to sanctity rested solely on her "heroic virtue," and the popular Emmerick who continued to fascinate precisely through the supernatural powers Church officials often sought to downplay or ignore. Thus,

following Emmerick's cult of veneration reveals how Germans "thought with" Catholicism to understand the rapidly changing modern world around them.

By examining the controversies sparked by Emmerick's life, and following the twists and turns of her long afterlife, the goal of this dissertation is to reveal how Catholics sustained and reimagined their inherited faith traditions to meet the new and evolving challenges they faced as modern Germans; to determine who was able to participate in this process of creating meaning; and to track how this changed over time. It is thus about Catholicism from above as well as below. On the one hand, it will examine how powerful authorities and institutions fought for control of Emmerick and her image across two centuries of German history. On the other, it will also emphasize the many ways Emmerick and subsequent generations of her devotees resisted attempts to impose one hegemonic meaning on her life, wounds, and visions, and how their idiosyncratic, quotidian ways of living out their Catholic faith did not always align with "official" desires and expectations. Not only is this dual approach necessary for full understanding of Emmerick and her cult; it is also necessary for a full understanding of Catholicism in modern Germany.

### *Primary Sources*

A rich cache of primary sources makes this top-down and bottom-up approach possible. Volumes of material written by Emmerick's guardians, admirers and critics have been published and are thus easily accessible. This is partly because Emmerick's life coincided with a period of rapid expansion in print media and conscious efforts by the growing educated Germans to cultivate a "republic of letters" in their native language, one which served the whole range of

intellectual life from arts and culture, politics and philosophy to science and medicine.<sup>21</sup> From almost the moment her stigmata became publicly known, Emmerick became a topic of frequent, often heated debate in print. The wealth of published primary source material on Emmerick is also partly a result of later investigations by Church scholars working toward her beatification. These clergy and theologians often published the fruits of their archival research, making them accessible for subsequent generations of researchers. In particular, the postulator of Emmerick's cause in the 1920s, Winfried Hümpfner OESA, published two collections of primary sources, with extensive annotations. Documents in the two Hümpfner volumes include the diary of Emmerick's parish priest, correspondence among clerical as well as state investigators, the medical notes of her physicians, and interviews of Emmerick's relatives and of the nuns from her convent.<sup>22</sup> In addition, many of the individuals who interacted with Emmerick were sufficiently famous, admired, or important in their own right to have their papers published after their deaths.<sup>23</sup> The most obvious example is Clemens Brentano, whose personal correspondence, manuscripts, and journals have been published in a 42-volume historical-critical edition by the Freies Deutsches Hochstift in Frankfurt.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For the concept of the "republic of letters," see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 15-52. On the development of the German press and literary public in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 144-145, 152-190; Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn's Revival of the St. Matthew Passion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 47-49, 81-84.

<sup>22</sup> Winfried Hümpfner OESA, ed., *Akten der kirchlichen Untersuchung über die stigmatisierte Augustinerin Anna Katharina Emmerick nebst zeitgenössischen Stimmen* (Würzburg: St. Rita Verlag, 1929); Hümpfner, *Tagebuch des Dr. med. Franz Wilhelm Wesener über die Augustinerin Anna Katharina Emmerick, unter Beifügung anderer auf sie bezüglicher Briefe und Akten* (Würzburg: St. Rita-Verlag, 1926).

<sup>23</sup> See for example F. Bartscher, ed., *Der innere Lebensgang der Dichterin Luise Hensel. Nach den Original-Aufzeichnungen und ihren Tagebüchern vorgelegt* (Paderborn: Schöningh 1882); H. Cardauns, ed., *Aus Luise Hensels Jugendzeit. Neue Briefe und Gedichte. Zum Jahrhunderttag ihrer Konversion* (Freiburg/Br.: Herder 1918); Paul Krüger, ed., *Aus dem Tagebuche einer grossen Seele : die Tagebücher Bernard Overbergs* (Kevelaer : Butzon & Bercker, 1937); Ludwig von Vincke, *Die Tagebücher des Ludwig Freiherrn von Vincke : 1789-1844* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Clemens Brentano, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, Volumes 1-42, ed. Anne Bohnekamp et. al. (Frankfurt: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2005). Volumes cited in the dissertation will be referred to in abbreviation as the Frankfurt Brentano Ausgabe (FBA).

In addition to these published primary sources, this project will also draw on a considerable amount of archival material. The Bistumsarchiv Münster now holds the original documents Hümpfner published, as well as many more that he did not, including more letters between Emmerick's clerical handlers and records pertaining to the Prussian state investigation of Emmerick in 1819. Its Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv also holds a wealth of material about her subsequent cult, such as an extensive collection of German newspaper and journal articles from the 1810s to the present; research notes and correspondence among German Augustinians working toward Emmerick's beatification; and hundreds of letters written by ordinary Germans to the Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Haus, reporting of prayers answered through her intercession.<sup>25</sup> The dozens of hagiographies and devotional works published over two centuries serve as primary sources for this project, revealing both continuity and change in the depiction of Emmerick as mystic and model for Catholics over time.<sup>26</sup>

### *Existing Emmerick Literature: Adding a Historical Perspective*

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<sup>25</sup> Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, Bistumsarchiv Münster.

<sup>26</sup> Hagiographical works from the nineteenth and early twentieth century that continue to be reprinted include Caspar Franz Krabbe, *Erinnerung an die selige Anna Catharina Emmerich, Augustinerin des Klosters Agnetenberg in Dülmen* (Münster: Friedrich Regenberg, 1860); Karl Eberhard Schmöger, C.Ss.R., *Das Leben der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick*, 2 volumes (Freiburg: Herder, 1870); Thomas á Villanova Wegener, OESA., *Das wunderbare innere und äußere Leben der Dienerin Gottes Anna Katharina Emmerick aus den Augustinerorden* (Dülmen: Laumann, 1891); Anna Freiin von Krane, *Die Leidensbraut: Geschichte eines Sühnelebens* (Cologne: J. P. Bachem, 1921); Johannes Schuck, *Der königliche Weg des Kreuzes: Nach den Betrachtungen der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Munich: Ars Sacra, 1925); Hermann Josef Seller OESA and Ildelfons Dietz OESA, *Im Banne des Kreuzes: Lebensbild der stigmatisierten Augustinerin A. K. Emmerick* (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch, 1940). Some of the many, more recent works include Danemarie, *Anne Catherine Emmerick and Stigmatisation*; Michael Bangert et. al., *Anna Katharina Emmerick: Ein neues Porträt* (Dülmen: Laumann, 2000); Giovetti, *La monaca e il poeta*; Hurd Baruch, *Light on Light: Illuminations on the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the Mystical Visions of the Venerable Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Herndon, Va. : MaxKol Communications, 2004); Boufflet, *Anne-Catherine Emmerick*; Vincenzo Noja, *Anna Katharina Emmerick: Visioni bibliche e contemplazioni mistiche* (Milan: Paoline Editoriale Libri, 2009); Günter Scholz, *Anna Katharina Emmerick: Kötterstochter und Mystikerin* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2010); Heio Weishaupt, *Instrument in der Hand des Herrn: Gebet- und Wallfahrtsbuch mit der seligen Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Münster: dialogverlag, 2011); Klemens Kiser, *Was Heilige von Heiligen berichten: Aus den Visionen der seligen Anna Katharina Emmerich* (Stein am Rhein: Christiana, 2017).

In addition to this wealth of primary sources, the dissertation will also engage with an extensive corpus of secondary literature on Emmerick. Historians of German Catholicism have almost entirely ignored Anna Katharina Emmerick.<sup>27</sup> She does appear, however, in three other bodies of literature. The first is made up of the books and articles written by theologians and clergy, many of whom were connected with Emmerick's bid for beatification.<sup>28</sup> Second, scholars of German literature discuss Emmerick in connection with their analysis of the literary oeuvre of Clemens Brentano.<sup>29</sup> Finally, Emmerick occasionally features in books and articles about stigmata, which are either aimed at a popular audience, or discuss the phenomenon from a medical or psychological perspective.<sup>30</sup> Researchers in each of these three areas have produced

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<sup>27</sup> When Emmerick does appear in historical works, it is in passing, as one example of German popular piety or female mysticism among many. See for instance David Blackburn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Knopf, 1994): 10, 21, 346; Otto Weiß, "Seherinnen und Stigmatisierte," in *Wunderbare Erscheinungen: Frauen und katholische Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Irma Götze von Olenhusen (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1995), 56-62; Otto Weiß, *Weisungen aus dem Jenseits?: Der Einfluss mystizistischer Phänomene auf Ordens- und Kirchenleitungen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2011), 48-49, 130, 133, 136, 147; Hubert Wolf, *Die Nonnen von Sant'Ambrogio: Eine wahre Geschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2013), 124-125, 132, 162, 415. Historians' fleeting references often focus on Brentano's work with Emmerick, more than Emmerick herself. For example, Margaret Lavinia Anderson referred to Emmerick in her historiographical essay, "Piety and Politics," 701, noting that the impact of *Das bittere Leiden* in nineteenth-century Germany "would be hard to overestimate" and that "*Brentano's* influence on Catholic piety would repay systematic investigation" (emphasis added).

<sup>28</sup> The most important works in this category include those of Thomas Wegener OESA, Winfried Hümpfner OESA, and Clemens Engling, all of whom are clergymen that served as researchers for Emmerick's beatification cause; and Joseph Adam SCJ, who wrote the *Positio* for Emmerick's cause. Wegener, *wunderbare innere und äußere Leben*; Winfried Hümpfner OESA, *Clemens Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit in seinen Emmerick-Aufzeichnungen; Untersuchung über die Brentano-Emmerick-frage unter erstmaliger Benutzung der tagebücher Brentanos* (Würzburg: St. Rita-Verlag, 1923); Hümpfner, *Akten*; Hümpfner, *Tagebuch*; Joseph Adam, *Clemens Brentanos Emmerick-Erlebnis: Bindung und Abenteuer* (Freiburg: Herder, 1956); Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*; Clemens Engling, *Die Wende im Leben Clemens Brentanos: Folgen der Begegnung mit Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2009); Clemens Engling, *Anna Katharina Emmerick: Mystikerin der Nächstenliebe* (Kevelaer: Topos plus, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Bernhard Gajek, *Homo poeta: zur Kontinuität der Problematik bei Clemens Brentano* (Königstein im Taunus: Athenäum Verlag, 1971); Wolfgang Frühwald, *Das Spätwerk Clemens Brentanos (1815-1842): Romantik im Zeitalter der Metternich'schen Restauration* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977); John Fetzer, *Clemens Brentano* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981); Hartwig Schultz, *Schwarzer Schmetterling: Zwanzig Kapitel aus dem Leben des romantischen Dichters Clemens Brentano* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2000); Sean Ireton, "'Wunden'/'Wunder': On the Romantic Function of Blood and Wounds in the Later Brentano," *German Studies Review* 30, no. 3 (Oct. 2007), 597-610; Günter Scholz, *Clemens Brentano 1778-1842: Poesie, Liebe, Glaube* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2012); Xenia Goślicka, *Die Kraft der Berührung – eine Poetik der Auserwählung: das Körperbild der Stigmatisation, Clemens Brentanos Emmerick-Projekt, die Josephsromane Thomas Manns* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> The most exhaustive work on stigmata remains Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*. See also F.A. Whitlock and J.V. Hynes, "Religious Stigmatization: An Historical and Psychophysiological Inquiry," *Psychological Medicine* 8,

important work that this project will draw upon, but they have also failed to present a comprehensive picture of Emmerick, her mystical phenomena, or her admirers and detractors. In particular, the grounding of Emmerick and her cult in her broader historical context has been missing from these works. This project will therefore seek to inject the historical perspective that has been missing into scholarly conversations about Emmerick and her legacy.

Works on Emmerick by clergy and theologians straddle the primary/secondary source divide for this dissertation. On the one hand, they are windows into the saint-making process itself, revealing how servants of the institutional Church actively shaped her image with an eye to bolstering her case for sainthood. On the other hand, these works also frequently set forth interpretive arguments about Emmerick and her cult, as well as the reliability of Brentano and others around her as sources on her life. This dissertation will engage these arguments and reflect on their motivations and biases. In particular, it will argue that the overarching need to present Emmerick as a saint, and to satisfy the specific demands institutional saint-making, has repeatedly led theologians and clergy to stress her patience, humility, and obedience – to the point of obscuring her independence, outspokenness, and sense of mission. While accurately portraying her Catholic orthodoxy, respect for authority, and steadfast faith, works by Church scholars can mask Emmerick’s agency when they cast her *solely* as a submissive instrument in the hand of God.

Furthermore, clerical works on Emmerick evince consistently biased opinions on the reliability of some sources over others, which in turn affect the accuracy of their analyses. They uniformly castigate Brentano as a manipulative force in Emmerick’s life, and view his notes and publications with skepticism. Their concerns are not entirely unfounded; but they often fail to

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no. 2 (1978), 185-202; Rene Biot, *The Enigma of the Stigmata*, trans. P.J. Hepburne-Scott (New York: Hawthorne Publishers, 1962); Ted Harrison, *Stigmata: A Medieval Mystery in a Modern Age* (New York: Penguin, 1994); Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions*.

raise the same objections about other sources (especially clerical ones) that are equally problematic. Writing as they are from within the institutional Church, and with the explicit goal of achieving (and later, commending) Emmerick's beatification, these scholars are unable and perhaps unwilling to ask the full range of critical questions that an outside researcher might ask, both about Emmerick herself and the process by which she became beatified. Finally, twentieth- and twenty-first-century clergy writing about Emmerick have scrupulously adopted modern historical research methods, and Clemens Engling in particular has made a commendable effort to discuss Emmerick in both a historical and theological sense.<sup>31</sup> They do not, however, connect her in any systematic way with the broader historical narrative of modern German Catholicism, or engage the vast body of historical literature on this subject. One of the tasks of this project, therefore, is to integrate and combine these narratives.

In the process, it will also consider the work of German literary scholars on Brentano's Emmerick material, and their evaluations of his relationship with Emmerick. Understandably, the focus for these scholars is the poet, not the stigmatic visionary per se. They are primarily concerned with situating *Das bittere Leiden* and Brentano's other volumes of Emmerick visions in the context of his literary career, and within German Romanticism more generally. In accomplishing these tasks, they have provided valuable insight into the symbolic language and imagery of the Brentano-Emmerick material, and particularly how much they are in keeping with the poet's earlier works. For example, female visionaries and wise peasant women feature in earlier Brentano works such as his play *Die Gründung Prags* and his novella, *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*. The symbolic imagery of blood and wounds can be found in much of his poetry. In following this line of argument, however, Germanists have cast

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<sup>31</sup> This goal of Engling's is made explicit in the title of what is arguably his most important work on Emmerick – *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich: Anna Katharina Emmerick historisch und theologisch neu entdeckt*.

*Das bittere Leiden* and the other volumes of visions as wholly Brentano's creations, silencing Emmerick's own voice. Literary scholars have seen in Brentano's work with Emmerick yet another iteration of his characteristically Romantic fascination with the mysterious, otherworldly, fantastical, and macabre. That is, they argue that *Das bittere Leiden* is a quintessentially Romantic work, the product of Brentano's own unique poetic imagination – and therefore not the work of an untutored peasant woman like Emmerick.<sup>32</sup>

In making this claim, Romantic scholars not only point to the symbolic and thematic parallels between the books of Emmerick visions and Brentano's larger creative oeuvre. They also draw on analyses of Brentano's famously strong personality, as well as his (after ca. 1817) fervent, yet eccentric brand of Catholic piety, as revealed in his journals and correspondence. This Romantically-tinged faith, the argument goes, predisposed Brentano to see Emmerick as a powerful seeress, whether she was or not (and whether or not she wished to be seen in such a way). He then treated her accordingly, relentlessly using her as a well of inspiration for a project that increasingly took shape in his mind: an epic, multi-volume life of Christ. In taking this view of the power dynamics and hidden agendas lurking behind Brentano and Emmerick's relationship, these scholars have also been influenced by the aforementioned depictions of Emmerick as meek and submissive in the works of Church scholars and in hagiographical literature. Thus pointing to Brentano's forcefulness and his own specific mission, religious and literary scholars alike argue that his leading questions practically put words into Emmerick's mouth.

There are elements of truth in these arguments; yet as Chapter Four will discuss in greater detail, they have a disturbing tendency to mask Emmerick's agency and silence her voice.

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<sup>32</sup> See for example Frühwald, *Spätwerk Clemens Brentanos*, 270-723; Ireton, "Wunden/Wunder," 596-610; Scholz, *Brentano*, 75-85.

Literary scholars in particular make this error because they view *Das bittere Leiden* and the other vision books too narrowly within the purview of Brentano's works and the broader corpus of German Romanticism. They show little awareness of the many other sources we have besides Brentano about the personality, ideas, and aspirations of Anna Katharina Emmerick. This project will use these other sources to show that Emmerick was Brentano's match: that is, that she also had a powerful personality, a storyteller's gift, and a formidable sense of mission. There is ample evidence that supports a recasting of Emmerick as willing and active collaborator in Brentano's literary project to record her visions – even while acknowledging the extent of Brentano's later elaborations as he brought those visions to the printed page.

Finally, Emmerick is sometimes mentioned in books about stigmata that have appeared over the years. Some of these are by journalists or similarly non-professional historians, and are aimed at titillating a popular audience. More worthy of attention in this dissertation are those works on stigmata by medical experts of various stripes. Some of these scholars are concerned with “debunking” stigmata, while others try to find a physiological or psychological explanation for the phenomenon. Such attempts to ground stigmata in medical science have been made for centuries, as Emmerick's own cult reveals. Modern works tend to take one of two lines of argument: either they present stigmata wounds as made by the stigmatic and classify it as a form of self-harm; or (more rarely) they argue that a psychosomatic process could be capable of producing spontaneous, visible wounds on the bodies of people who obsessively meditate on the Crucifixion, in the same way that assault victims under hypnosis have had bruises and other marks appear on their body as they recalled their experiences.<sup>33</sup> In either case, the medical expert

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<sup>33</sup> For an example of each of these two respective approaches, see Sharon K. Farber et. al., “Death and Annihilation Anxieties in Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia, and Self-Mutilation,” in *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 24, no. 2 (April 2007), 289-305; Harrison, *Stigmata*, 4-13.

sees the stigmatic's unusually intense, even pathological focus on bodily suffering as the underlying cause of stigmata.

There are, of course, significant differences between the clinical and the historical gaze. The former often has a lens focused narrowly on the "patient," while the latter seeks to understand subjects within their historical context. Similarly, medical experts often treat mental and physical disorders as absolute, universal, and timeless categories, while historians have increasingly been aware of the ways in which medical conditions are also constructs, which emerge out of the beliefs of a particular moment and often change over time.<sup>34</sup> Psychological experts may ascribe to specific theories of universal drives and behaviors, giving them the confidence to make judgments about the psyche of historical individuals; but many historians are more cautious about a scholar's ability to truly enter another person's thought-world, as well as the viability of psychoanalytical theory as a vehicle for doing so.<sup>35</sup> It would be remiss to ignore the insights of psychologists and other medical experts into stigmata as a physical phenomenon. As this dissertation will discuss, however, medical analyses of stigmata are most helpful when read in tandem with theological as well as historical perspectives.<sup>36</sup>

*Contributions to the Historiography of Catholicism in Modern Germany: Topical, Methodological, Argumentative*

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<sup>34</sup> An excellent discussion of mental disorders from a historical perspective is Ann Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness: The Eberbach Asylum and German Society, 1815-1849* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-7; see also Caroline Walker Bynum's discussion of issues surrounding any simple diagnosis of fasting medieval mystics as "anorexics" in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 4-5, 194-207.

<sup>35</sup> Lynn Hunt, "Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Historical Thought," in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, eds. Lloyed Kramer and Sarah Maza (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 337-356.

<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of the different frameworks and methodologies of medical and cultural-historical analyses of stigmata, see Arnold I. Davidson, "Miracles of Bodily Transformation, or How St. Francis Received the Stigmata," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2009), 451-480, especially 453-455.

In bringing this historical perspective to bear on Emmerick's life and cult, this project will draw on the extensive historiography of Catholicism in modern Germany. After decades of neglect, Catholics first became a focus of interest for modern German historians in the decades following World War II. Even before the war ended, Catholic scholars were already lionizing their Church as a bulwark of resistance to Nazism.<sup>37</sup> Works on the Catholic resistance and the so-called "German Church Struggle" had stirred up a major reaction by the 1960s, and the behavior and political attitudes of Catholics in the Third Reich became a major focus of research.<sup>38</sup> Nineteenth-century German Catholics broke onto the historiographical agenda by the 1980s-90s, with key works by Margaret Lavinia Anderson, David Blackbourn, Olaf Blaschke, Werner Blessing, Wilfried Loth, Thomas Nipperdey, Wolfgang Schieder, Helmut Walser Smith, and Jonathan Sperber.<sup>39</sup> Their work paved the way for more recent studies by Rebecca Bennette,

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<sup>37</sup>"The Nazi War against the Catholic Church" (Washington, DC: United States National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1943), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89088275086> (accessed 29 May 2018); Friedrich Baerwald et al., "Catholic Resistance in Nazi Germany," *Thought* 20, no. 2 (1945), 217-234; Friedrich Muckermann, *Der deutsche Weg: Aus der Widerstandsbewegung der deutschen Katholiken von 1930-1945* (Zurich: NZN Verlag, 1945); Johann Neuhäusler, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz: Der Kampf des Nationalsozialismus gegen die katholische Kirche und der kirchliche Widerstand* (Munich: Press of the Catholic Church of Bavaria, 1946); Hans Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler: An Appraisal* (Hinsdale, IL: Regency Co., 1948).

<sup>38</sup> Key works in the first wave of revisionist scholarship on Catholicism, Nazism, and resistance include Gunter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Gordon C. Zahn, *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars: A Study in Social Control* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1962); Gerhart Binder, *Irrtum und Widerstand: Die deutschen Katholiken in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Pfeiffer, 1968); Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke, eds., *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974); Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979); Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). More recent works that explore the relationship between Catholicism and Nazism, as well as the extent of Catholic resistance and complicity in the Third Reich, include Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Robert A. Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany* (New York: Continuum, 2004); Kevin P. Spicer, *Hitler's Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008); Wolfram Pyta, *Die Herausforderung der Diktaturen: Katholizismus in Deutschland und Italien 1918-1943/45* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009); Derek Hastings, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity and National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Lauren Faulkner Rossi, *Wehrmacht Priests: Catholicism and the Nazi War of Annihilation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>39</sup>Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Windthorst: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Blackbourn, *Marpingen*; Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Göttingen:

Michael Gross, Eric Yonke, and others.<sup>40</sup> Scholarship on early-twentieth-century German Catholics has continued to flourish.<sup>41</sup> The past decade or so has also seen growing interest in postwar German Catholicism, an exciting new area of research.<sup>42</sup> Many of the works in this body of scholarship share methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives. They have also tended to focus on some areas of German Catholic history at the expense of others. This dissertation will explore new topics and experiment with new methodological approaches.

First, this project focuses on two intersecting topics that have received insufficient scholarly attention. As mentioned previously, Anna Katharina Emmerick has thus far merited

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Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); Werner Blessing, *Staat und Kirche in der Gesellschaft: Institutionelle Autorität und mentaler Wandel in Bayern während des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); Wilfried Loth, *Katholiken im Kaiserreich: der politische Katholizismus in der Krise des wilhelminischen Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1984); Thomas Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch: Deutschland 1870-1918* (München: C.H. Beck, 1988); Wolfgang Schieder, *Religion und Revolution: Die Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844* (Cologne: SH-Verlag, 1996); Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>40</sup> Rebecca Ayako Bennette, *Fighting for the Soul of Germany: The Catholic Struggle for Inclusion After Unification* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Skye Doney, "Presence and Pilgrims: Distinguishing the Travelers of the Past," *Environment, Space, Place* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2017), 114-134; Michael B. Gross, *The War Against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Michael O'Neill Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of Modern German Catholicism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Todd Weir, *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Eric Yonke, "The Problem of the Middle Class in German Catholic History: The Nineteenth-Century Rhineland Revisited," *The Catholic Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (Apr. 2002), 263-280; Jeffrey Zalar, "'Knowledge is Power': The 'Borromäusverein' and Catholic Reading Habits in Imperial Germany," *The Catholic Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (Jan. 2000), 20-46.

<sup>41</sup> Ulrike Ehret, *Church, Nation, and Race: Catholics and Antisemitism in Germany and England, 1918-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Beth A. Griech-Poelle, *Bishop von Galen: German Catholicism and National Socialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Hastings, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism*; Patrick J. Houlihan, *Catholicism and the Great War: Religion and Everyday Life in Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jeremy Roethler, *Germany's Catholic Fraternities and the Weimar Republic* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016); Faulkner-Rossi, *Wehrmacht Priests*; Spicer, *Hitler's Priests*.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Edward Ruff, *The Battle for the Catholic Past in Germany, 1945-1980* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Kimba Allie Tichenor, *Religious Crisis and Civic Transformation: How Conflicts over Gender and Sexuality Changed the West German Catholic Church* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2016); Barbara Thériault, "Conservative Revolutionaries": *The Protestant and Catholic Churches in Germany after Radical Political Change in the 1990s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); Benjamin Ziemann, *Encounters with Modernity: The Catholic Church in West Germany, 1945-1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); Ulrich L. Lehner, *On the Road to Vatican II: German Catholic Enlightenment and Reform of the Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016); Thomas Großbölting, *Der verlorene Himmel: Glaube in Deutschland seit 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); Antonius Liedhegener, *Macht, Moral und Mehrheiten: der politische Katholizismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA seit 1960* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006); Erwin Gatz, *Die Katholische Kirche in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg: Herder, 2009); Sebastian Holzbrecher, *Der Aktionskreis Halle: Postkonziliare Konflikte im Katholizismus der DDR* (Würzburg: Echter, 2014).

only passing mention in the work of German historians. This reflects a broader paucity of works on mysticism as well as women religious in the literature on modern Catholicism. One of the most innovative and important works in the field is David Blackbourn's *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, which examined the flurry of public interest surrounding alleged visions of the Virgin by three young girls in the Saarland in 1876. As Blackbourn noted in his work, such apparitions and mystical phenomena were a highly visible and important aspect of Catholic devotional culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in Germany as elsewhere;<sup>43</sup> yet there have been hardly any other studies on Catholic mysticism in modern Germany since *Marpingen* was published in 1994.<sup>44</sup> Even *Marpingen* was arguably focused more on the social history of the German Catholic milieu and the liberal anti-Catholic initiatives of the Prussian state than on the spiritual experiences of the Marpingen visionaries themselves.

The stories of women religious – who have historically made up a disproportionate number of visionaries, stigmatics, and mystics – have suffered similar neglect from modern German historians. Nineteenth-century Germany saw a proliferation of new religious orders for women, as well as an expansion of the old contemplative congregations. Waves of secularization of monastic houses in the 1810s and 1870s could only temporarily hold back this “monastic spring.” German women religious became a ubiquitous presence in German classrooms and hospitals, providing essential social services in an age of rapid industrialization and population

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<sup>43</sup> Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, xxiv.

<sup>44</sup> The few exceptions being von Olenhusen, ed., *Wunderbare Erscheinungen*; Monique Scheer, *Rosenkranz und Kriegsvisionen: Marienerscheinungskulte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 2006); Michael O'Sullivan, “West German Miracles: Catholic Mystics, Church History, and Postwar Popular Culture,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 6 (2009), 11-34; Monica Black, “Miracles in the Shadow of the Economic Miracle: The ‘Supernatural ‘50s’ in West Germany,” *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 4, Europe in the 1950s: The Anxieties of Beginning Again (Dec. 2012), 833-860; Weiß, *Weisungen aus den Jenseits*; Wolf, *Nonnen von San' Ambrogio* (and the latter, while it investigates the attempted murder of a German woman, is centered on events in Italy).

growth.<sup>45</sup> Despite their clear importance, practically the only book-length study on modern German nuns is Relinde Meiwes' *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn: Katholische Frauenkongregationen im 19. Jahrhundert*, a work which has come in for its fair share of criticism.<sup>46</sup> Emmerick's story can help fill in both of these lacunae in our historical knowledge of modern German Catholicism.

The second contribution this project will make is a methodological one. Many historical works on modern German Catholicism have adopted a framework first introduced by M. Rainer Lepsius in the 1960s: that of the socio-cultural "milieu." This methodological approach treats nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century German society as divided into a number of milieux: Catholic, liberal-bourgeois, socialist, aristocratic, and so on. Each of these milieux maintained group cohesion through institutional organization and leadership, and members participated in social, cultural, and political life within the confines of their respective groups. Lepsius developed this framework as a way to explain the fragmenting of German society and subsequent failure to present a united front against threats to democracy at the ballot box.<sup>47</sup> Later scholars have used milieu theory to describe how nineteenth- and early-twentieth century German Catholics formed their own print culture, schools, hospitals, networks of social and charitable organizations, political parties, and even their own community butcher shops and bakeries within the broader German nation. As if separated by an "invisible boundary" from their non-Catholic

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<sup>45</sup> Relinde Meiwes, *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn: Katholische Frauenkongregationen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2000).

<sup>46</sup> Patrick Pasture, "Beyond the Feminization Thesis: Gendering the History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Beyond the Feminization Thesis: Gender and Christianity in Modern Europe*, eds. Patrick Pasture, Jan Art, and Thomas Buerman (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012), 15-17.

<sup>47</sup> M. Rainer Lepsius, "Parteisystem und Sozialstruktur: Zum Problem der Demokratisierung der deutschen Gesellschaft," in *Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, ed. Wilhelm Abel (Stuttgart: G. Fischer, 1966), 371-94.

neighbors, Catholic Germans lived, worked, learned, socialized, and voted within their own milieu, as encouraged by Catholic priests and politicians.<sup>48</sup>

The framework of milieu has a number of advantages, but as Michael O’Sullivan has noted, it can over-privilege structure at the expense of individual agency, and portray German Catholics as a more socially and culturally homogenous group than they actually were. By dividing German society into socio-political blocs, milieu researchers have not been as salient to the possibilities of historical persons maintaining emotional and real ties to “multiple affiliations,” even contradictory ones. Milieu methodology, a concept originating in social and political history, may be less well-suited to projects with a more cultural-anthropological perspective. Additionally, because of its “top-down” approach to the study of religious institutions and structures, milieu theory has largely failed to tell the stories of Catholic women, religious and lay, whose pursuit of independent spiritual expression and agency has necessarily followed alternative avenues within the hierarchical, patriarchal Church.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps the most fundamental flaw of milieu methodology in the study of religion is its indebtedness to modernization theory. Lepsius, the originator of the milieu concept, saw them as a transitional stage in the modernization of society. He argued that traditional, institutional religion adapted to secularization of state and society by forming a milieu – that is, by using the modern tools of associational networks, political parties, the press, and mass education to continue to perform the indoctrinating, confessionalizing tasks the Church had carried out under the *ancien regime*. The outward forms of the milieu were modern, but the society they sought to preserve within was thoroughly traditional, even anti-modern. In the long run, Lepsius believed, such self-contradictory religious milieux were unsustainable, and their power and cohesion

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<sup>48</sup> Etienne François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648-1806* (Sigmarinen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1991). See also Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict*, 80-85.

<sup>49</sup> O’Sullivan, “From Catholic Milieu to Lived Religion,” 846-851.

would erode as modernization, democratization, and secularization of society and culture progressed.<sup>50</sup>

Most historians now reject any easy equivalency of modernization with secularization, including historians of modern German Catholicism. Yet by continuing to use the milieu model to describe the place of Catholics in modern German society, these scholars can unwittingly allow the assumptions of modernization theory to underlie the questions they ask. Much of the work on German Catholicism has focused on the apparent paradox of a Catholic milieu that used modern methods to defend and disseminate allegedly “pre-modern” practices and beliefs. This in turn has led to an ongoing debate over whether and to what extent nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholics were “modern.” Some, such as Michael Gross, have acknowledged the embrace of modern political tools, mass media, and associational life by German Catholics from the nineteenth century onward, but characterized the results of this embrace as unequivocally “reactionary” and “anti-modern.”<sup>51</sup> Others, such as Margaret Lavinia Anderson, have argued that German Catholic political parties, devotional culture, literature and associations were indeed pushing against a particular definition of modernity, but also offering their own alternative vision of what life in modern Germany could be: a vision in which regional as well as national ties, and emotional as well as rational experience were valued.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately however, as Heilbronner and O’Sullivan have warned, focusing on the “modernity question” runs the risk of unintentionally reproducing nineteenth-century Protestants’ characterization of Catholics as superstitious and ignorant. This is a label that closes off rather than invites deeper understanding.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Lepsius, “Parteisystem und Sozialstruktur,” 371-94.

<sup>51</sup> Gross, *War against Catholicism*, 24-35.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, *Windthorst*, 8, 238.

<sup>53</sup> Heilbronner, “From Ghetto to Ghetto;” O’Sullivan, “From Catholic Milieu to Lived Religion.”

This project, in contrast, will approach the nature of Catholicism in modern Germany from a different angle. Rather than asking why modern Germans continued to be Catholic, it will explore how modern Germans understood and lived out their Catholic identity. Instead of measuring German Catholics against a constructed yardstick of modern-ness, it will seek to understand what cultural work was being performed by Catholicism, and by Emmerick's cult in particular. Taking into account the interplay between the conditions that made possible modern "imagined communities"<sup>54</sup> with the deep history of the Church's ever-evolving tradition, it will explore how Catholics have continuously fashioned a usable past from their religious heritage to assert belonging and to address their present-day needs and desires. It will also highlight the importance of both local memory and modern print media in sustaining German Catholics' sense of community.

It will do this by looking at modern German Catholicism from above as well as below – that is, the project will be aware on the one hand of the power exerted by Catholic institutions, discourses, and models, as well as their social embeddedness; yet it will also be concerned above all with the quotidian ways in which individuals are nonetheless able to exert their own influence on the shape of Catholicism through practices, rituals, and the appropriation of language and symbols. It will treat religion as a source not merely of indoctrination and social control, but also as a source of consolation, community building, and meaning making: a source of spiritual and

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<sup>54</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006); cf. the concept of "invention of tradition" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Anderson contrasts modern "imagined communities" with religious modes of thinking, but I would argue that is framework is highly applicable to the Catholic religious community of believers united in belief across time and space, as well as by shared rituals, print networks, and participation in associations. A historian of religion in modern Germany who takes the same view and sees modern religious confessions and movements as "imagined communities" is David L. Ellis, *Politics and Piety: The Protestant Awakening in Prussia, 1816-1856* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 11-12. A scholar who has envisioned religion as providing the "building blocks" of imagined communities, without necessarily employing Anderson's language, is Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

cultural power which individuals as well as elites and institutions can tap. In taking this methodological perspective, this project owes much to scholars of “lived religion,” as well as scholars who have envisioned religion as an “institutional field” or set of cultural tools. The deep roots of such approaches lie in the theories of anthropologists and sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu, Marshall Sahlins, and even Emile Durkheim.<sup>55</sup> Contemporary scholars of religion that have inspired the methodology of this project include Robert Orsi, Andrew Greeley, Martin Riesebrodt, and Terrence Tilley.<sup>56</sup>

The final set of contributions this project hopes to make to the historiography of modern German Catholicism are argumentative/interpretive. It will argue for a reappraisal of three historiographical themes: (I) a chronological narrative which roots modern German Catholicism in the mid-nineteenth century; (II) a conceptualization of this time as one of “Catholic revival;” and finally, (III) an interpretation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the “feminization” of Catholicism.

### I: Redrawing the Narrative Arc of Modern German Catholicism

The story of modern German Catholicism has taken on a narrative arc which begins in earnest only after 1848. Before that, according to this generally-agreed-upon chronology, early modern German Catholicism had slipped from the high point of Counter-Reformation fervor to Baroque decadence over the course of the eighteenth century. The rise of Enlightenment ideas

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<sup>55</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1912]); Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>56</sup> Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Terrence W. Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000). For an overview of scholarship on lived religion, religion as institutional field and religion as set of cultural tools, see Penny Edgell, “A Cultural Sociology of Religion: New Directions,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 38 (2012), 247-265.

and absolutist government increasingly pulled educated and ambitious men away from the Church, which became in consequence the province of women and country rustics.<sup>57</sup> Church attendance declined. Instances of illegitimate birth rose. Fewer people left money to the Church in their wills. Not even the German bishops were immune from this trend; rather, they increasingly asserted their independence from the oversight of the Vatican, and moved Catholic practice in a more “Enlightened” direction by banning or restricting processions, pilgrimages, and forms of populous religious expression that smacked of magic or the supernatural.<sup>58</sup> Taken together, according to Jonathan Sperber’s landmark study, all this suggested “a more general tendency toward secularization and laicization . . . which can be observed in many areas of religious life in the early nineteenth century.”<sup>59</sup>

By thus defining the first decades of the nineteenth century as a low-point of German Catholic devotion, historians have thereby set the stage for the emergence of what is often referred to as a “Catholic revival” in the 1850s-1870s. Before that, a pair of early episodes serve as harbingers of the greater drama to come: the so-called *Kölner Wirren* (“Cologne Troubles”) of 1837, in which Prussian provincial rulers imprisoned Archbishop Clemens August zu Droste-Vischering for his opposition to confessionally-mixed marriages, amid much public outrage; and the Trier Pilgrimage of 1844, when the massive crowd of pilgrims venerating the alleged Holy Coat of Christ provoked condemnation of Catholic credulity and superstition in the popular press.<sup>60</sup> In each case, the intertwining of public piety with social and political protest presages

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<sup>57</sup> Rudolf Schlögl, “Sünderin, Heilige oder Hausfrau?: Katholische Kirche und weibliche Frömmigkeit um 1800,” *Wunderbare Erscheinungen: Frauen und katholische Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Irmtraud Götz von Olenhausen (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995), 13-50.

<sup>58</sup> Printy, *Enlightenment*, 15-16, 25-53.

<sup>59</sup> Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 14-18. Sperber’s analysis is particularly relevant as his book focuses on North Rhine-Westphalia, Emmerick’s own region.

<sup>60</sup> Regarding the *Kölner Wirren*, see Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 37-38; Wolfgang Schieder, “Kirche und Revolution: Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 14 (1974):

the main event which sparked the Catholic revival: the Revolution of 1848.<sup>61</sup> Shaken by the memory of the barricades, German conservative governments, even in Protestant states such as Prussia, found new appreciation for the Catholic Church as an ally in the fight against liberalism, and as an important inculcator of public moral order. Catholic clergy and laity alike formed political organizations to defend traditional values. Religious organizations and activities – sodalities, group pilgrimages, etc. – proliferated in the growing public sphere, inculcating these values in the German Catholic population at large. They made use of the burgeoning popular press, and a whole industry of German Catholic newspapers and devotional literature developed. At the same time, a “monastic spring” saw the proliferation of religious houses across Germany once again.<sup>62</sup>

The second key moment in the formation of a modern, revitalized German Catholic community, according to the standard narrative, is its trial by fire during the Kulturkampf. Political liberals, exuberant after having finally achieved the unification of the Fatherland in

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419-54; Rudolf Lill, “Kirche und Revolution: Zu den Anfängen der katholischen Bewegungen im Jahrzehnt vor 1848,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 18 (1978), 565-75; Friedrich Keinemann, *Das Kölner Ereignis: sein Wiederhall in der Rheinprovinz und in Westfalen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1974); Frank Eyck, “Liberalismus und Katholizismus in der Zeit des deutschen Vormärz,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft Sonderheft* 9, Liberalismus in der Gesellschaft des deutschen Vormärz (1983), 133-46. On pilgrimage at Trier, see Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 250-251; Schieder, “Kirche und Revolution;” Skye Doney, “The Sacred Economy: Devotional Objects as Sacred Presence for German Catholics in Aachen and Trier, 1832-1937,” *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 1: 1 (2013), 62-71.

<sup>61</sup> For a recent example of scholars’ treatment of the events at Cologne and Trier as harbingers of a *later* revival, rather than as part of the event itself, see Siegfried Weichlein, “Nation State, Conflict Resolution, and Culture War, 1850-1878,” in Helmut Walser Smith, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 287: “Unlike liberalism, the Catholic Church, Catholicism and particularly the Catholic laity, emerged strengthened from 1848. The revolution had abolished the paternalism of the state church and state representatives came to see the Catholic Church as an ally in fighting the revolution. The Trier pilgrimage of 1844, mass pilgrimage to the Seamless Robe of Christ housed in the Cathedral of Trier, had already foreshadowed this development.” Similarly, James Brophy writes in *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 267: “the private processions and pilgrimages in the 1820s and 1830s produced Catholic publics that were political insofar as they exerted a power to organize citizens for events that neither Church nor state promoted. Their ability to mobilize thousands in the name of religious devotion *only became a political problem after 1837* [emphasis added] when processions also became demonstrative of motives and wishes unrelated to piety. Indeed, the Revolution of 1848-9 would reveal that the distance between procession and demonstration was not great.” While not disagreeing that the political valence of Catholic public piety changed after 1848, I would argue that viewing events before that date as harbingers of or developments toward something else can obscure their full significance.

<sup>62</sup> Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 39-94; Gross, *War against Catholicism*, 32-72.

1871, next aspired to remake the German people. There was no room in their vision of a modern, educated, industrial society for Catholicism, which they saw as a perpetuator of ignorance and superstition. They made common cause with conservative Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who was alarmed by the newly promulgated doctrine of Papal Infallibility and growing numbers of Polish Catholics flocking to German industrial centers. For Bismarck and others, Catholics were a potentially dangerous fifth column with non-German loyalties, an indication that Germany was still an “*unvollendete Nation*” (incomplete nation). Prussia’s parliament passed a series of anti-Catholic legislation which also affected its heavily Catholic provinces like Westphalia. Priests were required to swear a loyalty oath to the state or face incarceration. Furthermore, the government, not the Church, would oversee seminaries and pay clerical salaries, in effect turning Catholic priests into tightly controlled civil servants.<sup>63</sup> Liberal *Reichstag* leader Rudolf Virchow, who at one point railed in a well-known speech against stigmatics like Emmerick, coined a word for this suite of legislative moves against the Church: *Kulturkampf*, a “culture struggle” for German hearts and minds.<sup>64</sup>

German Catholics, however, rallied as a community to thwart *Kulturkampf* measures, and asserted their identity as good Germans *and* good Catholics. Communities gathered in force to prevent the arrest of their pastors, and refused to attend masses celebrated by their state-appointed replacements. They defiantly continued to hold their pilgrimages and religious processions. Underground seminaries formed. Nuns who were forced to leave their religious houses simply continued to teach in Catholic schools. In newspapers and in speeches in the

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<sup>63</sup> Ronald J. Ross, *The Failure of Bismarck’s Kulturkampf: Catholicism and State Power in Imperial Germany, 1871-1887* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

<sup>64</sup> Virchow, a cutting-edge physician and pathologist as well as a politician, spoke on stigmatics at a national medical conference. His speech was later published: Rudolf Virchow, *Ueber Wunder: Rede, gehalten in der ersten allgemeinen Sitzung der Versammlung deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte zu Breslau am 18. September 1874* (Breslau: E. Morgenstern Verlag, 1874). On Virchow’s coining of the term *Kulturkampf*, see Andrew Zimmerman, “Race and World Politics: Germany in the Age of Imperialism, 1878-1914,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 360.

*Reichstag*, Catholics professed their loyalty to both the Church and to the German state. As a result, by the 1880s Kulturkampf laws were rescinded or were no longer enforced, the Catholic Center Party became a key coalition partner in federal German politics, and German Catholicism emerged from the experience stronger than before.<sup>65</sup> When, in the Nazi era, state policies gradually dismantled Catholic political parties, schools, associations, and newspapers, German Catholics resisted and spoke of another “*Kampf*.” Scholarship on what is sometimes called the “German Church Struggle” of the 1930s-40s has turned to the *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s-80s as the (only) crucial moment of comparison.

In sum, historians have tended to see the reactionary turn after 1848, and later the failure of the Kulturkampf, as the two key moments in the formation of modern German Catholic culture. As a result, research on German Catholicism has concentrated overwhelmingly on the 1850s-1870s, and secondarily on the Nazi era. These works have made vital contributions, and this project will build upon their insights, but English-language scholars in particular have failed to appreciate how much modern German Catholicism was shaped by the experience of war, invasion, and secularization at the start of the nineteenth century.

At the time of Emmerick’s birth in 1774, hundreds of flourishing Catholic monasteries and convents dominated the “sacral landscape” of the Holy Roman Empire. They controlled vast swathes of rich farmland, commissioned dazzlingly decorated chapels, and educated many of the country’s foremost scholars and ecclesiastical princes.<sup>66</sup> By the time of Emmerick’s stigmata, however, nearly all of Germany’s monastic houses – including her own – had been secularized, resulting in the near eradication of an institution which had decisively shaped Germany, not only

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<sup>65</sup> Ross, *Failure of Bismarck’s Kulturkampf*.

<sup>66</sup> Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, 39; Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866*, 20.

spiritually but economically, culturally, and politically, for a thousand years.<sup>67</sup> Arguably, German Catholics never recovered from the loss of their vital monastic centers of learning and production. For at least the next century, they were increasingly and woefully underrepresented in Germany's universities, board rooms and city councils.<sup>68</sup>

Equally dramatic was the removal of the Church from the formal exercise of political power. Emmerick had been one of many Germans under the rule of a "prince of the Church," in her case the Prince-Bishop of Münster. When the Napoleonic wars concluded, however, she and the rest of the Münsterland's Catholics found themselves under the rule of Protestant Prussia, which governed its new province from distant Berlin. Meanwhile, like many other episcopal seats in Germany, The see of the Bishopric of Münster was now vacant, and would remain without a bishop for twenty years.<sup>69</sup> The Church suddenly lost much of its power and influence at a time when it needed them most, as it faced the challenge of not only political but intellectual revolution.<sup>70</sup>

In short, the turn of the nineteenth century marks a rupture in German Catholicism at least as dramatic as the Kulturkampf. Nonetheless, there are very few English-language works on the period. Historians writing in German have produced more, particularly regarding the secularization of religious congregations in Napoleonic Germany, but these have been largely

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<sup>67</sup> Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, 8.

<sup>68</sup> Etienne Francois has put it thus: "instead of continuing to assert that it was above all the Reformation which was responsible for the undeniable cultural backwardness of the Catholic population of Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, should we not rather ask whether the real causes are not to be sought in the secularization brought by the French Revolution and in the subsequent unification of Germany under Protestant leadership?" (Quoted in Blanning, *French Revolution in Germany*, 39-40). For Catholic underrepresentation in German universities, business, and government, see Smith, *German Nationalism*, 102-113; Anderson, *Windthorst*, 20.

<sup>69</sup> On the fate of the Prince-Bishopric of Münster and the imposition of Prussian rule, see Susanne Kill, "Vom alten Münster zur preußischen Provinzialhauptstadt (1780-1816)," *Historische Zeitschrift Beihefte* 14, Vom alten zum neuen Bürgertum: Die mitteleuropäische Stadt im Umbruch 1780-1820 (1991), 105-141.

<sup>70</sup> An excellent study on the impact on the Church of secularization programs which stretched across the Revolutionary, Napoleonic, and Restoration eras is Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, c. 1750-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

concerned with the economic and social consequences of the secularization of church property.<sup>71</sup> There is much more work to be done on the enormous rupture in the cultural, “sacral landscape” of Germany brought about by the secularization of its resplendently Baroque monastic culture, the impact on lived piety, and the immediate efforts to recover from this rupture.<sup>72</sup>

This oversight has been a missed opportunity. An investigation of Emmerick’s life can highlight the neglected first decades of the nineteenth century as setting in motion the cultural tensions and political conditions that would go on to shape modern German Catholicism. Long recognized as a crucial moment in the crystallization of German patriotism and political modernization, this project will emphasize that the Napoleonic era was a time of increased religiosity as well. As Timothy Blanning and others have shown, precisely because Enlightenment and revolution was exported to Germany at the point of French bayonets, they repelled far more Germans than they attracted. Unsurprisingly, stories of invading French troops desecrating communion hosts and looting churches inspired many to rally to the defense of the Church in its hour of crisis.<sup>73</sup> Even as the institutional Church suffered a major blow to its economic and political power, ordinary German Catholics fervently clung to and defended their faith.

The controversy ignited by Emmerick brings these defenders of German Catholicism to light. While she was indeed an object of scorn for many a German pamphleteer, she was a call to

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<sup>71</sup> See for example Harm Klueting, *Die Säkularisation im Herzogtum Westfalen, 1802-1834: Vorbereitung, Vollzug und wirtschaftlich-soziale Auswirkungen der Klosteraufhebung* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1980); Hans Müller, *Säkularisation und Öffentlichkeit am Beispiel Westfalen* (Münster: Mehren u. Hobbeling, 1971).

<sup>72</sup> For the central place of monasteries in the popular culture and “sacral landscape” of pre-Napoleonic Germany, see Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, 39. The Baroque culture of Westphalia’s monasteries and convents, and their struggle to cope with secularization, is described at length in Matthias Wemhoff, ed., *Die Kultur der Klöster in Westfalen*, 2 volumes (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2008). Surprisingly, Emmerick is nowhere to be found in this two-volume work.

<sup>73</sup> Blanning, *French Revolution in Germany*; Christopher Clark, “Religion,” in Jonathan Sperber, ed., *Germany 1800-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 163-167.

renewed piety for many others. Emmerick's critics vented so much energy in refuting her claims to sanctity precisely because they faced a determined rebuttal from Catholic clergy and laity alike. As one traveler through the Catholic Rhineland in 1800 derisively observed, "the ignorant mob have become even more attached to their miracle-working booths, their images of saints, and their clerics since the danger arose that they might lose them."<sup>74</sup> Emmerick's case makes clear, however, that Catholicism's advocates were a more complex group than an "ignorant mob." When clergymen held up Emmerick as an example for the faithful, they did so not only in sermons but in learned literary pamphlets.<sup>75</sup> Physicians debated and often attested to the veracity of Emmerick's stigmata in books and medical journals, viewing her wounds not only in the light of faith but also of emerging ideas about psychology and the link between mind and body.<sup>76</sup> Emmerick's greatest champion, Clemens Brentano, collected her ecstatic visions not only as a pious pilgrim but also as a Romantic poet, sharing with the Grimm brothers and other contemporaries the belief that such folk wisdom gave access to the authentic soul of the German nation.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, from its very inception Emmerick's cult became one part of a broader effort by Catholic social and ecclesiastical elites to construct a religious practice that tapped into popular

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Blanning, *French Revolution in Germany*, 235.

<sup>75</sup> See for example Simon Buchfelner, *Von der Glaubwürdigkeit der Offenbarung über das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick, Augustinerin zu Dülmen, nach den Zeugnissen des Grafen Fr. L. v. Stolberg, Dechant Rensing zu Dülmen, und Medizinal-Rathes Druffel, in Bezug auf ihr mystisches Leben und die Wundenmaale Christi an ihrem Körper. Mit Bemerkungen über d. Magnetismus in seinem Verhältnisse zur übernatürlichen Gnadenwirkung Gottes* (München: Jakob Siel, 1834).

<sup>76</sup> Examples include C. von Bönnighausen, *Geschichte und vorläufige Resultate der Untersuchung über die Erscheinungen an der ehemaligen Nonne A.C. Emmerick zu Dülmen* (Hamm, 1819); Joseph Ennemoser, *Der Magnetismus im Verhältnisse zur Natur und Religion* (Cotta, 1842); Karl Wilhelm Ideler, *Der religiöser Wahnsinn* (Schwedtscke, 1847); Dr. Karsch, *Die stigmatisierte Nonne Anna Katharina Emmerick zu Dülmen, eine Wundergeschichte aus dem neunzehnten Jahrhundert. Auf Grundlage nicht veröffentlichter amtlicher Aktenstücke dargestellt von Medizinalrath Dr. Karsch, ord. Prof. der beschreibenden Naturwissenschaften an der Königl. Akademie zu Münster* (Münster: C.C. Brunn, 1878); Theodor Lutterbeck, *In Betreff der Anna Katharina Emmerick abgenöthigte, zunächst dem Wahrheit-liebenden Publikum gewidmete Zuschrift des Arztes Lutterbeck an den Herrn Landrätlichen Kommissar des Kreises Coesfeld, C. V. Bönninghausen* (Schürholz, 1820).

<sup>77</sup> Scholz, *Clemens Brentano*, 42-45, 129-130; Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 62-104.

religious fervor, yet also offered a defensible counter to enlightened rationalism and – especially as the century went on – to Protestant-inflected German nationalism.<sup>78</sup> Emmerick was one weapon Catholics like Brentano wielded in that fight. At the same time, other Catholics – such as Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering – would see her as an embarrassing sign of backwardness in the Church, and the need for the Catholic Enlightenment to make its way to the level of peasants in rural towns and villages. They, too, would wield Emmerick as a symbol, as they debated in the press what it meant to be Catholic in a modern age. Emmerick’s story redraws the narrative arc of modern German Catholicism, rooting it in this time of political and institutional change, intellectual debate, and religious ferment. With this recognition of the crucial importance of the early-nineteenth-century in place, the “Catholic revival” of the 1850s-1870s becomes not simply a reactionary backlash against immediate events, but rather the ever-more-energetic continuation of an established struggle rooted in Germans’ historical memory.

## II: Recasting “Revival” as “Re-imagination” by “Thinking with Saints”

In addition, this project will use the life and afterlife of Anna Katharina Emmerick to reevaluate the very concept of a “Catholic revival.” The term has been a mainstay of German historiography among English-speaking scholars. For example, Jonathan Sperber devotes Chapter Two of his *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* to “A Religious Revival: 1850-1870.” In *Marpingen*, David Blackbourn situates the alleged Marian apparitions in that German village in the context of “a religious revival that is one of the outstanding

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<sup>78</sup> See in particular Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 38-43, 74-79; Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict*, 14-26; Zalar, “‘Knowledge is Power,’” 20-46. Explanations of how Protestantism became a crucial component of German nationalism can be found in Kevin Cramer, *The Thirty Years’ War & German Memory in the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 5-17; Hartmut Lehmann, “Pietism and Nationalism: The Relationship between Protestant Revivalism and National Renewal in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Church History* Vol. 51, No. 1 (Mar., 1982), 39-53; Anthony J. Steinhoff, “Christianity and the Creation of Germany,” in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 8, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 282-300; Gross, *War Against Catholicism*, 98-108.

characteristics of the nineteenth century.”<sup>79</sup> Michael Gross argues that “[t]he anti-Jesuit paranoia, rabid antimonasticism and anticlericalism . . . of the Kulturkampf developed along with the dramatic revival of popular Catholicism during the 1850s and 1860s.”<sup>80</sup> Rebecca Bennette also refers matter-of-factly in her recent book to “the religious revival experienced within Catholicism” as a crucial factor in German church-state conflict.<sup>81</sup> In short, historians writing in English refer to a “Catholic” revival in Germany constantly and reflexively. This is not, it should be said, without justification or heuristic value. Anglo-American scholars use “Catholic revival” as a convenient shorthand to describe very real phenomena in Germany and across nineteenth-century Western Europe: the proliferation of Catholic organizations, the renewed embrace of older traditions such as pilgrimages and processions, the founding of countless new monastic houses and religious orders, and a perceptible swing toward Ultramontanism among the Catholic faithful, both clerical and lay. This project will reexamine the idea of a “Catholic revival,” however, and how the term can become conceptually limiting. Ultimately, it will seek to shift the focus of the questions historians ask about modern German Catholics by recasting “revival” as “re-imagination.” It will also use the evolving nature of Catholic saints’ cults, up to this point ignored by modern German historians, as an ideal way to explore this process.

First, it is worth noting that the term “Catholic revival” is comparatively rare in German-language scholarship. This absence of a hegemonic “revival” paradigm becomes apparent in Olaf Blaschke’s influential article, “Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Zweites Konfessionelles Zeitalter?” (“The Nineteenth Century: a Second Confessional Age?”). In this extended essay of nearly forty pages, Blaschke calls for a “paradigm shift” in historians’ treatment of religion in nineteenth-century Germany, and in particular for re-labeling the period as a “second confessional age.”

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<sup>79</sup> Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 3.

<sup>80</sup> Gross, *War against Catholicism*, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Bennette, *Fighting for the Soul of Germany*, 18.

Blaschke exhaustively cites and rejects the other labels that have been bandied about in German historiography up to that point, some of which are similar to revival while others are not: “neo-confessionalization,” “religious neo-traditionalism,” “re-Christianization,” “sacralization,” “religious upheaval,” and “religious upsurge,” among others.<sup>82</sup> Blaschke also explicitly rejects the idea of nineteenth-century German religiosity, Catholic or Protestant, as a mere “revival” of an earlier, pre-modern piety.<sup>83</sup> This proliferation of terms in German scholarship stands in pointed contrast with the Anglo-American language of Catholic “revival,” which raises the question: why this difference?

The different historical experience of the English-speaking world may provide an answer. In nineteenth-century England, observers spoke (with approval or with disdain) of a “Catholic revival” in their midst. Prominent figures such as John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning converted to Catholicism, eventually becoming cardinals; Westminster Palace architect A. W. Pugin, another convert, spearheaded a Gothic revival in the arts; the repeal of the “Test Acts” allowed Catholics to serve in government without renouncing their faith. This growing social acceptance, political ascendancy and public visibility of English Catholics flew in the face of British national identity. Catholics had supposedly been marginalized, converted or expelled from England centuries before, reduced to the effigies burned every Guy Fawkes Day. England was a Protestant nation (unlike its archenemy, Catholic France).<sup>84</sup> Thus, the emergence of men like Newman, Manning, and Pugin constituted a “revival” of England’s apparently long-buried popish past.

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<sup>82</sup> Blaschke, “Das 19. Jahrhundert,” 38-75.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-45.

<sup>84</sup> For the centrality of Protestantism to British national identity, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), revised ed., 11-53.

“Revival” was also a term in wide use in the United States, where it was applied to various Protestant evangelical movements, from the First Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century forward. Here, too, “revival” was a fitting term for a very different reason. The various Christian movements under the “revivalism” umbrella often shared an express desire to “revive” what they believed to be the authentic spirituality of the early Christian Church. Thus, British and American scholars alike would have been familiar with the idea of a religious “revival” in the nineteenth century.

The term “revival,” however, is much better-suited to the English and American cases than the German one. Unlike England, German-speaking Europe had been clearly bi-confessional since the Reformation.<sup>85</sup> Nor were nineteenth-century German Catholics analogous to American revivalists; they were not interested in “reviving” the Christianity of the apostles. Most importantly, the term “revival” carries with it an implication of repeating an older practice in a newer era – that is, of looking backward. This has the added disadvantage of feeding into a circular preoccupation over how “modern” Catholics were. Therefore, while still acknowledging the significant shift in nineteenth-century Catholic religiosity “revival” has been used to describe, this project will recast the phenomenon as “re-imagination.” It draws on the one hand from the work of Andrew Greeley and others on a distinctive “Catholic imagination” that runs through followers’ beliefs, practices, and understandings of themselves and their worlds.<sup>86</sup> On

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<sup>85</sup> Even “bi-confessional” is an oversimplification which elides the difference between Lutheran and Calvinist Protestants.

<sup>86</sup> Greeley, *Catholic Imagination*. See also Eleanor Heartney, *Postmodern Heretics: The Catholic Imagination in Contemporary Art* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 2004); Ross Labrie, *The Catholic Imagination in American Literature* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997); Michael P. Murphy, *A Theology of Criticism; Balthasar, Postmodernism, and the Catholic Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); John Pfordresher, *Jesus and the Emergence of a Catholic Imagination: An Illustrated Journey* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008); Wendy M. Wright, *Mary and the Catholic Imagination: Le Point Vierge* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2011).

the other hand, it draws inspiration from Benedict Anderson's portrayal of modern nations, sustained through print media and mass politics, as "imagined communities."<sup>87</sup>

Following the red thread of Emmerick veneration through the centuries makes this *re-imagination* of Catholic tradition, rather than mere revival, very clear. Although her life, her wounds, and her visions were very much a product of the Napoleonic era, they took on new forms and meanings in her long afterlife. This reinvention is intrinsic to Catholic saintly cults. As biography becomes hagiography, remains become relics, and images become icons, Catholics reinvent historical persons as saints. In doing so, they link the saint to an established ritual tradition which has itself evolved considerably over two millennia. For a saintly cult to survive, it must mediate between the lived religion of the faithful, whose veneration establishes the saint's reputation of sanctity, and interests of the institutional Church, which seeks to channel popular enthusiasm down orthodox paths that reaffirm clerical authority. Initially rooted in the excitement and acclaim of a local community at a particular time and place, saintly cults that achieve canonization must become relevant for the "universal Church." The belief of a saint's contemporaries must be transmitted in such a way that new generations, with different needs and worldviews, will also believe in pious deeds and miracles they have not seen.

Thus, Catholic cults of veneration are, by their very nature, processes of continual reimagination and renegotiation. Historians of late antiquity and the medieval and early modern periods have developed a rich historiography that explores this fact from multiple angles. To cite just a few examples: Peter Brown has shed light on the emergence and evolution of martyrs' veneration as conditioned by radical cultural change, as religious practice responded to the

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<sup>87</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

decline of the pagan classical worldview.<sup>88</sup> In her work on the thirteenth century, Janine Peterson has examined the tensions between an older tradition of saint-making through popular acclaim and the papacy's increasing abrogation of the power of "canonization" for itself, making the conferral of sainthood contingent on Rome's political and economic interests.<sup>89</sup> In the historiography of the early modern period, Alison Frazier and David Collins have analyzed Renaissance humanists' re-fashioning of saints into exemplars of civic virtue and a source of cultural, even national pride.<sup>90</sup>

In other words, Catholics in these various times and places were able to read and manipulate the "language" of veneration, using saints and their cults as a discursive vehicle to understand and shape the world around them. From the time of Diocletian persecution to the Reformation, in southern and in northern Europe, among clerical elites and in rustic villages, scholars have consistently found evidence of what Simon Ditchfield has termed "thinking with saints." "[W]hen debating or talking about what we would today categorize as scientific, historical, religious, and political topics," Ditchfield has argued, "Catholics not infrequently used saints as tropes or discursive tools. There is thus a sense in which hagiography . . . is a substantially unwritten chapter in the histories of early modern science, politics, and even religion itself."<sup>91</sup> The history of *modern* sainthood, in Germany in particular, is indeed a

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<sup>88</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

<sup>89</sup> Janine Larmon Peterson, "The Politics of Sanctity in Thirteenth-Century Ferrara," *Traditio* 63 (2008), 307-326.

<sup>90</sup> Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); David J. Collins, *Reforming Saints: Saints' Lives and Their Authors in Germany, 1470-1530* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>91</sup> Simon Ditchfield, "Thinking with Saints: Sanctity and Society in the Early Modern World," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2009), 354.

“substantially unwritten chapter.”<sup>92</sup> Yet an analysis of the evolving ways modern Germans “thought with” Emmerick is as fruitful as similar projects in medieval and early modern studies.

### III: Reconsidering the Feminization Thesis

Just as the concept of “revival” can obscure the true nature of modern German Catholic culture, describing this culture as one of “feminization” can be misleading. The idea of the feminization of modern Catholicism, in Germany and more generally, is a well-established one. Historians such as David Blackbourn, Ruth Harris, and Michael Gross, for example, have noted the growing centrality of Marian devotion during this time period. The conjunction of a series of high-profile Marian apparitions at Lourdes, Marpingen, and La Salette, new popular devotions such as the Miraculous Medal, and the Vatican’s 1854 promulgation of the doctrine of Mary’s Immaculate Conception have led some to describe the period ca. 1850-1950 as the “Marian century.”<sup>93</sup> These years also saw the dramatic upsurge of Catholic women’s religious houses, and the foundation of new women’s orders such as the Poor Sisters of Saint Francis, Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus, and the Sisters of Mercy.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Unsurprisingly, the limited body of scholarship on modern European saints is focused on Italy, Spain, and France – see for instance Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999); Cristina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in Modern Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Lucy Riall, “Martyr Cults in Nineteenth-Century Italy,” *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 2, *The Persistence of Religion in Modern Europe* (June 2010), 255-287; William A. Christian, Jr., *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). As for German beatified or canonized saints, they are simply absent from the historiography after 1500. The few exceptions are almost exclusively on German saints of the twentieth century, particularly dissenters or martyrs of the Nazi state: see for example Harry James Cargas, editor, *The Unnecessary Problem of Edith Stein* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997); Griech-Poelle, *Bishop von Galen*.

<sup>93</sup> Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 4-7; Gross, *War against Catholicism*, 209-212; Harris, *Lourdes*, 15-16, 283-284; Roberto di Stefano and Francisco Javier Ramón Solans, “Introduction,” in *Marian Devotions, Political Mobilization, and Nationalism in Europe and America*, eds. Roberto di Stefano and Francisco Javier Ramón Solans (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 2-8.

<sup>94</sup> Relinde Meiwes, *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn*. These three orders, only a few of many examples that could be cited, are indirectly connected with Emmerick herself. The foundresses of these three orders (Frances Schervier, Appollina Mallinckrodt and Clara Fey respectively) all attended the same Catholic girls’ school in Aachen. There, they were profoundly influenced by their teacher Luise Hensel, a Catholic convert and close friend of both Emmerick and

Above all, historians have pointed to the “feminization” of modern Catholic congregations, offering up a wide variety of statistical indicators. Rudolf Schlögl, for instance, has charted the growing gender imbalance among Westphalian Germans who left money to the Church in their wills, pursued a monastic vocation, or joined a religious sodality from the 1740s to the 1830s.<sup>95</sup> Some have also seen a “feminization” of piety more generally at this time, in which religion became increasingly associated with sentimentality, domesticity, and strong emotions.<sup>96</sup> The gendered reading of these various attributes by contemporaries is especially visible in German anti-Catholic sentiment of the time. Michael Gross and Roisin Healy have described how nineteenth-century German liberals affirmed their and their nation’s virility, rationality and modernity by constructing an explicitly effeminate German Catholic “Other,” characterized by the sexual deviance of its clergy, its emotionally overwrought piety, and its fundamental irrationality.<sup>97</sup> Michael Carroll, surveying these various indicators, argued in 2004 that the facts were indisputable: “To the extent that there is disagreement in this literature on Catholicism, it is only over the timing of this increasing feminization . . . what is uncontested is that such feminization occurred.”<sup>98</sup>

A number of scholars have since argued, however, that there is much to be contested regarding the “feminization” thesis. True, the various elements of this perceived “feminization” were indeed important aspects of Catholicism in Germany and elsewhere. The growing gender

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Clemens Brentano, her would-be suitor. The school, furthermore, was a product of the Catholic educational initiative led by Dean Bernhard Overberg, another close confidante of Emmerick.

<sup>95</sup> Schlögl, “Sünderin, Heilige oder Hausfrau,” 18-22.

<sup>96</sup> Schlögl, “Sünderin, Heilige oder Hausfrau,” 18-22; Michael P. Carroll, “Give Me That Ol’ Time Hormonal Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 43, No. 2 (June 2004), 275-278. For a discussion of the ahistorical nature of this kind of analysis of nineteenth-century piety and its reliance on essentialist readings of gender, see Pascal Eitler et. al., “Feeling and Faith – Religious Emotions in German History,” *German History*, 32, No. 3 (September 2014), 343-352.

<sup>97</sup> Gross, *War against Catholicism*, 203; Rosin Healy, “Anti-Jesuitism in Imperial Germany: The Jesuit as Androgyne,” in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (New York: Berg, 2001), 154-164.

<sup>98</sup> Carroll, “Give Me That Ol’ Time Hormonal Religion,” 276.

imbalance in Catholic congregations and organizations over the course of the nineteenth century is clear, as is the dominance of women's orders in modern Catholicism's "monastic spring." Popular piety arguably became more explicitly emotive in comparison with the more austere "Catholic Enlightenment" of the previous century. The Church's German critics also clearly sought to discredit Catholics by emasculating them. Whether these elements collectively add up to a "feminization" of Catholicism, however, is another matter entirely.

As Thomas Buerman, Patrick Pasture, Olaf Blaschke, Manuel Borutta and others have pointed out, the thesis of Catholic feminization can overstate the case for Catholic women's advancement and agency. In what little research there is on modern women's religious orders, scholars often emphasize the "liberating" and "independent" quality of nuns' lives.<sup>99</sup> Admittedly, convents were one of the few places where nineteenth-century women, Catholic or otherwise, could hold administrative positions, generally regulate their own affairs, and pursue careers as nurses, teachers, and social workers. Catholic laywomen were similarly able to participate in public life through their work in religious charities, and their status as the moral instructors of the home dignity and purpose to their roles as wife and mother. What is lost in this picture, however, is the undeniable fact that the Catholic Church remained (and remains) a thoroughly patriarchal institution. German nuns' relative "independence" and broadened career options came at the price of their own sexuality, even their individuality, as they surrendered their rights to love, marriage, and motherhood, to their own names, possessions, and control over their own appearance. Women in religious orders may also have experienced higher mortality rates, a

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<sup>99</sup> This is particularly the line taken by Relinde Meiwes, arguably the foremost scholar on modern German female religious orders: Meiwes, "*Arbeiterinnen des Herrn*." Another well-known proponent of this idea is Barbara Welter, whose work has been influential beyond its original focus on American Protestantism: Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in Mary Hartman and Lois Banner, eds., *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 137-157. For overviews of the historiography in Europe and the United States, see Pasture, "Beyond the Feminization Thesis," 7-34; Carol K. Coburn, "An Overview of the Historiography of Women Religious: A Twenty-Five-Year Retrospective," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22, no. 1, Religious Life (Winter, 2004), 1-26.

result perhaps of the combination of intense working hours and exposure to the ill with a culture that valued austerity, self-mortification, and sacrifice.<sup>100</sup> German Catholic laywomen similarly exercised their roles within the narrow confines of their socially defined gender sphere, or faced condemnation and suspicion. By embracing the opportunities offered by these “acceptable” religious roles, women were participating in a gender discourse which defined them as inferior.<sup>101</sup>

Secondly, the feminization thesis obscures the continuing importance of men, clerical and lay, in the modern Church. For instance, the feminization thesis can reduce religious behavior to “popular piety” – that is, attending regular religious services and participation in rituals such as pilgrimages, processions, and novenas. Imbedded in this reduction is the assumption, carried over from secularization theory, that religion became “privatized” in the nineteenth century, and thus excised from the public sphere reserved for men. In reality, however, German men engaged with their religious faith through politics as well as civic, professional, and social organizations. Meanwhile, German clergymen in this period actually greatly increased their authority over their congregations, reaping the benefits of a general swing towards Ultramontanism and Catholic institutional centralization. Lastly, it goes without saying that men retained their monopoly of the preaching office and the dispensing of sacraments.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Annett Büttner, “‘Herr ist meines Lebens Kraft, vor wem sollte ich mich fürchten?’: Die religiöse Deutung des vorzeitigen Todes durch evangelische Diakonissen im 19. Jahrhundert,” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 34, no. 4 Premature Death: Patterns of Identity and Meaning From a Historical Perspective/Vorzeitiger Tod: Identitäts- und Sinnstiftung in historischer Perspektive (2009), 133-153; Martina Cucchiara, “Crucified Brides of the Crucified Savior: Redemptive Suffering in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century German Women Religious Communities” (paper presented at the Forty-First German Studies Association Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, October 6, 2017).

<sup>101</sup> Pasture, “Beyond the Feminization Thesis,” 15-17.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 17; Olaf Blaschke, “The Unrecognized Piety of Men: Strategies and Success of the Re-masculinization Campaign around 1900,” in Yvonne Maria Werner, ed., *Christian Masculinity: Men and Religion in Northern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2011), 21-45.

The life and afterlife of Anna Katharina Emmerick make the complex relationship between gender and Catholicism in modern Germany apparent. On the one hand, by becoming a stigmatic and mystic, this poor and ill-educated peasant woman was able to command the attention of religious and political elites. Like the many (and over 90% female) stigmatics<sup>103</sup> before her, Emmerick was able to usurp the kind of religious authority normally reserved for men.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, her bedridden and emaciated state, her frequent illnesses and, above all, her startling, un-healable wounds, indicate the high price Emmerick had to pay for this attention. Furthermore, the moment she became a public figure, her life was no longer her own. She was subject to a stream of visits from curiosity-seeking strangers, two official investigations, and almost constant surveillance for the rest of her life. When the king himself, Prussia's Protestant monarch Friedrich Wilhelm III, came to Dülmen and sent his court physician to prod and poke her, Emmerick had only one request for her sovereign: that he would see to it that she would finally be left alone.<sup>105</sup>

Emmerick's fight to exert her own agency even in the midst of her veneration and celebrity, and women's fight for agency in the midst of Catholicism's "Marian century," is particularly evident in the evolution of her cult. To return to Brentano's own metaphor, Emmerick became "like a wayside cross," a symbol open to appropriation and interpretation. Brentano was the first in a long line of men to assert control over her image. Her formal beatification case was opened and advanced by the bishop of Münster and the Augustinian order

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<sup>103</sup> Frustratingly, the only comprehensive survey of stigmatics dates from the nineteenth-century: Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*. I am currently developing my own list of stigmatics. In the process, I have cross-referenced all of the nearly three hundred stigmatics listed by Imbert-Gourbeyre, and subsequently winnowed down this number to individuals who displayed all five "classic" stigmata wounds (both hands, both feet, and side) and whose wounds were visible to others during their lifetime, rather than a manifestation after death. The percentage of women in this reduced cohort is analogous to the percentage in Imbert-Gourbeyre's entire sample: over 90%.

<sup>104</sup> For a perceptive analysis of the discursive power available to female mystics, see John Coakley, *Women, Men, & Spiritual Power: Female Saints and their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>105</sup> Multiple accounts of this episode can be found in Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 39, BAM.

of monks in Germany; Augustinian sisters provided clerical services for the Emmerick Bund and conducted tours of her preserved apartment, but little else. Of the many authors of books on Emmerick in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, only one was female. In these works, furthermore, authors consistently argued for the veracity of Emmerick's stigmata by citing her support from contemporary learned and important men. In the Emmerick Haus's guest-books, or the hundreds of letters it received from ordinary Germans, women dominate, and yet their contribution to the sustaining of Emmerick's cult is almost impossible to tease out. In all these ways, the life and afterlife of this mysterious woman has been obscured by the layers of images imposed on her by generations of men. Tracing this process can create a more nuanced picture of gender and modern German Catholicism.

### *Chapter Outline*

This project is organized into chapters which progress not only chronologically but order of increasing scope, as Emmerick's individual spiritual life becomes a topic of debate and object of control for an increasing number of people and institutions. The first four chapters deal with events taking place during or shortly after Emmerick's lifetime. The final chapter, in contrast, provides a brief overview of the beginning of her formal beatification process in the later nineteenth-century before focusing on what is arguably the high-point of her veneration during the 1920s and 1930s.

Chapter One focuses on Emmerick herself, drawing primarily on sources from 1813, the first months of her fame. Using the accounts of her life Emmerick gave to clergy, physicians, and other onlookers, its goal is to unearth her own self-fashioning and self-understanding from underneath the many subsequent layers of interpretation, veneration, and excoriation that have

built up over two centuries. It will consider her determined pursuit of a religious vocation, her confident preaching voice, and the focus of her prayer and ascetic practices, using the insights gleaned from this deep background to finally approach the question of how to interpret her stigmata.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four will turn the reactions of Emmerick's contemporaries, and their attempts to interpret, appropriate, and control Emmerick both physically and discursively. Chapter Two, "A Body of Evidence," examines the investigation of Emmerick by the Catholic diocese of Münster. This will serve as a starting point for a broader discussion of the post-Napoleonic Church's fraught efforts to accommodate a changed world and the disappointed hopes of a generation that had believed in the compatibility and interdependency of faith and Enlightenment.

Chapter Three, "Experiments in Faith," centers on the decade-long relationship between Emmerick and her physician, Franz Wilhelm Wesener. Though the remarkable story of her work with Clemens Brentano has since overshadowed it, Emmerick's relationship with Wesener was just as intimate, just as well documented, and just as important for understanding her and her evolving cult. In exploring this relationship, Wesener's fascination with Emmerick as medical doctor as well as man of faith, his struggles over whether to engage in the print wars that were increasingly raging about "the nun from Dülmen," and his theorizing about the nature of Emmerick's mystical power will all serve to reveal the permeability of the boundary between science and religiously-infused metaphysics around the turn of the nineteenth century.

Chapter Four will finally take on what is arguably the most crucial period in Emmerick's life: her years-long collaboration on the project of recording her visions with the Romantic poet Clemens Brentano. As previously mentioned, this story of religious muse and Romantic

amanuensis is one that has been told and retold by hagiographers, theologians, and literary scholars alike. The most famous book to come out of their time together, *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*, is also a heavily-analyzed work. This chapter will seek to add a historical perspective to these existing conversations about the Emmerick-Brentano encounter. First, it will recount the “turf war” between Berntano and Wesener, which powerfully shaped how he and Emmerick both thought of their work together going forward. Second, it will elaborate on and reinforce the picture of Emmerick as charismatic, intelligent, independent individual built up in previous chapters, taking on directly the common argument that Emmerick’s voice and ideas played no part in the production of *Das bittere Leiden*. Finally, it will analyze the content of *Das bittere Leiden* itself, presenting the text as not only a reflection of contemporary Romantic literature, but also a reflection of contemporary Catholics’ efforts to remember and re-imagine the traditions of their Church in the face of threats to its continued existence.

Chapter Four is thus a sort of pivot point in the dissertation, considering as it does both events in Emmerick’s life and the “afterlife” of her story, ideas, and visions in Brentano’s publications. Chapter Five, “Domesticating a Mystic,” is concerned with Emmerick’s cult between the two World Wars. This period, which included the hundredth anniversary of Emmerick’s death in 1924, was arguably the time in which Emmerick veneration reached its apotheosis. Interwar German Catholics engaged in promoting her beatification cause organized a multi-pronged, multimedia campaign. Priests and laypersons, the popular press and theological journals alike encouraged veneration of Emmerick as “a crucified saint for a crucified *Volk*.” Memories of Napoleonic French aggression, secularization, and waning religious belief provided revanchist Weimar German Catholics with a readymade narrative of victimization. Moreover, as

a poster-child of the *Heimat*, her pilgrimage sites offered a spiritual antidote to the godless modern city. These ideas literally took concrete form in the *Heilig-Kreuz Kirche* by architect Dominikus Böhm, Dülmen's parish church created to house Emmerick's remains, completed in 1938. Meanwhile, everyday Catholics continued a century-old, locally-based tradition of veneration which did not strictly conform to the new "official" line. Emmerick's interwar cult, and the modern saint-making process more generally, thus provides a window onto the push and pull between clergy and laity, men and women, institutional and popular forces in shaping lived German Catholicism in the 1920s.

## CHAPTER ONE

### STIGMATIZED BY CHOICE: ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK'S STORY

#### *Introduction: Whose Story?*

The residents of Dülmen had plenty to talk about and worry over in March of 1813. By then, the small Westphalian town had seen multiple regime changes over the course of a decade of war (See Maps 1-4). Until recently it had been part of the Prince-Bishopric of Münster, a thriving Catholic ecclesiastical state in the Holy Roman Empire. Since the outbreak of the Napoleonic wars, however, Dülmen had been occupied by Prussians and then passed through the hands of two dukes before being annexed by Imperial France.<sup>1</sup> As the front line between French troops and the other European powers shifted, passing soldiers made camp in Dülmen's fields and requisitioned its goods – over 15,000 of them at one point, overwhelming the community's 2,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> The annexed community's peasants were emancipated. Its Augustinian convent, called Agnetenberg, was secularized. Twenty of Dülmen's young men had recently

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of Emmerick's birth, Dülmen was part of the Prince-Bishopric of Münster. The last Prince-Bishop of Münster died in exile in Vienna in 1801, and the Prince-Bishopric was formally dissolved by the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluß* of 25 February 1803. Dülmen then fell to Duke Anna Emanuel von Croy of Regensburg. In 1806 it changed hands again, becoming part of the Duchy of Arenberg. Ludwig von Arenberg, supported by the French, would institute the *Code Napoleon* in 1809. When he was captured by the English, Dülmen was annexed by France directly and became part of the Lippe Departement in 1811. (In December of that year French officials secularized Agnetenberg convent, where Emmerick lived.) Following Napoleon's defeat in Russia and subsequent retreat, Prussian troops occupied Dülmen in November 1813, becoming the effective ruling power. Dülmen would formally become part of the Prussian province of Westphalia at the Congress of Vienna in June 1815. Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 77-79.

<sup>2</sup> Dülmen is situated along a Hanseatic trade route linking the Low Countries with central and eastern Europe. This established highway was also convenient for armies on the march, and as a result Dülmen has often had to play host to quartering (and often pillaging) troops through the centuries. The region suffered greatly at the hands of criss-crossing armies during sixteenth-century religious wars, the Thirty Years' War, and Seven Years' War. It was still struggling to recover from the latter conflict when Emmerick was born, and would soon face yet another extended state of crisis during the Napoleonic Wars. Finally, Dülmen and the Münsterland would suffer its greatest devastation yet during World War II, when the Allies saturation-bombed Westphalia in advance of invading ground troops in spring 1945. Bastian Gillner, "Dülmen vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zum Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges: Stadtherrlichkeit und Kriegsschrecken," in Stefan Sudmann, ed., *Geschichte der Stadt Dülmen* (Dülmen: Laumann, 2011), 86-98; Elizabeth Harding, "Dülmen 1648-1803: Politik, Wirtschaft und Alltag un einer fürstbischöflichen Landstadt," in Sudmann, ed., *Dülmen*, 110-112; Helmut Müller, *Fünf vor null: Die Besetzung des Münsterlandes 1945* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2005), 27-44.

been conscripted into Napoleon's *Grand Armée*, joining its long march to Russia. Now the Russian campaign was over, all twenty Dülmener soldiers were dead, and not only retreating French but Prussian and Russian troops were heading Dülmen's way.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these pressing concerns, a growing number of Dülmeners were talking in the streets and taverns about something else entirely: Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774-1824), the bedridden nun forced to leave convent Agnetenberg upon its secularization (see Figure 1). This peasant woman, rumor had it, possessed supernatural powers. Abstaining from all food, she lived solely on Holy Communion (and an occasional teaspoon of fruit juice or beef broth). Visions of angels, demons, and saints filled her sleeping and waking hours. Divine inspiration allowed her to see into men's hearts and predict the future. Most startling of all, she bore a cross-shaped mark on her breastbone, prick-marks around the crown of her head, open wounds in the front and back of her hands and feet, and a wound in her right side: the blessed stigmata, the wounds of Christ. Even in the midst of war and privation, she commanded Dülmeners' attention. Whether they ridiculed it as nonsense or affirmed it in reverence, the whole town was spreading Emmerick's story.

It was not long before Dülmen's educated elites stepped in to try and ascertain the truth. Physician Franz Wilhelm Wesener (1782-1832) spearheaded the effort (see Figure 2). The thirty-year-old was a hands-on doctor serving Dülmeners' medical needs, as well as a published scholar who kept abreast of the latest research.<sup>4</sup> A somewhat lapsed Catholic, he openly scoffed

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<sup>3</sup> Armin Owzar, "Dülmen in der napoleonischen Zeit (1803-1813): Freiheit, Gleichheit, Krieg," in Sudmann, *Dülmen*, 169-188; Dirk Eckerwiegert, "Dülmen 1813-1849: Die ersten preußischen Jahrzehnte von der Restauration zur Revolution," in Sudmann, ed., *Dülmen*, 189-192.

<sup>4</sup> Wesener's journal publications included the following (not an exhaustive list): Franz Wilhelm Wesener, "Die sämtlichen Schutzpockenverhandlungen in meinem Physikatskreise, und meine Korrespondenz und Versuche über diesen Gegenstand," *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 35, no. 9 (Sep. 1812), 97-121; Ibid, "Ueber ein neues und sicher genanntes Mittel nicht nur den Lungenkatarrh, sondern auch den Keichhusten und die häutige Bräune zu heilen," *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 38 (1814), 86-96; Ibid, "Etwas über die Eigenschaften und Wirkungen des Mutterkorns (secale

at the idea of supernatural stigmata in the local tavern.<sup>5</sup> The attention Emmerick was garnering, however, was no joke to learned doctor. He set out to organize a thorough investigation the very next day, expecting “to unmask, through an imposing intervention, a [case of] debunked fanaticism.”<sup>6</sup>

Wesener recruited two men to join him in an interrogation of the convent-less nun. The first was Dülmen’s parish priest, Father Bernhard Rensing (1760-1826), in whom Wesener found a ready ally. The priest had secretly learned of Emmerick’s stigmata from her confessor nearly three months earlier, around the start of the new year. Since then he had done nothing about it – perhaps because he hoped the matter would resolve on its own, or perhaps because he simply did not know what to do. A somewhat dry and aloof personality in his early fifties, Fr. Rensing’s was an austere faith that went along with the Enlightened tide of his generation. Having a stigmatic

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cornutum),” *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 45 (1817), 68-91; Ibid, “Therapeutische und physiologische Bemerkungen und Beobachtungen,” *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 47, no. 4 (1818), 17-33; Ibid, “Vermischte praktische Beobachtungen,” *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 48, no. 2 (1819), 91-109; Ibid, “Beiträge zur praktischen Heilkunde,” *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 52 (1823), 45-78; Ibid, “Meine Behandlung der Manie,” *Hufelands Journal der praktischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunde* 66 (1828), 68-98. Wesener also published two books of practical medicine for home use: Franz Wilhelm Wesener, *Vollständiger Gesundheitskatechismus: Ein Unterricht über Beschaffenheit und Pflege des menschlichen Leibes mit besonderer Hinsicht auf Westfalen. Nebst Anweisung zur Rettung in plötzlichen Todesgefahren* (Paderborn: Joseph Wesener, 1821); Ibid, *Medizinisches Handbuch oder Hülfe bei allen vorkommenden Krankheiten für jedermann insbesondere für Eltern, Lehrer, erwachsene Jünglinge und Jungfrauen. Nebst Anweisung zur Rettung in plötzlichen Todesgefahren* (Paderborn and Arnsberg: Joseph Wesener, 1826). Wesener’s only publication regarding Anna Katharina Emmerick was a short piece in a local weekly paper: Franz Wilhelm Wesener, “Die Nonne zu Düllmen betreffend: Nachricht und Bitte,” *Das Mindener Sonntagsblatt* 2, no. 6 (Sep. 1817), 44f; reprinted in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 444-445. See Chapter Three.

<sup>5</sup> To Dr. Wesener’s great surprise and discomfort, Emmerick apparently saw this incident in spirit and recounted it to him on their first meeting, as he records in his diary: “Herr Limberg fragte sie nachher, woher ich [Wesener] ihren Zustand erfahren habe? Hierauf antwortete sie: ‘In einem Wirtshause bei den Herrens.’ Ich habe dagegen geprochen und sei dann zu ihr gekommen. Als sie meine Rührung sah, forderte sie mich mit heiterer, sanfter Miene auf, ruhig und munter zu sein.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 6. Wesener’s initial skepticism regarding Emmerick’s stigmata is also attested to in Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, “Tagebuch des Herrn Grafen Fr. Leopold von Stolberg auf seiner Reise auf Dülmen, die dortige Kloster-Jungfrau, Anna Katherina Emmerick [sic] betreffend,” July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 5. On Wesener’s biography and scholarly attainments, see Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 89-93; Winfried Hümpfner OESA, “Einleitung,” *Akten*, xi-xlvi.

<sup>6</sup> Wesener recalled in his unpublished account of his time with Emmerick, *Kurzgedrängte Geschichte der stigmatisierten Augustinernonne Anna Catharina Emmerick in Dülmen, von ihrem Artzte* (1824): “. . . meine Erwartung durch einen imposanten Eingriff einem verlarven Fanatismus die Maske abzuziehen, war gescheitert. . .”. *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 371.

visionary in his flock was not only a shock but a challenge to his instinctual skepticism of the supernatural.<sup>7</sup> Now that Dr. Wesener had approached him however, Rensing made a show of taking charge of the situation.

The second person Wesener recruited was Dr. Peter Krauthausen (1750-1820), another local physician who had treated Emmerick in the past. Dr. Krauthausen also agreed to participate. Emmerick was, after all, his patient and not Wesener's. A generation older than his colleague, Krauthausen brought decades of professional experience to bear on the situation. Most importantly, he was intimately familiar with Emmerick's long medical history. He began treating the frequently-ill nun shortly after she professed her final vows in 1803. Over the succeeding decade he had treated her for a variety of complaints, from colds, coughs, and headaches to acute nerve pain, abdominal swelling, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting.<sup>8</sup>

On March 22, 1813, these three men ascended the steps of a house own by a local widow, Frau Roters, to reach Anna Katharina Emmerick's rented apartment. When they entered, two other men were already present: Father Alois Joseph Limberg and Abbé Jean Martin Lambert. Both were Emmerick's close confidantes and spiritual advisors. Fr. Limberg (1782-1852), a Dominican, had come to live with relatives in Dülmen several years ago when his monastic house was secularized. He had been Emmerick's confessor since she became a nun, and in that

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<sup>7</sup> Clemens Brentano described Rensing as „der Trockene“ and „der Vorsichtige“ in his journals. Although Brentano was not the most impartial judge, subsequent scholars have agreed with the poet's assessment. For example, in his capacity as postulator for Emmerick's beatification cause during the 1920s, Winfried Hümpfer OESA was able to read around 250 of Rensing's sermons that were held privately by a relative. That experience led him to write in one of his publications on Emmerick that he understood why Brentano had given Rensing these unflattering nicknames. „Ein gewisser Mangel an Gemüt scheint in der Tat ein wesentlicher Zug an ihm zu sein.“ (Unfortunately these sermons do not appear to be held in any archive.) This is also the impression one gets from reading Fr. Rensing's correspondence with his superior, Vicar General Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering, as will be seen in greater detail in Chapter Two. Hümpfer, „Einleitung,” *Akten*, xvi; Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 128-138.

<sup>8</sup> Krauthausen wrote a detailed summary of his medical treatment of Emmerick, beginning from her entry to Agnetenberg convent, at the request of Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering. This document was subsequently published by Hümpfer: Dr. Peter Krauthausen, „Bemerkungen der Krankheiten und Zufälle, womit die Jungfer Anna Catharina Emmerich seit ihrer Gegenwart hierselbst in Dülmen behaftet gewesen ist,” April 25, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfer, 400-403.

capacity had been the first person to discover her stigmata.<sup>9</sup> Fr. Lambert (1753-1821), meanwhile, had fled from his native France to nearby Westphalia during the Terror, like many other priests.<sup>10</sup> He eventually found refuge in Dülmen's Agnetenberg convent, and there became close friends with Emmerick (despite his limited German). When Agnetenberg, too was secularized, Lambert rented some rooms in Frau Roters' inn, and took Emmerick on as his housekeeper. Although she became completely bedridden shortly thereafter, they continued to share the rented apartment.<sup>11</sup>

With introductions made, these five men – Wesener, Rensing, Krauthausen, Limberg, and Lambert – crowded around Emmerick's bed. They then confronted her with the question she would be continually asked for the rest of her life: where did her mysterious wounds come from? With one of the party acting as stenographer, they waited for this frail woman to tell her story.

*1<sup>st</sup> Question:* Explain before God our just Judge, who punishes falsehood, where the cross[-shaped wound] on your breast came from?

*Answer:* I can't say, I myself no longer know.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Question:* Tell truthfully and according to your conscience, how the wounds in your hands and feet and in your right side came to be?

*Answer:* That I also cannot say, any more than the former.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Question:* Did you not feel it at all when you received these wounds in your hands and feet and side?

*Answer:* Yes, I felt the pain, but I did not know that there were wounds.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 106-109.

<sup>10</sup> Münster's then Vicar General, Franz Wilhelm Friedrich Freiherr von Fürstenberg, had actively invited refugees of the French Revolution to take refuge in the Prince-Bishopric (which he *de facto* ruled on behalf of an absentee bishop who was simultaneously Elector of Cologne). Over two thousand French priests took Fürstenberg up on the offer. Locals' reception of these exiles was mixed. Bernard Kröger, *Der Französische Exilklerus im Fürstbistum Münster (1794-1802)* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> It was now Emmerick's sister Gertrud who saw to the cooking and cleaning for the household. Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 104-106.

<sup>12</sup> "1. Frage: Erklären Sie aus vor Gott unserem gerechten Richter, der Unwahrheit straft, woher rührt das Kreuz auf ihrer Brust? / 1. Antwort: Das kann ich nicht sagen, ich weiß selbst nicht mehr. / 2. Frage: Sagen Sie mit Wahrheit und auch ihr Gewissen woher rühren die Wunden in Ihren Händen und Füßen und in Ihrer rechten Seite? 2. Antwort: Das kann ich auch nicht mehr sagen als das Vorige. / 3. Frage: Haben Sie es gar nicht empfunden, als Sie die Wunden in Händen und Füßen und in ihre Seite erhielten? / 3. Antwort: Ja die Schmerzen habe ich empfunden, aber ich habe nicht gewußt, daß es Wunden waren." [Franz Wilhelm Wesener], "Protokoll d. lokal. Kommission v. 23. III. 1813," March 23, 1813, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 13, doc. 67, BAM, 1-2. This document is also found in Hümpfner, *Tagebuch*, 397-400.

