The notions of a “religious”, and particularly of a “Catholic Enlightenment” remain contested, although they have been gaining acceptance in recent years. The specific epistemological and discursive practices of Catholic scholarship around 1700 have rarely been explored so far. Our contribution focuses on two sets of controversies within erudite monastic circles of the early 18th century in the southern parts of the Holy Roman Empire. – One of these is the rivalry between Benedictines and Augustinian Canons, whose main points of contention were of a historical nature, concerning, among other things, the relative age of the two orders and the disputed authorship of the immensely popular devotional text, the *Imitation of Christ*. Following these debates over a period of several decades brings to light shifts in modes of argumentation on both the epistemic and the rhetorical levels, including the depreciation of the argument from authority in favor of the argument from empirical evidence, the displacement of juridical or theological approaches to assessing sources in favor of the historical auxiliary disciplines, and the declining regard for techniques of demonstration based in formal Aristotelian logic. – The various institutional and scholarly implications of disputes in the monastic context are then examined in the case of the learned Lower Austrian Benedictine Bernhard Pez (1683–1735), who between 1715 and 1731 was involved in a series of conflicts that ranged from an exchange of pamphlets with the imperial librarian to a revolt Pez and some of his fellow monks instigated against their abbot. Historical, philological and theological scholarship, in these conflicts, was always at the centre of attention: in regard to its institutional locus, to its practices and content, and to its basis in epistemic and monastic virtues.