

COMPETING PATTERNS OF PIETY, AND ATTEMPTS AT INNOVATION WITHIN MONASTIC ORDERS

The servite Order in the Region north of the Alps in the 17th and 18th centuries

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During the 17th century, the Order of the Servants of Mary sought to re-establish a foothold on the far side of the Alps. The Servites' attempts at restituting former convents and at creating new ones brought them in a situation where they competed with other orders. The present contribution examines the strategies which smaller orders such as the Servants of Mary employed in order to attain their goals. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining a semblance of historical continuity in the way the orders argued, but also the extraordinary attractiveness of new forms of piety and devotion to laity and monks alike. The cult of the Seven Pains of the Holy Virgin Mary and the consecrated black scapular were by no means Servite inventions, but the Servants of Mary succeeded in interpreting, propagating and incorporating them in their religious rites to such an extent that the presence of this order throughout central Europe received a considerable impetus.