Incredibly, Emmerick claimed she had no idea she had stigmata until her confessor, Fr. Limberg, saw the wounds and pointed them out to her. According to Limberg's own notes, this occurred on December 31, 1812.<sup>13</sup> For her part, Emmerick could only say (in response to a fourth question) that the stigmata had appeared "sometime before New Year."

Such evasive and unlikely answers would seem to provide ample grounds for skepticism.

Only two more questions follow in the transcript, which elicited predictable replies.

*5<sup>th</sup> Question:* Have you prayed to our Savior for the special grace of His making you bodily more like Him, that is, through [receiving] His Five Wounds?

*Answer:* Yes.

*6<sup>th</sup> Question:* Are you, in good conscience, firmly convinced that you yourself did not make the cross [wound] on your breast, the wounds in your hands and feet and side, as well as the wounds on your forehead; and that you have not, to your knowledge, received them from any other person; but rather, that you have received them through especial divine grace, and through a true miracle?

*Answer:* Of that I am convinced; regarding [whether it is] a miracle, I hope and believe that [it is so].<sup>14</sup>

It was a brief, unenlightening interview, conducted by educated men, of a bed-ridden peasant woman. Yet the encounter produced a startling outcome. The doctors went on to examine her body, while Fr. Rensing examined her conscience. More questions undoubtedly followed, though they are not recorded in the formal report. Before the day was out all five men present signed this document, some of them with tears in their eyes.<sup>15</sup> In it they attested that "through the

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<sup>13</sup> Father Joseph Limberg, "Notizen P. Limbergs über A.K. Emmerick," January 15, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 279.

<sup>14</sup> "5. Frage:Haben Sie es sich als eine ausgezeichnete Gnade von unserem Heiland erbeten, daß er Sie auch körperlich d. h. durch seine 5 Wunden ihm ähnlich mache? / 5. Antwort:Ja. / 6. Frage:Sind Sie fest und in Ihrem Gewissen überzeugt, daß Sie das Kreuz auf ihrer Brust, die Wunden in Händen und Füßen und in der Seite, so auch den Kreuz um Ihre Stirn sich nicht selbst verursacht haben und sie auch von keinem Menschen mit Ihren Wissen bekommen, sondern aus besonderer göttlicher Gnade und also durch ein wahres Wunder erhalten haben? / 6. Antwort:Davon bin ich überzeugt; im Hinsicht des Wunders so glaube ich und hoffe es." Wesener, "Protokoll d. lokal. Kommission," Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 13 doc. 67, BAM, 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Rensing wrote in the letter accompanying the official document of the investigation that both Wesener and Krauthausen were "bis zu Tränen gerührt." Bernhard Rensing to General Vicar Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 193.

Augustinian nun Anna Katharina Emmerich . . . God our Father made us worthy to behold his wonder in an extraordinary way, to give witness to the salvation of our own souls and the salvation of our fellow men.”<sup>16</sup> Emmerick, they were convinced, was a saintly woman who had miraculously received her stigmata from God.

Eleven years would pass from this afternoon interview to Emmerick’s death in February 1824. During that time, countless people would find their way to her rented room in Dülmen as published accounts of her proliferated and her fame grew. Some of these visitors were of high social standing and formal education: physicians, university professors, men of letters, government officials, aristocrats. Others were peasants, craftsmen, and tradespeople. Some came to pay homage; some came – like Wesener – expecting to debunk a fanatic; and others came out of curiosity. Surviving accounts reveal that many of these people left their time with Emmerick impressed, moved, even reverential, like Wesener and the others who questioned her in March 1813.

This raises an obvious question – one that can be posed in two different ways. One could ask: *what did Anna Katharina Emmerick say and do* to elicit such a response from people, including many who were predisposed to dismiss her as a hysteric or a fraud? Or alternatively: *what did others, including many skeptics, see* in Emmerick that led them to believe she was a genuine stigmatic and visionary? In other words, did she create herself as a mystic, or did she become a mystic through the veneration and legitimization of others? Who really controlled the story that was spreading through the streets of Dülmen?

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<sup>16</sup> “. . . zu der Augustinernonne Anna Katharina Emmerich aus Flamske bei Kösfeld, welche bei der Witwe Roters auf der Münsterstraße allhier in Dülmen zur Miethe wohnt, um uns zu unserm eigenen Seelenheile und zum Heile unserer Mitbrüder zu überzeugen, I. Gott unser Herr, uns würdige, seine Wunder auf ganz außerordentliche Art zu sehen.” Wesener, “Protokoll d. lokal. Kommission,” Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 13 doc. 67, BAM, 2.

This chapter will address these questions. Its task is complicated by the distance that separates the modern historian, temporally and mentally, from Emmerick the “authentic” individual. When looking back from a contemporary vantage point at Emmerick in 1813, the view is obstructed by two centuries of accumulated hagiography, speculation, and criticism. Fortunately, there are a number of diaries, letters, and official documents concerning Emmerick which survive from the early years of her fame. These sources allow us a glimpse of her before the hagiographical, polemical, and scholarly interpretations of later years had solidified.

The first body of sources from this period comes from the aforementioned parish priest of Dülmen, Fr. Rensing. After the investigation with Krauthausen and Wesener, Rensing sent the document they had signed, along with an introductory letter, to the Church in Münster. The addressee was Vicar General Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering, who was acting as de facto head of the diocese in the absence of a sitting bishop. Droste-Vischering immediately ordered Rensing to visit Emmerick as often as possible, to keep a detailed journal of his interactions with her, and to send him regular reports. He also instructed Rensing to conduct interviews of Emmerick’s relatives, friends, and former fellow nuns.<sup>17</sup> These documents, along with the priest’s many letters to the Vicar General over the following months and years, are a treasure trove of material.

Droste-Vischering also sent a second clergyman to observe and report on Emmerick: Bernhard Overberg (1754-1826) (See Figure 3 and 4). A man from beginnings as humble as Emmerick’s own, Overberg had been a parish priest in a small Westphalian community when, in 1784, then-Vicar General Franz Friedrich Wilhelm Freiherr von Fürstenberg happened to observe him teaching catechism on a Sunday afternoon. Fürstenberg was amazed at Overberg’s natural pedagogical ability and plucked the priest from obscurity, recruiting him to help shape

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<sup>17</sup> Regarding the Church investigation of Emmerick under Droste-Vischering’s direction, see Chapter Two.

his designs for education reform in the Prince-Bishopric of Münster. Overberg went on to become known as “the teacher of teachers,” running a *Normalschule* in Münster and publishing school textbooks, catechisms, and books on pedagogical theory that were written in language the common man could understand.<sup>18</sup> Far more than his formal learning (which was limited), it was Overberg’s geniality, patience, and natural facility with students that made him a successful educator. These qualities also made him a spiritual advisor and confessor sought out by many. It was precisely this humble background, friendly nature, and knack for listening that made Overberg the ideal person to coax information out of Emmerick. She opened up to the congenial Overberg far more than to Rensing, and his notes of their conversations provide detailed information regarding Emmerick’s childhood, adolescence, and time in the convent.<sup>19</sup>

A third rich source for Emmerick’s life comes from the diary of Dr. Wesener, the Dülmen physician whose initial skepticism immediately gave way to deep reverence for her. After the interrogation with Rensing and Krauthausen, Wesener returned the next day “out of purely pious motives to the blessed maiden Anna Katharina Emmerick, in order to worship the

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<sup>18</sup> Works published by Overberg include: *Christkatholisches Religions-Handbuch um sich und andere zu belehren* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1804); *Geschichte des alten und neuen Testaments: zur Belehrung und Erbauung besonders für Lehrer größere Schüler und Hausväter* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1817); *Katechismus der christkatholischen Lehre: zum Gebrauche der kleineren Schüler* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1804); *Sämtliche Schriften für Schulen*, 5 volumes (Münster: Aschendorff, 1833-1838); with Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, *Zusprache an Mädchen, welche sich mit einem Protestanten verloben wollen* (München: Lentner, 1840). Overberg’s catechism textbooks were much reprinted and used by generations of students.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Reinermann, *Bernhard Overberg: Lehrer der Normalschule, Examinator synodalis in Spiritualibus, Dechant an der Lieb-Frauen-Kirche, Regens im bischöflichen Seminar zu Münster, Ehren-Mitglied des Domkapitels, Ober-Konsistorial-Rath, Ehren-Mitglied der Königl. Preuß. Regierung daselbst, und Ritter der rothen Adler-Ordens 3r Klasse, in seinem Leben und Wirken* (Münster: Theissing, 1829); Klemens Löffler, “Overberg, Bernhard Heinrich,” in Charles G. Herbermann et. al., ed., *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1913) <[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Encyclopedia\\_\(1913\)/Bernhard\\_Heinrich\\_Overberg](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Bernhard_Heinrich_Overberg)> (accessed 20 January 2017); Alwin Hanschmidt, “Oververg, Bernhard Heinrich,” in Otto zu Stolberg-Wernigerode, ed., *New Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 9 (Berlin: Nauwach-Pagel, 1999), 727-728; Ewald Reinhard, *Die Münsterische „Familia Sacra“: Der Kreis um die Fürstin Gallitzin: Fürstenberg, Overberg, Stolberg, und ihre Freunde* (Münster: Verlag Regensberg, 1953), 39-43; Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 125-128.

wonders of God on this pious person.”<sup>20</sup> It was the first of many, almost daily visits Wesener would make to Emmerick up until her death, in his capacity as a physician but also as a friend. The doctor recorded his observations and conversations with her in a remarkable journal that goes through late 1819.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg (Figure 5) wrote and circulated an extended account of his audience with Emmerick during a visit to Dülmen in the summer of 1813. A German patriot, poet, and traveling companion of Goethe, he became friends with Vicar General Fürstenberg, the princess Amalie von Gallitzin, and the learned Catholics they engaged in conversation in the so-called “Münster Circle” (*Münsterscher Kreis*). These connections led Stolberg to move to Münster and convert to Catholicism himself in 1800, to the consternation of many of his acquaintances and friends. An impressive scholar with varied interests, Stolberg was engaged in writing a multi-volume *History of the Religion of Jesus Christ* when his friend and fellow alumnus of the *Münsterscher Kreis*, Vicar General Droste-Vischering, asked him to visit Emmerick and tell him what he thought about her. Stolberg and his family accordingly visited Emmerick in July 1813. As the account of this visit reveals, the von Stolbergs were greatly impressed.<sup>22</sup>

Noticeably absent from this otherwise deep cache of sources is anything written by Emmerick herself. With only a few letters attributed to her in existence, essentially all our

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<sup>20</sup> “Dienstag, den 23. März des Abends, ein Viertel nach neun Uhr begab ich aus purem frommen Antriege zu der gottseligen Jungfrau Anna Katharina Emmerich um Gottes Wunder an dieser frommen Person anzubeten.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813,” in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 3.

<sup>21</sup> This diary is reprinted in full in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 1-317. Wesener’s writings and observations on Emmerick will be discussed at much greater length in Chapter Three.

<sup>22</sup> Regarding Stolberg, see Reinhard, *Münsterische ‘Familia sacra,’* 43-53; Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 92-93; Jenny Lagaude, *Die Konversion des Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg: Motive und Reaktionen* (Leipzig: Kirchhof & Franke, 2006); Erich Schmidt, “Stolberg-Stolberg, Friedrich Leopold Graf zu,” in *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliographie* vol 36 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1893), 350-367.

knowledge of her comes to us second- and third-hand.<sup>23</sup> The people who wrote about her in diaries, letters, argumentative pamphlets and official documents brought their own beliefs and assumptions to their encounters with her. These in turn influenced the questions they asked and the conclusions they drew. Nonetheless, this chapter will reconstruct from other accounts, so far as possible, Emmerick's story – and prove that it was, in fact, *Emmerick's* story, her own sense of mission and charismatic personality, that had such an effect on visitors that we can still perceive the wonder and reverence in their accounts, two hundred years later. Emmerick was, as this chapter will recount, an invalid and an impoverished woman who had received little formal education. Moreover, once her stigmata became publicly known she was under near constant scrutiny, her life no longer truly her own. Despite these limitations, this formidable woman was able to shape her own identity, tell her own story, and make her own history.

At the heart of this effort to recover Emmerick's story is an exploration of her mysticism. It should be noted from the outset that this exploration is not an attempt to scientifically diagnose or explain her visions, stigmata, or ability to survive without food (sometimes referred to as *inedia*). Nor is it a theological defense of the possibility of stigmata, or the “authenticity” of Emmerick's supernatural gifts. Rather, it is an attempt, from a cultural-historical perspective, to recover what these spiritual phenomena and experiences meant to her, and how much agency she was able to exercise in shaping them.

In this effort, the chapter will draw on a burgeoning literature on female mystics through the ages by historians, psychologists, anthropologists, theologians, and literary scholars. The

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<sup>23</sup> Anna Katharina Emmerick was definitely able to read (on which see below), but her writing ability was limited. Hümpfner includes three letters from her hand in his compilation of primary sources, *Akten*, all of which date from 1819 or later. I have not been able to locate the originals in archives so far, or find references to any other documents by Emmerick besides these three letters. A few lines from one letter to Luise Hensel, written May 8, 1819, with spelling errors intact, will illustrate the limits of Emmerick's writing skills: “liebe schwester in iesu / ich dank für den brif. ich schreib schwer. das gewissen antwortet auf alles.” *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 341.

interplay of gender, identity, agency, and power has long been a recurring theme in this vast body of scholarship on women and mysticism in the Catholic Church, but one that has yet to reach a consensus. For example, scholars such as Frank Graziano and Michael Carroll have viewed women like Emmerick through the lens of Foucauldian institutional oppression and psychological disorders. In their analyses, “spiritual mortifications” become “masochism;” “religious fasting” becomes “anorexia;” “visions” become “hallucinations;” “auditory revelations” become “schizophrenia.” Their arguments do not simply replace one set of labels with another, however: they construct mystics as a product of their internalized, psychologically damaging discourses of human (and especially female) imperfection and inferiority. Studies of female mystics in this vein thus focus primarily on the reconstructed psyche of the individual in question, and secondarily on Christianity, monasticism, and gender norms as institutions and discourses of social control.<sup>24</sup> Research on the psychosomatic aspects of emotional trauma, and the potential links between conditions like anorexia and self-mutilation, can bolster this reading of mystics and stigmatics.<sup>25</sup> From this perspective, the status of these tortured women as “mystics” is due to their disordered self-image and to others’ interpretation of them as “mystics,” rather than as masochists, anorexics, or schizophrenics. These psychological conditions are treated as trans-historical and absolute, rather than historically-conditioned constructs of modern, institutionalized medicine.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Frank Graziano, *Wounds of Love: The Mystical Marriage of Saint Rose of Lima* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions*; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), especially 137-149; see also Christine Gervais and Amanda Watson, “Discipline, Resistance, Solace, and the Body: Catholic Womens’ Religious Convent Experiences from the Late 1930s to the Late 1960s,” *Religions* 5 (2014), 277-303.

<sup>25</sup> Farber et. al., “Death and Annihilation Anxieties,” 289-305.

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the constructed nature of mental disorders by professionalized medicine, and how the pathologizing of behaviors by psychologists and physicians had a major impact on women like Emmerick, see Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, 3-7, 38-70.

On the other hand, Caroline Walker Bynum, Andrea Dickens, and others have interpreted Catholic female mysticism in a different light. In their view, mysticism functions as a suite of ideas and practices which can provide Catholic women an alternative means of exercising power. Meanwhile, the physically punishing asceticism and gory wounds that characterize so many of these women become for these scholars signs to be read in the light of the mystic's unique religious views and performative spirituality. By making this argument, these scholars shift the point of origin for women's mysticism from the individual psyche to the individual encounter with her historical context: her reading of theological ideas, and her response to what she perceives as her society's greater or lesser fidelity to them. Thus, when women like Hildegard von Bingen, Theresa of Avila, or Catherine of Siena found the Church and society of their time falling short of its religious duty, claims to mystical inspiration provided them a way to circumvent traditional bans on women from preaching offices and make their concerns known.<sup>27</sup> Some have pushed this view to its extremes, making female mystics of all periods and beliefs into rebels against the patriarchy.

These highly contrasting approaches, each with their own shortcomings, reflect the paradoxical, uncomfortable nature of women mystics like Emmerick for modern observers: spiritually powerful and socially abased, with ecstatic minds and tortured bodies. Thus the conundrum: can taking on such a revered role be, in fact, debasing? Can the embrace of crippling physical pain, perhaps to the point of inflicting self-harm be, in fact, empowering? This chapter seeks to avoid the anachronisms of making Emmerick either a self-harming anorexic or a feminist *avant la lettre*. Its goal will be to acknowledge the disturbing nature of Emmerick's afflictions while also situating them within her own worldview and historical context. It will seek

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<sup>27</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*; Andrea Janelle Dickens, *The Female Mystic: Great Women Thinkers of the Middle Ages* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

to understand Emmerick's attempts to embrace, interpret, and reimagine the physical and mental phenomena she experienced, while recognizing the limits of any attempt to enter her thought-world. Finally, though it will highlight the often unconventional and uncompromising nature of Emmerick's beliefs, ideas, and actions, it will also situate her squarely in the tradition of Orthodox Roman Catholicism.

This chapter is organized thematically. The first section will consider Emmerick's discernment of a calling to a life rooted in service and action on behalf of her community as well as contemplation. It will trace her dogged determination to follow that call, in the face of considerable obstacles, as proof of her strong sense of identity. This initial section will also consider some of the images, ideas, and experiences that may have shaped Emmerick's devotional focus above all on the suffering, crucified Christ.

With her early biography and sense of vocation thus sketched out, the second and third sections will examine her visions and stigmata respectively. Section two frames Emmerick's visions not just as inward experiences, but as part of her greater mission to serve her community through good works, preaching, and teaching. It will also discuss how her confidence in sharing her visions drew not only on her faith, but also on her lifelong reading about and thoughtful contemplation of religious subjects. Finally, section three will ground her stigmata in a broader discussion of her transformative embrace of suffering as a means of redemption. It will find clues to how Emmerick understood her stigmata in her reaction to personal hardship. Most fundamentally, it will draw connections between her stigmata and her commitment to service to others. The clue that will reveal this crucial connection will be Emmerick's obsession with expiatory acts on behalf of souls in Purgatory. Thus examining Emmerick's determined pursuit of what she saw as her spiritual vocation and her transformative embrace of her own suffering,

the chapter will argue that Emmerick's story is one of agency without autonomy and non-conformity without disobedience. Though disadvantaged by birth, she became stigmatized by choice.

### *Unlikely Nun*

Choice might seem to be an unlikely theme in the life of a nineteenth-century Westphalian nun. From birth, Emmerick's life choices were limited by her gender, her poverty, and her social station. Later, Imperial France absorbed Dülmen and its environs and imposed the *Code Napoléon*, sweeping away estate privileges and feudal obligations. As a penniless woman, however, Emmerick was on the margins of this emancipation. In any case, in becoming a nun in 1803, she had seemingly surrendered what few choices remained open to her: where and with whom to live, how to dress, how to work, and how to pray. When the historical context and biographical details of Emmerick's life are taken into account, however, a different picture of her story emerges: one of determined insistence on a particular calling, and a particular way of living out that calling, in the face of stiff opposition. Even as she followed what she perceived to be the will of God and vowed obedience to the Church, Emmerick also defied the social conventions of her class and the expressed wishes of her parents. Her zealous embrace of religious life, furthermore, went equally against the grain of her new convent community. As Rensing, Overberg, Wesener, and Stolberg would discover as they delved into the details of her past, her confidence in her own vocation allowed her to succeed in becoming an unlikely nun.

Emmerick's adolescence and spiritual formation played out against a backdrop of tremendous changes, ones that would place not only her own dreams of entering a convent but the Catholic monastic tradition itself at risk. She was born in Coesfeld, a town about 10 miles from Dülmen, to tenant farmer Bernhard Emmerick and his wife Anna née Hillers in 1774. The

Age of Enlightenment was approaching its apotheosis, and the Romantic era was on the horizon. That same year the First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, Goethe published *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, James Cook was discovering new islands in the Pacific, and Joseph Priestley isolated the element oxygen. Jacques-François Blondel, the great neoclassical architect, died; Caspar David Friedrich, the future Romantic painter, was born. 1774 was also the year Louis XVI ascended to the French throne amid pageantry proclaiming him king by divine right – an indication that even as philosophers, scientists, artists, explorers, and revolutionaries pushed the boundaries of human reason and social convention, the “old regime” of monarchical Europe was prepared to push back. The violent clash between these two worldviews for the soul of Europe took place during Emmerick’s formative years.

Closer to home, Germans inside and outside the Church were wrestling over what role, if any, monastic institutions should play in a modernizing world. Many educated German Catholics, both clerical and lay, had become increasingly uncomfortable with the more supernatural aspects of Baroque Catholicism in the latter half of the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Attacking religious behavior and traditions they saw as superstitious, they took up the banner of Enlightenment as readily as Protestants. Religious orders were for many of them epitomizers and perpetuators of backwardness. In his much-reprinted *General History of the Jesuits*, for example, Bavarian official and one-time Catholic seminarian Peter Philipp Wolf decried the infamous order for having “[driven] out the use of sound reason through their sensual religiosity, and implanted in the sensibilities of all Catholics an irresistible tendency toward enthusiasm and superstition.”<sup>29</sup> The older religious orders faced equally sharp criticism. Another official,

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<sup>28</sup> On Baroque Catholicism and its critics, see Forster, *Catholic Germany from Reformation to Enlightenment*, 4-10, 145, 182-197.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Philipp Wolf, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Jesuiten: Von dem Ursprung ihres Ordens auf den gegenwärtige Zeiten* (Zurich: 1789-), 4 volumes, 2: 173, quoted in Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German*

Heinrich Wasseroth, accused monastics of “tempting the people in their area through the recounting and exhibiting of false and invented miracles, thereby bringing themselves acclaim.”<sup>30</sup> One can only imagine what he would have made of the spectacle surrounding Emmerick. Wasseroth went on to decry women’s convents in particular as “more shameful than useful to the state, and little or no use to religion.”<sup>31</sup> By “shameful,” Wasseroth may well have been referring to popular cultural images of convents as sites of lustful adventures, corruption, and other scandals, as depicted in works such as Denis Diderot’s *The Nun*. His fellow Catholic Johann Adam Ickstatt echoed Wasseroth’s utilitarian criticism: “how many more happy subjects would our Catholic Princes have, if the monks and nuns had not sworn off the sacrament of holy matrimony? . . . How many armies could we not form out of our monks? How many upstanding housewives would our nuns not therefore supply?”<sup>32</sup>

The reality was in fact more complicated. Some monasteries were important centers of education, with celebrated libraries and schools that had trained the sons of elites for generations. German monks and priests were also among those participating in the Enlightenment and its call for reform in the Church.<sup>33</sup> As for convents dangerously depleting the ranks of procreating housewives, that concern was without foundation. Late eighteenth-century Europe was in fact in

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*Catholicism*, 131; “Wolf, Peter Philipp,” by Sigmund Ritter von Riezler, in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Volume 43 (1898), pp. 781–785, digital full-text edition in [Wikisource](https://www.wikisource.org/), URL:

[http://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:Wolf,\\_Peter\\_Philipp&oldid=1691742](http://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:Wolf,_Peter_Philipp&oldid=1691742) (accessed 16 March 2015).

<sup>30</sup> “. . . die die Mönche . . . durch Erzählung und Vorzeigung falscher und erdichteter Mirakel, das Volk in diese Oerter zu locken, und dieselbe dadurch in großen Ruf zu bringen.” Heinrich Joseph Watteroth, *Die Reformation in Deutschland zu Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1781), 35.

<sup>31</sup> “Mit den Nonnenklöstern, von denen man mit Recht sagen kann, daß sie dem Staate mehr schädlich als nützlich sind, der Religion aber wo nicht gar keinen, doch nur einen sehr unbedeutlichen Nutzen bringen, ist eine ernstliche Reformation vorzunehmen.” Wasseroth, *Die Reformation*, 21-22.

<sup>32</sup> Christian Friedrich Menschenfreund (pseud. Johann Adam Ickstatt), *Untersuchung der Frage: Warum ist der Wohlstand der protestantischer Länder so gar viel größer als der catholischen?* (Salzburg and Freisingen, 1772), 85; quoted and translated in Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism*, 62. (Printy does not provide the original German and I have been unable to procure a copy myself.)

<sup>33</sup> Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism*; Lehner, *On the Road to Vatican II*; Richard Schaefer, “True and False Enlightenment: German Scholars and the Discourse of Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 97 no. 1 (January 2011), 24-45.

the midst of a demographic boom.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, many believed that monastics were the opposite of the model modern citizen: unproductive and un-Enlightened, leeches on the German economy, their religious houses clutching countless acres of land in the “dead hand of the church.” Franz Wilhelm von Spiegel zum Desenberg, a nobleman from Emmerick’s own province of Westphalia, summed up mainstream Enlightened opinion thus: monks and nuns were no more than an “ignorant class of religious vagabonds.”<sup>35</sup> Until recently, German-speaking lands had what Derek Beales has described as “the most spectacular efflorescence of the monasteries, especially of the Old Orders, in the whole of Europe,” both in terms of sheer numbers and in wealth, intellectual output and architectural splendor.<sup>36</sup> Now, however, changing tastes in religious expression and flagging support from church and state elites eroded religious houses’ foundation in German society.

Economic difficulties hastened the monasteries’ decline. Westphalian religious houses, including Dülmen’s Augustinian convent of Agnetenberg, had survived the Reformation, the Thirty Years’ War, and the Seven Years’ War in part by going into massive debt (Figure 6). By the end of the eighteenth century, Agnetenberg’s debt amounted to several thousands of talers. Fewer Catholics were leaving money to convents and monasteries in their wills, and fewer were pursuing a monastic vocation, which exacerbated the problem.<sup>37</sup> From an all-time high of nearly fifty, the number of Agnetenberg’s resident nuns fell to less than ten. A 1799 visitation to the convent by the Vicar General of the diocese reported lax observance of the Augustinian Rule,

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<sup>34</sup> David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 26-33.

<sup>35</sup> “. . . ungebildete Klasse von geistlichen Vagabunden.” Franz Wilhelm von Spiegel zum Desenberg, *Gedanken über die Aufhebung der Klöster und geistlichen Stifter im Herzogthum Westfalen* (Münster 1802); quoted in Christian Todrowski, “Säkularisation in Westfalen,” in Matthias Wemhoff, ed., *Säkularisation und Neubeginn: Die Kultur der Klöster in Westfalen* (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2007), 21-47.

<sup>36</sup> Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, 39.

<sup>37</sup> Schlögl, “Sünderin, Heilige oder Hausfrau?,” 13-50.

bitter conflicts among the sisters, and systemic financial mismanagement. The Prince-Bishop of Münster seriously considered closing the nearly-350-year-old convent for good.<sup>38</sup>

In short, a calling to religious life was inopportune and increasingly unconventional in Westphalia at the turn of the nineteenth century. This was especially true for women who, like Emmerick, were poor and therefore unable to pay the usual convent dowry. Until quite recently, religious houses relied on applicants bringing a substantial gift, in the form of currency or valuable goods, which would then offset the costs of lifetime room and board. This requirement effectively restricted religious life to those of wealthier background: typically, daughters of the aristocracy and burgher elites.<sup>39</sup> Emmerick was the daughter of a tenant farmer – that is, a person who did not own the land he worked, occupying one of the lowest rungs on Westphalia’s socio-economic ladder. It was highly unlikely that she could save enough to enter any convent, even a convent as poor and humble as Agnetenberg.

Yet even under these circumstances, Emmerick felt such a calling and followed it in the face of many obstacles.

When she was about sixteen years old, she was in the fields one day . . . when she heard the bells of the convent in Coesfeld. She had indeed often heard them before, when the wind was favorable, but on this occasion she felt such an indescribable, wonderful sensation that the other workers rushed to help her, for she was on the point of fainting. It came to her as if someone was calling out to her: “You must join a convent, come what may!” From that moment on she was determined.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Kohl, *Das Bistum Münster: Die Schwesternhäuser nach der Augustinerregel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), 4-33; 249-279.

<sup>39</sup> “Da die Aussteuer eine gewisse Wohlhabenheit erforderte - im 18. Jahrhundert lag die Mitgift im Durchschnitt bei 100 bis 300 Rtl. - blieben ganz unvermögende Familien praktisch ausgeschlossen.” Kohl, *Das Bistum Münster*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> “Als sie ungefähr 16 Jahre alt gewesen, sei ihr einst auf dem Felde. . . als sie die Glocke der Nonnen in Coesfeld lauten hörte. Sie hatte sie freilich schon oft gehört, wenn der Wind dazu günstig war, aber dieses Mal wandelte sie ein so unbeschreibliches, wunderbares Gefühl an, daß die Arbeiter ihr zu Hilfe eilen wollten, indem sie einer Ohnmacht nahe war. Es sei ihr vorgekommen, als wenn ihr einer zurief: Du mußt ins Kloster, es gehe auch wie es wolle! Von dem Augenblick an sei auch ihr Entschluß fest gewesen.” Wesener, journal, September 8, 1814, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 120.

Thus did Emmerick recall, in a conversation with Dr. Wesener, quite literally hearing a call to religious life. Whether or not her recollection was true in all its particulars, this much is clear from the sources: Anna Katharina Emmerick decided early in life that she had a vocation to follow God in an extraordinary way. She heard this call despite the fact that, as a tenant farmer's daughter, she had little hope of raising the dowry typically required of postulants to a convent. She also followed this call at a time when Catholicism's centuries-old monastic tradition was at risk from intellectual reformers and secularizing regimes. Ultimately she achieved her dream, entering the convent of Agnetenberg even over the objections of her family and friends; yet she soon discovered her new religious community was far from perfect. Undaunted, she continued to live out her vocation in her own unusual way, ignoring the misunderstanding and displeasure of the other sisters. Some inner fire drove her to overcome all these circumstances, becoming a most unlikely nun.

Where did this fire come from? The first sparks, Emmerick consistently told her listeners, touched her heart as a very young child. In fact, as she looked back on her life in 1813 as a nearly forty-year-old woman, she could not remember a time when she was not consumed by thoughts of God. Bernhard Overberg, for example, recorded:

Question: From what age of your earthly life can you remember something?

Answer: From age three.

Question: What do you remember about yourself from that time?

Answer: That I often prayed to God that he would let me die.

Question: Oh! Why that then?

Answer: Because I had heard that when one grew up, one would often offend God with many sins.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> "Frage: Von welchem Jahre Ihres Lebens auf Erden können Sie sich noch an etwas erinnern? / Antwort: ‚Vom dritten.‘ Frage: Was erinnern Sie sich denn von Ihren damaligen Gesinnungen? / Antwort: ‚Daß ich Gott oft bat, er möchte mich sterben lassen.‘ Frage: O warum denn das? / Antwort: ‚Weil ich gehört habe, daß [man], wenn man groß würde, Gott oft mit vielen Sünden beleidigte.‘" Bernhard Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen über Anna Kath. Emmerick," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 76.

Emmerick would repeat this story to Overberg twice more in the coming months.<sup>42</sup> Around the same time Rensing would record in his diary “that she remembered that already as a child of three she felt a particular appetite [*Trieb*] for God and his service,” while Stolberg wrote that “when she was three years old already she exhibited extraordinary piety, and bade God to take her from this world before she could besmirch herself with sin.”<sup>43</sup> Very quickly, Emmerick’s piety latched onto the Cross as a particular site of contemplation and devotion. Stolberg reported that “From youth on she had often prayed to God that she be allowed to experience something of the suffering of Jesus Christ,” while Rensing noted, “As we were speaking of her youth, she told me that already as a child of six or seven she had thought a great deal about the suffering of Jesus and, if she was alone, she sometimes carried around a piece of wood or something of that kind that she could hardly lift in place of the cross, and had also tried to follow our suffering Savior in other ways.”<sup>44</sup> Overberg, the most exhaustive note-taker of the three men, provided even more detail: “she had often stung herself with nettles, and for a long time had slept on a double cross made of wood . . . She very often walked the [outdoor] Stations of the Cross, and indeed with bare feet.”<sup>45</sup>

As Emmerick grew older, her story went on, her piety became ever more astonishing, ever more uncompromising, and ever more disconcerting for many of those around her. Rensing heard from one of her childhood friends that Emmerick “often gave all [her possessions] to the

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<sup>42</sup> Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 81; 99.

<sup>43</sup> “. . . sie erzählte mir, daß sie sich erinnere, daß sie schon als Kind von drei Jahren einen besonderen Trieb zu Gott und seinem Dienste gespürt.” Bernhard Rensing, journal, May 4, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 44; “Als sie drei Jahre alt war, zeigte sie schon besondere Frömmigkeit, und pflegte Gott zu bitten, sie aus der Welt zu nehmen, ehe sie durch Sünden sich beflecken möchte.” Stolberg, “Tagebuch,” July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 1-2.

<sup>44</sup> “Indem wir von ihrer Jugendgeschichte sprachen, erzählte sie mir, daß sie schon als Kind von 6-7 Jahren viel an das Leiden Jesu gedacht und, wenn sie allein gewesen wäre, zuweilen ein Stück Holz oder sonst etwas, was sie kaum hätte tragen können, anstatt des Kreuzes herumgeschleppt und auch in andern Stücken unserm leidenden Heilande nachzufolgen gesucht hätte.” Rensing, journal, May 1, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 41.

<sup>45</sup> “Sie hätte sich oft mit Nesseln gebrannt, hätte lange auf einem doppelten Kreuze von Holz geschlafen . . . Wäre sehr oft den Kreuzweg gegangen, auch wohl mit bloßen Füßen.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 82.

needy, so that she herself was naked and bare, and that she seldom had money because she had given it all away.”<sup>46</sup> “She had from childhood on the innermost sympathy for the suffering and joys of others, and so gave all that she had to the poor,” Stolberg’s account concurred, “even though she and her parents were poor themselves.”<sup>47</sup> Overberg’s notes added: “she even took the clothing from her back and gave it away. . . when she was still smaller, she would say when she found a hungry person, ‘Wait [here], I’ll get some bread from the house.’ Her mother sometimes saw this, but said nothing particular about it.”<sup>48</sup> Stolberg also recalled that Emmerick’s mother often saw her daughter’s acts of charity “and yet acted as if she did not want to notice it.”<sup>49</sup>

At this point Emmerick inserted her parents into the narrative, in which they played an ambiguous role. Overberg and Stolberg’s accounts described Emmerick’s parents in the same terms – “stern, but not hard-hearted” – and praised their piety.<sup>50</sup> Yet Emmerick connected her obsessive fear of sin from infancy to a lack of parental love and praise. “Because she was sometimes scolded by her parents and never praised, as she had heard other parents praise their children, she believed that there was no child on earth as bad as she was,” Overberg wrote.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Emmerick’s parents were filled not with pride so much as anxiety by her

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<sup>46</sup> “. . . gab oft den Dürftigen alles, daß sie selbst nackt und bloß war, daß sie selten Geld hatte, indem sie das Verdiente gleich vortgab.” Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung der Jgfr. Feldmann,” April 11, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 207-208.

<sup>47</sup> “. . . [sie] hatte von Kindheit an das innigste Mitgefühl für Leiden und Freuden anderer, gab daher alles, was sie hatte, an Arme, so arm sie und ihre Eltern auch selbst waren; . . .”. Stolberg, “Tagebuch,” July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 2.

<sup>48</sup> “Sie hätte immer gern alles weggegeben, was sie nur hätte geben können. Hätte wohl Kleider vom Leibe gezogen und sie weggegeben . . . Auch hätte sie wohl gesagt, als sie noch kleiner gewesen, wenn sie einen Hungrigen gefunden: ,Wartet, ich will euch Brot aus dem Hause holen.’ Die Mutter hätte es zuweilen gesehen, aber nichts Besonderes davon gesagt.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 85.

<sup>49</sup> “. . . die Mutter es bemerkte, und doch tat, als ob sie es nicht bemerken wollte.” Stolberg, “Tagebuch,” July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 2.

<sup>50</sup> “Stolberg, “Tagebuch,” July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 2; Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 81.

<sup>51</sup> “Weil sie zuweilen von ihren Eltern wäre betrafft und nie gelobt worden, wie sie wohl gehört hätte, daß andere Eltern ihre Kinder lobten, so hätte sie geglaubt, es wäre kein schlechteres Kind in der Welt als sie. Da wäre ihr bange geworden, daß sie bei Gott sehr übel stünde.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 82-83.

preoccupation with religion. When at age seven she spoke to them about her visions of angels and encounters with the devil, her worried parents took her to a consult with a local priest. Observing her preference for prayer over play, they sent her away to live with relatives for a few years in hopes of encouraging her to mix in society. They later apprenticed her to a seamstress, where she learned alongside other girls her age, for the same reason. In response Emmerick's meditative practices became more private, even secretive: "Often kneeling and with arms spread wide she carried out her meditations . . . when she was alone," Rensing wrote.<sup>52</sup> Overberg also recounted that "She used to in the evenings, when the others had gone to sleep, secretly go out of the house and into the garden . . . to pray with outstretched arms."<sup>53</sup>

Despite Emmerick's professed wish to become a nun, her parents began to make wedding arrangements for their daughter.<sup>54</sup> Backed by her confessor, she continued to search for a convent that would accept her. When, in 1802, Agnetenberg in Dülmen accepted her as a novice, family tensions boiled over into harsh words. Emmerick "went to her parental home to take her leave," Overberg wrote, "and to ask her father for some money for the journey [from Coesfeld to Dülmen]. He replied: 'If you wanted to bury yourself tomorrow, I would pay the expenses, but to enter a convent I will give you nothing.'"<sup>55</sup> Other friends and relatives added their own objections, arguing that Agnetenberg had a reputation as a disharmonious convent, and it would probably soon be secularized anyway.<sup>56</sup> For a dowerless peasant, becoming a nun was also

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<sup>52</sup> Rensing, journal, May 4, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 44.

<sup>53</sup> "Sie pflegte des Abends, wenn die andern schlafen gingen, heimlich aus dem Hause zu gehen und in dem Garten . . . mit ausgestreckten Armen zu beten." Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 72.

<sup>54</sup> Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 97; 100.

<sup>55</sup> ". . . zu ihrem elterlichen Hause gegangen, um Abschied zu nehmen und hätte ihren Vater um einiges Geld zur Reise begehrt. Dieser hätte geantwortet: 'Wenn du dich morgen willst begraben lassen, so will ich die Begräbniskosten bezahlen, aber um ins Kloster zu gehen, gebe ich dir nichts.'" Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 84.

<sup>56</sup> This concern was well founded. German princes – Enlightened and traditionalist, Catholic and Protestant alike – looked to the seizure of lands held by monastic houses beckoned as a way to recoup their losses at the hands of Napoleon. Thus, in one of its last acts before its dissolution, the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire promulgated the

simply impractical. Because she was entering the convent as a charity case, with no dowry or useful skills to offer, she would undoubtedly be given the most disagreeable chores and the least appreciation (a prophesy which turned out to be true). Religious life was for daughters of nobility and the bourgeoisie, not the child of poor cottagers. Still Emmerick held firm. Overberg wrote that in response she declared, “Let it be as terrible as it may, let me have to perform the filthiest and most difficult work, and yet still I will be away from the disquiet and danger of the world.”<sup>57</sup> One friend told Rensing that Emmerick declared she would still enter the convent, even if it was to be secularized a week later.<sup>58</sup> In another interview, a relative recounted that “when I called on her to give up her desire to be a nun, because it would be hard on all her relations, she answered: ‘You must not say that, or I will not be your friend [anymore]. I want to do this, and I must do this.’”<sup>59</sup> Emmerick thus made clear in her account of her life that she had brooked no opposition from anyone in her pursuit of the convent, not even her paterfamilias.

This showdown with her parents and relatives introduced what would also be the theme of Emmerick’s account of her convent experience: the inability of those around her to appreciate her unique spiritual gifts. All sources from 1813 stress this point, often using the same anecdotes as evidence, an indication that Emmerick placed great weight on it as well as she repeatedly shared her story. Stolberg wrote of her fellow nuns: “. . . the others, though good girls, did not understand her, looked askance at her, and there was much gossip, as one can easily understand.”

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*Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* (Final Recess of the Imperial Deputation) on February 25, 1803. A sweeping mediatization dissolved around a hundred smaller territories and free imperial cities, which were then absorbed by the larger states. Rulers were also granted the right to seize church lands as they saw fit. Emmerick took her final vows at Agnetenberg just months later. Her convent would be secularized by Imperial France on December 3, 1811.  
<sup>57</sup> „Laß es so schlimm sein wie es will, muß ich auch die allerschmutzigste und schwerste Arbeit verrichten, so komme ich doch aus den Unruhen und Gefahren der Welt.“ Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 84.

<sup>58</sup> Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung der Fr. Gertrud Ahaus-Mört,” April 8, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 211-212.

<sup>59</sup> “. . . wenn ich ihr abriet, doch ihr Vorhaben, eine Nonne zu werden, aufzugeben, weil sie alles das Ihrige zusetzen müßte, so antwortete sie: ‚Davon müßt Ihr nicht sprechen, sonst bin ich Eure Freundin nicht. Dies muß ich tun, und will es tun.‘“ Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung der Fr. Elisabeth Messing-Emmerick,” April 8, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 208-209.

Emmerick's difficulties with the other sisters were understandable, Stolberg explained, because they had resented what they saw as the unjust financial burden this penniless, often ill woman placed on the struggling convent. Thus prejudiced against her from the start, Emmerick's fellow nuns were unable or unwilling to take her mystical experiences seriously.<sup>60</sup> Rensing and Overberg's accounts concur with this explanation.<sup>61</sup>

As Emmerick explained to them, Agnetenberg only admitted her to the novitiate because her friend Clara Söntgen, whose organ-playing skills the convent needed, refused to enter the convent without her.<sup>62</sup> In addition to being a charity case, Emmerick was also low-class. Although the family background of Agnetenberg's nuns was less illustrious than most convents, there remained a social gulf between Emmerick, the child of a tenant farmer, and the daughters of the bourgeoisie with whom she now lived.<sup>63</sup> Most damning of all, she was in poor health and medical care was expensive. In Rensing's interviews with the other former nuns of Agnetenberg, some confirmed that financial issues were one reason for Emmerick's unpopularity. Söntgen herself stated that "she [Emmerick] was certainly not well-liked, and it seems to me that came about in part because . . . we both were so sickly and were too burdensome for the convent for

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<sup>60</sup> Stolberg, "Tagebuch," July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 2-3.

<sup>61</sup> Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hüpfner, 50-51; Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hüpfner, 87-93.

<sup>62</sup> Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hüpfner, 84. Emmerick's relationship with the Söntgen family and the role they played in her entrance to the convent will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Two.

<sup>63</sup> Augustinian convents drew their ranks almost exclusively from the burgher class. Peasants in particular were almost entirely excluded because they rarely had the means to pay the convent the usual dowry: "Da die Aussteuer eine gewisse Wohlhabenheit erforderte – im 18. Jahrhundert lag die Mitgift im Durchschnitt bei 100 bis 300 Rtl. – blieben ganz unvermögende Familien praktisch ausgeschlossen." Historically, Agnetenberg convent in Dülmen did have more exceptions to this rule than any of the other Augustinian houses in Westphalia, possibly due to its location. Recruitment generally was restricted to the immediate area. Kohl, *Das Bistum Münster*, 4-15.

that reason.”<sup>64</sup> Franziska Hackebram, the former Mother Superior of the convent, said the same.<sup>65</sup>

So deep was this resentment that the other sisters neglected her when she was ill, even when she suffered severe injuries after a heavy basket full of laundry fell on top of her.<sup>66</sup> In a carefully worded statement, Mother Hackebram acknowledged she was aware of Emmerick’s complaints in this regard: “She was quite patient in her illnesses and good towards those who attended her. But she did indeed claim (not against me, but against other persons) that she was not as well cared for in sickbed as others.”<sup>67</sup> Catharina Woltermann spoke for the other sisters when she admitted that Emmerick “did complain about a lack of care and food” when ill, but made clear that in her view Emmerick was overly sensitive: “In such cases, or if one said a word against her, she could be quite impatient and nasty . . . She was hardworking and good, but she also let her unhappiness and touchiness show when things did not go her way.”<sup>68</sup> Anna Maria Böhmer also accused Emmerick of being cranky: “She was . . . often unhappy with her care, and consequently not always friendly and mild towards those who had to treat her. . . she let show through her behavior that she was embittered at heart.”<sup>69</sup> Again and again, the sisters described

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<sup>64</sup> “Sie war freilich im Kloster nicht recht beliebt, und das scheint mir zum Teile daher gekommen zu sein . . . daß wir beide so kränklich wären und deswegen dem Kloster zu sehr zur Last fielen.” Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung Clara Söntgen,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 225.

<sup>65</sup> “. . . einige auch glaubten, sie mache durch ihre Kränklichkeit dem Kloster zu viel Last.” Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung Franziska Hackebram,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 218.

<sup>66</sup> See for instance Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 93-94; Bernhard Rensing, addendum to “Vernehmung Dr. Krauthausens u. A. K. Emmericks,” April 27, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 229-230.

<sup>67</sup> “Sie war in ihren Krankheiten recht geduldig und gut gegen jene, welche ihr aufwarteten. Aber sie hat sich wohl (nicht gegen mich, sondern gegen andere) beschwert, daß für sie im Krankenbette nicht so gut gesorgt würde, als für andere.” Rensing “Vernehmung Franziska Hackebram,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 218.

<sup>68</sup> “. . . doch klage sie auch wohl über Mangel an Aufwartung und Verpflegung. In solchen Fällen, oder wenn man ihr wo ein Wort zuwider sagte, konnte sie wohl recht ungeduldig und böse werden . . . Sie war dienstfertig und gut, aber sie ließ doch auch oft ihre Unzufriedenheit und Empfindlichkeit merken, wenn es nicht so recht nach ihrem Kopfe ging . . .” Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung Catharina Woltermann,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 222-223.

<sup>69</sup> “Sie war in ihren Krankheiten recht geduldig, aber mit der Aufwartung oft unzufrieden, und deswegen nicht immer freundlich und sanftmütig gegen die, welche mit ihr umgehen mußten . . . und ließ es durch . . . ihr ganzes

Emmerick as “good” and “hardworking” but also as “sensitive,” “easily upset,” and “reproachful.”<sup>70</sup> The implied message was clear: if Emmerick was unpopular and shunned, she had only herself to blame.

Yet when Rensing interviewed Dr. Peter Krauthausen, a physician who attended to Emmerick while in the convent, he corroborated Emmerick’s claims of neglect:

The Herr Doktor said that her treatment in sickbed was not always as it should have been and related as an example that he had once in winter found the patient in her cold room, shivering from cold, because she had not been given fresh linens after having sweat profusely; and so her bed linens soaked through and through with sweat, and also in part her shirt, had frozen stiff.

Krauthausen at first demurred when pressed for further details and said that he couldn’t say whether all of Emmerick’s claims were justified, but “finally,” Rensing wrote, “the Herr Doktor said some of the nuns had often complained about the burden which spinster Emmerick caused the convent through her frequent illness, and not only her attendants, but even the reverend Mother.”<sup>71</sup> Even if Emmerick was overly sensitive regarding her treatment, it is apparent that her failure to bring money into the convent, as well as her illnesses and consequent drain on the community’s resources, affected the way her fellow nuns thought about her, and probably the way they treated her as well.

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außerliches Betragen genug merken, daß sie in ihrem Herzen erbittert war.” Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 226-227.

<sup>70</sup> Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung der Oberin Franziska Hackebram,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 216-220; Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung Catharina Woltermann,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 222-223; Bernhard Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 226-228.

<sup>71</sup> “Der Herr Doktor sagte, die Behandlung derselben im Krankenbette sei nicht immer gewesen, wie sie hätte sein sollen, und erzählte zum Beweise, daß er die Kranke im Winter auf ihrem kalten Zimmer gefunden hätte, zitternd vor Kälte, weil sie nach einem starken Schweiß nicht mit frischem Leinenzeuge wäre versehen worden und die vom Schweiß durch und durch nassen Betttücher, so wie auch zum Teile ihr Hemd, steif gefroren gewesen waren; ob aber die Schuld davon auf die zu ihrer Aufwartung bestimmte Mitschwester, oder auf die Oberin falle, wisse er nicht. – Die Kranke, setzte er hinzu, habe ihn auch öfters geklagt, daß es ihr an gehöriger Aufwartung fehlte, und sie überhaupt nicht behandelt würde, wie es eine kranke Klosterperson verlangen könnte; er wüßte aber nicht, ob alle diese Klagen gegründet gewesen wären . . . Endlich sagte der Herr Doktor, einige Klosterfrauen hätten sich oft über die Last beschwert, welche die Jungfer Emmerick durch ihr öfteres Kranksein dem Kloster verursachte, und dadurch nicht allein ihre Aufwärterin, sonder auch die würdige Mutter . . .” Rensing, “Vernehmung Dr. Krauthausens,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 229.

Emmerick probably fueled this fire, however inadvertently, by giving away convent goods to the poor and destitute without permission. Putting her skills as a seamstress to use, Emmerick “sometimes, when she was sacristan, made caps or other trifles for poor children out of old church vestments,” Mother Hackebram reported, “but I don’t remember her obtaining permission from me.” The former mother superior also said Emmerick gave away items to maids and workmen at the convent, frequently without permission.<sup>72</sup> Some sisters saw this as extravagant at a time when their convent was struggling: “She was so sympathetic to the needy,” Franziska Neuhaus told Rensing, “that she often gave them more than she herself could spare.”<sup>73</sup> Other sisters’ responses on this point also carried a whiff of snobbery, disapproving of Emmerick’s associating so intimately with working people: “she was well-behaved toward the maids, but she was occasionally too familiar with them and spoke with them too much,” Anna Maria Böhmer alleged.<sup>74</sup>

Rensing’s detective work regarding Emmerick’s time in the convent uncovered more than social differences and tension over money, however. It also revealed deep differences of opinion between Emmerick and the others about how to work and pray. Not only did this dowry-less, sickly peasant woman practically force herself on the convent; she also had the effrontery to challenge the sisters’ more relaxed observance of its monastic rule by deliberately adopting a different lifestyle than the others. In numerous ways, Emmerick set herself apart from the women with whom she had vowed to live in community.

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<sup>72</sup> „Sie hat sich gegen die Mägde und Arbeitsleute immer gut und ordentlich betragen und gegen Bedürftige ist sie allzeit sehr mitleidig gewesen. Sie hat diesen vieles gegeben von dem Ihrigen, zuweilen mit, zuweilen ohne Erlaubnis von mir. Auch weiß ich wohl, daß sie, weil sie Sakristanin war, zuweilen von alten Kirchensachen Nutzen oder solche Kleinigkeiten für arme Kinder gemacht hat, aber ich erinnere mich nicht, daß sie von mir Erlaubnis dazu begehrt hat.“ Rensing “Vernehmung Franziska Hackebram,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 218.

<sup>73</sup> “Gegen Bedürftige war sie so mitleidig, daß sie ihnen oft mehr mitteilte, als sie selbst entbehren konnte.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Franziska Neuhaus,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 221.

<sup>74</sup> “Gegen Mägde betrug sie sich gut; aber sie war gegen dieselben zuweilen zu vertraulich und sprach mit ihnen zu viel . . .” Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 227.

Mother Hackebram told Rensing that Emmerick was often absent at communal prayer, or left early, “without having had sufficient reason in my opinion.”<sup>75</sup> When Emmerick did attend, Anna Maria Böhmer noted, her participation was “not exactly enthusiastic.”<sup>76</sup> Emmerick for her part freely admitted preferring her own inner, spontaneous, and intimate form of meditation. As she told Rensing,

I participated in the communal prayers as was prescribed, and whatever else I had to pray aloud I did, but if I prayed for myself or for others, then I presented my request to God and told it to him from the heart as well as I could . . . I would often go so far that I more or less argued with God, which by the way I preferred to do. . . Very often I asked myself: How is it that you exist, and what are you? In this way I went ever farther, so that my meditation often lasted for long periods of time and I myself did not know how I had come from one thing to the other.<sup>77</sup>

She also told him on the same occasion that it was revealed to her in a vision that “the prayers of those who trust entirely in recited prayers and their good works, but do not observe [God’s] commandments . . . had no merit.” Rensing, somewhat taken aback, pointed out to Emmerick that such an attitude was not easily compatible with a traditional monastic lifestyle structured around a cycle of set communal prayers.<sup>78</sup> In similar comments to Dr. Wesener, there are hints that Emmerick saw the convent’s contemplative rituals as a distraction from the kind of active ministry she had practiced since childhood: “She exhorted me strongly to stand with the poor and

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<sup>75</sup> “Sie blieb öfter vom Chore weg oder ging wohl zu früh davon, ohne daß sie meiner Meinung nach hinlängliche Ursache dazu hatte.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Franziska Hackebram,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 216.

<sup>76</sup> “[Regarding attending communal prayer] Oft hinderte sie ihre Kränklichkeit daran, und sonst wohnte sie denselben auch wohl nicht ganz eifrig bei.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 226.

<sup>77</sup> “Die gemeinschaftliche Gebete habe ich mitverrichtet, wie es vorgeschrieben war, und was ich sonst mündlich beten mußte, das habe ich getan, aber wenn ich so für mich oder für andere betete, dann stellte ich Gott das Anliegen vor und sagte es ihm so aus dem Herzen, wie ich es konnte . . . dann kam ich oft so weit, daß ich gleichsam mit Gott disputierte, übrigens betrachtete ich lieber . . . Erst und hernach noch gewöhnlich fragte ich mich selbst: Wie müßtest du sein und wie bist du? Darüber kam ich dann immer weiter, daß meine Betrachtung oft sehr lange dauerte und ich selbst nicht wußte, wie ich so von einem Dinge auf das andere gekommen war.” Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 49.

<sup>78</sup> “. . . das Gebet derer, die ihr ganzes Vertrauen auf mündliche Gebete und auf ihre guten Werke setzen, aber Gottes Gebote nicht achten . . . Der schwarze Strich, welcher dadurch geht, bedeutet, daß dieses Gebet vor Gott durchgestrichen wird und kein Verdienst hat.‘ Ihre Äußerung über den geringen Wert des mündlichen Gebetes veranlaßte mich ihr zu sagen, sie scheine mir zu wenig daraus zu machen, und zu fragen, wie sie es während ihres Klosterlebens, da im Kloster viele mündlich Gebete verrichtet wurden, damit gehalten habe.” Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 48-49.

support them, as this is a work most pleasing to God. True religion [she said] consisted not in many prayers, but in the fulfillment of one's duty. Every person must follow the path that the Lord God lays before him."<sup>79</sup>

Emmerick also tried to continue her punishing ascetic practices while in the convent, despite their being far afield of the Augustinian monastic tradition. Franziska Neuhaus, who supervised Emmerick during her novitiate, told Rensing of repeatedly finding and confiscating hard wooden planks from her bed, and one occasion a hair shirt.<sup>80</sup> Much as she had as a child, Emmerick would sneak out at night to pray on her knees with arms outstretched, or face down on the ground, until Mother Hackebram put a stop to the practice "because there was murmuring about it in the convent."<sup>81</sup> In these and other ways, Emmerick made clear to all that in her eyes, the normal spiritual practices of the community were insufficient to satisfy her needs. Her attempts at secrecy by praying at night failed miserably.

Not only in prayer but also in conversation, Emmerick shunned the company of the other sisters. Instead, she spent her time with the clergymen who stayed in the convent, either as guests or as pastors assigned to the community. Anna Maria Böhmer spoke for her fellow sisters, who harped on this point almost without exception, when she told Rensing: "That she was not exactly beloved in the convent seems to me to have come about because she had more friendship with Herr Lambert than with her fellow sisters, and that she thought too much of herself, that she was

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<sup>79</sup> "Sie forderte mich kräftig auf, den Armen beizustehen und [sie] zu unterstützen, indem dieses ein äußerst gottgefälliges Werk sei. Die wahre Religion bestehe nicht in vielem Beten, sondern in Erfüllung seiner Pflicht. Jeder müsse die Bahn rechtschaffen durchlaufen, die ihm Gott, der Herr, vorgesteckt." Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Bernhard Rensing, "Vernehmung Franziska Neuhaus, vormalige Novizenmeisterin der Emmerick," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 221.

<sup>81</sup> "Im Anfange blieb sie auch wohl des Abends nach der Complet in der Kirche sitzen, wenn die andern weggingen; aber sie tat es nicht mehr, sobald ich, weil Murren im Kloster darüber entstanden war, es ihr untersagt hatte." Rensing, "Vernehmung Franziska Hackebram," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 217.

set apart from us.”<sup>82</sup> Lambert indeed became Emmerick’s close confidante. Having obtained special permission to receive the Eucharist more often than the others, she would go alone to Lambert’s room at all hours to receive the Sacrament, sometimes even in the middle of the night. Although Emmerick allegedly went at such odd hours to avoid drawing attention to her special privilege, every nun told Rensing they were fully aware that she took the Eucharist so frequently. At a time when receiving Eucharist so regularly was rare for Catholics, Emmerick’s extraordinary devotion to the sacrament seemed ostentatious.<sup>83</sup>

In this context, Emmerick’s extreme asceticism and enthusiastic worship became not a merely interior way of spiritual life, but an outwardly visible critique of her religious community. This implicit criticism also made its way into Emmerick’s supernatural experiences, visions, and ecstasies. That fact helped ensure that her fellow nuns dismissed her mysticism as the product of her overactive imagination. Mother Hackebram’s reaction was typical:

She once told me . . . that it had come to her [in a vision] that I and spinster Neuhaus, who was her mistress of novices, wanted her out of the convent. In a later illness she said that in the mornings a beautiful chambermaid dressed in white appeared by her bed and performed services for her . . . but I thought that such visions must surely be just her imagination, and would hear nothing of them.<sup>84</sup>

Catharina Schulte similarly remarked to Rensing that Emmerick had often spoken of mystical experiences and visions, “but I never paid any attention to them, because I considered them

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<sup>82</sup> “Daß sie im Kloster nicht recht beliebt war, scheint mir daher gekommen zu sein, daß sie mit dem Herrn Lambert mehr Freundschaft hätte als mit ihren Mitschwestern, und daß sie sich zuviel dünken ließ, daß sie von uns zurückgesetzt würde.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 227.

<sup>83</sup> It is also worth noting that all of Emmerick’s former fellow nuns ruled out any possibility of a romantic, sexual, or otherwise inappropriate relationship between Emmerick and Lambert. Böhmer for instance, perhaps the sister least kindly disposed toward Emmerick, said Emmerick’s behavior was “immer ganz untadelhaft.” “She went on: “Daß Herr Lambert sich zu sehr für sie interessierte, gab zu vielem Gerede im Kloster Anlaß; jedoch hat man über diese Verbindung nie einen Verdacht geäußert, der dem unbefleckten Rufe geistlicher Personen nur im geringsten nachteilig wäre.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 227.

<sup>84</sup> “Soviel ich mich erinnere, hat sie, da sie noch im Noviziat war, erzählt, daß . . . es wäre ihr vorgekommen, daß ich und die Junfer Neuhaus, welche ihre Novizenmeisterin war, sie wieder aus dem Kloster haben wollten. In einer späteren Krankheit hat sie gesagt, des morgens wäre ein schön und weiß gekleidetes Frauenzimmer bei ihr am Krankenbette gewesen, welches ihr einige Dienste erwiesen hätte . . . ” Rensing, “Vernehmung Franziska Hackebram,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 219-220.

fantasies and dreams.”<sup>85</sup> Anna Maria Böhmer said she had paid so little heed to Emmerick’s tales that she couldn’t remember any details.<sup>86</sup>

Convinced of the rightness of her path, however, Emmerick transformed the hostility of her fellow nuns into a necessary aspect of her role as mystic. As she told her listeners, their unjust accusations were a God-given protection against her pride, to strengthen her humility as she progressed along the way of spiritual perfection. “I was so often annoyed and aggrieved at the behavior of my fellow sisters,” she told Rensing, “because I thought too much of how they should conduct themselves and too little of how I must behave myself. That was indeed ingratitude and imperfection.”<sup>87</sup> Overberg wrote that

God had arranged that her mother superior and fellow sisters would misunderstand her. They took all that she did as hypocrisy, flattery, as arrogance and the like, and reproached her for it . . . she said nothing other than, “I will improve myself” . . . She had, despite having to put up with much from them, so much love for all her fellow sisters, that she would gladly have given her blood for any one of them.<sup>88</sup>

Dr. Wesener made the point even more directly in his own notes: “She said . . . in the convent she was always treated with harshness and ridicule, but her fellow sisters could not realize that they were the instrument of God to test and practice her patience.”<sup>89</sup> So masterfully did Emmerick thus reassert control over the narrative of her time in the convent that her listeners readily took her side.

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<sup>85</sup> “Sie hat wohl öfter von solchen Dingen gesprochen; aber ich habe nie darauf achtgegeben, weil ich es für Einbildungen und Träumereien hielt.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Catharina Schulte,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 224.

<sup>86</sup> Rensing, “Vernehmung Anna Maria Böhmer,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 228.

<sup>87</sup> “. . . ich habe mich damals zu oft geärgert und gegrämt über das Betragen meiner Mitschwestern, weil ich zuviel daran dachte, wie die sich verhalten sollten, und zu wenig, wie ich selbst beschaffen sein müßte. Das war doch Undankbarkeit und Unvollkommenheit.” Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 51.

<sup>88</sup> “Gott hätte es zugelassen, daß ihre Oberin und Mitschwestern sie mißkannt hätten. Diese hätten alles, was sie getan, für Heuchelei, Schmeichelei, für Hoffart und dergleichen angesehen und hätten ihr dies vorgeworfen. . . . hätte sie weiter nichts gesagt, als: ‚Ich will mich bessern‘ . . . Sie hätte auch alle ihre Mitschwestern, obwohl sie viel von ihnen habe ausstehen müssen, so lieb gehabt, daß sie gern für eine jede ihr Blut hätte vergießen wollen.“ Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 87-88.

<sup>89</sup> “Sie sagte, . . . im Kloster sei sie immer mit Spott und Härte behandelt, aber ihre Mitschwestern könnten nicht davor, sie seien die Werkzeuge Gottes zu ihrer Prüfung und Übung in der Geduld gewesen.” Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 46.

In her conversations with Rensing, Overberg, Wesener, and Stolberg, Emmerick looked back on her life as following an inevitable, divinely-ordered path to the convent (and eventually, to stigmata). She wove her recollections into a well-constructed narrative, structured around the same anecdotes and turning points, as the consistency of details among Rensing, Overberg, Wesener, and Stolberg's accounts reveals. Her own testimony was corroborated by the interviews Fr. Rensing conducted of her family, friends, and fellow nuns. Together, these sources tell the tale of a woman who devoutly followed the teachings of the Church, and obediently submitted to what she believed was the will of God. Yet it is also a tale of a woman who pursued her spiritual vocation in defiance of social convention as well as the wishes of authority figures in her life; a woman who, once she obtained her dream of becoming a nun, lived out her spiritual calling in a way that went against the grain of the times, even when it made her the pariah of the convent. Thus in entering a convent she did not surrender so much as create choices for herself in an act of determined self-fashioning.<sup>90</sup>

When situated in the broader context of Enlightenment, revolution and war, Emmerick's agency becomes even clearer. At a time when western Catholic monasticism was plagued by

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<sup>90</sup> By "self-fashioning," I mean the process by which individuals construct public personas as well as their own self-images. Social discourses, communicated through texts as well as rituals and images, guide (and often constrict) a person in molding an acceptable sense of self. Yet individuals also exercise a degree of agency in selecting and shaping their identities, particularly their public selves, to meet certain ends. A person expresses his or her self-fashioned identity through texts, images, and performance, so that the relationship between aesthetic and self-fashioning is reciprocal. Foucault famously illustrated this by tracing the history of confessional guidebooks and their impact on priests' and penitents' understanding of sexual desire (Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Vol. I, trans. Robert Hurley [New York: Vintage Books, 1990], 58-70). Stephen Greenblatt, who coined the term "self-fashioning," drew on Foucault's ideas as he examined literary explorations of selfhood by men of the English Renaissance (Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980]). I have been particularly inspired by Mary Jo Kietzman, *The Self-Fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman: Mary Carleton's Lives* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004). Kietzmann's work on Carleton, a stunningly successful con artist and career criminal who impersonated a German princess, places particular emphasis on her subject's agency – and as a lower class woman, she makes a more fitting comparison with Emmerick than the male literary greats examined by Greenblatt. Carleton, in adopting and performing roles, was engaged in deliberate deception. I see Emmerick as also adopting "roles" as nun, visionary, stigmatic, and preacher, but not in a necessarily fraudulent way: rather, I think Emmerick was conscious of the performative aspects and expectations attached to each role and tried to fulfill them in order to reach her goal of communicating her views on spirituality to others.

both an ongoing popular decline and an immediate political threat, in a place where convents and their host communities alike had faced economic privation for generations, only a determined individual with a strong sense of vocation could hear and pursue a calling to religious life. Emmerick clearly had that strength, enabling her to prevail over the authority of her family and the conventions of her social class. The case for Emmerick as a main author of her own story as it comes down to us in the early accounts of 1813 becomes stronger when considered in the light of this fact: before she became a stigmatic, she had already dared to reinvent herself as an unlikely nun.

### *Untutored Visionary*

Just as analysis reveals Emmerick's confinement in a convent to be a paradoxical case of agency without autonomy, so too does Emmerick's role as mystic visionary prove to be one of nonconformity without disobedience. As a peasant in the early nineteenth century, becoming a nun was difficult; as a woman, becoming a Catholic preacher with legitimate authority was impossible. Interpretation of doctrine, administration of sacraments, and execution of the Church's institutional power were the exclusive preserve of men. Even were it not for this rigid doctrinal barrier, Emmerick's limited educational opportunities barred her from attaining the knowledge and skill set expected of preachers and theologians. That Emmerick was nonetheless able to impress so many of her (male) listeners with her visions and theological ideas, and even confidently instruct them on how they should follow Christ, is a testament to the charismatic power she wielded by presenting herself as a mystic. Emmerick also made her apparent lack of formal education into an asset by presenting her ideas as the fruit of devout, even divinely inspired contemplation, in contrast with mere book-learning – a common epistemological move

among mystics, but one with particular resonance in the waning years of the Age of Enlightenment.

Both ancient and modern, religious and secular ideas conspired to close off access to knowledge and positions of authority for women like Emmerick. On the one hand, the exclusion of women from priestly ordination was a firmly established principle of Roman Catholic doctrine. In his foundational work *Summae Theologica*, for example, church father Thomas Aquinas had asserted that “As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active power in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness according to the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from defect in the active power.”<sup>91</sup> Drawing on the ideas of Plato and Aristotle as well as Scripture, Aquinas and subsequent generations of Europeans through the eighteenth century understood the relationship between men and women in terms of a hierarchical one-sex model, in which woman was an imperfect man: less mentally developed, less able to resist temptation, and thus man’s natural subordinate and “helpmate.” As an “incomplete man,” a woman could not represent the fullness of human nature; thus Jesus, the Incarnation of God, had to be male, and so too did his twelve disciples and their successors, the clergy. Furthermore, this natural subordination of woman to man reflected the hierarchical cosmic order which God had established. It followed from this that women were unmeant and unfit for the exercise of clerical authority or the interpretation of doctrine.

On the other hand, emerging scientific worldviews, political challenges, and social change in the eighteenth century led to the emergence of new European gender paradigms. Belief in the body as microcosm of a hierarchically-ordered chain of being, reflecting the divine

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<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Mary Briody Mahowald, ed., *Philosophy of Woman: An Anthology of Classic to Current Concepts* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 55.

plan on which society rested, increasingly gave way among educated elites to belief in the observable, physical body and its natural behavior as the foundation for the understanding of gender. At the same time, the beginnings of an industrial free market economy forced Europeans to consider, redefine, and justify the sexual division of labor. The more tolerant openness of Enlightened society, expanding access to education, and an emerging “republic of letters” created a plethora of new social and political spaces, in which new rules had to be established concerning who could and could not participate. Finally, the Cartesian emphasis on the *mind* as the thinking subject, not the body, and the Lockean theory of social contract, created a problem for would-be revolutionaries: if the mind had no sex and all human beings had certain rights by virtue of their reason, it followed that women should have the same rights and responsibilities as men, something few actually wanted. Eighteenth-century men thus turned to “natural law” and biology to establish a new justification of women’s disenfranchisement on the basis of innate and irremediable difference.<sup>92</sup> Smaller, weaker, burdened with childbearing and menstruation, women had necessarily subordinated themselves to male protectors in the state of nature. A woman’s role as nurturing mother (and not as citizen) was reflected in what were considered to be observably innate female characteristics: passivity rather than aggression, sentimentality over rationality.<sup>93</sup>

These coexisting and competing ideas of gender in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century had different ontological bases, but similar practical implications for women. Defined in reference to men and found wanting, saddled with attributes that were explicitly incompatible with the ability to attain wisdom or exercise authority, they could not automatically command

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<sup>92</sup> Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 1-15; 150-170.

<sup>93</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996), 131-153.

the same respect, and did not have the same claims to civil rights and privileges. Although some Enlightenment thinkers increasingly asserted the equality of both genders, it was an equality of different and complementary roles. They saw the division of civic life into public and private, male and female spheres as both natural and central to a healthy body politic. Similarly, while Catholic theology taught that both men and women were made in God's image and played necessary roles in his plan of salvation, it was also divine will that these roles were manifestly different.

The combined effect of these gender paradigms and broader intellectual trends in Emmerick's homeland is clearly visible in an area of vital interest to both church and Enlightened state: education. Driven by a growing need for educated soldiers, skilled workers, trained bureaucrats and productive farmers, state officials and interested commentators saw mass schooling as a tool for creating a more industrious citizenry – but one in which each estate fulfilled its appointed role in the political economy. Despite rhetoric that at times suggested otherwise, education initiatives for the various strata of society remained unequal, and deliberately so. As Prussia's Frederick the Great, Enlightened ruler *par excellence*, wrote to one of his ministers in 1779: "In the countryside it is enough if they can learn to read and write a little; but if they know too much, then they move to the cities and want to become officials and the like."<sup>94</sup> While eighteenth-century Germany saw the first moves toward mass education of girls and women, this innovation was in large part a reaction to the growing importance of female labor in the economy. The instruction of peasant girls like Emmerick usually combined basic literacy and mathematics with lessons on suitably domestic work such as sewing or

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<sup>94</sup> "Sonsten ist es auf dem platten Land genug, wenn sie ein bisgen [sic] lesen und schreiben lernen; wissen sie aber zu viel, so laufen sie in die Städte und wollen Sekretairs und so was werden." Quoted in Helmuth Kiesel and Paul Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert: Voraussetzungen und Entstehung des literarischen Markts in Deutschland* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1977), 163.

spinning yarn.<sup>95</sup> While an ambitious and intelligent peasant boy could conceivably continue his education through the university level, no such distant opportunities beckoned for German girls.

The Church, meanwhile, continued to play a leading role in providing education as it had for centuries. Even secular-minded reformers usually approved of religious involvement in popular education because they saw the church as a bulwark of the established order. The classroom was an important site of moral instruction and indoctrination, and thus of social harmony and political stability. Elite German Catholics' ideas about education of the common people, furthermore, were generally in keeping with both theological and Enlightened ideas about gender. Tracts on the philosophy of education by Catholic authors often stressed different approaches for boys and girls, and justified these differences both by asserting the innately different skills and inclinations of each gender, as well as cautioning in more traditional language against the dangers of sexual temptation. For example, Johann Michael Sailer, a Jesuit professor who would later befriend and champion Emmerick, wrote in a 1785 work that "The boy imitates the business of his father. If his father has some farmland, so will he [the son] have an appetite for horses and for farming. . . the daughter in all things imitates her mother; she wants to knit, cook, spin and do other housework like her mother does." It followed from this that their education and upbringing should reflect this "natural" inclination towards gender roles.<sup>96</sup>

Another future admirer of Emmerick, the aforementioned Dean Bernhard Overberg of Münster, had been a leading educational reformer and advocate of schooling for girls and women since the 1770s. His advice to teachers of co-educational classrooms, however, is revealing:

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<sup>95</sup> Kiesel and Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*, 76.

<sup>96</sup> "Der Knabe macht die Geschäfte seines Vaters nach. Hat sein Vater ein Ackerbau: so hat er seine Lust an Pferde und am Ackerbau . . . Die Tochter macht alles ihrer Mutter nach; sie will nähen, kochen, spinnen, und andere Hausarbeiten thun, wie ihre Mutter." Johann Michael Sailer, *Vollständiges Lese- und Gebetbuch für katholische Christen*, vol. 5 (München: Lentner, 1785), 16.

If you have boys and girls in your school, do not let them sit among one another, and arrange the desks, when possible, so that all children are facing toward you, but the boys and girls do not have each other in direct view. Keep children of different genders, especially when they are older, from far too close of an intimacy with one another . . . *Good order demands that each be with his own kind.*<sup>97</sup>

Overberg felt the importance of this to be so great that he urged schoolteachers to take no chances, even advising that boys and girls should enter and leave the schoolhouse at different times and through separate doors.<sup>98</sup>

In short, Emmerick's access to education was strictly curtailed. At the same time, both traditional and more recent schools of thought militated against any woman being taken seriously on an intellectual level. When these factors are taken into account, the astonished reactions of more than one well-educated man to her visions and advice reveal Emmerick's intelligence as well as her confidence. Count von Stolberg, a poet, diplomat, and traveling companion of Goethe who had studied at the prestigious University of Halle, wrote: "This little nun, who had in her childhood tended cows and carried out other crude chores, spoke with a delicate voice and expressed herself concerning religion in elevated language that she could not have learned in the convent."<sup>99</sup> Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, Münster's Vicar General and another well-traveled, university-educated man of noble background, was equally charmed. When he had first learned about Emmerick from Dean Rensing, he responded with extreme caution and reserve.

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<sup>97</sup> "Habet ihr Buben und Mädchen in der Schule; so lasset sie nicht durcheinander sitzen, und stellet die Bänke, wenn es möglich ist, so, daß alle Kinder euch das Gesicht zuwenden; Buben und Mädchen aber sich nicht gerade im Gesichte haben. / Haltet die Kinder verschiedenen Geschlechts, besonders, wenn sie schon mehr erwachsen sind, von einer gar zu großen Vertraulichkeit mit einander ab. . . . *Die gute Ordnung erfordert es, daß jedes bey seines Gleichen sey* [emphasis in the original]." Bernhard Overberg, *Anweisung zum zweckmässigen Schulunterricht für die Schullehrer im Fürstenthum Münster* (Münster: Aschendorff, [1793] 1825), 95-96. Perhaps ironically, Overberg's belief in the need for strict separation of the sexes in education led him to establish training schools for some of Germany's first lay female schoolteachers. One beneficiary of Overberg's program was Luise Hensel, a Catholic convert and yet another close friend and subsequent public champion of Emmerick. She would go on to found a girl's school in Aachen, and no less than three of her pupils would go on to found new Catholic women's religious orders in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>98</sup> Overberg, *Anweisung zum zweckmässigen Schulunterricht*, 96.

<sup>99</sup> "Dieses Nönnchen, welches in der Kindheit Vieh gehütet und grobe Arbeit verrichtet hat, spricht mit zarter Stimme, und drücket sich über die Religion in edler Sprache, die sie nicht im Kloster lernen könnte." Stolberg, "Tagebuch," July 22, 1813, Historische Sammlung A11 doc. 1, BAM, 2.

After visiting her on a few occasions, however, he wrote to Stolberg that while he regarded ecstatic visions in general as highly suspect (*bedenklich*), Emmerick's own mystical experiences were like a divine delicacy (*Leckerbissen*): "they vividly point in my opinion to higher influence."<sup>100</sup> Rensing himself not only rejected his former skepticism but became amazed by Emmerick's wisdom. After one particularly powerful conversation with her, he wrote in his journal: "I left comforted, edified, and astounded by her, and that a person with no other education and instruction than she received has such a pure, correct, and superior grasp of religion and morality."<sup>101</sup>

Of these and many other accounts, perhaps the most remarkable is that of Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener. Before meeting Emmerick, Wesener was highly skeptical regarding stigmata and other alleged supernatural phenomena. When he accompanied Rensing and Krauthausen on his official visit of March 22, 1813, however, he had what could justifiably be called a religious experience. As Wesener wrote in his journal, he returned to Emmerick's rented room the very next day, compelled "to worship God's wonder [as revealed] in this pious person."<sup>102</sup> From then on Wesener wrote almost daily entries about his observations and conversations with Emmerick, in which he humbly solicited her opinion on a range of subjects, from how much tithes one should give and whether the soul retained its earthly memories after death to the possibility of

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<sup>100</sup> "Unter den vielen Sachen, die zu schreiben wären, wozu aber Zeit fehlt, nur etwas, welches mir ein rechter Leckerbissen ist. Nicht daß sie Ekstasen zu haben scheint, ist mir ein Leckerbissen; wirkliche Ekstasen sind dies freilich in einem Gnade, für den es hienieden keine Wort gibt; aber es ist so außerordentlich, darum schon bedenklich, und dabei so leicht Täuschung, darum noch bedenklicher; aber was sie davon sagt, das ist der Leckerbissen, und deutet nach meinem Gefühl lebendig auf höreren Einfluß." Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, November 14, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 244.

<sup>101</sup> "Ich ging gerührt, erbaut und erstaunt von ihr, daß eine Person, die keine andere Erziehung und Bildung als sie genossen hat, so reine, richtige und erhabene Begriffe von Religion und Moral hat." Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 39.

<sup>102</sup> "Dienstag, den 23. März des Abends, ein Viertel nach neun Uhr begab ich mich aus purem frommen Antriebe zu der gottseligen Jungfrau Anna Katharina Emmerich [sic] um Gottes Wunder an dieser frommen Person anzubeten." Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 3.

life on other planets.<sup>103</sup> Again and again, solicited and unsolicited, she expounded to her visitors on theology, biblical history and human nature. Though never claiming extraordinary power or privileges in so many words, she nonetheless spoke as one with authority.

This preaching voice apparently came naturally to Emmerick. Multiple persons testified in their interviews with Father Rensing that in her youth and adolescence, she had not simply led by example, but fervently and incessantly instructed them in their faith. Her siblings may well have been her first audience. Her older brother Bernhard recalled: “She spoke very little of worldly things, and instead usually sought to instruct us regularly in articles of faith and good morals; she told us sermons [she had] heard or stories of the saints[,] and sought through her lessons to keep us good [*uns zum Guten anzuhalten*].”<sup>104</sup> Maria Feldmann, who had apprenticed with Emmerick under the same seamstress when she was fourteen, told Rensing that “she always talked about church services and instructed me in the faith and in good morals,” with endless patience for Feldmann’s “slow understanding.”<sup>105</sup> Anna Schwering said much the same: “her conversation was at all times about the holy Scripture, the lives of the saints and lessons of faith.” Frau Gertrud Ahaus-Mört recalled that she had instructed her “in what the duties of a Christian were,” as well as sharing stories “of the lives of holy nuns, like Mechtildis, Katharina, Gertrudis, Clara, etc.”<sup>106</sup> Perhaps the most telling anecdote of Emmerick’s zeal for instruction comes from Elisabeth Eyinck. One day, Eyinck’s mother told her that Emmerick came to speak

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<sup>103</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 9; 34; 39.

<sup>104</sup> “Sie sprach wenig von weltlichen Geschäft[en], sondern suchte gewöhnlich uns übrige in Glaubenssachen und guten Sitten zu unterrichten; erzählte uns gehörte Predigten oder Geschichten der Heiligen und suchte uns durch ihre Lehren zum Guten anzuhalten.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Bernhard Emmerick,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 206-207.

<sup>105</sup> “Ich hatte sehr große Zuneigung zu derselben [Emmerick]. Diese Zuneigung kam daher weil selbe Emmerick sehr gottesfürchtig war, weil sie mir bei meinem langsamen Begriff mit der größten Sanftmut den Unterricht erteilte . . . Immer redete sie vom Gottesdienste, und unterrichtete mich im Glauben und guten Sitten.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Maria Feldman,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 207-208.

<sup>106</sup> “Unsere Unterredung war immer von Religion, wo sie mich in vielem unterrichtete, in dem was die Pflichten eines Christen seien, und mir gewöhnlich erzählte von dem Leben heiliger Nonnen, als der Mechtildis, Katharina, Gertrudis, Clara, etc.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Gertrud Ahaus-Mört,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 210-211.

with her about Elisabeth. She was concerned, she said, because Elisabeth had not gone to confession in ten weeks. Astonished that Emmerick knew this, and believing she could only have learned of her absence from the confessional through supernatural means, she hurried to the church. Now, she told Rensing, “I don’t go to visit her until I receive the Sacrament first.”<sup>107</sup>

For Emmerick to confidently instruct her younger siblings and female peers in how to lead a good Christian life was one thing; for her to instruct clergymen and physicians was quite another. This she frequently did, however, and with apparent ease. On one occasion, for example, Emmerick had a long conversation with Fr. Rensing in which, he wrote, she “demonstratively display[ed] her pure religious sensibility, to me very edifying.” So impressed was Rensing, in fact, that he gladly took down her advice on how he should instruct his parishioners in the confessional: “Instruct those who hear confession that they [should] pray more for the souls in purgatory than to the holy ones in heaven.” Dr. Wesener also sought out Emmerick’s instruction, as recorded in his journal. In these conversations Emmerick often took on the tones of a Sunday-school teacher quizzing a pupil on his catechism: “She asked me: did I indeed rightly know, then, why God created the human race? [She answered:] For his glory and our happiness. And indeed upon the fall of the legions of angels [who supported Lucifer] the Lord decided to make men in their place.”<sup>108</sup> Nor did Emmerick hesitate to school Wesener’s brother-in-law upon their first meeting. Lying in an ecstatic state as the doctor first brought him to meet her, she apparently was able to look into the heart of this stranger. As he stood there she pronounced: “This man broods too much and muses too long over his thoughts. Also he relies too much on himself. That is not good . . . He must follow his confessor and another person that

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<sup>107</sup> Quoted in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 89 n. 1. For reasons that are unclear to me, Hümpfner chooses to quote many primary documents in footnotes only rather than including them as part of the collection of sources in the main text.

<sup>108</sup> “Sie fragte mich: ob ich dann auch wohl recht wisse, warum Gott die Menschen erschaffen habe? Zu seiner Verherrlichung und zu unserm Glücke. Und zwar habe der Herr beim Falle der Legionen von Engeln beschlossen, an deren Stelle den Menschen zu machen.” Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 36.

advises him well. Francis de Sales and Saint Teresa say, one must not follow one's self, one must follow others who are righteous."<sup>109</sup> Wesener wrote with apparent credulity that "she told me that she could often read the hearts of the people who came to her and usually knows what people think of her."<sup>110</sup>

All the while, Emmerick did not deny but rather openly acknowledged, even emphasized her lack of education and lowly status relative to her listeners. She made an elaborate show of her obeisance and obedience to the commands of any clergyman: even when in the deepest ecstatic trance, rigid, immovable and seemingly impervious to any disturbance, she would answer questions or instantly return to wakefulness if Dean Rensing, Dean Overberg, or any other priest commanded her to do so. Overberg's vivid description of one instance is typical:

Now she sank completely into an ecstatic state, in which she gave hardly any signs of life. Herr Councilor von Druffel [a physician] turned her head and it remained as he had turned it. – he tried to open her eyelids but could hardly do so, they closed again immediately. – He raised her head with one arm laid behind her neck, and her body, without bending, raised up with it, as if it were a column. . . . During this examination she gave no signs of life at all. Then the Vicar General said: "I command you under [your vow of] holy obedience to answer." Hardly were these words out of his mouth when she turned her head, with a speed which would be difficult to imitate, towards the side where we were, looked at us with great friendliness, and answered everything she was now asked.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> "'Der Mann grübelt zu sehr,' sagte sie, 'und denkt zu lange über seinen Gedanken. Auch folgt er und verläßt sich zu sehr auf sich selbst. Das ist nicht gut. . . Er muß seinem Beichtvater und noch einem, der ihm gut rät, folgen. Franziskus Salensis und die heilige Theresia sagen, man müsse sich nicht selbst, man müsse andern folgen, die rechtschaffen sind.'" Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 48-49.

<sup>110</sup> "Sie sagte auch, daß sie oft in den Herzen der Menschen, die zu ihr kämen, lese und daß sie gewöhnlich wisse, was man von ihr denke." Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 39.

<sup>111</sup> "Hierauf sank sie völlig in die Ohnmacht (Ekstase), in welcher sie gar kein Lebenszeichen von sich gab. Herr Rat v. Druffel drehte ihr Kopf und wie er ihn drehte, so blieb derselbe liegen. – Er suchte ihr die Augenlider aufzuziehen, vermochte es kaum, sie fielen gleich wieder zu. – Er hob mit hinter ihren Nacken gelegtem Arme ihren Kopf und der Körper ward ohne sich zu beugen, gehoben, als wenn er eine Bildsäule gewesen wäre. . . . Während dieser Untersuchung gab sie gar kein Lebenszeichen. Da sprach der Herr Vicarius Generalis: 'Ich befehle Ihnen unter dem hl. Gehorsam zu antworten.' Kaum waren diese Worte aus seinem Munde, da warf sie ihren Kopf mit einer Schnelligkeit, die sich schwerlich nachmachen läßt, auf die Seite, wo wir waren, sah uns mit besonderer Freundlichkeit an, und antwortete auf alles, was sie nun gefragt wird." Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 71.

None of her visitors, furthermore, clerical or lay, described her as arrogant or acting above her station, but rather as mild and humble. No doubt this was in part because Emmerick made sure to inform them of her limited schooling. Overberg reported that “she had read little in her life,” and not long after first attempting it gave it up for contemplation.<sup>112</sup> She told both Stolberg and Droste-Vischering, the Vicar General, that she had attended school for only four months. At that point, her schoolteacher had allegedly declared in awe that “she was finished, he had nothing more to teach that she did not [already] know.”<sup>113</sup> Both these anecdotes suggested that Emmerick’s wisdom came from contemplation and visionary insight. Repeatedly, she told Rensing, Wesener, and Overberg that she had heard what she told them from an inner voice or during a dream.

What then, to make of this untutored visionary, whose breadth of knowledge and easy eloquence made such an impression? How to explain Emmerick’s confident voice without recourse to divine intervention? First, it should be noted that a close reading of the sources suggests Emmerick was not as ignorant as she led others to believe. In particular, she appears to have downplayed the extent of her literacy. Her brother Bernhard reported that when Emmerick stayed up long after the rest of the household had gone to bed, she did so not only to pray but also to read.<sup>114</sup> Overberg also recorded that as a child, Emmerick “had often taken small candle stubs from her parents which, when the others had gone to sleep, she would light and then sit

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<sup>112</sup> “Sie hätte in ihrem Leben wenig gelesen, wenn sie angefangen hätte, zu lesen, so hätte sie dies gleich gestört. Dann hätte sie das Lesen darangegeben und statt dessen betrachtet.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 92.

<sup>113</sup> “Als sie in die Schule kam, ward sie nach vier Monaten wieder herausgenommen, weil der Schulmeister erklärte, sie sei fertig, er habe nichts mehr zu lehren, das sie nicht wisse.” Friedrich Leopold Graf von Stolberg, “Bericht des Grafen Friedr. Leop. Stolberg über seinen Besuch in Dülmen,” July 22, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 294. It may also be worth noting that this anecdote, if true, is not necessarily as impressive as it sounds. Schoolteachers in Emmerick’s day were of highly variable quality.

<sup>114</sup> “Oft wenn wir schon längst schlafen gegangen, war sie noch auf, las in Büchern, oder betete, oft knieend mit ausgestreckten Armen.” Rensing, “Vernehmung Bernhard Emmerick,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 206-207.

with in a corner to read or to pray.”<sup>115</sup> Emmerick did not cease reading after her school-age years. On more than one occasion Fr. Rensing and Dr. Wesener found her with a book in her hands, or heard from her that she had read a devotional work during the long sleepless hours of the night.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps most telling of all, when Wesener once asked Emmerick how she was able to focus so intently on religious contemplation and ignore outside distractions, she declared that it was as easy as becoming absorbed in a good book – not an analogy a barely literate person who struggled to eke out a text would be likely to make.<sup>117</sup>

More importantly, Emmerick’s linked claims of limited education and visionary inspiration are best understood as a reflection of her self-fashioned identity as a mystic. As she seems to have recognized, it was precisely her humble, untutored status which made her statements all the more impressive in her visitors’ minds. As wisdom gleaned through contemplation and (implicitly) divine inspiration, moreover, Emmerick’s words became weighted with God’s authority rather than her own. The role of the prophet or visionary as holy fool, God’s chosen instrument to speak truth to power and shame the learned, was a well-established one. Women mystics and accomplished authors such as Hildegard von Bingen or Teresa of Avila, for example, had similarly bemoaned their ignorance and simplicity as mere women. In doing so, they derived their legitimacy as preachers from their status as visionaries,

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<sup>115</sup> “Als sie in die Schule gegangen, hätte sie oft kleine Endchen Licht von ihren Eltern weggenommen, welche sie, wann die andern wären schlafen gegangen, angezündet, und sich damit in ein Eckchen gesetzt um zu lesen oder zu beten.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 76.

<sup>116</sup> See for example Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 7, 61; Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 97.

<sup>117</sup> “. . . Ich lenkte jetzt das Gespräch auf das Gebet und sagte ihr, . . . ich möchte wohl wissen, wie sie und manche Andere in stundenlangen Gebete und zwar so beharren könnten, daß sie alles, was um sie wäre, vergessen und sich gleichsam in Gott verlieren könnten. Sie sagte mir, ich möchte einmal bedenken, ob man sich in einem interessanten Buche nicht so sehr vertiefen könne, daß man alles um sich her vergesse und verliere? Wie umsomehr müsse man sich in dem Gespräche mit Gott, dem Urquelle alles Schönen, verlieren.” Wesener, journal, August 2, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 72-73.

receiving messages directly from God.<sup>118</sup> The testimony of Emmerick's friends indicates that she was familiar with stories of the saints, and she may have followed their example in this regard.

Herein lay the alternative, charismatic power of women mystics in the patriarchal Catholic Church. Because of their reputed sensuality and emotional intensity, women were not only considered more prone to temptation; paradoxically, they were also more easily able to achieve ecstatic union with God than men.<sup>119</sup> In addition, precisely because they were weak, they provided God with striking opportunities to be strong in their weakness. As Rensing wrote to the Vicar General, days after meeting Emmerick: "Truly, the Lord always chooses the weak to shame the strong, and reveals mysteries to the simple and lowly that he has hidden from the great and learned."<sup>120</sup> He even dared to hope that Emmerick's miraculous feats would bring about "a return to a religious sensibility, and ultimately conversion to the Catholic Church" after the onslaught of Enlightenment, revolution and secularization.<sup>121</sup>

Emmerick expounded with confidence on a variety of religious topics, and was met with a positive reception by well-educated contemporaries. The presentation and reception of Emmerick's prophetic voice reveal how the centuries-old, ever-evolving tradition of women's mysticism played out in the specific context of early-nineteenth-century Westphalia. At a time when the Church's ancient authority appeared under threat, and the most radical spoke of a triumph of Reason over revelation, Emmerick and the mystical tradition she represented took on new layers of meaning. The awe and devotion of Rensing, Wesener and others to follow sprang

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<sup>118</sup> Dickens, *Female Mystic*, 25-38, 179-191. It is perhaps worth noting that both Teresa of Avila and Hildegard von Bingen have been declared "Doctors of the Church," meaning that their writings are foundational and profound statements of Catholic doctrine worthy of comparison to the Church Fathers such as Augustine.

<sup>119</sup> Dickens, 1-10; Coakley.

<sup>120</sup> "Wahrlich, der Herr wählt noch immer die Schwachen, um die Starken zu beschämen, und offenbart dem Einfältigen und Geringen Geheimnisse, die er vor dem Großen und Gelehrten dieser Welt verborgen hält." Bernhard Rensing to Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 191.

<sup>121</sup> ". . . von den ersten Rückkehr zu einem religiösen Sinn und Wandel, von den letzten aber der Übertritt zur katholischen Kirche unter dem Beistande der göttlichen Gnade zu hoffen ist . . ." Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 11.

from their reading of Emmerick as a sign for their troubled times. Though others thereby developed this reading of her as anti-Enlightenment symbol, Emmerick herself laid the foundation for this idea by presenting herself as spiritually inspired. Like Hildegard von Bingen, Teresa of Avila and other women before her, Emmerick embraced and even exaggerated her lack of education. By thus suggesting her wisdom was the fruit of deep contemplation, perhaps even visionary revelation, she weighted her words with the testimony of the Holy Spirit rather than her own. This enabled her to speak her mind without disobedience to authority. When this strategy combined with her startling wounds and her charismatic zeal, the effect was powerful – not despite but rather because it centered on such a seemingly powerless woman, a rustic, untutored visionary.

### *Unconventional Redeemer*

Nun, mystic, preacher, visionary – Emmerick took on all these roles, making them part of her self-fashioned identity. She also succeeded in making others see her in this light when, in March 1813, she became a public figure. As she told them the story of her life and shared with them her visions, she helped shape the narrative that Rensing, Wesener, Overberg, and Stolberg subsequently put to paper. It was not her story or her visions, however, that brought these men to Emmerick's bedside; rather, it was her wounded and bleeding body. For all of her confidence and charisma, her strong sense of vocation and her religious zeal, Emmerick's reputation ultimately hinged on how others saw these wounds: as miraculous stigmata, a mysterious yet natural phenomenon, or a hoax.

At the same time, Emmerick's own sense of self would inevitably have to grapple with the new roles these wounds opened to her – celebrity, scandal-monger, and perhaps even saint.

“Do not imagine yourself another Saint Catherine of Siena,” Father Lambert reportedly admonished her when he first discovered the bleeding in her hands.<sup>122</sup> Who, then, did Emmerick imagine herself to be, and what did these wounds mean to her? How successfully did Emmerick communicate that meaning to others, and refute the interpretations others sought to impose on them? Taken together, what does all this suggest about Emmerick’s role in the construction of her public image?

When viewed in the context of her time, as well as her words and actions, Emmerick’s stigmata are revealed as of a piece with the larger spiritual mission she envisioned for herself. Neither the mere victim of psychological drives nor the pawn of others’ fanaticism, Emmerick consciously took on the role of stigmatic in order to experience more deeply the suffering of Jesus – and, just as importantly, to continue his ministry. Both the physical pain and public ridicule brought by her wounds were for Emmerick sacrifices that she could offer up as expiation for the sins of others, just as Jesus endured ridicule and offered up his life for the salvation of humanity. Moreover, by making her inner religious zeal outwardly visible in a dramatic way, Emmerick’s wounds allowed her mysticism to be a participatory mysticism: not a silent inward prayer but a shocking declaration of faith, even a call to action, impossible to ignore. Despite being a woman, Emmerick dared to take on Christ’s own role, offering herself to her community as its unconventional redeemer.

In more ways than one, Emmerick found herself in a community in need of saving. The waning appeal of older forms of effusive religious devotion in Emmerick’s day has already been mentioned. In Westphalia, this spiritual impoverishment existed side by side with material

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<sup>122</sup> Overberg writes: “Hierauf erzählte sie mir, sie habe es nicht einmal gewußt [that she had stigmata]. Ein anderer hätte es zuerst gesehen (ich meine, daß sie Herrn Lambert nannte) und sie aufmerksam darauf gemacht, ihr aber zugleich dabei gesagt: Glauben Sie nicht, daß Sie Katharina von Siena sind, davon sind Sie noch weit entfernt.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 74.

poverty. Her home village of Coesfeld and the neighboring community, Dülmen, had never been particularly rich, especially after the devastations of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).

Westphalian peasants had feudal labor obligations to their manorial lords later than most other German lands west of the Elbe. While in other areas partible inheritance prevailed, in Westphalia farmland passed undivided to a single heir. This meant that non-inheriting children, especially daughters, faced a strong likelihood of downward social mobility. From around 1700 onward, a dramatic socio-economic shift had seen the rural substratum of smallholders or cottagers, who did not own enough land for a livelihood and thus depended on offering their labor to others, swell to the largest population group in the countryside. Emmerick's own family fell into this lowest socioeconomic category.<sup>123</sup>

At the time of Emmerick's birth in 1774, the region was in the midst of a particularly severe crisis as a result of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), which had seen troops tramp back and forth across the area, bringing destruction, disease, and famine in their wake. A vivid picture of this crisis can be found in an official report to the Prince-Bishop of Münster on her home village of Coesfeld in 1775, the year after she was born. The Bishop's ministers discovered that out of an earlier population of over 1,200, only about 425 remained. Of these, 148 were barely able to meet the tax requirements for full civic participation as burghers, and 97 could not meet them at all. In total they counted 225 collapsed or deserted houses.<sup>124</sup> In short, the Münsterland Emmerick knew in her formative years was one of economic despair as well as declining faith.

Emmerick responded dramatically and uncompromisingly to these challenges she perceived in her own community. As previous sections have shown, she exhorted her family and friends to remain strong in their faith. Despite being among the poorest members of her

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<sup>123</sup> Heide Wunder, "Agriculture and Agrarian Society," in Sheilagh Ogilvie, ed. and trans., *Germany: A New Social and Economic History, 1630-1800* (London: Arnold, 1996), 63-99.

<sup>124</sup> von Oer, "Coesfeld im 18. Jahrhundert," 228.

community, she gave all she owned to the destitute people she met. Her acts of charity continued in the convent, even as her unauthorized good works stretched the limits of her vow of obedience. As she told Dr. Wesener, in her view it was fulfilling one's duty to the poor, not prayer, that constituted "true religion" and "work most pleasing to God."<sup>125</sup>

Proselytization and charity were not the only weapons, however, that Emmerick chose to wield in her fight. All her life, she had devoted endless hours to prayer, fasting, and self-mortification. This method of prayer though pain reached its apotheosis in Emmerick's stigmata. It would be easy to see her history of such practices as a history of self-harm, with a masochistic inner psychological driver. Yet Emmerick's mysticism cannot be characterized as a retreat into an inner world of contemplation, absorbed in contemplating the divine plane at the expense of the everyday; nor was it a mere inward, mental obsession with self-punishment and the rush of relief that some have found in inflicting self-harm. As previous sections have shown, the calling she felt from childhood was a calling not only to prayer but preaching; not only to suffering, but service. Her stigmata were no exception. This fact becomes clear when they are read in the light of her visions and prayer practices. The crucial link between Emmerick's inner preoccupation with sin and self-punishment, on the one hand, and her outward missionary zeal on the other, was her fervent belief in a distinctly Catholic doctrine: Purgatory.

Emerging as a fully-formed concept in the twelfth century but with much older antecedents, Purgatory was the theological "solution" for the problem of reconciling divine justice with divine mercy. Drawing on a particular interpretation of Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers, it was a place of purification where souls unworthy of heaven, yet

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<sup>125</sup> "Sie forderte mich kräftig auf, den Armen beizustehen und [sie] zu unterstützen, indem dieses ein äußerst gottgefälliges Werk sei. Die wahre Religion bestehe nicht in vielem Beten, sondern in Erfüllung seiner Pflicht. Jeder müsse die Bahn rechtschaffen durchlaufen, die ihm Gott, der Herr, vorgesteckt." Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 7.

undeserving of eternal damnation in hell, atoned for their sins before finally being allowed into God's presence. Catholics in this world, moreover, could by their prayers and good works intercede on behalf of these poor souls as well as their own, thereby lessening their term of purification. The exact nature of this purification, however, was open to debate, giving rise to diverging ideas of Purgatory among theologians, mystics, and the laity alike.<sup>126</sup> As one Protestant German author derisively commented, “. . . what is this Purgatory in which I should believe? Of this nothing is said . . . people argue about it in the Roman Church, and this article [of faith] stands on shaky ground [*steht auf Schrauben*]. One [thus] professes nothing, or professes without knowing what [he professes].”<sup>127</sup> In reality, much was said and professed in Catholic sermons, church decorations, and didactic and popular literature about Purgatory, but little was agreed upon beyond its existence as a place of expiation and purification.

Since the Middle Ages, many theologians had argued that the “punishment” of Purgatory was existential rather than physical, consisting of the soul's exile from God's presence, and the mental and emotional anguish that resulted from this separation. After the French Enlightenment and around the time of Emmerick's birth, the majority of Catholic clergy favored this more austere view, partly in response to attacks on Purgatory by polemicists as a superstitious and false doctrine, invented to raise money through the selling of indulgences.<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, both elevated and more popular depictions of Purgatory, from church altars and translations of

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<sup>126</sup> For the early development of Catholic belief in Purgatory, see Jacques le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). For Purgatory in the modern Catholic imagination, see John E. Thiel, *Icons of Hope: The “Last Things” in Catholic Imagination* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013); Diana Walsh Pasulka, *Heaven Can Wait: Purgatory in Catholic Devotional and Popular Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>127</sup> “Wir sollen also ein Fegefeuer glauben. Aber was ist denn das Fegefeuer, das ich glauben soll? Hiervon ist nichts gesaget . . . man streitet noch in der römischen Kirche darüber, und es stehet dieser Artikel also auf Schrauben. Man beschwöret eigentlich nichts, oder schwöret, ohne zu wissen, was.” Johann Lorenz von Mosheim and Christian Ernst von Windheim, *Streittheologie der Christen*, vol. 1 (Erlangen: Wolfgang Walther, 1763), 241.

<sup>128</sup> Pasulka, *Heaven Can Wait*, 5-8. A good example of a polemical attack on Purgatory from Emmerick's day is L. Dingen, *Reise nach dem Fegefeuer* (1784).

Dante to cheap *Volkskalendar*, often featured souls writhing in fire, their torments barely distinguishable from those of hell. Mystics through the centuries had also often described visions of Purgatory as a place of fire and brimstone in which souls atoned for their sins through excruciating physical pain.<sup>129</sup>

As for the German Catholic didactic works written for the masses in Emmerick's day, they refused to commit to one side of the debate or the other. "In what way the souls of the departed are purified, through fire and other punishments, is not stated in Scripture," Raymundus Bruns wrote in one catechism; "We are only obligated to believe that there is a Purgatory," not that it operated in any particular way.<sup>130</sup> In his *Leichtfaßliche katechetische Reden eines Dorfpfarrers an die Landjugend (Easily-Graspable Catechetical Lessons of a Village Priest for Country Youth)*, Edilbert Menne also acknowledged that "we do not know what kind of punishments there are," though he went on to say: "but you can easily imagine that they must be far greater and more painful than all the pain and agony that a person can suffer on this earth; for God has a heavy hand and his punishments go deep."<sup>131</sup>

Thus, while many Catholic preachers argued that Purgatory was a consoling doctrine that indicated God's infinite mercy, popular ideas about Purgatory were not always so comforting in nature. Church dogma, meanwhile, avoided pronouncement on the manner of punishment souls experienced after death, leaving the exact nature of Purgatory to believers' imaginations. The

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<sup>129</sup> An old but comprehensive review of Purgatory as described by theologians and mystics through the centuries is F. X. Schouppe, S.J., *Purgatory Illustrated by the Lives and Legends of the Saints* (London: Burns & Oates, 1893).

<sup>130</sup> ". . . was für eine Weise die Seelen der Abgestorbenen, durch das Feuer und andere Strafungsmittel gereinigt werden, ist in der h. Schrift nicht bestimmt. Wie sind allein schuldig zu glauben, daß es ein Fegefeuer gibt, . . ." Raymundus Bruns, *Erklärung des katholischen Glaubensbekenntnisses: aus der heiligen Schrift und Vernunft* (Paderborn: Junfermann and Aschendorff, 1772), 401.

<sup>131</sup> "Was dies für Peinen sind, wissen wir nicht. Das könnt ihr aber euch leicht einbilden, daß sie weit größer und schmerzlicher seyn müssen, als alle Peinen und Schmerzen, die man auf dieser Welt leiden kann. Denn Gott hat eine schwere Hand, und seine Strafrute gehet tief ein . . ." Edilbert Menne, *Leichtfaßliche katechetische Reden eines Dorfpfarrers an die Landjugend: Die geoffenbarte Religion; Von den Sakramenten und der christlichen Gerechtigkeit*, vol. 4 (Augsburg: Nicolaus Doll, 1795), 515.

leeway afforded by this ambiguity meant that individual Catholics, in response to the discourses and concerns of their time, came to a variety of conclusions about Purgatory and its position on a spectrum between heaven and hell. The relative “infernization” or “celestialization” of Purgatory in a particular vision, sermon, piece of literature, or work of art can therefore reveal something about the author’s beliefs about sin, justice, and mercy.<sup>132</sup> In this way, Emmerick’s conception of Purgatory provides critical clues regarding her own personal faith, and how she understood her stigmata in the context of that faith.

In Emmerick’s visions and pronouncements as recorded by Overberg, Rensing, Wesener, and others, a consistent theme emerges: the infinite mercy of God, and expiatory prayer and mortification as a way for believers to invoke this mercy for themselves and others, particularly those in Purgatory. In her very first encounter with Fr. Overberg, she told him of her most recent ecstatic experience, saying it was inwardly revealed to her “the great mercy of God toward sinners, whom he tries to lead back [to him] and so lovingly takes up again [to himself] . . . [despite] the sins that wound God so terribly.”<sup>133</sup> As Overberg learned over the course of his many conversations with her, leading such sinners to mercy was Emmerick’s greatest desire and constantly occupied her thoughts. Contemplating others’ damnation caused her so much anguish, in fact, that it had formerly led her to question even her most foundational beliefs:

For a long time she was in the habit of disputing with God over [the fact] that he did not convert all great sinners, and punished the unconverted forever in the next world. She said to him that she did not know how he could be this way; it seemed to be against his nature. He was after all so benevolent and it cost him nothing to convert sinners; he had all things in his hand; he should remember all that he and his beloved Son had done for sinners . . . If he himself did not keep his word [to forgive sinners], how could he then

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<sup>132</sup> On the debate among Catholics over the relative “infernization” or “celestialization” of Purgatory, see Alan E. Bernstein’s extended review of Le Goff: Alan E. Bernstein, “Review: Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du purgatoire* (1981), *Speculum* 59, no. 1 (Jan. 1984), 179-183.

<sup>133</sup> “Bald froh, bald traurig . . . Über die große Barmherzigkeit Gottes gegen die Sünder, daß er diese so suchte wieder zurückzuführen, und so lieblich wieder aufnahm. . . . [und] über die Sünden, daß Gott so schrecklich beleidigt würde.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, *Akten*, 71.

demand that men should do so[?] Herr Lambert, whom she told about her disputation [with God], had said, “Easy, easy, you are going too far!”<sup>134</sup>

To Rensing Emmerick said, “If I thought of just one poor sinner becoming damned, that hurt me so much that I could not get over it.”<sup>135</sup> Not only, then, was Emmerick obsessed over her own sinfulness, so that even as a child she would pray God to strike her dead rather than allow her to sin. She was equally preoccupied with the sins of others. It was no wonder, then, that she had always proselytized to her neighbors and relatives with such urgency.

The apparent resolution to Emmerick’s disputation with God was supplied by Purgatory. Not only did this place of purification save countless sinners from hell; it also meant that through her prayers Emmerick could continue to work for others’ salvation even after they had passed into the next world. From earliest childhood, she began to pray almost exclusively for the deliverance of poor souls in Purgatory, and many of her visions were affirmations that God was merciful and her prayers were indeed efficacious. She told Fr. Rensing one morning that in her latest vision, “she was present as God served judgment over great sinners. ‘His justice,’” she said, “‘is great, but his mercy still greater. Only those will be damned who absolutely will not be converted[;] but those who have even a speck of good intentions will be saved . . . they indeed go to Purgatory, but they merely pass through it and do not remain there.’”<sup>136</sup> Rensing’s superior,

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<sup>134</sup> “Eine Zeitlang hätte sie die Gewohnheit gehabt mit Gott zu disputieren darüber, daß er nicht alle große Sünder bekehrte und die unbekehrten in der andern Welt ewig strafte. Sie hätte Ihm gesagt, sie wüßte nicht, wie er doch so sein könnte; das wäre ja seiner Natur zuwider. Er wäre ja so gütig und es kostete Ihm nichts die Sünder zu bekehren; Er hätte alle in seiner Hand; Er sollte doch denken, was Er und sein geliebter Sohn alles für die Sünder getan hätte; . . . Wenn Er sein eigenes Wort nicht selbst hielte, wie Er dann verlangen könnte, daß die Menschen es tun sollten. Herr Lambert, dem sie von Ihrem Disputieren erzählte, hätte gesagt: ‘Sachte, sachte, du gehst zu weit!’ . . .”. Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 93.

<sup>135</sup> “Wenn ich sonst daran dachte, daß nur ein armer Sünder verdammt werde, das tat mir so wehe, daß ich es nicht verschmerzen konnte . . .”. Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 43-44.

<sup>136</sup> “Da ich diesen Morgen die Kranke besuchte, erzählte sie mir, sie hätte in der vergangenen Nacht wenig oder nichts geschlafen und viel gelitten, aber auch Vorstellungen gehabt . . . sie wäre gegenwärtig gewesen, da Gott über große Sünder Gericht gehalten hätte. ‘Seine Gerechtigkeit,’ sagte sie, ‘ist groß, aber seine Barmherzigkeit noch größer. Nur jene werden verdammt, die sich durchaus nicht bekehren wollen, aber die welche nur noch ein Fünkchen von gutem Willen haben, werden gerettet . . . Sie kommen wohl ins Fegfeuer, aber sie gehen nur dadurch und bleiben nicht darin.’” Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 43.

Vicar General Droste-Vischering, recorded another vision of Purgatory which emphasized God's mercy and forgiveness:

I was in Purgatory, it was to me as if I was led into a deep chasm. There I saw a great open space that that seemed terrible and yet not terrible – I don't know how I should say it – that seemed moving. There sat people who were so silent and sad; but there was something in their expressions, as if they still had joy in their hearts and believed in the merciful God. I saw fire (this she said smiling) not at all . . .<sup>137</sup>

These visions of Purgatory were not new: they had comforted Emmerick since childhood.

Overberg, for example, wrote:

She related that from youth on she almost always prayed for others [rather than herself], and especially for the souls in Purgatory. Once an unknown person led her to a place that must have been Purgatory. There were in this place many people in great suffering who pleaded for her intercession." From then on she offered up almost constant prayers on their behalf, and often heard in response disembodied voices who expressed their gratitude: "I thank you, I thank you."<sup>138</sup>

She also told Rensing of this vision, which she apparently had multiple times, and in which the faces of the suffering sinners took on before her eyes a look of indescribable happiness, "a sign of the near deliverance of these souls."<sup>139</sup> Emmerick's mission to free the souls she saw trapped there was evidently a very personal one: on at least one occasion, she told Rensing that she

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<sup>137</sup> "Ich war im Fegfeuer, da war es mir, als wenn ich in einen tiefen Abgrund geführet würde. Da sah ich einen großen Platz, der schrecklich, doch eigentlich nicht schrecklich, ich weiß nicht wie ich sagen soll, so rührend aussah. Da saßen Menschen, die waren so still und traurig; aber sie hatten doch noch was im Gesichte, als wenn sie noch Freude im Herzen hätten und an den barmherzigen Gott dächten; Feuer sah ich (das sagte sie lächelnd) gar nicht darin . . ." Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, November 14, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 245.

<sup>138</sup> "Sie erzählte, daß sie von Jugend auf fast immer für andere, und besonders für die Seelen im Fegfeuer gebetet. Einmal hätte eine unbekante Person sie an einen Ort geführt, der das Fegfeuer müßte gewesen sein. Es wären an dem Orte viele in großen Leiden gewesen, die hätten sie um ihre Fürbitte angefleht. . . Sie hätte auch mehrmalen eine Stimme gehört, die ihr zugerufen, 'Ich danke dir, ich danke dir.'" Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 77.

<sup>139</sup> ". . . [es] wäre ihr vorgekommen, als wenn in dieser österlichen Zeit viele große Sünder zu Gott zurückkehrten und viele Seelen aus dem Fegfeuer erlöst würden. Wenigstens hätte sie sich in diesen Ort der Reinigung versetzt geglaubt, dor mehrere Menschengestalten erblickt und in ihren Gesichtern so etwas Frohes bemerkt, das sie nicht recht beschreiben könnte, das ihr aber geschienen hätte ein Zeichen der nahen Erlösung dieser Seelen zu sein." Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 30.

recognized acquaintances she had known among those being tormented to purify them of their sins.<sup>140</sup>

She offered as expiation for her sins and for these lost sheep of her community far more, however, than her prayers. As she explained to Rensing, “I am not praying for myself, and I am never so often heard for others, and not for me, as when I pray in suffering.”<sup>141</sup> Many times, she would complain bitterly to Rensing, Overberg and whoever else would listen about her suffering – the burning pain of her wounds that kept her awake through the night, and the pain of mortifying embarrassment before the endless parade of people who came to see her: “Oh,” she cried out during one of Overberg’s visits, “how I wish to die!” When Overberg asked if her pain was so unbearable that she felt she could no longer hold out, she said it was, “and her appearance showed well enough why she wished so much to die. Of the pain of her wounds, she said: ‘These are not like other pains, these go straight to the heart.’”<sup>142</sup> Yet even as she was tortured by her condition, she sought to embrace and transform it into a work of mercy. Though she said she fervently wished the visible wounds would disappear, she prayed for her physical pain to continue and even increase: “if I could wish that through my suffering something could contribute to His glory and to the conversion of sinners, then I would gladly suffer longer and

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<sup>140</sup> Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 47.

<sup>141</sup> “. . . denn ich bitte ja nicht für mich und ich bin schon so oft erhört worden, wenn ich für andere bat, für mich nie, als wenn ich bat um Leiden.” Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 42.

<sup>142</sup> “Kurz vor unserm Abschiede den 8. April sagte sie: ‘Ach, wie wünsche ich zu sterben!’ Ich fragte: ‘Können Sie dann die Leiden nicht länger aushalten?’ Sie antwortete: ‘Ja, darum nicht.’ Und ihr Blick zeigte genug, warum sie so sehr zu sterben wünschte. Von den Schmerzen ihrer Wunden sagte sie: ‘Diese sind nicht wie andere Schmerzen, diese gehen bis ins Herz.’” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 78.

still more.”<sup>143</sup> Emmerick even told Overberg that “she was most unwell when she had nothing particular to suffer; without suffering she could not be well.”<sup>144</sup>

She was emboldened in her zeal by what she saw as the Church’s hour of crisis, as secularization dissolved the convents, French revolutionary troops looted churches, and clergy went into exile. To Dr. Wesener, who would update Emmerick on the latest wartime developments, she described the times as unprecedented in their lack of Christian virtue: “‘Never,’ she said, ‘was there so little love of neighbor in the world as there is now.’”<sup>145</sup> The Russians were bad enough, but at least they still had religion; the French, on the other hand, she described as godless. More than once she emphasized to Wesener that what would save the Münsterland from succumbing to this godlessness was the faith and prayer of Münsterlanders.<sup>146</sup> From this point of view, Emmerick’s own devotions became acts of public engagement on behalf of her community, in a crisis whose stakes could not be higher.

Emmerick had already at her disposal a model of radical self-mortification as expiation for others’ sins: Jesus on the cross, the “suffering Savior” she had always tried to follow. Throughout her life, she had tried to understand and accept her privations in the light of his own story. When other villagers, put off by her zeal, considered her haughty and self-righteous, she learned to rejoice in their persecution: as she told her friend “she was glad that people said this, because Christ too had suffered and was innocent.”<sup>147</sup> Faced with the same reaction from her

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<sup>143</sup> “. . . und wenn ich wüßte, daß ich durch mein Leiden nur etwas zu seiner Ehre und zu der Bekehrung der Sünder beitragen könnte, dann wollte ich gern noch lange und noch mehr leiden.” Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 51.

<sup>144</sup> “Dann, sagte sie, wäre ihr am meisten unwohl, wenn sie nichts Besonderes zu leiden hätte; ohne Leiden könnte sie nicht gut sein.” Overberg, “Overbergs Aufzeichnungen,” in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 104.

<sup>145</sup> “‘Nie,’ sagte sie, ‘war so wenig Liebe des Nächsten in der Welt, als gerade jetzt.’” Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 22.

<sup>146</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 8; 27.

<sup>147</sup> “Und weil die Leute sagten, sie wollte aus Hoffart eine Nonne werden, so sagte sie, dieses wäre ihr lieb, daß die Leute dieses sagten, weil Christus auch unschuldig gelitten hätte.” Rensing, “Vernhemung Gertrud Ahaus-Mört,” April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 210-211.

fellow sisters in the convent, Emmerick fell back on the same thought. Having been born into poverty, she followed the example of Jesus and his disciples and gave what little she had away, making her deprivation something she chose rather than something to which she simply submitted. Apparently cursed with a weak constitution, she nonetheless punished her body – perhaps to the point of giving herself stigmata – so that her pain likewise became a cross she chose to accept. In thus transforming the circumstances of her life, she made every hardship and hindrance a sacrifice she could offer up for the expiations of sins, just as God sacrificed his Son to redeem the world.

Emmerick's accounts of her visions as well as her physical mortifications, furthermore, suggest that she increasingly associated her own suffering with the suffering of Jesus on the cross. When praying in Coesfeld's church late at night, she saw its crucifix fly down to meet her.<sup>148</sup> On another occasion, she was in the chapel of her convent, praying for a better relationship with her fellow sisters, when she saw a bleeding crucifix and interpreted this as a sign that she would continue to suffer.<sup>149</sup> As another nun, Clara Söntgen, confirmed, Emmerick had first experienced the pain of Jesus' crown of thorns years ago while praying with her in church, though no visible wounds appeared at that time.<sup>150</sup>

By 1813, however, Emmerick's wounds were strikingly visible. As Rensing, Overberg, Stolberg, Wesener and others attest, these wounds were seemingly impervious to all attempts to heal them. On Fridays, according to tradition the day Jesus died on the Cross, they would bleed, sometimes copiously, sometimes stopping and starting before their eyes. Emmerick claimed, and many have believed through the present day, that these wounds came from God as a heavenly sign. Other contemporaries believed she was being manipulated by one or more of the pious

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<sup>148</sup> Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 98.

<sup>149</sup> Overberg, "Overbergs Aufzeichnungen," in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 87.

<sup>150</sup> Rensing, "Vernehmung Clara Söntgen," April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 225-226.

clergymen around her, used as a tool to drum up the faith. None of the clergymen surrounding Emmerick come across as such conniving and manipulative characters, however. Given Emmerick's independent and even willful personality, furthermore, it seems unlikely that she would allow anyone to carry out such a thing, no matter the motive. More recently, some authors have suggested that stigmata like Emmerick's may be the result of a psychosomatic process. There is also the possibility that Emmerick made the wounds herself, either consciously and deliberately, or during one of her ecstatic states.

The distance of time and the limitations of the remaining sources do not permit any definite answers to this question. While it is impossible to know the "authentic" nature of Emmerick's stigmata, or the "authentic" nature of Emmerick the individual, the sources do permit a recovery of the self-fashioned identity she presented to those who made the climb to her rented room above Dülmen's public inn. Drawing on the portrait that emerges from this process, and on the nature of stigmata and women's mysticism in the Catholic tradition, a few conclusions regarding the meaning of Emmerick's stigmata suggest themselves. First, if Emmerick did indeed wound herself, this cannot be chalked up to masochism pure and simple; or at least, her masochism was one of a very peculiar and paradoxical kind. Her role as unlikely nun and untutored visionary stemmed from a strong sense of self and the zeal of an expiatory mission on behalf of her community, in which she was able to embrace, transform, and transcend her disadvantages. Without demanding autonomy, she nonetheless exercised agency; without disobedience, she led a life of nonconformity. Her stigmata were no exception to this pattern. On the one hand, her deep awareness of her sin and her obsessive fixation on the cross could have become mentally and emotionally torturous, driving her to self-mutilation. On the other, her

meditation on Jesus' sacrifice for humanity could also have led her to marvel at the love and mercy of her Savior, and this seems to also have been the case.

Taking the whole picture of Emmerick's prayer practices, visions, and theological focuses into account, it seems reasonable to view her stigmata wounds as one more way in which she drew herself and her community closer to God, commanding power through the embrace of weakness. In taking on a ministry of expiatory suffering, she had taken on Jesus' mission as it was understood by the church. By taking on or accepting his stigmata, she even more visibly and unmistakably took on the role of Christ, of God himself. Her subtle mixing of humility and authority suggests Emmerick was fully aware of this reading of her role. Even as she abased herself, she did so in the same way that Jesus abased himself: to reveal his superior spirituality. Her wounds were a mutilation but also an audacious elevation of the flesh when their symbolic meaning in the context of Catholic doctrine is understood.

Yet the question remains: why did Emmerick, and many before and after her, specifically manifest their devotion to Christ in their very flesh? Why did her body become her text, preaching Christ crucified? Just as Emmerick's words and visions reveal themselves more fully when read in the light of her own circumstances as well as in the context of a centuries-old Catholic mystical tradition, so too must Emmerick's stigmata be considered in conjunction with the longer history of stigmata as a phenomenon. As numerous scholars have noted, a clear pattern emerges in this history: though the first known and accepted stigmatic was Francis of Assisi, women were subsequently far more likely to exhibit stigmata and other forms of bodily mystical phenomena. According to the most exhaustive study, over the five and a half centuries separating Francis from Emmerick, sixty-nine individuals are known to have exhibited the

“classic” five wounds of stigmata (hands, feet, and side). Only three of these stigmatics (4%) were men.<sup>151</sup>

One could easily reproduce the gender stereotypes of Emmerick’s day in attempting to explain why exhibiting stigmata has been an overwhelmingly female phenomenon, resorting to an identification of more emotive, visceral piety as somehow essentially feminine. More than a whiff of sexism lingers in older scholarship which dismisses so-called “affective,” emotionally-charged, physical manifestations of mysticism as “excited emotionalism and intoxicated eroticism.”<sup>152</sup> Similar dangers can lurk in psychologically-based explanations for stigmata, self-flagellation, prolonged fasting, and other forms of religiously-motivated self-mortification. From the moment of psychology’s emergence as a professional scientific discipline around the turn of the nineteenth century, many of its practitioners both associated enthusiastic religiosity with hysteria, and gendered hysteria as feminine.<sup>153</sup> While Emmerick became a sudden celebrity in Dülmen, elsewhere German insane asylums took in peasants, usually women, who claimed to be gifted with supernatural powers or were prone to religious ecstasies.<sup>154</sup> Though Dr. Wesener and others would publish articles in journals describing Emmerick’s stigmata as inexplicable by medical science, his contemporary Johann Bährens would cite Emmerick as a specific example in his book on the then-fashionable theory of “animal magnetism.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Frustratingly, the only comprehensive survey of stigmatics dates from the nineteenth-century: Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*. Modern scholars continue to cite Imbert-Gourbeyre. I am currently developing my own list of stigmatics. In the process, I have cross-referenced all of the nearly three hundred stigmatics listed by Imbert-Gourbeyre, and subsequently winnowed down this number to individuals who displayed all five “classic” stigmata wounds (both hands, both feet, and side) and whose wounds were visible to others during their lifetime, rather than a manifestation after death. The percentage of women in this reduced cohort is analogous to the percentage in Imbert-Gourbeyre’s entire sample: over 90%.

<sup>152</sup> Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West* (New York, 1932), 30. Quoted in Herbert Moller, “The Social Causation of Affective Mysticism,” *The Journal of Social History*, 4, no. 4 (Summer 1971), 305.

<sup>153</sup> It is worth remembering, for instance, that the word “hysteria” shares with “hysterectomy” the same Greek word as its root: “hystera,” meaning womb.

<sup>154</sup> Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, 36-70.

<sup>155</sup> J[ohann] Ch[ristian] Bährens, *Der animalische Magnetismus und die durch ihn bewirkten Kuren* (Elberfeld and Leipzig, 1816), 138 ff.

That this deeply encoded assertion of power was the recourse of women like Emmerick, far more than men, is understandable without resorting to essentialist readings of gender: what other group has so consistently been shut out of the normal avenues of power that they would turn to such a tortuous alternative path? What other group would be more predisposed by their experiences to recognize and empathize with Jesus' ennoblement of his suffering and lowliness? What other group could employ stigmata as social and cultural critique to such shocking effect? The carnivalesque reality of a woman as Christ, particularly a woman like Emmerick, can serve to powerfully shame men who are failing in their Christ-like duty to shepherd their flock.

Modern psychology and psychiatry have moved away from the simplistic understanding of gender that prevailed in the early years of the discipline. Even so, contemporary research has sometimes failed to provide a convincing alternative explanatory framework for women mystics' behavior. One example is Michael Carroll's examination of Emmerick and other women stigmatics, in which he uses an analysis of their visions to conclude that their wounds represent a conflation of the infantile desire to suckle at the breast with an Electra complex that compelled them to incorporate the "father" (in this instance God) through the mouth.<sup>156</sup> Carroll seems to suggest that the psyche of women mystics is sufficient to explain their behavior, and furthermore that subconscious complexes, some of which are peculiar to women, are the driving force behind their mysticism. Similarly, Herbert Moller attributes the emergence of stigmata as well as its predominance among women to "the re-emergence of repressed wishes and fantasies, but distorted by regression . . . The mystics directed their infantilized desires for love objects at the Christian triune deity and particularly at Jesus, who became the beloved of the individual mystic." Moller sees evidence of this "regressive" emotional desire in a wide range of stigmatics' mystical experiences, from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: "The eroticized deity

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<sup>156</sup> Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions*, 79-103.

could reveal himself as a loving father as well as a helpless infant in a crèche or as a radiant youth. The divine object was experienced by some as a female figure, either as Sancta Sophia or as a feminized Christ with an open wound and helpless in his humiliation. On a still more regressive level Christ appeared as a mother figure.”<sup>157</sup> What this mono-causal framework excludes or ignores is the possibility of active choice as well as compulsion. When analyzed solely in this way, Emmerick comes across as a victim of her own psychoses. Basing the understanding of her stigmata on psychoanalysis of her visions, rather than a broader investigation of Emmerick’s words and actions in their historical context, cannot capture their full complexity. As Arnold Davidson among others has pointed out, psychiatric and cultural readings do not easily map onto each other: “What must be explained from a psychiatric point of view often turns out to be distinct from that which needs to be interpreted theologically or historically.”<sup>158</sup> Both approaches are needed, in other words, to uncover the whole story of Emmerick’s stigmata.

Carroll, Moller, and others rightly point out the psychological underpinnings that may contribute to women mystics’ punishing asceticism, perhaps to the point of brutal self-mutilation. The fact that stigmata or other alleged miraculous wounds are usually accompanied by a host of other phenomena – visions, hearing voices, prolonged abstinence from food, frequent illness – bolsters the supposition that mystics like Emmerick would today likely be diagnosed as having one or more psychiatric conditions, including schizophrenia, anorexia, and so on. Assertions by Frank Graziano and others that, in their rush to celebrate their charismatic power, scholars have

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<sup>157</sup> Moller, “Social Causation of Affective Mysticism,” 305-306.

<sup>158</sup> Davidson, “Miracles of Bodily Transformation,” 454.

sometimes denied or obscured the tortuous reality of women mystics' mental and physical health, have some merit.<sup>159</sup>

There is no denying that Emmerick was, in the memorable phrase of one author, “a pathological museum,” a bedridden woman beset with a host of debilitating physical symptoms.<sup>160</sup> Be that as it may, when her single-minded pursuit of a religious vocation and her confident, impressive voice are taken into account, it becomes hard to see Emmerick as a mere victim of mental or physical illness. Emmerick's own words and actions suggest that while she may sometimes have been plagued by painful awareness of sinfulness, an intense obsession with suffering and an unusual fixation on religion, she also recognized and owned these parts of her personality to the best of her ability. Unable or unwilling to deny them, she instead embraced and transformed them into a powerful tool in her crusade against poverty and declining faith. In so doing, she became stigmatized – in at least one sense of that word – by choice, offering her body as well as her prayers to save her community as its unconventional redeemer.

### *Conclusion: Emmerick's Story*

It was, to a large degree, Anna Katharina Emmerick's own story that people spread through the streets of Dülmen in March of 1813. Through her words and actions, she had fashioned an identity and role for herself in her community as an uncompromising ascetic, insistent preacher, and even saver of souls. She persevered in her pursuit of a monastic vocation in the face of repeated opposition. She shared her spiritual visions even as those around her dismissed or ridiculed them. By following such a path, she placed herself outside the communal support structures of marriage and family ties, with the ever-present possibility of being branded

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<sup>159</sup> Graziano, *Wounds of Love*, 3-34.

<sup>160</sup> Biot, *Enigma of the Stigmata*, 57.

as a heretic or a hysteric; yet, she repeatedly chose to risk such stigmatization. When, in 1813, she became stigmatized in a literal way, both Emmerick and her curious listeners were able to understand it as a logical progression along the life path she had constructed for herself.

In her hierarchical, patriarchal society, Emmerick had little access to education, wealth, or power. All of these obstacles, however, she embraced as opportunities. In her fertile mind and fervent piety, poverty became not something she was born into but something she actively chose out of love for God and neighbor. Her meager diet of religious books became an endless feast of images and ideas for her to contemplate. The astonishment and ridicule that followed her everywhere became a God-given guard against pride, and a way of growing closer to the persecuted Christ. Her recurrent pain and illness became a penitential offering she could give on behalf of others. Unable to write, her wounded body eventually became her text, preaching Christ crucified.

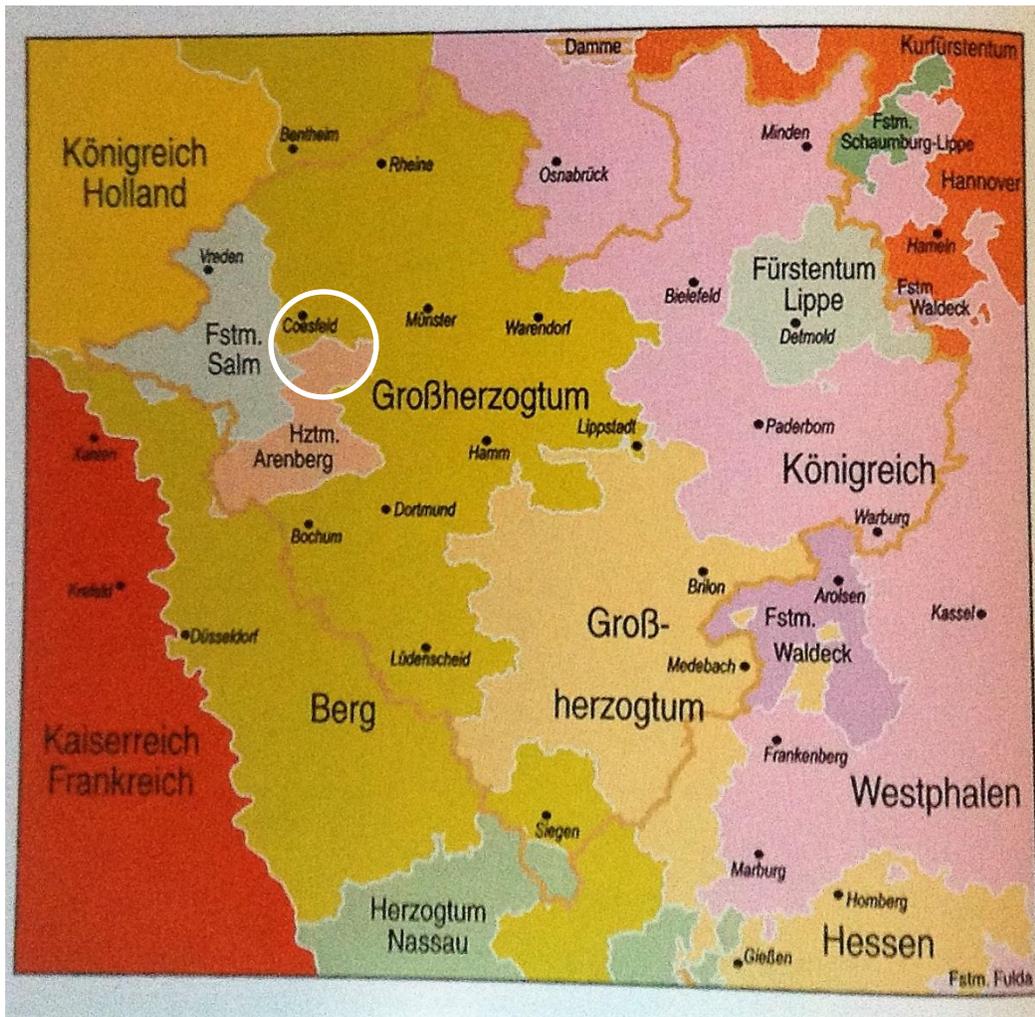
It is important to stress that Emmerick's path of mysticism was not a path toward self-enfranchisement; nor was it an act of deliberate rebellion against authority. Yet a consideration of Emmerick's monastic career and the context in which she pursued it, her open and unashamed sharing of her thoughts on theology, and her bold adoption of Jesus Christ's own role all suggest that Emmerick found a way to make her powerlessness empowering. To interpret this as acquiescence in institutions of social and religious control is to mask Emmerick's own agency. To make her a hapless victim of assumed psychological or pathological conditions is to miss the deliberate theological message behind Emmerick's actions.

This peasant-woman-turned stigmatic visionary would face new challenges, however, in the months and years following her entry onto the public stage in March 1813. From then on, visitors to her room came from increasingly farther afield, drawn to her for increasingly diverse

reasons. Westphalian papers and pamphleteers picked up on her strange tale, drawing the attention of the international press. She became a topic of discussion not only in Dülmen's taverns, but in distant Berlin's salons. Ever-higher ranking Church and state officials alike concerned themselves with Emmerick, eventually even popes and kings. As her story spread through all these mediums and along these many pathways, it stretched beyond her control.



**Map 1.** The Münsterland in 1804. Coesfeld (and Dülmen, located 10 mi southwest, unmarked) indicated by a white circle. Original map from Wemhoff, Matthias, ed., *Die Kultur der Klöster in Westfalen*, vol. 1 (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2008), 43.

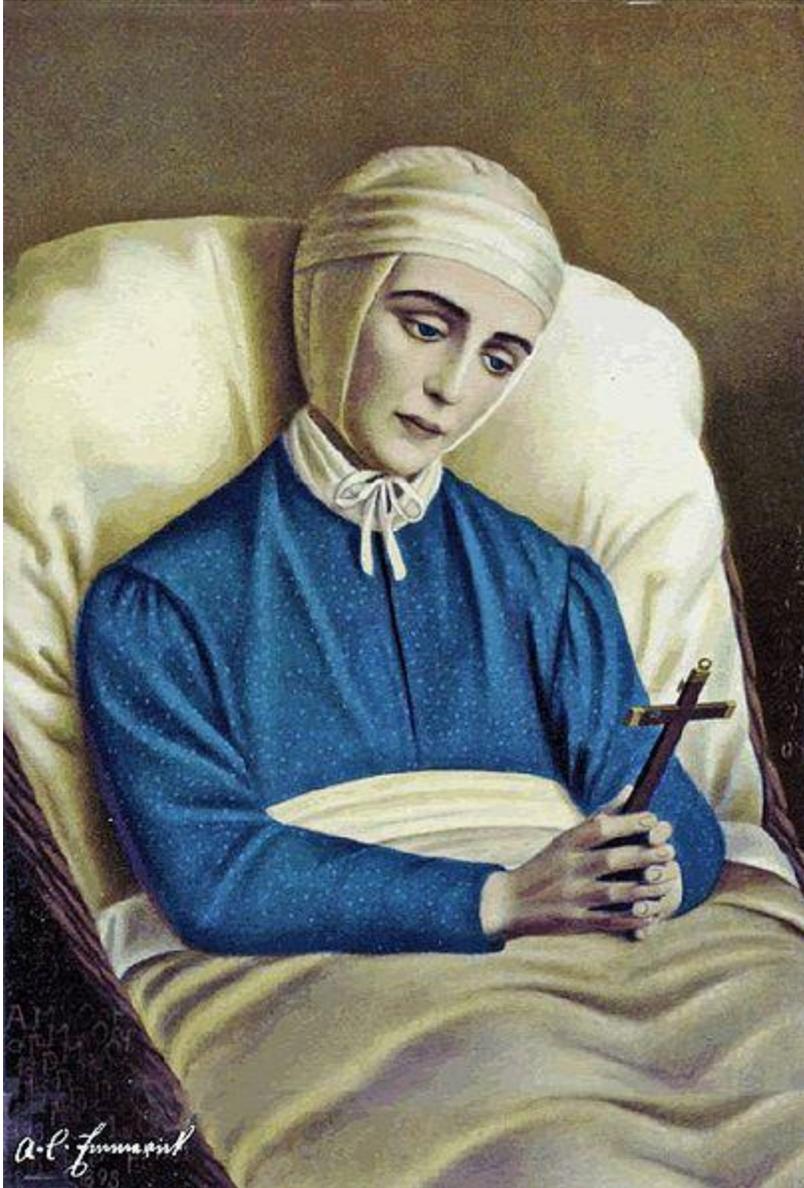


**Map 2.** The Münsterland in 1808. Coesfeld (and Dülmen, located 10 mi southwest, unmarked) indicated by a white circle. Original map from Wemhoff, Matthias, ed., *Die Kultur der Klöster in Westfalen*, vol. 1 (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2008), 44.



**Map 3.** The Münsterland in 1811. Coesfeld (and Dülmen, located 10 mi southwest, unmarked) indicated by a white circle. Original map from Wemhoff, Matthias, ed., *Die Kultur der Klöster in Westfalen*, vol. 1 (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2008), 45.



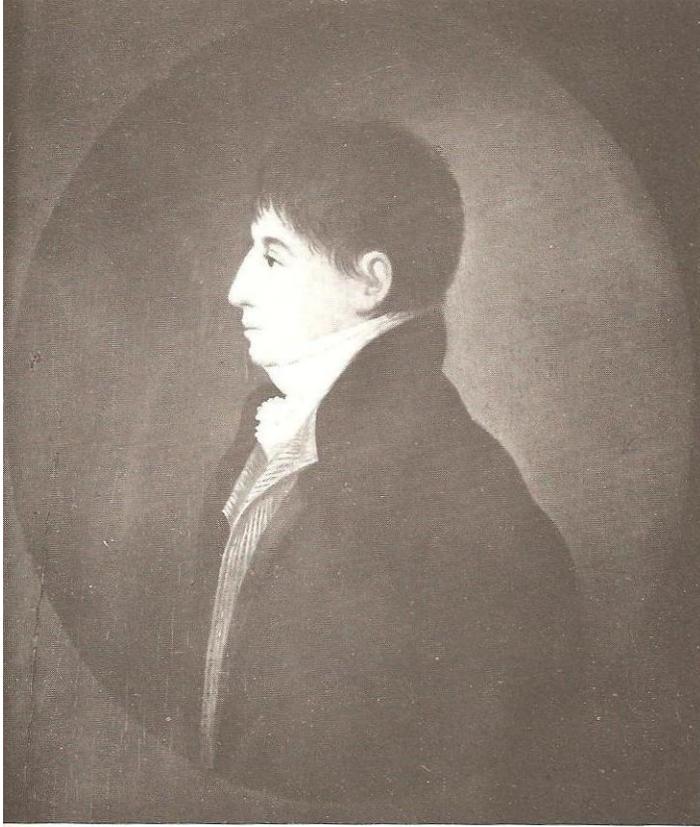


**Figure 1.** Anna Katharina Emmerick. Painting by Anna Maria Freifrau von Oer, 1895.

Wikimedia Commons.

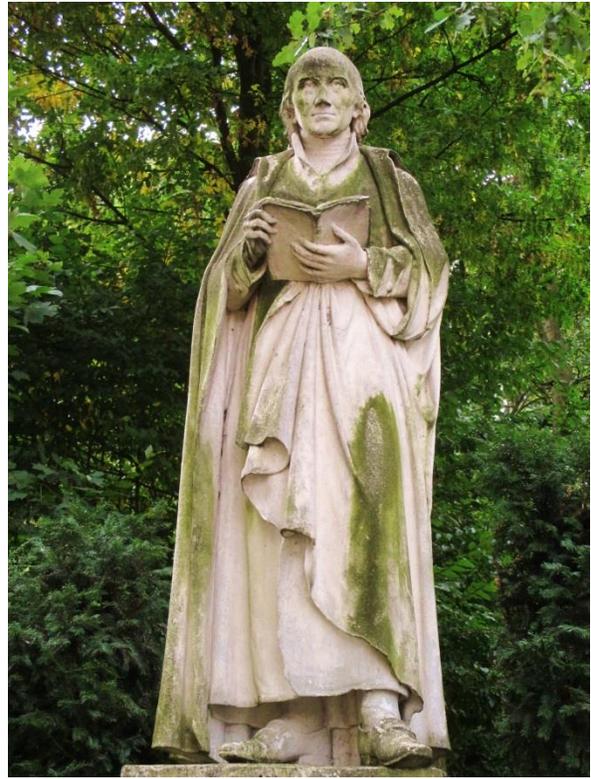
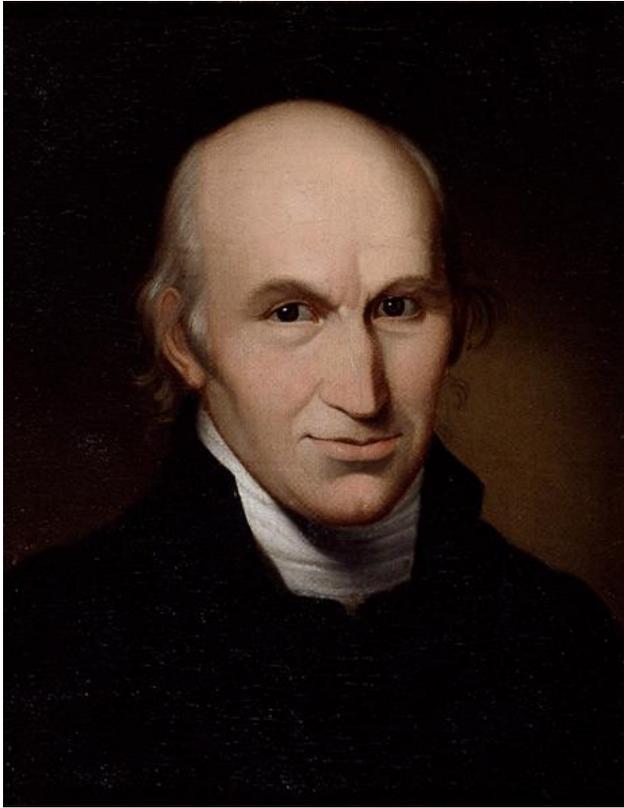
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna\\_Katharina\\_Emmerick\\_Saint\\_Visionary.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna_Katharina_Emmerick_Saint_Visionary.jpg)

(Accessed June 02, 2018)



Franz Wilhelm Wesener  
\* 1782 † 1832  
Dr. med., Arzt in Dülmen  
(X f) s. S. 133

**Figure 2.** Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener. Frontispiece to P. Winfried Hümpfner OESA, ed., *Tagebuch des Dr. Med. Franz Wilhelm Wesener über die Augustinerin Anna Katharina Emmerick unter Beifügung anderer auf sie bezüglicher Briefe und Akten* (Würzburg: St. Rita Verlag, 1926).



**Figures 3 and 4.** Left: Father Bernhard Overberg. Painting by Johann Christoph Rincklake, Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster. Right: Statue of Bernhard Overberg outside the Überwasserkirche, Münster, 2013. Photo by the author.



**Figure 5.** Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg. Lithograph by Josef Lanzedelly d. Ä. Photo by Peter Geymayer. Wikimedia Commons.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Friedrich\\_Leopold\\_Stolberg\\_Litho.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Friedrich_Leopold_Stolberg_Litho.jpg) (accessed June 2, 2018).



**Figure 6.** Former cloister of Agnetenberg, Dülmen, later turned into apartments, in an undated photo. The main building was destroyed by Allied bombing in 1945, so that only the square tower remains today. Stadtarchiv Dülmen, [https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/index.htm](https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/index.htm) (Accessed June 02, 2018).

## CHAPTER TWO

### A BODY OF EVIDENCE: CHURCH INVESTIGATIONS OF ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK

*Introduction: "To Separate the Purely Spiritual from the Purely Physical"*

“. . . [T]he Lord, who was always so miraculous in his saints, also performs signs through them in our own times of foolishness and unbelief.” Thus began Father Bernhard Rensing’s first letter about Anna Katharina Emmerick to the Vicar General in Münster, Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering. Just two days earlier, Rensing had formally interviewed Emmerick with Drs. Krauthausen and Wesener. As Chapter One recounted, any doubts the men may have had about her were swept away by their powerful encounter with her. With tears in their eyes, they had signed a document affirming that she was a woman blessed by God. It was now Fr. Rensing’s task to forward it to the head of his diocese, and to that end he composed this attached letter. Perhaps the priest was brought to tears yet again as he put pen to paper. He was, he confessed, writing “with a deeply moved heart . . . full of religious feelings.”<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Rensing’s opening sentence made a bold claim. What was shocking was not necessarily the idea that, even in the nineteenth century, humanity was still living in an age of miracles. True, some strains of Protestantism were uncomfortable with the idea of miracles after the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> More recently, a number of Enlightenment thinkers had questioned the

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<sup>1</sup> “Mit einem tief gerührten Herzen und voll der religiösen Empfindung melde ich . . . daß der Herr, der von jeher so wunderbar in seinen Heiligen war, auch in unsern Tagen des Leichtsinnes und Unglaubens noch Zeichen an ihnen tut . . .” Bernhard Rensing to Vicar General Clemens August Droste zu Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 191.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther led a sixteenth-century “war” on saintly miracles and other alleged supernatural events, not only as often fraudulent, but also as theologically flawed attempts to found one’s faith in God on something besides Scripture alone. Luther did not, however, rule out miracles entirely, and both he and other early Lutherans spoke about God’s “natural wonders” as a reflection of his power. Philip M. Soergel, *Miracles and the Protestant Imagination: The Evangelical Wonder Book in Reformation Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 33-66. John Calvin was much less prepared to accept the possibility of miracles after the New Testament. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* he called “modern” (that is, post-biblical) miracles “sheer delusions of Satan.”

possibility of God’s hand intervening so directly in human history, though Spinoza may have been the only philosopher to rule miracles out almost entirely.<sup>3</sup> For a believing Catholic like Rensing’s addressee the Vicar General, however, God’s ability to work wonders at any time and place was, theoretically, an article of faith. The truly shocking element of Rensing’s statement was not its evocation of miracles in general, but rather its “scandalous particularity:” the claim that he had found a *specific instance* of God’s miraculous meddling in human affairs, centered not on a person of great power and learning but on a humble peasant woman in a Westphalian backwater.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this miracle took the form of stigmata, an outward sign that all could “read.” Fr. Rensing believed the message this sign conveyed was clear: not merely a general

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John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536 Edition*, trans. and ed. by Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 6. Many Protestants – Lutheran, Calvinist, and otherwise – continued to marvel at God’s power by pondering “wonders” such as astronomical events, so-called “monstrous births,” and so on. This was especially true of the first generations of Protestants who had grown up in a world suffused with Catholicism, but “popular” Protestantism remained replete with “wonders” into the era when Emmerick lived. See Soergel, *Miracles and the Protestant Imagination*; Moshe Sluhovskiy, “Calvinist Miracles and the Concept of the Miraculous in Sixteenth-Century Huguenot Thought,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1995), 5-25; Julie Crawford, *Marvelous Protestantism: Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Ted Peters, “Protestantism and the Sciences,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism*, eds. Alister E. McGrath and Darren C. Marks (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 311-314; David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Some key texts here are Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Hamburg: Heinrich Künraht, 1670), <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/989> (accessed June 02, 2018); John Locke, *A Discourse on Miracles* (London: 1701), <https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/347jlmir.html> (accessed June 02, 2018); David Hume, *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (London: A Millar, 1748), <http://www.davidhume.org/texts/ehu.html> (accessed June 2, 2018); Voltaire [François-Marie Arouet], *Questions sur les Miracles* (London: Crapart, 1769), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k122837c.texteImage> (accessed June 02, 2018); Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1793), <http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Kant,+Immanuel/Die+Religion+innerhalb+der+Grenzen+der+bloßen+Vernunft> (accessed June 02, 2018). For two conflicting views on the interpretation of Spinoza’s writings on miracles and the legacy of his thought in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, see Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 218-230; Graeme Hunter, “Spinoza on Miracles,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 56, no. 1 (Aug. 2004), 41-51.

<sup>4</sup> I am borrowing here the language of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Gerhard Kittel and his now-famous phrase “the scandal of particularity” (*das Ärgernis der Einmaligkeit*): the idea that Christianity’s most scandalous claim is that God became a historical person (of humble origin, no less) in a particular time and place. Gerhard Kittel, “The Jesus of History,” in *Mysterium Christi: Christological Studies by British and German Theologians*, eds. Gerhard Kittel, George Kennedy Allen Bell and Gustav Adolf Deissman (London: Longmans Green, 1930), 31-49. Although the precise phrase was coined relatively recently by Kittel, the same sense of scandal at the Incarnation, miracles, and other such instances of specific divine interventions in history was already present in some Reformation-era Protestant attacks on Catholicism, and later Enlightenment-era critiques of Christianity. Cathal Doherty SJ, *Maurice Blondel on the Supernatural in Human Action: Sacrament and Superstition* (Boston: Brill, 2017), 14-25.

evocation of redemption through the Cross, but a specific rebuke of the times as foolish in its faithlessness. Emmerick's stigmata, Fr. Rensing waxed lyrically, "show the strength of our holy religion in its brightest splendor[,] and will bring the frivolous to reflection and the unbelieving to a turning away from their erring ways. Truly, the Lord always chooses the weak to shame the strong, and reveals to the humble and simple the mysteries which he has kept hidden from the great and learned of this world."<sup>5</sup> Put succinctly: God was speaking to contemporary Germans through a living, bleeding saint in the town of Dülmen.

Anna Katharina Emmerick was not only a stigmatic. She was also a visionary with alleged psychic powers, a charismatic preacher, and a woman with a vocation to serve her community, particularly the poor and marginalized. Her mysticism expressed itself through a variety of physical phenomena – not just stigmata, but also strange ecstatic trances, and an apparent ability to survive almost entirely on the Eucharist. Rensing's letter would mention these other aspects of Emmerick's mysticism in passing. Her stigmata, however, was his overwhelming focus. He noted that she had been a visionary since childhood, but his letter did not recount any of her visitations from angels, visions of biblical history, or inspired spiritual pronouncements. He described her as pious, but otherwise told little of her acts of charity or her proselytization of friends and family. Rensing did, however, speak at length about "[w]hat mark[ed] her *above all* as an exceptional friend of our Savior[:] . . . the bleeding crown around her head, the wounds in her side as well as the hands and feet[,] and 2-3 crosses on her breast."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “. . . die Kraft unserer heiligen Religion in ihrem hellesten Glanze zeigen und den Leichtsinigen zum Nachdenken und den Ungläubigen zur Rückkehr von seinem Irrwege bringen. Wahrlich, der Herr wählt noch immer die Schwachen, um die Starken zu beschämen, und offenbart dem Einfältigen und Geringen Geheimnisse, die er vor dem Großen und Gelerhten dieser Welt verborgen halt.” Rensing to Droste-Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 191.

<sup>6</sup> “Was sie aber am meisten als eine vorzügliche Freundin unsers Heilandes auszeichnet, ist dieses, daß sie einen blutigen Kranz um den Kopf, die Wundmalen in der Seite, wie auch an den Händen und Füßen und auf der Brust 2-3 Kreuze hat. Diese sowohl as jene bluten öfter, jedoch diese gewöhnlich an Mittwochen und jene am Freitage, und

An attached document written by Dr. Wesener provided the Vicar General with a detailed, clinical description, worth quoting in full:

On the backs of both hands we observed the scabs of coagulated blood of the size of a two-groschen piece, [and] under these scabs the skin was sore. In the palms of both hands were similar scabs, only smaller, and the skin underneath likewise sore. We found the same scabs on the back of both feet and also in the middle of the soles of the feet. These scabs hurt when disturbed and one on the right foot had bled shortly beforehand. In the right side we saw, at around the fourth rib counting up from the bottom, a wound of about 3 inches in length, which was like scratches from a needle several times next to each other, which sometimes also bled.

On the breastbone we found similar striated scratches, which made the form of a forked cross. But directly above the navel we saw a usual cross [i.e., one with two perpendicular lines], faintly suggested by lines a half inch in breadth.

On the upper portion of the forehead we saw many dots like needle pricks, which went into the hairline on both sides. In the cloth which she wore around her forehead, we saw several bloody spots.<sup>7</sup>

On paper, the wounds did not necessarily sound so impressive. Wesener's description even acknowledged that at least some appeared to be the work of a mere needle. The woman that carried them, however, made such a powerful impression that she left Rensing and the physicians present with no doubts that they were truly stigmata, the miraculous wounds of the crucified Christ. His letter bringing them to the attention of the Vicar General therefore brimmed over with faith and confidence.

The reaction, however, of Münster's Vicar General, Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering (1773-1849), upon receiving this letter was quite different (Figure 7). As he wrote in

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zwar so stark, daß zuweilen dicke Tropfen herunterrollen." Rensing to Droste-Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 192. Emphasis added.

<sup>7</sup> "Auf dem Rücken beider Hände bemerkten wir Krusten eines geronnenen Geblütes von der Größe eines Zweigroschenstückes, unter diesen Krusten war die Haut wund. In der Fläche beider Hände waren ebensolche Blutkrusten, nur kleiner, und die Haut unter ihnen ebenfalls wund. Dieselben Blutkrusten fanden wir auf dem Rücken der Füße und so auch in der Mitte der Fußsohlen. Diese Krusten schmerzten bei der Berührung und jene am rechten Fuße hatte noch vor kurzem geblutet. In der rechten Seite sahen wir ungefähr auf der 4ten wahren Rippe, von unten gezählt, eine Wunde von etwa 3 Zoll in der Länge, als wie mit einer Nadel mehreremale neben einander geritzt, welche zuweilen bluten soll. Auf dem Brustbeine sahen wir ebensolche gertizte Striche, die ein Gabelkreuz bildeten. Eben über dem Nabel aber sahen wir ein gewöhnliches Kreuz, von blaß suggilierten halb Zoll breiten Strichen. Am oberen Teil der Stirn sahen wir viele Punkte wie Nadelstiche, die bis in die Haare auf beide Seiten gingen. In dem Tucho, welches sie um die Stirne trug sahen wir viele blutige Punkte." Wesener, investigative protocol, March 22, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 397-398.

his private notes, “I was far from seeing the matter as [Fr. Rensing] seemed to portray it . . . I suspected delusion or even fraud, as I will every time in such cases.” Until Rensing’s letter arrived, the Vicar General had heard “not a syllable” about Emmerick, but he was now dismayed to learn that she was already a topic of discussion in the streets.<sup>8</sup>

The Church in Münster’s delicate political position – and therefore his own – was certainly weighing on his mind. Over the course of his lifetime, he had seen its institutional power reach the apotheosis of a glorious rise, only to suddenly and precipitously fall. At the time of Droste-Vischering’s birth, the Prince-Bishopric of Münster had been thriving. A new Baroque palace for the Prince-Bishop was under construction, and the University of Münster had also just been founded, attracting scholars to a new center of Catholic learning (Figure 8).<sup>9</sup> Droste-Vischering and his three brothers, as members of one of Westphalia’s wealthiest noble families, were positioned to reap the rewards of this spiritual, political, and intellectual ferment. Pious and clever young men, they became members of the *Münsterscher Kreis*, the constellation of brilliant minds and influential figures that frequented the salon of Princess Amalie von Gallitzin (1748-1806) (Figure 9). Meanwhile they received tutoring from two of the earliest modern church historians, Nikolaus Bürgens and Johannes Theodor Katerkamp. In this stimulating and faith-filled environment, the Droste-Vischering brothers excelled. The eldest married to carry on the family name, while Clemens August and the other two took holy orders. They quickly rose

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<sup>8</sup> “Als ich die Anlage Nr. 1 nebst der Einlage 1a [Rensing’s letter and the attached statement signed by him, Wesener, Krauthausen, Limberg, and Lambert] erhalten hatte, war ich weit entfernt, die Sache so anzusehen, als dieselbe in jener Anlage dargestellt zu werden scheint, ich vermutete Täuschung oder gar Betrug, wie ich solches in ähnlichen Fällen jedesmal vermuten werde. Bis dahin hatte ich nicht eine Silbe davon gehört, da ich aber sah, daß die Sache schon zum Stadtgespräch in Dülmen geworden war, auch wegen der so ins Auge fallenden Dinge dachte, man würde die Wahrheit ohne große Mühe finden können, so ging ich am andern Tage, wo man mich in Dülmen noch nicht zuverlässig erwartete, hin. . .” Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, personal notes, March 1813, quoted in Hümpfner, *Tagebuch*, 13 n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Kill, “Vom alten Münster,” 106-109.

through the ranks, enjoying the benefits of being well-connected and well-educated men at the center of a lively ecclesiastical state.<sup>10</sup>

Yet within a few decades, the Prince-Bishopric of Münster would be gone forever. The resplendent new Prince-Bishop's Palace had served barely two occupants before the city was taken by Prussian General von Blücher in 1802. A year later, the final deputation of the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire (*Reichsdeputationshauptschluß*) legitimized that seizure. Napoleon's invasion dealt the final death blow to the centuries-old Prince-Bishopric in 1806. The city later passed from Prussian to French rule with the changing fortunes of war. The ancient See of Münster, meanwhile, sat vacant, and would remain so until 1820.<sup>11</sup> One Münsteraner recalled the time as one of "boundless pain and misery," when "people who hardly knew each other would fall into each other's arms to lament the common misfortune."<sup>12</sup>

Droste-Vischering's career advanced in this time of uncertainty and crisis. He proved his firm commitment to the Church's continued mission when he founded a new women's religious order in 1808, even in the midst of French occupation.<sup>13</sup> In 1810, he became Vicar General – and therefore, in the absence of a sitting bishop, *de facto* head of the church in Münster. It fell to him

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<sup>10</sup>Reinhard, *Münsterische "Familia sacra,"* 54-57.

<sup>11</sup>Kill, "alten Münster," 106-109.

<sup>12</sup>"Schmerz und Jammer grenzenlos . . . Leute, die einander kaum kannten, waren sich in die Arme gefallen, das allgemeine Unglück zu beweinen." Johann Hermann Hüffer, quoted in Kill, "alten Münster," 105.

<sup>13</sup>Droste-Vischering modeled the Genossenschaft der Barmherzigen Schwestern von der allerseligsten Jungfrau und schmerzhaften Mutter Maria, also known (in a nod to his name) as the Clemensschwestern, after the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (in German, Vincentinerinnen). An active rather than contemplative order, its sisters ministered to the poor and worked as nurses. Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg helped finance the founding of the congregation. Father Bernhard Overberg aided in the order's development as well. Today, the Clemensschwestern have twenty-six convents in Germany as well as a mission station in Rwanda. One of its members, Sr. Maria Euthymia Üffing (1914-1955), was beatified in 2001. Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering, *Über die Genossenschaften der barmherzigen Schwestern insbesondere über die Einrichtung Einer derselben, und deren Leistungen in Münster* (Münster, 1833); "Die barmherzigen Schwestern in Münster," *Salzburger Kirchenblatt*, November 25, 1858, 375; Meiwes, "Arbeiterinnen des Herrn," 90-93; "Geschichte," Barmherzige Schwestern – Clemensschwestern e.V., <<https://www.clemensschwestern.de/gemeinschaft/geschichte/>> (accessed 2 February 2018).

to defend the Church in the region against government incursions and creeping secular control.<sup>14</sup> By the time Droste-Vischering received Rensing's letter in late March 1813, the war was turning against the French, and the Prussians were marching Münster's way. The prospect of renewed Prussian rule did not, however, augur improved fortunes for Westphalia's Catholic Church. It was, in fact, the Prussians who had started the process of secularizing Münster's religious houses and other ecclesiastical properties a decade earlier. In short, as an acting diocesan leader poised between two secularizing regimes, Droste-Vischering was at the center of a very delicate situation. The security of his position and the reach of his power were subject to change at any moment. No help would be forthcoming from the Pope: Pius VII remained a prisoner in France. Now, Droste-Vischering learned he had an alleged stigmatic on his hands. The last thing the embattled Vicar General could afford was a scandal that could embarrass and weaken the Church.

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<sup>14</sup> Droste-Vischering's staunch opposition to the encroachment of secular government into Church affairs would mark the rest of his career. Weeks after Rensing's first letter to Droste-Vischering regarding Emmerick, Napoleon would appoint Count Ferdinand August von Spiegel zum Desenberg as bishop of Münster. Von Spiegel had ingratiated himself with both Prussian and French occupying forces, resulting in his appointment to a Commission overseeing faculty hiring for the University of Münster. He clashed repeatedly with Droste-Vischering, also a Commission member, and as a result von Spiegel had retreated into private life until Napoleon suddenly named him bishop. Droste-Vischering (and the pope) successfully prevented von Spiegel from taking up the bishop's seat on the grounds that he was a mere tool of the French government. When Prussia put forth its own candidate for bishop of Münster in 1815, Droste-Vischering attempted to block him as well. In 1820, he was finally forced to recognize Ferdinand Hermann Maria von Lüninck. (Von Lüninck remained in Corvey, of which he was also bishop. He fell gravely ill soon after his appointment and died in March 1825, at which time he was succeeded by Clemens August's brother, Kasper Maximilian von Droste-Vischering, as bishop of Münster.) Droste-Vischering's old rival von Spiegel would succeed in becoming Archbishop of Cologne after years of wrangling with the Prussian monarchy. When von Spiegel died in 1835, however, it was Droste-Vischering that would succeed him. It was as Archbishop of Cologne that Droste-Vischering would have his most famous run-in with the state. In 1837, he contravened Prussian law by insisting on the Church's right to demand that confessionally mixed couples promise to raise their children in the Catholic faith. His uncompromising stance led to his incarceration in Minden Fortress for sixteen months. Many Catholics reacted with outrage to the imprisonment of the "Martyr of Minden." Historians since Treitschke have seen the so-called "Cologne Troubles" (*Kölner Wirren*) episode as an important milestone in the formation of a politically conscious German Catholic community. Walter Lipgens, "Droste zu Vischering, Clemens August Freiherr von," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* vol. 4 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1959), 133; Franz Heinrich Reusch, "Spiegel zum Desenberge, Ferdinand August Graf von," in Walter Lipgens, ed., *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 35 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1893), 149-154; Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict*, 32-33; Keinemann, *Kölner Ereignis*.

The Vicar General's response to Rensing's letter was swift. Within three days he was in Dülmen, armed with a plan and accompanied by two men. The first was Fr. Bernhard Overberg, a trusted colleague and fellow alumnus of Princess Gallitzin's *Münsterscher Kreis*, whom we met in Chapter One. The second was Dr. Franz Ferdinand Druffel (1763-1857), Droste-Vischering's personal physician, another *Münsterscher Kreis* alumnus, and a professor at the University of Münster. Droste-Vischering, Overberg, and Druffel spent the next two and a half days examining and questioning Emmerick. Druffel examined her in consultation with her own physician, Peter Krauthausen. Overberg spent hours in conversation with her, learning her life story and asking about her prayers and visions. Droste-Vischering, however, remained more aloof. He was focused above all on the physical aspects of her mysticism. As he later wrote, he had come specifically to see "the remarkable manifestations that supposedly show themselves on [her] body."<sup>15</sup> Despite being in Dülmen for over two days, Droste-Vischering barely exchanged words with her.

On the afternoon of the third day, March 30, the Vicar General returned to Münster – and then sent Fr. Rensing his marching orders. In the first of what would be many letters spanning several years, Droste-Vischering instructed Rensing on how to handle the Emmerick situation. Where Rensing's letter had been all enthusiasm and credulity, Droste-Vischering's was caution and skepticism. It was his "duty" as an authority of the Church, the Vicar General wrote, to determine whether Emmerick's wounds were the result of some illness, were made by someone, or "lay outside the sphere of the natural" – a phrase far more cautious, and far less infused with traditional religious language, than Rensing's. If Emmerick was to serve as a message for the

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<sup>15</sup> The formal account of Droste-Vischering's, Overberg's and Druffel's visit, written by the Vicar General and signed by all three, opens with the unambiguous sentence: "Sonntag den 28. März 1813 gegen 5 Uhr nachmittags besuchten Unterzeichnete die Jungfer Emmerick um sich von den besonderen Erscheinungen, die sich an derselben Körper zeigen sollte, zu überzeugen." "Protokoll über Drostes, Overbergs and Druffels Besuch vom 28./29. März 1813," March 29, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 117.

times, she needed to be vetted by the standard of the times: rational, scientific investigation. Faith in miracles – or in Emmerick – should not be allowed to influence the proceedings. Instead, the order of the day was objectivity, impartiality, careful documentation, and evaluation by relevant experts.<sup>16</sup> “What one believes,” Droste-Vischering wrote, “does not enter into the matter at all, but rather only ascertaining with the greatest possible certainty: what actually is.”<sup>17</sup>

The Vicar General then laid out a strict division of labor. The examination and treatment of her body fell under the purview of Dr. Druffel, who would periodically visit from Münster, and Emmerick’s own physician, Dr. Krauthausen. Fr. Rensing and Bernhard Overberg, meanwhile, were tasked with investigating everything pertaining to her soul: her visions, prayer practices, and religious views. From now on they would be the only ones allowed to question her during her ecstatic trances. Overberg would visit several times from Münster to converse with Emmerick, but the bulk of the work would necessarily have to fall on Rensing’s shoulders as the “man on the ground” in Dülmen. Droste-Vischering instructed Rensing to visit her as often as possible, preferably every day. Furthermore, Rensing was responsible for preventing strangers and curiosity-seekers from seeing her – a task which would become increasingly onerous as word of Emmerick’s stigmata spread. Everything Rensing observed, he was to record in a daily

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<sup>16</sup> Regarding the Church’s increasing reliance on the experts, methods and language of science in its investigation of alleged mystics and other supernatural phenomena, and the more general permeability of the borders between “religious” and “scientific” approaches to questions like the connection between mind and body since the Enlightenment, see H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment: Johann Joseph Gassner and the Demons of Eighteenth-Century Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> “Das was sich an der A. K. Emmerick, jetzt wohnhaft in Dülmen, zeigt, ist von der Art, daß es Pflicht der geistlichen Obrigkeit ist von der einen Seite so viel tunlich zu ergründen: Ob die äußerlichen ungewöhnlichen Erscheinungen, als z. B. die Blutkrusten auf und in den Händen und Füßen, der Blutschweiß am Kopfe Wirkung einer Krankheit sind, oder ob solche äußerliche Erscheinungen auf eine Art entstanden sind und unterhalten werden, welche außer der Sphäre des Natürlichen liegt, oder ob solche Erscheinungen mit Fleiß hervorgebracht sind und unterhalten werden. Es kommt hier gar nicht darauf an, was man glaubt, sonder nur darauf, mit möglichster Gewißheit auszumitteln: was ist.” Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Bernhard Rensing, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 194-195.

journal, which he should send to Droste-Vischering every eight days. No one else, neither Emmerick nor even her confessor, was to know what was inside it.<sup>18</sup>

In closing, Droste-Vischering ordered that the entire matter be kept as quiet as possible. Rensing had spoken in his letter of “preaching from the rooftops” the miracles God was working through Emmerick,<sup>19</sup> but his ecclesiastical superior threw cold water on those hopes. “The more the whole story is forgotten, the less it is spoken of, the fewer visits to the invalid by those who have nothing to do with her, the better.”<sup>20</sup> If Fr. Rensing was disappointed, he dutifully kept those feelings out of his reply. “I will observe the authorities’ directives contained in these most prudent instructions punctiliously and to the letter,” he wrote. “[It is] also so right, as always in similar cases,” he continued, “to separate the purely spiritual from the purely physical, and to give over each to him whose profession concerns itself with it.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus began a three-month process, from April through June of 1813, in which the Church in Münster would seek evidence to substantiate Fr. Rensing’s claims about a living saint in Dülmen. True to the principle of “separating the spiritual from the physical,” the information-gathering proceeded along two tracks. On the one hand, Rensing and Overberg – and one other secret informant, to be discussed below – provided the Vicar General with information on

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<sup>18</sup> This journal, which covers the period from April 1 to June 26, 1813, can be found in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 3-63.

<sup>19</sup> “Bisher nötigten mich die Pflicht der Verschwiegenheit, die Schonung, welche ich der von Gott so hoch begnadigten Bescheidenheit schuldig zu sein glaubte, und die Furcht nachteiliger Folgen, diese Begebenheit, in so weit es möglich war, geheim zu halten, aber jetzt hat es Gott zugelassen, daß sie, aller von mir angewandten Behutsamkeit unerachtet, wie von den Dächern gepredigt, weit und breit bekannt geworden ist und schon viel Gutes gestiftet hat. Hiedurch fühle ich mich aufgefordert, meinen offiziellen Bericht darüber untertänig abzustatten, denn in diesen Umständen scheint es mir nicht mehr gut, die Geheimnisse des Königs aller Könige noch länger zu verbergen, sondern weit besser, daß man die Werke Gottes verkündige und Ihn dafür preise.” Bernhard Rensing to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, March 25, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 191.

<sup>20</sup> “Je mehr die ganze Geschichte in Vergessenheit gerät, je weniger davon gesprochen wird, je weniger Besuche die Kranken von solchen, die nichts bei ihr zu tun haben, erhält, je besser.” Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Bernhard Rensing, 30 March 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 195.

<sup>21</sup> “Ich werde die in dem hochgedachten Auftrage enthaltenen obrigkeitlichen Weisungen um so pünktlicher und buchstäblicher beobachten, weil sie mir dem Zweck ganz angemessen scheinen und gleichsam auf der Seele geschrieben sind, auch so recht, wie es in ähnlichen Fällen immer geschehen sollte, das rein Geistliche von dem rein Physischen trennen und jedes Fach dem übergeben, der sich seinem Berufe nach damit befassen muß.” Bernhard Rensing to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, March 31, 1813, quoted in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 195 n. 2.

Emmerick's life, religious beliefs, prayer practices, and mystical experiences, supplemented by the testimony of family and friends. All this was meant to build up a picture of Anna Katharina Emmerick's character and conduct, with an eye toward answering one simple question: was she the kind of exemplary person to be favored with such an extraordinary grace as stigmata? Or, was she the kind of person who would fake stigmata wounds, or allow someone else to create them on her body? Concurrently, Doctors Druffel and Krauthausen examined the physical aspects of Emmerick's mysticism, as well as her overall health. They observed her ecstatic states, measured her dietary intake, and – above all – tried to describe, explain, and heal her stigmata wounds. All this built up to an intensive, round-the-clock “observation” (*Bewachung*) of Emmerick on June 10-19, 1813, involving several volunteers. Vicar General von Droste-Vischering coordinated every detail of this two-track process and its culminating investigation from Münster, issuing itemized lists of directions to his various investigators and responding immediately to each report they sent.

As this chapter will recount, practically all of the Vicar-General's carefully laid plans went awry. The June 1813 *Bewachung*, in particular, utterly failed to fulfill Droste-Vischering's hopes of a Church inquiry so thorough that it would render any other investigation “totally superfluous.”<sup>22</sup> After this failure, Droste-Vischering and Rensing would both make sporadic efforts to renew an investigation of Emmerick over the years. Both, however, would ultimately give up as fruitless any attempt by the Church to regain control of the increasingly complex affair.

On a basic human level, the failure of the Church's investigation of Anna Katharina Emmerick was the result of difficult circumstances, clashing personalities, and a sort of comedy

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<sup>22</sup> “. . . unter anderm muß die geistliche Obrigkeit so vorsichtig untersuchen, daß dadurch jede andere Untersuchung ganz überflüssig, wo möglich beseitigt wird.” Droste-Vischering to Rensing, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 194.

of errors. Without the kind of institutional structures and secure power base his predecessors or his counterparts in the Papal States enjoyed, the Vicar General was forced to constantly improvise and rely on unreliable helpers. Some members of Droste-Vischering's network of investigators proved unable or unwilling to provide him the kind of objective, raw information he wanted. Some failed to show up when they were supposed to have done, or follow basic directions. Meanwhile, other people whom Droste-Vischering had deliberately left outside this network continued to interfere in the process. Furthermore, the object of all these efforts – Anna Katharina Emmerick herself – made known her complaints and concerns about her treatment, even as she dutifully submitted to the orders she was given. When she felt the demands of the Vicar General and his chief assistant, Fr. Rensing, went contrary to what she believed to be the will of God for her life, she boldly told them as much. Neither clergyman reacted well to being lectured about the divine will by a woman. Feelings hardened on all sides.

In recounting this human drama, however, this chapter will also argue that on a deeper level, the Church investigation of Emmerick also failed because of its misguided attempt “to separate the purely spiritual from the purely physical.” This principle, formulated by Droste-Vischering and thoroughly adopted by Rensing, arose partly out of the Vicar-General's suspicion from the start that Emmerick was a fraud, and therefore that a medical examination would quickly reveal her wounds to be artificial or self-inflicted.<sup>23</sup> It also, however, arose out of the need both men felt to “prove” Emmerick's mysticism, if it was authentic, using the language and methods of rational empiricism. Believing that evidence one could see, touch, and measure was the only kind the public would respect, Droste-Vischering placed overwhelming emphasis on gathering proof of this kind. All this reflected a larger, ongoing struggle by the Catholic Church

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<sup>23</sup> Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, personal notes, March 1813, quoted in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 13 n. 1.

as an institution to orient itself in a post-Reformation, post-Enlightenment world, and make truth-claims that would resonate in an increasingly “scientific” modern culture.<sup>24</sup>

There were two tragic consequences that arose from this separation of the spiritual and physical halves of the investigation. First, this strict division of labor made it all but impossible for any of the investigators to build up a holistic picture of Emmerick in their minds. For Emmerick as for so many mystics, interior prayer and outward practice, spiritual contemplation and physical experience were intimately connected.<sup>25</sup> It was hard for any of the investigators to understand her by looking at only one dimension of her spiritual life.

The second tragic consequence was an increasing alienation of Emmerick-as-person from Emmerick-as-body, leading the investigation to proceed in a manner that lost sight of her basic humanity. All too easily, Droste-Vischering and Rensing stopped seeing her as an individual whose soul needed to be saved and whose heart and mind deserved comfort and counsel. Instead, she became for them either a “sign” to be read in the Church’s battle for hearts and minds, or a dangerous source of potential embarrassment. Similarly, the physicians who prodded and poked her frequently lost sight of their human patient, with complex problems and needs, in their focus on the fascinating case study in front of them. Emmerick found herself unable to effectively make her voice heard or intervene against observations to which she objected. Having gained such an attentive audience, she was nonetheless increasingly frustrated in her attempts to share

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<sup>24</sup> In using here the descriptor “scientific” rather than “scientific,” I am not trying to engage in a thorough-going fundamentalist critique of rational empiricism as reductionist, à la E.F. Schumacher, *A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1977). Rather, I am using it to evoke a particular culture in a particular historical moment, in which the language and methods of science had enormous discursive power and cultural cachet, even when bastardized or misapplied. See for instance discussions of public popular science mania in late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century European literary culture in Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), esp. 11-16; Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment*, 2-10; 23; 148.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the many works on mysticism and the mind-body connection that could be cited are Thomas Cattoi and June McDaniel, eds., *Perceiving the Divine through the Human Body: Mystical Sensuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*; Elizabeth Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

ideas about the spiritual life. She ceased to be a whole person once she was under an investigator's authoritative gaze, becoming instead a mere body of evidence.

*The Spiritual Investigation of Emmerick's Conduct and Character: Walking the Line between "Heroic Virtue" and "False Holiness"*

Droste-Vischering was tied down by affairs in Münster, and was able to make only a few fleeting visits to Emmerick in person. He thus tasked a few carefully chosen individuals with gathering information. Just as deliberately, he chose *not* to involve other persons in his investigation. Droste-Vischering relied above all on Fr. Rensing, and secondarily on Fr. Overberg. They were both highly logical choices as investigators. Rensing had some familiarity with Emmerick already, and was on the scene in Dülmen. Overberg, for his part, was a longstanding friend of Droste-Vischering's, as well as a gifted listener and examiner of conscience. In turning to "men of the cloth" to investigate Emmerick, Droste-Vischering was also following a procedure typical of Church investigations. As clergymen, Rensing and Overberg were spiritually and institutionally bound to obey the Vicar General's orders. As pastors, they had some experience in examinations of conscience. Their ordination by the Church, furthermore, gave their testimonies the weight of institutional power and expertise. This was crucial if Droste-Vischering's goal was to say *authoritatively* whether Emmerick was a true mystic, a deluded and ill person, or a fraud.

There were also, however, two other obvious clergymen Droste-Vischering could have turned to for help in his investigation: Father Limberg and Father Lambert, Emmerick's closest friends and most constant companions. Limberg had been Emmerick's confessor for a decade, and while the seal of the confessional forbade him from revealing what she said to him in a

sacramental context, he also spent a great deal of time with her in casual conversation. He was a daily presence in her house. Father Lambert had likewise known Emmerick since her time in the convent, where the two spent many hours together. Since the secularization of Agnetenberg, Lambert had taken her into his rented apartment. Lambert's struggles with German would have been no obstacle: Droste-Vischering was fluent in French, and Rensing had at least some facility in the language as well. Droste-Vischering asked neither Limberg nor Lambert for their help, however, and their omission from the investigation he conducted is telling. The same intimacy with Emmerick that might have made them good sources of information, also made them the most likely suspects in conspiring to fake her stigmata. Droste-Vischering spoke of this quite frankly in his letters with Rensing, and both agreed that Lambert and Limberg would have to be completely absent from any serious investigation.<sup>26</sup>

As for Rensing and Overberg, the Vicar General gave them both very specific instructions, not only regarding the questions they should ask, but how they should react to Emmerick's answers. In particular, he commanded that they should not attribute any special

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<sup>26</sup> See for instance Rensing, journal, April 11, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 20; Droste-Vischering to Rensing, June 4, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 233. Lambert in particular was apparently a target of popular suspicion because of his French background. Rensing wrote to Droste-Vischering in a note he appended to his journal entry for April 11: "Herr Dechant Brockmann [who was visiting Dülmen to see Emmerick] erzählte mir, als wir zu Hause von der seltsamen Geschichte sprachen, in Münster wäre die Bemerkung gemacht worden, daß, wenn die Jungfer Emmerich auch keine Betrügerin wäre, die Wundmalen noch immer verdächtig blieben, solange der Herr Lambert nicht auf eine hinlänglich lange Zeit, um allen Verdacht einer künstlichen Unterhaltung derselben zu widerlegen, von ihr entfernt wäre, oder nicht solche Vorkehrungen getroffen würden, die es auf eine hinreichende Prüfungszeit moralische unmöglich machten, zur Fortdauer der Wundmale etwas beizutragen, denn es gäbe unter den französischen Geistlichen von gewöhnlichen Schlage der Emigrierten und Deportierten mehrere, die fanatisch genug wären, zu glauben, sie täten ein gutes Werk, wenn sie einer frommen und einfältigen Person behilflich wären, solche schmerzliche Erinnerungszeichen an die Leiden Jesu beständig an ihrem Leibe zu haben." Rensing went on to say that, knowing the moral character of both Lambert and Emmerick, he considered them both incapable of doing such a thing. Rensing, journal, April 11, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 20-21. Lambert was one of thousands of French clergy who made their home in the Münsterland after fleeing the French Revolution, due largely to the open invitation Droste-Vischering's predecessor as Vicar General, Franz Wilhelm Friedrich von Fürstemberg, extended them. Initially, these clergy received a generally warm welcome from Münsterlanders, but popular opinion about the French in general, clergy included, fell with the coming of the war and Napoleonic occupation. Rudolfine Freiin von Oer, "Coesfeld im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Coesfeld 1197-1997: Beiträge zu 800 Jahren städtischer Geschichte*, ed. Norbert Damberg, vol. 1 (Münster: Ardey Verlag, 1999), 219-242.

meaning or divine grace to Emmerick's wounds, trances, or visions in her presence.<sup>27</sup> This was an explicit precaution against feeding into any false pretensions to saintliness on Emmerick's part. This instruction may indicate that Droste-Vischering was aware of the institutional Church's standard methods and thinking on how to interrogate alleged stigmatics and visionaries. Mystics tried by the Office of the Inquisition often found themselves guilty not just of heresy, but also of a charge known as "false holiness:" a pretense to being especially favored by God, one that led the mystic to trespass the bounds of modesty and humility that were always observed by the truly righteous. "False holiness" might exhibit itself in the form of claims to receive special, "divine" knowledge through supernatural means; in the desire to acquire disciples; or in allowing oneself to be venerated as a living saint. Women in particular might also exhibit "false holiness" if they took on roles and responsibilities the Church had reserved for its male clergy, such as preaching or hearing confessions, insisting their special, divine favor gave them the right to do so.<sup>28</sup>

Chapter One recounted the details of Rensing and Overberg's conversations with Emmerick. Each clergyman reported to Droste-Vischering the same basic story of Emmerick's piety, self-abnegation, and acts of charity; her adolescent zeal to preach and determination to become a nun; her struggles to get along with her sisters in the convent; and her subsequent confinement to bed, inedia, and stigmata. They also reported on her visions, lifelong devotion to

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<sup>27</sup> "Auf die Wunden und Merkmale gar nicht der geringste Wert, nicht als ob das eine besondere Gnade wäre, gelegt werden. Das Verzeichnen sowohl des Vorgegangenen als des Zukünftigen geschieht am besten so, wie es einem in den Sinn kommt, ohne es in Ordnung bringen zu wollen; es sind nur ausgemachte Tatsachen zu verzeichnen und müssen dabei alle Urteile, alle Erklärungen vermieden werden. Bei den Fragen, die der Emmerick zu machen sein dürften, sind alle Suggestionen auf das sorgfältigste zu vermeiden." Droste-Vischering to Rensing, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 195.

<sup>28</sup> On Inquisition trials and "false holiness," particularly as it relates to gender, see Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618-1750* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Nora Jaffary, *False Mystics: Deviant Orthodoxy in Colonial Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 2-3, 16-17, 26-27, 29, 35-36; Wolf, *Nuns of Sant' Ambrogio*, 102-107; Hubert Wolf, ed. "Wahre" und "falsche" Heiligkeit: *Mystik, Macht, und Geschlechterrollen im Katholizismus des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2013).

the crucified Christ, and focus on redemptive suffering for her community and those in Purgatory. Both clergymen also bore witness regarding her bleeding stigmata wounds. In every significant detail, their stories matched. Was their matching story one of “false holiness?”

Neither Rensing nor Overberg thought so. The enthusiasm Rensing expressed in his first letter about Emmerick to the Vicar General did not fade as he came to know her better through the spring of 1813. As he wrote in his journal, he was simply “astounded . . . that a person with no other education and instruction than she received has such a pure, correct, and superior grasp of religion and morality.”<sup>29</sup> In a letter written to the Vicar General a year later, Rensing’s admiration for her was unchanged: he considered her “a soul angelically pure, totally subsumed in God, preoccupied only with the reverence of God and the healing of men.”<sup>30</sup> Overberg was equally convinced from his several visits to Dülmen that Emmerick was an extraordinarily pious, contemplative woman. As he wrote in 1814, anyone who met her could not help but be impressed by her “deep insight . . . the beauty of her glance beaming with joy[,] and the exhilaration evident in her entire countenance, the moment the conversation turns to the subject of God, of his goodness, of heaven, and the like.” He too, marveled that such thoughtful and pure ideas on Christianity could come from someone of so little formal learning.<sup>31</sup> Both clergymen

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<sup>29</sup> “Ich ging gerührt, erbaut und erstaunt von ihr, daß eine Person, die keine andere Erziehung und Bildung als sie genossen hat, so reine, richtige und erhabene Begriffe von Religion und Moral hat.” Rensing, journal, April 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 39.

<sup>30</sup> “. . . einer engelreichen, ganz in Gott vertieften, nur mit der Ehre Gottes und dem Heile der Menschen beschäftigten Seele.” Bernhard Rensing to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, March 15, 1814, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 252.

<sup>31</sup> The passage is worth quoting in full: “Diejenigen, welche unbekannt das erste Mal zu ihr kommen, finden sich anfangs gewöhnlich in ihrer Erwartung getäuscht; sie glaubten, etwas Außerordentliches zu finden und nehmen nichts als etwas sehr Gemeines wahr; gar nichts Hervordrängendes, nichts Großtuendes, nichts Exaltiertes, kaum ein Wort, wenn sie nicht angedredet wird, und dann auch nicht mehr als zur Antwort nötig ist. Die größte Einfalt in Worten, Mienen und Gebärden, ernste Ruhe mit Scham vermischt im Gesichte. Wenn aber die Kranke die Notwendigkeit gesetzt wird, reden zu müssen, so bewundern sie an dieser Person von geringer Herkunft, die nur vier Monate ununterbrochen zur Schule ging, ihre tiefe Einsicht und werden entzückte von der Schönheit ihres freudestrahlenden Blickes und über die Erheiterung ihres ganzen Angesichtes, sobald von Gott, von dessen Güte, vom Himmel oder dergleichen die Rede kommt.” Bernhard Overberg, unpublished essay about Anna Katharina Emmerick, n.d. [based on context, from 1814], in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 301-302.

concluded that such insight from a woman of such limited education was possible only through the aid of true divine revelations.

Droste-Vischering, however, was unsure whether Emmerick *the individual* was so pure and spotless. He admitted that her visions and spiritual pronouncements were remarkable – a “delicacy” that suggested supernatural influence, as he wrote in a letter to Count von Stolberg.<sup>32</sup> Yet according to traditional Catholic belief, the devil could sometimes grant revelations and mystical powers as well, in order to lead men astray. Emmerick herself spoke of seeing demons and being attacked by them from earliest childhood (about which, more below). Such frequent encounters with the diabolical were a potential red flag in any Church investigation.<sup>33</sup>

In the relatively recent and important work *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et de Beatorum Canonizatione*, a text Droste-Vischering would almost certainly have known, Pope Benedict XIV (r. 1740-1758) had written at length about how to tell mystics of diabolical and divine influence apart. A patron of the sciences and particularly medicine, Benedict took care to note that some apparent ecstasies were “natural” – that is, the result of disease.<sup>34</sup> If the potential mystic suffered from “paralysis, apoplexy . . . weariness, by sluggishness of the limbs, a clouding of the mind and understanding, forgetfulness of past events, paleness of face, and

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<sup>32</sup> “Unter den vielen Sachen, die zu schreiben wären, wozu aber Zeit fehlt, nur etwas, welches mir ein rechter Leckerbissen ist. Nicht daß sie Ekstasen zu haben scheint, ist mir ein Leckerbissen; wirkliche Ekstasen sind dies freilich in einem Gnade, für den es hienieden keine Wort gibt; aber es ist so außerordentlich, darum schon bedenklich, und dabei so leicht Täuschung, darum noch bedenklicher; aber was sie davon sagt, das ist der Leckerbissen, und deutet nach meinem Gefühl lebendig auf höreren Einfluß.” Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, November 14, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 244.

<sup>33</sup> See for instance Rensing, journal, May 4, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 44; Overberg, notes on visit on April 7-8, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 72; Overberg, notes on visit on April 20-23, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 86, 90-91.

<sup>34</sup> On Benedict XIV’s status as “Enlightenment Pope” and his sincere efforts to engage with modern science, see Renée Haynes, *The Philosopher King: The Humanist Pope Benedict XIV* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970); Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *Retrying Galileo, 1633-1992* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007), 126-153; Rebecca Massbarger, *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 13-14, 20, 35, 107-108.

sadness of mind,” then some kind of illness was the cause.<sup>35</sup> Regarding diabolical mystics, the warning signs were many. If a mystic’s ecstatic states were accompanied by “great contortion of the limbs, and violent movements of the body,” this could not be an act of the Holy Spirit, “for grace is in itself adapted for perfecting, not for destroying, diminishing, or violating nature and good conduct.”<sup>36</sup> It was also not a good sign if the alleged mystic “falls frequently into ecstasies in public places, where the concourse of men is greater; for it is the property of the devil to seek honour in external things, and which are visible to men.”<sup>37</sup> Above all, the diabolically-inspired mystic revealed him- or herself in seeking and enjoying the admiration of others, and in placing his or herself above the teachings and authority of the Church – that is, through “false holiness,” as defined by the Inquisition.

It followed that the divine mystic, in contrast, was revealed as genuine through his or her serenity, cheerfulness, and above all by great humility and obedience to ecclesiastical authority.<sup>38</sup>

As Benedict XIV wrote, quoting seventeenth-century Cardinal Giovanni Bona:

“There is no proof more certain of a true and supernatural ecstasy, than the harmony of his [i.e., the mystic’s] conduct with this divine gift who receives it; if he despises the world, if he hates its pomps and vanities, if he has an effectual purpose of serving God, if he thinks himself unworthy of that grace, if he makes greater progress from day to day, if, by reason of this intimate union with God, he grows in humility, self-denial, hatred of self, and in the love of God.”<sup>39</sup>

This was hardly a new idea, even when Bona wrote it a century earlier. Benedict, the so-called “Enlightened Pope,” however, took things a step further in *De Servorum Dei*. If, he argued, the genuine mystic’s supernatural gifts were always accompanied by humility, obedience, and virtue,

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<sup>35</sup> Benedict XIV [Prospero Lorenzo Lambertini], *Heroic Virtue: A Portion of the Treatise of Benedict XIV on the Beatification and Canonization of the Servants of God, Translated into English from the Original Latin*, Vol. III (London: Thomas Richardson and Son, 1801), 259.

[https://archive.org/stream/heroicvirtue03beneuoft/heroicvirtue03beneuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/heroicvirtue03beneuoft/heroicvirtue03beneuoft_djvu.txt) (accessed June 02, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue*, 261.

<sup>37</sup> Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue*, 262.

<sup>38</sup> Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue*, 262-264.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue*, 267.

and those of the false mystic by self-righteousness, ostentation, and rebelliousness, then it followed that examination of conduct should be sufficient to separate the true mystic from the false. Furthermore: if agents of the devil could also exhibit ecstasies, visions, and stigmata (albeit in a disorderly and perverse fashion), then the mere presence of mystical phenomena proved nothing about an individual's holiness.

From here Benedict made an important leap: he asserted that the virtues which accompanied true mysticism were not just pointers toward holiness, but *the point*. What made a mystic holy, and therefore worthy of elevation to sainthood, was not visions, ecstasies, or stigmata, but “heroic virtue” – a concept that has shaped the saint-making process to this day. Any mystical charisms a person enjoyed were of value solely as evidence of her inner purity, humility, and especially her obedience to the Church's authorities and teachings. In a beatification or canonization process – an investigation not unlike that undertaken of a living mystic like Emmerick – the presence or absence of mystical charisms should be held of “no account.” “Heroic virtue” was the only criterion that mattered.<sup>40</sup>

Thus did the “Enlightenment pope” shift the focus away from, perhaps even “downgrade,” the significance of mystical, supernatural charisms that were difficult to authenticate. It was the logical culmination of a centuries-long process in post-Reformation Catholicism to more rigorously “legitimize” alleged supernatural events, which Paolo Parigi has

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<sup>40</sup> “. . . no account is to be made of grace *gratis data* in the causes of the servants of God whose beatification and canonization is under discussion, although they may have been endowed with it during their lifetime. For the sentence of beatification and canonization is a sentence of holiness, innocency of life, and of heroic virtues, with which, as we have said, grace *gracis data* has nothing in common. . . The test of sanctity is not to perform miracles, but to love every one as oneself, to have true thoughts of God, and better thoughts of our neighbor than of our selves; because true virtue consists in love, not in the exhibition of a miracle.” Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue*, 92-93. The term “grace *gratis data*,” or “grace freely given,” is a theological construct which includes all graces given by God to a person for the salvation *of others*, and not necessarily of the person him- or herself, and which exist independent of that person's moral state and behavior. Grace *gratis data* is understood to include all supernatural charisms such as ecstasies, stigmata, tongues, etc., as well as the priestly power to administer the sacraments. In contrast, “grace *gratum faciens*,” or “grace of sanctification,” is a gift of grace given by God to a person to aid in that person's own salvation.

called “the rationalization of miracles.”<sup>41</sup> Without rejecting the possibility of true mysticism, Benedict provided a means for the church to carefully sidestep the challenge of “proving” supernatural events by focusing on the orthodoxy and good conduct of alleged stigmatics and visionaries like Emmerick instead. There was no greater proof that a mystical experience was authentic, Benedict made clear, than the “heroic virtue” of the mystic.<sup>42</sup> The Inquisition’s concept of “false holiness” made a similar theoretical move by suggesting that the first step one should take in vetting a stigmatic was not physically examining her wounds per se, but theologically examining her conscience and her conduct. If the alleged stigmatic proved to be more sinner than saint, then her stigmata and visions were necessarily false – for God would never bestow such divine favors on such an unworthy individual.

Did Emmerick meet the standards of conduct set out by Benedict XIV? Droste-Vischering was unsure on this point, and increasingly so as time went on. As Chapter One argued, Emmerick was obsessed with her own unworthiness, orthodox in her beliefs, and obedient to her ecclesiastical superiors; yet at the same time, she was outspoken, strong-willed, and convinced of her own divine mission to suffer for the sins of others. She managed to make the line between “heroic virtue” and “false holiness” seem incredibly fine. Meanwhile, there were there were inevitably times she fell short of the incredibly high standard of Christian perfection which both she and the investigators had set for herself. What made these ordinary human failings so troubling to Droste-Vischering, however, was their common theme: they were always an expression of frustration or resistance toward some aspect of the investigation.

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<sup>41</sup> Paolo Parigi, *The Rationalization of Miracles* (Cambridge University: Cambridge University Press, 2012). On Benedict XIV’s role in this process, see 7, 123-124.

<sup>42</sup> Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue*. For an example of Benedict XIV’s “heroic virtue” approach to saint-making in action, see Catrien Santing, “Tirami sù: Pope Benedict XIV and the Beatification of the Flying Saint Giuseppe da Copertino,” in Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham, eds., *Medicine and Religion in Enlightenment Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 79-100.

One source of constant frustration for Emmerick was the interruption of her prayer and rest by a constant stream of visitors, which she told Rensing she found “extremely bothersome (*äußerst überlässig*),” and about which she complained on a more or less daily basis.<sup>43</sup> As soon as he had first heard about her, the Vicar General had ordered that no visits from those who had nothing to do with her should be allowed.<sup>44</sup> He tasked Rensing with acting as gatekeeper to keep any curiosity-seekers and pilgrims away. Rensing performed this increasingly time-consuming task as well as he could, while still fulfilling his duties as Dülmen’s pastor. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, for example, Rensing began his day by refusing “Father von Lette, a French priest from Haltern, and two nuns from Coesfeld” entrance to Emmerick’s room in the space of a few hours. Rensing then left to lead a Lenten meditation service in the parish church. Immediately after the service’s conclusion, a Dr. Sentrup from Münster came up to Rensing and demanded to see Emmerick. So persistent was the doctor that “I had finally, because I could not get rid of this gentleman, to grant his request.”<sup>45</sup> The next day, April 10<sup>th</sup>, at 11 o’clock in the morning Rensing turned away a “man and wife . . . who had traveled for five to six hours in order to see her;” and by early afternoon had also refused entry to the “Father Prior of the former Karthaus monastery and the clergyman Herr Masius from Haltern.”<sup>46</sup> April 11<sup>th</sup> was Palm Sunday, an extremely busy day for Fr. Rensing, but in between church services and his own visits to Emmerick he turned away three more people. That same day, he also received a letter from Droste-Vischering, reiterating his order (as if Rensing needed reminding) that visits to the increasingly famous Emmerick were to be restricted as much as possible.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Rensing, journal, April 9, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 17; see also entries for April 1, p. 4; April 2, p. 7; April 4, p. 10; April 5, p. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Droste-Vischering to Rensing, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 195.

<sup>45</sup> Rensing, journal April 9, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 17.

<sup>46</sup> Rensing, journal, April 10, 1813, , in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 17-18.

<sup>47</sup> Rensing, journal April 11, 1813, , in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 18-19. The original letter from Droste-Vischering to Rensing, which Rensing refers to in his journal, is no longer extant.

Droste-Vischering, however, frequently violated his own rule by sending certain individuals – fellow members of the Westphalian nobility, physicians, and scientists – to visit Emmerick and then report back to him with their opinions. His purpose in doing so was to gain positive testimonies on Emmerick from people whose opinions he thought the greater public would especially respect on account of their social standing, great learning, or presumed freedom from bias. For example, On April 13<sup>th</sup> Droste-Vischering sent a certain Dr. Ruhfuß to Dülmen to examine Emmerick. The Vicar General chose Ruhfuß not only because he was a doctor, but specifically because he was a Protestant – and therefore, presumably, all the less likely to be impressed by a case of stigmata unless it was “objectively,” demonstrably outside the realm of nature. Emmerick was unhappy about seeing Ruhfuß, but Fr. Rensing exhorted her at length “not to refuse this request from a doctor of the Protestant faith.” In the end, she allowed the visit and he carried out his physical examination of the stigmata.

Droste-Vischering got the result he wanted from the encounter: as Rensing wrote excitedly, “As soon as I had left the room with him, he said to me: ‘What I have seen has left me astounded. One cannot think of any deception here. The religious mindset of this person, her physiognomy, pious innocence, sincere reverence for God and serene surrender to the will of the Lord is clearly apparent.’” Emmerick’s charisma had won over another unlikely convert. Her wounds, in this case as least, were also persuasive. Regarding the stigmata, Dr. Ruhfuß was unequivocal: “‘It is not at all possible to discover a natural explanation for the wounds through suggestion, induction, analogy, or whatever else a person would use to explain them. In my opinion it is supernatural.’” Ruhfuß apparently went on to publicly state his belief in the authenticity of Emmerick’s stigmata in an article or pamphlet of some kind, though this

statement has since been lost to history.<sup>48</sup> Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, whose account of his audience with Emmerick was a key source in Chapter One, was another “VIP” given a special pass from Droste-Vischering to visit Emmerick. He also not only became an admirer of her, but a public one whose account was well-known in German literary circles.

Dr. Ruhfuß and Count von Stolberg both conducted themselves respectfully during their visits to Emmerick, but others sent by the Vicar General were far less courteous. The worst of these were Frau Caroline von Romberg and Professor (Johann) Bernhard Bodde. Frau von Romberg was a VIP, indeed: her husband, Giesbert Freiherr von Romberg, was not only a member of a distinguished Westphalian noble family, but also prefect of the Ruhr Departement in the French imperial regime.<sup>49</sup> Professor Bodde, meanwhile, was a chemist, a member of the medical faculty at the University of Münster, and a very open skeptic of Emmerick’s stigmata.<sup>50</sup> If Droste-Vischering could secure from a French official’s wife and a scientist-skeptic the kind of public approval he had won from Ruhfuß and Stolberg, it would be a major victory for the Church in Münster (and for him).

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<sup>48</sup> “Gleich daraf kam auch der Herr Dr. Ruhfuß aus dem Bentheimischen . . . Erst wollte sie [Emmerick] nicht gerne ihre Einwilligung [for Ruhfuß’s visit] dazu geben; nachdem ich ihr aber die Gründe vorgestellet hatte, welche wegen ich wünschte, daß sie einem Arzte protestantischer Religion dieses Gesuch nicht abschlagen möchte, sagte sie, sie wäre mit dem zufrieden, was ich gut fände, und nun ließ ich den Herrn Doktor kommen. Sein Benehmen was äußerst bescheiden. Er ließ sich die Wunden zeigen, fragte nach allem, was ihm in diesen Umständen dienlich schien, und dankte nicht allein beim Weggehen der Kranken für ihre Gefälligkeit, sondern äußerte sich auch über diese Erscheinung auf eine Art, die seinem Wahrheitsinn Ehre machte. Sobald ich mit ihm aus dem Zimmer war, sagte er zu mir: ‘Was ich gesehen habe, setzt mich in Erstaunen. Betrug läßt sich hier nicht denken. Das sagen die religiöse Denkensart der Person, ihre Physiognomie, die fromme Einfalt, herzliche Gottesfurcht und heitere Ergebung in den Willen des Herrn so deutlich sehen läßt, und *selbst die Beschaffenheit der Wunden* [emphasis in original], letztere wenigstens dem Kenner. Das natürliche Entstehen der Wunden durch Imagination, Induktion, Analogie, und was man sonst zur Erklärung desselben brauchen wollte, zu erklären, ist nicht wohl möglich. Nach meiner Meinung ist es übernatürlich.’” Rensing, journal, April 13, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 22. See also Dr. Ruhfuß’s letter to Rensing, May 3, 1813, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 14, doc. 56, BAM.

<sup>49</sup> Walter Gronemann, “Romberg, Giesbert Christian Friedrich Freiherr von,” in *Biographien bedeutender Dortmunder: Menschen in, aus, und für Dortmund*, ed. Hans Bohrmann, vol. 1 (Dortmund: Ruhfus, 1994), 121-123.

<sup>50</sup> “Bodde, (Johann) Bernhard C.” Internet-Portal “Westfälische Geschichte,” Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe. <http://www.westfaelische-geschichte.de/per2056> (accessed June 14, 2018).

According to accounts by both Wesener and Rensing, Professor Bodde and Frau Prefect von Romberg conducted themselves rudely from the moment they arrived in Dülmen. Droste-Vischering had written Rensing ahead of time with instructions that they be allowed to see Emmerick, and in particular that Emmerick show them all her stigmata wounds, because Bodde “has much against them.”<sup>51</sup> Rensing duly ushered them in to Emmerick’s tiny room in the morning, along with the Frau Prefect’s “retinue,” which apparently consisted of several people. The visit was short, perhaps because Bodde in particular felt the whole thing to be a waste of time.<sup>52</sup> Within hours, however the party sought out Rensing to request yet another audience with Emmerick, this time staying for more than an hour. When they finally left Emmerick, who was by then exhausted,<sup>53</sup> Frau von Romberg told Fr. Rensing she and her traveling companions were now leaving for Münster. Yet at 8:45PM, just as the priest was preparing to visit an ailing parishioner, Frau Prefect von Romberg and Professor Bodde accosted him yet again, this time with Dr. Krauthausen also in tow. As Rensing wrote, they had heard from Krauthausen that Emmerick usually fell into an ecstatic trance at this hour of the night, and accordingly the party requested to once again see Emmerick “as soon as she is in faint, in order to satisfy themselves through such a visit to the already completely bothered sufferer of the working of a higher

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<sup>51</sup> Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Bernhard Rensing, June 16, 1813, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 14, doc. 47, BAM.

<sup>52</sup> Several years after the event, Prof. Bernhard Bodde would write about his visit to Emmerick in a denunciatory pamphlet, which was originally published in the Netherlands (in Dutch) but quickly translated into German and appeared in the *Hermann Zeitschrift von und für Westfalen* on April 22, 1817 (see Franz Wilhelm Wesener, letter to Bernhard Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 424). By 1818 Bodde’s work had also appeared as a standalone pamphlet which also included a reply from Fr. Rensing, to be described below: [Johann] Bernhard Bodde and Bernhard Rensing, *Bericht über die Erscheinungen bey der A.K. Emmerich, Chorschwester des aufgehobenen Klosters Agnetenberg in Dülmen von dem Herrn Medizinal-Rath Bodde, Professor der Chemie in Münster mit Entgegnungen von B.A.B. Rensing, Dech[ant] und Pfarrer in Dülmen* (Dorsten: Heß, 1818). Bodde admits in the text that his examination was relatively short, mainly because to him it was immediately obvious that the wounds were fabricated. In his response, Rensing protested that a number of other doctors (including Druffel, Wesener, Ruhfuß) had found the wounds to be genuine and could not explain with certainty what caused them; and that furthermore, Bodde’s examination was so cursory that he could not have drawn any significant conclusions from it at all. Bodde and Rensing, *Bericht über die Erscheinungen bey der A.K. Emmerich*, 19-20; 22.

<sup>53</sup> Rensing, journal, June 18, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 60.

power.” Rensing, however, refused to let them in to see her a third time, at such a late hour.<sup>54</sup> Both of them left Dülmen in a sour mood and unconvinced by Emmerick’s stigmata.

Emmerick frequently protested such visits. In cases such as Frau Prefect von Romberg and Professor Bodde, whose repeated examinations were both exhausting and unfriendly, the reasons for her objections are obvious. Emmerick also protested these visits, however, on spiritual grounds. For one thing, having to entertain callers all the time meant that she was constantly interrupted in prayer and contemplation.<sup>55</sup> More substantively, she worried that, by being the subject of such attention from so many important persons, she was being made to sin against humility and forced to act as if she was greater than she was.<sup>56</sup> “I don’t at all like my signs [stigmata wounds] to be seen,” she told Rensing, “because they have made me a reputation for special grace of which I am not worthy.”<sup>57</sup> Emmerick did not have access to the technical language of Benedict XIV’s *De Servorum Dei*, or the Inquisition’s definitions of what constituted “false holiness.” Yet in essence, she was expressing her fear that the nature of the investigation itself – specifically, its reliance on Droste-Vischering’s parade of notables, sent to see her wounds, watch her trances, and hear her visions – placed an expectation on her of “performing” the mystic’s role, almost setting herself up for committing the sin of “false holiness.” It was this, as much as their tiresomeness, which bothered Emmerick about her stream of exalted callers.

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<sup>54</sup> Bernhard Rensing to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, June 21, 1813, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 14, doc. 24, BAM. Bodde makes a great deal of this refusal and how suspicious he finds it in his pamphlet, *Bericht über die Erscheinungen bey der A.K. Emmerich*, 20.

<sup>55</sup> Rensing, journal, April 12, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 21.

<sup>56</sup> See for instance, Emmerick’s reaction to a rumored visit from Prefect von Romberg in Rensing, journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 14-15; Overberg, notes on visit of April 7-8, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 77; also Overberg, notes on visit of May 10-12, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 101-102.

<sup>57</sup> “‘Ach,’ erwiderte sie, ‘ich mag meine Zeichen nicht bloß sehen, weil sie mir einen Ruf von besonderen Gnaden gemacht haben, deren ich nicht würdig bin.’” Rensing, journal, April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 31; see also Rensing, journal, April 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 31; Rensing, journal, May 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 49.

Moreover, there were some visitors she *did* want to see – and these were precisely those who Droste-Vischering ordered Rensing to keep away from her. As Chapter One argued, Emmerick felt called to minister among the poor and simple. Giving them her clothing, her money, but most of all her time, sharing with them her ideas about the spiritual life, telling them the stories of the lives of the saints and the heroes of the Bible – this ministry had always been a central part of her life. Now, however, very few everyday Dülmeners were allowed anywhere near her. As she told Dr. Wesener, her most sympathetic listener, ““It is ever so painful to me that so many distinguished people visit me. Many poor people could find consolation and invigoration through me, but these ones do not dare try to come to me nowadays, while the prominent take it upon themselves to obtain permission without a second thought.””<sup>58</sup>

None of the Church investigators seem to have understood this. All of them lectured her, with varying degrees of severity, on her need to obediently welcome whomever the Vicar General sent her way. When Emmerick exclaimed one day that “she wanted nothing from the world, neither riches nor honor, wished for nothing more than to be hidden away and at peace,” and complained that the investigation was severely testing her patience, Overberg told her to endure and that she “must be obedient, no matter how much it cost her.”<sup>59</sup> Rensing, who saw Emmerick most frequently and knew how physically exhausted and in pain she was, had the most sympathy for her dislike of visits from strangers. He too, however, usually expected Emmerick to accept without question the decisions he made as her gatekeeper, and accept visitors which, for whatever reason, he saw fit to allow inside. He considered the sharing of her

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<sup>58</sup> ““Es ist mir recht schmerzlich, daß mich so vornehme Leute besuchen. Mancher Arme könnte bei mir Trost und Stärkung finden, aber diese heute wagen es nicht zu mir zu kommen, die Vornehmen nehmen sich aber ohne weiteres die Erlaubnis.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener, journal, May 4, 1814, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 100.

<sup>59</sup> “Sie erklärte uns . . . She verlangte nichts von der Welt weder Geld noch Ehre, sie wünsche nichts mehr als verborgen und ruhig zu sein. Und so könnte sie es nicht länger zulassen, daß man ihre Geduld so auf die Probe setzte. . . Als ich am folgenden Morgen hierüber anmerkte, dies wäre, wie mir schiene, dreist gesprochen, sie müßte doch gehorsam sein, wenn es ihr auch noch soviel kosten sollte, antwortete sie, es wäre ihr in der vorhergehenden Nacht eingegeben, sich so zu erklären.” Overberg, notes on visit of April 7-8, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 77.

“signs” and spiritual wisdom with the world paramount, more important than her own individual comfort.<sup>60</sup> Thus did the investigation, with its endless stream of formal and informal “investigators” sent by the Vicar General, make it very difficult for Emmerick to live out what she believed to be her calling as a Christian – not merely by constantly interrupting her prayer, but by making her “signs” and visions a sort of delicacy reserved for the elite, rather than a message to the poor and simple from one of their own. Rensing and Overberg appeared to genuinely care for Emmerick as an individual, but they were also sometimes so overawed by her insight, piety, and enigmatic power that they lost sight of her own desires, as well as the limits of her physical stamina.

*The Physical Investigation of Emmerick’s Stigmata: Binding Wounds and Opening Wounds*

Of course, these “signs” – that is, Emmerick’s stigmata – were the reason the entire investigation had been called into being. It was the treatment of her wounds by investigators which would elicit the most protests from Emmerick. It was these protests, in turn, which would most excite the suspicion and even anger of Vicar General Droste-Vischering. Emmerick’s stigmata were arguably the most important aspect of her mysticism for the Church investigation to understand, and it was in this area that the investigation was least successful. This failure stemmed, in part, from Droste-Vischering’s insistence on trying to separate the spiritual and physical aspects of the investigation. As physical signs with symbolic religious meaning, apparently connected with Emmerick’s inner contemplations, her stigmata required a comprehensive analytical approach.

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<sup>60</sup> See for example Rensing, journal, April 13, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 22. Also, on terminology used for Emmerick’s stigmata see below.

On a basic level, it made sense to have the various members of the investigation stick to their areas of expertise. It was also logical to have the medical aspect of the investigation proceed from a religiously neutral standpoint. Droste-Vischering and his investigators observed this physical-spiritual divide to such an extreme, however, that it actively hindered investigators from uncovering the truth about Emmerick and her stigmata. Because Droste-Vischering instructed the clergymen investigating Emmerick to leave all physical phenomena and behavior out of their reports, and the physicians likewise were ordered not to engage with Emmerick's religious life, none of them were in a position to understand or explain her wounds. Each group of investigators was allowed to focus on only part of the relevant information.

The rigidity of the investigation's physical-spiritual division, and its resulting struggle to grapple with Emmerick's stigmata reveals itself even in the language Church investigators used to describe them. Neither clergy nor physicians used the Latin terms "stigmata," or "stigmen," hardly at all.<sup>61</sup> Beyond that, commonalities between the two groups of investigators cease. The clergy involved in Emmerick's case employed a wide variety of terms, some of which were grounded in the wounds' physicality, and others which had more to do with their existence as mystical phenomena. In Rensing's letter first announcing the existence of Emmerick's stigmata to Droste-Vischering, for example, he referred to them as *Wunden* ("wounds") on one occasion, and on another as *Wundmalen*, a term which suggests more of a scar or marking as opposed to a raw, open wound.<sup>62</sup> The Vicar General's letter of instructions to Rensing, written five days later, employed a broader range of terms. Some – *Wunden*, *Blutkrusten* ("scabs"), *Merkmalen* – also described Emmerick's wounds in a physical sense. Others, such as *Erscheinungen* (lit.

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<sup>61</sup> I am frankly not sure why this is the case. *Stigma* and *stigmata* are Latin terms that can be employed in non-religious contexts and have an entirely different meaning, such as in botany, but surely in a letter or other document about the investigation of a Catholic mystic, there would be sufficient context for the intended meaning of *stigmata*, if used, to be clear.

<sup>62</sup> Rensing to Droste-Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 191-193.

“apparitions”), may have captured something of her stigmata’s spiritual essence in a way that *Wunden* failed to do, but were also so ethereal that they almost denied her stigmata’s physical reality.<sup>63</sup>

Over subsequent months, Droste-Vischering’s spiritual investigators would strikingly and consistently employ a sort of dual-speak. When Rensing or Overberg witnessed Emmerick’s body bleeding, or watched bandages, stiff with dry blood, being slowly peeled away from her raw skin, or recorded her complaints of severe physical pain, they used terms like *Wunden* and *Wundmalen*.<sup>64</sup> Otherwise, they often used *Erscheinungen*, or – Emmerick’s preferred term – *Zeichen*, “signs.”<sup>65</sup> Dr. Druffel and Dr. Krauthausen, meanwhile, predictably used *Wunden*, *Krusten*, or *Wundmalen* almost exclusively.

One of the first acts of the investigation was the binding of Emmerick’s wounds by Dr. Krauthausen and Dr. Druffel, on the Vicar General’s orders. These bandages were deliberately wound so tightly as to prevent all freedom of movement by Emmerick’s fingers and toes. This would prevent her or anyone else from tampering with her wounds without disturbing the bandages in a noticeable way. Emmerick frequently complained that she found these bandages extremely painful. Overberg, for example, wrote of one of his visits in early April: “She told us

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<sup>63</sup> Droste-Vischering to Rensing, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 194-195. *Erscheinungen* is also one of the terms that Emmerick and others use to describe her ecstatic visions, which can lead to confusion. Droste-Vischering’s use of *Erscheinungen* in this crucial first letter of instructions is clearly in reference to Emmerick’s stigmata, however, as a quotation of the passage in full shows: “Das was sich an der A.K. Emmerich, jetzt wohnhaft in Dülmen, zeigt, ist von der Art, daß es Pflicht der geistlichen Obrigkeit ist von der einen Seite so viel tünlich zu ergründen: Ob die äußerlichen ungewöhnlichen Erscheinungen, als z. B. die Blutkrusten auf und in den Händen und Füßen, der Blutschweiß am Kopfe Wirkung einer Krankheit sind, oder ob solche äußerliche Erscheinungen auf eine Art entstanden sind und unterhalten werden, welche außer der Sphäre des Natürlichen liegt, oder ob solche Erscheinungen mit Fleiß hervorgebracht sind und unterhalten werden.”

<sup>64</sup> See for example entries in Rensing’s journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, at 5, 8, 10, 16; and in Overberg’s notes, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, at 74, 78, 97.

<sup>65</sup> See for example entries in Rensing’s journal, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, at 4, 7, 10, 14, 21; and in Overberg’s notes, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, at 80-81, 97, 101. Sometimes this shift from one class of descriptive terminology to another happened within the same sentence. Rensing wrote in his journal entry for April 12, for example: “Sie [Emmerick] klagte mir, daß ihr das öftere Besehen ihrer Zeichen bald von diesem bald von jenem weit empfindlicher wäre als die Schmerzen, welche ihr ihre Wunden verursachen.” Rensing, journal, April 12, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 21.

[Overberg and Druffel] immediately upon our arrival that she had resolved not to endure the pains which the bandages made any longer than through tomorrow . . . she could no longer allow people to test her patience so. It seemed to her that this meant testing God.” Overberg let the remark pass in silence, but brought it up again the next day. He told her he found her remark impudent [*dreist*], and asked her how often she “forgot God.” Emmerick “was silent for a moment and then answered, ‘In these days (she meant, those in which she had suffered so much from the bandages) more than in a year.’”<sup>66</sup> Rensing also wrote in his journal of Emmerick’s complaint that the bandages covering her wounds were unbearable. Once again, she expressed her belief that by making her suffer in this way, the investigation’s procedures was causing her to lose patience and fall into sin. “[T]hrough conversation,” however, Rensing was able to encourage and even bring her “to declare herself willing to suffer still more, if only God would grant her enough strength to endure it without grumbling.”<sup>67</sup>

Emmerick’s frustration with the examination of her wounds was so evident that it greatly upset her longtime physician, Peter Krauthausen, who bore the brunt of these frustrations alone. His colleague and nominal fellow investigator, Dr. Druffel, was based in Münster rather than Dülmen, where he had many patients as well as responsibilities as a faculty member of the University. Druffel thus made a few visits, during which he carried out detailed investigations,

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<sup>66</sup> “Sie erklärte uns gleich bei unserer Ankunft, sie hätte sich vorgenommen, bis morgen die Schmerzen, welche die Binden machten, dann aber nicht länger zu tragen. . . . so könnte sie es nicht länger zulassen, daß man ihre Geduld so auf die Probe setzte. Es schien ihr, dies heiße Gott versuchen. Als ich am folgenden Morgen hierüber anmerkte, dies wäre, wie mir scheine, driest gesprochen, sie müßte doch gehorsam sein, wenn es ihr auch noch soviel kosten sollte, antwortete sie, es wäre ihr in der vorhergehenden Nacht eingegeben, sich so zu erklären . . . Auf meine Frage, wie oft sie wohl auf Gott vergäße, schwieg sie ein Weilchen still und antwortete dann: ‘In diesen Tagen (sie meinte die, in welchen sie wegen der Binden so viel gelitten) mehr als sonst in einem Jahre.’” Overberg, notes on visit on April 20-23, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 77-78.

<sup>67</sup> “Abends gegen 7 Uhr besuchte ich sie wieder, fand sie sehr traurig, weil sie fürchtete, die Schmerzen in den Wunden, die ihrer Aussage nach jetzt schon fast unausstehlich waren, möchten in der Nacht so stark werden, daß sie, durch das Übermaß derselben hingerissen, gegen den Gehorsam sündigte, den sie Gott und der Obrigkeit schuldig wäre. Ich beruhigte sie, so gut ich es konnte, und brachte sie durch Zureden so weit, daß sie sich willig erklärte auch noch mehr zu leiden, wenn ihr Gott nur Stärke genug verleihen würde es ohne Murren auszuhalten.” Rensing, journal, April 1, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 6.

but it was Krauthausen who necessarily took on the real work of assessing Emmerick's stigmata from a medical perspective, on a day-to-day basis. It turned out to be a heavy burden indeed. Following Droste-Vischering's detailed directions, Krauthausen observed Emmerick for several hours every day. Writing up detailed notes throughout each day, he would forward them to the Vicar General at the end of each week. As ordered, he washed and then bound her hands and feet on April 1 "in such a way that the fingers and toes had no more freedom of movement, and these bandages could not be displaced without my noticing, much less removed." Krauthausen insisted in his report that he carried out this operation "in the slowest and most delicate way," but nonetheless the process "caused the sufferer extreme pain and unrest."<sup>68</sup>

Krauthausen testified in his report that there was no sign of anyone having tried to tamper with the bandages throughout his observation period. Somehow, these bandaged wounds bled regularly and profusely, especially on Fridays. On at least one occasion, this bleeding seems to have begun spontaneously in Krauthausen's presence, though his wording on this crucial point is unclear.<sup>69</sup> Sometimes the bleeding was so dramatic that it not only completely soaked through the thick bandages, which had to be replaced, but the blood would run down her body, staining

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<sup>68</sup> "Dem gnädig mir erteilten Auftrage zufolge habe ich Unterschriebener am Donnerstage den 1. April 1813 morgens 8 Uhr der ehem. Augustinernonne A.K.E. hieselbst die bekannten blutkrustigen Stellen an beiden Händen und Füßen wie auch am Kopfe mit warm[em] Wasser rein abgewaschen und gleich demnach dergestalten mit Binden umwickelt, daß die Finger und Zehen keine freie Bewegung mehr haben und daß dieser Verband, ohne nicht von mir bemerkt werden zu können, weder verschoben, noch viel weniger abgenommen werden kann. Jetzt gesagtes Abwaschen (obschon es auf die langsamste und lindeste Art mit einem feinen Schwam geschehen) und das Umwickeln hat der Leidenden die empfindlichsten Schmerzen und Unruhe, die ungefähr 24 Studnen angehalten haben, verursacht." Peter Krauthausen, first report to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 136.

<sup>69</sup> See for example Krauthausen's description of Emmerick's bleeding on Friday, April 2, 1813: "An diesem Nachmittag hatte sie am Kopf so geblutet, daß am Abende nicht nur allein ihr Kopftuch an verschiedenen Stellen davon durchnässet, sondern auch zugleich über ihr Angesicht bis auf die Brust herab getröpfelt war, auch ebenfalls auf den Rücken beider Füße durch die Binden gedrungen. Das Blut am Kopf und im Angesicht habe ich sofort abgewaschen; aber wegen der unzähligen Pünktchen, die sich am Kopfe befinden, wodurch das Blut sich ergießet, und weil die Stirne allzusehr mit Blut bedeckt war, konnte ich nicht sehen, noch unterscheiden, ob es allen oder nur aus einigen und aus welchen Pünktchen es hervorgequollen war." It is clear from the end of the passage that the bleeding from Emmerick's forehead, at least, was still actively occurring in Dr. Krauthausen's presence; but the beginning of the passage is vague enough to make it unclear whether he came upon a bleeding in progress or witnessed the start of it. Krauthausen, first report to Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 137.

her sheets and bedclothes. Whenever Krauthausen replaced the bandages, he found the wounds exactly the same as they had appeared at the beginning of April, with no signs of healing.<sup>70</sup>

This was absolutely invaluable evidence – but it came at a great personal price. Again and again, Krauthausen reported Emmerick’s complaints of severe pain because of the bandages. When Krauthausen changed them on April 4, they were “so strongly stuck together with blood and so stuck to each wound that it took me a long time to soften and loosen them, and (worst of all) despite this effort the patient had to endure great pains.”<sup>71</sup> A note of sympathy is apparent in this early entry by Krauthausen, but as Emmerick made the same complaint over and over, Krauthausen’s notes about it became more coldly matter-of-fact. On the next day he wrote: “In the early morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> the bandages on both hands and feet were once again soaked through and the patient complained of great pain. As the pain had not lessened by 5 in the afternoon and the blood had soaked still more through the bandages, and as the sufferer bid me remove the bandages as she could not stand the pain anymore, I did so,” washing them and immediately binding them up as before.<sup>72</sup> On the 6<sup>th</sup>: “Patient complained not only of great pain in her hands and feet but also of burning and pain in her breast and head.”<sup>73</sup> On the 7<sup>th</sup>: “Patient greatly desired that I remove the bandages that . . . I had yesterday placed on her hands and feet, for she could no longer endure the pain suffered in the same; this however I have not done, because it

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<sup>70</sup> Krauthausen, reports to Droste-Vischering, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 136-140.

<sup>71</sup> “Sie [the bandages] waren alle so stark von dem durchdringenden Blut auf einander und auf jede Wunde dergestalt geklebt, daß ich eine geraume Zeit, um sie mit lauwarm Wasser zu erweichen und losmachen zu können, habe anwenden und nebst diesem (was noch das Schlimmste war) der Patientin große Schmerzen habe verursachen müssen.” Krauthausen, first report to Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 138.

<sup>72</sup> “Den 5ten morgens frühe waren die Binden an beiden Händen und Füßen schon wiederum mit Blut durchnäßt und Patientin klagte annoch über große Schmerzen an diesen Teilen. Da nun nachmittags um 5 Uhr die Schmerzen noch nichts nachgelassen hatten und das Blut noch mehr durch die Binden gedrungen war, auch die Leidende mit dem Bedeuten, sie könne die Schmerzen nicht mehr aushalten, mich bat, ich möchte doch die Binden und die aufgelegten Pflaster wieder abnehmen, so habe ich solches getan, dann sofort die Wunden von dem darin enthaltenen Geblüte gereinigt und wiederum neue Binden so wie vorher, jedoch ohne Pflaster appliziert.” Krauthausen, first report to Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 139.

<sup>73</sup> “Patientin klagte nicht nur allein über noch größere Schmerzen an den Händen und Füßen, sondern auch zugleich über Brennen und Schmerzen in der Brust und am Kopfe.” Krauthausen, first report to Droste-Vischering, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 139.

contradicts the orders I have received, to which instructions of conduct I am subserviently obedient.”<sup>74</sup>

Krauthausen’s clinical focus meant that he recorded no details of his personal interactions with Emmerick. The litany of repeated complaints and the defensive reference to his orders, however, allows one to sense the growing tension between Krauthausen and Emmerick, whom he at first referred to as “the sufferer” [*die Leidende*] but soon denoted merely as “Patient” [*die Patientin*]. Moreover, Rensing noted in his journal in late April: “She bewailed to me that a short while earlier, Dr. Krauthausen was with her, made reproaches against her that she believed she did not deserve, complained severely of his charge from the high authorities, and explained to her in a very testy manner that he wanted nothing further to do with her.”<sup>75</sup> Dr. Krauthausen himself would write to the Vicar General and formally quit the investigation in a letter dated May 6, 1813. He gave as his reason his frustration with Emmerick’s lack of cooperation: “she was more resistant from day to day.”<sup>76</sup> The Church investigation thus lost its medical investigator after barely a month, long before the planned round-the-clock observation that was to take place in June.

It was not just Emmerick’s insubordination, however, that “wounded” Dr. Krauthausen so greatly. It appears that his professional pride was also wounded by interference and open criticism from his junior colleague, Franz Wilhelm Wesener. As Chapter One recounted, Dr.

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<sup>74</sup> “Patientin verlangte sehr, ich möchte die Binden von den Händen und Füßen, die ich, wie gesagt, vorgestern angelegt habe, doch abnehmen; denn sie könnte die Schmerzen, welche dieselben ihr verursachten, nicht aushalten. Ich habe e saber bis hiehin noch nicht getan, weil es gegen Hochdero Anordnung streitet; daher bitte hierüber Verhaltensunterricht mir untertänig gehorsamst aus.” Krauthausen, first report to Droste-Vischering, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 139-140.

<sup>75</sup> “Sie klagte mir, daß kurz vorhin der Dr. Krauthausen bei ihr gewesen, ihr Vorwürfe, die sie nicht verdient zu haben glaubte, gemacht, sich über seine Aufträge von hoher Obrigkeit sehr beschwert und ihr auf eine recht empfindliche Art erklärt hätte, daß er mit ihrer Sache nichts weiter zu tun haben wollte.” Rensing, journal, April 28, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 35.

<sup>76</sup> “Über meine, bei ihr vorgenommenen Untersuchungen, Beobachtungen und Bemerkungen wurde sie von Tag zu Tag widerwilliger.” Dr. Peter Krauthausen to Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, May 6, 1813, quoted by Hümpfner in *Akten*, 36 n.1.

Wesener had organized the first “investigation” of Emmerick, carried out by himself, Krauthausen, and Rensing, on March 22, 1813. Wesener, the convinced skeptic, had emerged from that experience a fervent believer. Nearly every day since then, Wesener had been visiting Emmerick, often multiple times a day, and sometimes for hours at a time, and recording all that he saw and heard in a journal – and doing all this on his own initiative, unasked. Meanwhile, Dr. Krauthausen was observing Emmerick, recording notes on her condition, and binding her wounds on the orders of the Vicar General. Inevitably, the two doctors – from two generations, born thirty-two years apart – were in close contact. One had a clear brief to carry out specific observations on *his* patient; the other did not.

In his journal, Wesener wrote that he was visiting Emmerick “out of purely pious motives.”<sup>77</sup> Yet inevitably, as a physician he took great interest in her health, as well as Krauthausen’s care – and Wesener did not at all like what he saw. The younger physician was quite frankly horrified at the way Krauthausen was binding Emmerick’s wounds, without the use of any salve, and without allowing any movement in her extremities. Even after these bandages became completely soaked through with blood – which happened frequently, as Emmerick’s stigmata were bleeding as often as four times a week during this period – they would routinely be left unchanged for several days (see Chapter Three, Table 1). As a result, by the time Krauthausen did remove them, they had become stuck to her skin, and any scabbing over her wounds that had managed to form would be torn away. Such a method may have guarded against attempts to fake her stigmata, but it was also guaranteed to cause Emmerick a great deal of pain. Furthermore, Wesener believed (quite reasonably) that this type of binding

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<sup>77</sup> “Dienstag, den 23. März des Abends, ein Viertel nach neun Uhr begab ich aus purem frommen Antriege zu der gottseligen Jungfrau Anna Katharina Emmerich um Gottes Wunder an dieser frommen Person anzubeten.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813,” in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 3.

would not contribute to healing Emmerick's stigmata wounds, but actually prevent them from doing so.<sup>78</sup>

This second criticism touched on a crucial, secret aspect of Krauthausen's brief. In his instructions to Rensing and Overberg, the Vicar General told them to try and preserve the fiction that Emmerick was not under any sort of investigation. This would allegedly calm her nerves and help ensure her cooperation. Rensing and Overberg were to explain away all the fuss around Emmerick by telling her that its sole aim was to "heal" her – that is, to heal her stigmata wounds. As Droste-Vischering wrote to Fr. Rensing:

In regards to the physical, [you, Rensing] hereby are charged with the task of telling Emmerick: out of obedience to the Church authorities she must allow whatever Herr Krauthausen deems necessary for the healing of her body to take place. Above all Emmerick must be as little aware as possible that one wishes to investigate her. The more the whole thing is handled so that E. naturally comes to believe that one has nothing other than her healing is in mind, the better.<sup>79</sup>

Droste-Vischering also wrote this fiction to Emmerick's friend Clara Söntgen, who was visiting Emmerick on a regular basis. Fr. Rensing was tightly restricting visits to her friend and doctors were examining her, the Vicar General explained, because he had ordered "a very serious attempt to heal E."<sup>80</sup>

In reality, however, the words "heal," "cure," or any variations of the same appeared nowhere in the Vicar General's detailed, itemized list of instructions to Dr. Krauthausen. Instead,

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<sup>78</sup> Wesener said as much to Droste-Vischering, Druffel, and Overberg during their visit to Dülmen on April 7, 1813, as recorded in his journal entry for that day: *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 24.

<sup>79</sup> "In Hinsicht des Körperlichen erhält der Herr Dechant hiermit den Auftrag, der Emmerick zu sagen: Aus Gehorsam gegen die geistliche Obrigkeit habe sie sich alles gefallen zu lassen, was der Herr Krauthausen zur Heilung ihres Körpers vorzunehmen gut finden werde. Überhaupt muß die Emmerick so wenig wie möglich davon merken, daß man untersuchen will. Je mehr die ganze Sache so behandelt wird, daß die E. natürlicherweise glauben muß, man habe keine andere Absicht als die ihrer Heilung, je besser." Droste-Vischering to Rensing, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 194-195; see also Overberg, notes on visit of April 20-23, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 79.

<sup>80</sup> "Man wird jetzt ernstlich die Heilung der E. versuchen und die Besuche werden einer von mir an den Herrn Dechant erlassenen Verfügung zufolge sehr gemindert werden . . ." Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Clara Söntgen, March 31, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 156.

Droste-Vischering instructed the physician “to arrange the bandages on the hands and feet so that the fingers and toes have no freedom of movement, and that after eight days the bandages may be replaced.”<sup>81</sup> In short, the high Churchman had given Dr. Krauthausen a task no doctor would envy, one which arguably violated the historic ethical principle that a physician should do no harm. Krauthausen was not in Emmerick’s room, hour after hour, day after day, to heal; rather, his role was more akin to a police warden, observing Emmerick’s bandages as well as her wounds with his professional eye to make sure that they were real wounds, bleeding real blood, and that no one had tampered with them. His patient, however, was led to believe the exact opposite was the case – and so, too, apparently, was his junior colleague, Franz Wilhelm Wesener. In April he let his disapproval be known in a public, barely civil discussion with the General Vicar himself, Dr. Druffel, and Fr. Overberg, one which Krauthausen would certainly have heard about. Having his competency and decency challenged by a much younger colleague in a small town like Dülmen would also, no doubt, have been “wounding.”

Dr. Wesener did not stop there. He decided that, because Emmerick’s protests of extreme pain had brought about no change in her care, it was his duty as a Christian, a physician, and a friend to be her advocate. When it became clear that his oral protest had made no difference, he took up his pen and wrote the Vicar General a passionate letter. In its opening lines he apologized for having spoken so animatedly to high Churchman “in a weak moment when my heart held my reason captive.” Respectfully, he asked to speak to Droste-Vischering, “my shepherd, straight from the heart as a child speaks to his father.”<sup>82</sup> Wesener then clearly laid out

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<sup>81</sup> The instructions regarding Emmerick’s stigmata wounds in Droste-Vischering’s letter to Dr. Krauthausen read in full: “Die Wunden müßten nach Abrede mit dem Herrn Medizinal-Rat von Druffel mit warmem Wasser gewaschen werden. Sie werden sich der Abrede erinnern, den Verband um Hände und Füße so einzurichten, daß die Finger und Zehen keine freie Bewegung haben möchten, und daß nach acht Tagen der Verband erneuert werden möge.” Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Dr. Peter Krauthausen, March 30, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 135.

<sup>82</sup> “Hochwürdiger Herr Generalvikar! Verzeihen Sie, daß ich in einem schwachen Augenblicke, wo das Herz den Verstand gefangen nahm, mir Äußerungen gegen Sie erlaubt, die vielleicht Ihre Würde beleidigen . . . Nun erlauben

his case against Krauthausen's treatment. His older colleague's practice of wrapping Emmerick's hands and feet in tight, dry bandages was "against all rule and method [*wider alle Kunst und Regel*], and rather than heal the wounds, ma[de] them extremely sore. For no wound doctor would lay . . . a dry bandage on a dry abscess and let it lie for 8 days or even [just] 2 days. . . ." The bandages, furthermore, were "far too tight," and this tightness clearly served no medical purpose.<sup>83</sup> All this forced Dr. Wesener to conclude that Dr. Krauthausen had forgotten his sacred duty to heal and alleviate pain, rather than cause it: "he has altogether lost sight of his beautiful purpose as a physician."<sup>84</sup>

When Emmerick complained repeatedly to Krauthausen about how painful his bandages were, her caregiver ultimately responded with anger and frustration. Because Krauthausen's records on Emmerick are so clinical and sparse, it is impossible to reconstruct with certainty the road that led Dr. Krauthausen to such a reaction. Reading the surviving documents over two hundred years later, it can be hard to understand how Krauthausen, both as a healer by vocation and also as a human being, could react to Emmerick's pain with anger rather than understanding. Perhaps he was simply tired of treating Emmerick, a person of frequent illnesses and apparently great sensitivity to pain, after so many years. Perhaps he had come to see her as something of a hypochondriac.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps his frustration was an expression of his secret guilt at having accepted

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Sie aber, daß ich mit Ihnen, meinem Oberhirten recht aus dem Herzen wie ein Kind zum Vater spreche." Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Celmens August von Droste-Vischering, June 22, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 404-405.  
<sup>83</sup> "Hierauf verband mein Herr Kollege Krauthausen aus Auftrag von Herrn Druffel die Wunden; aber er verband sie wider alle Kunst und Regel und nicht um die Wunden zu heilen, sondern um sie erst recht schlimm zu machen. Denn kein Wundarzt wird auf ein trockenes Geschwür (und anders können wer es nach unserer Kunst nicht nehmen) einen trockenen Verband anliegen und ihn 8 Tage oder auch nur 2 Tage liegen lassen . . . Und endlich würde nur der Roheste das Digestiv gewählt haben, womit man ihr zum dritten Male die Wunde der Hand verband, weil es viel zu reizend und keine zweckmäßige Verbindung war." Wesener to Droste-Vischering, June 22, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 405-406.

<sup>84</sup> "Darauf muß ich aber dienen, daß er ganz und gar seinen schönen Zweck als Arzt aus den Augen gesetzt . . ." Wesener to Droste-Vischering, June 22, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 406.

<sup>85</sup> At part of the Chuch investigation process, Dr. Krauthausen wrote a detailed medical history of Emmerick for Droste-Vischering that went back to 1802. In it, he described a patient whom he had treated for an astonishing variety of ailments, from coughs, colds, fevers, and headaches to irregular menstruation, severe abdominal cramping

such a task from the Vicar General. All these possibilities are nothing more than possibilities, and with so few clues to Krauthausen's personality and character, a historian cannot begin to pronounce with confidence that one explanation or another correctly captures the feelings and motivations of a man who lived and died two centuries ago. Given his cooperation in binding Emmerick's wounds in a way he would have known to be painful and untherapeutic, however; and furthermore, given his continuing to do so despite multiple requests from his patient to stop, it does seem possible as a historian to say this: in his focus on carrying out the physical observations he had been ordered to perform, Dr. Krauthausen failed to sufficiently regard the human needs, feelings, and dignity of his patient.

Once Dr. Krauthausen washed his hands of the investigation, the Vicar General no longer had a Dülmen-based physician on whom he felt he could rely. He did, however, have one more source of information about Emmerick's physical *and* spiritual life: his secret informant, Clara Söntgen.

### *The Secret Informant*

Clara Söntgen was Emmerick's closest female friend. The two first met over a decade earlier, when Emmerick was struggling to join a convent. Unable to pay the dowry religious houses demanded of their postulants, Emmerick decided to pursue an alternative route by learning a skill that was much in demand in religious houses: playing the organ. Accordingly,

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and constipation, "rheumatic pains," loss of appetite, exhaustion, weakness, nausea, and vomiting. Towards the end of this litany of ailments, Krauthausen interjects with a comment on how frequently ineffective his treatments were at providing relief from pain, much less reversal of symptoms : "Gegen alle hier oben bemerkte Krankheiten und Zufälle sind sehr viele, und zwar einem jeden Falle anpassende Arzneimittel teils mit Vorteil, und teils aber auch fruchtlos angewandt werden." At the close of the medical history, Krauthausen noted that because of Emmerick's inability to keep down food or medicine, practically the only treatment he was able to offer his patient at this point was drops of tinctured opium. Peter Krauthausen, "Bemerkungen der Krankheiten und Zufälle, womit die Jungfer Anna Catharina Emmerich seut ihrer Gegenwart hieselbst in Dülmen behaftet gewesen ist," April 25, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 400-403.

she sought out the Church organist in her hometown of Coesfeld, a certain Herr Söntgen. She almost immediately became intimate friends with his daughter Clara, and awakened in her a desire to join a convent as well.

Emmerick's plan to learn the organ from Söntgen, however, never came to fruition. As she explained to Overberg and Wesener, it was immediately apparent to her that the Söntgens were in desperate financial straits. As always, Emmerick placed her devotion to the needy before her own well-being. She gave them all of her meager savings, and worked full-time for them as their maid in exchange for a shared bed with Clara and *very* meager board. There was simply no time in her grueling workday for music lessons. Herr Söntgen, however, was grateful for the salutary affect Emmerick had on his daughter Clara by preaching to her about the Catholic faith and good morals. He therefore promised Emmerick that he would do all he could to see her and Clara both accepted by a convent.

It was Clara's skill as an organist, as well as her ability to teach school, that would provide him the leverage he needed. In 1802, he helped Clara petition for entry to Agnetenberg convent. Given her ability to earn her keep as a schoolmistress as well as play the organ, the financially-strapped convent agreed to waive Clara's dowry requirement – and then Herr Söntgen played a final trump card. He insisted Agnetenberg could only have his daughter if they accepted Emmerick as well. Reluctantly, the convent agreed to take in the two charity cases.<sup>86</sup> Emmerick's account of these events is corroborated by a number of other documents, including Agnetenberg's records, Rensing's interviews of the other nuns, and civic tax rolls from the period that show the extent of the Söntgen family's debts.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Wesener, journal, May 27, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 46; Bernhard Overberg, notes, April 20-23, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 84.

<sup>87</sup> Documents cited in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 84 n.4; 159, n. 1

Thus was the nature of Emmerick's longstanding relationship with Clara Söntgen. Unbeknownst to Emmerick or anyone in her immediate circle, Söntgen also had a relationship with Droste-Vischering: one formed in the intimacy of the confessional. In 1808, when Söntgen was still a nun at Agnetenberg and earning her keep at the convent by teaching, she went for some time (exactly how long is not clear) to learn pedagogy from Fr. Overberg, who as previously mentioned was a great educational reformer. During her time in Münster, it was Droste-Vischering that served as Söntgen's confessor. In that capacity, he must have heard her speak about her relationship with Emmerick, because when he learned of the latter's stigmata, his connection with Söntgen immediately leapt to mind.

During Droste-Vischering's visit to Dülmen, while Overberg and Druffel were busy interrogating Emmerick, the Vicar General stole away to meet secretly with Söntgen. "I have orally sought from the schoolmistress Söntgen a report on the life of Emmerick," he would later write in his notes, "and I commanded her to keep the strictest silence – [Rensing] knows nothing of it, and neither he nor anyone else should know anything about it – so that the truth may reveal itself that much more clearly through [collecting] several reports that are independent of each other."<sup>88</sup> In case he had not made the point clearly enough during their personal meeting, the Vicar General also wrote Söntgen a detailed letter of instructions immediately upon returning to Münster, on March 31, 1813. Droste-Vischering instructed Söntgen to write her thoughts down "one thing after another, just as they come to you," rather than trying to organize them, and to

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<sup>88</sup> "Die Schullehrerin Söntgen habe ich mündlich um einen Bericht über das Leben der Emmerick ersucht, und ihr strengste Verschwiegenheit empfohlen, - der Dechant weiß davon nichts, und soll weder er noch irgend jemand etwas davon wissen – damit durch mehrere von einander ganz unabhängige Berichte die Wahrheit soviel klarer sich zeigte." Droste-Vischering, personal notes, March 31, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 155 n.2.

record any conversations she had with Emmerick as soon afterward as possible, “for the memory is not true for long.”<sup>89</sup>

As in his instructions to his other investigators, Rensing and Overberg, he explained that he was interested in the unvarnished, unedited truth, without commentary or analysis.<sup>90</sup> In one striking respect, however, Söntgen’s mandate from the Vicar General differed from that of the two clergymen. Droste-Vischering told Rensing and Overberg to concentrate on evaluating Emmerick’s spiritual state. They were to question her firmly about her stigmata, but by no means attempt to explain or examine them, leaving investigation of the physical phenomena of her mysticism to the expertise of Dr. Krauthausen. Söntgen, however, the Vicar General “commanded” to write down “everything you know with certainty that has anything to do with Anna Katharina Emmerick, from the time when you became acquainted with her (or even earlier) up to the present, *regarding her external body as well as her soul* [emphasis added].”<sup>91</sup>

Clara Söntgen enthusiastically fulfilled her secret mission from the Vicar General. In a string of gossipy letters, she gave him her own account of Emmerick’s life. Its broadest strokes corroborated the testimony gleaned by Rensing and Overberg – the tales of Emmerick’s early and enthusiastic sense of religious vocation, her frequent visions, her penchant for asceticism and long hours of solitary prayer, her struggles to get along in the convent, and finally the exposure

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<sup>89</sup> “. . . aufzuschreiben, was Sie mit Sicherheit wissen . . . insofern Sie es sich erinnern und wie es Ihnen einfällt; daß Sie sich nicht quälen, es in Ordnung aufzuschreiben; mir ist es lieber, wenn sie so, wie es Ihnen eins nach dem anderen einfällt, gleich hinschreiben . . . Wenn Sie nun bei Ihren Besuchen und Gesprächen etwas bemerken, welches sich am Körper oder in der Seele der E. zuträgt, so bitte ich ihr mir von *Zeit zu Zeit* solches mitzuteilen, aber immer sobald Sie zu Hause kommen, womöglich, es aufzuschreiben; denn das Gedächtnis ist nicht immer lange gehörig treu.” Droste-Vischering to Clara Söntgen, March 31, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 155-156.

<sup>90</sup> “Wo Si emir erzählen, was die E. gesagt hat, wünsche ic soviel tunlich die Worte der E., wo Sie Tatsachen oder Begebenheiten erzählen, nichts als diese, ohne Anmerkungen, ohne Erklärungen oder Urteile und Meinungen, obgleich mit allen Umständen, zu wissen.” Droste-Vischering to Clara Söntgen, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 156.

<sup>91</sup> “Ich schreibe Ihnen meiner geistlichen Tochter . . . als Ihre geistliche Obrigkeit ein für allemal Ihnen ernstlich und noch einmal zu befehlen: 1. Aufzuschreiben, was Sie mit Sicherheit wissen, daß es sich mit der Anna Katharina Emmerick von der Zeit an, wo Sie mit ihr bekannt geworden sind (oder auch noch früher), bis jetzt, sowohl am Äußern ihres Körpers als mit ihrer Seele zugetragen hat.” Droste-Vischering to Clara Söntgen, March 31, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 155.

of her stigmata. Other aspects of Söntgen's testimony conflicted with these reports, however. Some of these discrepancies were minor, explainable by the fog of memory or as the result of a different perspective on the same event. Other discrepancies were far more serious.

Tellingly, Söntgen's account of how Emmerick came to know her and her family was very different from the one Rensing and Overberg heard. According to Söntgen, Emmerick never learned to play the organ because she was hopelessly bad at it, despite Herr Söntgen's best efforts to instruct her. In Söntgen's telling, it was Emmerick and not her own family that was deeply in debt, the result of her overzealous acts of charity. Herr Söntgen then generously took Emmerick in, provided her free room and board, and helped her enter Agnetenberg purely out of the goodness of his heart.<sup>92</sup> This version of the story painted Söntgen's family in a much more flattering light. It also made Emmerick appear careless, even reckless, in having accumulated such debts. As mentioned previously, however, it is Emmerick's account which is corroborated by multiple outside sources. Thus, Söntgen started off her role as Droste-Vischering's secret informant by telling him a bold-faced lie.

As for Emmerick, Söntgen's description of her in her letters to the Vicar General was not entirely consistent, so that one cannot simply categorize Söntgen's portrait of her as positive or negative. She seems to have taken to heart Droste-Vischering's request to write "one thing after another, just as they come to you," rather than organize them into a cohesive narrative. If there was a consistent element in Söntgen's letters, it was the presence of high drama. She included many of the same basic anecdotes about Emmerick's life that Rensing and Overberg were hearing from the stigmatic directly, but Söntgen provided far more colorful details – and occasionally, far more troubling ones, too. At times, the letters seemed to describe a mystic of extraordinary supernatural power and piety, an over-the-top version of Rensing and Overberg's

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<sup>92</sup> Clara Söntgen to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 157.

already quasi-hagiographical accounts. Then again, Söntgen also included details and incidents which hinted darkly that Emmerick might be misled by the devil, perhaps to the point of making wounds on herself.

Söntgen's first report to the Vicar General, for example, began with an account of Emmerick's pious childhood identical to Rensing's and Overberg's: how as a child she attended only four months of school, but was constantly reading religious books; her diligence in taking on the hardest household chores, but also in staying up half the night to pray, outdoors, with arms outstretched; her incessant preaching on the Bible and the lives of the saints to her friends and neighbors as she grew into a young woman. At this point, however, Söntgen began to exaggerate the supernatural and ascetic aspects of Emmerick's prayer practices. According to Söntgen, when Emmerick went to pray the outdoor Stations of the Cross in Coesfeld at night, the city gates were locked, yet she was mysteriously able to surmount the high walls surrounding the town with ease. It was true that she had occasionally fallen, "but she never received a scratch [*nie Schaden gekriegt*]. Once she even fell into a basin of caustic lime without any harm."<sup>93</sup>

Supernatural forces also apparently intervened to compensate for Emmerick's reckless acts of charity. "For as long as I have known Emmerick," Söntgen wrote, "I have observed that she had great joy if she could share something with the poor. Before she entered the convent she had given away almost everything [she had] . . . she did the same then in the convent. I asked her why she did this, for she needed these things herself. 'Oh,' she said, 'I always receive more.'"

This turned out to be the case, though the means of Emmerick's remained highly mysterious.

Gold coins would appear out of nowhere outside the door to her convent cell. It seems likely that

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<sup>93</sup> "Oft ist sie Nachts aufgestanden, hat sich heimlich aus ihrem Hause geschlichen und ist mit bloßen Füßen den Kreuzweg gegangen. Ist das Tor verschlossen gewesen, so ist sie über sehr hohe Mauern gestiegen, um den Kreuzweg zu gehen. Sie ist wohl von den Mauern heruntergefallen, hat aber nie Schaden gekriegt. Sogar ist sie einmal in einem Kalkbehälter von ungelöschtem Kalk gefallen ohne Nachteil." Clara Söntgen to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 158.

Father Lambert was Emmerick's secret benefactor, as he had helped her pay other debts in the past. In Söntgen's account, however, Emmerick appears convinced that the coins are of miraculous origin.<sup>94</sup>

As for her asceticism, Emmerick had told Rensing and Overberg that she used to wear a hair shirt and sleep on boards, but stopped these practices when her confessor forbade her from continuing them. Söntgen, however, claimed that Emmerick indulged in much more extreme punishments of the flesh. While they were sharing a bed together in her family house, Söntgen observed Emmerick wearing "a hard, sharply twisted cilice with many knots around her naked body, and so tight that it often became engorged in her swollen body." Her confessor, upon discovering the cilice, took it away; "but she [Emmerick] said that, as it was forbidden to her, she felt herself the sensation of a red band around her body." The exact phrasing here is odd, and Söntgen uses a verb, "verspüren," which can mean "to have the urge to do something." Depending on how one translates the phrase, Emmerick either felt a sensation of the cilice biting into her skin when it wasn't there, or felt the urge to experience that sensation – and, what is more, felt these things *because* it was forbidden by her confessor. Even the most generous translation of the passage made a troubling revelation: that Emmerick had a history not merely of physical self-discipline, but of self-harm.<sup>95</sup> Söntgen further confirmed this in the next sentence of her report: "Often she went out alone in the evenings, [and] when she came back I noticed that

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<sup>94</sup> Clara Söntgen to Droste-Vischering, n.d., in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 161-162.

<sup>95</sup> "Ich bemerkte, daß sie immer auf der bloßen Haut ein wollenes Hemd trug; auch hatte sie einen harten, scharf gedrehten Gürtel mit vielen Knoten um den bloßen Leib, und so fest, daß der Gürtel ihr oft um den Leib zuschwoll. Ihr Beichtvater vernahm dies und verbot ihr, dies nicht mehr zu tun. Sie hätte aber, sagte sie, wie es ihr verboten wäre, von selbst wie ein rotes Band um den Leib in der Haut verspürt." Söntgen to Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 159-160.

the skin on her whole body was lacerated as if with needles.”<sup>96</sup> In short: Söntgen testified that Emmerick had a history of wounding herself, secretly, as a spiritual practice.

If this was not troubling enough, Söntgen told the Vicar General of repeated encounters between Emmerick and apparent demonic forces. Emmerick herself had told Overberg when asked that she believed she had endured attacks by diabolical forces: “She also said in response to my question, the devil had often sought to frighten her while she was at prayer, usually through all manner of loud noises, and also through apparitions of frightening forms; one in the form of a great dog which laid its head on her shoulder[;] but God had given her the grace so that [even] in the most desperate times she was able to pray.”<sup>97</sup> Once, Emmerick told Overberg, she had been in the convent reading her copy of the Augustinian rule when an unseen force knocked the book violently out of her hands. This, too, Emmerick believed to be a diabolical attack. Söntgen corroborated these stories, but also added several more. According to her, when Emmerick was staying in her family house, they had experienced all manner of poltergeist activity. Unseen beings tread the floors; all the candles in the house mysteriously went out at once; loud knocks and rattling chains kept them up at night. Söntgen even alleged that an evil force tried to smother her and Emmerick in bed with their pillows.<sup>98</sup>

Without written evidence of his thoughts on the matter, it is hard to know what the Vicar General made of all this. As a well-educated man, he may not have put much stock in these tales of chain-rattling demons and spectral dogs. Culturally, Emmerick’s life occurred in between

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<sup>96</sup> “Oft ging sie des Abends allein, wo ich, wenn sie wieder kam, bemerkte, daß die ganze Haut des Körpers [wie] mit Nadeln zerrissen war.” Söntgen to Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 160. See also Söntgen to Droste-Vischering, May 28, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 163.

<sup>97</sup> “Auch sagte sie auf mein Fragen, der Teufel hätte sie beim Beten oft zu schrecken gesucht, gewöhnlich durch allerlei Geräusch, auch durch Erscheinung fürchterlicher Gestalten; einmal in der Gestalt eines großen Hundes, der ihr den Kopf auf die Schulter gelegt, Gott hätte ihr aber die Gnade gegeben, daß sie dann am dringendsten hätte beten können, wenn der Teufel sie zu schrecken gesuchte hätte.” Overberg, notes on visit of April 7-8, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 72.

<sup>98</sup> Söntgen to Droste-Vischering, April 7, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 159-161.

events like the last witch trials on German soil in the mid-eighteenth century, and the rise of the modern spiritualist movement in the later nineteenth.<sup>99</sup> Even if he thought such claims were fanciful, however, that would suggest that Emmerick was prone to flights of imagination, something that would not reflect well on her character or claims to mystical inspiration.<sup>100</sup>

The information Droste-Vischering received from his “spiritual daughter,” then, did not exactly tally with the accounts of Rensing and Overberg. She did corroborate the two clergymen’s tales of Emmerick as a woman of deep piety; but Söntgen’s portrait of her “friend” was painted with a more melodramatic palette. In her version of events, Emmerick’s ascetic practices were more punishing, her confrontations with the devil more frightening, and her tokens of divine favor from heaven more fantastical. Söntgen also altered the story of how Emmerick came to live with her family and why she never learned to play the organ. This diverging account, which is contradicted by circumstantial evidence, not only cast the Söntgen family in a more flattering light; it also made Emmerick into a more careless, less sympathetic figure. The stories of miraculous coins reinforced this image of recklessness.

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<sup>99</sup> On witch hunts in Germany, and particularly their last gasp in the eighteenth century, see Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 222-246; Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry, and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 352-354. Also relevant in this context is the discrediting of Johann Joseph Gassner’s public exorcisms of demons by Franz Anton Mesmer in 1773-1774, a subject which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3: Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment*. For the later spiritualist movement in Germany, see Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

<sup>100</sup> Söntgen herself may have had such dismissive opinions on the matter. She is particularly hard to read on this point. On the one hand, her account of incidents like the smothering in bed seem charged with genuine fear. Yet on the other hand, Wesener wrote in his journal that Söntgen told him he was taking Emmerick far too seriously, and would only succeed in flattering her ego with his attention. Wesener was completely bewildered by the conversation, in which Söntgen also appears to confess that she was the one to let out the secret of Emmerick’s stigmata: “Am Mittage erzählte mir die Jungfer Söntgen, daß ihre Freundin ihr gleich gesagt, daß sie ihr immer versprochen, nichts von dem zu sagen, was sie von ihr gewußt. Jetzt habe sie dennoch den Schelm gespielt und habe von ihr geplaudert. Ich wunderte mich außerordentlich, indem mir die Jungfer Söntgen wirklich vor drei oder vier Tagen viele Wunder, die an ihr [Emmerick] geschehen, erzählt hatte. Sie hatte auch gesagt, daß ich mir die Sache zu sehr zu Herzen nehme, das sei nicht gut, denn wenn man den Bogen gleich zu hoch spanne, so reiße er entzwei.” Wesener, journal, March 26, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 10-11.

Cutting Emmerick down to size may have been Söntgen' goal. Perhaps she was jealous of the attention her friend was now receiving, or perhaps she simply felt her veneration was undeserved. It appears probable that Clara Söntgen was an unreliable witness, driven by a personal agenda. Whether Droste-Vischering was aware of this possibility is unclear, however. As her confessor, he had no doubt made an estimation of her character. That estimation did not stop him from choosing her as his secret informant in his quest for the truth about Emmerick. Perhaps he even chose her precisely because of her propensity to gossip, betting that she would be a goldmine of information. He took Söntgen's testimony seriously enough to exchange several letters with her throughout the busy months of 1813. What he read in her messages was not, to be sure, an outright accusation of Emmerick. Söntgen provided him with no "smoking gun" (or in this case, bloody needle). She did, however, provide just enough to fan the flames of his fears that her stigmata could be fake. The fact that, unlike Rensing or Overberg, her reports mixed together her observations of Emmerick's character with stories about her physical mystical phenomena, made her reports stand out from the others all the more.

### *The Observation of June 1813*

Bernhard Rensing, Bernhard Overberg, Peter Krauthausen, Clara Söntgen: these were the investigators that Vicar General Droste-Vischering relied on to gather information about Anna Katharina Emmerick. He tasked some of these individuals with observing the physical phenomena of Emmerick's mysticism; some he instructed to probe Emmerick's conscience, conduct, and beliefs; and to Söntgen, the most unconventional of his informants, he gave discretion to report on anything and everything that should come to her mind. In addition to these main investigators, the Vicar General sent persons whose opinions he valued (or whose good

graces he coveted) to have special access to Emmerick and report back on their impressions: Count von Stolberg, Dr. Ruhfuß, Professor Bodde, and several others. Droste-Vischering sat at the center of this elaborate “web” of information, seeking to arrive at the truth through the comparison of as many independent reports as possible. To achieve this end, he often left even his most vital helpers in the dark about what other informers in his network were doing.

By the beginning of June 1813, he had amassed a great deal of interesting information. He decided it was time to move on to what he envisioned as the final phase of the Church investigation: a round-the-clock observation of Emmerick. Droste-Vischering hoped this observation could determine once and for all whether her stigmata wounds were bleeding spontaneously without outside interference, as well as test her ability to survive without food.

The Vicar General, as usual, drew up highly detailed plans for the observation weeks in advance. In collaboration with Rensing, he sought out around two dozen volunteer observers from around the region, including multiple doctors. His plans called for an observation in which a minimum of two observers were in Emmerick’s room at all times, with no exceptions. At least one of the observers was to be a physician. These observers were to write detailed notes of everything they had seen and heard at the end of each shift. All these reports were to be forwarded on to Münster every four days. As for what they were to observe, Droste-Vischering was very clear in his instructions to Rensing: “The observation must concern itself solely with the presented facts, namely the wounds, with [Emmerick’s] waking and sleeping, with food consumed and passed through, or anything at all which may present itself as an anomaly.” The observers were *not* to concern themselves with Emmerick’s visions, ecstatic states, or prayer

practices. In fact, Droste-Vischering considered it best if they avoided conversation with her altogether.<sup>101</sup>

Rensing and the Vicar General struggled from the start to find physicians willing and able to participate in the time-consuming investigation. Eventually, they were forced to settle for medical students, and in general for younger and less accomplished men than Droste-Vischering would have liked. Hopes that Dr. Krauthausen might be persuaded to rejoin the investigation proved unfounded. Dr. Wesener was very pointedly not asked at all.<sup>102</sup> In the end, the only full physician who had agreed to participate was a certain Dr. Ringenberg from Lüdinghausen. With his assistance apparently secured, and plans in motion to have Fr. Lambert stay in another town during the observation period, the long-awaited procedure finally commenced on June 10.

Emmerick was indeed under constant watch by at least two observers from the evening of June 10 to the evening of June 19, 1813. This, however, was nearly the only part of Droste-Vischering's directions his "observers" managed to follow. The personnel chosen for the observation proved to be highly unreliable. When the starting day of the investigation arrived, Dr. Ringenberg of Lüdinghausen, the sole physician among the observers, failed to appear. Rensing, in a remarkable lapse of judgment, decided to begin the observation anyway. A few days into the process, Dr. Ringenberg still had not arrived, and there was more bad news: Rensing was astonished to learn that the observers, contrary to Droste-Vischering's directions, were not writing reports at the end of every shift. As they explained to what must have been a

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<sup>101</sup> Es versteht sich indessen, daß die Beobachter sich dabei höchst schonend betragen müssen; zu dieser Schonung gehöret auch, daß mit der Patientin so wenig wie möglich geredet wird. Vollends darf keine Frage während des Schlafs oder während des Traumes an sie gerichtet werden, um nähere Aufklärung über die Individualität zu erhalten. Die Beobachtung muß sich lediglich auf die sich darstellenden Tatsachen beziehen, nämlich auf die Wunden, auf Wachen und Schlafen, aufgenossener Dinge und auf die Ausleerungen oder überhaupt auf das, was sich alls Besonderheit darstellen mag." Clemens August von Droste-Vischering to Bernhard Rensing, May 16, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 231.

<sup>102</sup> In an undated letter to Rensing, Droste-Vischering wrote that he considered Wesener all-too-taken in by Emmerick's charisma to be able to judge her stigmata objectively and scientifically. See Hümpfner, *Tagebuch*, 16 n. 1.

most exasperated Rensing, if Emmerick's stigmata did not happen to bleed during the few hours they were on shift, they felt there was nothing that needed reporting.<sup>103</sup> In the end, Dr. Ringenberg showed up for the last day of the investigation. In a letter to Rensing that was a study in non-committal waffling, the young doctor pled inexperience and said he could not risk his professional reputation so early in his career by making any firm judgment about Emmerick's stigmata or other phenomena.<sup>104</sup>

At the conclusion of the observation period, the various participants signed a document, dated June 26, 1813, which made a number of remarkable assertions. During the whole of the observation period, Emmerick ate no solid food, consuming only water and an occasional bit of broth. On several occasions, observers saw some or all of Emmerick's stigmata wounds begin to bleed spontaneously, and at no time did anyone manipulate her wounds in any way. She fell into ecstatic trances, during which she spoke nonsensibly as if in delirium, almost every evening between the hours of 10:00pm and 12:00am. The closing paragraph of the statement, which was signed by thirty men, read: "we are prepared at any time to repeat our above assertions before any spiritual or worldly authority, and if necessary to affirm the truth of the same with a physical oath."<sup>105</sup> It was a bold statement, but without the involvement of a medical professional, Droste-Vischering believed it to be almost useless. No physician meant no professional expertise that a general public would respect. Furthermore, thanks to the observers' careless and lazy approach to the whole affair, he lacked any kind of documentation to substantiate the claims of their final statement.

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<sup>103</sup> Bernhard Rensing to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, June 18, 1813, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 14, doc. 30, BAM.

<sup>104</sup> Dr. Ringenberg to Bernhard Rensing, June 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 235.

<sup>105</sup> "Obige unsere Aussagen sind wir vor jeder geist- und weltlichen Obrigkeit immer bereit, zu wiederholen und nötigenfalls die Wahrheit derselben mit einem körperlichen Eid zu bekräftigen." "Schluß-Protokoll über die Bewachung von 10. bis 19. Juni 1813," June 26, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 234.

Shortly after the investigation was over, the Vicar General wrote Rensing to relieve him of any further duties regarding Emmerick. No longer was he required to keep a journal about her, to police who entered her home, or conduct any further investigative business. Furthermore, Droste-Vischering declared he himself was washing his hands of the situation. The disaster of the Church investigation had convinced him that he was unable effectively assert control over what happened around her. From now on it was up to her, Droste-Vischering said, to make peace in her own home.<sup>106</sup>

*Conclusion: “Critical Revisions”*

“ . . . I have not always observed and investigated what transpired with equanimity; my doubts as to the correctness of those things which have presented themselves as the product of a higher power, I have ever more strongly repressed; and not infrequently I have found myself in a state of oppressive difficulty if I question myself regarding this or that extraordinary occurrence.”<sup>107</sup> Fr. Bernhard Rensing, reflecting on his part in the Church investigation of Anna Katharina Emmerick, wrote these words in March of 1821, in a manuscript he titled “Kritische Revision der seltsamen Geschichte der Anna Katharina Emmerich.” They are a far cry from the enthusiastic exclamation he made in his letter to the Vicar General, almost exactly eight years earlier: “. . . [T]he Lord, who was always so miraculous in his saints, also performs signs through

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<sup>106</sup> Clemens August Droste-Vischering to Bernhard Rensing, June 27, 1813, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 14, doc. 25, BAM.

<sup>107</sup> “. . . ich habe nicht immer gleichgültig gegen das, was herauskommen möchte, beobachtet und untersucht, manchen Zweifel an der Richtigkeit dessen, was sich als Product höherer Einwirkung darstellte, vielmehr gewaltsam unterdrückt, als für mich selbst befriedigend aufgelöst, und nicht selten mich in drückender Verlegenheit befunden, wenn ich über meine Meinung von diesem oder jenem Ausserordentlichen, das sich zutrug, befragt wurde.” Bernhard Rensing, “Kritische Revision der seltsamen Geschichte der Anna Katharina Emmerich, Conventualinn des aufgehobenen Augustinessen-Klosters in Dülmen,” March 1821, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 18, p. 4, BAM.

them in our own times of foolishness and unbelief.”<sup>108</sup> Over the years following the Church investigation of 1813, Rensing evolved from one of Anna Katharina Emmerick’s greatest admirers to one of her bitterest critics.

This change happened quite gradually. As late as 1818, Rensing was taking up his pen not to question Emmerick’s stigmata, but to defend them, very publicly, in what evolved into a “pamphlet war” with the professor who had visited Emmerick and behaved so rudely years before, Bernhard Bodde. Bodde had published a booklet which unequivocally dismissed Emmerick’s stigmata wounds as fabricated – that is, painted on in some way and not actual wounds at all. Bodde had also found time along the way to call Emmerick a “disgusting braggart” [*eckelichen Pralerin* (sic)], and to suggest that Rensing was either a gullible idiot or a religious fanatic seeking to perpetrate a pious fraud on other gullible idiots. Rensing had leapt to Emmerick’s (and his own) defense; Bodde had written yet another “*Streitschrift*” in response, and the whole affair became a topic of discussion in the broader German press.<sup>109</sup> How then, had Rensing become so disenchanted with Emmerick that he felt compelled to write “Kritische Revisionen” barely three years later?

To the extent that they have engaged with this question – and they are naturally reluctant to deal with the entire subject – Emmerick’s hagiographers and church researchers have fallen back on one explanation: jealousy. As writers as diverse as Winfried Hümpfner, Jeanne Danemarie, and Clemens Engling have argued, once Droste-Vischering relieved him of his

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<sup>108</sup> “Mit einem tief gerührten Herzen und voll der religiösen Empfindung melde ich . . . daß der Herr, der von jeher so wunderbar in seinen Heiligen war, auch in unsern Tagen des Leichtsinnes und Unglaubens noch Zeichen an ihnen tut . . .” Bernhard Rensing to Vicar General Clemens August Droste zu Vischering, March 25, 1813, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 191.

<sup>109</sup> Bodde and Rensing. *Bericht über die Erscheinungen bey der A.K. Emmerich*; [Johann] Bernard Bodde, *Sendschreiben an den Herrn Rensing, Dechant und Pfarrer zu Dülmen, worin derselbe einer Theilnahme an der Erkünstelung der Wundmaale der Jungfer Emmerich nicht beschuldigt, das Wundersame der Wundmaale aber standhaft verneint wird* (Hamm: Schultz und Wundermann, 1819), [http://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/sendschreiben.htm](http://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/sendschreiben.htm) (Accessed July 12, 2017).

duties as investigator, Fr. Rensing no longer had a clear role to play in Emmerick's life. Limberg was her confessor, Lambert her longtime spiritual advisor, and Dr. Wesener increasingly became her closest friend and most attentive listener. Then Clemens Brentano arrived in late 1818, and quickly took on an enormous role in the stigmatic's life. The Dülmen parish priest felt excluded from her inner circle and became bitter as a result. Bitterness turned into disillusionment, and that was that.<sup>110</sup>

There is truth to this explanation on a human level. As Engling notes, however, it is also worth considering Rensing's change of heart in light of the degree to which he was "a child of his times."<sup>111</sup> Born in 1760 (thirteen years before the Vicar General) and well-educated at a Franciscan Gymnasium, Rensing had come of age in the Enlightenment. As the work of Michael O'Neill Printy, Ulrich Lehner, and Marc Forster has shown, many educated, German-speaking Catholics of Rensing's generation felt themselves estranged from the emotive and mystical piety of "Baroque Catholicism." Instead, they enthusiastically worked toward a Church that met the challenges of Enlightenment – for they believed that Faith and Reason reinforced rather than opposed each other. This was not a case of waning piety, but rather piety reimagined: as Printy writes, "German Catholic intellectuals rethought the Church and its devotions in a language 'intelligible to their generation' [a quote from Vatican II], and in so doing sought to create a new form of religiosity that they saw as both appropriate to modern times and faithful to the traditions and doctrines of the church."<sup>112</sup> This was the great intellectual project of educated German Catholics during Rensing's first years as a priest.

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<sup>110</sup> Winfried Hümpfner, "Enleitung," in Winfried Hümpfner, ed., *Akten*, xxxviii; Danemarie, *Emmerich and Stigmatization*, 8, 19; Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 129-133.

<sup>111</sup> ". . . ein Kind seiner Zeit." Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 133.

<sup>112</sup> Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism*, 126.

Then came Napoleon. It would perhaps be grandiose and over-simplistic to say, with Thomas Nipperdey, that the advent of the Napoleonic wars changed everything for Catholics in German Europe; but in their destruction of ecclesiastical states like the Prince-Bishopric of Münster, and their secularization of monastic schools which had served as centers of Catholic learning, the environment which had allowed for the germination of the Catholic Enlightenment was gone. So, too, were many of the problems it had focused its energies on (like how to pursue reform within the complicated structure of the Holy Roman Empire).<sup>113</sup> What was not gone, however, was “Baroque Catholicism” – or at least, the so-called “popular practices” and “folk beliefs” that have been grouped under that label were not gone. German-speaking Catholics in the Napoleonic era were still going on pilgrimages, praying to saints, and believing in miracles. As a number of studies have shown, alleged miraculous events often emerge in times and places of unrest. This was certainly the case in German Europe under Napoleon. The Introduction cited a few of these cases above: the miraculous cross in Birgden, the plague of caterpillars in Stromberg.<sup>114</sup> There were also, strikingly, several stigmatics across German-speaking Europe, many of whom have since been forgotten by history.<sup>115</sup>

Rensing was “a child of his times,” but his “times” did not end with the conclusion of his formal studies in the late eighteenth century. He was also a child of the tumultuous times, understudied by historians of German Catholicism, when Napoleon invaded, the sacral landscape of Catholic Europe was forever changed, and God supposedly showed his wrath through raining caterpillars and bleeding mystics. In a very human way, Rensing became caught up in the drama

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<sup>113</sup> Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism*, 212. I am, of course, evoking Thomas Nipperdey’s famous opening sentence, “Am Anfang war Napoleon,” in *Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1983).

<sup>114</sup> Justus Hashagen, *Das Rheinland und die französische Herrschaft: Beiträge zur Charakteristik ihres Gegensatzes* (P. Hanstein, 1908), 152; “Ausstellung: Die Geschichte der Wegekreuze,” *Aachener Zeitung*, November 17, 2011; Peter Jansen, “Unsere Heimat,” *Beilage der Aachener Volkszeitung*, January 1949; Blanning, *French Revolution in Germany*, 325-328.

<sup>115</sup> See Appendix A.

and proclaimed that God was rebuking the attacks on His Church through a living saint in his own humble parish. Never did Rensing forget his faith in reason or empiricism, however, in the process. When his ecclesiastical superior, Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, wrote him about the need for a medical investigation, Rensing enthusiastically agreed. “[It is] also so right, as always in similar cases, to separate the purely spiritual from the purely physical, and to give over each to he whose profession concerns itself with it.”<sup>116</sup>

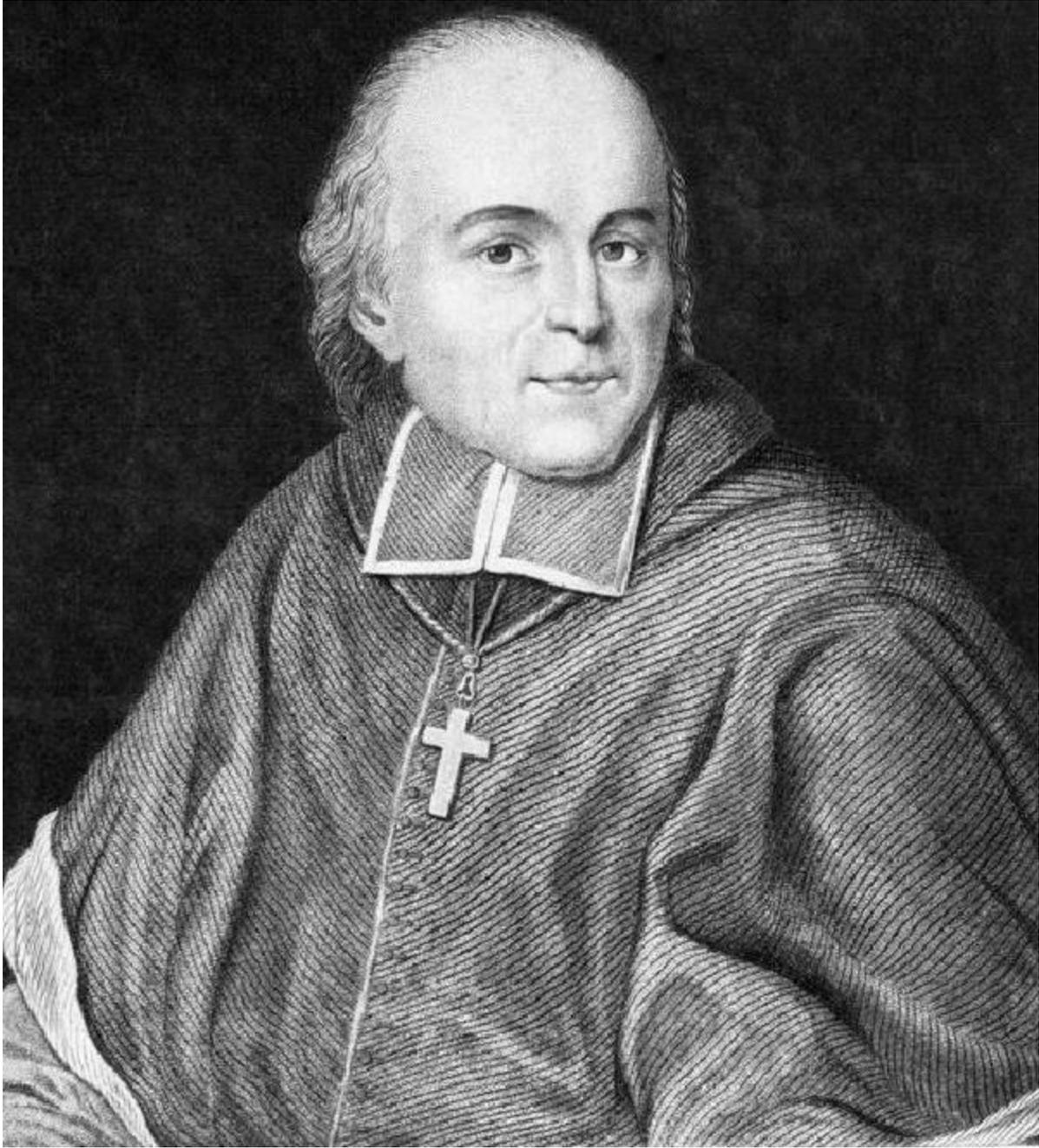
Yet Anna Katharina Emmerick’s mysticism did not neatly divide into spiritual and physical halves. Neither Rensing nor any other investigator achieved a full understanding of her, or “proved” anything about the mystical phenomena surrounding her, by trying to look at her through such bifurcated lenses. An empirical investigation could prove Emmerick’s stigmata wounds were fraudulent by establishing through evidence that someone was making them. “Proving” her stigmata were divine in some sort of empirical way, however, was impossible. As the eighteenth century turned approached the nineteenth, theologians and church leaders like Benedict XIV had tried to side-step the issue by insisting that the proof was in a mystic’s heroic virtue – or, the virtue was so admirably heroic that the mystical phenomena no longer mattered.

But mysticism, and the belief that the natural world was shot through with the holy – that holy bones could retain sacred power, that divinely favored skin could spontaneously bleed – these elements of the faith were central to Catholicism, and they were here to stay. No “critical revisions” could banish them. As Germans moved from Enlightenment to Romanticism and pondered the connection between mind and body, so too would German Catholics have to continue the hard work of reimagining how they would understand and defend their faith in the modern world. The Church investigation of Anna Katharina Emmerick, its quixotic attempt to

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<sup>116</sup> Bernhard Rensing to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, March 31, 1813, quoted in Hümpfner, *Akten*, 195 n. 2.

unbraid the physical from the spiritual, and its ultimate failure to make any definitive statement on one woman's stigmata, reveals just how hard this work was in the transition years of Napoleonic occupation.



**Figure 7.** Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering of Münster, future Archbishop of Cologne. Landschaftsverband Rheinland-Zentrum für Medien und Bildung, Portal Rheinische Geschichte, <https://www.rheinische-geschichte.lvr.de/Persoenlichkeiten/clemens-august-von-droste-zu-vischering-/DE-2086/lido/57c698a86671f9.06491391> (accessed June 02, 2018).



**Figure 8.** The Prince-Bishop's Palace, Münster, a reflection of the Prince-Bishopric's power in the waning years of the Age of Baroque. Designed by Architect Johann Conrad Schlaun, it was built from 1767 to 1786. It was captured by Prussian General Freiherr von Stein in 1803. From 1815 until 1933 it served as the residence of the Oberpräsident of the Province of Westphalia. During the Third Reich, it became the residence of the Gauleiter for Westfalen-Nord, Alfred Meyer. The Palace was severely damaged in multiple Allied bomb attacks from 1941-1945. Today the original appearance of the outside has been restored, while the modernized inside serves as the main administrative building for the University of Münster. Photo by the author.



**Figure 9.** The *Münsterscher Kreis*, also known as the *Familia sacra*, a constellation of Catholic notables and literary figures who gathered around Princess Amalie von Gallitzin (1748-1806) and Vicar General Franz Friedrich Wilhelm von Furstenberg (1729-1810). They are depicted here in an 1862 painting by Theobald von Oer, currently held by the Bischöflichen Diözesanmuseums für christliche Kunst, Münster. Some of the younger members of the group who are depicted in the painting would go on to interact with Emmerick, including Dr. Franz Ferdinand Druffel (second from left); Friedrich Leopold Graf von Stolberg (seventh from left, directly to the right of the woman with her hair covered); Father Bernhard Overberg (standing directly right of Princess Gallitzin, center in green dress); Clemens August von Droste-Vischering (two right of Overberg, with his hand in his coat); and Marianna Prinzessin Gallitzin (right of Droste-Vischering, in white dress with blue ribbon with her back turned). The figure at the far right edge of the painting is one of Droste-Vischering's tutors, Church historian Theodor Katerkamp.

Photo by S. Sagurna, Landschaftsverband-Westfalen-Lippe, Internet-Portal Westfälische Geschichte, <http://www.westfaelische-geschichte.de/med165> (accessed June 02, 2018).

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXPERIMENTS IN FAITH: DR. FRANZ WILHELM WESENER AND MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK

*Introduction: "Every Means at my Disposal To Uncover the Nature of the Matter"*

“. . . [M]y much-discussed and oft-written-about local patient:”<sup>1</sup> thus did Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener describe Anna Katharina Emmerick to the German reading public in 1817.<sup>2</sup> “Much-discussed” was no exaggeration. As another article on Emmerick appearing that year phrased it, “already in the first days when these so-called unusual apparitions [Emmerick’s stigmata] became known, they provoked much uproar in regions near and far; the uproar grew and multiplied in the mouths of those who reported it. Those who had the fortune to see her in Dülmen themselves, brought new strengths to this uproar back with them each time. . . .”<sup>3</sup> Dr. Wesener had seen this “uproar” develop from the beginning. By the time his own article about his “much-discussed” patient appeared in the *Mindener Sonntagsblatt*, he had already been

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<sup>1</sup> A note on translation here: Wesener here uses the term *die Kranke* and not *die Patientin*. I have made a choice to translate it as “patient,” however, because the English equivalents for *die Kranke* – “the cripple,” “the invalid,” etc. – carry a somewhat pejorative ring to my ear that I think Wesener did not at all intend. To use a very contemporary term, “the invalid” sounds “ableist.” It seems to reduce Emmerick to her physical limitations, rather than describing her as a whole person. In English, therefore, I have sometimes chosen to use “patient,” a seemingly more neutral (albeit clinical) term, instead of “invalid.” All that being said, the terms *Kranke* and *Patient* have their own, different connotations in German. Francisca Loetz has argued that a shift in terminology from *Kranke* to *Patient* occurred in Germany as the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth, and that this shift was part of a broader process of *Medikalisierung* – that is, the professionalization of medicine and, arguably, a more structured and institutional relationship between doctor and patient. Loetz, it should be noted, seeks in her work to qualify the strongest portrayals of *Medikalisierung* as a story of Foucaultian social control, and argues that contemporary medical texts reveal a doctor-patient relationship with more complicated power dynamics. Francisca Loetz, *Vom Kranken zum Patienten: "Medikalisierung" und medizinische Vergesellschaftung am Beispiel Badens 1750-1850* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993). Interestingly, Emmerick’s case seems to have fallen in the middle of this terminology shift. Wesener tends to refer to Emmerick as *die Kranke*, while Dr. Krauthausen (despite being from an older generation) often called her *die Patientin*.

<sup>2</sup> “. . . meine vielbesprochene und vielbeschriebene hiesige Kranke. . .” Franz Wilhelm Wesener, “Die Nonne zu Düllmen betreffend: Nachricht und Bitte,” *Das Mindener Sonntagsblatt* 2 no. 6 (1817), 44, quoted in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 444.

<sup>3</sup> “Diese darin sogenannten ungewöhnlichen Erscheinungen erregten im Frühjahr 1813, gleich in den ersten tages des Bekanntwerdens, sowohl hier als in nahen und entfernten Gegenden viel Aufsehens; sie wuchsen und vervielfältigten sich im Munde der Erzählenden. Diejenigen, die das Glück gehabt hatten, sie in Dülmen selbst zu sehen, brachten jedesmal neue Bekräftigungen mit . . .” Bodde and Rensing, *Bericht über die Erscheinungen bey der A.K. Emmerich*, 11-12.

interacting with Emmerick on an almost daily basis for over four years. As the previous chapter recounted, Dr. Peter Krauthausen abruptly ended his professional relationship with his patient of many years in May 1813. Wesener, already a regular presence in Emmerick's life, immediately stepped in to become her physician. Since then he had conversed with, observed, examined, and treated her -- both as a caregiver seeking to understand and treat her chronic pain, weakness, and inability to digest solid food; and as a natural researcher trying to come to grips with her ecstatic trances, stigmata, and other supernatural phenomena.

Wesener was familiar with Emmerick in another sense, however: he was also her friend, a person with whom he had deep conversations, joined with in prayer, and often turned to for advice. One could even go so far as to say that Wesener was her student, humbly learning from her about the history and practice of the Catholic faith. Increasingly, he had come to see himself as not only a caregiver but a defender of this bedridden woman, using his position as doctor to advise against the constant visits she disliked and the investigations she feared. He fought to prohibit these not only on the grounds that they would endanger her perpetually frail health, but also because he believed they were a basic violation of her privacy, rights, and dignity.

Watching her experience of the Church's investigation of April-June 1813 had been formative in this regard. That June, as the previous chapter recounted, Dr. Wesener had tried to bring his concerns in this regard before Vicar General Clemens August von Droste-Vischering as respectfully as possible. In August, however, Droste-Vischering did something which Wesener found unforgivable, and a clear sign that he had not respected a word of the doctor's earlier protestation: he visited Emmerick accompanied by Frau Prefect von Romberg and Professor Bodde, who had both behaved so rudely to Emmerick months earlier. While there, he raised the prospect of a renewed Church investigation.

This time, Dr. Wesener's letter to the Vicar General held nothing back. "I have shown you," he wrote, "how indiscreet such people are, how they believe that on account of some tenuous claim that their great-great-great grandfathers did some good service [ for which they received a hereditary title] . . . they may torture a poor unfortunate nun for whole days in order to save some high-born soul or other."<sup>4</sup> By continuing to send such people Emmerick's way, the Vicar General made a mockery his own command that no one be allowed to see her. Instead, Wesener wrote, it was clear that the Vicar General only meant to keep *ordinary* people from seeing her: "people were grumbling here in a pub last night, that the Vicariate forbids the common people entrance to the nun and cavaliers come by the dozens to bother her the whole day long." Whereas everyday Münsterlanders were inspired by the piety of the woman they or their acquaintances had long known, and humbly wished to seek wisdom from her, most members of the parade of notables sent by Droste-Vischering were clearly bothering Emmerick solely "to satisfy their curiosity."<sup>5</sup>

Wesener knew that when he had raised such concerns in the past, Dr. Druffel, Droste-Vischering's own physician, had scoffed at the idea that Emmerick's many visitors posed any threat to her health. To that, Wesener could only say: "Although I trust the Herr Professor has more and deeper insight into the construction and powers of the human organism than myself . . . he has a poor knowledge of the strength of the human body and [especially] the influence of a

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<sup>4</sup> "Ich habe Ihnen gezeigt, wie indiskret solche Menschen sind, und sich auf das oft sehr prekäre Verdienst ihrer Ur-Ur-Urgroßväter oder auf ihre Reichtümer was zugute tun und glauben, daß sie auf diesesn Titel eine arme unglückliche Nonne ganze Tage quälen dürften, damit sie eine oder die andere hochgeborene Seele retten." Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Clemens August von-Droste-Vischering, August 27, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 408.

<sup>5</sup> "Man hat gestern Abend hier öffentlich in einem Bierhause darüber geschimpft, daß das Vikariat den gemeinen Leuten den Zutritt zu der Nonne versagte und Kavaliers kämen zu Dutzenden und belagerten sie ganze Tage. Erbarmen Sie sich doch endlich der armen Leidenen. Sie sollten ihr Ruhe geben und zeigen der ganzen Welt den Weg zu ihr, oder sollen sie alle Anderen in Ruhe lassen und sollen die Münsterischen Kavaliers allein das Recht haben, ihre Neugierde an ihr zu befriedigen. Denn was anderes hat die Herren hierhergeführt, die gestern bei ihr waren?" Wesener to Droste-Vischering, August 28, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 410.

strong power of imagination on a weakened body.” The visit by Droste-Vischering, the openly hostile Bodde, and Frau von Romberg had made Emmerick “deathly weak,” so much did it upset her. “In short, I assure you on my honor, that yesterday’s proceedings would have surely cost the invalid her life, if the Almighty had not worked a miracle [to sustain her], for she lives still.”<sup>6</sup> Thus did Wesener practically accuse the Vicar General of involuntary attempted murder. Having done so, the physician laid down an ultimatum: “I hereby inform you, that as doctor of the invalid I will allow no further visits of this kind. She is my patient and I demand rest for her, and I will therefore call upon the protection of the law under which we all stand as French citizens.” If the Church decided to re-launch its investigation, it would have to do so in a manner that would not compromise Emmerick’s precarious health. “I beg you, I adjure you, do not place me in the sad position of having to refuse entrance to the patient to men for whom I have love and respect.”<sup>7</sup>

By the time Wesener wrote in the *Mindener Sonntagsblatt* in 1817, four years later, however, the rising tide of interest in Anna Katharina Emmerick had reached such an extent that neither he, nor the Vicar General, nor anyone else could hold it back. She was a frequent topic of

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<sup>6</sup> “Unbegreiflich wäre es mir, wie Sie meiner Kranken hätten die gestrige Qual antun [können], wenn ich nicht an die Behauptung des Herrn Professors Druffel dächte, daß nämlich all das Wesen der Kranken keinen Schaden zufügen könne. Allein obgleich ich dem Hrn. Professor mehrere und tiefere Einsichten in die Konstruktion und Kräfte des menschlichen Organismus zutraue als mir, so will ich ihm doch beweisen, daß er die Kräfte des Körpers und den Einfluß einer regen Einbildungskraft auf einen geschwächten Körper schlecht kennt, wenn ihm obige Behauptung Ernst ist. – Kurz, ich beteure Ihnen bei meiner Ehre, daß Ihr gestriges Verfahren der Kranken sicher das Leben gekostet hätte, wenn der Allmächtige nicht ein Wunder gewirkt hätte, denn sie lebt noch.” Wesener to Droste-Vischering, August 28, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 409.

<sup>7</sup> “. . . ich erkläre Ihnen hiermit, daß ich als Arzt der Kranken durchaus keine Besuche derart mehr zugebe. Sie ist meiner Kranke und ich verlange Ruhe für sie, und ich werde dazu den Schutz der Gesetze anrufen, worunter wir als französische Bürger alle stehen. Müssen Sie Ihre Untersuchung fortsetzen, in Gottes Namen, die Leidende läßt sich zur Ehre des Allerhöchsten alles, wovon sie überzeugt ist, daß es zum Guten abzweckt, gefallen, aber es muß ohne Geräusche und nicht auf Kosten ihrer, freilich sehr relativen, Gesundheit geschehen . . . Ich bitte, ich beschwöre Sie deshalb, setzen Sie mich nicht in die traurige Verlegenheit, selbst Männern, vor denen ich Liebe und Hochachtung haben muß, den Zutritt zu der Kranken zu verwehren, welches ich tun muß, wenn Sie mit starker Begleitung oder mit Menschen kommen, die nicht zur Untersuchung erforderlich sind.” Wesener to Droste-Vischering, August 28, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 410-411. Dr. Wesener’s strong interventions, as well as Emmerick’s own protests, successfully prevented Vicar General von Droste-Vischering from re-launching a Church investigation in August 1813 and again in mid-1815: see *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 76-77 n. 2; 159-161; 411.

debate in all sorts of print media: books, scholarly journals, popular broadsheets, and argumentative pamphlets. Their conclusions ranged from awe and astonishment to cursory dismissal; their tone from reverent to neutral to accusatory. Each new publication stirred up yet another round of public excitement, and another stream of worshippers, armchair investigators, and curiosity seekers would try to gain access to Emmerick's apartment in Dülmen.

The author whose pamphlet had caused the latest round of interest was none other than the longtime object of Wesener's ire: Professor Bernard Bodde. Bodde had not seen Emmerick since the 1813 visits arranged by Droste-Vischering, but suddenly decided to publish a thoroughgoing exposé of her years later. The chemistry professor published initially in the Netherlands, where his essay appeared in Dutch newspaper *Recensent* in October 1816. It was then reprinted in German in the *Hermann Zeitschrift von und für Westfalen* in April 1817.<sup>8</sup> As briefly noted at the end of the previous chapter, Bodde's pamphlet, *Auch etwas über die Erscheinungen bey der Anna Katharina Emmerich, Chorschwester des aufgehobenen Klosters Agnetenberg in Dülmen*, was anything but neutral in tone. The professor did not restrict himself to a scientific discussion of Emmerick's alleged stigmata as he had observed them, but also spent considerable time assassinating the character of both Emmerick and Fr. Rensing as religious zealots perpetrating a public fraud. In publishing such a work, Bodde believed he was not merely offering his professional opinion on a medical case study, but also performing a public service by exposing a

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<sup>8</sup> Emmerick was a topic of lively discussion in the Dutch press, as well as German, from a very early date. The first article about her that I know of, Professor Druffel's 1814 essay in the Austrian *Medicinisch-Chirurgische Zeitung*, was translated into Dutch within a year as *Echt berigt, wegens de zeldzame verschijnsels, welke plaats hebben bij mejufvrouw Anna Catharina Emmerich, koorzuster van het vernietigde klooster der Augustinessen Agnetenberg, te Dülmen*, trans. J.W. Robijns (Deventer, 1815). This prompted a lively press debate. One of Dr. Wesener's professional colleagues living in Amsterdam, a Dr. Tythoff, wrote him in distress on September 16, 1815 with the news that "einigen Protestanten oder Ketzern" had responded to Druffel's article with scorn, calling the whole affair "eine fromme *List* oder *Priesterbetrug* (emphasis in original). Bodde was by no means introducing Emmerick to a new audience, then, when he chose to publish in the Netherlands first, and may have been building on a tide of critical press against her there. Dr. Tythoff to Franz Wilhelm Wesener, September 16, 1815, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 419.

notorious con artist who was preying upon the superstitious and gullible. Even so, the tone of his pamphlet arguably crossed the line from appropriate indignation to gleeful animosity.

Wesener reacted with horror to Bodde's pamphlet. Not only was it an attack on the character of people he knew and respected, but also an attack on what he fervently believed, as a Christian *and* as a man of science, to be the truth: first, that Emmerick's stigmata were real and beyond any known natural explanation; and furthermore, that Emmerick was a saintly woman who could never tell such lies. Moreover, he feared that Bodde's pamphlet would lead others to mock not just Emmerick and Rensing, but Catholics and their Church in general as superstitious and backward. This *Streitschrift* could only confirm ingrained prejudices, rather than encourage the kind of open-minded discussion of facts that would lead to greater understanding. Bodde's dismissive attitude and scathing words threatened to lower the character of public debate.

Though written by a scientist, the kind of discussion such an essay engendered was anything but rational and dispassionate.<sup>9</sup>

When Dr. Wesener wrote his article for the *Mindener Sonntagsblatt*, therefore, he titled it "Regarding the Nun from Dülmen: News and a Request" [*Die Nonne zu Düllmen* [sic] *betreffend: Nachricht und Bitte*]. The "request" in his article, which he addressed "to all my just and truth-loving brothers," was to "not turn your heads at all toward any wish-wash and rumors, and hold your opinions . . . until God or a complete investigation lays the matter out clearly before your eyes."<sup>10</sup> As the plea of a compassionate man with a caregiver's nature, seeking to spare his friend further pain and public humiliation, this attempt to put an end to press

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<sup>9</sup> See Wesener's reply to Bodde, which will be discussed in greater detail below: Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Bernard Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 424-431.

<sup>10</sup> "Nun die Bitte. – Diese richte ich an alle recht- und wahrheitsliebenden Brüder . . . daß sie sich durchaus an kein Geschreibsel und Gerede kehren, und ihr Urteil über die Erscheinung, oder wenigstens über die Person und ihre Umgebung so lange zurückhalten wollen, bis Gott, oder vollendetes Beobachtung ihnen die Sache klar vor Augen legt. – Und jetzt schließe ich mit der ganz besonderen Bitte an meine Freunde und Bekannten, an alle, welche die Sache näher angeht: mich nicht mehr mit Briefen und Anfragen über diesen Gegenstand, und die arme Kranke nicht mehr mit Besuchen zu plagen." Wesener, "Nonne zu Düllmen," 445.

speculation about Emmerick is understandable. Yet for a curious man of science and frequent publisher in medical journals, one who had furthermore invested years in trying to understand the case study of a lifetime, such a turn away from debate and public discourse was not easy to make. He had come to the conclusion, however, that the tone of press coverage about Emmerick, in popular and scholarly publications alike, had become so acrimonious and poisoned by prejudice that it resembled the jeers of a mob more than the civil tones of a “republic of letters.”<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Wesener hoped that, given time, the astonishing vitriol that had infected print discussion of Emmerick would die down, and then he could publish a medical article, grounded in his expertise borne of long years of observation, which would both satisfy the scientists and silence the scandal-mongers. Wesener therefore ended his brief note in the *Tageblatt* with a promise:

I may assure the public that I have already observed [Emmerick] with level-headed wits and a clear eye for 4 ½ years, and will observe still further, so long as God wills it; that I record everything observed diligently and faithfully; and that I, who have every means at my disposal to uncover the nature of the matter [*das Wesen der Sache zu ergründen*], may further promise to present the whole phenomenon in its true light.<sup>12</sup>

Over the course of eleven years with his famous patient, Wesener did indeed produce volumes of written material about her: not only a journal exclusively devoted to describing his interactions with her, but also a short biography, as well as an extremely detailed account of the Prussian

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<sup>11</sup> In his article, Wesener bemoaned the infection of public discourse about Emmerick with baseless rumors spread by “Schreier, Selbstsüchtige, Verleumder und Rabulisten.” His article, he wrote, was not addressed to such people, as they could not be persuaded through reason. Wesener, “Nonne zu Dülmen,” 445. On the deep-seated prejudice and acrimony that often characterized debates in the Enlightenment-era press on religious topics, see Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment*, 2-10; 23; 148; Jeffrey Freedman, *A Poisoned Chalice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> “. . . so darf ich das Publikum versichern, daß ich mit nüchternem Sinne und mit guten, klaren Augen jetzt schon 4 ½ Jahr beobachtet habe und not ferner beobachten werde, so lange Gott will; daß ich alles Beobachtete fleißig und getreu aufzeichne, und daß ich, da mir alle Mittel und Wege zu Gebote stehen, das Wesen der Sache zu ergründen, sich versprechen darf, die ganze Erscheinung dereinst in wahren Lichte darstellen zu können.” Wesener, “Nonne zu Dülmen,” 445.

state investigation of Emmerick in August 1819 which was taken down more or less verbatim from the woman himself. Wesener also carefully saved a copy of every letter he wrote concerning Emmerick, as well as nearly every reply that he received, organizing them chronologically and numbering them as if for future publication. Ultimately, however, he chose to publish none of it.

In considering this longstanding and complex relationship, the enormous trove of documents it left behind, and this unfulfilled promise to bring them before the public, three obvious questions thus arise. First, given Dr. Wesener's dramatically immediate "conversion" from skeptic to believer in Emmerick, and their development of a close friendship, did he really have the ability, as he phrased it in the *Mindener Tageblatt*, to objectively evaluate her "with level-headed wits and a clear eye"? Second, if Wesener was so confident as to assure the readers of the *Tageblatt* that he had "every means at [his] disposal to uncover the nature of the matter," what *were* his ultimate conclusions about the mystical phenomena of Anna Katharina Emmerick? Lastly, why did he not fulfill his promise to publish these conclusions and "present the whole phenomenon in its true light"?

This chapter will address these questions through a narration of Dr. Wesener's relationship with Emmerick from 1813 through late 1819, when he stopped keeping his journal about her (for reasons to be discussed below). Although it has been overshadowed in subsequent literature by her later connection with Clemens Brentano, Anna Katharina Emmerick's relationship with Franz Wilhelm Wesener was just as central to her life – and its story is just as dramatic. Years before the Romantic poet who sold off most of precious library, left the salons of Berlin and moved to the tiny town of Dülmen, there was another "conversion" story: that of the sober-minded doctor, opening scoffing about stigmata in the local tavern, who was soon brought

to tears by the mystic he would visit almost daily for the rest of her life. So sudden was Wesener's change of heart regarding Emmerick, and so unswerving was his devotion to her afterward, that others around him – like Clara Söntgen and Vicar General Droste-Vischering – thought he had become carried away by an overly fervent piety and a tendency toward sentimentality.<sup>13</sup> An examination of the background – of Wesener's life and writings, before and after Emmerick, but also the background of the medical profession in Wesener's day – reveals the truth to be more complicated.

This chapter begins with an overview of his attempts to treat Emmerick's various health issues and to understand, both spiritually and scientifically, the source of her mystical power. Situating Wesener's work in the broader context of medical theory and praxis in German Europe during the early nineteenth-century, it shows him to be a man of his times, albeit one of great compassion and faith. It will also, however, highlight the difficulties Wesener faced in discerning Emmerick's illness from her mysticism. Finally, Dr. Wesener's reaction to Bodde's pamphlet, and his agonizing over whether and how to respond to the growing press coverage of Emmerick, will reveal that he was conflicted over what his obligations were toward her as a doctor, as a friend, and as a man of Catholic faith.

In the end, the remarkable encounter between a learned country doctor and his “much-discussed and oft-written-about local patient” proves to be more than the story of a touching friendship. It shines light on a particular historical moment in the history of religion as well as medicine in early nineteenth-century Germany, when mysticism and magnetism could meet and some Catholics came to believe in a world where the working of the Holy Spirit could be described in a scientific way. It will also, in examining the role played by Wesener in

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<sup>13</sup> See Hümpfner, *Tagebuch*, 16 n. 1; Wesener, journal, March 26, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 10-11.

Emmerick's life, consider the actors, institutions, and conditions that allow saint-making to happen, thus highlighting the contingent factors which separated Emmerick from countless other contemporary, mostly female, would-be mystics that instead either fell into obscurity, were dismissed as frauds, or became pathologized as hysterics and mad persons.

### *An Intellectual "Conversion" and a Foundational Friendship*

Previous chapters have told in its basic outlines the "conversion story" of Franz Wilhelm Wesener. When the doctor first approached Anna Katharina Emmerick, on March 22, 1813, he did so as a skeptic and man of science who had organized an impromptu investigation. Accompanied by Dr. Krauthausen and Fr. Rensing, his purpose that day had been to determine, through interrogation and a physical examination, the nature of Emmerick's stigmata. When Wesener returned to see her the very next day, however, he did so "out of purely pious motives . . . to worship God's wonders on this pious person."<sup>14</sup> In describing his intentions in this way in the first entry of his Emmerick journal, Wesener appears to have cast off the role of investigator entirely. In visiting her that day, and over the next several weeks, he came not even in his capacity as physician, but as a person of faith. On this basis, he quickly built a close relationship with Emmerick, who seemed to love the opportunity to talk with interested listeners about spiritual matters. As Chapter One recounted, they discussed everything from how much alms a person should give and the best means of keeping focused during prayer to the possibility of life on other planets.

Wesener had heretofore been something of a lukewarm Catholic, believing in God and participating in the sacraments but harboring something of a dislike for the institutional Church –

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<sup>14</sup> "Dienstag, den 23. März des Abends, ein Viertel nach neun Uhr begab ich aus purem frommen Antriege zu der gottseligen Jungfrau Anna Katharina Emmerich um Gottes Wunder an dieser frommen Person anzubeten." Franz Wilhelm Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 3.

a dislike which he attributed in large part to a miserable childhood experience at a Franciscan Gymnasium.<sup>15</sup> Wesener was just barely old enough to have missed the benefits of educational reforms later implemented by Vicar General von Fürstenberg and Fr. Bernhard Overberg. As such, his educational schooling was left to monks who, in his recollection, had no particular training in either pedagogy or the subjects they taught. As he remembered his schooling in the 1820s, Wesener wrote that his earliest teachers aimed for no loftier goal than “sanding down the rough edges of the dear youth. *I cannot,*” he stated emphatically, “*remember a single one of my Gymnasium teachers with love and respect.*” Instruction in science, Wesener recalled, was particularly poor at his Gymnasium.<sup>16</sup> It was only once he reached higher levels of schooling that he was finally able to pursue his enthusiastic interest in the subject.

Still, Wesener had not become entirely alienated from religion and the Church as a result of this experience. Later Emmerick hagiographies have exaggerated his youthful antipathy toward the Church, in order to make his “conversion” at the sight of her stigmata wounds seem all the more miraculous. They attribute his moral instruction entirely to Emmerick, as if he had known nothing of the Church’s teachings, or of right and wrong, before he met her.<sup>17</sup> All evidence suggests, however, that Wesener was a moral and compassionate man from the beginning to the end of his life. In his work as a “praktischer Arzt,” he often cared for the poor and indigent, and he would write in medical journals over the years of his concern that medicine and a doctor’s care be financially accessible to all.<sup>18</sup> Having doubtless encountered many a

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<sup>15</sup> Hümpfner, “Einleitung,” *Tagebuch*, xvi-xviii.

<sup>16</sup> “. . . junger Franziskaner-Mönche, die man zu Lherern am Gymnasium bestellte, damit sie an der lieben Jugend ihre rauhen Kanten abschleifen sollten. – *Ich kann mich mit Liebe und Achtung keinen Einigen meiner Gymnasiallehrer erinnern* . . . [emphasis in original].” Quoted in Hümpfner, “Einleitung,” *Tagebuch*, xvi.

<sup>17</sup> See for example Luise Hensel’s exaggeration of Wesener’s lapsed faith to the point of quasi-atheism in her published recollections: “Erinnerungen an A. K. Emmerich,” *Hochland* XIII (1916), 415f; Carl E. Schmöger, *The Life of Anne Catherine Emmerich*, vol. 1 (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1976), 206; Wegener, *Innere und äußere Leben*, 82-84, 196.

<sup>18</sup> Hümpfner, “Einleitung,” *Tagebuch*, xlii.

peasant healer with his or her own ideas about how to treat the sick, Wesener bucked the conventions of his time by calling for medical professionals to respect, listen to, and learn from simple people and the folk remedies they had discovered over the generations.<sup>19</sup> He also wrote often and movingly in his medical articles about a doctor's need to truly *care* for his patients, not only with his head but with his heart and soul: "Woe betide the doctors . . . who lack the greatest treasures of the human race, spirit [*Geist*] and religion! A soulless [*geistloser*] doctor is worse than the illness he tries to cure."<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, Wesener continued to affirm the basic teachings of the Church and participate in its rituals throughout his life. In an affectionate letter to one of his sons as he prepared to leave for university, for instance, Wesener wrote:

Above all I bid you with my love: have dear God always before your eyes never forget to pray diligently and attentively in the morning and at evening. Never fail to hear holy Mass on Sundays and feast days, and if possible a sermon. Go regularly to the holy Sacraments, about every 6-8 weeks, or at least 4 times a year . . . Pass by any mockery of your holy religion in silence, and at least express your disapproval through your demeanor. Consider that he who wishes to challenge or rob you of your faith, would rob you of the highest and holiest Good there is, and will make you unhappy not just in the present moment, but for eternity.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hümpfner, "Einleitung," *Tagebuch*, xl-xlii. In the early nineteenth century, the professionalization of modern medicine was still in process, and a number of scholars have argued that a key part of this process was the disparaging of folk healers as inferior to university-trained physicians: Thomas H. Broman, *The Transformation of German Academic Medicine, 1750-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2-6; Ute Frevert, *Krankheit als politisches Problem 1770-1830: Soziale Unterschichten in Preußen zwischen medizinischer Polizei und staatlicher Sozialversicherung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); Claudia Huerkamp, "The Making of the Medical Profession, 1800-1914: Prussian Doctors in the Nineteenth Century," in *German Professions, 1800-1950*, eds. Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad Jarausch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 66-84.

<sup>20</sup> "Wehe aber dem Arzte . . . wo diese größten Kleinode des Menschengeschlechtes (Geist und Religion) fehlen! Ein geistloser Arzt ist schlimmer als die Krankheit, die er kurieren soll." Quoted in Hümpfner, "Einleitung," *Tagebuch*, xxxvi-xxxvii.

<sup>21</sup> "Vor allem bitte ich Dich bei meiner Liebe: Habe stets den lieben Gott vor Augen und vergiß doch nie des Morgens und Abends fleißig und andächtig zu beten. Versäume nie an Sonn- und Feiertagen die hl. Messe zu hören, wenn möglich eine Predigt. Gehe regelmäßig zu den hl. Sakramenten, etwa alle 6-8 Wochen, zum wenigsten aber 4 mal des Jahres. . . Spöttern gegen Deine hl. Religion gehe stillschweigend aus dem Wege und gib wenigstens in Mienen Dein Mißfallen kund. Bedenke, wer Dir Deinen hl. Glauben anfight oder rauben will, der beraubt Dich des höchsten und heiligsten Gutes, und will Dich nicht nur zeitlich, sondern auch ewig unglücklich machen." Quoted in Hümpfner, "Einleitung," *Tagebuch*, xxii-xxiii.

There was nothing lukewarm, in short, about Wesener's love of God or man, nor even his diligence in availing himself of the Church's sacraments. He did, however, have a deep suspicion of claims about supernatural phenomena such as stigmata – in which he was hardly alone among his peers.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the memories of the indifferent and ignorant Franciscans he encountered as a child left him with something of a reserved attitude toward the clergy, and an aversion to unthinking dogmatism of any kind. This formative childhood experience had also apparently killed any interest he might have once had in applying his native intelligence and curiosity to questions of faith. Having acquired his basic moral compass from the Church, and accepted its role in providing him grace through the Sacraments, he explored his faith no further.

Something about Emmerick, however, moved him to reevaluate his relationship with his Church. As he would later write of this time, “The whole thing gripped me, I do confess, like nothing else in my life.”<sup>23</sup> Winfried Hümpfner, the Augustinian researcher who later edited Wesener's papers, called Emmerick “the best friend of this man,” who “in a certain sense let himself be guided and instructed like a child by Anna Katharina” in Catholic teachings and the history of the faith.<sup>24</sup> Wesener himself wrote in a letter to Overberg in 1816 that Emmerick “taught me the scriptures . . . In this regard I gladly give myself over to her guidance.”<sup>25</sup>

One could cite numerous examples of this teacher-student dynamic, which Emmerick and Wesener seemed to fall into naturally. For instance, Wesener records in his journal entry for May 12, 1813: “I steered the conversation toward the life to come, and asked her whether she believed that our souls, after separation from our bodies, would retain all that they knew of what they had

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<sup>22</sup> On the growing divide between less-educated, mostly rural Catholics and educated, mostly urban Catholic professionals over belief in the supernatural and practices like veneration of relics and saints, see Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism*, 11; Forster, *Catholic Germany*, 184-191.

<sup>23</sup> Franz Wilhelm Wesener, “Kurzgedrängte Geschichte der stigmatisierten Augustinerin Anna Catharina Emmerick in Dülmen: Von ihrem Arzte,” 1824, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 371.

<sup>24</sup> Winfried Hümpfner, “Einleitung,” *Tagebuch*, xlvii, 1.

<sup>25</sup> “[Emmerick] mich ja die hl. Schrift lehrt . . . Indessen überlasse ich mich gerne Ihrer Leitung . . .” Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Bernhard Overberg, November 22, 1816, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 423.

done in connection with the body? She said they would know everything, [and that] even the tiniest deed would appear before them clear as day.”<sup>26</sup> On another occasion, “our conversation came to direct temptation by the devil. I asked her whether she believed that the devil had such a connection to our minds that he could directly insert thoughts in them, and sometimes thoughts that one’s mind itself found absurd or abhorrent? She believed it with certainty, for she herself had [experienced] examples of it.”<sup>27</sup> Emmerick contemplated spiritual matters, the Scriptures, and the saints all her life. Wesener, meanwhile, was a man with a researcher’s curiosity and a Catholic who was *intellectually* engaging with his faith for the first time. In talking with Emmerick, Wesener was unafraid of asking big questions and offering his own speculations – something he might well have been more hesitant to do with a priest. She, meanwhile, knew Wesener was not there to investigate her orthodoxy, and could perhaps be freer in expounding her ideas. It was an ideal situation for both of them.

Religious subjects formed the bulk of their conversations. Wesener also, however, took the time to know Emmerick more generally, and she likewise took a friendly interest in his family, life, and work. Precisely because he was not there to investigate or examine her, they were able to let their talks together range freely. They discussed the war, a topic at the forefront of everyone’s minds (Emmerick correctly predicted Napoleon’s return from exile, but was proved wrong in her belief that Prussian rule of Westphalia would be temporary).<sup>28</sup> They talked

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<sup>26</sup> “Ich lenkte das Gespräch auf’s künftige Leben und fragte sie, ob sie glaube, daß sich unsere Seele nach der Trennung vom Körper alles dessen bewußt sein werde, was sie in der Verbindung mit dem Körper getan? Sie sagte, alles werde sie wissen, selbst die kleinste Tat werde ihr sonnenklar vorschweben.” Wesener, journal, May 12, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 33-34.

<sup>27</sup> “Endlich fiel unser Gespräch auf die unmittelbaren Versuchungen des Teufels. Ich fragte sie, ob sie glaube, daß der Teufel eine solche Verwandtschaft zu unserem Geiste habe, daß er uns unmittelbar Gedanken eingeben könne und manchmal Gedanken, die der Verstand selbst lächerlich und abscheulich finde. Sie meinte allerdings, denn sie selbst habe Proben davon.” Wesener, journal, August 2, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 73.

<sup>28</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 93-94; 150; 194.

about Wesener's other patients, whom Emmerick kept in her prayers.<sup>29</sup> They talked about each others' families (both had siblings whom they feared would not reach heaven).<sup>30</sup> Within weeks they had developed the close rapport that would last until her death.

### *Treating Emmerick's Physical Health: Practicing Medicine amid Mysticism*

Although Wesener began his relationship with Emmerick in March 1813 as a friend and admirer, not as doctor, he did not stop being a physician when he crossed Emmerick's threshold. For the first month of so of their acquaintance, Emmerick's personal doctor was officially Peter Krauthausen. In his journal, however, Wesener commented on what he observed of Emmerick's physical and mental states. These observations became even more systematic once he took over as her personal doctor. Over the succeeding months and years, he formed an overall picture of her health, as well as the nature and regularity of her mystical phenomena.

Emmerick's mysticism and spiritual practices cannot be separated out from any assessment of her physical health. Throughout her life, Emmerick had consciously denied herself food and rest, taken on demanding physical labor, and sought to experience pain. She engaged in these practices for multiple reasons. First, these self-mortifications were as a means of self-discipline, to increase in the Christian virtues of poverty, humility, and self-sacrifice. As Wesener wrote in his journal: "she said a person must have suffering, one must struggle with one's passions to learn about oneself and to master oneself."<sup>31</sup> Secondly, Emmerick used suffering as an aid to contemplation, so that she could experience more powerfully the physical suffering of Jesus. Finally, Emmerick believed she had a particular vocation to suffer for others,

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<sup>29</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 30, 34.

<sup>30</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 8, 130-131, 167.

<sup>31</sup> "Sie sagte, der Mensch müsse Leiden haben, er müsse seine Leidenschaften bekämpfen, um sich selbst zu kennen und beherrschen zu lernen." Wesener, journal, May 1, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 31.

offering up her pain in prayer as expiation for the sins of her community and souls trapped in Purgatory. As such, to view Emmerick's weakness, chronic pain, or digestive issues solely as physical ailments would be reductionist. To a large degree, she accepted, embraced, transformed, and even sought to increase the pain and discomfort she experienced. Any complete understanding of Emmerick's physical experiences must therefore be alive to the religious and symbolic meanings she ascribed to her own suffering.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, however, it is clear that Emmerick also lived with suffering, both physical and emotional, that she did *not* want, create, or accept. Suffering that fell into this category could be the unintended consequence of her ascetic and spiritual practices, or the result of a physical ailment that afflicted her, for related or unrelated reasons. Additionally, Emmerick sometimes found the pain of her stigmata wounds, her pangs of hunger, or her limited stamina and mobility to be more than she thought she could bear. In these times, she would often ask for relief from her physical suffering through medical means. Finally, Emmerick's medical history clearly shows that she was a person who had been chronically ill throughout her adult life. Just as a purely medical analysis of Emmerick would be reductionist, it would be equally one-sided to acknowledge only the religious and symbolic meanings of Emmerick's physical, mental, and emotional experiences. Her life as mystic was one of agony as well as ecstasy, apparent supernatural ability as well as evident physical disability. Her mysticism and illnesses were connected, and impossible for her, Dr. Wesener, or any later scholar to fully disentangle.<sup>33</sup>

As Emmerick's physician, Wesener was faced with a delicate task of discernment. As a doctor, he had a straightforward vocation to heal, cure, and alleviate pain. His patient, however,

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<sup>32</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 194-207.

<sup>33</sup> For an overview of contemporary approaches to the study of Christian mysticism as it relates to illness, and how scholars have tried to acknowledge and respect the reality of mystics' religious experiences as well as their illnesses, see Kevin Magill, Louise Nelstrop, and Bradley B Onishi, *Christian Mysticism: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Approaches* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), esp. 164-172.

actively sought out some types of pain as a religious practice. Wesener was committed to respecting Emmerick's wishes in this regard, and did not want to force treatments upon her which she did not want, such as trying to heal her stigmata wounds. He did, however, want to alleviate those physical afflictions which threatened her quality and longevity of life. He taught himself to listen carefully to the language of redemptive suffering Emmerick used as a practitioner of ascetic mysticism, in order to help guide the course of treatments he pursued as her personal doctor. This was something Dr. Krauthausen, in his brief time as Emmerick's physician post-stigmata, had not done. Indeed, the need to make such distinctions seems not to have crossed his mind, perhaps because he had a basic belief that his and the Vicar General's opinions about what was best for Emmerick (medically and otherwise) were more important than her own.<sup>34</sup>

Wesener, on the other hand, respected Emmerick's right to control over her own body, and was careful to listen to what she wanted.<sup>35</sup> At the same time however, Wesener's closeness to Emmerick and his viewing of her through the lens of his Catholic faith influenced how he evaluated her as a patient. He was forever having to distinguish between "delirium" and

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<sup>34</sup> Again, regarding this issue of the doctor-patient relationship and the changing power dynamics that accompanied the professionalization of medicine in Germany in this period, see Loetz, *Vom Kranken zum Patienten*. Another useful point of comparison in this regard would be that of German women institutionalized in mental asylums, at around this same time and going forward through the nineteenth century, for so-called *religiöser Wahnsinn*. Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, 36-70.

<sup>35</sup> Wesener, in fact, frequently used the language of "rights" to defend Emmerick against those who would impose their own will upon her life and particularly her body. In his respect for a woman's right to exert control over the treatment of her own body, he seems to have been ahead of his time. In his angry August 1813 letter to Vicar General Droste-Vischering, for example, Dr. Wesener wrote: "Was für ein Recht haben Sie, die Person [Emmerick] so äußerst zu belästigen und bis auf den Tod zu quälen? Sie wollen, Sie müssen die Sache untersuchen, gut, aber so untersucht man nicht. Heißt das untersuchen, wenn man mit einem Gefolge von acht oder zehn Personen daher kommt, die schwache Kranke von morgens 8 Uhr bis abends 6 Uhr belagert hält, ihr vor der ganzen Versammlung die Brust entblößt und das Zartgefühl der höchst reizbaren Kranken so preisgibt[?]" Wesener to Droste-Vischering, August 27, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 409. See also the closing sentences of Wesener's article in the *Mindener Tageblatt*, where he appealed to Emmerick's political right to privacy (and, in a more basic sense, dignity or respect): "Übrigens ist sie eine freie Bürgerin und steht unter dem Schutze der Gesetze. Sie gibt sich für nichts aus als für eine Kranke und verlangt in der ganzen Gotteswelt nichts, als – Ruhe. – Ist das ein Verbrechen?" Wesener, "Die Nonne zu Dülmen," in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 445.

“ecstasy,” “fainting” and “trances,” “dreams” and “visions,” “inedia” and “digestive disorder,” suffering-as-prayer and suffering-as-illness. Some of Emmerick’s behavior or symptoms he immediately “read” as illness through the lens of his medical training, and others he “read” as supernatural phenomena through the lens of his faith. Sometimes he was conscious of the fact that he was making such judgment calls, and at other times he appears not to have been aware that he was doing so. Sometimes, he was not sure whether he was dealing with illness, a divine charism, or perhaps both, and sometimes his opinions on a particular facet of Emmerick’s behavior evolved over time. Such were the travails of practicing medicine in the midst of mysticism.

A good example of this is Dr. Wesener’s treatment of Emmerick’s chronic pain. His patient experienced a variety of pains, for a variety of reasons: stiffness and bedsores due to her lack of mobility; headaches that may have been brought on by a lack of rest, food, and water; sore abdominal muscles and a burning throat from vomiting; and, of course, pain from her stigmata wounds. Sometimes, Emmerick expressed clearly her desire for this suffering, and at other times she complained that it was more than she could bear. At no time did Dr. Wesener attempt to heal her stigmata wounds, and thereby remove one of the apparent underlying causes of Emmerick’s recurring pain. He often washed and bandaged them, but used salve when he did so, and did not bind them restrictively as Dr. Krauthausen had done. He would apply various poultices on occasion when Emmerick complained of severe burning in the area, particularly on the cross wound on her chest. He also treated the pain caused by these wounds on a fairly regular basis, when Emmerick complained that it was particularly severe or when he observed that it was preventing her from sleeping. On these occasions, Wesener relied on one of the most common and effective palliatives available in his day: tincture of opium, or laudanum, which he delivered

as drops mixed in water. Occasionally, Wesener would administer tinctures of “Hoffmann’s drops” (ether) or “moschus” (musk) instead.<sup>36</sup>

Another indication of Wesener struggles to clearly distinguish mysticism from medical condition can be found in his descriptions of Emmerick’s trances and fainting spells in his journal. She experienced something that could be called a “trance” or “faint” on a daily basis, but the nature of these episodes varied widely. In some cases, her entire body went limp, her skin turned pale, her pulse and breathing slowed, and she appeared as if she was on the point of death.<sup>37</sup> In others, every muscle in her body tensed, her pulse often raced, and she became rigid as a column.<sup>38</sup> In perhaps the most dramatic cases, she would spring suddenly to her knees and pray for long minutes with arms outstretched, a feat she normally should not have had the strength to accomplish.<sup>39</sup> Sometimes her eyes were open, and sometimes closed. Sometimes her face took on a beatific expression, and at other times she appeared to be in pain or distress. Sometimes she was silent; sometimes she spoke confusedly, as if delirious; sometimes she had lucid conversations, but with an apparently invisible figure no one else could see.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes, Emmerick would remember what occurred while she was unconscious, but on most occasions she would claim to have no memory or awareness at all of what she did while “in trance.” Often, she would be apparently unaware of and unresponsive to any sound or touch, but immediately

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<sup>36</sup> See Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 19, 21, 57, 66, 92, 104, 108, 110, 122, 125, 132, 133, 147, 155, 163, 165, 170, 171, 172, 178, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 187, 188, 196, 204, 257, 272. Emmerick may well have been treated with tinctures of opium or similar drugs during her time in the convent as well. She told Wesener on one occasion that Krauthausen would order her a variety of medicines: Wesener, journal, May 27, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 46. Opiates can cause a number of side effects, including euphoria, dysphoria, hallucinations, constipation, respiratory depression, and, of course, sedation. It is important to consider the possibility that at least some of Emmerick’s mystical experiences, particularly her visions or feelings of ecstasy, were in fact induced by opium. Being a historian and not a medical expert, I cannot speak with expertise on this point.

<sup>37</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 108, 114, 117, 132, 172, 176.

<sup>38</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 28, 36, 38, 48, 51, 53, 60, 79, 112, 147, 154-55, 173, 176.

<sup>39</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 5, 9, 55, 60-61, 180, 188-91.

<sup>40</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 10, 14, 18-19, 21, 82, 88, 106, 157, 176, 182, 247, 258.

come to full wakefulness if a member of the clergy commanded her to awake by her vow of obedience.<sup>41</sup>

It seemed clear to Dr. Wesener that some of these episodes were faints or delirium brought on by exhaustion or excessive pain. Some, he knew, could have been caused by the laudanum he gave Emmerick to treat her chronic pain. Others, however, he believed to be true mystical, ecstatic trances. When Emmerick would pray on her knees with outstretched arms, for example, he considered this miraculous; for not only did he believe her incapable of “faking” her bedridden state through base deceit, but as a physician he witnessed evidence of her physical weakness on a daily basis. Wesener was further convinced by what he considered the remarkable wisdom and beauty of what Emmerick said in some of these “trances.” On April 2, 1813, for example, Wesener wrote:

Shortly hereafter she fell into a stupefaction, but convulsed and whimpered constantly. She was also delirious. But what a delirium! She spoke with lucidity, and unsophisticated, beautiful morality. She appeared to speak with someone and admonished him for his tepidity and meanness in his moral behavior . . . As she came completely to herself, she asked if someone [else] had not been here. As I answered this in the negative, she said she had thought she had been speaking with someone. I bid her to ask the Lord, our God to reveal to her for what purpose he did all these things through her.<sup>42</sup>

Initially, Wesener described all these very different faints, trances, convulsions, etc. as either *Ohnmachten* [“faints”] or *Ekstasen* [“ecstasies”], using the terms more or less interchangeably.

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<sup>41</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 48, 154-55, 173, 176, 189, 190, 202, 275-76.

<sup>42</sup> “Kurz hierauf fiel sie in eine Betäubung, krümmte sich aber und winselte alle Augenblicke. Sie delirierte auch. Aber was für ein Delirium! Sie sprach mit Zusammenhang, und lautere, schöne Moral. Sie schien mit jemand zu sprechen und verwies ihm seine Lauheit und Kleinlichkeit und seinem moralischen Betragen . . . Als sie ganz zu sich gekommen, fragte sie, ob nicht jemand hier gewesen. Als ich dieses verneinte, sagte sie, habe geglaubt mit jemanden zu sprechen. Ich bat sie, Gott unsern Herrn zu bitten, daß er ihr offenbare, zu welchem Zwecke er alles das an ihr tue.” Wesener, journal, April 2, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 18-19. I think one has to consider the possibility that Emmerick in fact intended her admonishing words for Wesener himself, and used the “cover” of a mystical trance and an invisible, “other person” to deliver these harsh words. Then again, Emmerick did not hesitate to admonish Wesener and others directly over their moral behavior on many occasions. All in all, I think it unlikely that she would feel the need to resort to such subterfuge, especially with Wesener.

By mid-1814, he had developed more hard-and-fast rules regarding terminology;<sup>43</sup> but there were still many cases that fell into a grey area between obvious ecstatic trance and obvious fainting spell.

Regarding his medical treatment of Emmerick's "faints" and "ecstasies:" Wesener at no time sought to induce or deepen such states through mesmerist techniques. As will be discussed in greater detail below, German-speaking Europe (and to a lesser extent England) was in the midst of a mesmerist "revival" of sorts in the 1810s-1830s, though it was now more often called "animal magnetism."<sup>44</sup> Some of Wesener's medical contemporaries experimented with inducing trances as a therapeutic and diagnostic aid, or even as a means of numbing patients to the pain of surgery. Perhaps most famously, physician Justinus Kerner used "magnetic" treatments to induce trances in a merchant's wife named Friederike Hauffe, who allegedly suffered from a form of spirit possession. His published records of her strange utterances during trance would gain her a reputation as the *Seherin von Prevorst* in 1829.<sup>45</sup> Wesener was aware of the latest research on magnetism, as will be seen, but saw no reason to artificially lead Emmerick into trance state through "medical" means. If anything, he would try to rouse her from "trances" if they appeared to be causing her physical pain or exhaustion. Most frequently, however, he simply observed and recorded them.

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<sup>43</sup> As Wesener explains in his journal entry for August 20, 1814: Samstag, den 20. August abends klagte sie immer noch über heftige Schmerzen in der Seite und als man sie aus dem Bette nahm, schrie sie vor Schmerz und fiel hierauf in Ohnmacht. Es war dies eine gewöhnliche Ohnmacht, d.h. nicht der bekannte ekstatische Zustand mit unbiegsamer Steifigkeit des ganzen Körpers, sondern alles war schwang [sic] und alle Glieder hingen schlaff herunter." *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 117.

<sup>44</sup> Laurie Johnson, "The Romantic and Modern Practice of Animal Magnetism: Friedrich Schlegel's Protocols of the Magnetic Treatment of Countess Lesniowska," *Women in German Yearbook* 23 (2007), 10-14; Matthew Bell, *The German Tradition of Psychology in Literature and Thought, 1700-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 167-207; Fred Kaplan, "'The Mesmeric Mania:' the Early Victorians and Animal Magnetism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1974), 691-702; Bettina Gruber, *Die Seherin von Prevorst: Romantischer Okkultismus als Religion, Wissenschaft und Literatur* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> Justinus Kerner, *Die Seherin von Prevorst: Eröffnungen über das innere Leben des Menschen und über das Hereinragen einer Geisterwelt in die unsere*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1829); Gruber, *Seherin von Prevorst*.

Another, related area where the boundary between mysticism and mere natural phenomenon was difficult for Wesener to distinguish was that of Emmerick's visions. In his journal, Wesener recorded many of her visions over the years. Famously, once he arrived on the scene in late 1818, Clemens Brentano would especially revere Emmerick's visionary powers, considering all of her revelations to be unquestionably divine in origin. Dr. Wesener took a more complex view of the matter. Some of the visions Emmerick related to him he regarded with awe as genuinely revelatory, but others he was not so sure about. In fact, on more than one occasion he asked Emmerick about how well she was able to distinguish her visions from ordinary dreams, or her imagination, or hallucinations that might be brought on by her hunger. (Wesener did not explicitly mention hallucinations brought on by medication, but must have known that was also possible.) Emmerick insisted she knew the difference quite well: "I know very well how to distinguish imagination and illusion from reality and truth." She admitted, however, that she had a "lively imagination" that would sometimes try to lead her astray.<sup>46</sup>

Ecstasies, trances, visions - all these existed in a grey area for Dr. Wesener. Sometimes they appeared to him to be symptoms of physical illness, and at other times they struck him powerfully as miraculous tokens from God. Other aspects of Emmerick's health and behavior, however, were much less ambiguous to his mind. Above all, he saw her inability to keep down solid food in straightforward terms as some sort of chronic digestive disorder. For him, it was neither a divine gift, nor a deliberate form of extreme fasting on Emmerick's part. The only miraculous element of her inedia was that she somehow was managing to survive on almost nothing at all.

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<sup>46</sup> "Ich weiß übrigens Einbildung und Täuschung sehr gut von Wirklichkeit und Wahrheit zu unterscheiden," setzte sie noch hinzu, "ich habe mir schon wohl eine lebhafte Einbildung von einer Sache gemacht, daß ich sie am Ende wirklich zu sehen glaubte, aber ich konnte mich doch immer wieder finden . . ." Wesener, journal, February 14, 1816, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 194.

Dr. Wesener appears, based on a close reading of the evidence, to have adopted Emmerick's own view of her eating issues. From the beginning of her fame as a stigmatic, nearly everyone around her assumed that Emmerick's inedia was supernatural in origin – that is, that she had deliberately asked in prayer for the special grace of living solely on the Eucharist, just as she had asked to experience the pain of Jesus' Crucifixion. A number of medieval mystics were supposed to have sustained themselves on the Eucharist alone, including Lydwina of Schiedam and Elisabeth Achler. Emmerick may well have known the stories of these women. Yet if she was indeed trying to imitate mystics past in abstaining from all food, she failed to say so to Overberg, Rensing, Wesener, or anyone else in their extensive examinations of her spiritual practices. She shared with Wesener and Overberg her recurring dreams about food without any apparent shame, though she did describe these dreams as “temptations.”<sup>47</sup>

According to her own testimony, as well as that of her acquaintances, Emmerick had long practiced abstinence as a form of spiritual discipline. Yet at the same time, she recognized the necessity of eating at least some food to maintain her physical stamina. Peter Krauthausen's medical reports on her time in the convent show that she actively sought treatment for years for chronic digestive issues, including vomiting, constipation, and abdominal swelling.<sup>48</sup> In late 1812, however – that is, at around the same time she became bedridden and her stigmata wounds appeared – these chronic digestive issues progressed to the point where she would immediately vomit up almost any solid food.<sup>49</sup> Through trial and error, she had managed to develop a “diet” she could tolerate by early 1813, which consisted of water, beef broth, plum juice, and the occasional bit of cooked apple – in addition of course, to the Eucharist she received daily from Limberg or Lambert (See Table 1).

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<sup>47</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 87, 93

<sup>48</sup> Krauthausen, “Bemerkungen der Krankheiten,” in *Tegebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 400-403.

<sup>49</sup> Krauthausen, “Bemerkungen der Krankheiten,” in *Tegebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 403.

Emmerick and Wesener were united in their desire to increase her food intake and thus improve her physical stamina. For Wesener, this was a clear intervention to promote the longevity and overall quality of her life. In particular, he had noticed that Emmerick's physical well-being was closely tied to her emotional state. After any frightening, stressful, or unpleasant event, her health would rapidly decline. For example, after Vicar General Droste-Vischering visited unexpectedly in August 1813 and told Emmerick he was making plans for renewing the Church investigation, Wesener found her that evening "so miserable, her pulse so depressed [*gesunken*], so small, that [both] I and she herself expected her death with certainty."<sup>50</sup> On another occasion, when Fr. Limberg became upset with her over something trifling, it affected her so much that she became "deathly weak . . . hardly able to bring forth one soft word," and only regained her usual strength when he forgave her.<sup>51</sup>

Emmerick's younger sister, Gertrud, was perhaps the most frequent cause of stress on Emmerick's sensitive nerves. Approximately four years younger than Emmerick, Gertrud lived and slept alongside her sister and acted as one of her caretakers, performing intimate duties such as helping her change clothes. She left no writings of her own behind, but both Wesener and, later, Clemens Brentano, would spill much ink complaining about Gertrud: about her negligence, her poor judgment, and frequently sullen attitude. Dr. Wesener tried more than once to force Gertrud to leave, appealing to other Emmerick siblings and, repeatedly, to Fr. Overberg, for help

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<sup>50</sup> This incident, which prompted Wesener's angry letter to the Vicar General cited in the Introduction, is worth citing more fully, as the Vicar General's handling of Emmerick physically and emotionally provides such a stark contrast to Wesener's approach: "Abends traf ich die Kranke so elend, der Puls war so gesunken, so klein, daß ich sicher und sie selbst ihren Tod erwarteten. Ihre Schwester und Herr Limberg sagten mir, daß der Herr Vicarius generalis mit einem starken Gefolge sie heute den ganzen Tag belästigt hätten. Daß man ihr mehrere Male die Brust entblößt und sogar das Kreuz abgewaschen hätte. In meinem Unwillen über dieses Verfahren schrieb ich beiliegenden Brief. Samstag, den 28. August morgens war die Kranke etwas munterer, der Puls war aber noch äußerst klein und fadenförmig. Sie hatte eine sehr elende Nacht gehabt und [war] immer von Schreckenbildern geängstigt worden. Sie sagte mir, daß sie in ihrem Gewissen überzeugt sei, daß sie mit ihren Zeichen nicht weiter gehen dürfe . . ." Wesener, journal, August 27-28, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 78.

<sup>51</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 122-123.

in doing so.<sup>52</sup> Emmerick herself, however, strongly resisted these attempts, as she felt a great responsibility to try to save Gertrud's soul by encouraging her sister's good behavior. Being of such different temperaments however, the two often fell to fighting, and when this happened Emmerick's health would noticeably decline for days afterward.<sup>53</sup> Episodes like these convinced Dr. Wesener that unnecessary visits, or a new investigation, could be deadly in Emmerick's current state. By reintroducing her to food, he hoped to provide her with the physical stamina to withstand the intrusive curiosity seekers, as well as the ever-present threat of a new investigation, that were now a part of her daily life.

Emmerick, for her part, saw her bedridden state as a God-sent affliction to force her to rely fully on Him.<sup>54</sup> She was also frequently frustrated and dismayed, however, by her lack of mobility. Trapped in her Dülmen apartment, she was unable to attend Mass, which she missed very much.<sup>55</sup> Equally painful for her was her inability to perform the simple acts of ministry she had been accustomed to do in the past. No longer could she go to offer food to her neighbors or tend to those who were ill. Often, the pain and weakness in her hands and arms was such that she could not even knit clothing for the poor, though she would do so whenever her health permitted her.<sup>56</sup> She knew eating food again would be a major step towards regaining the ability to move on her own, and so with her blessing, Dr. Wesener tried for years to gradually re-introduce solid food into her diet.

In this process, with little more than educated guesswork to go on, he proceeded slowly, aware of how painful the consequences were for Emmerick if his efforts led to either vomiting or

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<sup>52</sup> See Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 107; 126-129; Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Fr. Bernhard Overberg, November 22, 1816, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 420-22.

<sup>53</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 41, 127, 164, 180, 184-85, 211-12, 240, 253, 261, 272.

<sup>54</sup> Wesener, journal, May 8, 1814, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 101.

<sup>55</sup> Emmerick in fact tried to obtain the required permission from Vicar General Droste-Vischering to have Masses said in her room, having found an anonymous benefactor who offered to pay the expenses. Without giving a reason for doing so, Droste-Vischering refused her permission. Hümpfner, *Akten*, 170 n. 3.

<sup>56</sup> See for example Wesener, journal, February 22, 1815, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 147.

constipation. All the while, the careless actions of Emmerick's sister, Gertrud frequently threw Wesener's cautious efforts into chaos. According to Wesener, Gertrud would feed Emmerick food when her sister was in a delirious state and apparently unaware of what she was doing.<sup>57</sup> These actions may have been well-intended, and may even have been in response to Emmerick's own prompting, for Wesener heard her ask for food while confused or delirious on a few occasions.<sup>58</sup> Regardless, the results were always disastrous. Wesener achieved his greatest success in 1817, when he was able to gradually add milk and eventually a bit of barley to her diet, but after a few months of this Emmerick was once again unable to keep down anything other than water.<sup>59</sup> In the end, Emmerick remained unable to consume more than occasional, meager amounts of solid food for the rest of her life.

The other aspect of Emmerick's physical condition about which Wesener seemed to have no doubts was her stigmata. Whereas he saw her inability to eat as entirely due to some natural illness, her stigmata were for him a grace given to Emmerick by God to help lead others to the true faith, as they had led him. As he told Emmerick one day, when she was complaining about the many visitors who came to see her wounds out of mere curiosity: "you must consider that your outward signs [*Zeichen*, i.e. stigmata] are not for you alone. God performs miracles to strengthen the pious and to bring the erring to correction."<sup>60</sup> Wesener was not present in her room at every hour of every day, and must have accounted for the possibility that she, or someone else, was aggravating the wounds when he was not there. He was convinced, however,

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<sup>57</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 66, 80, 107, 177

<sup>58</sup> See for example Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 82, 257.

<sup>59</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 221-253.

<sup>60</sup> "Aber, gabe ich Ihr zu bedenken, 'denken Sie an Ihre äußeren Zeichen, die sind nicht für Sie allein. Gott tut Wunder um die Frommen zu stärken und die Verirrten zurecht zu bringen.'" Wesener, journal, June 18, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 65. For the record, Emmerick was not impressed by this argument, especially when Wesener tried to compare her to case to that of St. Francis Xavier. "Ach, das war ein ganz anderes. Dieser hatte es mit wilden Menschen, mit Heiden zu tun. Die von Christum nichts wußten. Von Christen aber verlangt der Herr Glauben, und wer glaubt, der bekommt Überzeugung dazu, wer sich aber erst bei mir überzeugen will, um zu glauben. der kommt nie zum Ziele."

that this was not the case. He could not offer any scientific proof in this regard, other than the findings of the Church's ten-day continuous observation. Rather, he was convinced because he considered such deceit impossible for a person of Emmerick's moral character. He could not imagine others around Emmerick, such as Limberg or Lambert, doing such a thing, either.

What about Gertrud Emmerick, the mysterious, much-maligned figure about whom we know so little? Dr. Wesener did not think much of her Gertrud's character, to put it mildly, and if she was able to make Emmerick eat against her will when she was "delirious" and "in trance," it would seem logical to assume that Gertrud could have manipulated Emmerick's wounds during such times as well. Certainly, she had the opportunity to do so, being alone with her sister in their shared bed every night. Yet while Wesener accused Gertrud in his journal and in correspondence of a number of misdeeds – of feeding Emmerick food that made her sick, of bickering with and emotionally abusing her, even of spreading rumors about her – there is no surviving documentary evidence that Wesener considered her a suspect in faking Emmerick's stigmata.<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, one is forced to come to the conclusion that the physician's belief in the authenticity of Emmerick's wounds was, first and foremost, a conviction borne by faith. As he wrote a medical colleague:

I now inform you that I have strictly observed the nun since March 21 [sic; actually March 22], that I have not suspect a shadow of deception, and I find the matter exactly the same as I found it six weeks before. She has, quite naturally, the five wounds of Christ. . . If I now tell you, that the patient consumes nothing but clear water, that she has had no stools since February 28<sup>th</sup> of this year, and that she urinates at the most three times a week, this is somewhat hard to believe medically; abut if my conviction is worth

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<sup>61</sup> Equally bizarre to me is the fact that there is no evidence of anyone else having suspected Gertrud, either. As part of the Church investigation, for example, Fr. Rensing interviewed several of Emmerick's friends and relatives – yet he took no deposition from Gertrud Emmerick. Or, if he did, that document has been lost. Vicar General Droste-Vischering openly suspected Limberg, Lambert, and/or Emmerick herself of faking her stigmata in his letters to Rensing, yet none of his surviving letters mention Gertrud. A conspiracy theorist might conclude that someone has destroyed documents related to Gertrud or otherwise kept them out of archival materials, but one cannot derive evidence merely from absence.

anything to you, then I say to you, that I am so firmly convinced of it as anything in my life. The character of this person is the purest love for God and humanity, even today she declared to me that she would let herself be torn into shreds if it could save a single soul from corruption. Regarding religion and morals she has the most enlightened, purest notions, and her speech is full of meekness and love.<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, alongside the language of faith Wesener wrote to his fellow doctor that Emmerick bore “quite naturally” the wounds of Christ. Did he then, believe that her wounds, though no less wondrous, were the result of a phenomenon that could be explained and described by natural science? Unfortunately, beyond his tantalizing choice of words in this May 1813 letter, there appear to be no other documents in which Wesener speculated on such a possibility. As with her trances, Wesener restricted his role regarding Emmerick’s stigmata to that of observer.

These observations would, with a few chronological gaps, span the period from March 23, 1813 to November 3, 1819. Over that time, Wesener faithfully recorded on a day-to-day basis whether Emmerick’s stigmata bled, and if so, which wounds in particular and how much. This remarkable record reveals both continuities and changes. On the one hand, Emmerick’s stigmata bled very consistently on Fridays, the day of Jesus’ Crucifixion, throughout this lengthy period. On the other hand, the amount of bleeding, and which wounds bled, varied considerably. As the years went on, Wesener noted that Emmerick’s stigmata appeared to be healing, and by mid 1819 her bleeding almost completely stopped. (See Table 2).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “Jetzt melde ich Ihnen, daß ich die Nonne seit dem 21. März streng beobachtete, und daß ich nie einen Schatten von Trug geahnt, und die Sache gerade heute noch so finde, wie vor sechs Wochen. Sie hat ganz natürlich die fünf Wunden Christi. . . Wenn ich Ihnen nun sage, daß die Patientin nichts genießt als klares Wasser, daß sie nach dem 28. Febr. d. l. keinen Stuhlgang gehabt, und daß sie höchstens dreimal in der Woche uriniert, so ist dieses medizinisch etwas schwer zu glauben; aber wenn Ihnen meine Überzeugung etwas wert ist, so sage ich Ihnen, daß ich davon so fest, wie von meinem Leben überzeugt bin. Der Charakter der Person ist die reinste Liebe zu Gott und den Menschen, noch heute erklärte sie mir, sie wollte sich in Stücke zerhauen lassen, wenn sie eine einzige Seele vom Verderben retten könnte. Über Religion und Moral hat sie die aufgeklärtesten, reinsten Begriffe und ihre Reden sind voll Sanftmut und Liebe.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Theodor Lutterbeck, May 13, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 403-404.

<sup>63</sup> There are a few chronological gaps in Wesener’s Emmerick journal, which began on March 23, 1813. The first, which spans the period July 21 – August 1 of that year, was apparently the result of Count Leopold von Stolberg and his family’s visit to Dülmen during this period, and their monopolization of Emmerick’s time. The reason for the largest gap in the journal, from mid-November 1813 to April 1, 1814, is unknown, but may have something to do

*Grappling with Emmerick's Mystical Phenomena: Magnetism and the early Nineteenth-Century Catholic Imagination*

In his Emmerick journal, Wesener provided observations of Emmerick's trances, visions, inability to eat, and stigmata over the course of nearly seven years. This remarkable document also recounted his efforts to treat those aspects of Emmerick's physical suffering that she wanted relief from, including his efforts to introduce solid food into her diet and his use of laudanum and similar medicines when she was too agitated to sleep. Along the way, it also records the deep conversations and simple tokens of respect and understanding that undergirded their lasting friendship. The question remains, however: did Dr. Wesener, as a physician and natural researcher, simply content himself with observing, treating, and marveling at his unusual patient? Does his journal record any attempts on his part to investigate and explain the mysterious phenomena he witnessed?

In fact, Wesener did perform investigations and experiments of a kind on Emmerick: magnetic experiments. Today, medical professionals would consider magnetism to be pseudoscience, at best, and some of Wesener's contemporaries thought so, as well. In German Europe in the first decades of the nineteenth century, however, there were also many physicians (and other educated persons, such as artists and philosophers) who thought there was something to magnetic theory. Many of these persons, like Wesener himself, had interests in so-called "animal magnetism" that were not strictly scientific. Rather, they were fascinated by magnetism

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with the quartering of both Prussian and Russian troops in and around Dülmen during this period. Finally, Dr. Wesener traveled with Christian Brentano from mid-June through late August of 1819. Otherwise, his journal provides a continuous daily record of Emmerick's health, and especially the behavior of her stigmata, from March 23, 1813 through November 3, 1819, when the journal stops abruptly. See Hümpfner, "Einleitung," *Tagebuch*, liv-lv.

precisely because it seemed to offer a way to bridge the chasm between science and religion, the material and the immaterial world.

Educated German Catholics, in particular, had a relationship with magnetic theory that went back to its initial introduction by Austrian Franz Anton Mesmer in the 1770s. Before he went on to Paris and became truly (in)famous in the 1780s, Mesmer made his start by demonstrating his techniques to appreciative, educated audiences across southern Germany. During this time, a curious incident brought Mesmer on a collision course with another Austrian who performed on the road: Father Joseph Anton Gassner. Gassner (1727-1779) astonished crowds across southern Germany with his dramatic exorcisms, which seemed to miraculously cure every kind of ailment. Gassner briefly earned the trust and public approbation of a number of clergy. The most notable of these was the Bishop of Regensburg, who invited Gassner to work his wonders in various places in his diocese.

Then, the Bavarian Academy of Sciences invited Franz Anton Mesmer to offer his opinion of Gassner before the electoral court in Munich. Mesmer demonstrated his own “magnetic” cures for the assembly of notables, and declared Gassner’s “exorcisms” to be nothing more than an unwitting application of the same principles. The educated public took Mesmer’s side. Emperor Joseph II himself ordered Gassner to desist. The Bishop of Regensburg quietly provided him a position at a parish church in the village of Pondorf, hoping the public would quickly forget his endorsement of the disgraced exorcist.<sup>64</sup> Here was a case where two worlds within German Catholicism collided: that of the mostly lower-class, less-educated crowds that

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<sup>64</sup> Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment*; Karl Baier, “Mesmer versus Gaßner: Ein Kontroverse der 1770er Jahre und ihre Interpretationen,” in Maren Sziede and Helmut Zander, eds., *Von der Dämonologie zum Unbewussten: Die Transformation der Anthropologie um 1800* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 47-84; Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 56-57.

followed Gassner, and educated, Enlightened Catholic elites, many of whom placed their “faith” in Mesmer.

Of course, the historical irony of the Gassner-Mesmer encounter is that, from a twenty-first-century perspective, they both appear equally dubious. As H.C. Erik Midelfort has pointed out, the animal magnetist’s talk of channeling and redirecting invisible forces was no less “mystical” than Gassner’s reference to demons, and no less lacking in any physical proof of its validity. As Mesmer himself admitted, his and Gassner’s techniques of intense staring, massaging the temples of the patient, and so on, were virtually the same. What led Mesmer to victory was nothing more or less than his adoption of the language of Enlightenment rather than faith – of scientific method, natural forces, subjects, experiments, and rational theorization. This façade of scientism, however, would not stand up to serious scrutiny by other natural researchers, who increasingly labeled Mesmer a fraud. Mesmer would face humiliation and a dramatic loss of credibility when a 1784 French investigative commission, led by Benjamin Franklin, Antoine Lavoisier, Joseph-Ignace Guillotin, and Jean-Sylvain Bailly dismissed mesmerism as manipulation of the imagination. As the commission pointed out, Mesmer had no physical proof that the magnetic fluid he claimed to manipulate existed at all.<sup>65</sup>

Yet mesmerism refused to die with the French report of 1784. As Robert Darnton wrote of the phenomenon: “In its first stages, mesmerism expressed the Enlightenment’s faith in reason taken to an extreme, an Enlightenment run wild, which later was to provoke a movement toward the opposite extreme in the form of romanticism. Mesmerism played a role in this movement,

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<sup>65</sup> I.M.L. Donaldson, trans. and ed., *The Reports of the Royal Commission of 1784 on Mesmer’s System of Animal Magnetism, and other contemporary documents* (Edinburgh: James Lind Library and The Sibbald Library, Royal College of Physicians, 2014), [https://www.rcpe.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/the\\_royal\\_commission\\_on\\_animal\\_-\\_translated\\_by\\_iml\\_donaldson\\_1.pdf](https://www.rcpe.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/the_royal_commission_on_animal_-_translated_by_iml_donaldson_1.pdf) (accessed June 02, 2018).

too: it showed the point at which the two extremes met.”<sup>66</sup> German Romantic artists and philosophers from Schlegel and Schelling to Hoffmann and Kleist (and, of course, Clemens Brentano) evinced a fascination with “magnetism” and “somnambulism.”<sup>67</sup> This fascination, however, was not confined to the literary, philosophical, and artistic realm. German scientists and medical doctors continued to perform types of magnetic experiments on their patients, as discussed above. In addition, some early-nineteenth-century European Catholics, seeking a Romantic unity of faith with science, would go so far as to use magnetism as a means of “explaining” mystical phenomena, even the miracles Jesus performed in the New Testament.<sup>68</sup> In the same era Wesener was treating Emmerick, articles on magnetism were appearing German-language medical journals and Catholic books and periodicals alike.<sup>69</sup>

From his first acquaintance with Emmerick, Wesener performed what could be considered “magnetic” experiments on her. These experiments did not engage at all with her stigmata; rather, they were concerned with her apparent clairvoyant abilities, and particularly her ability to “sense” blessed persons and objects in her proximity while in ecstatic trance. Interestingly, it was Emmerick’s confessor, Fr. Limberg – a man both Droste-Vischering and Brentano dismissed as simple and ill-educated – that first interested Wesener in these types of experiments. In the very first entry in his Emmerick journal, for instance, Wesener describes how Limberg showed him the way Emmerick, eyes closed and deep in an apparent trance, would suddenly turn toward, cling to, kiss, and even suck on the “blessed fingers” of Limberg, a priest,

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<sup>66</sup> Darnton, *Mesmerism*, 39.

<sup>67</sup> For a complex exploration of magnetism and German Romanticism, see Jürgen Barkhoff, *Magnetische Fiktionen: Literarisierung des Mesmerismus in der Romantik* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1995).

<sup>68</sup> Notable in this regard is Aubin Gauthier’s *Le Magnétisme Catholique* (Paris: Bureau de la revue magnétique, 1844).

<sup>69</sup> See for example Joseph Weber, “Vom Verhältnisse der Elektrizität zum Magnetismus,” *Literaturzeitung für katholische Religionslehrer* 76 (September 20, 1821), 377-384; Johann Heinrich Pabst, “Zur Theorie der Ehe,” *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und katholische Theologie* 9, no. 3 (1834) 38-78; W. A. Schickedanz, “Des französischen Philosophen Louis Claude de Saint-Martin nachgelassene Werke,” *Literaturzeitung für die katholische Geistlichkeit* 22, (Dec. 1833), 279-295.

if they came near her, “as metal is drawn toward a magnet.” Toward Wesener’s hand she exhibited no reaction at all.<sup>70</sup> Then, the Dominican demonstrated for Wesener how Emmerick would immediately cross herself if he silently blessed her, even though she could not see him.<sup>71</sup>

The doctor was greatly impressed, and from then on he would constantly conduct such experiments on Emmerick. If, during trance, he held out a crucifix or reliquary toward her, she would reach out and clutch it; if he held out a holy card or devotional image, she would kiss it.<sup>72</sup> If he flicked droplets of holy water on her, she would cross herself, while normal water provoked no reaction at all.<sup>73</sup> Sometimes, these experiments went wrong, and Emmerick would react to the “wrong” stimulus or fail to react to the “right” one.<sup>74</sup> Some experiments did not work out at all, such as the occasion when Limberg and Wesener asked Emmerick, while she was in trance, to name the nature of her illness and where it was centered in her body.<sup>75</sup> The overwhelming majority of the time, however, Wesener and Limberg achieved the results they expected. When Wesener brought friends and relatives to see Emmerick and she fell into a trance, he would almost proudly put her through her magnetic “paces,” having Limberg bless her silently from around the corner to see if she would react, and so on.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “Herr Limberg bewegte sich die beiden geweihten Finger bis ungefähr auf 2 Zoll weit an ihre Lippen; sogleich bog sich der streife Körper, wie sich das Eisen zum Magneten zieht, zu den Fingern, und wenn sie die Finger mit ihren Lippen erreicht hatte, küßte sie selbe und sog auch wohl an dem Zeigefinger. . . Hierauf brachte ich auf Herrn Limbergs Geheiß meine Finger an ihren Mund. Sie blieb aber in ohnmächtigen Zustand und rührte sich gar nicht.” Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 4; see also 38, 92-93, 157

<sup>71</sup> Wesener, journal, March 23, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 5, 25, 51-52, 56, 206, 214, 241-42, 244, 246.

<sup>73</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 10, 53-54.

<sup>74</sup> See for example Wesener, journal, June 16, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 60.

<sup>75</sup> Wesener, journal, January 25, 1816, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 180. Emmerick offered no answers to this question. When Limberg commanded her by her vow of obedience to answer, she awakened from trance and asked if someone had been calling her.

<sup>76</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 9, 15, 25-49.

Wesener wrote in his journal that he “often discussed animal magnetism and the similarities of its manifestations with the manifestations on our patient” with Fr. Limberg.<sup>77</sup> Magnetism would become even more of a focus of their discussions when a certain Brentano arrived in Dülmen: not Clemens (yet), but rather his brother, Christian, who was a trained physician. Over a year before his elder brother would make his way to Emmerick, Christian Brentano came to see her on April 5, 1817. he would stay for several weeks, building a close friendship with Emmerick, Fr. Limberg, and especially with Dr. Wesener.

Dr. Brentano,<sup>78</sup> like his brother Clemens, had recently rediscovered the Catholic faith into which he had been baptized, and it was this faith in part that drew him to Dülmen.<sup>79</sup> He was also led, however, by his strong interests in animal magnetism. Almost immediately after arriving in Dülmen, he discussed his understanding of the phenomenon at length with Dr. Wesener and Fr. Limberg. Listening to the learned doctor, “we realized,” Wesener wrote, “that magnetism was nothing other than an over-streaming of the fullness of health and life, which is enflamed through religion and the central pillars of the same, that is love of God the Savior and of neighbor.”<sup>80</sup> In

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<sup>77</sup> “. . . Herr Limberg, mit dem ich oft über den tierischen Magnetismus und die Ähnlichkeit seiner Äußerungen mit den Erscheinungen an unser Kranken mich unterhalten, . . .” Wesener, journal, April 14, 1815, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 153-54.

<sup>78</sup> Tedious and tendentious as it will sound to use it over and over, I will refer to Christian Brentano as “Dr. Brentano” in order to distinguish him from Clemens Brentano.

<sup>79</sup> So overcome was Christian Brentano at his first sight of Emmerick’s stigmata, in fact, that he fell to his knees and begged to kiss her hand. This embarrassed and upset Emmerick greatly, and she protested that she did not deserve such veneration. It was only after Wesener reassured her of Dr. Brentano’s moral character that she agreed to let him see her again. Wesener, journal, April 5, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 227-228.

<sup>80</sup> “Herr P. Limberg und ich hatten in den vorigen Tagen durch die lehrreiche Unterhaltung mit dem Herrn Dr. Brentano uns mit dem Wesen und den Erscheinungen des Magnetismus vertrauter gemacht und . . . wir eingesehen, daß der Magnetismus nichts anderes sei als ein Überströmen von der Fülle der Gesundheit und des Lebens, welches durch Religion und den Hauptpfeiler derselben, die Liebe zu Gott, Erlöser und zum Nächsten, entflammt wird, . . .” Wesener, journal, April 16, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 230. For a time, Clemens Brentano possessed Wesener’s Emmerick journal. He showed this passage to his brother Christian, who wrote in the margins his own more elaborated definition of magnetism: “ein Überströmen von der Fülle der Gesundheit und des Lebens, welches Überströmen eines Spiritus rectoris vitae, der, vielleicht eins durch die ganze Natur, von dem Kranken durch und in einer communionem spirituali vel (seu et) corporali empfangen, sich in demselben wiederfindend und begegnend, dort nach Beschaffenheit seines Prinzips irdisch, über- oder unterirdisch fortflamme und sonach körperlich oder geistig heilsam oder verderblich wirken könne, der aber durch Religion und den Hauptpfeiler derselben, die Liebe zum

other words, holy objects and persons radiated an invigorating magnetic energy that was palpable to sensitive persons nearby. It was a theory that, in effect, transformed “the power of the Holy Spirit” into “magnetism,” clothing the invisible power of God in the language of natural science.

Inspired by Dr. Brentano, Wesener and Limberg not only continued the experiments with Emmerick they had already been making, but added new elements. Now, Fr. Limberg used his capacity as ordained priest to harness the spiritual, magnetic energy that adhered him by virtue of his holy office, and direct it toward Emmerick with the aim of improving her vitality. He breathed into her open mouth as she was sleeping. He laid his hands on her when she was uncomfortable or in pain. He bestowed his priestly blessing on the water she drank.<sup>81</sup> All of these actions have a deep history as traditional means of conveying blessings through the Holy Spirit, in Scripture as well as Christian history. Now, Dr. Brentano encouraged Wesener and Limberg to use a new language and theoretical framework to describe these actions: that of animal magnetism.

Emmerick came to respect Dr. Brentano and enjoy his company, but she viewed magnetism with great suspicion. On a number of occasions, she advised Dr. Wesener of her concerns that magnetic experiments were a form of black magic. Over the coming months she reported receiving a series of visions, in which her spiritual guide told her that magnetism as a medical treatment could, in certain conditions be permissible; but if this force was manipulated by man for mere entertainment, or to try and mimic divine powers such as the ability to know the future, then it was a work of the devil.<sup>82</sup>

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Erlöser und zum Nächsten, entflammt werden könne, dürfe und solle.” Quoted in Hümpfner, ed., *Tagebuch*, 230 n. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 230, 231, 236, 256, 257.

<sup>82</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 233, 235, 238.

*Bodde's Pamphlet and the Decision not to Publish*

Soon however, a greater crisis than disagreements over magnetism would overtake Emmerick and her circle of caregivers and supporters. On May 19, 1817, they received a copy of Bernard Bodde's pamphlet decrying Emmerick as a fraud and Rensing as either her dupe or accomplice. Stunned and upset at this "slandorous libel," Wesener gathered with Dr. Brentano, Fr. Lambert, Fr. Limberg, and Fr. Rensing in Emmerick's room to discuss how they should respond. "Herr Lambert, Herr Fr. Limberg and the patient thought one must stay silent. Our Herr Dechant [Fr. Rensing], however, the friend Christian Brentano and I believed we must at least protest against it." In the end, they adopted a compromise position: rather than publish a rebuttal immediately, they would draft a letter to Professor Bodde expressing their concerns. This, all agreed, was "the Christian way" to respond.<sup>83</sup>

In the end it was Dr. Wesener who took on the task of writing to Bodde, as one scientist to another.<sup>84</sup> His letter centered around two key words throughout: truth and love. In its opening lines, Wesener assured his addressee that his letter "has no other aim than to procure justice for the truth. Anyone who loves the truth cannot do otherwise, he must spring to her side where he sees her supplanted by an error . . . and so I wish and believe is also the case with Your Eminence's essay given before the public regarding the choir sister A.K. Emmerich."<sup>85</sup> Thus did Wesener graciously give Bodde the benefit of the doubt, attributing to him only the purest

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<sup>83</sup> Wesener journal, May 19, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 230.

<sup>84</sup> Hümpfner says in *Tagebuch* 230, n. 2 that although it was signed with Wesener's name, Christian Brentano was the one to actually write the letter, with Wesener making some changes to the final draft. He provides no evidence to support this assertion, so I am left uncertain as to how Hümpfner came to this conclusion regarding the letter's authorship and whether he was in fact correct. From long familiarity with the writing style of Wesener and both Brentano brothers, I am inclined to believe Hümpfner. In any case, because Dr. Wesener signed his name to the letter, I am treating the words as his own.

<sup>85</sup> "Mögen Ew. Hwgeb. so liebeich sein, die Freiheit meiner gegenwärtigen Zuschrift nicht als eine Anmaßung zu deuten und meine Versicherung ohne Arg aufzunehmen, daß ich bei dieser Mitteilung keine andere Absicht habe, als der Wahrheit Gerechtigkeit zu verschaffen. Ein jeder, der die Wahrheit aufrichtig liebt, kann ja nicht anders, er muß ihr beispringen, wo er sie von einem Irrtum verdrängt sieht . . . und so denk ich und wünsche ich, daß es mit dem von Ew. Hochwlggeb. dem Publikum übergebenen Aufsatz über die Chorschwester A.K. Emmerich der Fall sei." Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Bernard Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 404.

motives. This same love of truth, Wesener hoped, would lead Bodde to acknowledge his error once he realized that Emmerick was not in fact a fraud. The Herr Professor had observed Emmerick for “several minutes; I however [have observed her] for over four years.” This long observation gave Wesener the confidence to declare to Bodde: “here is no deception; here is truth!”<sup>86</sup> He went on:

I have observed the aforementioned person in every circumstance, ailing and improving, lively and half-dead, waking and sleeping, dreaming, in ecstasy and in ordinary life, alone and in company; the so-called wounds I have observed before bleeding, at the commencement of bleeding and during the same . . . and I can proclaim to you with certainty: here is no pasted-on work, no fastening on of a scab – no artificially colored rivulets: rather a visible, actual exudation of blood!<sup>87</sup>

Wesener did not attribute any malice to Bodde, nor did he suggest that his prejudices had led him astray. (Perhaps, he vaguely speculated, Bodde’s understandable shock at encountering something so outside the normal course of nature had overcome his powers of observation.)<sup>88</sup> In

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<sup>86</sup> “. . . Sie, bestimmen Sie selbst wieviel, Minuten, ich aber 4 Jahre beobachtet habe . . . hier ist kein Betrug; hier ist Wahrheit!” Wesener to Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 405-406.

<sup>87</sup> “Ich habe die betreffende Person in allen Umständen, kränker und besser, belebter und halb tot, wachend und schlafend, träumend, in Ekstase und im gewöhnlichen Leben, allein und in Umgebung gesehen; die sogenannten Wunden vor der Blutung, im Anfange der Blutung und während derselben beobachtet . . . und kann Ihnen daher wohl ohne Verdienst und ohnbeschadet Ihrer sonst besseren Einsichten mit Gewißheit zurufen: hier ist kein Klebwerk, keine Befestigung einer Kruste, keine künstlich gefärbte Flüssigkeit! sondern ein augenscheinliches, ächtes Blutschwitzen.” Wesener to Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 406. Wesener is responding here to specific allegations Bodde makes in his pamphlet. Bodde wrote that when he examined the cross on Emmerick’s chest, he picked at the edge of it with his fingernail and the entire cross came off, revealing uninjured skin underneath. Based on this, he concluded that Emmerick’s stigmata were in fact artificially created scabs that were glued onto her skin. Bodde also commented on the streams of dried blood that ran down Emmerick’s face from the wounds in her forehead. The fact that they ran straight down her face revealed them to be false, he argued, because Emmerick was bedridden and therefore lying down all the time. [In fact, during her waking hours other people would often help her into an upright, sitting position in bed.] Therefore, he concluded they were simple streaks of red paint. The gory sight of Emmerick’s face covered with streaks of blood that had also stained her nightshirt, furthermore, was clearly meant to shock, and served to confirm for Bodde that Emmerick was a “disgusting braggart” who was simply seeking attention. Bodde and Rensing, *Bericht über die Erscheinungen bey der A.K. Emmerich*, 19-20; 22.

<sup>88</sup> The sentence structure here is convoluted, perhaps deliberately so: “Ew. Hwohlgeb. waren hier, sahen und entschieden, daß die Erscheinungen, welche sie sahen, erkünstelter Natur sei[e]n. Von dieser Überzeugung aus möchten die teils laut ausgesprochenen teils unversteckt gehaltenen Rügen der diesen Erscheinungen unterliegenden Person selbst sowohl, als derjenigen, die näher mit ihr umgehen, vielleicht noch zu gelind sein. Wie aber ew. Wohlgeb. sich überzeugen müssen, daß hier kein erkünstelter Betrug stattfindet, daß Sie das allerdings Fremdartige der Erscheinung in der jedem Physiker eigenen Anfeindung alles dessen, was der gewöhnlichen Naturordnung, deren Kenntnis sein Schatz ist, zu widersprechen scheint, präokkupiert hat; daß Sie diese Präokkupation zu

short, Wesener's letter did not take Bodde to task for his acerbic tone or accuse him of anything other than an error made in good faith. The letter spoke of how Bodde had slandered Emmerick's character in the eyes of the world, but turned this into a sort of positive by noting that Emmerick, who truly wished to imitate Christ, embraced the world's scorn.<sup>89</sup> In closing, Wesener assured Bodde that he saw him not as an "enemy or opponent," but as a "Christian brother who, through tragic circumstances, has been led astray." Bodde was welcome to return to Dülmen at any time to re-examine Emmerick, at which time Wesener would welcome into his home and offer him food at his table.<sup>90</sup>

The difficult business of writing Professor Bodde thus concluded, Dr. Wesener sat down to write another document: his brief article in the *Mindener Sonntagsblatt* about "my much-discussed and oft-written-about local patient," with which this chapter began. Again, he addressed his words to "just and truth-loving brothers." He spoke of his journal in which he had spent years recording observations of Emmerick, and he promised that one day he would use this material to "present the whole phenomenon in its true light."<sup>91</sup>

Little did Wesener know, however, that his opinions on Emmerick would be published for all to read by someone else, within a matter of months. While Dr. Wesener had been busy writing in conciliatory tones to Bodde and taking "the Christian way," Fr. Rensing had been quietly stewing. He had been the object of Bodde's attacks as much as Emmerick, and he took the insults to his character and intelligence in the pamphlet very personally. In the heat of his anger, and without consulting his superior Droste-Vischering or anyone else, he wrote a

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mangelhafter Beobachtung, und diese zu irrigen Erklärungen geführt hat; dann werden Ihnen jene Rügen sehr hart scheinen . . ." Wesener to Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 424-425.

<sup>89</sup> Wesener to Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 428.

<sup>90</sup> "Mein Haus und meine frugale Tafel stehen zu Ihrem Befehle, und ich gebe Ihnen die heilige Versicherung, daß weder die Kranke noch irgend einer aus ihrer nächsten Umgebung den Feind und Widersacher in Ihnen, sondern den durch traurige Verhältnisse irre geleiteten christlichen Bruderer blicken wird." Wesener to Bodde, May 19-June 6, 1817, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 429.

<sup>91</sup> Wesener, "Nonne zu Dülmen," 445.

pamphlet of his own responding to Bodde's accusations. In addition to his own lengthy refutations of Bodde's every argument, Rensing included the full text of Dr. Wesener's letter to Bodde in his work – without asking the doctor or even notifying him beforehand. The priest removed Wesener's signature from the end, but given his identification of himself in the letter as Emmerick's physician of over four years, there would be no doubt the letter was his.

Rensing's pamphlet appeared in 1818, and within a year Bodde had responded with yet another attack, reaffirming his earlier opinions. This pamphlet war provoked other German newspapers and periodicals to publish their own accounts of the Emmerick affair, and more visitors than ever sought access to her in Dülmen. This flurry of publicity, much of it polemical in tone, had serious consequences. Prussia's Oberpräsident of its Westphalian province, Ludwig Freiherr von Vincke, had corresponded with his superiors in Berlin about Emmerick and whether the state should intervene to stop what he considered to be the spread of superstition as early as 1816. He asked Münster's civic government to look into the matter. A few letters passed back and forth between Berlin and Münster before more pressing matters arose and the subject became lost in the mazes of bureaucracy. Rensing and Bodde's pamphlet war, however, brought Emmerick back to Prussian officials' minds. As a direct result, von Vincke finally started the bureaucratic wheels in motion for a state investigation of Emmerick, which would take place in August 1819.<sup>92</sup>

Dr. Wesener hated to see his dear friend Emmerick slandered over and over in the press. he was equally horrified, however, by the consequences she suffered from each publication, even those that were complimentary: more publicity, more visitors, more investigations. On the one hand, he had long believed that some form of investigation and formal public statement

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<sup>92</sup> Hümpfner, "Einleitung," *Tagebuch*, lviii-lxi. The Prussian state investigation of Emmerick will develop into a substantive chapter when this dissertation is revised and expanded for publication.

regarding her stigmata and other mystical phenomena was badly needed. Not only would a definitive investigation share the wonderful truth of Emmerick's blessings with the world, inspiring the faith of Catholics; it would also share the truth of her physical condition with other natural researchers, expanding their knowledge of what was possible in the world. On the other hand, Emmerick herself hated the veneration and notoriety she had gained in equal measure, and wanted nothing more than to be left in peace. Investigations and publications would not serve that end. Thus did Wesener find himself in a terrible conundrum. As he had written in his letter to Bodde, he felt a duty, as a Christian and as a man of science, to proclaim the truth. As a friend, he no doubt felt obligated to defend his friend against slander. Yet he also respected Emmerick's wish, expressed to him many times over the years, to enjoy her privacy and preserve her humility.

For years, Wesener agonized over what to do. Emmerick extracted from him a solemn promise not to publish anything about her while she still lived.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps because of this, Wesener, began to write less and less in his Emmerick journal by mid-1819, and stopped altogether in early November.<sup>94</sup> He wrote a full manuscript on the Prussian state's investigation of Emmerick in 1819, based on her own testimony, however, which he clearly intended to bring before the public at some future date. Very shortly after Emmerick's death in February 1824, furthermore, he wrote a short biography of his dear friend which was apparently intended for a newspaper or journal of some kind. In his last years, he also collected and numbered his correspondence concerning Emmerick over the years and inserted them in his Emmerick journal. Ultimately, however, Wesener brought none of these documents before the public. In one of his last acts, however, the physician made an eloquent, if wordless, testimony to his deep friendship

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<sup>93</sup> Wesener, journal, June 4, 1819, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 295.

<sup>94</sup> Hümpfner and others speculate that Wesener also stopped because he knew Clemens Brentano was documenting Emmerick's life on a daily basis, and felt his own journal to be superfluous.

with Anna Katharina Emmerick: on his death in 1832, he was buried at her right side (Figure 12).

### *Conclusion: Experiments in Faith*

Anna Katharina Emmerick lived in a time of far-reaching transitions and intellectual, cultural, and spiritual explorations, as revolution gave way to restoration and Enlightenment blended into Romanticism. She was one of many people in German-speaking Europe who claimed to experience mystical phenomena during this tumultuous period. Some of them would find themselves the object of magnetic experiments, like Friederike Hauffe under the sway of physician Justinus Kerner. Some, like Appollonia Filzinger and Karoline Beller, would be brought before secular government on charges of fraud and imprisoned.<sup>95</sup> Some would be committed to Germany's earliest asylums for *religiöser Wahnsinn* ("religious madness"), abandoned by their families, their names lost to history.<sup>96</sup> Some, like Helene Wallraff and Margaretha Stoffel, would cause a brief sensation and then quickly become forgotten.<sup>97</sup> A precious few, like Maria von Mörl, would attract sustained interest that would outlive them.<sup>98</sup> A few members of this tiny group, such as Anna Katharina Emmerick, would not only achieve a lasting cult of veneration, but formal approval by the institutional Church through beatification or canonization.

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<sup>95</sup> Anja Middelbeck-Varwick and Markus Thureau, eds., *Mystikerinnen der Neuzeit und Gegenwart* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009); Muhs, Rudolf Muhs, "Die Stigmata der Karoline Beller: Ein katholisches Frauenschicksal des Vormärz im Spannungsfeld von Volksreligiosität, Kirche, Staat und Medizin," in *Wunderbare Erscheinungen: Frauen und katholische Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1995), 83-130.

<sup>96</sup> Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, 36-70.

<sup>97</sup> Engelbert Joseph Heinen, *Helena Wallraff von Brügggen, Pfarrei Kirdorf bei Lechenich, die merkwürdigste Seherin am Rhein*. (Cologne: Kreuder, 1849); Eduard Braun, *Wunderbare und merkwürdige, zum Theil schon eingetroffene Prophezeihungen, der Somnambule Margaretha Stoffel, zu Ehrenthal in Tyrol, über die Zukunft der Jahre 1848 bis 1856* (Brixen, 1848).

<sup>98</sup> Nicole Priesching, *Maria von Mörl, 1812-1868: Leben und Bedeutung einer „stigmatisierten Jungfrau“ aus Tirol im Kontext ultramontaner Frömmigkeit* (Brixen: A. Weger, 2004).

There are many factors at play in determining whether a particular historical person makes it down the long path toward Catholic sainthood. The presence of Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener in Emmerick's life was one important factor at play in her case. Not only did he respect and encourage her as a woman of spiritual gifts, rather than institutionalize her as a religious hysteric; he also left behind extraordinary documentary evidence of her stigmata, inedia and visions, as well as her personality, ideas, and character. Though Wesener chose not to publish his volumes of material on Emmerick during his lifetime, his descendants preserved them for future researchers. Augustinian priest Winfried Hümpfner, as part of his work promoting Emmerick's cause for beatification, would publish Wesener's journal, letters, and other Emmerick manuscripts in an annotated volume in 1926.

An examination of these papers reveals much about Wesener and Emmerick, but also about the time and place in which they lived. It highlights the first decades of the nineteenth century in German-speaking Europe as a unique place and time where mysticism and magnetism could coexist in the minds of some educated Catholics. It shows how eagerly – and sometimes, viciously – questions of religion and science were debated by Catholics and Protestants, experts and laypersons in the booming German press. It also shows how other Catholics, like Emmerick, continued to keep alive the Church's centuries-old mystical tradition, and were not so ready to exchange “the power of the Spirit” for “emanations of magnetic energy.” On the broadest level, it offers an example of how suffering, a universal human experience, can take on different meanings in religious and medical contexts.

For the Emmerick researcher, there is no richer trove of material – save one: the many volumes of notes, poems, manuscripts, and letters produced by the man who would become

Emmerick's amanuensis and first hagiographer, Clemens Brentano. It is to this other great relationship in Emmerick's life that we now turn.



**Figure 10.** A portrait of Dr. Franz Wilhelm Wesener (1782-1832) as a young man. Wesener was considerably younger than Emmerick, and about 30 when he first met her. Stadtarchiv Dülmen, [https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/besucher.htm](https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/besucher.htm) (Accessed June 02, 2018).

**Table 1.** Food Consumed by A. K. Emmerick April 1-25, 1813, as recorded by Dr. Krauthausen.

Data from Winfried Hümpfner OESA, ed., *Akten der kirchl. Untersuchung . . .*(1929)

DATE	LIQUIDS	SOLIDS	VOMITING?
4/1/1813	1/2 liter water	1/3 cooked apple, "bit of veal"	veal, immediately
4/2/1813	1/2 liter water	2 cooked plums, "bit" of cooked apple	
4/3/1813	1 liter water, 2 tablespoons meat broth, 1 teaspoon coffee		coffee, immediately
4/4/1813	1 liter water, 1 tablespoon meat broth	"bit" of cooked apple	
4/5/1813	1 liter water, 1 tablespoon meat broth	"bit" of cooked apple	
4/6/1813	1 1/2 liters water	"bit" of cooked apple; vegetable dish with potatoes and turnips	vegetable dish, immediately
4/7/1813	none	none	
4/8/1813	1 liter water	"quarter" of cooked apple	
4/9/1813	1 1/2 liters water	none	
4/10/1813	2 liters water, tablespoon of meat broth, juice of 2 cooked plums	2 cooked plums	
4/11/1813	1 1/2 liters water, 2 tablespoons meat broth	1 cooked plum	meat broth, immediately
4/12/1813	1 liter water, "a little" meat broth	1 cooked plum	
4/13/1813	1 liter water, 2 tablespoons cooked plum juice	1 cooked plum	
4/14/1813	1/2 liter water, "a little" fish broth	1/3 cooked apple	fish broth, immediately
4/15/1813	1 1/2 liters water	none	

4/16/1813	1 liter water, juice of (Good Fri) 2 cooked plums	none
4/17/1813	1/2 liter water	none
4/18/1813	1 liter water, juice of 2 cooked plums	"bit of" cooked apple
4/19/1813	"2 mouthfuls" water, (Easter) juice of cooked apple	none
4/20/1813	1/2 liter water	1/3 cooked apple
4/21/1813	1 liter water, 2 teaspoons meat broth	"bit of" cooked apple
4/22/1813	none	none
4/23/1813	1/2 liter water, juice of 2 cooked plums	none
4/24/1813	1/2 liter water	"bit of" cooked apple
4/25/1813	1 liter water	1 cooked apple

**Table 2.** A.K. Emmerick Stigmata Bleeding, as Recorded by Dr. F.W. Wesener

Source: Winfried Hümpfner OESA, ed., *Tagebuch des Dr. Med. Franz Wilhelm Wesener* (1926)

 **bleeding**  
 **no data**

1813 Jan-Feb....

Month	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Month	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S		
<b>Mar</b>								<b>Aug</b>									
			1	2	3	4	5		6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
	28	29	30	31						29	30	31					
<b>Apr</b>								<b>Sep</b>									
					1	2	3						1	2	3	4	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
	25	26	27	28	29	30				26	27	28	29	30			
<b>May</b>								<b>Oct</b>									
							1								1	2	
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
30	31							31									
<b>Jun</b>								<b>Nov</b>									
			1	2	3	4	5				1	2	3	4	5	6	
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	27	28	29	30						28	29	30					
<b>July</b>								<b>Dec</b>									
					1	2	3					1	2	3	4		
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		5	6	7	8	9	10	11		

11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

1814

**Jan**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**Jul**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**Feb**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

**Aug**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Mar**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**Sep**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**Apr**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**Oct**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**May**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**Nov**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Jun	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Dec	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3	4						1	2	3
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	26	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1815

Jan	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Jul	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								1
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	29	30	31						23	24	25	26	27	28	29
									30	31					

Feb	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Aug	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4	5
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	26	27	28						27	28	29	30	31		

Mar	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Sep	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3	4							1	2
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Apr	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Oct	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
							1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		29	30	31				
	30														

May	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Nov	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
												1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4	5	6		5	6	7	8	9	10	11

7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

<b>Jun</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
					1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	

<b>Dec</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						

1816

<b>Jan</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
		1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31			

<b>Jul</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
		1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31			

<b>Feb</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
					1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>Mar</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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	31						

<b>Sep</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30					

<b>Apr</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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<b>Oct</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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May	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Nov	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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	26	27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Jun	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Dec	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	26	27	28	29	30	31			27	28	29	30	31		

Feb	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Aug	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	23	24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		28	29	30				
	30	31													

Apr	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Oct	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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	27	28	29	30												

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<b>May</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>										1
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	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			30							

										<b>Dec</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>Jun</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>										
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	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	29	30								28	29	30	31				

1818

										<b>Jul</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			26	27	28	29	30	31		

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	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
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<b>Mar</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>										
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	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			20	21	22	23	24	25	26	

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<b>Apr</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>		<b>Oct</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
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	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
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	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	28	29	30						27	28	29	30	31			

1819

<b>Jan</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	31														
<b>Feb</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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<b>Mar</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>

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<b>May</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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<b>Nov</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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<b>Jun</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30			

<b>Dec</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
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	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30		



**Figure 11.** Christian Brentano (1784-1851), a physician who, like his brother, came to embrace a mystical brand of Catholicism in his adult years. In 1817, well before Clemens Brentano came to Dülmen, Christian spent several weeks with Emmerick and established a lasting friendship with Dr. Wesener. Together, they would develop a theory that drew on so-called animal magnetism to explain aspects of Emmerick's mystical and apparent clairvoyant abilities, and experiment with a form of magnetic treatment to help rejuvenate her physical strength. Stadtarchiv Dülmen, [https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/besucher.htm](https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/besucher.htm) (Accessed June 02, 2018).



**Figure 12.** Original Emmerick grave site, with Dr. Wesener's grave on the left and Fr. Limberg's grave on the right. Photo by Dietmar Rabich, 2014. Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:D%C3%BClmen,\\_Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche\\_--\\_2014\\_--\\_2765.jpg#/media/File:D%C3%BClmen,\\_Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche\\_--\\_2014\\_--\\_2765.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:D%C3%BClmen,_Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche_--_2014_--_2765.jpg#/media/File:D%C3%BClmen,_Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche_--_2014_--_2765.jpg) (Accessed June 02, 2018).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### “LIKE A WAYSIDE CROSS:” CLEMENS BRENTANO AND ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK AS SYMBOL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

#### *Introduction: A Story Worth a Historical Retelling*

In September 1818, yet another pilgrim came to Dülmen to see Anna Katharina Emmerick: Clemens Brentano. He had traveled over three hundred miles from the literary salons and supper clubs of Berlin. Dülmen was a rustic backwater in comparison, but the Pilgrim – for so he would soon come to call himself – liked what he saw. The open country, he later wrote, was marked by an innocence of the jealousy and gossip that inevitably plagued cities where people lived together all too closely. There was something especially wholesome in the local farmers’ preservation of their own peculiar regional customs from outside influence, a sign that they were uncorrupted by the world.<sup>1</sup> Worldliness, indeed, was precisely what Brentano wanted to leave behind him. What he hoped to find was nothing less than a sign from God.

The son of a comfortably wealthy merchant family, the forty-year-old had enjoyed two decades of respect and intellectual stimulation as a writer. Most notably, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the collection of folk songs and poems he published from 1806 to 1808 with Achim von Arnim, had enchanted readers with “Loreley” and other tales of the Romantic Rhine.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “In mancher Hinsicht ist diese ganze Land noch ein Land der Unschuld zu nennen. Bedenke nur, das Schlechtigkeit des Gesindes aus Lüderlichkeit und Verführung hier unbekannt ist, und fast gar kein Luxus unter diesem Stand . . . Das Land hat etwas besonderes Wohltätiges zur Erhaltung der Eigentümlichkeit und der Sittenreinheit der Bauern, da es sehr wenige Dörfer gibt, wo die Leute nebeneinander wohnend in Laster und Klatscherei durcheinander fallen.” Quoted in Günter Scholz, *Clemens Brentano, 1778-1842: Poesie, Liebe, Glaube* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2012), 66.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg: Mohr and Zimmer, 1806); Brentano and Arnim, *Wunderhorn*, vol. 2 (Heidelberg: Mohr and Zimmer, 1808); Brentano and Arnim, *Wunderhorn*, vol. 3 (Heidelberg: Mohr and Zimmer, 1808). The Goethe-Haus Freies Deutsches Hochstift in Frankfurt has been publishing a multi-volume critical edition of Brentano’s complete oeuvre – published and unpublished poems, plays, and other manuscripts, diaries, and letters – since the 1960s. The Frankfurt Critical Edition (Frankfurter Brentano-Ausgabe, FBA) for the three volumes of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* are: Brentano and Arnim, *Wunderhorn* Vol. 1, FBA, ed. Heinz Röllecke (Frankfurt: Kohlhammer, 1975); Brentano

His charm, wit, and intellect (to say nothing of his good looks) had won him friends among the German luminaries of the day, from Goethe, Schlegel, Kleist, and Tieck to Fichte, the Grimm brothers, and Karl von Savigny.<sup>3</sup> He was one of the leading figures of the artistic and philosophical movement known as Romanticism.

For all his success, Brentano had felt restless and unsatisfied in recent years. With two marriages and other tempestuous courtships already behind him, he had recently fallen in love with yet another woman who could not return his affections: Luise Hensel.<sup>4</sup> Taking refuge from his heartbreak in work had proved not to be an option, for he increasingly found himself crippled by a lack of creative inspiration, even a lack of confidence in poetry itself. As he wrote in despair to Wilhelm Grimm in 1815: “I have put an end to my poetic efforts . . . it is all a failure to me. For one should not ornament the finite with what is infinite in order to give it the appearance of eternity.”<sup>5</sup> If Romanticism was about “giv[ing] the common a higher meaning, the ordinary a mysterious aspect, the familiar the grandeur of the unfamiliar, and the transient the appearance of the eternal,” this statement by the Romantic poet amounted to a severe crisis of faith in the artistic philosophy that had thus far guided his life.<sup>6</sup>

Searching for a new source of truth and a new focus for his energies, he found himself discussing religion with his literary friends. Along with Wilhelm, Leopold, and Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach, he spearheaded the formation of a Berlin social club called the “Maikäferei.” The

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and Arnim, *Wunderhorn* vol. 2, FBA, ed. Heinz Röllecke (Frankfurt:Kohlhammer, 1976); Brentano and Arnim, *Wunderhorn* vol. 3, FBA, ed. Heinz Röllecke (Frankfurt:Kohlhammer, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> John Fetzer, *Clemens Brentano* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 15-35.

<sup>4</sup> Scholz 27-28, 36-39, 57-62.

<sup>5</sup> „Meine dichterischen Bestrebungen habe ich geendet . . . es ist mir alles mislungen. Denn man soll das Endliche nicht schmücken mit dem Endlichen[,] um ihm einen Schein des Ewigen zu geben. . .“ Clemens Brentano to Wilhelm Grimm, 15 February 1815, *Clemens Brentano Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, vol. 33, FBA (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 142-143.

<sup>6</sup> The quote is from Novalis' *Fragmente*: “Indem ich dem Gemeinen einen hohen Sinn, dem Gewöhnlichen ein geheimnißvolles Ansehn, dem Bekannten die Würde des Unbekannten, dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Schein gebe so romantisire ich es.” Stephen Prockett, *European Romanticism: A Reader* (London: A&C Black, 2014), 150.

possibility of a spiritual revival after the destruction of revolution and war was a recurring topic of conversation.<sup>7</sup> Brentano reported to the club in 1816, for example, about a Catholic, mystical, Christ-centered movement – one viewed with great suspicion by many in the Church hierarchy – called the Allgau Awakening (*Allgäuer Erweckungsbewegung*), led by Martin Boos, Johann Michael Feneberg, and Johann Michael Sailer. Meanwhile many of the “Maikäfer” themselves were participants in a like-minded Pietist Awakening that was simultaneously developing in Prussia.<sup>8</sup>

The soon-to-be-Pilgrim felt drawn to these movements’ emphasis on the teachings of Christ, on depth of feeling and on contemplation of God’s infinite mystery. He wondered whether he should once again actively practice the Catholic faith into which he had been baptized. Yet as he wrote to a friend in late 1816, he had always found the formal, institutional Church “part empty, dead, and gray; part political organization; part abominable, horrible magic.”<sup>9</sup> He was inspired by “the German spirits of Sailer, Feneberg, Boos, and their friends,” but knew full well that their friends did not include the pope.<sup>10</sup> He doubted he would ever find among the ranks of the Catholic clergy what he felt he most desperately needed – an intimate

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<sup>7</sup> Ernst von Gerlach wrote years later that they called themselves the *Maikäferer* “weil der erste Wirt Mai hieß.” He went on to define the main interest of the club as “patriotisch-romantisch-genial-christliche Poesie.” Dietmar Pravida, “Maikäferklub,,” *Das Handbuch der Berliner Vereine und Gesellschaften 1786-1815*, ed. Uta Motschmann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 456.

<sup>8</sup> The leaders of these Catholic and Protestant movements were in fact in contact with each other. Pravida, „Maikäferklub,“ 456-458; David L. Ellis, *Politics and Piety: The Protestant Awakening in Prussia, 1816-1856* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 11-12; Horst Weigelt, “Die Allgäuer katholische Erweckungsbewegung,,” in *Der Pietismus im neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert*, ed. Gustav Adolf Benrath and Martin Sallmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 85-111.

<sup>9</sup> The broader context of the phrase is worth citing, revealing as it does Brentano’s despairing search for meaning: „Daß ich nicht glücklich bin, fühle ich, aber ich fühle auch, daß, wenn ich mich, zum Beispiel, um gänzliche innre Ruhe im Chatholischen Christenthum bemühen will, ich in eine solche Quälerei und Verwirrung hineingerathe, daß es mir viel schlechter zu Muth wird als vorher, und ein tiefes allgemeines religiöses Gefühl in mir dabei in solche Abnahme kömmt, daß ich mir nicht zu helfen weiß, und mir alles theilweis leer todt und grau, theilweis wie politische Organisations, theilweis wie eine gräsliche scheusliche Magie vorkömmt.“ Clemens Brentano to Johann Nepomuk Ringeis, November 1816, *Briefe* vol. 33 FBA, 200-201.

<sup>10</sup> „Was weiß der Pabst [sic] von dem innern Zustand der Christenheit, hat er einen Begriff wohl von dem deutschen Geiste Sailers, Fenebergs, Boos, und deiner Freunde . . .“ Ibid, 199.

spiritual guide to lead him on the path to Christ: “I feel through and through that nothing religious can help me unless through a connection with a person that I absolutely trust and deeply love, that I can give up all my own will to and follow completely.”<sup>11</sup>

He had hoped that his spiritual guide on the path to newfound purpose would be his latest love, Luise Hensel. A Protestant clergyman’s daughter, she too was searching for a more satisfying spiritual foundation for her life and was seriously considering a conversion to Catholicism. They had other interests in common as well, for she was also a great reader and a poet in her own right. Yet Hensel was unable to reciprocate the depths of his affection.<sup>12</sup> Instead, she pointed him in another direction: toward Dülmen. One of the members of the Maikäferei had recently reported on a mysterious stigmatic in Westphalia. As told in the previous chapter, Brentano’s own brother Christian had joined the throng of curiosity seekers to take in Dülmen’s famous daughter in 1817. Now, Hensel urged him to go and see Anna Katharina Emmerick for himself.

And so on September 17, 1818, Brentano climbed the narrow steps to Emmerick’s room and met her for the first time. He later described this first encounter in a letter to Hensel, his enthusiasm giving vent to a torrent of adjectives:

I was in no way startled by her wounded hands[;] it pleased me that they carried such a holy, noble sign on them, and her pure, innocent countenance filled me with uncommon inner joy. . . everything she says is quick, curt, simple, quite artless, without smugness, but full of depth, full of love, full of life, and indeed quite provincial [*ländlich*], like a wise, dignified, good, chaste, tested and thoroughly wholesome soul.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> „Ich fühle mich durch und durch, daß mir religiös nicht zu helfen ist, als durch das Anschließen an einen Menschen, dem ich unbedingt traue und den ich innigst liebe, und daß ich dann allen eignen Willen aufgebe, und ihm gänzlich folge. . .“ Ibid, 201.

<sup>12</sup> On the relationship between Luise Hensel and Clemens Brentano, and particularly the intertwining of religious with erotic symbols and imagery in his poems and letters to her, see Scholz, *Brentano*, 59-62.

<sup>13</sup> “Ich war durch ihre wunden Hände auch gar auf keine Weise erschüttert, es freute mich, ass sie ein so heiliges, edles Zeichen an sich trug, und mit ungemeiner innerer Freude bewegte mich ihr reines unschuldiges Antlitz. . . Alles, was sie sagt, ist schnell, kurz, einfach, einfältig, ganz schlicht, ohne breite Selbstgefälligkeit, aber voll Tiefe, voll Liebe, voll Leben, und doch ganz ländlich, wie eine kluge, feine, frische, keusche, geprüfte recht gesunde Seele.” Quoted in Scholz, *Brentano*, 65.

If provincial Dülmen had appeared wholesome and full of rustic charm to Brentano's searching heart and poetic eye, Emmerick herself magnified these impressions tenfold. What he saw as her untutored simplicity, moreover, seemed to make a profound counterpoint to her mysterious stigmata wounds. In fact, it was not so much her supernatural aura but her "pure, innocent," artless manner that attracted him; not merely the "holy, noble signs" she carried on her body, but even moreso her *words*, "full of depth, full of love, full of life," that would compel the restless poet to stay. It was the recording of these remarkable words, moreover, that would occupy Brentano until his own death in 1842.

The encounter would alter the course of Brentano's life. Up until then he had led a restless, peripatetic existence, filled with aborted courses of study, short-lived projects, and intense but fleeting infatuations. So profound was his experience with Emmerick, however, that he made a lasting commitment. With few interruptions, for the next five years – until Emmerick's death in 1824 – Brentano was a near-constant presence at her side. If he had arrived in Dülmen a man in turmoil and transition, he soon became a man with a divine mission: the recording of Emmerick's ecstatic visions. "[T]he duty of revealing her inner life I have fulfilled with every power at my disposal," he would write to Dean Overberg in March 1819. "My responsibility is terrible, the voice of God has called loudly to me, and I . . . believe that I am following the will of God and not my own – God, who has never spoken to me so clearly as he has there."<sup>14</sup> The Pilgrim found exactly what he had traveled so far to find: a spiritual guide, a conversion experience, and a newfound sense of purpose.

One might be tempted to remark at this point that "the rest, as they say, is history." It is true that the basic outlines of the story from here have been told and retold: how Brentano took

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<sup>14</sup> Clemens Brentano to Bernhard Overberg, March 20, 1819, *Sämtliche Werke*, FBA vol. 34, 37-38.

down Emmerick's ecstatic visions of biblical history over the months and years; how he dreamed of editing these visions into a multi-volume, epic life of Christ; how he published *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi* in 1833, a book which would go on to be one of the most widely read devotional works of the nineteenth century. So familiar is the tale that it has become the subject of light, entertainment media. Brentano's long sojourn in Dülmen was the subject of a historical novel, for instance, by prolific paperback author Kai Meyer.<sup>15</sup> Ten years later, his book *Das Gelübde* was turned into an award-winning, made-for-tv movie of the same name. More recently, the tale of Pilgrim and visionary became the subject of an illustrated children's book.<sup>16</sup>

This encounter has also been the subject of analyses by researchers engaged in Emmerick's beatification bid, as well as scholars of Brentano, German literature, and Romanticism. These analyses, as will be seen, justly interrogate the listing of Anna Katharina Emmerick as sole author on the title pages of most editions of *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*. They make fruitful comparisons between the text and other creative works by Clemens Brentano, and situate his time in Dülmen in the broader context of his biography. As compelling as these arguments are, however, they do not exhaust the ways in which we can learn from Brentano and his time in Dülmen, from *Das bittere Leiden*, or (especially) from Emmerick herself.

Like the moment Stanley discovered Livingstone, the Emmerick-Brentano encounter has much recounted – and yet, it would not be accurate to say that “the rest, as they say, is history,” because it is precisely the historians who have been left out of the analyzing and story-telling. In particular, three important questions have yet to be sufficiently addressed. First: how can the

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<sup>15</sup> Kai Meyer, *Das Gelübde: ein Roman* (München : W. Heyne, 1998). The book was made into a film of the same name, *Das Gelübde*, directed by Dominik Graf (Strasbourg: ARTE, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Nina Domnik, “Kindgerechte Mystikerin: Neues Bilderbuch über Anna-Katharina Emmerick,” *Dülmener Zeitung*, 30 September 2014. < <http://www.dzonline.de/Duelmen/1742882-Neues-Bilderbuch-ueber-Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Kindgerechte-Mystikerin> > (accessed 13 March 2017).

long history of female mystics and their male literary collaborators contextualize the Brentano-Emmerick encounter? Secondly, how can *Das bittere Leiden* illuminate not just the man and woman who wrote it but also the historical context in which it was produced, and vice versa? Furthermore, how can the text and its role in Emmerick's cult reveal the nature of Catholic culture, especially saint-making, in modern Germany? In short, this story of a visionary, a pilgrim-poet, and their book is worth a historical retelling.

This chapter will therefore reconsider the Emmerick-Brentano encounter and the most famous book it produced from the perspective of a cultural historian. It will begin by analyzing the "vision" of Brentano and Emmerick, and the resistance against their collaboration, against both the immediate context of Westphalia under Prussian rule and the long history of Catholic female visionaries and their male amanuenses. This will lay the foundations for a consideration of previous scholarly analyses of Brentano's relationship with Emmerick, and particularly their failure to see Emmerick as anything other than a weak and manipulated figure without a voice. Finally, the third part of the chapter will read the text itself against contemporary debates about Emmerick, and Catholicism more generally, in the German press.

Ultimately, the chapter will argue that *Das bittere Leiden* was a collaborative project by both Brentano and Emmerick. Furthermore, the text was a carefully crafted response to contemporaries' criticisms of Catholicism in general, and Emmerick in particular. This devotional work powerfully re-imagined Jesus's Passion, but also offered a re-imagination of Emmerick as symbol of and for the contemporary Catholic Church: a symbol of its embattled position in Europe after the French Revolution, as well as the rich faith tradition that Brentano and Emmerick believed would be the Church's salvation. Finally, the defining characteristics of its narrative –its depiction of women, its graphic physical violence, and its historicism – do more

than reflect its Romanticism. They also point to its origins in the era of Napoleonic secularization.

### *A Context of Conflict: Wesener's Opposition*

Thanks to the ongoing popularity of Brentano-Emmerick publications such as *Das bittere Leiden*, and the crucial role Brentano played in both Emmerick's life and the perpetuation of her later cult, their encounter can seem almost foreordained. In reality, however, their collaboration almost never happened at all. The first months of their relationship were marked by a crisis that threatened the future of their relationship: a concerted campaign by Dr. Wesener to keep Brentano away from Emmerick. It is impossible to fully appreciate the nature of their relationship, or the themes in their later collaborative work, without taking into account this formative context of conflict.

When Brentano first came to Dülmen, he was well received by Emmerick and her circle, including Dr. Wesener. In his Emmerick journal, the physician wrote of how Brentano had come to him first seeking permission to visit her, "and as he seemed to me to be of a very good will, I asked the patient. She showed herself willing to receive him immediately, and so I led him to the patient."<sup>17</sup> A week later, he wrote of how close Emmerick and Brentano had quickly become, and how invigorated she seemed by their conversations: "the patient has won Herr Brentano's love . . . [she] is built up through her acquaintance with him, more collected." Wesener also noted that Brentano's presence seemed to encourage her to fall into trances more often: "his conversations about God and the reading aloud of good books triggered more frequent ecstatic

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<sup>17</sup> "Donnerstag, den 24. September kam der Bruder des Herrn Brentano, von dem im vorigen Jahre oft die Rede war, zu mir in der Absicht, die Kranke kennen zu lernen. Er heißt Clemens., privatisierte bisher in Berlin und da er mir recht guten Willens zu sein schien, so meldete ich ihn der Kranken. Diese zeigte sich gleich bereit, ihn zu empfangen, und so führte ich ihn der Kranken zu." Wesener, journal, September 24, 1818, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 273.

states again.”<sup>18</sup> After another week, Wesener commented that Emmerick was already sharing her visions with Brentano, treasures which she had always reserved for very few people: “She has spoken with him about several visions she has had these days. One of these he shared with me in writing.”<sup>19</sup> Within only a few weeks of his arrival then, Emmerick had already begun to entrust Brentano with her visions, and he was already writing them down. The rapid growth of their friendship paralleled that of Emmerick and Wesener’s years earlier.

Brentano’s role in Emmerick’s life began to parallel Wesener’s in another respect: that of “magnetic” experimentation. As Chapter Three discussed, Christian Brentano encouraged Wesener to incorporate a faith-infused version of magnetism into his treatment of Emmerick, with Fr. Limberg’s help, during his visit a year earlier. In particular, he outlined a theory of harnessing the power of blessed persons and objects – priests, relics, etc. – through magnetism, and channeling this positive force toward Emmerick in order to improve her health. She herself expressed misgivings that such attempts were flirting with black magic; yet Wesener encouraged Limberg to use his priestly power to heal Emmerick through the laying on of hands, breathing into her mouth, and blessing the water she drank. All these actions were part of centuries-old traditions of Christian healing and blessing, but Wesener and Limberg began to use the language of magnetism to describe these “experiments.”

Upon his own arrival in Dülmen, Clemens Brentano carried on where his brother left off. While he did not employ the language of magnetism in the way that his brother Christian had, the techniques he used were the same. In particular, he became fascinated by the idea of saints’

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<sup>18</sup> “Die Kranke hat den Herrn Clemens Brentano lieb gewonnen, obgleich sie seinen Bruder einigermaßen vorzuziehen scheint. Was ich übrigens ahnte, ist wirklich schon eingetreten, die Kranke ist durch den Umgang mit Brentano erbaut, mehr gesammelt; durch seine häufigen Besuche hält er manche lästige Erscheinung von ihr ab und durch seine Unterhaltungen von Gott und das Vorlesen aus guten Büchern stellen sich die ekstatischen Zufälle wieder häufiger ein.” Wesener, journal, October 2, 1818, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 273.

<sup>19</sup> “Über mehrere Visionen die die Kranke in diesen Tagen gehabt, hat er sich mit ihr unterhalten. Eine derselben teilte er mir beiliegend schriftlich mit.” Wesener, journal, October 9, 1818, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 273-74.

relics as loci of spiritual energy. In this, he was only continuing what his brother had started, and what Wesener and Limberg had both taken up. Wesener, for example, had once brought along a reliquary that had been passed down in his family on a visit to Emmerick, and when he held it near her during her ecstatic trances she would clutch it tightly.<sup>20</sup> Fr. Limberg took things a step further, and used relics to “test” Emmerick’s clairvoyant ability. Holding a reliquary housing multiple objects within, Limberg asked her what it contained, and she was able to correctly identify the names of the two apostles whose remains were said to be inside. On another occasion, she correctly identified another reliquary’s contents as a piece of the “True Cross.”<sup>21</sup> Now, Clemens Brentano began conducting similar experiments. He came up with the idea of using relics to “treat” Emmerick, laying them on areas of the body where she was in pain. Wesener wrote in his journal that this “treatment” seemed to be very effective.<sup>22</sup>

By December 1818, however, Dr. Wesener had become concerned about Emmerick and Brentano’s relationship – and specifically, about the “magnetic” force Brentano’s large personality might be imposing on the sensitive Emmerick. In his journal he confessed himself “unsettled” by “the close intercourse Herr Brentano has settled into with the patient, and the physical-magnetic connection [*physisch-magnetische Rapport*] through which he, and now I too, am able to bring about ecstatic torpidity and reactions in her.” These sorts of reactions, Wesener firmly believed, had come exclusively “through the power of ecclesiastical blessings” before – that is, through the “magnetic” blessings Limberg performed on Emmerick through his touch, breath, and so on. Now Brentano – a layperson, with no conferral of priestly power by the

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<sup>20</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 56.

<sup>21</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 206, 246.

<sup>22</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 279.

Church – was able to induce the same kind of reactions in Emmerick.<sup>23</sup> Whereas Limberg's actions could be, in Wesener's mind, simultaneously the work of magnetism and the power of the Church, Brentano's appeared to him as purely secular manipulation, outside of God's power and therefore potentially contrary to his will.

Emmerick's health began to decline somewhat after the New Year. As her friend and physician, Wesener was naturally concerned. He also believed he knew the cause of her decline: "it seems to me, that the eternal questioning and explorations of Herr Brentano, his heavy-handedness [*Heftigkeit*] and his harsh behavior toward the ornery sister of the patient has lately affected the invalid so greatly."<sup>24</sup> A week later, on January 15, 1819, Wesener wrote: "On the 12<sup>th</sup> Herr Clemens Brentano traveled back again to Berlin with the promise that he would soon return and wants to remain by the patient. The patient however does not wish this, because his thirst for information has no bounds and he has become bothersome through his questioning and searching."<sup>25</sup> At this point, a great battle of wills began between Wesener and Brentano, with Emmerick caught in the middle.

Over the course of February and March 1819, Brentano would receive a number of letters: from his brother Christian, Fr. Lambert, Dr. Wesener, and Emmerick herself. All had been written at Wesener's instigation, and all made the same request – or demand – of Clemens Brentano: not to return to Dülmen. First came a letter from Christian, on February 5, in which his

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<sup>23</sup> "Herr Clemens Brentano fährt fort, das innere Leben der Kranken zu erforschen, die Resultate seiner Untersuchungen zeichnet er fleißig auf, und er wird mir das Wesentlichste mitteilen. Soweit ist alles gut, indessen beunruhigt einigermaßen der enge Verkehr, worin der Herr Brentano sich mit der Kranken gesetzt und der physisch-magnetische Rapport, wodurch er, und jetzt auch ich, ekstatische Erstarrungen und Reaktionen in diesen zu Wege bringen können, da dieses sonst nur doch auch jetzt noch, durch innere Beschauungen und durch die Kraft der kirchlichen Weihen geschah." Wesener, journal, nDecember 28, 1818, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 280-281.

<sup>24</sup> "Die Kranke ist fortwährend schwach und elend; es scheint mir, daß die ewigen Fragen und Ausforschungen des Herrn Brentano, seine Heftigkeit und sein hartes Verfahren gegen die störrische Schwester der Kranken letztere so sehr angreifen." Wesener, journal, January 8, 1819, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 252-253.

<sup>25</sup> "Am 12. reiste der Herr Clem[ens] Brentano wieder zurück nach Berlin mit der Versicherung, daß er bald wieder komme und bei der Kranken bleiben wolle. Die Kranke aber wünscht es nicht, weil seine Wißbegier keine Grenzen hatte und er ihr durch sein Fragen und Forschen lästig wurde." Wesener, journal, January 15, 1819, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 253.

brother said he had received a statement from Emmerick, signed by her own hand. In this statement, she protested her love for Clemens but firmly asserted that she could not allow, nor wished him to return.<sup>26</sup> Shortly thereafter came a letter from Wesener himself. “The purpose of my writing is none other,” he wrote, “than to dissuade you from your intention to come back here . . . Everyone here, all friends of Emmerick in Münster are united in the opinion that your return [and] your close intercourse with E. will have the most evil consequences for the latter.”<sup>27</sup> He went on to say that while E loved him, she feared his “unbendable mind” and was upset over the way he had inserted himself into her household.<sup>28</sup>

The next salvo in this barrage of letters came from Fr. Lambert, whose letter was enclosed with Wesener’s. Writing in his native French, the elderly refugee priest opined, “I do not feel I have enough courage and strength to endure a second time all that I suffered during the time of your assiduity day and night with our sister in Jesus Christ [Emmerick].” So obsessively and forcefully had Brentano monopolized her time, Lambert wrote, that he had been forced to be secretive in snatching what time he could with her, for fear of upsetting him. This sudden change from the regular intimacy he had enjoyed with his dear friend was painful, and he wished nothing more than for their little household to return to what it was before Brentano came: “for more than fifteen years [including their time in Agnetenberg convent] we have lived together in the greatest peace and union of heart, and so we would like die [in the same way].”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Christian Brentano to Clemens Brentano, February 5 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 397-398. If Emmerick did write and sign such a statement, it has not survived. Dr. Wesener also does not mention any enclosed statement in his letter to Christian Brentano, asking him to write Clemens and convince him not to return to Dülmen. See Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Christian Brentano, January 12-19, 1819, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 459-461.

<sup>27</sup> “Der Zweck meines Schreibens ist kein anderer, als Ihr Vorhaben, wieder hierherzukommen, Ihnen auszureden . . . Alle hiesigen, alle Freunde der E. in Münster sind einstimmig der Meinung, daß Ihr Wiederkommen, Ihr enger Umgang mit der E. für letztere wenigstens die übelsten Folgen haben werde.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Clemens Brentano, February 11, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 399.

<sup>28</sup> Wesener to Clemens Brentano, February 11, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 400.

<sup>29</sup> “. . . je ne me sens plus assez de courage et de force pour supporter une seconde fois tout ce que j’ai souffert pendant tout le temps de votre assiduité tant de nuit que de jour auprès de notre Soeurs en J. C. Depuis plus des 15

Finally, a letter came from the woman at the heart of the matter, Emmerick herself. As a source of insight into her own true feelings regarding Brentano's return, and as one of only a few documents that purportedly offer access to her unmediated voice, it is worth quoting in full, with original paragraph breaks and lack of punctuation intact:

Dear brother

In Jesus Christ, after your departure I was very ill you wished that I should detach myself from everything this wish is fulfilled I am laying in my little room quite peacefully but my surroundings [i.e., household and caregivers] which are by me daily I cannot detach myself from it would be ungrateful if I sadden elderly Lambert who has been my only support in his old age No that I cannot do I wish to upset no one that afflicts me in my soul here I must have my freedom my dear friend on this point you must be a little more flexible and not stick so firmly to your own opinion then also have patience with the weaknesses of other people for each has his faults but one's faults are borne by others then the law of Jesus Christ will be fulfilled I ask this of you through the sweet heart of Jesus.

With many thanks for your efforts.

I wish you peace happiness health and blessing though Jesus Christ our Lord amen your well-meaning friend

C. A. Emerick

I can no more Dr. Wesener says the above.<sup>30</sup>

Faced with all of these objections, Brentano gave up his plans to move permanently to Dülmen.

In a letter written March 16<sup>th</sup>, he apologized to Wesener for any hurt his behavior had caused, and promised that in accordance with their wishes, he would not return.

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ans nous avons vecu ensemble dans la plus grande paix et union de coeur et nous y voulons mourir. Il me fut bien d'ur de ne pouvoir la voir et lui parler que furtivement durant votre séjour ici." Abbé Jean Martin Lambert to Clemens Brentano, February 12, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 401.

<sup>30</sup> "Lieber bruder / In Jesu Christo, nach ihre abreise war ich schwerkrank sie wünschten ich sollte mich von alles losmachen dieser wünsch ist erfüllet, ich liege in mein Zimmergen ganz ruhig aber meine Umgeben [Umbgebung] die täglich bey mir sind kan ich mir nicht losmachen es wäre undankbar wenn ich den allten Lambert der mein einzige Unterstützung gewesen ist in seinen alter betrüben sollte Nein das kan ich nicht Ich mag keinen Menschen betrüben das tut mir wehe in meine Seele hierin muß ich mein Freyheit haben mein lieber Freunt hierin musen sie Ein weniger nachgiebiger sein und auf ihrer Meynung nicht so fest stehn dann auch Geduld haben mit den Schwachheiten anderer Menschen den ein jeder hat seine Fehler aber einer übertrage des andern seine Schwachheit dann wird das Gesetz Jesu Christi erfüllet hierum bitte ich sie durch das süße Herz Jesu. / Mit vielen Dank für ihre bemühung. / Ich wünsche Ihnen Ruhe zufriedenheit heyl und segen durch Jesum Christum unsern herren amen ihre wohlmeinende Freundin / C. A/ Emerick / ich kan nicht mehr Dr. Wesener sagt das übrige." Spelling and capitalization errors in the original. Anna Katharina Emmerick to Clemens Brentano, February 11, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 398-399.

Just days later, however, Brentano received a new batch of letters from Dülmen, and this time the tone was somewhat changed. Fr. Limberg wrote for the first time, and he told a story very different from the one Wesener and Christian Brentano had told. Limberg wrote that he felt great sympathy for the “agonizing situation” Brentano had been placed in through the recent barrage of letters. “It also pains the invalid E[mmerrick] very much that you have to suffer so unjustly because of her.” Limberg went on: “If *others* have written to you harshly (though they did not mean to be so bad), the surely did so only turn away from us a pain that oppressed us bitterly, and which prejudiced persons ascribed to you. . . That you should never come here again, has never been my desire and I assure you, that this is also not the will of the invalid (emphasis in original).”<sup>31</sup> The fact that Emmerick never asked Brentano to stay away in her own letter lends credence to this claim. The cryptic last line, “I can no more Dr. Wesener says the above,” also suggests that the physician may have pressured her to write the letter in the first place.

Dr. Wesener also wrote Brentano again, addressing him as *lieber Herzesfreund*. He expressed to Brentano his concerns about the poet’s alleged magnetic effect on Emmerick, and his fears that Brentano was inducing trances and visions that were not “real” (that is, not from God), for the first time.<sup>32</sup> Wesener also confessed that he, himself had felt overwhelmed by the

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<sup>31</sup> “Mit herzlicher Teilnahme habe ich aus Ihrem werten Briefe die quälende Lage vernommen, worin Sie durch mehrere Briefe versetzt sind. Auch der Kranken J[ungfer] E[mmerrick] tut es sehr wehe, daß Sie so unschuldig um ihretwillen leiden müssen. Haben Ihnen *andere* hart geschrieben (die es doch wohl so übel nicht meinten), so haben sie es gewiß nur darum getan, um von uns Leiden abzuwenden, die uns hart drohten, und die einseitige Menschen Ihnen zuschrieben. . . Daß Sie gar nicht wieder hier kommen sollten, das ist mir nie beigefallen und ich versichere es Ihnen, daß dieses der Wille der Kranken auch nicht ist. . .” Fr. Alois Joseph Limberg to Clemens Brentano, March 22, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 407.

<sup>32</sup> The passage lays out so clearly Wesener’s distinction between magnetism by laypersons and magnetism through priestly power that it is worth quoting in full: “Sie haben schönen Dinge an der E. gesehen, herrliche Entdeckungen gemacht. Aber, lieber Br., überlegen Sie bei kaltem Blute ob Sie nicht zuviel Gewicht auf Träume legen? – Lachen Sie nicht über mich und über diese Frage – mich beunruhigte langer vor Ihrer Abreise eine Entdeckung . . . daß ich die E. in den Kreis des physischen, tierischen Magnetismus herabgezogen glaubte. – Ich legte Ihr einmal bei Kopfschmerzen die Hand auf den Kopf, die Schmerzen schwiegen; ich setzte ihr die Fingerspitzen auf die Herzgrube, und sie schlief; ich fragte sie etwas, und sie antwortete mir, sprach auch von Feuerfunken, feurigen

“magnetism” of Brentano’s personality and the incredible experiences he seemed to inspire from Emmerick in such a short time. Lambert and Limberg he speculated, had felt the same. The doctor now realized that it was this sudden disturbance of the tight-knit household they had all formed around Emmerick that provoked his concern, even jealousy. Brentano had responded to their misgivings defensively, and everyone had overreacted.

You excuse yourself regarding your behavior toward Lambert, Limberg, Drücke [Gertrud] and me, you are innocent of all slights and all grief [caused]. You have meant well, your intentions were only for the good; only you forgot in the strength of your intellect [*Geist*] that we are all poor, weak midges and that your forceful storm-winds broke our wings and threw us onto the cliffs. – Dear, best friend . . . my dear brother in the Lord – I am the one at fault, I am the one who actually nourished such apprehensions that you had the intention of distancing us all from E., to possess her all for yourself and have her in your power. It behooves me therefore to ask for your forgiveness, and I do so here as God’s will.<sup>33</sup>

Thus did Wesener reverse course and express his willingness for Brentano to come back to Dülmen – provided that he keep his concerns about overtaxing and over-influencing Emmerick in mind. Ultimately, Fr. Overberg acted as a mediator in the situation. He advised Brentano that he was welcome to return, but that he must restrict the amount of time he spent with Emmerick each day so as to save her strength (and presumably, to allow her other admirers and caregivers an equal share of her time). With all parties agreed to these conditions, Brentano was able to return to Emmerick’s side.

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Strahlen u. dgl. – Das betrübte, beunruhigte mich, da ich Reaktionen derart vorher nie hatte bewirken können, und nur durch priesterliche Weihgewalt sie vorhin gesehen.” Franz Wilhelm Wesener to Clemens Brentano, March 20, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hüpfner, 405.

<sup>33</sup> “Sie entschuldigen sich über Ihr Betragen gegen Lambert, Limberg, Drücke und mich, Sie sind unschuldig an aller Kränkung, an aller Betrübniß. Sie habens gut gemeint, Sie bezweckten nur das Gute; allein Sie haben in der Kraft, Ihres Geistes vergessen, daß wir alle arme schwache Mücken sind, und daß Ihr gewaltiger Sturmwind unsere Flügel zerbrach und uns an Felsen schleuderte. – Lieber, bester Freund . . . mein lieber Bruder im Herrn – ich bin der Verworfene, ich bin es, der den Gedenken wirklich hegte, daß Sie die Absicht hätten, uns alle von der E. zu entfernen, um sie allein zu besitzen und in Ihrer Gewalt zu haben. – Mir geziemt’s also, Sie um Verzeihung zu bitten, und ich tue es hier um Gottes Willen.” Wesener to Clemens Brentano, March 20, 1819, in *Akten*, ed. Hümpfner, 406.

As will be seen, the later text of *Das bittere Leiden* is marked throughout by a tone of urgency, even a siege mentality. Repeatedly, Brentano remarks in his introduction and in asides during the main text that Emmerick's visions, an inestimable treasure for the Church, could have been lost forever if he had not come along to record them. He also describes the task he and Emmerick undertook in retelling Biblical history as one of recovering, through mystical inspiration, Christian traditions and stories that would otherwise have been lost forever. Furthermore, he portrays Emmerick as a saint sent to rebuke the times, a sort of savior for an embattled Church beset by secularization and waning belief. The internecine conflict within Emmerick's circle that nearly prevented their collaboration from coming into being places this tone of *Das bittere Leiden* in helpful context.

#### *Questions of Authorship, Authority, and Agency*

This struggle between Brentano and Wesener for access to Emmerick has been the subject of frequent analysis. The church researchers, hagiographers, and literary scholars who have studied Brentano's relationship with Emmerick have uniformly come down on Wesener's side of this conflict, despite the doctor's own admission of fault at the end of the whole affair. Authors from all these camps have, for their own reasons, argued that Brentano was indeed forceful in his behavior toward Emmerick's friends and relatives. Even worse, they assert, he was a possessive and manipulative force in Emmerick's life, however good-intentioned.

The clergymen who have conducted research over the past two centuries for Emmerick's beatification process, for example, have uniformly found much fault with Brentano. The first postulator of her beatification cause, Thomas Wegener, acknowledged that God chose Brentano as his instrument to record Emmerick's visions, but pointedly remarked that "his boisterous

character and his passionate disposition” were continual hindrances.<sup>34</sup> A generation later, Winfried Hümpfner OESA strongly asserted that whereas Wesener would break off any conversations or magnetic experiments so as not to exhaust Emmerick, Brentano showed her no such regard. “[I]f it had to do with extorting visions, [Brentano] completely used Emmerick as an experimental object for his own observational goals.”<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Brentano’s distortions of Emmerick’s visions only intensified as he began the process of organizing them for publication. Once she died and was no longer able to guide Brentano, Hümpfner argued, “Christianity for him became more and more entangled with the Romantic.” As a result, the poet’s flights of fancy crept into *Das bittere Leiden*. What finally made it to the printed page was not simply edited but embellished and expanded, a fact that Brentano never acknowledged in his preface or his footnotes. It was a case not only of “unconscious distortions” but also at times of “deliberate, systematic mystification.”<sup>36</sup>

The way in which Brentano’s own agenda drove his relationship with Emmerick was similarly problematic for the last postulator of Emmerick’s beatification cause, Clemens Engling. Consumed by his desire to record supernatural phenomena and spiritual wonders, Engling has argued, the poet made constant demands on the weak and exhausted woman. It diverted her attention, furthermore, from doing tasks she considered just as important, such as knitting clothes for the poor or spending quiet hours in prayer. His own “vision” of writing a great Christian

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<sup>34</sup> Wegener, *Innere und äußere Leben*, 228.

<sup>35</sup> “Wesener . . . bricht die interessantesten Unterhaltungen ab, aus Furcht A.K. zu ermüden. Br[entano] hat solche Rücksichten auf A. K. sicherlich oft beiseite gesetzt, wenn es galt Visionen zu erpressen, überhaupt A.K. für seine eigenen Beobachtungszwecke als Versuchsobjekt auszunützen. . . .” Hümpfner, *Tagebuch*, 251-52 n. 1.

<sup>36</sup> “Ihm verwächst mehr und mehr das Romantische mit dem Christentum . . . Wir dürfen am Ende unserer Untersuchung diesen Satz positiv fassen und sagen: Daß Br. Absichtlich eigene Erfindungen und Erzählungen anderer als Gegenstand Emmerick’scher Gesichte in die Tagebücher verwoben, kurz, daß eine absichtliche wissenschaftliche Mystifikation vorliegt, das steht unleugbar fest! . . . nicht allein mit unfreiwilligen Entstellungen zu tun haben, sondern mit bewußten Umgestaltungen, mit bewußter Einführung neuer Motive, mit bewußter Unterschiebung eigener Ansichten und eigener Interpretation der Tatsachen.” Hümpfner, *Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit*, 568-569.

literary epic overwhelmed Emmerick's "vision" for her life: one of humility, charity, and redemptive suffering.<sup>37</sup> This attitude has trickled down into popular hagiographical works as well. Jeanne Danemarie, for example, wrote of the situation: "We may be sorry for Anne Catherine, who had to put up with the presence of this man, irascible, sensitive, ignorant of religious matters, in a word, unendurable; but – let me hasten to add – full of kindness, brains and good intentions. She was to make him gentle and humble – but at what a price!"<sup>38</sup>

The other group of academics to take interest in the Emmerick-Brentano encounter is German literary scholars. Many have drawn lines of continuity between the subjects, themes, and imagery of *Das bittere Leiden* and those of Brentano's creative works. For example, female visionaries and wise peasant women feature in earlier Brentano works such as his play *Die Gründung Prags* and his novella, *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*.<sup>39</sup> The symbolic imagery of blood and wounds can be found in much of his poetry.<sup>40</sup> One can draw direct analogies between his collection of rural folktales and songs for educated audiences in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and his collection of Emmerick's peasant wisdom in *Das bittere Leiden*.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, literary scholars have seen Brentano's work with Emmerick as yet another iteration of a characteristically Romantic fascination with the mysterious, otherworldly, fantastical, and macabre. That is, they argue that *Dolorous Passion* is a quintessentially Romantic work, the product of Brentano's own unique poetic imagination. However sincere his religious conversion, it was his Romantic literary predilections that would define *Das bittere*

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<sup>37</sup> Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 123.

<sup>38</sup> Danemarie, *Anne Catherine Emmerich and Stigmatisation*, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Scholz, *Clemens Brentano*, 54.

<sup>40</sup> Ireton, "'Wunden'/'Wunder,'" 597-610. On Romanticism and violence (albeit focused primarily on English examples), see Ian Haywood, *Bloody Romanticism: Spectacular Violence and the Politics of Representation, 1776-1832* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Scholz, *Brentano*, 129-130.

*Leiden* as much as anything else Brentano wrote: he was fundamentally, as Bernhard Gajek phrased it, “Homo poeta.”<sup>42</sup>

Germanists and Brentano biographers have reinforced this claim by arguing, like the clerical scholars, that Brentano manipulated Emmerick, seeing in her what his Romantic worldview predisposed him to see and hearing in her utterances what he wanted to hear. His literary ambitions to write an epic biography of Christ dictated the form and focus of Emmerick’s visions. His urgent, leading, relentless questioning practically put words into her mouth. Wolfgang Frühwald concluded that

[t]o eliminate Brentano’s visions-as-chronicled from the visions-as-reported of Emmerick appears still more fruitless than an attempt to reconstruct the voice of the famous “fairytale woman” from the stories of the brothers Grimm. Even when [such an attempt] manages to lift words, formulations, vision fragments, etc. of the invalid woman from the Emmerick papers, one has captured only the thoughts of the poet in the verbal guise of the nun.<sup>43</sup>

More recently, Günter Scholz has written that Brentano, however pure his intentions, ended up subjecting Emmerick to a thorough-going *Stilisierung* and *Literarisierung* in his mind and in his writing. So enamored was he with his mystical muse and supernatural seeress that he soon failed to see anymore the actual, “simple nun” in front of him.<sup>44</sup> In short: Brentano played Emmerick like a Ouija board.

There is some truth to all of these accusations, and to the accusations of controlling behavior in the letter campaign organized by Dr. Wesener. Brentano’s fixation, even obsession with Emmerick could indeed be possessive. In a letter to Luise Hensel, for instance, Brentano wrote of Emmerick: “she remains mine, and ours, and the Church’s. . . I know things about her,

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<sup>42</sup> Gajek, *Homo poeta*.

<sup>43</sup> Frühwald, *Das Spätwerk Clemens Brentanos*, 273. Frühwald is referring to the peasant woman who recounted to Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm many of the fairy tales that were included in their celebrated anthology. On the Grimm brothers’ polishing and re-writing of the fairy tales and the inability to treat their texts as unmediated access to an oral folktale tradition, see Jack Zipes, *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Spell of the Grimms’ Folk and Fairy Tales* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 1-32.

<sup>44</sup> Scholz, *Brentano*, 75-85.

that she herself does not know.”<sup>45</sup> Brentano could be harsh about those who took away from his time with her. He was convinced that he was the only one who truly appreciated Emmerick’s ecstatic visions, and that no one else around her was capable of carrying out the important work he was doing. As he complained to Fr. Overberg, Dr. Wesener’s fears that he was inducing trances demonstrated that the physician did not appreciate what was in front of him day after day: “He, who has stood for many years without any consolation at the side of her, the very fount of consolation! He has oppressed her with hypochondrial impetuosity.” Limberg was no better: “He told me that I give too much to the dreams of this person.” Brentano was incredulous that “the virtuous confessor,” who by the nature of his role was constantly immersed in “the inner life of his charge,” could mistake her divine visions for mere dreams. In sum, through the ignorance of Wesener, Limberg and Emmerick’s other handlers, “her spirit [*Geist*] has gone unrecognized and severely mishandled,” but as long as he was allowed to continue recording her visions, the treasures of her inner life would not be “entirely lost.”<sup>46</sup> In another letter, this time to Vicar General Droste-Vischering, Brentano would write that Emmerick was “the helpless ward of ill-advised, bumbling and simple-minded men, who are pious enough but are not always in Christ.”<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, Brentano did influence how Emmerick behaved in trance, which visions she talked about, and probably what she “saw” as a result of his leading questions. After some time with her, and learning that she claimed to see visions of events from the Old and New Testament, Brentano began to conceive a specific project: a sweeping epic of salvation history, and particularly the life of Christ, as revealed to Emmerick. He therefore asked her questions that

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<sup>45</sup> Clemens Brentano to Luise Hensel, December 9, 1818, *Sämtliche Werke*, FBA vol. 33, 427.

<sup>46</sup> Clemens Brentano to Bernhard Overberg, March 20, 1819, *Sämtliche Werke*, FBA vol. 34, 37-38.

<sup>47</sup> Clemens Brentano to Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, after October 9, 1819, *Sämtliche Werke*, FBA vol. 34.

guided her through the events of the Bible, rather than letting her visions and retelling of them proceed at random.

In doing so, however, Brentano was not introducing new themes into Emmerick's visions. Thanks to Wesener's Emmerick journal, we know that well before Brentano came to Dülmen, she claimed to know the stories of the Bible and the saints in their finest details, and to make "pilgrimages" to the Holy Land in spirit, seeing all that had transpired there throughout Biblical history, on a regular basis.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, any conscious "magnetic" practices Brentano performed were also a continuation of experiments Wesener, Limberg, and Christian Brentano had started earlier.

Clerics working toward Emmerick's beatification have had a reason to distance her legacy from Brentano, and to play up the credibility of Dr. Wesener as a source on her life. As researchers delved into Brentano's papers, it became clear that it was not possible to tease out Emmerick's "authentic" visions from the final text of *Das bittere Leiden* or any of the other works organized and edited by Brentano. This should not have been a revelation: Brentano frankly discussed in the introduction to *Das bittere Leiden* his process of recording the visions, which involved taking down as much as he could while he listened to Emmerick speak for an hour or so in her low-German dialect; then rushing home to write from memory what he had heard; and finally reading it back to her later that day if he had a chance.<sup>49</sup> Hümpfner's research in the 1920s, however also revealed that Brentano had gone so far as to write whole new passages or borrow from other works on biblical history if he found his notes fuzzy, or if there

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<sup>48</sup> Wesener, journal, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 31-32, 42-45, 116-117.

<sup>49</sup> Clemens Brentano, "Einleitung," *Das bittere Leiden*.

were gaps in the narrative that needed filling.<sup>50</sup> This threw all of Brentano's voluminous writings on Emmerick into question.

Dr. Wesener, with his Emmerick journal, beckoned as the best alternative source for researchers to use in the investigation of her life that was a required part of the beatification process. Hümpfner and others therefore praised Dr. Wesener's credibility as a witness, pointing to his medical expertise as well as the respect for Emmerick expressed throughout his journal, letters, and other papers.<sup>51</sup> Yet a close reading of the Wesener material, as carried out in the previous chapter, reveals that while he did indeed have great respect and affection for Emmerick, the doctor's methods of exploring her "inner life" were not so different from Brentano's in the end.

As for the arguments of German literary scholars, they have drawn legitimate and useful connections between *Das bittere Leiden* and the rest of Brentano's creative oeuvre. They also helpfully situate his time with Emmerick in the context of his broader biography. In doing so, however, they have evinced a troubling tendency to portray Emmerick as a weak figure without a voice, contributing little or nothing to the famous books of visions that bear her name. In a sense, she becomes the stereotypical enthralled woman of Romantic fiction or Gothic horror in the eyes of these scholars, totally under the power of a mesmerizing man. This erasure of Emmerick's agency is troubling. It does not fit, furthermore, with the portrait of Emmerick that emerges from a comprehensive exploration of all available contemporary sources.

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<sup>50</sup> Hümpfner, *Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit*.

<sup>51</sup> See for instance Hümpfner, "Vorwort" *Tagebuch*, vi: "Eine besondere Bedeutung hat die Bekanntmachung dieses Materials auch für die weitere Lösung der sogen. Brentano-Emmerick Frage. Wir haben in unserer Arbeit 'Clemens Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit in seinen Emmerick-Aufzeichnungen: Untersuchung über die Brentano-Emmerick Frage unter erstmaliger Benutzung der Tagebücher Brentanos, Würzburg: St. Rita-Verlag 1923' nachgewiesen, daß Brentanos Aufzeichnungen eine keineswegs zuverlässige Quelle sind. Alle seine Berichte über Visionen und Tatsachen aus dem Leben Anna Katharinas bedürfen also der Kontrolle und diese finden wir eben in vieler Beziehung in den über 6 ½ Jahre sich erstreckenden Aufzeichnungen Weseners."

Anna Katharina Emmerick was – no less than Clemens Brentano – a person with a formidable sense of mission. From her earliest childhood, she was determined to become a nun. Her poverty meant that she could not pay the dowry needed to enter a convent. Her family also opposed her. Three different convents turned her away. Nevertheless, she persisted. She was also a person with definite opinions on how one should live a Christian life. Growing up, she incessantly preached to her siblings, friends, and neighbors. In the convent, she adopted her own prayer practices, sticking to them even when she was accused of self-righteousness by her fellow nuns. She gave away convent goods to the needy, even without permission. Later, when she became a stigmatic and public figure, she unswervingly insisted that her wounds and visions came from God in the face of many interrogations, two invasive official investigations, and repeated mockery and condemnation in the popular press. This was no passive, easily-manipulated woman.

From childhood, Emmerick had experienced visions of Jesus, Mary, and other figures from the Bible. When her parents and others expressed disbelief and concern about this, she learned to keep these visions to herself. After her stigmata, however, she felt she had been chosen by God to share her visions – and she did so, repeatedly. In his diary, her physician, Wesener recorded a conversation with her in 1813, five years before Brentano came to Dülmen: “I expressed regret that we did not possess a more exact . . . life history of Jesus; then she told me she knew everything in minute detail, as if she had seen it all herself.”<sup>52</sup> Emmerick promised to share some of these visions with Wesener, and shortly thereafter she began to tell him the early history of Jesus’ mother Mary, saying that as a young child, her parents promised her to the Temple. She recounted the tale to Wesener in fine detail, describing how the three-year-old

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<sup>52</sup> “Ich bedauerte bei dieser Gelegenheit, daß wir nicht eine genauere Geschichte der früheren Lebensgeschichte Jesus besäßen; darauf sage sie mir, sie wisse alles so haarklein, als wenn sie alles selbst gesehen hatte.” Wesener, journal, May 1, 1813, in *Tagebuch*, ed. Hümpfner, 31-32.

toddler Mary struggled to climb up the steep Temple steps. Here, frustratingly, the vision breaks off, and Wesener would never bother to record the rest. He did record, however, this telling comment: “She told me furthermore, that she only wished she could write, for she thought she wanted to write a full book of the visions she had.”<sup>53</sup> Five years later, when Brentano arrived on the scene, Emmerick had her chance. In short, given her history, and her own expressed interests in sharing her visions and reflections, there is ample ground for re-casting Emmerick as a willing and active collaborator with Brentano.

These questions of authorship, authority, and agency that surround Emmerick’s relationship with Brentano are hardly unique. On the one hand, some scholars have seen their interactions as emblematic of their historical context: the age of Romantic seeresses and “magnetized” somnambulists. Yet throughout the history of the Catholic Church, there have been mystics whose ecstatic visions and other spiritual experiences passed through more than one “medium” on their way to the written page. Sometimes, the mystic herself is literate and eloquent enough to capture something of her ineffable experiences on paper: Hildegard von Bingen and Teresa of Avila being two well-known examples. Even in these cases, however, there is inevitably a chasm between the “actual” mystical experience, however one wishes to understand this, and what the mystic can write down, usually some time after the experience has occurred. Furthermore, the mystic is almost always writing under the guidance (and scrutiny) of a clerical authority, and as such may consciously or unconsciously monitor and shape her words to conform to Catholic orthodoxy.

Finally, there have also been many cases through the centuries of mystics, especially female mystics, who have relied, to a greater or lesser degree, on (male) clerical scribes and

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<sup>53</sup> “Sie sagte mir noch, sie wünte nur schreiben zu können, so wolle sie wohl ein Buch, glaubte sie, von den Erscheinungen, die sie schon gehabt, vollzuschreiben.” Wesener, journal, May 27, 1813.

amanuenses. Notable examples here include Margery Kempe and the unnamed scribe she employed to write the book of her life; Peter of Dacia and Christine von Stommeln; Anthony of Capua and Catherine of Siena; and Angela of Foligno and her anonymous memorialist. Such men have traditionally occupied a crucial place in the lives of holy women: they have traditionally been the confessors, advisors and hagiographers of female saints, who have always been subject to male clerical authority. Thus, male clerics have usually had the power of determining how female saints are remembered, interspersing themselves as a mediator between the voice of a female mystic and the public, choosing which elements of her life and her words to emphasize, or to report at all.<sup>54</sup>

One might be led to conclude from all this that there is no chance for a historian, biographer, theologian, or worshipper to truly access the mystical world of visionaries like Emmerick; and furthermore, that the practices of the patriarchal, institutional Church have only widened this unbridgeable gulf. It is true that any mystical experience must ultimately remain ineffable. Yet it does not follow from this that the voices of female mystics are forever silenced by the forces of history and patriarchy, or that they were not able to exercise agency, authority, and authorship in the recording of their ecstasies and visions. As scholars such as John Coakley and Andrea Janelle Dickens have noted, many of the male scribes who recorded the visions of female mystics did so because they believed fervently in her access to the divine – and even believed that her femininity was, in part, what allowed her to achieve such emotional intimacy and ecstatic union with God. Catholic female mystics have not been granted access to the channels of institutional power in their church, but they have been able to wield tremendous charismatic power by virtue of their privileged revelations.<sup>55</sup> Anna Katharina Emmerick, who

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<sup>54</sup> Coakley, *Men, Women, and Spiritual Power*, 2-5.

<sup>55</sup> Coakley, *Men Women, and Spiritual Power*; Dickens, *The Female Mystic*.

astounded so many learned men with her piety and eloquence, is a part of this long tradition. It is in this spirit that we now turn to analysis of the text of *Das bittere Leiden* itself.

### *Das bittere Leiden in Historical Context*

When Brentano began his work with Emmerick, she had already been the subject of intense and often critical media speculation throughout Europe. One London paper, for example, sarcastically referred to Emmerick as a “Modern Miracle,” concluding, “Superstition and imposture are still in existence in various parts of the continent.”<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, the *Hermann Zeitschrift von und für Westfalen* reported: “That this [time-worn] deception is being repeated in our own day, in Prussian territory, cannot be decried loudly enough. Is a shameful game being played on this unfortunate person, or is she herself an imposter? In any case it is a matter for the authorities.”<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the intensity and harshness of the debate was about to sharply increase. Dülmen’s own priest Bernhard Rensing had been engaged in a pamphlet war, defending Emmerick in print against veiled accusations of fraud by Bernard Bodde, a professor of chemistry at the University of Münster.<sup>58</sup> Prussian authorities became increasingly concerned about the disruption of public order. As Chapter Three discussed, in 1819 they would open an official investigation of Emmerick, forcibly removing her from her home for two weeks. Meanwhile, a series of biting, sarcastic articles ran in the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger*, signed “the *reisende Juwelier*.” In his essays, “Juwelier” made clear that he considered

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<sup>56</sup> “Miracles in 1819!,” *London Monthly Magazine*, October 1819, reprinted in *The Atheneum; or, Spirit of the English Magazines*, Vol. VI (Boston: Monroe & Francis, 1820), pp. 244-245.

<sup>57</sup> „Die Wiederholung dieses Betrugs in unsern Tagen im preußischen Gebiete kann nicht genug zur Kunde gebracht werden. Wird mit der unglücklichen Person ein schändliches Spiel getrieben, oder ist sie Betrügerin? Auf jeden Fall ist es Sache der Obrigkeit . . .“ Pascal (pseud.), “Nichts Neues,” *Hermann:Zeitschrift von und für Westfalen*, No. 44 (Hagen: May 30, 1817), 352, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 13, BAM.

<sup>58</sup> Bernard Bodde, *Sendschreiben an den Herrn Rensing, Dechant und Pfarrer zu Dülmen, worin derselbe einer Theilnahme an der Erkünstelung der Wundmaale der Jungfer Emmerich nicht beschudligt, das Wundersame der Wundmaale abber standhaft verneint wird* (Hamm: Schulz und Wundermann, 1819).

Emmerick a hysteric and her devotees a gullible, superstitious mob.<sup>59</sup> Wrapped up as he was in his daily task of recording Emmerick's visions, Brentano nonetheless took the time to pen an anonymous response to these scandal-mongering diatribes.<sup>60</sup>

In the *Rhein-Westfälische Anzeiger*, physicians, scientists, and interested amateurs debated in its pages the exact physical cause of Emmerick's behavior, but many agreed that her gender had something to do with it. Perhaps, one doctor speculated, Emmerick's bleeding stigmata were outpourings of menstrual blood run amok.<sup>61</sup> As one of the *Anzeiger's* correspondents pointed out (correctly, in fact), the vast majority of stigmatics through the centuries have been women – women, who almost all Enlightenment philosophes and revolutionaries agreed were too irrational to exercise the duties of citizenship.<sup>62</sup>

In sum, Emmerick's critics saw her case as a symbol of a broader problem: the “superstition and imposture,” of religious fanaticism, which played a “shameful game” on the ignorant and impressionable. Furthermore, Emmerick's body – her wounds, her faints, her sex –

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<sup>59</sup> Reisenden Juwelier (pseud.), "Fragen eines Wißbegierigen, den Zustand der Anna Catharina Emmerich betreffend," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger* 32, no. 79, October 2, 1819, pp. 1540-1546; "Erklärung und fernere Frage des reisenden Juweliers," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger* 32, no. 90, November 10, 1819, 1758-1763; "Antworten auf Fragen vom reisenden Juwelier," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger* 32, no. 101, December 18, 1819, 1978-1981; "Antworten auf Fragen vom reisenden Juwelier (Schluß)," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Anzeiger* 32, no. 102, December 22, 1819, 1991-94.

<sup>60</sup> Anonymous (Clemens Brentano), "Wohlgemeintes Sendschreiben an den reifenden Juwelier," *Rheinisch-Westfälischer Anzeiger*, 33, no. 6, January 19, 1820. Attributed to Brentano in Otto Mallon, *Brentano-Bibliographie: Clemens Brentano, 1778 bis 1842* (Berlin: S. Martin Fraenkel, 1926).

<sup>61</sup> See for example Johann Bapt. Boner, "Die Nonne von Dülmen," *Rhein-Westfälische-Anzeiger* 32, no. 77 (September 25, 1819), 1503-1507, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 13, BAM; „Über die Nonne zu Dülmen,“ ,“ *Rhein-Westfälische-Anzeiger* 25, no. 67 ( August 23, 1815), 1068-1071, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 13, BAM.

<sup>62</sup> „. . . Andere erdichteten allerlei wunderbare Zufälle eines ergriffenen Nervensystems: sie fielen in einen Schlaftrunkenen Zustand, worin sie die Gabe des Hellsehens und der Prophezeiung äußerten, trotz einer Somnambule aus dem neunzehnten Jahrhunderte. Mehrere zeugten Male (Stigmata) vor, die mit den Wundmalen Christi Ähnlichkeit hatten. Der größte Teil dieser Schwärmer und Heuchler bestand aus Weibern.“ Reisende Juwelier (pseud.), "Antworten auf Fragen vom reisenden Juwelier," *Rhein-Westfälische Anzeiger* 32, no. 101 (December 18, 1819), 1978-1981, „Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 13, BAM. On Enlightenment views of gender and citizenship, see Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996).

was frequently the focus of this criticism. She was the embodiment, if you will, of sensual, superstitious Baroque Catholicism.

Brentano, fully aware of Emmerick's critics, recognized that her symbolic potential could also be turned to the Church's advantage. Here, after all, was a woman whose convent had been secularized, her homeland threatened by a French army with a reputation for stripping altars and desecrating communion hosts. Her mysterious wounds and visions, moreover, continued to confound the medical professionals and other skeptics, who could not agree on their cause.

In the introduction to *Das bittere Leiden*, Brentano therefore presented Emmerick as a martyr of a godless age, cast out of her convent by cold rationalism.<sup>63</sup> Brentano did far more, however, than simply play upon Emmerick's pathetic circumstances. He met her critics on their own ground, making Emmerick's body and femininity a recurring touchstone of *Das bittere Leiden*.

Regarding Emmerick's gendered, emotionally-wrought piety, for example, Brentano took pains to present a much more nuanced picture of female devotion in *Das bittere Leiden*. This is particularly evident in the contrasting reactions of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene to Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion. The Virgin Mary is fixated throughout on her son's suffering rather than her own, so much so that she experiences a sort of psychic connection with Jesus. Like Emmerick herself, Mary is "in constant inner sympathetic suffering with Jesus, knowing and feeling everything that happened to him."<sup>64</sup> This overwhelming emotional experience does not prevent Mary, however, from recognizing that it is all part of God's plan of salvation: "She saw indeed his terrible suffering, but illuminated all through with the holiness, love, and patience

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<sup>63</sup> Brentano, "Lebensumriß," *Das bittere Leiden*, 10-12, 35.

<sup>64</sup> „Die heilige Jungfrau, in stetem, innerem Mitleiden mit Jesus, wußte und fühlte alles, was ihm geschah.“ Clemens Brentano and Anna Katharina Emmerick, *Das bittere Leiden*, 157.

of his willing sacrifice.”<sup>65</sup> This psychic connection and higher understanding is a privilege granted to Mary alone.

Magdalene, on the other hand, is repeatedly described as “out of her senses.” As Jesus at one point explains to his mother, Magdalene honors him with her “inexpressible love, but her Love is still of the flesh.”<sup>66</sup> In consequence, Magdalene’s selfish attachment to Jesus blinds her to the broader significance of the Passion as it unfolds. “[As] she saw Jesus mistreated and led to his death . . . she placed her love before her own guilt, for Jesus had to suffer such torment, [and] her repentance [likewise] retreated into the background.” All Magdalene could feel was “yearning” (*Sehnsucht*) for Jesus and bitter anger toward the crowd that abused him.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, at Calvary itself, the Virgin Mary summons the strength to witness the Crucifixion, standing by her son at the foot of the cross when nearly all his friends and followers have abandoned him. Magdalene, on the other hand, has at this point been reduced to “wordless moaning, handwringing, and wailing.”<sup>68</sup> The message is clear: the highest form of reverence is heartfelt, yet contemplative devotion, not mere sensual abandon.

Similarly, the extreme violence of *Das bittere Leiden* is not only attributable to its subject matter. Rather, it flows directly from Brentano’s defense of Emmerick’s body. In the narrative of the Passion itself, Jesus’ horrific suffering is intercut with vignettes of Emmerick’s own wounded and bleeding body as she sees and relives the Crucifixion, *and* as she relives Jesus’

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<sup>65</sup> “Sie sah wohl fortwährend seine schrecklichen Leiden, aber ganz von der Heiligkeit, Liebe und Geduld seines sich opfernden Willens durchgeleuchtet.“ Ibid, 169.

<sup>66</sup> “Ich sah den Herrn mit seiner Mutter allein sprechen . . . Von Magdalena, welche ganz sinnlos durch Betrübniß war, sagte er: sie liebe unaussprechlich, aber ihre Liebe sei noch vom Fleisch umgeben. . .“ Ibid, 65.

<sup>67</sup> „ . . . da sah sie [Magdalene] Jesus mißhandelt und zum Tode geführt auch wegen ihrer Schuld, die er auf sich genommen; da entsetzte sich ihre Liebe vor ihrer Schuld, für welche Jesus so Entsetzliches leiden mußte, und stürzte nieder in den Abgrund der Reue und konnte ihn nicht erschöpfen noch erfüllen und erhob sich wieder in Sehnsucht nach ihrem Herrn und Meister . . .“ Ibid, 180.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 246.

betrayal and humiliation in the present-day humiliation of the persecuted Church. Jesus' body, Emmerick's body, and the metaphorical "body of Christ," the Church, thus merge into one.

Nowhere is this more explicit than when Brentano pauses in the Passion narrative to recount Emmerick's vision of a wounded, metaphorical body:

I was taught the meaning of my pain . . . in the following vision. I saw a giant human body in a terrible state of mutilation, being raised up towards heaven. There were members chopped off of its hands and feet, great wounds in its body, of which some were fresh and bleeding . . . I, horrified, felt all of these afflictions myself. My [spiritual] guide said: "This is the body of the Church, the body of all mankind and also your body."<sup>69</sup>

The same striking image appears again when Emmerick recounts Jesus' suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane: "I saw the Church as the body of Christ, whose several scattered members had been bound together by his suffering, and I saw that as later generations separated themselves from the Church, it was as if whole pieces were torn from his living, suffering, lacerated body."<sup>70</sup>

This repeated description of the Church as the mutilated "body of Christ" casts the gory violence of *Das bittere Leiden* in a new light. There is more at work here than a Romantic poet's aesthetic fascination with the macabre. Rather, the violence of Jesus' Passion is heightened because it is relived by Emmerick, who as Brentano says "preaches with her body Christ crucified."<sup>71</sup> This unforgettable suffering, moreover, described insistently the suffering Church in a secularizing age.

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<sup>69</sup> "Die Bedeutung meiner Schmerzen . . . lehrte mich folgendes Bild: Ich sah einen großen menschlichen Leib in schrecklicher Verstümmelung gegen Himmel aufgerichtet. Es waren an Händen und Füßen Glieder abgeschnitten, große Wunden in seinem Leib, darunter noch neue, frisch blutende . . . Als ich entsetzt alle diese Leiden an mir selbst fühlte, sagte mein Führer: „Dieses ist der Leib der Kirche, der Leib aller Menschen und auch dein Leib.“ Ibid, 40.

<sup>70</sup> „. . . ich sah die Kirche als den Leib Jesu, dessen einzelne zerstreute Glieder er alle mit seinem bitteren Leiden verbunden hatte, und ich sah, als würden alle jene Gemeinden oder Familien und alle deren Nachkommen, die von der Kirche getrennt wurden, wie ganze Stücke con seinem lebendigen Leib schmerzlich verwundend und zerfleischend losgerissen.“ Ibid, 106.

<sup>71</sup> "Ihr armer Leib selbst mußte Christus, den Gekreuzigten, predigen." Brentano, „Lebensumriß“, 26.

Like the cross however, Brentano also saw Emmerick as a symbol of salvation. As he wrote in a letter to a friend in 1819, he was determined to record her visions before this frail, bed-ridden woman died and they were lost forever. As mentioned previous, Brentano saw Emmerick as a “font of “consolation [and] . . . unending blessings” for the Church that only needed to be tapped:

Her spirit has gone unrecognized and severely mishandled, but it should not be completely lost. . . [T]he duty of revealing her inner life I have fulfilled with every power at my disposal . . . My responsibility is terrible, the voice of God has called loudly to me, and I . . . believe that I am following the will of God and not my own – God, who has never spoken to me so clearly as he has there.<sup>72</sup>

This sense of terrible urgency is evident throughout *Das bittere Leiden*. Ever-curious, Brentano pumps Emmerick for the rich details and deep background missing from the Gospel narratives, viewing her as a precious eyewitness to events forever lost in the flow of history. The Last Supper, for example, is transformed in *Das bittere Leiden* into a ceremony with much more explicit symbolism and layers of scriptural association. The chalice, we learn, was first owned by Melchizedek. The chamber is divided into three parts, mimicking the Temple with its innermost “holy of holies.” The house in which the supper was held had once been inhabited by King David. All these nuggets of illuminating detail, Emmerick laments, have been forgotten over the centuries.<sup>73</sup>

The anecdotes and extra details in *Das bittere Leiden*, therefore, are not included merely to flesh out the story but to reveal how much of the Passion has been lost. In the Garden of Gethsemane, for instance, as Jesus kneels on the ground and prays in great distress, his knees are

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<sup>72</sup> Brentano, letter to Bernhard Overberg, 20 March 1819, *Sämtliche Werke*, 37-38.

<sup>73</sup> “. . . bei uns in Christentum manches altertümliche, heilige Kleinod durch die Schicksale der Zeit in Vergessenheit kommt.“ Brentano and Emmerick, *Das bittere Leiden*, 62.

said to miraculously make a permanent impression in the earth. Emmerick relates that early Christians knew and venerated this sacred spot, but it had long since been forgotten. The places where Jesus fell as he was arrested, the stones flecked with Jesus' blood as he is flogged – all once venerated, all suffer the same fate.<sup>74</sup>

Emmerick's distress at this profound loss is directly connected the losses suffered by the contemporary Church, as she explains: "When [in vision] I see temples and the ancient castles of great kings fall into ruin and misuse, I always think that it is exactly like it is . . . in the present, where so many churches and cloisters . . . have been destroyed [and] laid waste." The centuries of worship in her own convent, Emmerick laments, will soon be entirely forgotten. There is, however, hope for the preservation of the Church's rich tradition, to be found in God: "and just as he allows me to relive all the old stories, so does all that is good, and all that is evil, that has transpired in forgotten places remain in him. . . preserved for the day of judgment."<sup>75</sup>

Thus, thanks to Emmerick, Christians have another chance to recover their heritage before it is destroyed -- this time forever – by the iconoclasts of the Enlightenment. Just as Brentano and his contemporaries collected German folk tales to preserve so-called authentic rural culture before it gave way to all things modern, Brentano collected Emmerick's visions to inspire renewed faith in a faithless age. As he notes in an aside, "Eternal Wisdom in her mercy

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 113; 125; 199.

<sup>75</sup> "Wenn ich in den alten Zeiten Schlösser großer Könige und Tempel so herabgekommen sehe zu niedrigen Gebrauch, denke ich immer, es ist doch gerade wie ein paar tausend Jahre später, nämlich wie jetzt, wo auch so viele große Werke frommer, treuer Mühsamkeit, Kirchen und Klöster, zerstört und verwüstet oder zu weltlichem, oft nicht allzu sündenreinem Gebrauch verschleudet werden . . . einiger Zeit wird man kaum mehr wissen, wo eine lange Reihe von Jahren hindurch eine Schar von gottgeweihten Seelen zu Gott gebetet haben. Gott aber wird es wissen, bei ihm is kein Vergessen, in ihm ist Vorzeit und Zukunft gegenwärtig, er ist, da da ist, und wir er mich bei ihm alle die alten Geschichten gegenwärtig finden läßt, so ist bei ihm auch alles Gute, das an vergessenen Orten, wie alles Böse, dan an mißbrauchten veruntreuten Orten geschehn ist und wird, aufbewahrt zum Tage der Abrechnung, wo bis zum letzten Heller bezahlt werden muß." Ibid, 173.

has never needed the printed word in order to leave a witness . . . for future generations.”<sup>76</sup>

Instead, the traditions of the holy Church are graven on the hearts of believers like Emmerick, whose childlike faith allows her to be open to hidden or forgotten truths.

*Conclusion: “Like a Wayside Cross”*

In the introduction to *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*, Clemens Brentano wrote of Anna Katharina Emmerick:

. . . this woman, who as a youth had prayed day and night before the Stations of the Cross and before the wayside crosses, had herself been made like a wayside cross. By one passerby she was mistreated; by a second, greeted with tears of penitence; by a third, regarded as an object of artistic or scientific curiosity.<sup>77</sup>

In *Das bittere Leiden*, Brentano re-imagined Emmerick as a symbol – “like a wayside cross” – of the persecuted church, and a focus for the revitalization of German Catholic popular piety, both in her own day and in the decades to come.

The graphic violence of *Das bittere Leiden* was not simply the product of a gothic fascination with the macabre. The extra-scriptural details were not there merely to satisfy curiosity. The portrayals of female figures within its pages did more than just conform to stereotype. All these aspects of this famous devotional work grew out of Anna Katharina Emmerick’s own Catholic imagination, as well as Clemens Brentano’s Romantic imagination.

Furthermore, they reflected the contemporary debates and particular contexts surrounding the origin of the text. It is without doubt an illuminating text for scholars of German

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<sup>76</sup> „Die ewige Weisheit hat in ihrer Barmherzigkeit nie der Buchdruckerkunst bedurft, um der Nachwelt ein Zeugnis von Heiligen zu überliefern.“ Ibid, 234.

<sup>77</sup>“So war sie, die so viele Stunden ihrer Jugend bei Tag und Nacht vor den Stationsbildern des Leidensweges Christi und vor den Kreuzen am Wege gebetet hatte, nun selbst wie ein Kreuz am Wege geworden, von dem einen mißhandelt, von dem anderen mit Tränen der Buße begrüßt, von den dritten als Gegenstand der Kunst und Wissenschaft betrachtet.“ Clemens Brentano, “Einleitung,” *Das bittere Leiden*, 26.

Romanticism, but it also has a historical significance that transcends Romantic literature. Its origins in the public fascination with Emmerick reveal its usefulness as a window onto debates over the role of religion in modern Germany at a time of far-reaching transition. It provides material for understanding German Catholics' wrestling with the nature of female piety at the onset of what has been called the nineteenth-century "feminization of the Church." It calls attention to the profound rupture in German Catholicism following Napoleonic invasion and secularization.

The nature of *Das bittere Leiden*'s production was convoluted, and the resulting murkiness of its authorship is undeniable. It cannot be treated as a stenographic account of Emmerick's "authentic" visionary experiences. Neither, however, should it be seen as wholly Brentano's creation. Though the contributions of poet and pilgrim, peasant woman and seeress can never be untangled, *Das bittere Leiden* remains a highly valuable text for hagiographers, German literary scholars, and – though they have yet to recognize it – modern historians. As medievalists like John Coakley and Andrea Dickens have shown, it is precisely the murkiness of authorship/authority (that is, *auctoritas*) that reveals so much about the history of hagiography, Catholic cult formation, and the intersections of spirituality and gender. Thus far, the encounter between Anna Katharina Emmerick and Clemens Brentano, and the enduring devotional work it produced, has been absent from the pages of historical scholarship – but for all these reasons, this story of a nun, a poet, and their book is a story well worth (re)telling.



**Figure 13.** Clemens Brentano. Drawing by Wilhelm Hensel, ca. 1819. Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wilhelm\\_Hensel\\_-\\_Clemens\\_Brentano\\_1819.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wilhelm_Hensel_-_Clemens_Brentano_1819.jpg) (accessed June 02, 2018).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DOMESTICATING A MYSTIC: ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK'S CULT OF VENERATION AND INSTITUTIONAL SAINT-MAKING IN INTERWAR GERMANY

#### *Introduction*

On December 20, 1923, a schoolteacher named Fräulein Heidfeld mailed a letter. The subject matter of her note was not, in and of itself, extraordinary: a plea for prayers on behalf of a seriously ill friend, “so that her children may keep their mother for a bit longer.”<sup>1</sup> Even the fact that she addressed this plea to Anna Katharina Emmerick, a woman who had lain in her grave for a century, was not so unusual. A Catholic, Fräulein Heidfeld was engaging in a religious practice nearly two millennia old: seeking the intercession of persons posthumously revered as saints.

Sources describe similar pleas at the tombs of Roman martyrs during the infancy of the Christian Church. “[...] shedding tears of reverence and passion,” Gregory of Nyssa wrote in the fourth century, “they address to the martyr their prayers of intercession as though he were present.”<sup>2</sup> A millennium later, pilgrims were still streaming to saints’ altars in medieval Europe along routes to Compostela, Rome, and countless other sites. This cult of the saints continued to flourish across the great rupture of the Reformation, despite Martin Luther’s condemnation of it as idolatrous.<sup>3</sup> Even in the twentieth century, an age of scientific rationalism and modern medicine, Fräulein Heidfeld was far from alone in invoking the healing power of the holy dead.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ich denke, A.K. hilft, daß die Kinder ihre Mutter behalten für eine Zeitlang wenigstens noch . . . Ihr Gebet hat mich vom Tode zurückgeholt, es wird auch die kranke Frau noch erhalten, wenn Gott will.” “Lehrerin Heidfeld” of Gelsenkirchen to Emmerick-Haus, December 20, 1923. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33, doc. 25, BAM.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 11.

<sup>3</sup> For Luther’s views on the cult of the saints, see Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 85-86. On the importance of saints’ cults and shrines in “inoculating” certain regions of Germany from Protestantism, see Steven Pfarr, “The True Citizens of the City of God: The Cult of the Saints, The Catholic Social Order, and the Urban Reformation in Germany,” *Theory and Society* 42, no. 2 (March 2013), 189-218; Lionel Rothkrug, “Holy Shrines, Religious Dissonance and Satan in the Origins of the German Reformation,” *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 143-286, esp. 144-146.

As she addressed her plea to Emmerick, the cause of Bernadette Soubirous was rapidly advancing towards beatification, and the pile of crutches discarded by pilgrims was mounting at the grotto she made famous in Lourdes.<sup>4</sup>

Were one then able to collect all the countless prayers and petitions heaped at the feet of the saints across the ages and compare them side by side, Fräulein Heidfeld's letter included, much would at first seem timeless and universal in their pleas: invocations against illness, family discord, financial insecurity, and the thousand other natural shocks that flesh is always heir to. Telling details, however, set apart Fräulein Heidfeld's letter from this imaginary heap of indistinguishable prayers. The schoolteacher in question wrote a letter and dispatched it by post, rather than trekking by foot to leave a votive offering at a distant shrine. She sent it to an organization known as the Anna Katharina Emmerick-Haus, rather than to a chapel or tomb. She also included a small donation—of five hundred billion marks. This seemingly astronomical amount might appear out of keeping with a schoolteacher's salary, but in reality it was worth little more than the stamp used to send it.<sup>5</sup> Fräulein Heidfeld's letter was reenacting an ancient practice, but it was also written in a very particular time and place: Weimar Germany in the midst of the inflation crisis of 1923. This chapter is about how such particularities left their mark on Anna Katharina Emmerick's cult of veneration during the tumultuous years between the world wars.

Fräulein Heidfeld was one of many others, mostly women [See Graph 1], who wrote to the Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Haus during this time. Neither the Emmerick-Haus nor the cult of veneration it celebrated was new. Starting with the tremendous crowd that attended her

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<sup>4</sup> Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879) was beatified in 1925 and canonized in 1933. On Lourdes, see Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York: Penguin, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> The monthly average US dollar exchange rate of the German Mark in December 1923 was 4.2 trillion. Gerald D. Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.

funeral in 1824 amid rumors that her corpse had been stolen, Anna Katharina Emmerick had enjoyed an eventful afterlife. Generations of German Catholics had preserved and passed down her belongings as hallowed relics. They wore a path through Dülmen's cemetery to her grave, which in time was upgraded from a simple stone marker to a large cross surrounded by an iron gate and kneelers for visiting pilgrims. In the mid-nineteenth century Father Thomas Wegener, a fellow member of Emmerick's Augustinian order, collected evidence of this local veneration and used it to successfully lobby the diocese of Münster to open formal beatification proceedings in 1892. He would go on to found the Emmerick-Haus, a memorial center housing her reconstructed apartment, clothing, and other relics, in 1898.<sup>6</sup> For the next few decades Augustinian lay sisters would live on-site, acting as docents and responding to letters like Fräulein Heidfeld's, dispatching prayer cards, leaflets, and even holy relics by post. [See Figures 14 and 15.]

In short, Fräulein Heidfeld was following in the footsteps of a century of German Catholics when she brought her prayers to Emmerick. She was also participating in a cult of veneration which was more widespread, more organized, and more enthusiastic than ever before, as this chapter will reveal. At the same time, however, Emmerick's cult faced an uncertain future in 1923. True, there were plenty of indications that devotion to her was flourishing. Visitor numbers at the Emmerick-Haus remained high.<sup>7</sup> Letters like Fräulein Heidfeld's continued to

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<sup>6</sup> n.a., "Der Augustinerinnen-Orden wieder in Dülmen," March 2, 1920, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 22, BAM.

<sup>7</sup> Work with the guest-books of the Emmerick-Haus remains in progress. A few sources allow for approximations of visitor numbers at this stage. I do know that there are 24,436 numbered entries in the guestbooks for the period 1921-1924. In the work I've completed on guestbooks from an earlier period, individual entries often record multiple visitors ("Familie Kemper," "eine Gesellschaft aus Coesfeld," etc.), so it is likely that the actual number of individuals visiting the Emmerick-Haus over this three-year period is higher than 24,000. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 48, BAM. In addition, a 1922 newspaper article reports that "Ueber 70 000 Namen von Personen aller Berufe und Stände aus Deutschland und den fernsten Ländern sind im Besuchsbüchle des Emmerickhauses ausgezeichnet." This would work out to an average of just under 3,000 guestbook entries per year. The fact that considerably more than that number visited in 1921-1924 suggests an uptick in attendance relative to

arrive. Clemens Brentano's accounts of Emmerick's visions were now available in nine languages, with new editions appearing regularly.<sup>8</sup> Yet the progress of Emmerick's formal beatification had stalled for decades. Her continued fame and popularity rested in part on her famous visions as recorded by Brentano. As researchers delved into these books as well as the poet's original papers, however, it became increasingly unclear where Emmerick's "authentic" visionary experiences ended and Brentano's own elaborations began. Rome could not, in any case, endorse Emmerick's visions, any more than her stigmata, as sufficient proof of her saintly status. But because Brentano was also one of the most important sources for details of Emmerick's life, his lack of credibility threw the whole investigative process into doubt.<sup>9</sup>

In 1923, the same year Fräulein Heidfeld wrote her letter, a new book by the postulator of Emmerick's cause, Father Winfried Hümpfner, made this explosive issue public (see Figure 17). *Clemens Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit in seinen Emmerick-Aufzeichnungen* [*Clemens Brentano's Credibility in his Emmerick Publications*] made damning side-by-side comparisons of Brentano's sketchy notes and greatly expanded final text. In his conclusion Hümpfner did not mince words: Brentano had engaged in "deliberate mystification," sometimes fabricating stories out of whole cloth, sometimes altering his record of Emmerick's statements to fit his own views.<sup>10</sup>

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previous decades. "Ehrung Anna Katharina Emmericks in ihrem Geburtsorte Coesfeld," *Recklingshäuser Volkszeitung* 2, no. 7, January 10, 1922, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 35, BAM.

<sup>8</sup> A 1926 Brentano bibliography lists editions of Brentano's most popular Emmerick work, *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*, in German, French, Italian, Spanish, English, Dutch, Polish, Czech, and Lithuanian. The editor notes that because of *Das bittere Leiden's* enormous popularity, his list is almost certainly incomplete. Otto Mallon, *Brentano-Bibliographie*, 85-90.

<sup>9</sup> For a contemporary comment on this problem, see, "Ein neues Buch über Anna Katharina Emmerich," *Deutsches Heim am deutschen Rhein, Familienblatt der Rheinischen Volkswacht*, September 28, 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 30, BAM.

<sup>10</sup> „Wir dürfen am Ende unserer Untersuchung diesen Satz positiv fassen und sagen: Daß Br. Absichtlich eigene Erfindungen und Erzählungen anderer als Gegenstand Emmerick'scher Gesichte in die Tagebücher verwoben, kurz, daß eine absichtliche wissenschaftliche Mystifikation vorliegt, das steht unleugbar fest! . . . nicht allein mit unfreiwilligen Entstellungen zu tun haben, sondern mit bewußten Umgestaltungen, mit bewußter Einführung neuer

In addition to what Emmerick enthusiasts came to refer to as the “Brentano question,” there were larger concerns. The Catholic Church, and the clergy tasked with interpreting and defending its doctrines, faced a tricky cultural challenge in interwar Germany. The modern spiritualist movement that had emerged in the late nineteenth century grew in significance and popularity in the wake of World War I. Political and economic uncertainty fueled interest in alternative sources of meaning: occultism, mysticism, and various strands of religious and political radicalism.<sup>11</sup> As Hermann Hesse insightfully observed in 1926, Weimar Germans felt themselves in a moral vacuum and longed for a new worldview: “Irreplaceable things have been lost and destroyed forever; new unheard of things are being imagined in their place. Destroyed and lost for the greater part of the civilized world are, beyond all else, the two universal foundations of life, culture and morality: religion and customary morals.” It was this, he argued, that drove contemporaries’ interest in everything from spiritualism, Asian philosophy, and secret societies, to “a whole host of necromancers, sharpers, and clowns,” all streams of what was “the raging, murky flood of modern attempts at religion.”<sup>12</sup> Establishment clergy and theologians, whose churches had supported the now-tarnished Kaiserreich and its failed war effort, scrambled to reassert the relevance of traditional religion – and to differentiate it from the heterodoxies of spiritualist mysticism.<sup>13</sup> A figure like Emmerick, the so-called “*Mystikerin des Münsterlandes*,”

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Motive, mit bewußter Unterschiebung eigener Ansichten und eigener Interpretation der Tatsachen.“ Hümpfner, *Clemens Brentanos Glaubwürdigkeit*, 568-569.

<sup>11</sup> Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*; Rudy Koshar, “Introduction,” in Leonard V. Kaplan and Rudy Koshar, eds., *The Weimar Moment: Liberalism, Political, Theology, and Law* (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), xi-xx; John Ondrovčík, “Max Hoelz Haunts the Vogtland: The Visible and the Invisible in Germany, 1914-1921,” in *Revisiting the “Nazi Occult”: Histories, Realities, Legacies*, eds. Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2015): 65-84.

<sup>12</sup> Hermann Hesse, “Die Sehnsucht unserer Zeit nach einer Weltanschauung,” *Uhu* 2 (1926): 3-14, quoted in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 365-67.

<sup>13</sup> Erwin Gatz, *Die katholische Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 2009), 55-66; Wilhelm Friedrich Graf, *Wiederkehr der Götter: Religion in der Modernen Kultur* (Munich: Beck, 2007), 133-178; John S. Conway, “Totalitarianism and Theology,” in *Christian Responses to the Holocaust: Moral and Ethical Issues*, ed. Donald J. Dietrich (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 1-11; Werner G. Jeanrond, “From Resistance

immortalized as a supernatural stigmatic and visionary by Brentano, threatened to muddy these already “murky” waters.<sup>14</sup>

Problems of an entirely different order would emerge following Hitler and the Nazi Party’s ascension to power in 1933. In his speech to the Reichstag on the occasion of the Enabling Act, Hitler assured Germans of his respect for Christianity as one of the pillars of German society.<sup>15</sup> A few months later, the Nazi State concluded a Concordat with the Holy See which required the Center Party to dissolve, but promised in return that the German Catholic press, schools, and associations would be allowed to continue their activities. Yet almost immediately, they fell afoul of the policies and practices of *Gleichschaltung*, the thorough-going Nazification of every aspect of Germans’ lives.<sup>16</sup> As a result, Emmerick’s popular cult would

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to Liberation Theology: German Theologians and the Non/ Resistance to the National Socialist Regime,” *The Journal of Modern History* 64, Supplement: Resistance Against the Third Reich (Dec., 1992), S187-S203.

<sup>14</sup> A number of clergymen wrote articles in the 1920s refuting assertions that Emmerick was just one more product of hypnotic suggestion, or a charlatan cut from the same cloth as self-proclaimed spiritualist mediums. See in particular Johannes Niessen, *A. K. Emmerichs Charismen und Gesichte – Grundsätzliches, Tatsächliches, Kritisches; Zugleich Beiträge zur Clemens Brentano Frage* (Sieg: Petrus Verlag, 1918). A later article by Niessen gives a laundry list of spiritualist phenomena which should not be confused with authentic religious stigmata and visionary experiences like Emmerick’s. Its remarkable length indicates the breadth of the problem he and his contemporary clergymen faced: “Trance- und hypnotischen Zustände, hypnotische Ekstase, Tischrücken, automatisches Schreiben (ohne Aufmerksamkeit und doch mit Sinn und Geist), durch Suggestion erzeugte Brandwunden und Blutungen, schreibender Tisch und Psychograph, dann rein seelische Erscheinungen wie unerklärliche Erinnerungen, Gedankenlesen, zeitliches und räumliches Hellsehen, das “zweite” Gesicht, das geheimnisvolle Ahnungsvermögen, Wahrträume, Prophezeiungen (meist von Bränden und Sterben), ferner eine dritte Gruppe, zurzeit noch ganz unerklärter, wenn auch wissenschaftlich genau festgestellter Vorgänge: freies Schweben von Dingen und Personen in der Luft, Bewegung von Dingen ohne körperliche Berührung (z. B. Spielen eines Saiteninstrumentes, das vor allen Zuschauern sichtbar auf dem Tische liegt und ohne jeden erkennbaren Grund spielt) die “Kreuzkorrespondenz”, schließlich die so überaus seltsamen Materialisationen (von der Person im Trancezustand geht eine weiße, dunftige Masse vorzüglich vom Kopfe aus, die allerlei Gestalten, wie menschliche Gesichter, Hände usw. annimmt, betastet und photographiert werden kann, gleichsam sichtbar gewordene Phantasien; die Dunftmasse geht in die Person wieder zurück).” Dr. Theol. Pfarrer Niessen, „Die Probleme des Okkultismus und Anna Katharina Emmerick,“ *Katholische Missions-Blatt, zugleich Ludgerusblatt* 70, no. 52, December 25, 1921, 825 in Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 32, BAM.

<sup>15</sup> Lewy, *Catholic Church*, 34-35.

<sup>16</sup> On *Gleichschaltung*, see Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 97-103. The classic account on Catholicism in the Third Reich is Lewy, *Catholic Church in Nazi Germany*. Another older but standard account, which discusses at length the Nazi state’s repressive measures toward Catholic organizations, associations, public processions, etc., is John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-45* (New York: Basic Books, 1968). Conway’s work has had a complicated reception: see Mark Edward Ruff, “The Critical Reception of John Conway’s ‘The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-1945,’” *Kirchliche Geschichte* 27, no. 1, Neubewrtung der kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte/ Reassessing Contemporary Church History (2014), 31-42. More recent work on Nazi

have fewer media outlets and organizational resources on which to draw in the mid-1930s in comparison with previous decades.

Nonetheless, it was precisely during the decades between Germany's world wars that Emmerick's cult of veneration reached its apotheosis, taking on the contours of an organized movement with national and even international aspirations. Spearheaded by a revived Augustinian order and a network of Catholic laypersons' associations, Emmerick's cult spread rapidly through sermons, public festivals, devotional books and magic-lantern shows. Priests and laypersons, the popular press and theological journals alike encouraged veneration of Emmerick as, in the words of one author, "a crucified saint for a crucified *Volk*."<sup>17</sup> Hagiographers' former emphasis on her wounds and visions shifted to her patience in suffering and readiness for self-sacrifice. The historical background of her life also took on new significance. Memories of Napoleonic French aggression, secularization, and waning religious belief provided revanchist interwar German Catholics with a readymade narrative of victimization. Emmerick's heroic faith in defiance of French Enlightenment made her the perfect "*Führerin*" of the "crucified *Volk*'s" resurrection like a phoenix from the ashes of the Treaty of Versailles. Moreover, as a poster-child of the bucolic German *Heimat*, her pilgrimage sites offered the ideal spiritual antidote to the godless modern city. In short, interwar Germans engaged in the process of shaping her "official" cult reimagined Emmerick, her time, and her place from the vantage point of their own. "Domesticating" the otherworldly mysticism that had pervaded Brentano's classic portrait,

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efforts to shut down, censor, or take over Catholic newspapers, journals, and periodicals during the Third Reich, an aspect of the so-called „German Church Struggle“ with particular relevance for this chapter, includes Martin F. Ederer, "Propaganda Wars: *Stimmen der Zeit* and the Nazis, 1933-1945," *The Catholic Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (Jul. 2004), 456-472; Michael Phayer, "Questions about Catholic Resistance," *Church History* 70, no. 2 (Jun. 2001), 328-331.

<sup>17</sup> "Dem gekreuzigten Volk eine gekreuzigte Heilige!", Anna Freiin von Krane, „Ein gekreuzigtes Leben,“ *Westfälische Volkszeitung Bochum, Sonntagsfreude* no. 6, February 10, 1924, 8. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 56, BAM.

interwar depictions cast her as a woman of simple piety and strength in suffering in the best tradition of the German homeland.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, Catholics like Fräulein Heidfeld continued a century-old, locally-based tradition of veneration. Although they consumed new hagiographical works, donated to Emmerick's beatification campaign fund and attended organized lectures and commemorations, believers did not strictly conform to the new "official" line. They continued to revere Emmerick as a stigmatic and visionary, despite some modern theologians' guarded attitude towards anything that smacked of mysticism and superstition, and they used relics to invoke her supernatural aid for everything from drunken relatives and diseased cattle to school exams and apartment-hunting. They also gave little indication of adopting the revanchist, politicized interpretation of Emmerick's history being pushed in contemporary speeches and articles.

This chapter charts the rise and fall of an ephemeral "Emmerick movement" in interwar Germany. At the same time, it documents the survival of the deeply-rooted cult of veneration of which this "movement" was a part. It begins in the early twenties with the establishment of a new laymen's organization, the Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Bund, and its aggressive publicity campaign. After delineating the many tentacles of this far-reaching movement and the success of its outreach in the first section, it will go on to consider two central facets of the Emmerick movement's mass-produced message: Emmerick as a daughter of the Heimat, and Emmerick as "crucified saint for a crucified *Volk*." Simultaneously, it will read this "official" line against the devotion of everyday Germans like Fräulein Heidfeld. Finally, it will analyze the shrine church built to house Emmerick's remains, Dülmen's *Heilig Kreuz Kirche* by architect Dominikus Böhm, as the "crucified Volk" narrative made concrete. Emmerick's interwar cult, and the

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<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Celia Applegate for the concept of "domesticating mysticism."

modern saint-making process more generally, will thus provide a window onto the push and pull between clergy and laity, institutional and popular forces in shaping lived German Catholicism.

### *Building an “Emmerick Movement”*

From the moment her stigmata became publicly known, Anna Katharina Emmerick’s story, her wounds, and her visions had attracted an impressive number of admirers (and detractors). Locally, Dülmen villagers had revered her and sought her blessings, sending their children to her on their way to their First Communion, and their young men to her on their way to the battlefield. As her fame spread, visitors came from increasingly farther afield and with increasingly varied interests: state officials, scientists, physicians, curiosity-seekers. Clemens Brentano, the most famous of these visitors, immortalized Emmerick in print and made sure that countless others would seek out the visionary of Dülmen, in person and through devotional literature, for generations to come.

At the inception of Emmerick’s rise to fame, laypersons like Brentano took the decisive lead in encouraging her veneration. The institutional Church, meanwhile, adopted a highly guarded approach. In the early nineteenth century, local priests would try in vain to stop Dülmeners from praying together at her grave. Such public displays of veneration, they told parishioners, was inappropriate for a woman who had not been officially beatified or canonized.<sup>19</sup> Clerical attitudes would change, however, in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Augustinian Father Thomas Wegener, born and raised in Emmerick’s birthplace of Coesfeld, began to interview locals in the 1850s about their memories of Emmerick, the prayers they offered to her, and the relics they had preserved. Collecting evidence of this grassroots

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Wegener, „Zeugnisse über Privatverehrung der Dülmener Einwohner (1858-1891),“ 11, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 39, BAM.

eneration over decades, it was clear to him that Westphalian Münsterlanders already revered Emmerick as a saint. Making this sainthood “official” became his life’s work (see Figure 16).

Modern Roman Catholic saint-making requires far more, however, than a popular reputation of sanctity. Elaborated over centuries, the process involves extensive research and multiple levels of review by various bodies of the institutional Church.<sup>20</sup> Wegener first needed to convince the bishop of the diocese where Emmerick had lived—namely, the bishop of Münster—to open her cause formally. His first request was unsuccessful, but Wegener persisted.<sup>21</sup> He wrote articles and pamphlets on various aspects of Emmerick’s life and cult, which regularly appeared in local newspapers and journals.<sup>22</sup> He also published a reverential, 350-page biography of Emmerick in 1891.<sup>23</sup> Bishop Hermann Dingelstad of Münster finally began her formal beatification process the following year. The diocesan commission, which Dingelstad appointed to investigate Emmerick’s life and prepare a dossier for the Vatican, concluded its work in 1898. That same year, Father Wegener capped a half-century of work by founding the Emmerick Haus: a memorial center that displayed her reconstructed apartment, as well as her clothing and other relics.

Yet even then, Wegener and his clerical contemporaries focused primarily on documenting and supporting Emmerick’s pre-existing, grassroots cult of veneration, rather than

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<sup>20</sup> On the beatification and canonization process in the modern Roman Catholic Church, see William H. Woestman, OMI, ed., *Canonization: Theology, History, Process* (Ottawa: St. Paul University Press, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> P. Chysostomus Spitzenberg, OESA, “Der Seligsprechungs-Prozeß der gottseligen A. K. Emmerich,” *Maria vom guten Rat: Illustrierte Marianische Monatschrift* 18, no. 5/7 (1921). Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Archiv D014 53, doc. 25, BAM.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., “Ein Zeugniß der Übereinstimmung der Visionen von A. K. Emmerich mit der Wirklichkeit,” *Westfälischer Merkur, gratis Beilage: Illustriertes Münsterisches Sonntagsblatt*, August 1, 1898, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Archiv D014 54, doc. 7, BAM; “Eine Stube Anna Katharina Emmerich,” *Halturner Zeitung*, September 30, 1900, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Archiv D014 54, doc. 12, BAM; *Geschichtliche Erinnerungen an die gottselige Anna Katharina Emmerich aus der Zeit nach ihrem Tode. Das neue Emmerichhaus* (Dülmen: J. Horstmann'schen Buchhandlung, 1903); “Kreisphysikus Dr. Franz Wesener. Vor hundert Jahren im März 1813,” *Dülmener Zeitung, Dülmener Anzeiger - Dülmen-Halturner Volkszeitung mit der Sonntags-Beilage Liboriusblatt*, March 22, 1913 Anna-Katharina-Emmerick Archiv D014 54, doc. 18, BAM.

<sup>23</sup> Wegener, *Innere und äußere Leben*.

directing it. They recounted and publicized Emmerick's story, but otherwise let her cult develop among the laity more or less organically. Furthermore, Wegener and his fellow Augustinians did not actively enlist ordinary German Catholic believers in the institutional process of Emmerick's beatification. Instead, German Augustinians collected the relevant information, forwarded it and presented it to Rome themselves. A new generation of Catholics in the 1920s, however, would take on a more ambitious goal: not only the spreading but the *shaping* of Emmerick's cult, directing the forms it took and channeling the enthusiasm it produced toward the specific demands of the Congregation of the Sacred Rite. This time, furthermore, German Catholic clergy would take an active, but not all-powerful role, working together with lay enthusiasts to create an "Emmerick Movement."

These aspirations took concrete form in the Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Bund, founded by a group of mostly male middle-class Dülmeners in 1921.<sup>24</sup> An internal planning document from its inaugural meeting reveals the scope of the Emmerick Bund's ambitions and the range of tools at its disposal. "In every Catholic community and every Catholic association," the group's mission statement declared, "a presentation about Anna Katharina Emmerick should be held. . . Then petitions for the beatification of Anna Katharina Emmerick should be sent from all communities to the Holy Father."<sup>25</sup> To facilitate this publicity campaign, the Bund produced pre-written presentations with accompanying slide-shows. It distributed these presentations, along with preprinted form letters to the pope, so that parishes could petition for Emmerick's beatification simply by filling in the blanks with their names. Ads in Catholic newspapers and

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<sup>24</sup> Members of the founding committee are listed as follows: "Frau Kommerzienrat Schlieker - Dülmen (Vorf.), Sanitätsrat Dr. Schmüderrich - Herten (stellvertr. Vorf.), Lehrer Elsbernd- Hausdülmen b. Dülmen (Schriftf.), Buchhändler Rubbert - Dülmen (Schatzmeister), Archivar Dr. Glasmeier und Lehrer Hillers als Besitzer." n.a., „Emmerickbund, Laienvereinigung deutscher Katholiken zur Förderung des Seligsprechungsprozesses Anna Katharina Emmericks,“ Dülmen, September 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 26, BAM.

<sup>25</sup> "In jeder kath. Gemeinde und jedem kath. Verein soll ein Vortrag über Anna Katharina Emmerick gehalten werden . . . Dann sollen aus allen Gemeinden Bittschriften um Seligsprechung Anna Katharina Emmerick and den hl. Vater gesandt werden." Ibid.

periodicals solicited donations. Daughter chapters of the Bund formed in other German cities.<sup>26</sup> Dülmen's own Catholic publishing company, the Laumann Verlag, produced reams of prayer cards and pamphlets.<sup>27</sup> Bund members also promoted a select list of Emmerick devotional literature they considered worthy of approbation. This list included Brentano's works and Wegener's biography, as well as more recent publications: theologian Johannes Niessen's examination of Emmerick's visions that touched on the "Brentano Question," and a sentimental biography just released by popular author Anna Freiin von Krane.<sup>28</sup>

Two characteristics that would characterize the interwar Emmerick Movement emerged from the start: the creative use of modern mass media and associational networks, and the assertion of central control over the script of Emmerick veneration through pre-written or otherwise approved statements. The Bund's mission statement also typified what would be an enduring feature of the beatification campaign: a complex interplay of clerical authority and lay initiative. On the one hand, the founding members of the Emmerick-Bund were all laypersons, and in its mission statement the organization indeed described itself as "a lay association of German Catholics."<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, its goal was to facilitate Emmerick's beatification, a process of the institutional Church, and the clerically-defined requirements of this process would dictate the Movement's focus. Parish networks, furthermore, were key to the success of the Bund's publicity and fundraising campaign. Priests were on the front-line of Emmerick evangelization, and they would also continue to author much of Emmerick's devotional literature.

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<sup>26</sup> Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 26, BAM.

<sup>27</sup> On the history of Laumann Verlag, which became well-known as a publisher of holy cards in the nineteenth century, see „Verlag Laumann, Dülmen i. W.,“ *Das Bistum Münster* (Berlin: Archiv-Gesellschaft für kirchliche und caritative Monographien der Bistümer m. b. H., 1933), 227-229.

<sup>28</sup> Niessen, A. K. *Emmerichs Charismen*; Anna Freiin von Krane, *Die Leidensbraut: Geschichte eines Sühnelebens* (Cologne: J. P. Bachem, 1921).

<sup>29</sup> “. . . Laienvereinigung deutscher Katholiken.“ Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 26, BAM.

Immediately, the leaders of the Emmerick-Bund set their ambitious plans in motion. They arranged for Laumann Verlag to produce an initial print-run of fifteen thousand Emmerick biographical pamphlets costing 50 pfennig apiece, as well as several thousand book-length biographies. Within months, all of these had completely sold out. Laumann and the Bund quickly developed new products to meet this demand: postcards, calendars, devotional images and novenas. Meanwhile, local chapters of the Bund sprang up in industrial centers and quiet villages alike. The Bund's several copies of slide presentations were out on loan to these sister branches and to various parishes throughout Germany almost every Sunday.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the Bund's most lavish productions, however, were the public festivals and lectures its members organized around the region. Within a few months of drawing up their founding charter, they had put on the first of many annual "Emmerick Day" celebrations, not only in Dülmen and nearby Coesfeld but also in Cologne and Essen, with more cities to follow. Newspapers reported packed, enthusiastic crowds in overflowing festival halls. A variety of experts – men and women, clerical and lay – regaled them with speeches on Emmerick's life and subsequent veneration: theologians, archivists, physicians, and biographers, many of whom also served on the central committee of the Emmerick-Bund.<sup>31</sup> "For us Catholics," Dülmen's newspaper exulted, "the especial significance [of the Emmerick-Day celebration] will be that here, in these days, the cornerstone will be laid of a great, German-wide lay organization for the furthering of the beatification process of our

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<sup>30</sup> Elsbernd, „Ein halb Jahr Emmerickbund,“ *Katholische Missions-Blatt, zugleich Ludgerusblatt* 71, no. 16 (April 16, 1922), 254-255, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 53 doc. 33, BAM.

<sup>31</sup> "Emmerick-Tag in Dülmen," *Dülmener Zeitung, Dülmener Anzeiger - Dülmen-Halterner Volkszeitung mit der Sonntags-Beilage Liboriusblatt*, September 17, 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 28, BAM; "Essen, 1. Dez. (Emmerichtagung)," *Dülmener Zeitung*, December 6, 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 32, BAM; "Anna Katharina Emmerick-Tag in Köln, am 9. Dezember 1921," Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 33, BAM; "Eine Ehrung Anna Katharina Emmericks in ihrem Geburtsorte Coesfeld," *Recklingshäuser Volkszeitung* 2 no. 7, January 10, 1922, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 35, BAM.

fellow citizen, Anna Katharina Emmerick. . . All German dioceses, all occupational groups will be represented.”<sup>32</sup>

The Emmerick-Bund organization, and Emmerick’s cult of veneration, would continue to draw primarily on the Catholics of the Münsterland. Even so, the *Dülmener Zeitung*’s confidence in its eventual nation-wide reach would prove more than an empty boast. Of the letters to the Emmerick-Haus from the interwar period that survive, the majority come from the immediate region, but others from much farther afield: not only distant German cities like Berlin, Kiel, Heidelberg, and Trier but from the Hague, Dublin, Buenos Aires and Chicago. [See Map 5.]

In these prayer requests, or reports of prayers answered, Emmerick devotees often mentioned the various ways in which they had discovered her. A Boy Scout in Ireland, for example, had received an Emmerick pamphlet (in English) from a priest he met in the park.<sup>33</sup> A Berlin woman came to venerate Emmerick after reading and being moved by von Krane’s biography.<sup>34</sup> A mother from Duisburg was also inspired to turn her prayers to Emmerick after reading a biography of her. She reported to the Emmerick Haus that her seven-year-old son’s sprained tendon fully healed after fourteen days of prayer for Emmerick’s beatification.<sup>35</sup> When a young Rhinelander’s wife had a difficult pregnancy, the prior of an Augustinian convent recommended the couple direct their prayers to Emmerick.<sup>36</sup> Another couple, from Legden in

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<sup>32</sup> "Für uns Katholiken wird der besonderen Wert dadurch erlangen, daß an diesem Tage hier der Grundstein gelegt werden soll zu jener großen, ganz Deutschland umfällenden Laien-Organisation zur Förderung des Seligsprechungsprozesses unserer gottseligen Mitbürgerin Anna Katharina Emmerich. Zahlreich sind die Anmeldungen von Verehrerinnen der Gottseligen. Alle Diözesen Deutschlands, alle Berufsstände werden vertreten sein." "Große Emmerich-Tagung," *Zeitung, Dülmener Anzeiger - Dülmen-Halterner Volkszeitung mit der Sonntags-Beilage Liboriusblatt*, September 17, 1921, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 28, BAM.

<sup>33</sup> John Maguire of Dublin, Ireland to Emmerick-Haus, August 9, 1932, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 88 BAM,.

<sup>34</sup> Anna Maria Langner of Berlin, Germany to Emmerick-Haus, February 25, 1923, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 29, BAM.

<sup>35</sup> Frau Blasius Kübel of Duisburg to Emmerick-Haus, April 12, 1939, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 33 doc. 133, BAM.

<sup>36</sup> Karl Wehner of Zahlbach, Germany to Emmerick-Haus, February 1, 1934, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 47, BAM.

Westphalia, attributed their ability to conceive, after years of childlessness, to the prayers they offered on a visit a friend urged them to make to the Emmerick-Haus.<sup>37</sup> An article in a Catholic periodical, meanwhile, inspired a man in Burgsteinfurt to begin praying to Emmerick, and eventually to travel to Dülmen with his family.<sup>38</sup> He was one of many who wrote of their powerful experiences in Emmerick's village, of praying at her graveside, of seeing the font where she had been baptized, or of touching religious medals against her hallowed deathbed. [See Image 18.]

In many cases, these Catholics became proselytizers for Emmerick's cause, sharing their devotion to her with others. One correspondent from Lüdinghausen took away four Emmerick relics from a visit to Dülmen and gave them away, sending one to a friend in America. He subsequently wrote the Emmerick-Haus to ask for more: "I have such a great love and reverence for blessed A. K. Emmerich that now whenever I find a sick person or grief-stricken soul, I recommend to them the blessed one's intercession."<sup>39</sup> Another writer, Berta S., recounted how she won a new devotee to Emmerick in the female patient sharing her son's hospital room. Upon laying a relic on the forehead of the ill woman, who had long been unconscious, she immediately began to improve. Berta told Emmerick's story to the woman upon her waking, and soon they were both praying five Our Fathers in her honor daily. Hospital staff noticed the woman's unexpected recovery, and before long Berta had also given all the nurses pictures of Emmerick.<sup>40</sup>

What these and dozens of similar anecdotes reveal is the working in tandem of many different facets of Emmerick's cult. Mass-produced prayer cards and pamphlets, popular

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<sup>37</sup> Frau Joseph Vennejan of Legden to Emmerick-Haus, 1930, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 33 doc. 59, BAM.

<sup>38</sup> W. Gottzky of Burgsteinfurt, Germany to Laumann Verlag, Dülmen, March 1, 1935, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 177, BAM.

<sup>39</sup> "Ich habe so eine große Liebe und Verehrung zur gottselige A. K. Emmerich, wenn ich nun eine Kranke oder kummervolle Seele finde so empfehle ich sie der Fürbitte der Gottseligen." E. Brüne of Lüdinghausen, to Emmerick-Haus, 25 November 1923, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 16, BAM.

<sup>40</sup> Letters, Berta S. To Emmerick-Haus, 1930, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 docs. 79-86, BAM.

biographies, pilgrimage sites, word of mouth – all played a part in spreading and reinforcing Emmerick’s devotion among the faithful, in Germany and beyond. The Emmerick Bund and its associates produced or promoted many of these mediums of communicating her veneration. Meanwhile, the Augustinian Order exercised its own decisive influence through its oversight of the Emmerick-Haus. In that capacity, it was able to gather these letters, providing the crucial intelligence it needed to demonstrate Emmerick’s flourishing cult and intercessory powers to the Congregation of the Sacred Rite. All told, the evidence lends some credence to the triumphant claim of a Dülmen periodical that “the entire Catholic German people . . . have created a Movement which extends in ever wider circles.”<sup>41</sup>

Emmerick’s beatification campaign was more regionally inflected than this boast would suggest, but “Movement” is without doubt the correct label: a centrally-organized effort with a specific end-goal, multiple means of proselytization and many enthusiastic participants. As with any movement, however, the architects engaged in shaping Emmerick’s interwar cult could only do so much. The institutional strictures of the Catholic Church’s formal beatification process on the one hand, and the lived religion of everyday Germans and their myriad personal worlds on the other, would also determine how Emmerick’s cult would evolve. Furthermore, both centuries-old Catholic tradition and contemporary historical context would leave their mark. The interplay of these actors and influences becomes apparent in her interwar cult’s re-imagining of Emmerick’s time and place.

### *Pilgrimage to the Heimat: Emmerick’s Interwar Cult and the Re-imagining of Place*

It was no accident that the birthplace and beating heart of the interwar Emmerick Movement was Dülmen. Not only was the first chapter of the Emmerick Bund formed there;

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<sup>41</sup>Elsbernd, „Ein halb Jahr Emmerickbund,“ 254.

even after the movement had spread through Germany, Dülmen's organizational oversight and influence remained supreme. On the face of it, alternative scenarios might seem just as probable; surely the nearby diocesan seat of Münster, for instance, could have been capital of the Emmerick Movement. Cologne might also have been a candidate: it was a storied Catholic city whose bishop had exercised some oversight over Westphalia since the Middle Ages, the Church there had overseen the reestablishment of the Augustinians in Dülmen, and it was home to a number of Emmerick admirers. Essen was another possibility: Esseners had been making an annual pilgrimage to Emmerick's grave for several decades. Then of course there were the large Catholic centers to the south, such as Munich. Any of these cities would have offered an ambitious movement both larger populations from which to draw and more resources to tap into than Dülmen.

What Dülmen did have was the oldest and thickest network of local memory of Emmerick. Just as importantly, it had Emmerick's bones, the bed in which she had lain, and the paths which she had walked. The village was also directly adjacent to Coesfeld, site of Emmerick's childhood home, the font where she had been baptized, and the famous Kreuzweg where she had spent countless hours in prayer. For believers, this meant the villages carried with them an ineffable quality of holiness which her presence had infused into the very soil.<sup>42</sup> Mourners at Emmerick's funeral in 1824 had taken away clumps of earth from her grave. A hundred years later, Weimar Germans were still doing the same. As Emmerick became a venerated figure, so too did Dülmen, Coesfeld and their environs become hallowed ground. The houses, places of worship, fields and walkways with an Emmerick connection likewise became

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<sup>42</sup> For an interesting analysis of veneration of saints' shrines in German Europe, which argues that Germans were unique in their imbuing physical place with holy power as opposed to solely the remains of saints themselves, see Lionel Rothkrug, "German Holiness and Western Sanctity in Medieval and Modern History," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 15, no. 1, Culture, Society and Religion in Early Modern Europe: Essays by the Students and Colleagues of William J. Bouwsma (Spring 1988), 161-249.

potential pilgrimage sites. Thus using the language of the centuries-old tradition of saintly veneration, Catholics could reimagine not only Emmerick but also the humble villages in which she had lived and died. Those lucky enough to live in this region could commune with Emmerick, their countrywoman, in an especially profound way. The interwar Emmerick Movement, meanwhile, could create public memorial centers here which leveraged the spiritual power of her physical presence like nowhere else.

Dülmen and Coesfeld were central to interwar German Catholics' imaginations of Emmerick for yet another reason, however: as rural towns rather than urban centers, they more readily evoked nostalgic visions of the Westphalian homeland and its distinctly Catholic identity. This imagined homeland had powerful appeal in the 1920s and 1930s, a time of continuing rapid industrialization, calls for political reform, and concerns over the impact of urbanization on German society. These contemporary longings and concerns influenced the way proselytizers of the interwar Emmerick Movement re-imagined the places central to her cult.

Without question, Westphalian German Catholics, and especially those from Dülmen and Coesfeld, had a particular devotion to Emmerick. One crude indicator of this is the fact that the majority of the letters sent to the Emmerick-Haus came from the immediate surrounding region [See Map 1]. Far more telling, however, is the language Westphalians used in these letters to describe their relationship with Emmerick. A woman from Essen, for example, wrote of how she felt “always united with [Emmerick] in thought,” because like her “I myself am a Coesfelder Kind.”<sup>43</sup> Maria Holbreck, writing to urgently request relics for a gravely ill friend, explained why she felt confident in Emmerick's intercession: “she will not refuse the request of a *Dülmener*

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<sup>43</sup> „Da ich mich selbst ein Coesfelder Kind bin u. so in Gedanken immer mit Ihr verbunden bin.“ Frau Schröder to Emmerick-Haus, July 10, 1939, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 143, BAM.

*Kinde* [sic].”<sup>44</sup> Hedwig Kaiser, a frequent correspondent with the Emmerick-Haus, had not been born in the area. After living in Dülmen for several years, however, she developed an intimate relationship with Emmerick, whom she thought of not merely as a distant intercessor but “as my friend.”<sup>45</sup> The ties of the *Heimat* bound Westphalians to Emmerick in a special way even beyond Germany's borders. Helene Barzik, a nanny living in the Netherlands, thought immediately of Emmerick when her young charge fell ill, “for I too am from Westphalia and have visited her home and grave.”<sup>46</sup> A nun working at a hospital in Chicago made a point of making a pilgrimage to the Emmerick-Haus on a “visit in the *Heimat*,” and later gave away the biographical pamphlet of Emmerick she bought there to one of her patients.<sup>47</sup>

Interwar Westphalian Catholics thus grounded their imaginations of Emmerick, friend and countrywoman, in the soil of their *Heimat*. In doing so, they continued a century-old local tradition of interweaving Catholic elements with regional identity. “Westphalia” had been an intermittent presence on maps of German-speaking Europe since the eighth century, but as a space with blurred boundaries, overlapping political and religious jurisdictions, and limited claim on its inhabitants’ heartstrings. It was only in 1815 that it first became a discretely bounded political space: namely, the Prussian province of Westphalia.<sup>48</sup> The experience of Protestant Prussian rule was formative for the inhabitants of the Westphalian province, and the region’s Catholic heritage became a central part of its identity and historical consciousness. One of the

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<sup>44</sup> “Ich hoffe, daß Sie einem Dölmener Kinde die Bitte nicht abschlagen.” Maria Holbreck to Emmerick-Haus, October 14, 1923, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 27, BAM.

<sup>45</sup> “Ich hatte K. E. als meine Freundin, als ich 10 J. in Dölmten war. Mein liebster Gang war zu ihrem Grab, und hat mir wohl jeden Wunsch erfüllt.” Hedwig Kaiser to Emmerick-Haus, 1945, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 184, BAM.

<sup>46</sup> “Dann ich bin auch aus Westf. und habe schon Ihr Heim besucht auch das Grab der gottsel. besucht.” Helene Barzik to Emmerick-Haus, July 1, 1923, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 11, BAM.

<sup>47</sup> “Vor zwei Jahren August 1928 war ich auf Besuch in der Heimat und auch in Dölmten, von danahm ich die Lebensbeschreibung der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emerich [sic] mit Viele haben das Buch gelesen, und sich sehr daran erbaut . . .” Sr. M. C. Lellis to Emmerick-Haus, 15 December 1930.

<sup>48</sup> Karl Ditt, “Der Wandel historischer Raumbegriffe im 20. Jahrhundert und das Beispiel Westfalen,” *Geographische Zeitschrift* Bd. 93, H. 1, Geographie und Geschichte (2005), 47.

first associations in Germany devoted to local history, the “Verein für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalens,” was founded in the diocesan seat of Münster in 1825, less than a year after Emmerick’s death, and many other organizations would follow.<sup>49</sup> As *Heimatspfleger* created a usable Westphalian past on which to construct their new province’s identity, they readily appropriated the centuries-old history of Münster’s Prince-Bishopric, re-imagining it as a progenitor to the political unit of their own day. Westphalian clergy, meanwhile, were equally prone to infuse church lore with regional pride, and even to portray pastoral work as a form of *Heimatspflege*.<sup>50</sup> In the foreword to a lavishly produced 1933 history of the diocese of Münster, for example, Bishop Clemens August von Galen boasted that his predecessors had “for more than eleven hundred years, in good and evil times, laid the foundation of our contemporary culture through tenacious work.” The history of the diocese, he continued, was a history of the “emergence and growth of our *Heimatkultur*,” and study of this history should foster a love of church and homeland alike.<sup>51</sup> Catholic faith and Westphalian culture thus became inseparable in these historical accounts.

If Catholicism was a central part of Westphalians’ re-imagined past, however, other forces had also been at work in shaping the province’s destiny. In particular, industrialism had transformed the land Emmerick knew and forged new links with neighboring provinces. A

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<sup>49</sup> “Der Verein,” Verein für das Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalens, Abteilung Münster i. W., <[http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Verein\\_Geschichte\\_Altertumskunde/Der\\_Verein](http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Verein_Geschichte_Altertumskunde/Der_Verein)> (accessed 25 February 2016).

<sup>50</sup> Hans Heinrich Blotevogel, “Regionalbewusstsein und Landesidentität am Beispiel von Nordrhein-Westfalen,” Institut für Geographie Diskussionspapier, 2001, <[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwiF8ZzI\\_tXLAhXCSiYKHb7TAOQQFgkMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fduepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de%2Fservlets%2FDerivateServlet%2FDerivate-5198&usg=AFQjCNFG9YrZ-mZDgEWaPc3WmuhV6sJ3cA&sig2=\\_oMcOqjBP5i8eJb7-jKYmw&bvm=bv.117218890,d.eWE&cad=rja](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwiF8ZzI_tXLAhXCSiYKHb7TAOQQFgkMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fduepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de%2Fservlets%2FDerivateServlet%2FDerivate-5198&usg=AFQjCNFG9YrZ-mZDgEWaPc3WmuhV6sJ3cA&sig2=_oMcOqjBP5i8eJb7-jKYmw&bvm=bv.117218890,d.eWE&cad=rja)> (accessed 25 February 2016), 9.

<sup>51</sup> “Bistum und Bischöfe haben mehr als elfhundert Jahre den Wechsel der Zeiten, gutes und böses Geschick zusammen getragen und in zäher Arbeit an den Grundlagen unserer heutigen Kultur mitgeschaffen. Das vorliegende Werk will uns Führer sein durch die Jahrhunderte dieses Werdens und Wachsens unserer Heimatkultur . . . Möge das prächtig ausgestattete Buch die Liebe zur Heimat und zur hl. Kirche fördern.” Clemens August Graf von Galen, Bishop of Münster, „Zum Geleit,“ in *Das Bistum Münster*, ed. Ferdinand Emmerich (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1933), 1.

snapshot of this transformation in process can be found in introduction to the third edition of a popular nostalgic volume, *Das malerische und romantische Westfalen*. When the first edition of this Heimat book appeared in the 1840s, the author reflected, his beloved Westphalia looked very different: with “no trains pulling it into the commerce of the great world,” it was a “quiet, sparsely inhabited and little-known“ province. “Since then,” however, “a great transformation has occurred, a remarkable development achieved in all directions – in thirty years Westphalia has become one of the most important industrial regions in the world.”<sup>52</sup> Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the economy and industry of Westphalia had become densely interwoven with that of the neighboring Rhineland, particularly in the Ruhr region that straddled their provincial borders. During the Weimar Republic, politicians and industrialists alike discussed the idea of merging part or all of the political territory of Westphalia with the Rhineland regions with which it had become economically linked. Westphalian *Heimat* enthusiasts came out in force against the proposed territorial reform, playing up in new publications what they described as a unique, cohesive, and historic Westphalian cultural identity.<sup>53</sup>

The literature of Emmerick’s interwar cult was a part of this dialogue about how Westphalians should imagine themselves and their *Heimat*. One indicator of this is the frequency with which authors in this period used the language of regional identity to make claims on Emmerick, and to exhort Westphalian Catholics to venerate her. Hagiographic books and articles from the decades after World War I are replete with references to Emmerick as “*our*

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<sup>52</sup> „Noch durch keine Eisenbahnen in den großen Weltverkehr gezogen, noch ohne die rastlos thätige Bewertung seiner großartigen Bodenschätze und seiner markigen Arbeitskräfte, war es ein stilles, wenig belebtes und auch wenig bekanntes, vielfach als unwirtlich verschrieenes Land . . . Seitdem ist ein großer Umschwung eingetreten, eine bewundernswerte Entwicklung nach allen Richtungen hin erfolgt – in dreißig Jahren ist Westfalen eines der bedeutendsten Industrie-Länder der Welt geworden . . .“ Levin Schücking, *Das malerische und romantische Westfalen* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1891), v.

<sup>53</sup> Blotevogel, “Regionalbewusstsein,” 9.

countrywoman” [*unserer Landsmännin*], as the “*Mystikerin des Münsterlandes*” or the “*Dulderin von Dülmen*.” In the flurry of articles written around the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Emmerick’s death, for example, the *Katholische Missions-Blatt* extolled her as “a true daughter of the Münsterland,”<sup>54</sup> the *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung* named her “the Westphalian Münsterland’s bride of suffering [*Leidensbraut*],”<sup>55</sup> and the *Westfälische Volkszeitung* urged its readers, “Awaken, Westphalia, and think on your great countrywoman!”<sup>56</sup>

These articles, essays and speeches did not stop at making references to the places Emmerick knew. Rural Westphalia was not a backdrop but a central feature in interwar hagiographical narratives, glowingly described in the most sentimental and nostalgic of terms. A reporter for the *Stadtlohner Volksblatt*, for example, described the experience of visiting “the birth-house of our countrywoman” thus: “We looked with familiarity on the charming little windows of the hut, as if they were old acquaintances.” Overall, the correspondent wrote, the Emmerick family home “seemed to us cozier, homier, more genuine.” The warm feelings evoked by the Emmerick family cottage brought to mind “the people who were happy there, without trains and radios, with their oil lamps and tallow candle-stubs, with their pious faith reflected in their lives. . . .”<sup>57</sup> Emmerick’s *Heimat*, preserved for the visiting public and described in mass-

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<sup>54</sup> “In allem ist Anna Katharina des Münsterlandes echte Tochter . . .” “Warum ersehnen wir die Seligsprechung Anna Katharina Emmericks?,” *Katholische Missions-Blatt, zugleich Ludgerus-Blatt* 73 no. 6, February 10, 1924, 87, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 37, BAM.

<sup>55</sup> “Besonders in unserem äußerlich so tief gebeugten Vaterlande besinnt man sich auf die reichen Werte des katholischen Glaubens- und Gnadenslebens der Leidensbraut des westfälischen Münsterlandes.” “Emmerick-Hundertjahrfeier,” *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung* 32, no. 2, February 8, 1924, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 51, BAM.

<sup>56</sup> “Ihr Westfalen, wachet auf und gedenket euer großen Landsmännin!” “Anna Katharina Emmerick. Zu ihrem 100jährigen Todestage: 9 Februar 1924,” *Westfälische Volkszeitung*, February 11, 1924, BAM Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54, doc. 59.

<sup>57</sup> „So wäre uns der Weg nach Flamschen zur Geburtshause unserer Landsmännin offen. Vielleicht gar interessant und lohnend. Da schauen uns die kleinrautigen Fensterlein der Hütte so vertraulich an, als wären es alte Bekannte. . . . Am liebsten sähen wir noch das alte Strohdach. Es dünkte uns behaglicher, heimatlicher, echter. Und die Menschen, die dort glücklich waren, ohne Eisenbahn und Fernsprecher, bei ihrem Oellicht und ihrer Unschlittschere, mit ihrem frommen Glauben, der sein Spiegelbild tief und warm in ihr Leben warf . . .“ “Zur 100. Wiederkehr des Todestages

produced media, was at once “homey” and “familiar,” yet radically alien from modern urban life with its trains and radios.

Author Anna Freiin von Krane struck a similar tone in an article she wrote for a Catholic periodical. When she visited the preserved Emmerick home, she thought of how peaceful and green Emmerick’s world was in comparison with contemporary noisy cities: “no sounds of the outside world pressed in, save the toll of the church-bell in the neighboring village Coesfeld. Immediately behind the house the green solitude [was] enclosed by hedges, where speckled cows grazed, and the chirping of crickets and the soft rustling of tree branches let your thoughts soar far above into the heavens.”<sup>58</sup> She continued to idealize Emmerick’s rural existence, and to draw pointed contrasts with contemporary urban life, in her book-length biography of Emmerick published that same year, *Die Leidensbraut: Geschichte eines Sühnenlebens* (1921). The book opened with a flowery description of “the peaceful Westphalian Münsterland, along its secluded hedgerows, under its high-vaulted sky,” going on to assert that Emmerick could not have come from any other place: “there and only there could a flower of such a mystical nature bloom.”<sup>59</sup> The nature theme continued throughout the book, in which the author encouraged her readers “to give oneself up to God’s miraculous garden and forget for a moment the cruel present.”<sup>60</sup> In the process, Emmerick’s home in the countryside became a point of physical and spiritual contrast with the industrial cities in which most Germans now lived. Returning again to the Emmerick

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der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick." *Beilage zur "Allgemeinen Zeitung," "Stadtlohner Volksblatt, u. Bredener Anzeiger,"* February 9, 1924, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54, doc. 52, BAM.

<sup>58</sup> "... kein laut der Außerwelt dringt zu ihm hin, es sei denn das Geläut der Kirchenglocken aus dem benachbarten Städtchen Coesfeld. Gleich hinter dem Haus beginnt die heckenumgebene grüne Einsamkeit, wo die buntgefleckten Kühe grasen, nachschauen, dem Zirpen (?) der Grillen und dem leisen Rauschen der Baumwipfel lauschen und seine Gedanken steigen lassen, weit, weit hinauf bis in den Himmel hinein." Anna Freiin von Krane, "Aus Anna Katharinas Heimat," *Maria vom guten Rat: Illustrierte Marianische Monatschrift* 18 no. ½ (Oct./Nov. 1921), 6. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 53 doc. 24, BAM.

<sup>59</sup> "Im stillen westfälischen Münsterland, auf seinen verschwiegenen Heckenwegen, unter seinem hochgewölbten Himmel . . . Dort und nur dort konnte eine solche Blume mystischer Art erblühen, wie ich sie gefunden habe." Von Krane, *Die Leidensbraut*, 5.

<sup>60</sup> ". . . sich in Gottes Wundergarten ergeben können und auf Augenblicke die harte Gegenwart vergessen." von Krane, *Die Leidensbraut*, 6.

family's peasant hut that they had shared with livestock, for instance, von Krane described it as reminiscent of the stable where Jesus was born, but also a place which would "drive us city people to despair."<sup>61</sup> The star-filled sky that had inspired the child Emmerick's visions of heaven were similarly alien to those accustomed to the "smoke-filled, hazy horizon of the cities."<sup>62</sup>

For interwar Emmerick devotees, this rural idyll was not merely a pretty backdrop for the story of the *Mystikerin des Münsterlandes*: "there and only there could a flower of such a mystical nature bloom." Rather, Emmerick's *Heimat* became in these accounts a formative element in her life, a place whose deep Catholic heritage, simplicity and wholesomeness reflected the would-be saint's own virtues. She was rooted in the soil of the *Heimat*: as one contemporary collection of Emmerick poems, essays, and speeches put it, she was "*die Passionsblume der roten Erde*."<sup>63</sup> In Emmerick biography *Im Banne des Kreuzes* by Augustinian fathers Hermann Josef Seller and Ildefons Dietz, the most scholarly biography of her to date, an entire chapter was devoted to "*Das Land der roten Erde – Die Heimat der Emmerick*." There the two Augustinians asserted: "We may never come to understand saints separate from the land of their earthly *Heimat*."<sup>64</sup> The Münsterland itself, they claimed, was a land of "solemn stillness and fertile blessings," and "[t]he Münsterlander's soul has ever new and unfathomable depths. Already in the sixteenth century a Humanist dubbed old Westphalia the land of seers." In was

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<sup>61</sup> "Und in dieser Umwelt, in diesen urweltlichen Verhältnissen, die uns verwöhnte Stadtmenschen zur Verzweiflung treiben würden, lebten die Eheleute Emmerich [sic] mit ihren vielen Kindern glücklich und zufrieden." von Krane, *Die Leidensbraut*, 9.

<sup>62</sup> ". . . dem rauchgetrübten Dunstkreis der Städte." von Krane, *Die Leidensbraut*, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph Dieninghoff, et. al., *Die Passionsblume der roten Erde: Die blühende Jüngerin Jesu Anna Katharina Emmerick; Kleine, aber liebe Gaben, dargebracht der Stigmatisierten Westfalens. Gespendet im Verein mit vielen Emmerick-Freunden vom Coesfelder „Kreuzherrn“ Joseph Dieninghoff* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Benziger & Co., 1924). The Münsterland, and Westphalia more generally, are often called "das Land der roten Erde" in *Heimat* literature, presumably referring to a distinctive color of the local soil.

<sup>64</sup> "Nie dürfen wir, um Heilige zu verstehen, sie herausreißen aus dem Boden ihrer irdischen Heimat." P. Hermann Josef Seller OESA and P. Ildefons Dietz OESA, *Im Banne des Kreuzes: Lebensbild der stigmatisierten Augustinerin A. K. Emmerick* (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch, 1974 [1940]), 7.

this “character of the land” that indelibly marked the soul of Emmerick, the greatest seer the *Heimat* had yet produced.<sup>65</sup>

Von Krane and her fellow standard-bearers of the Emmerick Movement were concerned not only with extolling the virtues of the Westphalian Münsterland as Emmerick had known it a century ago. They were also keen to assert that, despite the enormous transformations Germany had undergone in later years, this land retained its sacred power. Even if contemporary Westphalians and other German Catholics lived in the industrial cities of Cologne and Essen, Milwaukee and Chicago, they could still come to Dülmen and Coesfeld on a pilgrimage to the holy, healing *Heimat*. As one 1920s guidebook to the Emmerick Pilgrimage Trail exclaimed: “How happy is a man when he can wander about in God’s beautiful nature! He shakes off the cares and worries of the everyday . . . but this wandering is twice as beautiful, if it is a pilgrimage . . . This pilgrimage through the fresh, pure field and forest air, transfigured through the spirit of Emmerick, will give benefit to all in body and soul.”<sup>66</sup> The thousands of pilgrim-tourists who escaped German cities to visit Emmerick’s hometown, her birthplace, and her deathbed were thus supposedly taking a journey that was both mentally and spiritually restorative, one that led

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<sup>65</sup> “So war der Charakter des Landes, als dort im Lande der feierlichen Stille und des blühenden Segens Anna Katharina, das stille Kind der allmächtigen Gnade und des Gottessegens, geboren ward. . . Des Münsterlanders Seele hat immer neue, unergründliche Tiefen. Schon ein Humanist des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts nennt das alte Westfalen die Heimat der Seher.” Seller and Dietz, *Im Banne des Kreuzes*, 8-9. Seller and Dietz identify the “Humanist des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts” as Otto Beckmann of Warburg (d. 1556). Other sources also refer to this apparent reputation Westphalia and the Münsterland had as a land of seers. Clemens Brentano wrote in his biographical introduction of Emmerick which prefaced *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*: “Hierzu mochte wohl beitragen, daß in ihrem Vaterlande ein gewisser Grad prophetischer Sehergabe nicht selten ist. Es gibt dort hin und wieder sogenannte Kiecker, d. h. Seher (Gucker, Plattdeutsch Gicker), die Sterbefälle, Hochzeiten, Truppenzüge u. dgl. in Bildern, sogenannten Vorgesichten, voraussehen, für deren Richtigkeit manches Eintreffen zeugt.” Unfortunately, Brentano does not cite specific examples of this alleged phenomenon. Brentano, “Einleitung,” *Das bittere Leiden*, 12.

<sup>66</sup> “Wie froh ist der Mensch, wenn er hinauswandern kann in Gottes schöne Natur! Er schüttelt alle Pflichten und Sorgen des Alltags, die sich bleischwer an seine Füße hängen . . . Dieser Pilgergang durch die frische, reine Feld- und Waldluft, verklärt von dem Geiste der Emmerick, wird jedem wohltun an Leib und Seele.” P. Paschalis Reyer, OFM, *Gang durch die Erinnerungsstätten der Dienerin Gottes Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Dülmen: Laumann, 1924), 10-12.

away from the godless modern metropolis and toward a bucolic countryside dotted with churches and wayside shrines.

The Münsterland of the 1920s and 30s was hardly unspoilt by industrialization and urbanization: the network of trains carrying pilgrims to Emmerick memorial sites was just one indication of this. The depictions of Emmerick's childhood in print were also highly idealized, making a quaint country cottage out of what had been a primitive hut housing a tenant farmer with his wife and nine children. The surrounding field had similarly been a place where Emmerick and her family spent countless hours in manual labor, not listening to crickets chirp and staring up at the stars. Yet a century removed from these realities, Emmerick's interwar hagiographers looked around the preserved and reconstructed pilgrimage sites in Coesfeld and Dülmen and reimagined them as idylls from the modern, urban workaday world. The setting of her impoverished existence quite literally became in this period the stuff of weekend picnics and children's picture-books. [See Figures 19, 20, and 21.] These preserved and reconstructed stops along the Emmerick Pilgrim Trail evoked for interwar Germans the wholesomeness of the rural homeland, at a time when many discontented with modern life pined for an imagined rustic German past.<sup>67</sup>

*"A Crucified Saint for a Crucified Volk:" Emmerick's Interwar Cult and the Re-imagination of Past and Present*

This nostalgic tinge reveals an important fact: the imagination of place is also embedded in time. As hagiographers retold Emmerick's story to interwar Germans, they not only made her real and present by grounding her in a familiar landscape; in so doing, they also insisted on the

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<sup>67</sup> Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 60-70.

continued relevance of this woman who had lain a century in her grave. “Anna Katharina Emmerick was a shining example for her contemporary world,” attendees heard at Dülmen’s Emmerick-Day festivities in 1924, “but also for our own time her cardinal virtues should be *der Anfang und das Ende*” of good conduct. The speaker went on to make a striking parallel between Emmerick’s time and his own, between her self-immersion in the way of the Cross and interwar Germany’s own Via Dolorosa:

Our German *Volk* has gone down a *Via Crucis* for ten years which was pressed upon us by a genocidal war [*völkermordende Krieg*] and the storms of revolution. We must be strong to endure this *Via Crucis*. . . We must develop true inner heroism. Humility, poverty, and self-sacrificial courage [*Demut, Armut, und Opfermut*]: these three virtues which Anna Katharina so actively manifested, must also guide us.<sup>68</sup>

As a stigmatic who emerged in the midst of Napoleonic occupation, and a nun cast out of her convent by state secularization, many of Emmerick’s contemporaries saw her as a rebuke to the evils of their time. A century later, interwar Germans took up this idea once again, with a twist: they reimagined the era of the Napoleonic wars as a foreshadowing of their present, and Emmerick as a saint whose moment had come in their own day. In the process, interwar Emmerick festivals, articles, hagiographies, and memorial sites also placed very specific virtues – “*Demut, Armut, und Opfermut*” – at the center of their narratives. Rather than portray her as a woman of supernatural ability and superhuman piety, they cast her as a woman to whom Germans could relate and strive to emulate as they, too faced (national) humiliation, impoverishment, and sacrifice.

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<sup>68</sup> “Anna Katharina war ihrer Mitwelt ein leuchtendes Beispiel. Aber auch für unsere Zeit sollen ihre Kardinaltugenden der Anfang und das Ende sein . . . Unser deutsches Volke geht seit zehn Jahren einen Kreuzweg, den uns der völkermordende Krieg und die Stürme der Revolution aufgeprägt hat. Wir müssen stark sein, diesen Kreuzweg zu bestehen . . . Wahren Heldengeist müssen wir ausprägen in unserem Innern. Demut, Armut und Opfermut, diese drei Tugenden, die Anna Katharina so lebhaft bekundete, müssen auch uns voranleuchten.” “Die Jahrhundertfeier des Todestages Anna Katharina Emmericks,” *Westfälische Volkszeitung Bochum*, February 10, 1924. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 54 doc. 53, BAM.

As Karen Hagemann, Reinhard Sprenger, Kay Wenzel, and Wolfgang Koller among others have shown, many interwar Germans invoked the Napoleonic wars – or rather, their version of it – as an illustrative comparison with their troubled present-day.<sup>69</sup> From extolling the era’s “national” heroes in schoolbooks and celebrations of the Battle of Leipzig to popular films like Karl Grune’s *Waterloo* (1928), evocations of Germany’s “Wars of Liberation” were both common and politically pointed.<sup>70</sup> Emmerick’s story made her almost tailor-made for this pervasive interwar re-imagining of Germany’s experiences during the Napoleonic years, and those engaged in the shaping of her interwar cult took up the theme with gusto. One article described Emmerick as having risen like a pillar above the fray of a Europe destroyed by French Enlightenment, war, and revolution. A century later, it argued, the Fatherland was once again brought low by the evils of war and materialism, and it was for this reason that Emmerick and her rebuke to her time spoke to contemporary German hearts: “Despite the passing of one hundred years she stands much closer to us in spirit . . . What our *Volk* at that time admirably adopted from France – the faithless Enlightenment – is still furrowing more or less deeply into many German heads.”<sup>71</sup> At an Emmerick-Day celebration in Emmerick’s home village, a

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<sup>69</sup> Karen Hagemann, *Revisiting Prussia's Wars against Napoleon: History, Culture, and Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Reinhard K. Sprenger, *Die Jahnrezeption in Deutschland 1871-1933: Nationale Identität und Modernisierung* (Schorndorf: Schorndorf, 1985), 109-216; Kay Wenzel, "Befreiung oder Freiheit? Zur politischen Ausdeutung der deutschen Kriege gegen Napoleon von 1913 bis 1923," in *Griff nach der Deutungsmacht: Zur Geschichte der Geschichtspolitik in Deutschland*, ed. Heinrich August Winkler (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 67-89; Wolfgang Koller, "Heroic Memories: Gendered Images of the Napoleonic Wars in German Feature Films of the Interwar Period," in *War Memories: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Modern European Culture*, ed. Alan Forrest, Étienne François and Karen Hagemann (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), 366-385.

<sup>70</sup> Sam A. Mustafa, “Loyal Rebels and Unruly Prussians: Two Centuries of the Napoleonic Wars in German School History Texts,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 30, no. 1 (2008), pp. 467-585; Reinhard K. Sprenger, „. . . stählte die Jugend für den heiligen Kampf: ‘Der ,Turnvater‘ Jahn in deutschen Schulgeschichtsbüchern 1871-1933,“ *International Schulbuchforschung* 8, no. 1 (1986), 9-28; Jason Tebbew, “Revision and ‘Rebirth:’ Commemoration of the Battle of Nations in Leipzig,” *German Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (October 2010), pp.618-640.

<sup>71</sup> “Heute am Ende dieser 100 Jahre steht sie ähnlich da. . . Uns dagegen steht sie trotz des Abstandes von 100 Jahren geistig weit näher. . . Was damals unser Volk . . . bewundernd von Frankreich übernommen, - die ungläubige Aufklärung, - zieht wohl noch durch manches deutsche Hirn mehr oder wenige tiefe Furchen.” “Zur 100. Wiederkehr des Todestages der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick.” *Beilage zur "Allgemeinen Zeitung,"*

keynote speaker made the same point: “The darkness from the West, the Enlightenment, covers our country. The Lord chose the weakest as a light.”<sup>72</sup> In an extended essay, an Augustinian father active in Emmerick’s beatification campaign wrote: “Around one hundred years ago our Fatherland . . . was oppressed under the fist of a foreign ruler, God the helmsman of the world was dismissed by the Enlightenment, and like today the poison of religious and political revolution penetrated the Catholic people. In the same days,” he went on, “we find a Führerin . . . who can also take up leadership today. We will certainly know our *Volk* to be saved, if we allow ourselves to trust in this Führerin, follow her willingly, and submit to her. Her name is Anna Katharina Emmerick.”<sup>73</sup>

In reality, Germans – including German Catholics – were active participants in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. German rulers were also eager collaborators in the process of Napoleonic secularization. What is more, willingness to take up arms or monetarily contribute to Prussia’s wars against Napoleon had been noticeably lower in the Catholic regions under its control.<sup>74</sup> In the wake of defeat in World War I, the French occupation of the Ruhr, and other painful experiences, some Emmerick promoters distorted or ignored these realities. Blending together Enlightenment, revolution, and war into one monolithic French menace, they presented secularization and waning belief in early nineteenth-century Germany as a purely Gallic import. Clergy and laity alike therefore presented Emmerick to German Catholics as a saint fit for their troubled times. A daughter of the countryside, her humble home would welcome believers on a

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*"Stadtlochner Volksblatt, u. Bredener Anzeiger,"* February 9, 1924. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 52, BAM.

<sup>72</sup> “Die Finsternis vom Westen, die Aufklärung, bedeckt unser Land. Da wählt der Herr die Schwäche zur Leuchte.” “Die Jahrhundertfeier des Todestages Anna Catharina Emmericks,” Coesfeld, 12 February 1924, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 62, BAM.

<sup>73</sup> P. Chrysostomus Spitzenberg OSA, “Die Mission der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick für die Erneuerung des religiösen Lebens in Deutschland,” 1925. Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 75, BAM.

<sup>74</sup> Hagemann, *Revisiting Prussia’s Wars against Napoleon*, 41; 180-181; 197.

pilgrimage from urban squalor. A repudiator of Napoleon and the Enlightenment, she would defend German culture from the latest assault by French assault.

There was, indeed, a recurring theme of nationalist competition with the French in Emmerick literature of that 1920s and 30s. More than one writer remarked on the extraordinary number of new French saints that had been canonized in recent years, from Joan of Arc and dozens of “martyrs” of the French Revolutionary guillotine to Bernadette Soubirous, Thérèse of Lisieux, Margaret Alacoque, Peter Faber and John Vianney. In contrast, there had been barely more than a dozen German and Austrian saints beatified since the French Revolution. (See Appendix B.) As one commentator put it, Germans should donate to Emmerick’s beatification so as not to be outdone by French Catholics and their support for their own saints: “In enthusiasm . . . German Catholics will certainly not allow themselves to be overtaken by their French fellow believers, who in recent years have made possible the accomplishment of canonization of the servants of God Margarete Alacoque and Jeanne d’Arc.”<sup>75</sup>

Along with nationalism, themes of heroism, sacrifice and struggle suffused interwar Emmerick literature. As a stigmatic and ascetic, a woman who embraced suffering as a path to salvation, she inspired the leaders of her beatification campaign to reinterpret the nation’s dark

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<sup>75</sup>“Und im Eifer für die heilige Sache und auch in der Begeisterung von Mitteln werden die deutschen Katholiken sich gewiß nicht von den französischen Glaubensgenossen übertreffen lassen, die im vorigen Jahre durch ihre Opfernelligkeit die Durchführung des Heiligsprechungsprozesses der Dienerinnen Gottes Margarete Alacoque und Jeanne d’Arc ermöglichen.” n.a., *Das kostbare Kleinod Dülmens* (Dülmen: Laumann, 1919) Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54, doc. 21, BAM. Another 1922 article would bemoan the fact that Germany had achieved no new saints since the Reformation: n.a., “Eine Ehrung Anna Katharina Emmericks in ihrem Geburtsorte Coesfeld,” *Recklinghäuser Volkszeitung* 2, no. 7, January 10, 1922, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54, doc. 35, BAM. See also another article, which mentions “rumors” that Emmerick has not yet been beatified because the Congregation for the Sacred Rite was prejudiced against Germany and partial to other nations, especially France: n.a., “Geduld und Ausdauer! Zur Sache der Seligsprechung Anna Katharina Emmericks,” *Katholische Missions-Blatt* 74, no. 46, November 15, 1925, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 53, doc. 48, BAM. While this was an exaggeration, it was not far from the truth. Most of the relatively small number of saints from German Europe beatified or canonized since the Reformation were medieval saints. In other words, modern Germans were not achieving beatification or canonization at nearly the same rate as their peers, a condition that would persist until the pontificate of John Paul II. See Appendix B. I hope in the future to publish an article on the striking national demographics of saint-making in the modern era.

hour though the transformative language of redemption. Because of the Brentano controversy and its detrimental effect on progress in Rome, Emmerick's hagiographers and promoters were moving away from prior emphasis on her famous visions, and trying to rely on Brentano's material in their own writing as little as possible.<sup>76</sup> Instead, they praised her abstinence, her punishing ascetic practices, and her acceptance of lifelong physical suffering as proof of her heroic virtue. At an Emmerick-Day celebration in Coesfeld, for instance, one speaker told the assembled crowds: "It is entirely unimportant whether the investigation accepts Brentano's records. The proof [of Emmerick's sanctity] lies in an entirely different direction . . . She should be shown to the *Volk* as a patron in suffering [*Leidenspatronin*]." <sup>77</sup> The next speaker agreed: "if we strike all that is untrue from Brentano's sketches, there remains enough to celebrate the great mystic [Emmerick] for her heroic spirit of sacrifice [*heroischen Opferseele*]." <sup>78</sup> At another Emmerick-Day celebration in Greven, the message was similar: "Not so much her stigmatization and her visionary gift, but far more her heroic life of virtue serves as proof of her great holiness and makes us glad to appeal to Emmerick as our countrywoman." <sup>79</sup> In an anthology of essays, poems, and articles about Emmerick, Coesfeld clergyman Joseph Dieninghoff exhorted his

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<sup>76</sup> As Augustinian priests Hermann Josef Seller and Ildefons Dietz wrote in the foreword to their Emmerick biography, *Im Banne des Kreuzes*: "Der bedeutende Kenner christlicher Mystic, J[oseph] Zahn, schreibt in seinem großen Werke 'Einführung in die christliche Mystik:' 'Wer ein Leben der Heiligen für eine bloße Kette von Ekstasen, Visionen, oder anderen außerordentlichen Dingen halt, hat es schlecht verstanden. Wer eine Heiligenbiographie zumeist als solchen Dingen zusammensetzt, hat seine Aufgabe verfehlt.'" – Der Verfasser der Emmerickbiographie hat sich grundsätzlich an diese Richtlinien gehalten . . . Die Gestalt der Dülmener Seherin büßt nichts ein an Frische und Lebendigkeit, an edler Größe, wenn wir die biographischen Notizen Kl. Brentanos nur mit Vorsicht benutzen. Das Lebensbild der Gottseligen sollte eben soweit als möglich ohne die Brentanoquellen dargestellt werden . . ." Seller and Dietz, *Im Banne des Kreuzes*, iii.

<sup>77</sup> "Es ist aber höchst gleichgültig, ob die Aufzeichnungen Brentanos die Untersuchung nicht vertragen. Der Beweis sei nach ganz anderer Richtung zu führen . . . Als Leidenspatronin solle sie heute dem Volke gezeigt." Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 62, BAM.

<sup>78</sup> "Und wenn wir aus Brentanos Auszeichnungen der Visionen alles Unwahre austreichen, dann bleibt noch genug, die große Mystikerin mit ihrer heroischen Opferseele zu feiern." Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 62, BAM.

<sup>79</sup> "Nicht so sehr ihre Stigmatisation und ihre Sehergabe, als vielmehr ihr heldenhaftes Tugendleben dient uns als Beweis ihrer großen Heiligkeit und macht uns froh, Anna Katharina als unsere spezielle Heimatgenossin . . . ansprechen zu dürfen." "Emmerich-Abend in Greven." *Westfälischer Merkur Abend-Ausgabe*, April 18, 1922, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54, doc. 40, BAM.

readers: “Let us take the attitude of the Church toward the visions . . .! She gives little regard to them in considering the holiness of the visionary . . . Let us be filled with enthusiasm only by the illuminating *example of virtue* [set by Emmerick], the bride of suffering.”<sup>80</sup>

Consistently, the language of Emmerick’s interwar beatification campaign linked her sanctification through suffering to what they saw as the unjust suffering of the German Fatherland after wartime defeat, the Treaty of Versailles and economic crisis. One Augustinian author exhorted his contemporaries:

Look, German *Volk*, with hope and trust to your countrywoman and *Führerin* through hard times, to the bride of suffering from Dülmen! . . . For we are learning from her what our time desperately needs: greatness of soul, love in a loveless time, courage in a cruel struggle for true national health [*Volksgesundung*] and holiness. If we become like our *Führerin*, then we will be good, content people and therefore helpers and saviors of the *Volk* in the best sense.<sup>81</sup>

A 1936 article employed this same kind of language, describing Emmerick as a “Führerin” for Christians seeking to carry their own cross for Christ, full of “the courage to fight [*Kampfesmut*] for Christ and his bride, the Church: in short, a woman who led that was “truly full of heroism.”<sup>82</sup> This language of soil and sacrifice, heroism and nationalism, with its lurking political connotations, found its way into the speeches of women as well as men. At an Emmerick celebration convened especially for women and girls, speaker Christine Teusch

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<sup>80</sup> “Machen wir es uns in der Einstellung zu den Visionen zur Gewohnheit, zu denken wie die Kirche! Sie beachtet sie hinsichtlich ihrer Bedeutung für die Heiligkeit des Schauenden fast gar nicht; nur soweit etwa den Dogmen Widersprechendes oder sie Untergrabendes sich, als von dem Schauenden selbst herrührend, vorfinden sollte, fällt es für sie hierbei in die Wagschale. . . Lassen wir uns also einzig durch das hellstrahlende *Tugendbeispiel* der Leidensbraut begeistern . . .” Joseph Dieninghoff, “Auf Ausschau,” in Joseph Dieninghoff, et. al., *Die Passionsblume der roten Erde*, 37.

<sup>81</sup> “So blicke denn, deutsches Volk, mit Hoffnung und Vertrauen auf deine Landsmännin und Führerin aus harter Zeit, auf die Leidensbraut von Dülmen! . . . Denn wir lernen von ihr, was unserer Zeit besonders nottut: Seelengröße, Liebe in liebekalter Zeit, Mut in harten Ringen um wahre Volksgesundung und Heiligkeit. Wenn wir werden wie unsere Führerin, dann werden wir zufriedene und gute Menschen und damit Volkshelfer und Volksretter im besten Sinne.” P. Chrysostomus Spitzenberg OSA, “Die Mission der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick für die Erneuerung des religiösen Lebens in Deutschland,” 1925, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 75, BAM.

<sup>82</sup> n.a., “Anna Katharina Emmericks Leidensgeschichte und Leidensgesichte,” *Unser Kirchenblatt*, March 29, 1936, D 110, Historische Sammlung A2, doc. 14, BAM.

extolled Emmerick as “a true daughter of the red soil,” one who “led a life of heroic sacrifice” and felt herself “united with the *Volk*.”<sup>83</sup> As Anna Freiin von Krane, author of the popular biography *Die Leidensbraut*, put it: “May the beatification process soon come to an end, so that our *Volk* has the saint sent to it: a crucified saint for a crucified *Volk*!”<sup>84</sup>

This “crucified Volk” narrative resonated with other strands of German politics in the 1920s and 30s, of course. There were a surprising number of other instances in contemporary media in which Germans employed religious—and especially Catholic—language to reflect on recent developments in their state and society. The Berlin professor and Protestant theologian Ernst Troeltsch, for example, relied on surprisingly Catholic metaphors to express his outrage at the Treaty of Versailles, comparing the Paris Peace Conference to a “court of inquisition” that was obsessed with a “dogma of guilt” and had treated Germany as a “heretic to be burned.”<sup>85</sup> Some even described the plight of Germans living in the Belgian- and French-occupied Rhineland as a form of “martyrdom” and “*Via Crucis*.”<sup>86</sup> Politicians and pundits, as well as authors and journalists, often referred to Germany’s fallen soldiers in World War I as “martyrs,” an epithet that radical groups on the right and left also bestowed upon comrades killed in street violence. During the Third Reich, the Nazi Party and its leaders would create shrines and a cult

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<sup>83</sup>“Ein Kundgebung für Anna Katharina Emmerick. 4000 katholische Frauen und Jungfrauen in der Halle Münsterland,” Feb. 20, 1927, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54, BAM.

<sup>84</sup> “Möge der Seligsprechungsprozeß bald zu Ende sein, daß unser Volk die ihm zukommende Heilige hat. Dem gekreuzigten Volk eine gekreuzigte Heilige!” Anna Freiin von Krane, “Ein gekreuzigtes Leben,” *Westfälische Volkszeitung Bochum, Sonntagsfreude*, February 10, 1924, 8. , Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv D014 54 doc. 56, BAM.

<sup>85</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, “Das Schulddogma,” *Spektatorbriefe: Aufsätze über die deutsche Revolution und die Weltpolitik, 1918-1922*, ed. Hans Baron (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1924), 314-21; Heinrich Distler, *Das deutsche Leid am Rhein: Ein Buch der Anklage gegen die Schandherrschaft des französischen Militarismus* (Minden/Westfalen: Wilhelm Kohler, 1921), 9, 45.

<sup>86</sup> Otto von Stupnagel, *The French Terror: The Martyrdom of the German People on the Rhine and Ruhr* (Berlin: A. Scherl, 1923); anon., *Süddeutsche Monatshefte, Terror und Martyrium am Rhein und Ruhr: Amtliche Berichte und Dokumente* (Munich: Süddeutsche Monatshefte, 1923).

of martyrdom around the casualties of the Beer Hall Putsch or brown-shirts like Horst Wessel.<sup>87</sup> Adolf Hitler had long abandoned the Catholicism into which he was baptized when he began his political career. Having been raised in a Catholic family and region, however, he remained proficient in its language and imagery. He was one of many who spoke at the time of a German “resurrection,” brought about through the renewal of a *Volk* steeled by sacrifice.<sup>88</sup>

German politics and culture in this period was so replete with these religious concepts and metaphors, George Mosse has argued, because they suffused with meaning the sacrifices that Germans had experienced since World War I: “the memory of the war was refashioned into a sacred experience which provided the nation with a new depth of religious feeling, putting at its disposal ever-present saints and martyrs, places of worship, and a heritage to emulate.”<sup>89</sup> Reading the language of Emmerick’s official cult against this background suggests that some of Germany’s Catholics connected with the so-called “Myth of the War Experience” in an especially profound way, given that it drew on language and imagery that suffused their own religious beliefs. Emmerick’s life, wounds, and visions made her the ideal saint, in short, for this nation of would-be martyrs.

In one respect, the evidence suggests that Germans in Westphalia and beyond responded positively to this carefully crafted message put forward by hagiographers, the Catholic press, and the Emmerick Bund. They flocked to Emmerick memorial sites, consumed the latest devotional literature, and – as proselytizers worked towards her beatification, most significantly of all –

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<sup>87</sup> Jay W. Baird, *To Die for Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990); Sabine Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden: Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten, und Symbole 1923 bis 1945* (Griefswald: SH-Verlag, 1996).

<sup>88</sup> See, e.g., Adolf Hitler, *Vortrag Adolf Hitlers vor westdeutschen Wirtschaftlern im Industrie-Klub zu Düsseldorf am 27. Januar 1932* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1932,) 14. On Hitler and other leading Nazis’ views of Christianity, see Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>89</sup> George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.

Fräulein Heidfeld and many others turned to Emmerick in times of need. Their letters to the Emmerick-Haus also peaked during times of particularly acute national crisis [See Graph 2]. Yet the interwar sources also suggest that it was *personal* suffering that animated these devotions, rather than a revanchist national narrative.

The letters sent to the Emmerick Haus reflected the particular troubles of Germans in the 1920s and 1930s: of husbands unemployed since the end of the war, of savings lost through inflation, of the struggle to find housing in crowded cities, of the overwhelming pressure to secure one's future through passing school exams. The focus in these letters remains on the intimate relationship between petitioner and intercessor, and the longing for familial prosperity and security. None of the interwar letters invoke Emmerick's intercession for the German nation or society [See Graph 3]. Furthermore, the letters indicate that Emmerick's interwar hagiographers and promoters were less than successful in diverting attention away from her controversial, mystical phenomena. Many devotees reported praying five Our Fathers in honor of each of Emmerick's five stigmata wounds.<sup>90</sup> They unashamedly mentioned reading about and marveling at her ecstatic visions.<sup>91</sup>

These mixed results of Emmerick's "official" hagiographical line are unsurprising. The work of Patrick Houlihan, Jay Winter, and others on the Catholic culture(s) of World War I has shown how nationalist sermons and speeches by clergy and other elites existed alongside religious expressions of individual suffering, consolation, and hope. These scholars also provide ample evidence that the shock of industrialized warfare drove just as many, if not more,

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<sup>90</sup> Frau Heilmann to Emmerick Haus, May 18, 1923, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 22, BAM; see also Frau Auguste Oberfeld to Emmerick Haus, June 28, 1939, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 137, BAM.

<sup>91</sup> Frau Rich. Finke to Emmerick Haus, October 7, 1932, Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33 doc. 87, BAM.

Europeans to embrace traditional beliefs as it did to inspire the avant-gardism of others.<sup>92</sup> The letters to the Emmerick-Haus suggest these trends continued throughout the Weimar Republic and into the Third Reich. Even as articles and speeches sought to create Emmerick anew as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century German *Führerin*, her potency as a symbol derived from her existing veneration as a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Westphalian *Mystikerin*. Similarly, the tremendous symbolic power of her *Via Crucis* as an allegory of German national suffering could not help but evoke the belief that she had herself taken on the wounds of Christ. Though the concerns of Vatican officials demanded it, it proved difficult to successfully appropriate *and* simultaneously edit Catholics' communal memory of Anna Katharina Emmerick. The domestication of her mysticism could only proceed so far.

*Dominikus Böhm's Heilig Kreuz Kirche in Dülmen and Catholicism in Germany during the Third Reich*

Despite the strategic shift in Emmerick hagiographical literature, and despite the extensive efforts of Augustinian researchers like Winfried Hümpfner, Ildefons Dietz, and Hermann Josef Seller, the "Brentano question" dealt a serious blow to the beatification campaign. In 1928, The Congregation for the Sacred Rite suspended her cause in a rare procedure. Still, the Emmerick-Bund and the German Augustinians decided to press forward with their promotion, memorialization, and veneration of Emmerick in the hopes that Rome would reverse course. As a result, their energetic efforts continued into the 1930s unabated.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Houlihan, *Catholicism and the Great War*; Patrick J. Houlihan, "Local Catholicism as Transnational War Experience: Everyday Religious Practice in Occupied Northern France, 1914-1918," *Central European History* 45, no. 2 (2012): 233-67; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 120-25.

<sup>93</sup> Engling, *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich*, 25.

Over the course of the Third Reich, some aspects of Catholic devotional and organizational life fell afoul of the Nazi Party and State. In particular, officials used a variety of means to force parents to send their students to so-called *Gemeinschaftsschulen*, rather than parochial schools.<sup>94</sup> Many Catholic organizations and associations either disbanded or became folded into equivalent Party-run organizations, such as the Hitler Youth. New laws banned or restricted Catholic processions and public festivals.<sup>95</sup> Joseph Goebbels' propaganda machine also forced many Catholic newspapers, periodicals, and journals to either close or submit to strict censorship.<sup>96</sup> All of these measures were violations of the assurances Hitler had offered to the German Catholic Church in the Concordat he concluded with the Holy See in July 1933, and as such members of the Catholic hierarchy vigorously protested them. Münster's own bishop, Clemens August Graf von Galen, was vociferous in his opposition to some Nazi policies, particularly their euthanasia program.<sup>97</sup> Ordinary German Catholics also banded together to fight some state actions that impinged on religion, such as the removal of crucifixes from schools.

These policies, combined with the efforts of some high-ranking figures such as Heinrich Himmler and Alfred Rosenberg to supplant Christianity with a form of Germanic neo-paganism, led many German Catholics to believe their Church and beliefs were threatened. Pope Pius XI's 1937 encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* brought international attention to the issue.<sup>98</sup> By the 1940s, Catholics throughout western Europe and the United States were speaking of a "German Church Struggle."

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<sup>94</sup>Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, Bavaria 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 185-233.

<sup>95</sup> Michael O'Sullivan, "An Eroding Milieu? Catholic Youth, Church Authority, and Popular Behavior in Northwest Germany during the Third Reich, 1933-1938," *The Catholic Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (April 2004), 236-259.

<sup>96</sup> Ederer, "Propaganda Wars," 456-472; Phayer, "Questions about Catholic Resistance," 328-331.

<sup>97</sup> Griech-Poelle, *Bishop von Galen*.

<sup>98</sup> On *Mit brennender Sorge*, its origins, and its consequences, see William M. Harrigan, "Nazi Germany and the Holy See, 1933-1936: The Historical Background of *Mit brennender Sorge*," *The Catholic Historical Review* 47, no. 2 (Jul. 1961), 164-198; Lewy, *Catholic Church in Nazi Germany*, 156-159.

As many scholars have since argued, the reality on the ground was more complex than the term “German Church Struggle” suggests. Nazi policies severely disrupted some vital aspects of Catholic life, such as education, laypersons’ associations, and parochial newspapers. At the same time however, other aspects of German Catholicism remained intact, or even flourished, under Nazism. One of the most striking examples of this is the impressive number of new Catholic churches that were constructed during the Third Reich.<sup>99</sup> Among these churches was a new parish church in Dülmen, meant specifically to serve as a shrine church for Emmerick’s remains: Heilig Kreuz Kirche, constructed from 1936 to 1938 under the direction of prolific architect Dominikus Böhm.

Böhm was originally of Swabian-Bavarian extraction, but his training in architecture and the production of stained-glass took place in the Westphalian city of Cologne. His time there was formative in more ways than one. Not only did he draw artistic inspiration from the many Romanesque churches the city boasted, but he also returned again and again to complete projects in Westphalia throughout his career. Böhm’s work was wide-ranging, from colonial administrative buildings in German East Africa to individual houses and urban apartment blocks, but above all he became a prolific builder of Catholic churches in the 1920s-40s. Although ancient Romanesque architecture visibly inspired Böhm’s work, his sacred architecture was unmistakably modern. In this regard, he was a trailblazer in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Germany, when many new churches were built in familiar styles such as neo-Gothic.<sup>100</sup>

Dülmen’s St. Viktor parish commissioned Böhm to build a new church in the mid-1930s. The parish decided to demolish St. Viktor and have Heilig Kreuz Kirche built in its place for a

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<sup>99</sup> Holger Brülls, “‘Deutsche Gotteshäuser’ – Kirchenbau im Nationalsozialismus: ein unterschlagenes Kapitel der deutschen Architekturgeschichte,” *kritische berichte* 23, no. 1 (1995), 57-68.

<sup>100</sup> Alois Elsen, “Werdegang,” in Josef Hammel, ed., *Dominikus Böhm: Ein deutscher Baumeister* (Regensburg: Joseph Habel, 1943), 1-10.

number of reasons. For one, Dülmen had grown considerably since the turn of the twentieth century, and its current facilities were simply too cramped to meet the parish's needs. In fact, the parish cemetery had become completely overfull, leading to the exhumation of its graves and their removal to a new site. Emmerick's grave, as well as those of Fr. Limberg and Dr. Wesener on either side, were left in place, out of respect for the many decades of prayer and veneration that had occurred on that site. Eventually, however, many Emmerick devotees dreamed of the day when her remains could be translated to a shrine church erected in her honor. Although her beatification cause had stalled in Rome, the leaders of St. Viktor parish decided to have Böhm design the new church specifically as the future home of her translated remains.

Böhm took this aspect of his commission to heart. His completed church clearly continued techniques and architectural elements of his previous work, such as the use of thick walls, pylons, and tall, open spaces to evoke monumental scale; and the employment of many clear windows with a few stained-glass elements to create dramatic areas of light and shadow. Heilig Kreuz Kirche's design also drew visible inspiration, however, from Anna Katharina Emmerick. Specifically, the arrangement of the sanctuary deliberately focused attention on the altar, situated high above the congregation at the top of several stone steps, and the simple cross hanging suspended above it. No side chapels or niches, statues or artwork of any kind took attention away from them. The nave of the church was relatively dark, with only a few small windows, many feet above the pews. The cross above the altar, in contrast, was backlit with a flood of brightness. In a space behind and below the altar, filled with multiple two-story, floor-to-ceiling windows, sat the empty tomb waiting to house the remains of Anna Katharina Emmerick. It was this light-filled space which illuminated the cross and altar from behind. Altogether, these stark and simple elements visually conveyed a journey from darkness to light,

from death to resurrection through the cross. It was an architectural meditation on Emmerick's life of redemptive suffering, and an expression of confidence that she was now in the light of God's presence with the whole communion of saints.<sup>101</sup> [See Figures 22 through 26.]

Not long after the completion of Heilig Kreuz Kirche, the German army invaded Poland and started the Second World War. Increasingly, letters sent to the Emmerick-Haus spoke of sons wounded on the front or in POW camps, of prayers to Emmerick whispered in bomb shelters, and of desperate searches for basic foodstuffs. It was a common saying among Münsterlanders that Emmerick's intercession would protect them. Yet when the Allies invaded Germany in the spring of 1945, their path led straight through Emmerick's *Heimat*. Pilots prepared the way for ground troops by saturating the region with bombs. Somehow, Emmerick's grave, her reconstructed apartment in the Emmerick-Haus, and Heilig Kreuz Kirche escaped relatively unscathed; but Dülmen was almost entirely destroyed (See Figure 27).<sup>102</sup>

### *Conclusion*

During the interwar era, Anna Katharina Emmerick's cult of veneration spread rapidly through sermons, public festivals, devotional books, and presentations. Priests and laypersons, the popular press and theological journals, all encouraged venerating Emmerick as "a crucified saint for a crucified *Volk*." The earlier emphasis of hagiographers on her wounds and visions shifted to a focus on her patience in suffering and her readiness for self-sacrifice. The historical background of her life also took on new significance, as memories of Napoleonic French aggression, secularization, and waning religious belief provided revanchist interwar German Catholics with a readymade narrative of victimization. Emmerick's heroic faith in defiance of

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<sup>101</sup> Oliver Paschke, "Die böhmische Heilig Kreuz Kirche in Dülmen," in *Die Heilig Kreuz Kirche in Dülmen: "Der Raum, der Freiheit atmet . . ."* (Dülmen: Laumann, 2008), 11-27.

<sup>102</sup> Helmut Müller, *Fünf vor null: Die Besetzung des Münsterlandes 1945* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2005), 28.

French Enlightenment made her the perfect *Führerin* for the resurrection of the “crucified *Volk*”—like a phoenix rising from the ashes of the Treaty of Versailles. Moreover, with Emmerick serving as a poster child of the bucolic German *Heimat*, her pilgrimage sites offered the ideal spiritual antidote to the “godless” modern city. In short, then, interwar Germans engaged in the process of shaping her “official” cult reimagined Emmerick, her time, and her place from the vantage point of their own. “Domesticating” the otherworldly mysticism that had pervaded Brentano’s classic portrait, they depicted her instead as a woman of simple piety and strength in suffering—in the best tradition of the German *Heimat*.

At the same time, Catholics like Fräulein Heidfeld continued a centuries-old, locally based tradition of veneration. Although they consumed new hagiographical works, donated to Emmerick’s beatification campaign fund, and regularly attended organized lectures and commemorations, believers did not strictly conform to the new “official” line. They continued to revere Emmerick as a stigmatic and visionary, despite the guarded attitude of some modern theologians toward anything that smacked of mysticism and superstition. They also used relics to invoke her supernatural assistance, for everything from drunken relatives and diseased cattle to school exams and apartment hunting. In their letters to the Emmerick Haus, they gave little indication of having adopted the revanchist, politicized interpretation of Emmerick’s history featured in contemporary speeches and articles.

As biography becomes hagiography, remains become relics, and images become icons, Catholics reimagine historical persons as saints. In doing so, they link the saint to an established ritual tradition that has evolved considerably over two millennia. For a saintly cult to survive, it must mediate between the lived religion of the faithful, whose veneration establishes the saint’s reputation of sanctity, and the interests of the institutional Church, which seeks to channel

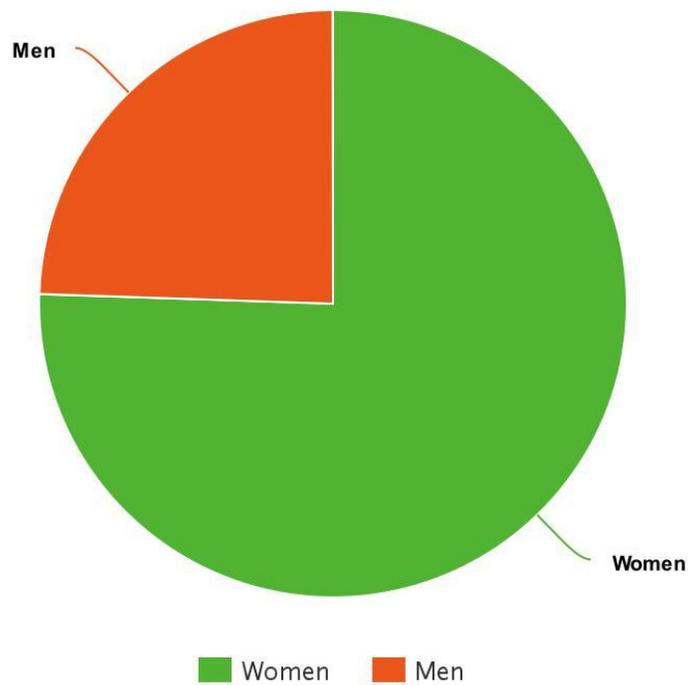
popular enthusiasm along orthodox paths that reaffirm clerical authority. Initially rooted in the excitement and acclaim of a local community at a particular time and place, saintly cults that achieve canonization must become relevant for the “universal Church.” The belief of a saint’s contemporaries must be transmitted in such a way that new generations, with different needs and worldviews, will also believe in pious deeds and miracles they have not personally witnessed. Who is able to participate in this process of creating symbols and building community? What does Catholic saint-making reveal about the place where living practices and institutional protocols meet?

Anna Katharina’s cult of veneration, from the moment of her death in 1824 through to the present, allows us to consider these important questions. In particular, Germans’ veneration of Emmerick in the 1920s and 30s, did not neatly conform to the needs and interests of those clergy working toward her beatification. Nor did everyday Catholics’ conception of Emmerick as intercessor, countrywoman, and friend perfectly reflect the national saint and savior of the *Volk* depicted in contemporary sermons and writings—to say nothing of Emmerick the historic individual. If one considered only the Emmerick devotional literature, public speeches, pamphlets, and festivals of this crucial period in German history, one would find a picture of a highly organized cult, shaped by clergymen and a handful of mostly male laypersons who readily drew connections between Emmerick’s beatification campaign and the desire for German national renewal. They were only the latest in a line of men, stretching back a century to Clemens Brentano and the contemporary clergy in Dülmen and Münster, who tried to control and appropriate Anna Katharina Emmerick’s public image.

If, on the other hand, one conducted an analysis based solely on the letters sent by ordinary German Catholics to the Emmerick Haus, and on the prosaic practices that they reveal,

one would find a lived religious culture in which women outnumbered men, and which resonated in intimately personal or timeless, universal registers far more than in national and political ones. At its heart, furthermore, was a woman whose mystical religious experiences had ensured her lasting memory and devotion. It is only when all these strands of Emmerick's cult—the public and the private, the regional and the national, the institutionally curated and the intimately personal—are woven together that the complexity of German Catholicism during this period becomes clear.

Gender of Letter Writers to Emmerick Haus, 1921-1939



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**Graph 1.** Gender of letter-writers to Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Haus, 1921-1939. Many letters from this period probably do not survive in the archives. In addition, of those that do survive, some do not provide enough information to determine the author's gender (due to signing with initials, for instance). Of the remaining 139 letters, 105 (or 75.5%) were written by women. Data from Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33, 37, BAM.

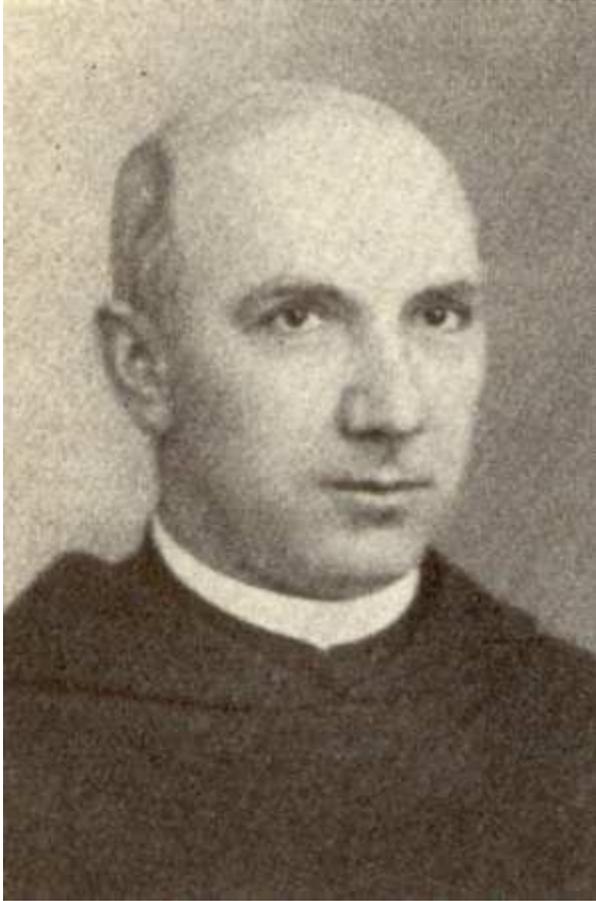


**Figures 14 and 15.** Postcard of Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Haus, Dülmen, 1928. Ansichtskartenpool, [www.akpool.co.uk](http://www.akpool.co.uk). Ansichtskartenpool, [www.akpool.co.uk](http://www.akpool.co.uk). (accessed June 6, 2016). Below: Emmerick's reconstructed apartment, Emmerick-Haus, ca. 1920s. Heimatverein Dülmen i. W., [www.heimatverein-duelmen.de](http://www.heimatverein-duelmen.de). (accessed June 6, 2016).

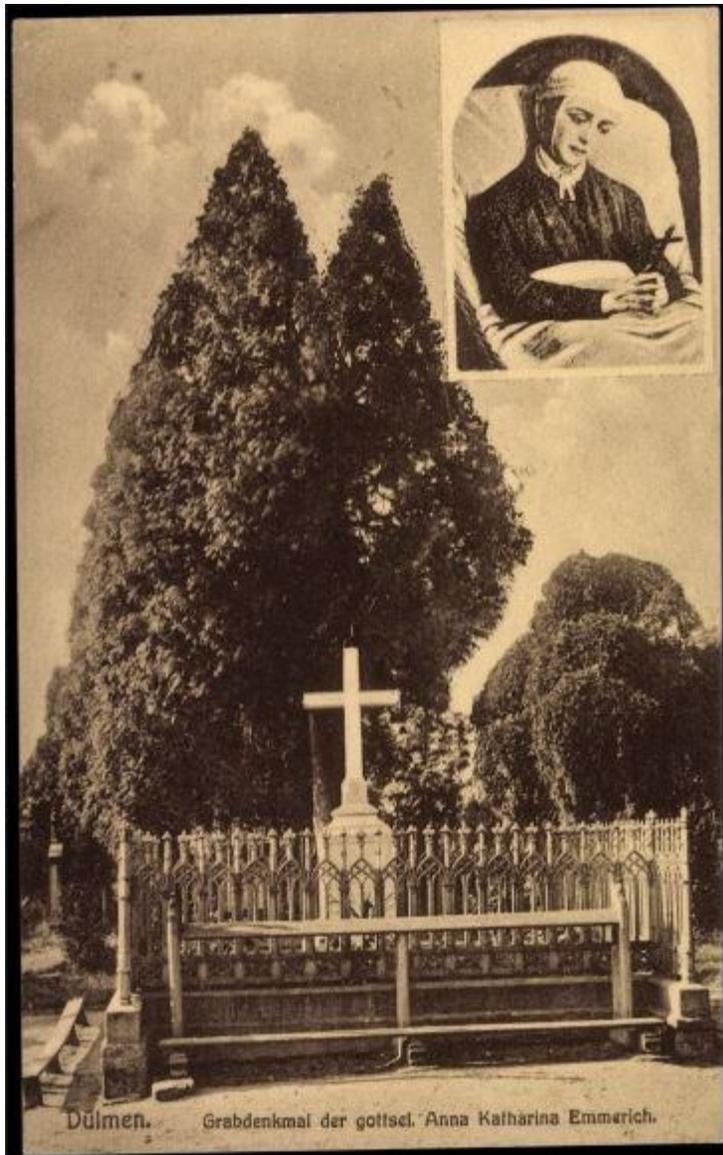




**Figure 16.** Augustinian priest Thomas á Villanova Wegener, original postulator of Emmerick's beatification cause and Founder of the Emmerick-Haus, Dülmen. Circa 1870s. Stadtarchiv Dülmen, [https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/seligspredung.htm](https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/seligspredung.htm) (accessed March 18, 2018).



**Figure 17.** Augustinian priest Winfried Hümpfner, one of the most important and prolific researchers of Emmerick's life, ca. 1920s. Stadtarchiv Dülmen, [https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/seligspredung.htm](https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/seligspredung.htm) (accessed March 18, 2018).

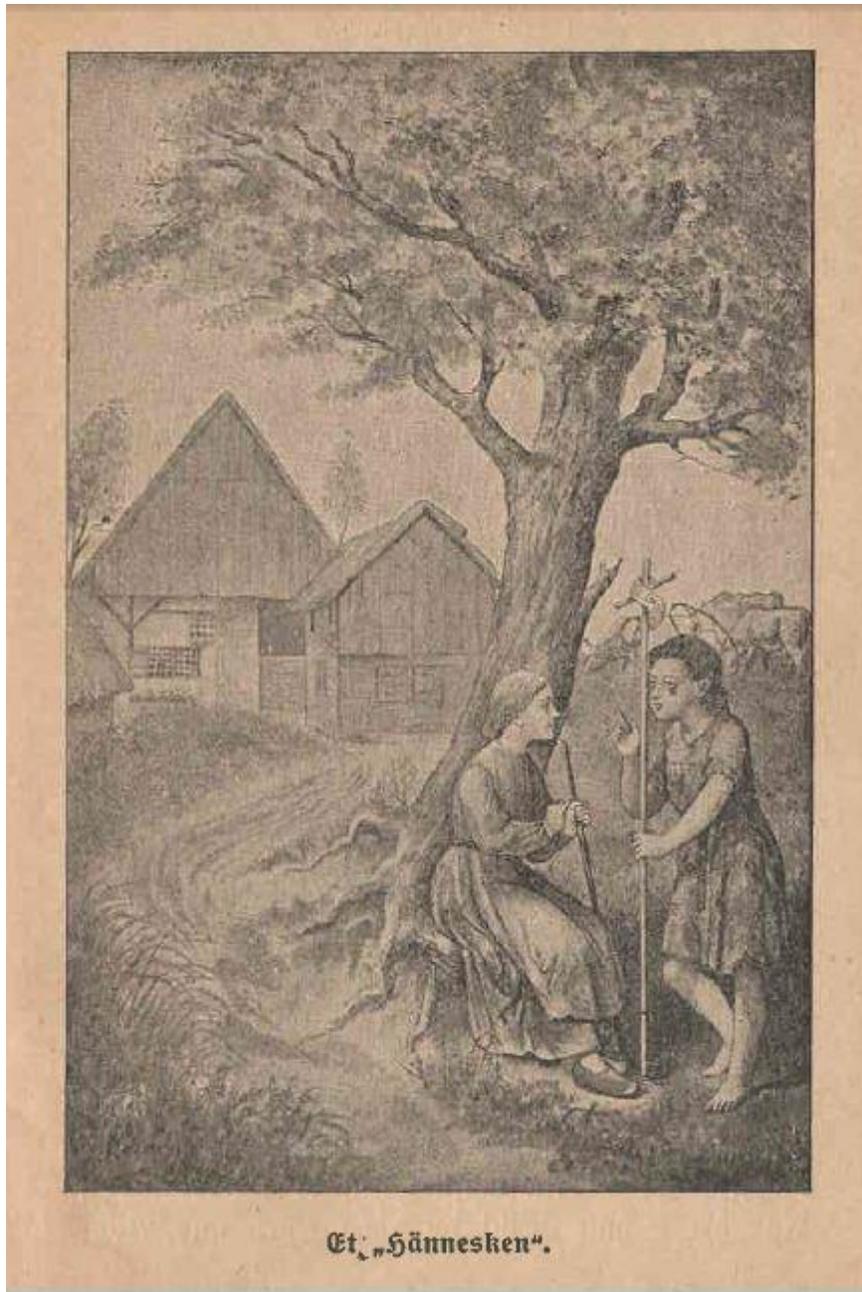


**Figure 18.** Postcard of Anna Katharina Emmerick's grave, surrounded by kneelers, with devotional image inset, ca. 1920s. Digital Image. Ansichtskartenpool, [www.akpool.co.uk](http://www.akpool.co.uk) (accessed June 02, 2018).



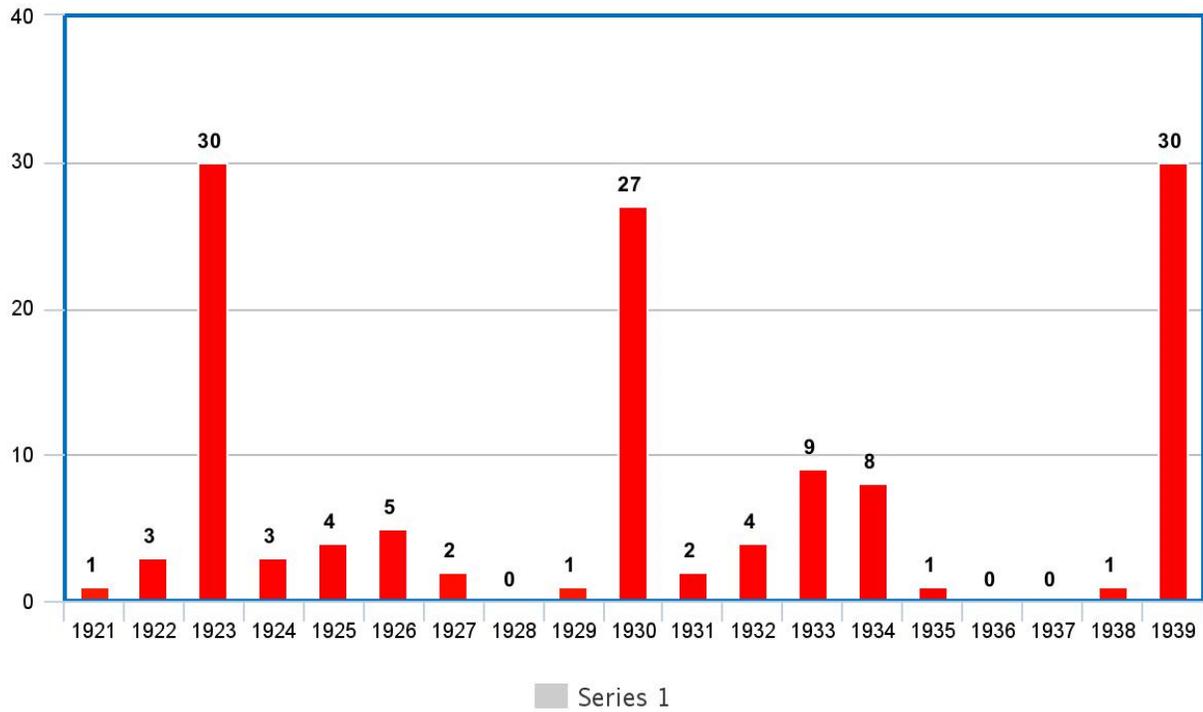
**Figures 19 and 20.** Schäfer, Joseph. Emmerick family home, Anna Katharina's birthplace, with visiting pilgrim-tourists. Photos by Joseph Schäfer, circa 1920. LWL Medienzentrum für Westfalen, <http://www.lwl.org/marsLWL/de/instance/picture/Slg-Schaefer--Westfalen-und-Vest-Recklinghausen-um-1900-1935-Fotografien-von-Joseph-Schaefer.xhtml> (accessed June 02, 2018).





**Figure 21.** Illustration of the child Emmerick with a young John the Baptist as her supernatural playmate, in front of her childhood home, from a children's book by M. Kreuser, *Annthringen: Für die Jugend aus der Jugend der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerick* (Dülmen: Laumann, 1923). The same image featured on the book's front cover.

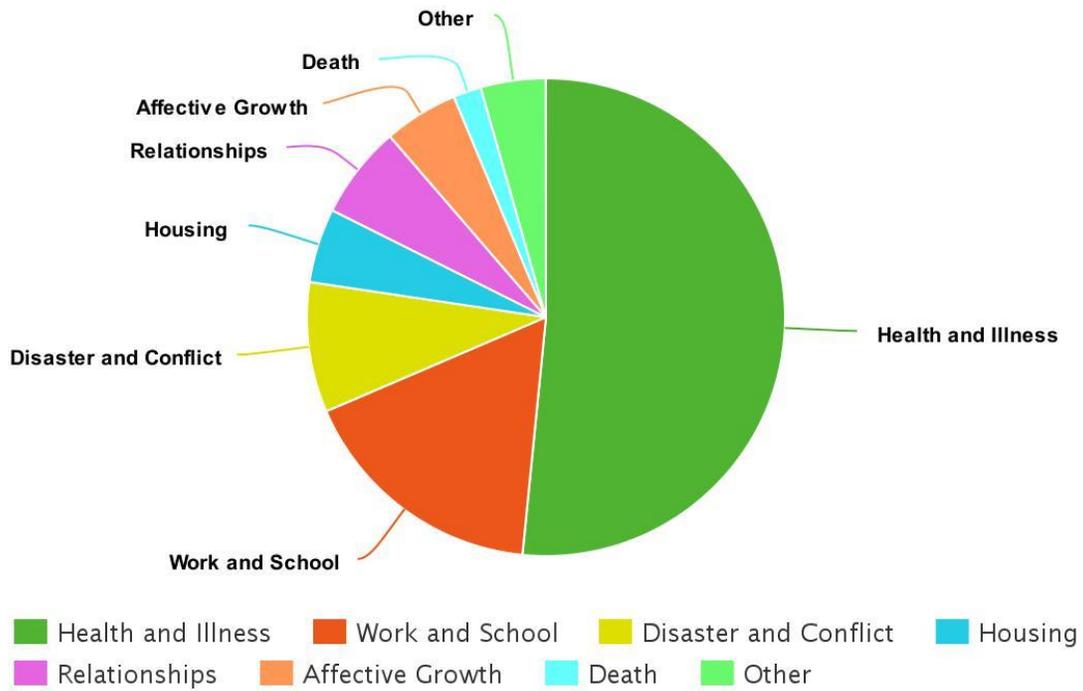
Letters Sent to Emmerick-Haus by Year, 1921-1939



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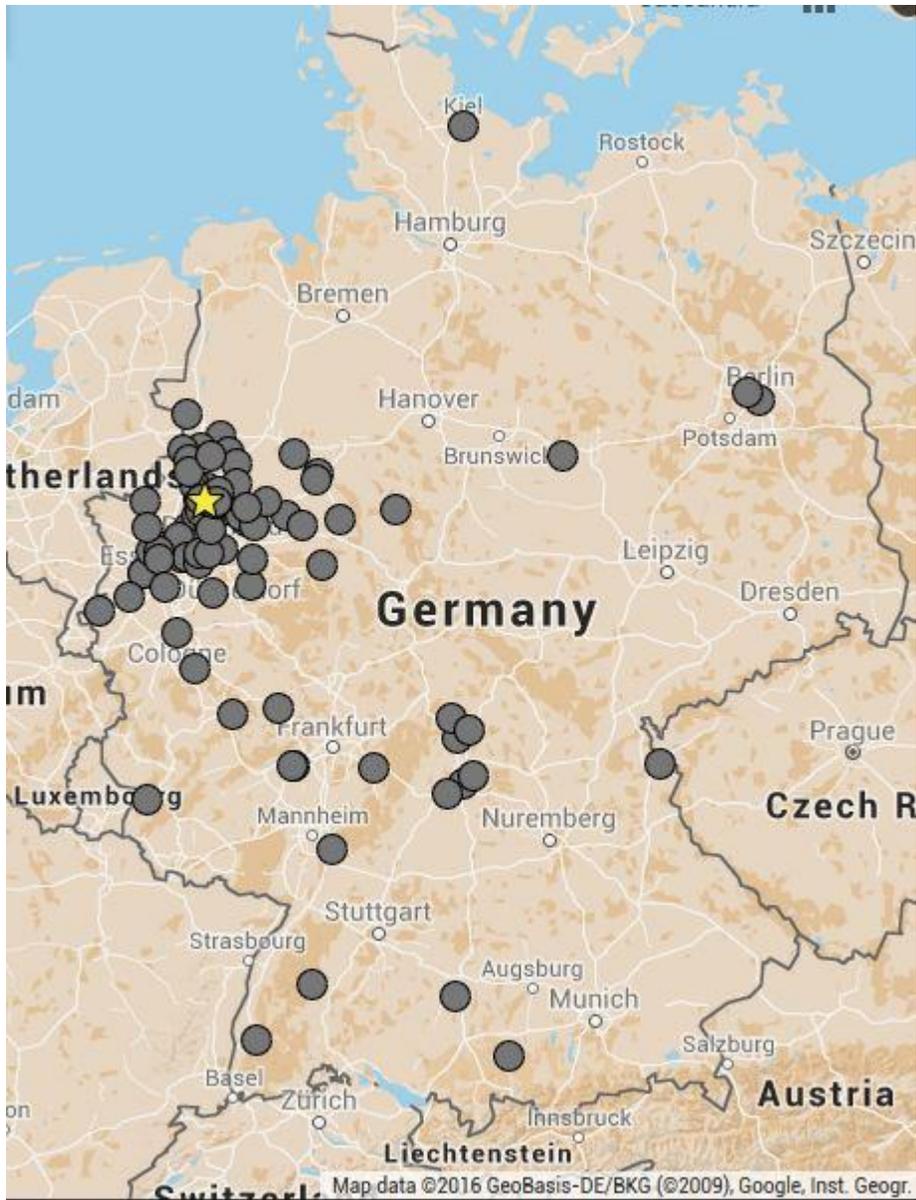
**Graph 2.** Letters sent to the Emmerick-Haus by year, 1921-1939. Of the letters that survive in the archives, many did not have a full date including the year and so could not be included in this data. Data from Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33, 37, BAM.

Subject of Prayers Sent to Emmerick-Haus, 1921-1939



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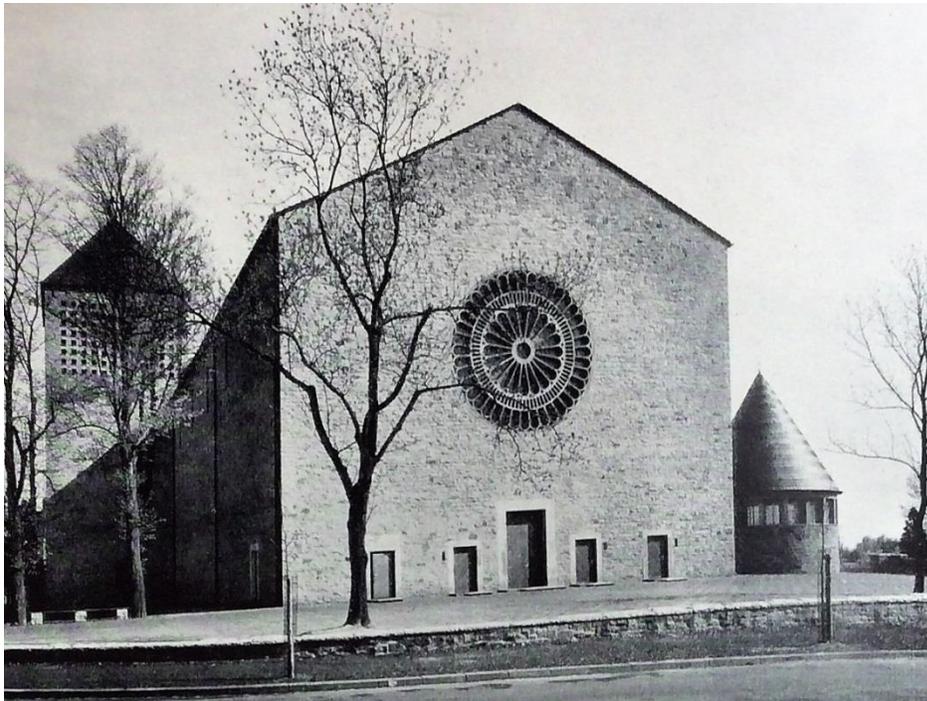
**Graph 3.** Subject of prayers sent to Emmerick-Haus, 1921-1939. Data from Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33, 37, BAM.

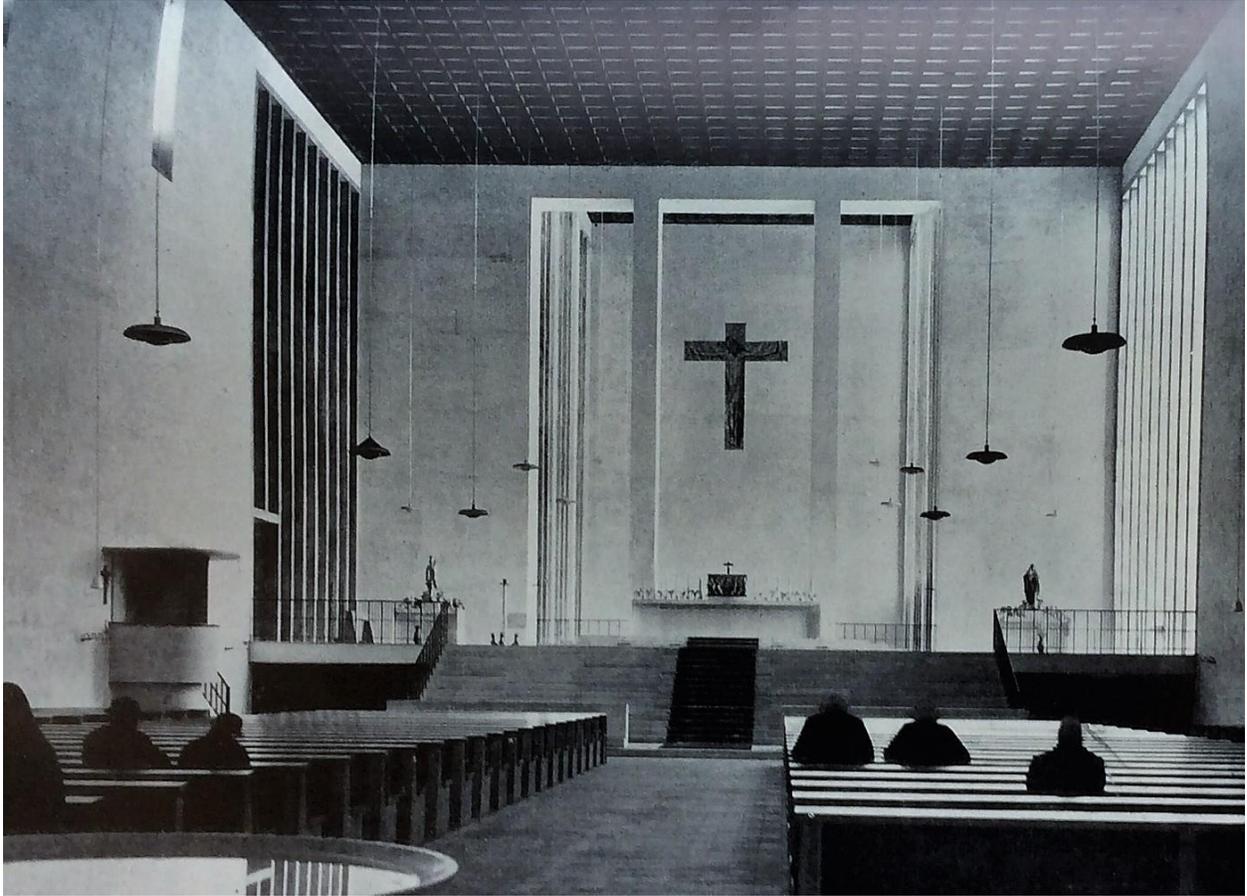


**Map 5.** Place of origin of letters sent to the Emmerick-Haus, 1919-1939 (map showing present-day political borders). Includes only letters that survive in the Bistumsarchiv Münster, which gives every indication of being an incomplete sample. Location of Emmerick-Haus, Dülmen is indicated by a yellow star. Not pictured: letters from The Hague, Netherlands; Dublin, Ireland; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Chicago, IL, USA; Union City, NJ, USA. Map created by the author using Google Maps. Data from Anna-Katharina-Emmerick-Archiv, D014 33, 37, BAM.

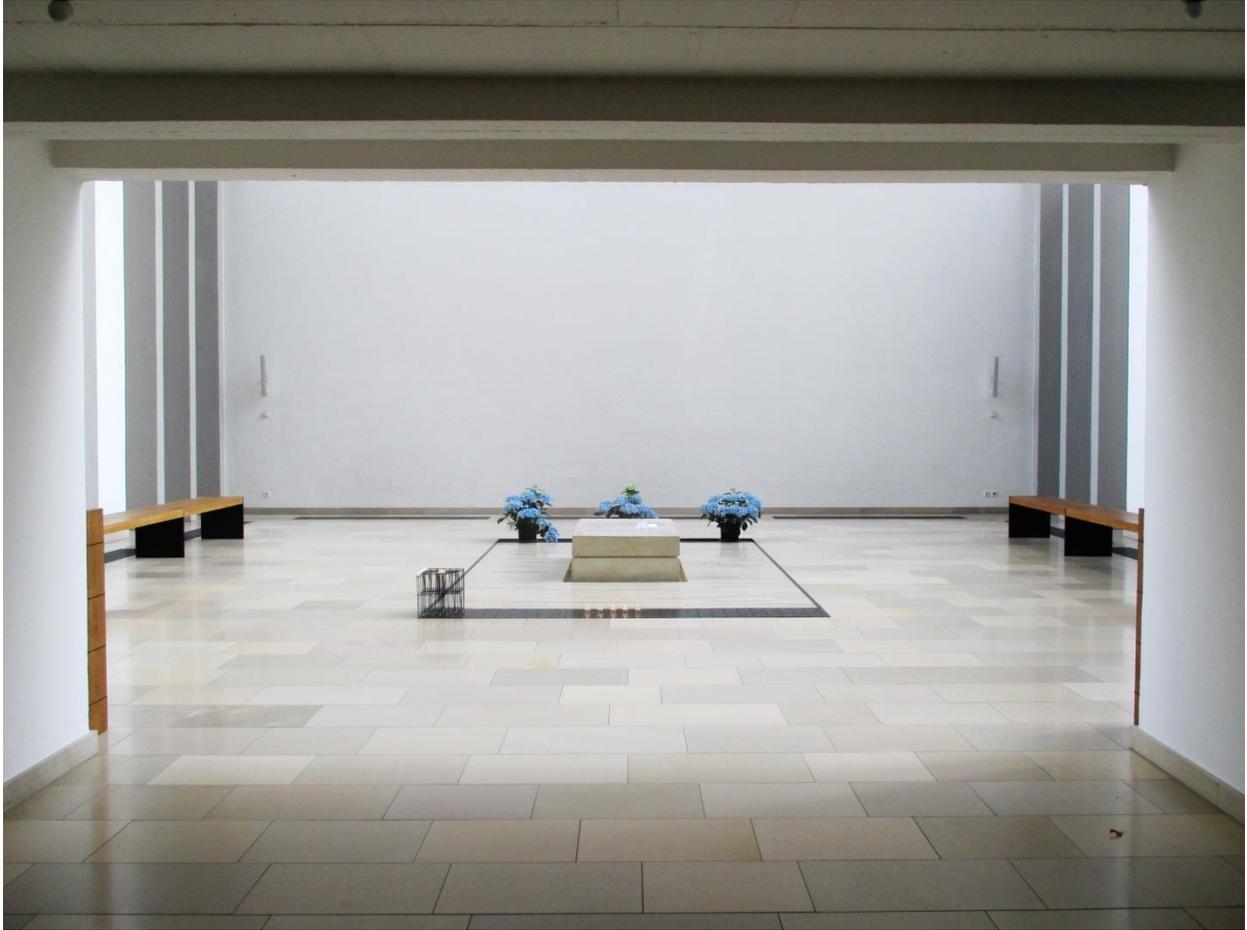


**Figures 22 and 23.** Heilig Kreuz Kirche, Dülmen, by Dominikus Böhm, completed 1936-38. From Josef Habel, ed., *Dominikus Böhm: Ein Deutscher Baumeister* (Regensburg: Josef Habel, 1943).





**Figure 24.** Interior of Heilig Kreuz Kirche, Dülmen. The intended space for Emmerick's grave is behind the altar and down a level, with two-story windows flooding the room with light. One reached it by staircases going down on either side of the marble steps that go up to the altar. From Josef Habel, ed., *Dominikus Böhm: Ein Deutscher Baumeister* (Regensburg: Josef Habel, 1943).



**Figure 25.** Anna Katharina Emmerick's grave, Heilig Kreuz Kirche, Dülmen. Although this space was part of the original 1936 design for the church and intended for Emmerick from the beginning, her remains were not translated here until 1975. Photo by the author, 2014.



**Figure 26.** Anna Katharina Emmerick's grave, Heilig Kreuz Kirche, Dülmen. The folded papers are prayers left by visitors to her grave, which accumulated over the course of a couple hours on a weekday afternoon, while the author was visiting. Photo by the author, 2014.



**Figure 27.** Aerial photo of Dülmen showing damage from Allied bombing, taken by unknown British reconnaissance pilot, March 1945. The city was reported 92% destroyed. Incredibly – one is tempted to say, miraculously – the Emmerick Haus, Emmerick’s grave and the adjacent Heilig Kreuz Kirche survived. Photo from Helmut Müller, *Fünf vor null: Die Besetzung des Münsterlandes 1945* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

Anna Katharina Emmerick's cult of veneration did not go up in flames in the general conflagration of the Münsterland in 1945. Formally, her beatification cause was suspended. Organizationally, the Emmerick-Bund would take years to revive its activities, and they would never quite reach the heights they had achieved during the interwar period. Her place in the hearts of countless German Catholics, however, was secure. Letters asking for prayers, and describing those answered through her intercession, continued to arrive at the Emmerick-Haus unabated. Brentano's books of her visions, as well as the many other hagiographies that had been written over the years, remained in print and continued to be translated.

The institutional saint-making process would finally restart in the 1970s. As the two-hundredth anniversary of Emmerick's birth approached, Münster's bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg began a concerted campaign to reopen her beatification cause. He gained the support of the broader conference of German bishops in this effort, and together they sent a statement to Rome asking the Congregation for the Causes of Beatification and Canonization (formerly the Congregation of the Sacred Rite) to reconsider. This joint statement had the desired impact, and in May 1973 both the Congregation and Pope Paul VI declared her beatification process could once again proceed. Emmerick admirers received this news with joy, and marked her "jubilee year" of 1974 with celebrations and speeches. Shortly thereafter, Emmerick's remains were finally translated to the crypt of Dominikus Böhm's Heilig Kreuz Kirche in Dülmen with great pomp and ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On Bishop Tenhumberg's efforts on behalf of Emmerick's beatification, see Engling, *Unbequem and ungewöhnlich*, 26-28; Heinrich Tenhumberg, *Bischofsworte zum Emmerick-Jahr 1974* (Münster: Verlag Regensburg, 1976).

The momentum of Emmerick veneration only continued to build in succeeding decades. A revived Emmerick-Bund began publishing its *Emmerick-Blätter* again for the first time since 1937. Under the direction of a diocesan commission, scholars from across Europe and the United States gathered to give papers on aspects of Emmerick's life and veneration in a series of symposia. New hagiographies appeared, in Germany and elsewhere. Her story became the subject of novels and films, as well. Most importantly of all, the gears continued to turn in her beatification process in Rome.

In 2004, thirty years after Emmerick's jubilee year, the hopes of generations of German Catholics – from Franz Wilhelm Wesener and Clemens Brentano, Thomas Wegener and Winfried Hümpfner to Bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg and the pastor of Heilig Kreuz Kirche, Clemens Engling – came to fruition. In a solemn ceremony in Rome, Pope John Paul II beatified Anna Katharina Emmerick on October 3. His sermon that day praised Emmerick's heroic virtue, but made no direct mention of her famous visions and only fleetingly acknowledged her stigmata.<sup>2</sup> Another event that year, however, would draw on a different aspect of Emmerick's legacy. In February of 2004, Mel Gibson's controversial, blockbuster film *The Passion of the Christ* debuted in theaters. Its gory violence, high drama, and – it must be said – its anti-Semitism can all be traced back to the text Gibson used as inspiration: not the Gospels, but Brentano and Emmerick's *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*.<sup>3</sup> These two events in 2004 thus demonstrate the continuation of the fissures in Emmerick's cult of veneration that

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<sup>2</sup> John Paul II's sermon can be accessed on the Holy See's website: John Paul II, "Beatification of Five Servants of God," October 3, 2004, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2004/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_20041003\\_beatifications.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2004/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20041003_beatifications.html) (accessed July 3, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> On anti-Semitism and Gibson's film, see Omer Bartov, *The Jew in Cinema: From The Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), xi-xiv. Bartov does not mention Gibson's use of Emmerick/Brentano as source material. As his book went to print just after the film was released, it is possible he had not yet become aware that *Das bittere Leiden* was Gibson's main source of inspiration.

were so evident in the interwar period: Emmerick the stigmatic visionary versus Emmerick the virtuous and heroic sufferer.

That this is the case should not be surprising. From the moment she became a public spectacle in March 1813, Anna Katharina Emmerick took on ever more meanings and guises in the imaginations of German Catholics. For contemporary physicians like Christian Brentano and Franz Wilhelm Wesener, she was a locus of spiritual and magnetic power, a figure who held the potential to reveal the scientific nature of the ineffable power of God. For some clergy, like Alois Joseph Limberg, Bernhard Overberg, and Bernhard Rensing, she was a sign sent to reassure the doubting and rebuke the foolish and unbelieving, while for others like Clemens August von Droste-Vischering she was a source of embarrassment. Clemens Brentano immortalized her forever as a Romantic seeress, but also as a symbol of the persecuted Catholic Church and its treasures of mystical consolation. In the decades following her death, readers of Brentano's books from around the world came to know and venerate Dülmen's famous daughter. Some were lucky enough to make a pilgrimage to the Münsterland, where generations of locals passed down their memories and relics of her. In the early twentieth century, some would see her as the *Führerin* of a German *Volk* oppressed by war and revolution and eager for a glorious resurrection, a daughter of her *Heimat* and saint of the modern German nation. Clerical scholars and hagiographers, meanwhile, sought to secure her legacy by refounding it on sources outside of Brentano's writings. In doing so, they emphasized Emmerick's poverty, simplicity, and heroic acceptance of suffering over her alleged supernatural gifts. Across the generations, in changing times and circumstances, German Catholic men and women of all backgrounds have reimagined Emmerick the historical person as a saint that met their needs. Such is the nature of saintly cults of veneration.

An analysis of the life and afterlife of Anna Katharina Emmerick, from 1774 to the present day, offers a number of important insights into the story of Catholicism in modern Germany. First, it clearly demonstrates the importance of the neglected first decades of the nineteenth century for understanding not only German Catholicism, but modern German history more generally. The enormous rupture in the sacral landscape of German-speaking Europe during the Napoleonic wars had far reaching consequences. Not only did Germans lose many of their most vital centers of Catholic learning and scholarship at a stroke, and not only did the institutional Church suddenly lose its temporal powers; German Catholics had to respond to these changes, challenges, and crises by reimagining their faith and finding new ways to sustain their community of believers. Some continued to prefer the rational, austere faith practices that had developed during the Enlightenment, while others enthusiastically and even defiantly embraced mystical traditions. Some sought a sort of middle path, in which “sciences” like magnetism offered alleged empirical support to the workings of the supernatural. Debates between these groups played out in the pages of a burgeoning German-language press. The issues raised in these decades of momentous change would continue to divide Catholics in later generations. Memories of the Napoleonic years, furthermore, would retain a special place in German Catholic memory.

Furthermore, the twists and turns of Emmerick’s life and afterlife reveal the complicated position of women within modern German Catholicism. Emmerick’s own story is one of agency without autonomy, charismatic power and constant surveillance and control. Clergy, physicians, and government officials – all men – would compete for control of her physical body as well as her public image. In the nearly two centuries since her death, men have also made up the overwhelming majority of her hagiographers, researchers, and promoters. Women, on the other

hand, have played a vital and probably leading role in sustaining her veneration through countless, individual acts of prayer and pilgrimage.

Finally, Emmerick's life and evolving cult provide insight into the many different institutions and actors involved in the creation of lived Catholicism, from above and below. The clergy and the institutional Church exerted tremendous power over Emmerick during her lifetime, and established the parameters and procedures through which her veneration could proceed after her death. Yet Emmerick herself, a single peasant woman, was able to confidently engage in conversation with clergy and laymen alike about religious subjects, sharing her own ideas and inspiring the faith of others. Through the writings left behind by Brentano, Wesener and others, she has continued to inspire Catholics down to the present. In quotidian acts of devotion, writers to the Emmerick-Haus over the decades described how they understood, admired, and related to Emmerick – often in ways that differed from her “official” portraits in approved hagiographical and scholarly works. These everyday Catholics sustained her reputation of sanctity and shaped her image just as powerfully as those engaged in her formal beatification process.

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## APPENDIX A

### STIGMATICS FROM GERMAN-SPEAKING EUROPE: A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Author's Note:* This list is a work in progress. It includes stigmatics discovered to be false, as well as well-attested cases. Because it includes all historical examples from the thirteenth century through to the present, it lists cases from "German-speaking Europe," rather than arbitrarily confining itself to the political borders of Germany in 1871, 1918, or 1990. Stigmata is interpreted broadly as any form of allegedly spontaneously appearing wound or wounds representing some aspect of Jesus' wounds during his scourging and Crucifixion. Cases in which stigmata appeared only after the death of the stigmatic have been omitted. Only cases mentioned in at least two print sources are included. Bibliography is highly selective for stigmatics mentioned in a number of works, such as Therese Neumann.

#### *Thirteenth Century*

1. **Lukardis von Oberweimar** (1274-1309), Oberweimar, Thuringia. Cistercian. Probably from a wealthy, noble family. Entered the convent at 12. Suffered chronic pain, fevers, illness, eventually bedridden. Visions, ecstasies, premonitions. Received five stigmata wounds as well as scourge marks and crown of thorns.

Nagy, Piroska. "Sharing Charismatic Authority by Body and Emotions: The Marvellous Life of Lukardis von Oberweimar (c.1262-1309)," in *Shaping Spiritual Authority in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, edited by Veerle Fraeters and Imke de Gier (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

Ruh, Kurt. *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*. Volume II: Frauenmystik und Franziskanische Mystik der Frühzeit. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993.

*Vita venerabilis Lukardis monialis ordinis Cisterciensis in Superiore Wimaria*, edited by J. de Bakker, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 18, 1899, pp. 305-367.

Weiss, Bardo. *Jesus Christus bei den frühen deutschen Mystikerinnen*. Volume I. Schöningh, 2009.

Wieland, M. „Die selige Lukardis, Cistercienserin zu Oberweimar.“ *Cistercienser-Chronik*, 10. Jhrg., No. 113, 1 July 1898, pp. 193-199.

2. **Christina von Stommeln** (Christina Bruso), (1242-1312), Stommeln, North Rhine-Westphalia. Beguine. Daughter of farmers. Visions from childhood. Joined community of

beguines in Cologne age 12. Received stigmata at 15. Rejected by her religious community as insane, found refuge with parish priest in Stommeln. Became friends with Swedish mystic Peter of Dacia, with whom she exchanged several letters. Mystical experiences ceased following Peter's death in 1288. Beatified by Pope Pius X in 1908, feast day on 6 November.

Coakley, John. "A Marriage and its Observer: Christine of Stommeln, the Heavenly Bridegroom, and Friar Peter of Dacia," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and their Interpreters*, edited by Catherine M. Mooney, pp. 99-117.

Kleinberg, Aviad M. *Prophets in their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

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#### *Fourteenth Century*

3. **Margaretha Ebner** (1291-1351), Mödingen, Bavaria. Dominican. Aristocratic background. Entered convent around 1305. Suffered from laughing and crying fits, frequent illness. Received visions from 1311 which she recorded in letters and journals. Forced from convent at one point due to Papal Schism. Connected with Friends of God movement. Beatified by Pope John Paul II, feast day 20 June.

Hale, Drage Rosemary. "Rocking the Cradle: Margaretha Ebner (Be)Holds the Divine," in *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality*, edited by Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, pp. 210-241.

*Margaretha Ebner, Major Works*, translated by Leonard P. Hindsley. New York: Paulist Press, 1993.

Strauch, Philipp. *Margareta Ebner und Heinrich von Nördlingen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*. Freiburg im Breisgau: J.C.B. Mohr, 1882.

4. **Agnes von Bayern** (aka Agnes von Wittelsbach) (1335-1352), Munich, Bavaria. Poor Clare. Daughter of Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig IV (Ludwig der Bayer). Entered convent in 1338. Due to her beauty, some members of the court wished her to return to the world and tried to forcibly remove her; received stigmata shortly thereafter. Remains translated to Frauenkirche, Munich, in 1809.

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Rosenberger, Ludwig. *Bavaria Sancta: Bayerische Heiligenlegende*. Munich: Pfeiffer, 1948.

### *Fifteenth Century*

5. **Elizabeth Achler** (aka Elizabeth von Reute) (1386-1420), Waldsee, Baden-Württemberg. Franciscan tertiary. Daughter of weavers. Joined beguine community in 1403, which became a convent for Franciscan tertiaries in 1406. Known for her hospitality to the poor. Visions, ecstatic experiences, lived for three years on Holy Communion alone. Vita by her confessor, Augustinian Konrad Kügelin. Beatified by Pope Clement XIII, feast day on 25 November.

Banzhaf, Ruth and Michael Barczyk. *Selig gute Beth von Reute*. Lindenberg: Kunstverlag Fink, 2003.

Bihlmeyer, Karl. „Die schwäbische Mystikerin Elsbeth Achler von Reute und die Überlieferung ihrer Vita,“ in *Festgabe Philipp Strauch*, edited by Georg Basecke and Ferdinand Joseph Schneider (Halle: Neimeyer, 1932), pp. 88-109.

Dinzelbacher, Peter. *Deutsche und niederländische Mystik des Mittelalters: Ein Studienbuch*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

6. **Magdalena Beutler** (1407-1458), Freiburg, Baden-Württemberg. Poor Clare. From wealthy merchant family. Mother was also a mystic and ascetic. Visions and catalepsy from early age. Fasting and physical mortifications. Wrote homilies, litanies, treatise on Lord's Prayer.

„Das Leben der Margaretha von Kentzingen: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Gottesfreundes im Oberland.“ *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Literature*, 19, 1876, pp. 478-491.

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Winston-Allen, Anne. *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing about Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.

7. **Christina (aka Stiva, Stieva) von Hamm** (before 1464-1480s), Hamm, North Rhine-Westphalia. Poor Clare. What little is known of her comes from 1482 source by Werner Rolevinck, who reports she had visible stigmata from Ash Wednesday to Corpus Christi (15 weeks) in 1464.

*Die Wunder der Gnade: nach unmittelbaren und mittelbaren Zeugen. Von einem Apostel der hl. Liebe*. Amberg: J. Habel, 1875.

Görres, Joseph von. *Die christliche Mystik*. Volume II. Regensburg: Joseph Manz, 1837.

Veilch, A.M. *Beispiele der Huld Gottes gegen seine Lieblinge: neu erzählt in Abend-Unterhaltungen; für die Jugend und Jugendfreunde*. Regensburg: Montag und Weiß, 1840.

8. **Margaret Bruch** ( 1488-?), Endringen by Konstanz (or Leidringen?), Baden-Württemberg. Very little known. Said to have received stigmata at 15 in 1503.

Austin, H. *The Stigmata: A History of Various Cases. Translated from "The Mystik" of Görres*. London: Richardson and Son, 1883.

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"Margarethe Bruch, die Stigmatisierte von Leidringen." Stadt Rosenfeld website, <<https://www.rosenfeld.de/portrait-buergerservice/unsere-stadt/persoenlichkeiten-der-stadt/detailansicht/archive/2011/july/13/article/margarethe-bruch-die-stigmatisierte-von-leidringen.html>> (Accessed 23 September 2017).

*Sixteenth Century: none*

*Seventeenth Century*

9. **Anna Faulhaberin** (?-1617), Memmingen, Bavaria. Franciscan tertiary.

*Calender der Heilig und Seelig gesprochenen Chorisierten Perennisierten und anderer mit ausserordentlichen Gnaden...aus dem dritten Orden des H. Seraphischen Vatters Francisci*. Amberg: Johann Georg Koch, 1735.

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Hueber, R. P. F. Fortunatus. *Menologium, seu brevis illuminatio sanctorum, martyrum, virginum ex triplici-ordine Fratrum Minorum Clarissarum Poenitentium*. Munich, 1698.

Turi, Anna Maria. *Stigmate e Stigmatizzati: i „Segni“ del Cielo: Storia e Attualità*. Rome: Edizione Mediterranee, 1990.

10. **Helene Ostermayr** (1624-1670), Munich, Bavaria. Poor Clare. Entered Kloster Bittrich (aka Püttrich). Visions, ecstasies.

Greiderer, Vigilius. *Germania Franciscana, seu Chronicon geographo-historicum Ordinis S. P. Francisci*. Vol. II. 1781.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La Stigmatisation – L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Paris: L. Bellet, 1894. (reprinted by Jerome Millon, Grenoble, 1996).

11. **Anna Joseph Binterner** (1672-1707), Uri, Switerland. Capuchin. Probably from wealthy background. Entered Kloster Altdorf, which ran a girls' school.

Arnold, Seraphin. *Kapuzinerinnenkloster Altdorf*. Altdorf, 1977.

Greiderer, Vigilius. *Germania Franciscana, seu Chronicon geographo-historicum Ordinis S. P. Francisci*. Vol. II. 1781.

### *Eighteenth Century*

12. **Maria Anna Josepha Lindmayr** (1657-1726), Munich, Bavaria. Carmelite. Father was valet of Duke Maximilian Philipp Hieronymus von Bayern-Leuchtenberg. Turned away from several convents due to chronic illness from 1687; finally accepted newly founded Carmelite convent in Munich in 1711. Voted prioress 1716. Self-flagellation and other physical mortifications. Stigmata attested to by two witnesses. Was told in a vision that Munich would be spared in War of Spanish Succession if a new church was built in

honor of the holy Trinity, to which townspeople agreed. Dreifaltigkeitskirche completed 1718.

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Forstner, Thomas. *Die Stadt lag in dem Grund, wan dise Kirch nit stund..., Maria Anna Lindmayr, die Dreifaltigkeitskirche und das Karmelittinnenkloster in München*. Munich: Verlag Sankt Michaelsbund, 2004.

Hartl, Karl. *Maria Anna Lindmayr 1657-1726: Ihr mutiges Ringen um eine reale Diagnose ihrer Zeit*. MDV Maristen Druck & Verlag, 2006.

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Plöbl, Elisabeth. *Maria Crescentia Höß (1682-1744) und Maria Anna Josepha a Jesu Lindmayr (1657-1726): Barockmystikerinnen*. 1997.

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Woods, Jean M., and Maria Fürstenwald, ed. *Schriftstellerinnen, Künstlerinnen, und gelehrte Frauen des deutschen Barock: ein Lexicon*. Metzler, 1984.

13. **Maria Johanna Neumayr** (1674-1729), Söll, Austria. Poor Clare. Took vows 1691.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La Stigmatisation – L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Paris: L. Bellet, 1894. (reprinted by Jerome Millon, Grenoble, 1996).

Stadler, Joh. Evang., editor. *Vollständiges Heiligen-Lexikon, oder Lebensgeschichten aller Heiligen, Seligen, etc. etc.....* Vol. 4, M-P. Augsburg: B. Schid'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1875.

14. **Cäcilia Mayr (aka Cecilia Mayer)** (1717-1749), Bad Wörishofen, Bavaria. Dominican.

Ashley, Benedict M. *The Dominicans*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009.

Moller, Herbert. „The Social Causation of Affective Mysticism.“ *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Summer 1971), 305-338.

Schiedermaier, Werner. *Klosterland Bayerisch Schwaben: zur Erinnerung an die Säkularisation der Jahre 1802/1803*. Fink, 2003.

15. **Maria Euphemia Dorer** (1667-1752), Freiburg im Breisgau, Baden-Württemberg.

Ursuline. Daughter of a surgeon. Entered convent in Lucerne, 1686. Visionary. Founded devotion to Sacred Heart of Jesus there. Sent to help found daughter house in Freiburg im Breisgau, where she worked as a teacher, 1699. Elected Prioress. Convent forced to billet French troops, 1744. Died of lung cancer.

Dorer, Euphemia. *Das Leben und die Schriften der gottsel. Euphemia von Baden: zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Klöster und der Andacht zum göttlichen Herzen Jesu. 82 Unterweisungen aus der zweiten Hälfte ihres ersten Aufenthaltes in Luzern, 1695-1699. 50 Unterweisungen aus der Zeit ihres ersten Aufenthaltes in Freiburg von 1699-1706. 1. Band*. Räber, 1886.

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*Schwester Euphemia Dorer, Ursulinerin: ein Lebensbild; zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Klosters St. Ursula zu Freiburg i. Br.* Caritasverband für das Kath. Deutschland, 1904.

16. **Maria Columba Weigl** (1713-1783), Griesstätt, Bavaria. Dominican. Daughter of a Munich brewer. Educated by “English sisters” (Congregation of Jesus). Orphaned at 14.

Entered convent 1730 against relatives' opposition, received stigmata the same year. Visions, ecstatic experiences. Relived Passion every Friday.

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Reddig, Wolfgang F., et. al., ed. *Tausend Jahre Bistum Bamberg 1007-2007*. Michael Imhof Verlag, 2007. [see pg 254; snippet preview on Google Books]

17. **Maria Columba Schonath** (1730-1787), Bamberg, Bavaria. Dominican. Daughter of a miller. Visions and ecstatic experiences from early age. Found vocation after reading Thomas a Kempis' *Imitatio Christi*. Entered convent 1753. Became chronically ill shortly thereafter. Received stigmata 1763.

Barth, Hilarius M. *Maria Columba Schonath: 11. Dezember 1730 – 3. März 1787*. Pustet, 1973.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La Stigmatisation – L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Paris: L. Bellet, 1894.

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Turi, Anna Maria. *Stigmate e Stigmatizzati: i „Segni“ del Cielo: Storia e Attualità*. Rome: Edizione Mediterranee, 1990.

18. **Helene (aka Helena) Wallraff** (1755-1801), Brüggen, North Rhine-Westphalia.

Laywoman, married 1783. Daughter of poor farmers. Had four children who died young. Illiterate. Dictated her prophetic visions, mostly political, to local priest.

Curique, Jean-Jules-Marie. *Voix prophétiques ou signes, apparitions et prédictions modernes, touchant les grandes événements de la Chrétienté au XIXe siècle et l'approche de la fin des temps*. Victor-Palmé, 1872.

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Perty, Maximilian, ed. *Die mystischen Erscheinungen der Menschlichen Natur, 2. Band*. Winter, 1872.

19. **Magdalena Lorger von Hadamar** (1734-1806), Offheim, Hesse. Poor Clare.

Chronically ill. Relived Passion every Friday.

Angenendt, Arnold, ed. *Der heilige Leib und die Leiber der Heiligen: eine Ausstellung des Dommuseum Frankfurt am Main im „Haus am Dom,“ 23. März bis 27. Mai 2007.* Verlag des Bischöflichen Ordinariats, 2007.

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### *Nineteenth Century*

20. **Josepha Kümi** (1763-1817), Wollerau, Switzerland. Dominican. Visions from early age. Entered convent age 20. Received crown of thorns and side wounds 1800. Elected prioress 1809. Vita written by confessor Laurenz Gmür.

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Summers, Montague. *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism: With Especial Reference to the Stigmata, Divine and Diabolic*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1950.

21. **Anna Katharina Emmerick (aka Emmerich)** (1774-1824), Dülmen, North Rhine-Westphalia. Augustinian. Daughter of a tenant farmer. Visions, ecstatic experiences, fasting, and physical mortifications from early age. Rejected from several convents due to lack of dowry; finally accepted in Augustinian convent Agnetenberg in Dülmen, 1802. Serious injury 1808; thereafter chronically ill. Convent secularized upon Dülmen's annexation by France, 1811. Becomes bedridden shortly thereafter. Receives stigmata December 1812. Poet Clemens Brentano records and publishes her visions. Beatified 2004, feast day on 9 February.

See dissertation references.

22. **Apollonia Filzinger** (1801-1827), Saverne, Alsace. Laywoman (?). Daughter of farmers. Received stigmata 1824, after which she abstained from food. Suspected of fraud, arrested and imprisoned for four days. One of several stigmatics visited and written about by Clemens Brentano and Joseph Görres.

Brieger, Anton. *Clemens Brentano: Weg und Wandlung*. Christiana-Verlag, 2006.

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Raab, Heribert, ed. *Joseph Görres: Schriften der Strassburger Exilzeit 1824-1827*. F. Schöning, 1987.

23. **Bernadine Ledergerber** (1801-1847), Wonnenstein, Switzerland. Capuchin. Entered convent at 19. Elected prioress 1832. Visionary.

de Courcelles, Dominique. *Stigmates*. Ed. De l'Herne, 2001.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La Stigmatisation – L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Paris: L. Bellet, 1894. (reprinted by Jerome Millon, Grenoble, 1996).

24. **Margaretha Stoffel** (?-1849), Aarau, Switzerland. Visionary who made dire predictions about world political events, recorded by local doctor.

Braun, Eduard. *Wunderbare und merkwürdige, zum Theil schon eingetroffene Prophezeihungen, der Somnambule Margaretha Stoffel, zu Ehrenthal in Tyrol, über die Zukunft der Jahre 1848 bis 1856*. Brixen, 1848.

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25. **Krescentia (aka Kreszentia, Crescentia) Nierklutsch** (1816-1855), Bolzano (Bozen), Italy. Layperson. Daughter of impoverished miller who became a day-laborer. Began working as a domestic servant at 16. Forced to return to father's home at 19, suffering from nerve disease. Fell into frequent, long-lasting ecstatic trances and convulsions. Local notable Johann Gratsch, impressed by her piety, takes her into his home in 1835. Received stigmata following Pentecost. Prayed for wounds to heal so as to avoid public acclaim; wounds eventually closed and health improved. Extreme fasting. Relived Passion every Friday.

*Das Gnaden-Bild der wunderthätigen heiligen Jungfrau Maria zu Alten-Oetting...Mit einem Anhang von anderen interessanten Mittheilungen und denkwürdigen Ereignissen*. Vol. 1. Munich, 1843.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La Stigmatisation – L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Paris: L. Bellet, 1894. (reprinted by Jerome Millon, Grenoble, 1996).

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Zöckler, Otto, and Maurice J. Evans, translator. *The Cross of Christ: Studies in the History of Religion and the Inner Life of the Church*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877.

26. **Emilie Schneider** (1820-1859), Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia. Sister of the Holy Cross (congregation f. 1833). Daughter of border official, from confessionally mixed family. Worked as governess. Entered convent of newly founded Sisters of the Holy Cross in Lüttich, against parents' wishes, in 1845. Ministered to the poor. Sent to help found daughter house in Rees, 1851. 1852, sent to oversee Theresien-Hospital in Düsseldorf, where she worked to make it a modern hospital. Contracted Typhus 1857, died two years later. *Geistliche Briefe*, recounting mystical experiences, published 1860.

*Geistliche briefe der ehrwürdigen Schwester Emilie, Oberin des Klosters der Töchter vom heil. Kreuze zu Düsseldorf: nebst einem kurzen Bericht über ihre Leiden und ihren Tod*. Wienand Verlag, 1987.

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Wolf, Irmgard. *Schwester Emilie Schneider – Ihr Leben, Ihr Wirken, Ihre Düsseldorfer Zeit*. Düsseldorf, n.d.

27. **Maria Agnes Klara Steiner** (1813-1862), Taisten im Pustertal, Italy. Poor Clare. Visions from early age. Worked as nurse. Became Franciscan tertiary 1835, worked as schoolteacher in Brixen. Rejected by several convents because of sickly constitution. Finally accepted to community of Bavarian Poor Clares in Assisi in 1839. Took vows 1841. Sent to reform Poor Clare convent in Nocera in 1845. Developed a reformed monastic rule. Knew Pope Pius IX personally. Vita by confessor Franziskus von Reuss.

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Baur, Johannes. *Die Kreuzträgerin: Die Ehrw. Dienerin Gottes Maria Agnes Klara Steiner von der Seitenwunde Jesu, Stifterin d. Gemilderten Klarissen 1813-1862; Geschichte eine Passionsblume d. Heimat; Dem Volke erzählt*. Athesia, 1942.

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von Reuss, Franziskus. *Kurze Lebensgeschichte der Dienerin Gottes Maria Agnes Klara Steiner von der Seitenwunde Jesu*. Rauch, 1886.

28. **Juliana Weiskircher** (1824-1862), Schleinbach (near Vienna), Austria. Laywoman. Daughter of farmers. Accidentally swallowed a water salamander at a public fountain, suffered from chronic pains and illness thereafter. Visions of Mother of God, souls in Purgatory and Hell from 1845. Bed-ridden with tuberculosis 1846. Prophetic visions and stigmata from 1847. Forced to move from Vienna to Schleinbach to try and get away from pilgrims, curiosity seekers in 1850. Relived Passion every Friday. Died of breast cancer.

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Mahler, Philipp. *Enthüllungen über die ekstatische Jungfrau Juliana Weiskircher aus Ulrichskirchen-Schleinbach*. Wien: Mayer und Compagnie, 1851.

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Strauss, Walter. *Juliana Weiskircher: eine österreichische Stigmatisierte*. Salterrae, 1993.

29. **Karoline Beller** (1830-1863), Lütgeneder, North Rhine-Westphalia. Daughter of farmers. Stigmata after a long illness, 1845. Extreme fasting. Declared fraud after

medical investigation and forcibly committed to hospital in Warburg. Subsequently admitted to making own stigmata after reading about Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena and Anna Katharina Emmerick.

Kurtz, Johann Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte für Studierende*. 13th edition, Volume II. Leipzig: August Neumann, 1899.

Muhs, Rudolf. „Die Stigmata der Karoline Beller: Ein katholisches Frauenschicksal des Vormärz im Spannungsfeld von Volksreligiosität, Kirche, Staat und Medizin,“ in *Wunderbare Erscheinungen: Frauen und katholische Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1995), 83-130.

30. **Angela Hupe** (stigmata 1861-63), Paderborn, North Rhine Westphalia. From village of Boke. Stigmata subjected to church and medical investigation, declared fraudulent. Alleged to have created stigmata after reading about Anna Katharina Emmerick.

no title, *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, 26. Jahrgang, Nr. 31, Cincinnati, OH, 18 March 1863, p. 362

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“Tagesneuigkeiten.” *Die Neue Zeit: Olmüzer politische Zeitung*, 16. Jahrgang, Nr. 48, 28 February 1863.

31. **Maria von Mörl** (1812-1868), Caldaro (Kaltern), Italy. Franciscan tertiary. From noble family. Chronically ill from early childhood. Sent away at 14 to learn Italian, returned home after 1 year upon mother's death. Health declined age 17. Father dies 1849, uses inheritance fund a Franciscan convent. Became Franciscan tertiary. Ecstatic experiences from 19. Received stigmata in hands and feet 1834. Relived Passion every Friday. Visited by many pilgrims, doctors, curiosity-seekers from across Europe, including Clemens Brentano. Kept diary, basis for later biography. Beatification cause open.

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Priesching, Nicole. *Unter der Geißel Gottes: das Leiden der Stigmatisierten Maria von Mörl (1812-1868) im Urteil ihres Beichtvaters.* A. Weger, 2007.

32. **Anna Bühlmann** (1821-1868), Lucerne, Switzerland. Layperson (?). Daughter of farmers. Fasting, visions, ecstasies. Bedridden for 18 years. Relived Passion every Friday.

Hüppli, Claudio. *Alois Lütolf: Leben und Werk. Ein Beitrag zur schweizerlichen Geschichtsschreibung im 19. Jahrhundert.* P.G. Keller, 1961.

Sigrist, Anton. *Niklaus Wolf von Rippertschwand: 1756-1832. Ein Beitrag zur Luzerner Kirchengeschichte.* Räber, 1952.

33. **Hieronyma Strobl** (?-1869), Caldaro (Kaltern), Italy. Franciscan tertiary, sister of St. Vincent de Paul. Relived Passion every Friday.

Buol, M. *Ein Herrgottskind: Lebensbild der ekstatischen Jungfrau Maria von Mörl aus dem Dritten Orden des hl. Franziskus: nach authentischen Quellen dargestellt.* A. Weger, 1997.

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34. **Magdalena Gschirr** (1798-1869), Schöfen, Austria. Franciscan tertiary. Daughter of farmers. Lived in Matrei most of her life. Domestic servant before becoming Franciscan tertiary. Visions, ecstasies. Relived Passion every Friday.
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- Österreich-Reihe, Bd. 230-232*. Bergland Verlag, 1964. [see pg. 428, 467; snippet preview on Google Books]
35. **Bertha (von?) Posch** (1843-1872), Caldaro (Kaltern), Italy. Layperson. Attempted to join Congregation of Jesus („English sisters“) in Brixen; rejected for poor health.
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- Leitner, Jakob. *Geschichte der englischen Fräulein und ihrer Institute seit ihrer Gründung bis auf unsere Zeit*. Regensburg: Manz, 1869.
- Priesching, Nicole. *Maria von Mörl, 1812-1868: Leben und Bedeutung einer „stigmatisierten Jungfrau“ aus Tirol im Knotext ultramontaner Frömmigkeit*. Weger, 2004.
36. **Ernestine Hauser** (stigmata in 1875/76), Breisach, Baden-Württemberg. Fasting, physical mortifications, ecstasies. Declared fraud after medical investigation. Hauser told parents and physician two priests had created her stigmata. Doctor published story, leading one priest to sue him for libel, settled before trial. Second priest sued Hauser. Brought before Schöffengericht on 11 January 1876, Hauser acquitted of libel, declines to pursue counter-charges against priest.

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“The Manufacture of Stigmata.” *The British Medical Journal*, February 12, 1876, p. 204.

37. **Sabine (aka Sabina) Schäfer** (1860-?), Rinsheim near Buchen, Baden-Württemberg. Layperson. Stigmata 1878 at age 17, bled every Friday. Ecstasies, visions, fasting. Forcibly removed by state officials to hospital for observation. Declared fraud. Sentenced to 10 weeks in prison by Stadtsanwaltschaft Baden.

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Perthes, Friedrich Andreas. *Theologisches Hilfslexicon*. Volume II. Gotha: Friedrich Andres Perthes, 1894.

38. **Franziska Barthel** (1822-1878), Andlau, Alsace, France. Prayed to Virgin Mary for healing of chronic illness. Apparent miraculous healing after seeing apparition of Mary; received stigmata thereafter.

Laurentin, René, and Patrick Sbalchiero. *Dictionnaire des “apparitions” de la Vierge Marie*. Paris: Fayard, 2007.

Priesching, Nicole. *Unter der Geißel Gottes: das Leiden der Stigmatisierten Maria von Mörl (1812-1868) im Urteil ihres Beichtvaters*. A. Weger, 2007.

39. **Louise Beck** (1822-1879), Altötting, Bavaria. Layperson. Daughter of pharmacist. Educated by Sisters of Mercy. Visions, ecstasies. Pregnancy out of wedlock resulting in stillbirth, 1847. Fever, hysteria symptoms. Complained of attacks by demon, exorcism by Redemptorist priest Franz von Bruchmann. Subsequently claimed to receive messages from Bruchmann’s late wife regarding how Redemptorist monastery should be run. Growing circle of devotees, including most notably Munich archbishop Karl August von Reisach and bishop of Regensburg Ignatius von Senestrey. Both influential bishops guided by her in church politics. In contact with Maria von Mörl from 1858. Redemptorist priest Carl Schmöger, confessor, also published visions of Anna Katharina Emmerick. Lived in wing of Redemptorist monastery from 1862.

Schneider, Bernhard. "Feminisierung und (Re-)Maskulinisierung der Religion im 19. Jahrhundert: Tendenzen der Forschung aus der Perspektive des deutschen Katholizismus," in *Feminisierung oder (Re-) Maskulinisierung der Religion im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert?: Forschungsbeiträge aus Christentum, Judentum und Islam* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), pp. 11-41.

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Weiß, Otto. *Die Macht der Seherin von Altötting: Geisterglaube im Katholizismus des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Kevelaer 2015.

40. **Maria Beatrix Schuhmann** (1823-1887), Pfarrkirchen, Bavaria. Layperson (?). Chronically ill, bedridden from age 27 onward. Visions, ecstasies. Received crown of thorns 1852, hand and feet wounds 1853. Subject to medical and church investigations, results inconclusive. Biography and visions published by her confessor, who noted Schuhmann's Passion visions closely matched those of Anna Katharina Emmerick.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La Stigmatisation – L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes – Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Paris: L. Bellet, 1894. (reprinted by Jerome Millon, Grenoble, 1996).

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Maier, Wilhelm. *Das verborgene Leben und Leiden der frommen Tertiärin Jungfrau Maria Beatrix Schuhmann von Pfarrkirchen*. Kleiter, 1914.

Schmitt-Lieb, Willy. "Marienbild im Wandel von 1300-1800." *Marianische Schriften des Internationalen Mariologischen Arbeitskreises Kevelaer*. Echter, 1987.

41. **Theresia (Therese) Städele** (1823-?), Menzingen, Switzerland. Layperson (?). Stigmata 1849, attracts large numbers of pilgrims, later declared fake. Brought before criminal court and banished from community. Local priest and collaborator Johann Joseph Röllin forced to retire to monastery.

*Der Hexen-Prozess und die Blutschwitzer-Prozedur (der Theresia Städele), zwei Fälle aus der Criminal-Praxis des Kantons Zug, aus den Jahren 1737-1738 und 1849*. J. M. A. Blunski, 1849.

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42. **Viktoria Hecht** (1840-1890), Wolpertswende, Baden-Württemberg. Layperson. Daughter of farmers. Chronically ill. Severely injured in accident on farm 1857. Bedridden from 1863. Gradually lost ability to speak. Extreme fasting. Viewed with distrust by local clergy, who try to have her committed; parents successfully intervened to prevent it. Subjected to exorcism, electric shock therapy. Stigmata 1869; wounds no longer visible after 1874.
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43. **Maria Dominika Klara Moes (aka Anna Moes)** (1832-1895), Bous, Luxembourg. Dominican. Visions from early childhood. Entered convent in Lampertsbierg. Elected prioress. Made strong impression on future bishop of Luxembourg Johannes Joseph Koppes.

Barthel, J.P. *Mutter Maria Dominika Klara Moes vom hl. Kreuz und ihre Klostergründung 1832-1895*. Luxembourg: St. Paulus Druckerei, 1908.

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44. **Vincentia (born Aloysia) Fauland** (1852-1902), Graz, Austria. Ursuline. Visions, ecstasies. Entered convent in Ödenburg/Sopron. Elected prioress. Predicted ca. 1895 that future (and final) Austrian emperor Karl I would assume the throne and suffer greatly during his rule; he subsequently became heir and then, briefly, emperor after the assassination of his uncle Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914.

Feigl, Erich. *“Gott erhalte-“ Kaiser Karl: Persönliche Aufzeichnungen und Dokumente*. Vienna: Amalthea, 2006.

Hornig, Andreas. *Mater Vincentia Fauland vom Kinde Jesu: Mystikerin, Stigmatisierte, Prophetin Gottes*. Vienna: Mediatrix Verlag, 2005.

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Mikrut, Jan. *Faszinierende Gestalten der Kirche Österreichs*. Volume I. Vienna: Dom Verlag, 2000.

45. **Barbara Pfister** (1867-1909), Wattenheim, Rhineland-Palatinate. Franciscan tertiary. Visions, ecstatic experiences from early age. Attempted to enter Dominican convent in Speyer, rejected for health reasons at 17. Worked as domestic servant. Received stigmata, crown of thorns 1890. Medical investigations inconclusive. Lived with community of Sisters of Mercy from 1896. Confessor Friedrich Molz published her visions after her death. Grave became pilgrimage site.

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Turi, Anna Maria. *Stigmate e Stigmatizzati: I „Segni“ del Cielo: Storia e Attualità*. Rome: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1990.

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46. **Salesia (born Elsa) Schulten** (1877-1920), Osnabrück, Lower Saxony. Ursuline. Born in Cologne. Entered German Ursuline convent in Nimègue, Netherlands, which had moved abroad due to Kulturkampf, 1898. Convent moved to Osnabrück 1903. Elected prioress. Writings about mystical experiences published after death.

Hendrikx, Ephraem. *Augustins Verhältnis zur Mystik: eine patristische Untersuchung*. Würzburg: Rita-Verlag, 1936.

Richstätter, Karl. *Mater Salesia Schulten und ihre Psychologie der Mystik: Leben und Schriften einer Ursuline*. Herder, 1932.

Wunderle, Georg. *Zur Psychologie der Stigmatisation*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1938.

47. **Anna Schäffer** (1882-1925), Mindelstetten, Bavaria. Layperson. Daughter of carpenter. Worked as domestic servant from 14, trying to save up money for convent dowry. Visions from 1898. Severely burned both legs in laundry accident 1901, bedridden thereafter. Especially devoted to Sacred Heart of Jesus. Wrote extensively about her devotions. Stigmata, ecstasies from 1910. Died of colon cancer. Beatification cause opened 1973. Beatified by John Paul II 1999; canonized by Benedict XVI 2012. Feast day on 5 October.

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- Weigl, Alfons M. *Anna Schäffer: opferbereit u. leidensfreudig bis zuletzt*. St. Grignion-Verlag, 1985.
48. **Anna Maria Göbel** (Goebel) (1886-1941), Bickendorf, Rhineland-Palatinate. Layperson. Ecstasies, extreme fasting.
- Ernst, Robert. *Anna Maria Göbel, die stigmatisierte Opferseele von Bickendorf (Eifel)*. Markus-Verlag, 1956.
- Priller, Georg. *Anna Maria Goebel, die Stigmatisierte von Bickendorf (Eifel): das Leben und Leiden der am längsten Stigmatisierten Deutschlands der Gegenwart*. Kohl, 1928.
49. **Johann Baptist Reus** (1868-1947), Pottenstein, Bavaria. Only known male German stigmatic. Ordained priest, entered Jesuit order 1893. Sent 1900 to teach theology at Cristo Rei College in São Leopoldo, Brazil, where he lived for the rest of his life. Autobiography and diary records visions, stigmata, ecstasies from 1912. Beatification process opened 1958.
- Baumann, Ferdinand. *Ein heiligmäßiger Priester unserer Zeit: P. Johann Baptist Reus, S.J. (1868-1947)*. St.-Otto-Verlag, 1952.
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Weigl, Alfons Maria. *P. Reus SJ, ein neuer großer Helfer*. Altötting: Verl. St.-Grignionhaus, 1995.

50. **Anna Henle** (1871-1950), Aichstetten, Baden-Württemberg. Layperson. Daughter of a baker. Visions, ecstasies, from age 13. Stigmata and visions of Virgin Mary, with apocalyptic predictions, at 16. Stigmata disappeared at 33.

*Anna Henle, Angelo con le stimate*. Edizioni Segno, 2017.

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51. **Therese Neumann** (1898-1962), Konnersreuth, Bavaria. Franciscan tertiary. Becomes bedridden after series of falls, accidents in 1918-1919, one of which allegedly caused her to go blind. Prayed to Therese of Lisieux for healing, sight restored on the day of her beatification, 1923. Also claimed miraculous healing of appendicitis, 1925. Visions, ecstasies. Stigmata, bleeding from eyes after Good Friday 1926. Claimed to live on Eucharist alone from 1923. Subjected to numerous medical examinations, inconclusive results. Observed, though not directly harmed by Gestapo during Nazi regime. Died of heart attack. Numerous skeptics as well as devoted followers. Beatification cause opened 2005.

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- Wunderle, Georg, and Alois Mager. *Um Konnersreuth: neueste religionspsychologische Dokumente*. Würzburg: Becker Universitäts-Druckerei, 1931.
52. **Adrienne von Speyr** (1902-1967), La-Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. Layperson. Daughter of physician. Visions from age six. Raised Protestant but developed early attraction to Catholicism. Excelled in academics. Became a physician (first woman to do so in Switzerland) against the opposition of her mother. Married a history professor and widower, 1927. First husband died 1934; married another history professor 1936. Converted to Catholicism 1938, shocking her family, with the help of Jesuit priest and future theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. Became good friends with many leading Catholic intellectuals. Ran busy private practice. Dictated several books on religious themes to von Balthasar while in trance state. Retired from medical practice due to poor health 1954.
- von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981.

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- von Speyr, Adrienne. *The Mission of the Prophets*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996.
- von Speyr, Adrienne. *The Mystery of Death*. Sn Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988.
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- von Spyer, Adrienne. *The Passion from Within*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998.

- von Speyr, Adrienne. *Three Women and the Lord*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986.
- von Speyr, Adrienne. *The Word: a Meditation on the Prologue to St. John's Gospel*. New York: D. McKay, 1953.
- von Speyr, Adrienne. *The Word Becomes Flesh: Meditations on John 1-5*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994.
- von Speyr, Adrienne. *The World of Prayer*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985.
53. **Grete Gansforth** (1926-1996), Heede, Lower Saxony. Layperson. Visions, particularly of Virgin Mary, from 1937. Stigmata 1939. Offered herself to God as "victim soul," 1940. Chronic illness, paralysis, fevers from 1947.
- Blackbourn, David. *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany*. New York: Knopf, 1993.
- Grete Gansforth*. Hermann Rieke-Benninghaus, 2005.
- Munder, Chris. *Our Lady of the Nations: Apparitions of Mary in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Catholic Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

## APPENDIX B

### Persons Beatified and Canonized during Period 1789-1945, from Several European Nations

FRANCE	ITALY	ENGLAND	NETHERLANDS	GERMANY & AUSTRIA
<b>TOTAL: 305</b>	<b>TOTAL: 195</b>	<b>TOTAL: 167</b>	<b>TOTAL: 19</b>	<b>TOTAL: 18</b>
Agathangelus Nourry	Agnellus of Pisa	Adrian Fortescue	Adrianus van Hilvarenbeek	Adalbert of Lambach
Airaldus of Maurienne	Aimo Taparelli	Alban Bartholomew Roe	Andreas Wouters	Albert the Great
Alphais of Cudot	Alexander Sauli	Alexander Blake	Antonius van Hoornaar	Christina of Stommeln
Amadeus of Lausanne	Alexis Falconieri	Alexander Briant	Antonius van Weert	Conrad of Parzham (aka Johann Birndorfer)
Ambroise-Augustin Chevreux	Alferius of LaCava	Ambrose Edward Barlow	Cornelius van Wijk	Engelbert Kolland
Andre Angar	Alphonsus Maria de Liguori	Anne Line	Franciscus de Roye	Friedrich of Regensburg
Andre-Abel Alricy	Amatus Ronconi	Anthony Middleton	Godfried van Duynen	Gamelbert of Michaelsbuch
Andre Grasset de Saint-Sauveur	Andrea Gallerani	Anthony Turner	Godfried van Melveren	Hemma of Gurk
Andre-Hubert Fournet	Andrew Dotti	Augustine Webster	Hieronimus van Weert	Henry Suso (aka Heinrich von Berg)
Andrew Abellon	Andrew of Peschiera	Bede the Venerable	Jacobus Lacops	Herman the Cripple
Anne-Alexandre-Charles-Marie Lanfant	Angela Merici	BrianLacey	Leonardus van Veghel	Irmengard
Anne-Joseph Leroux	Angelina di Marsciano	ChristopherBales	Lydwina of Schiedam	James Grissinger
Anne-Marie-Madeleine Thouret	Angelus de Scarpetti	Christopher Buxton	Nicasius Janssen van Heeze	John of Cologne
Anne Petras	Angelus of Acri	CuthbertMayne	Nicolaas Pieck	Jordan of Saxony
Anthony Daniel	Angelus of Furci	Duthus of Ross	Nicolaas Poppel	Maria Crescentia Höss
Antoine-Charles-Octavien du Bouzet	Angelus of Gualdo Tadino	Edmund Arrowsmith	Petrus van Assche	Notburga
Antoine-Mathieu-Augustin Nogier	Anne Marie Taigi	Edmund Campion	Theodorus van der Eem	Romedio of Nonsberg
Apollinaris of Posat	Anthony Balducci	Edmund Gennings	Willehad van Deem	Utto of Metten
Arigius of Gap	Anthony Mary Gianelli	Edward Coleman	Peter Canisius	
Armand-Anne-Auguste-Sicaire Chapt de Rastignac	Anthony Mary Zaccaria	Edward Fulthrop		
Armand de Foucauld de Pontbriand	Antonia of Florence	Edward James		
Artaldo of Belley	Antonio Patrizi	Edward Jones		

August-Denis Nezel	Antony Bonfadini	Edward Oldcorne
Auguste Chapdelaine	Antony Fatati	Edward Powell
Augustine Schoffler	Antony of Pavoni	Edward Shelley
Beatrix of Ornacieux	Archangela Giralani	Edward Stransham
Benedict Joseph Labre	Archangelus Piacentini	Edward Waterson
Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes	Arialdus of Milan	Eustace White
Bernard-Francois de Cucsac	Augustine Fangi	Everard Hanse
Bernard of Menthon	Balsamus of Cava	Francis Page
Bernard of Vienne	Balthassar of Chiavari	George Gervase
Bertrand-Antoine de Caupenne	Bartholomea Capitano	George Napper
Bertrand of Garrigue	Bartholomew degli Amidei	George Swallowell
Boniface of Canterbury	Bartholomew Fanti of Mantua	German Gardiner
Cassian Vaz Lopez-Neto	Bartholomew of Vicenza	Henry Abbot
Catherine Laboure	Benedict dell'Antella	Henry Morse
Charles Carnus	Benedict Revelli	Henry Walpole
Charles-Francois leGue	Benedict Ricasoli	Hugh Faringdon
Charles Garnier	Benedict the Black	Hugh Green
Charles-Jeremie Berauld du Perou	Benincasus of Cava	Hugh More
Charles-Louis Hurtrel	Bentivoglio de Bonis	Humphrey Middlemore
Charles of Blois	Berardo dei Marsi	James Bell
Charles-Regis-Mathieu de la Calmette de Valfons	Bernadine Realino	James Bird
Charles-Victor Veret	Bernard Perani	James Claxton
Clarus of Vienne	Bernard Scammacca	James Duckett
Claude-Antoine-Raoul Laporte	Bonaventura of Potenza	James Fenn
Claude Bochot	Bonaventure Tornielli	James Thompson
Claude Cayx-Dumas	Buonfiglio Monaldi	James Walworth
Claude Chaudet	Camillus Costanzo	John Almond
Claude Colin	Charles of Sezze	John Amias
Claude de la Colombiere	Christina Ciccarelli	John Beche
Claude Fontaine	Christina of Spoleto (aka Christina Camozzi, Christina Visconti)	John Bodey
Claude-Francois Gagnieres des Granges	Christophe rMacassoli of Vigevano	John Boste

Claude-Louis Marmotant de Savigny	Christopher of Milan	John Carey
Claude Ponse	Clare Agolanti of Rimini	John Cornelius
Claude Rousseau	Clare of Montefalco	John Davy
Claude-Silvain-Raphael Mayneud de Bizefranc	Constantius of Fabriano	John Duckett
Clothilde-Joseph Paillot	Conus of Lucania	John Eynon
Colette	Crispin of Viterbo	John Felton
Convoyon of Redon	Damian dei Fulcheri	John Fenwick
Daniel-Louis Andre des Pommerayes	Diana D'Andalo	John Finch
Denis-Claude Duval	Dominic Spadafora	John Fisher
Denis of the Nativity	Elizabeth of Mantua	John Forest
Eloy Herque du Roule	Falco of Cava	John Gavan
Emily de Rodat	Falco the Hermit	John Grove
Emily de Vialar	Felice of Nicosia	John Haile
Etienne-Francois-Dieudonne de Ravinel	Filippa Mareri	John Houghton
Etienne-Michel Gillet	Fortis Gabrielli	John Ingram
Etienne-Théodore Cuenot	Fortunatus of Naples	John Ireland
Eustache Felix	Francesco Saverio Maria Bianchi	John Jones
Felix of Valois	Frances Xavier Cabrini	John Kemble
Ferrolus of Grenoble	Francis Caracciolo	John Larke
Frances D'Amboise	Francis of Girolamo	John Lloyd
Francois Balmain	Francus of Francavilla	John Lockwood
Francois-Cesar Londiveau	Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows	John Mason
Francois Dardan	Gandulphus of Binasco	John Munden
Francois Dumas Rambaud de Calandelle	Gaspare Bufalo	John Nelson
Francois-Hyacinthe leLivec de Tresurin	Gemma Galgani	John Nutter
François-Isidore Gagelin	Gemma of Goriano	John Ogilvie
François Jaccard	Gentilis	John Payne
Francois-Joseph de la Rochefoucauld-Maumont	Gerard Cagnoli	John Pibush
Francois-Joseph Monnier	Gerardesca	John Rigby
Francois-Joseph Pey	Gerard Majella	John Roberts
Francois Lefranc	Gerard of Villamagna	John Robinson

Francois-Louis Hebert	Gherardino Sostegni	John Roche
Francois-Louis Meallet deFargues	Giacomo Villa	John Rochester
Francois-Urbain Salins de Niart	Giles Mary-of-Saint-Joseph	John Rugg
Francois Varheilhe-Duteil	Giles of Laurenzana	John Shert
Gabriel Desprez de Roche	Giovanna Maria Bonomo	John Slade
Gabriel Lalemant	Giovann iBattista Zola	John Southworth
Gaspard-Claude Maignien	Giovanni Giovenale Ancina	John Speed
Georges Girault	Giovanniof Triora	John Stone
Georges-Jerome Giroust	Giustino de Jacobis	John Storey
Germaine Cousin	Guala	John Thorne
Gilles-Louis-Symphorien Lanchon	Guido of Acqui	John Thules
Guillaume-Antoine Delfaut	Helen del Cavalcanti	John Wall
Guillaume-Nicolas-Louis Leclerq	Helen Duglioli	Lawrence Richardson
Heldrad of Novalese	Herculanus of Piegare	Luke Kirby
Henri-August Luzeau de la Mulonniere	Hippolytus Galantini	Margaret Clitherow
Henri-Hippolyte Ermes	Hugolinus Magalotti	Margaret Pole
Henri-Jean Milet	Hugolinus of Gualdo Cattaneo	Margaret Ward
Hugh of Bonnevaux	Hugolinus Zefferini	Mark Barkworth
Hyacinthe-Augustine-Gabrielle Bourla	Humbert III of Savoy	Nicholas Horner
Isaac Jogues	Humilis of Bisignano	Nicholas Owen
Jacques-Alexandre Menuret	Hyacintha of Mariscotti	Patrick Salmon
Jacques-Augustin Robert de Lezardieres	Ignatius of Laconi	Peter Wright
Jacques de la Lande	Imelda Lambertini	Philip Evans
Jacques Dufour	Isnard de Chiampo	Philip Howard
Jacques-Etienne-Philippe Hourrier	Jacobinus de Canepaci	Philip Powel
Jacques-Francois de Lubersac	James Benfatti	Ralph Ashley
Jacques Friteyre-Durve	James of Cerqueto	Ralph Corby
Jacques-Gabriel Galais	James of Padua	Ralph Crockett
Jacques Honoré Chastán	James of Viterbo	Ralph Sherwin
Jacques-Jean Lemeunier	James of Voragine	Richard Bere

Jacques-Joseph le Jardinier des Landes	James Oldo	Richard Featherstone
Jacques-Jules Bonnaud	Jane of Segna	Richard Gwyn
Jacques-Louis Schmid	Jane Soderini	Richard Kirkman
Jacques Sales	Jerome DeAngelis	Richard Langley
Jane Antide Thouret	Joachim Piccolomini	Richard Reynolds
Jane of Toulouse (aka Joan, Jeanne of Toulouse)	Joan of Bagno DiRomagna	Richard Whiting
Jean-Andre Capeau	John Baptist Rossi	Robert Anderton
Jean-Antoine-Barnabe Seguin	John Baptist Spagnuolo	Robert Dalby
Jean-Antoine Guilleminet	John Bosco	Robert Johnson
Jean-Antoine-Hyacinthe Boucharenc de Chaumeils	John Buonagiunta Monetti	Robert Lawrence
Jean-Antoine-Joseph de Villette	John Cini della Pace	Robert Salt
Jean-Antoine Savine	John Dominic	Robert Southwell
Jean-Antoine Seconds	John Joseph of the Cross	Robert Sutton
Jean-Baptiste Bottex	John Leonardi	Robert Widmerpool
Jean-Baptiste-Claude Aubert	John of Montemarano	Robert Wilcox
Jean-Baptiste Jannin	John of Penna	Roger James
Jean-Baptiste-Marie Tessier	John of Rieti	Sebastian Newdigate
Jean-Baptiste-Michel Pontus	John of Vercelli	Sidney Hodgson
Jean-Baptiste Nativelle	John of Vespignano	Talarican of Sodor
Jean-Charles Caron	John Pelingotto	Thomas Alfield
Jean-Charles Cornay	Jordan of Pisa	Thomas Bosgrave
Jean-Charles Legrand	Joseph Benedict Cottolengo	Thomas Cottam
Jean-Charles-Marie Bernard du Cornillet	Joseph Cafasso	Thomas Garnet
JeanCharton de Milou	Joseph Mary Tomasi	Thomas Green
Jean Elizabeth des Bichier des Anges	Julia of Certaldo	Thomas Holland
Jean-Francois Bonnel de Pradal	Laurence Loricatus	Thomas Johnson
Jean-Francois Bousquet	Laurentinus Sossius	Thomas Maxfield
Jean-Francois Burte	Lawrence of Brindisi	Thomas More
Jean-Francois-Marie Benoit-Vourlat	Leonard of Cava	Thomas Pickering

Jean-François-Régis Clet	Leonard of Port Maurice	Thomas Plumtree
Jean-Gabriel Perboyre	Lucia Filippini	Thomas Redyng
Jean-Gabriel-Taurin Dufresse	Maddalena of Canossa	Thomas Reynolds
Jean Goizet	Magdalen Albrizzi	Thomas Scryven
Jean-Henri Gruyer	Magdalen Panattieri	Thomas Sherwood
Jean-Henri-Louis-Miche lSamson	Margaret Colonna	Thomas Somers
Jean-Joseph de Laveze-Bellay	Maria Mazzarello	Thomas Thwing
Jean-JosephRateau	Mark Fantucci	Thomas Warcop
Jean Lacan	Mark of Montegallo	Walter Pierson
Jean Lemaitre	Mark Scalabrini	William Andleby
Jean-Louis Guyard de Saint-Clair	Mary DiRosa	William Exmew
Jean-Marie du Lau D'Alleman	Mary Fontanella	William Filby
Jean-Michel Philippot	Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Jesus	William Greenwood
Jeanne de Lestonnac	Obitius	William Harcourt
Jeanne Elizabeth des Bichier des Anges	Odo of Novara	William Harrington
Jeanne Gerard	Pacificus of San Severino	William Hart
Jeanne-Louise Barre	Panacea De'Muzzi of Quarona	William Hartley
Jeanne Marie de Maille	Paula Frassinetti	William Howard
Jeanne-Reine Prin	Paul Burali D'Arezzo	William Ireland
Jean-Philippe Marchand	Paul of the Cross	William Lacey
Jean-Pierre Bangué	Pellegrino of Falerone	William Marsden
Jean-Pierre Duval	Peter Cambiano	William Patenson
Jean-Pierre le Laisant	Peter Damian	William Richardson
Jean-Pierre Simon	Peter II of LaCava	William Ward
Jean-Robert Queneau	Peter of Canterbury	
Jean-Théophane Vénard	Peter of Citta DiCastello	
Jean-Thomas Leroy	Peter of Pappacarbone	
Joan of Arc	Peter Paul Navarro	
John Baptist de la Salle	Philomena	
John de Brebeuf	Pietro Tecelano	
John de la Lande	Pope Eugene III	
John Eudes	Pope Victor III	
John-Louis Bonnard	Raymond of Capua	
John Mary Vianney	Raynald of Ravenna	

John of Matha	Rita of Cascia
John of Valence	Robert Bellarmine
John Peter Néel	Rudolph Aquaviva
John Soreth	Sebastian Valfre
Joseph Becavin	Severinus Boethius
Joseph Falcoz	Sibyllina Biscossi
Joseph-Louis Oviefre	Simon Ballachi
Joseph Marchand	Simon Rinalducci
Joseph-Marie Gros	Sylvester Gozzolini
Joseph-Thomas Pazery de Thorame	Teresa Margaret Redi
Juan de Mayorga	Tommaso DaCori
Jules-Honore-Cyprien Pazery de Thorame	Veronica Giuliani
Julia Billiard	Vincentia Gerosa
Julien-Francois Hedouin	Vincent Strambi
Julien le Laisant	Vivald of Gimignano
Julien Poulain Delaunay	Vivaldus
Lacques-Leonor Rabe	Walfrid
Laurent	William of Fenoli
Lawrence Mary Joseph Imbert	
Leonianus of Autun	
Louis Alexander Alphonse Brisson	
Louis-Alexis-Mathias Boubert	
Louis Barreau de la Touche	
Louis-Benjamin Hurtrel	
Louise de Marillac	
Louise-Joseph Vanot	
Louise of Savoy	
Louis-Francois-Andre Barret	
Louis-Francois Rigot	
Louis-Jean-Mathieu Lanier	
Louis-Joseph Francois	
Louis-Laurent Gaultier	
Louis le Danois	
Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort	

Louis Maudit  
Louis-Remi Benoist  
Louis-Remi-Nicolas  
Benoist  
Louis Thomas-  
Bonnotte  
Madeline Sohpie  
Barat  
Marc-Louis Royer  
Margaret Mary  
Alacoque  
Margaret of Lorraine  
Marie-Augustine  
Erraux  
Marie-Francois  
Mouffle  
Marie-Genevieve-  
Joseph Ducrez  
Marie-Lievine  
Lacroix  
Marie-Madeleine  
Fontaine  
Marie-Madeleine-  
Joseph Dejardins  
Marie-Madeleine  
Postel  
Marie-Marguerite-  
Joseph Leroux  
Marie of the  
Incarnation  
Martin-Francois-  
Alexis Loublier  
Mary Euphrasia  
Pelletier  
Mathurin-Nicolas de  
la Ville  
Mathurin-Victoir  
Deruelle  
Michael Garicoits  
Michel-Andre-  
Sylvestre Binard  
Michel-Francois de la  
Gardette  
Michel Leber  
Nicolas Bize  
Nicolas Clairret  
Nicolas-Claude  
Roussel  
Nicolas Colin  
Nicolas Gaudreau  
Nicolas-Marie Verron

Noe IChabanel  
Noel Pinot  
Odo of Beauvais  
Olivier Lefebvre  
Peter Chanel  
Peter Faber  
Peter Fourier  
Peter Julian Eymund  
Peter the Venerable  
Philibert Fougeres  
Pierre Bonze  
Pierre Brisquet  
Pierre Brisse  
Pierre-Claude Pottier  
Pierre-Florent  
Leclercq  
Pierre-Francois  
Henocq  
Pierre-Francois  
Pazery de Thorames  
Pierre Gauguin  
Pierre-Jacques de  
Turmenyes  
Pierre-Jacques-Marie  
Vitalis  
Pierre Landry  
Pierre-Louis de la  
Rochefoucauld-  
Bayers  
Pierre-Louis Gervais  
Pierre-Louis Joret  
Pierre-Louis Joseph  
Verrier  
Pierre-Michel Guerin  
Pierre-Michel Guerin  
du Rocher  
Pierre-Nicolas  
Psalmon  
Pierre-Paul Balzac  
Pierre Philibert  
Maubant  
Pierre Ploquin  
Pierre-Rene Rogue  
Pierre-Robert Regnet  
Pierre Rose Ursule  
Dumoulin Borie  
Pierre Saint-James

Pope Innocent V  
Pope Urban II  
Rene Goupil  
Rene-Joseph Urvoy  
Rene-Julien Massey  
Rene-Marie Andrieux  
Rene Nativelle  
Rene-Nicolas Poret  
Robert-Francois  
Guerin du Rocher  
Robert le Bis  
Rosalina of  
Villeneuve  
Rose Philippine  
Duchesne  
Saintin Hure  
Sebastien Desbrielles  
Solomon LeClerq  
Stephen of Obazine  
Suzanne-Agathe  
Deloye  
Theophilus of Corte  
Therese of Lisieux  
Thomas-Jean  
Montsaint  
Thomas-Nicolas  
Dubray  
Thomas-Rene  
Dubuisson  
Urbain Lefebvre  
Vincent Abraham  
Vincent-Joseph le  
Rousseau de  
Rosencot  
William  
Saultemouche  
Yves-Andre Guillon  
de Keranrun  
Yves-Jean-Pierre Rey  
de Kervisic