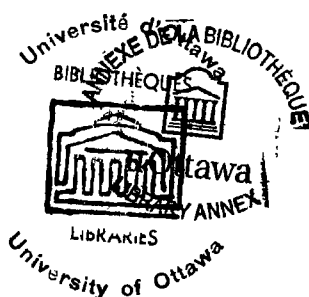


A STUDY OF BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLICAL ELEMENTS
AND OTHER ALLUSIONS IN THE HYMNS
IN HONOR OF ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA
FROM THE 10TH THROUGH THE 13TH CENTURY
by Theophile W. Brown, O.S.B.



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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Theophile W. Brown, O.S.B., was born August 24, 1925, in Richmond, Virginia. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, in 1952. From 1952 to 1956, he pursued theological studies at St. John's Seminary, Collegeville, Minnesota, and attended Latin courses at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the summers of 1956 and 1957.

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INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century a deep interest was shown in the Latin poetry of the Middle Ages when the medieval poets were edited mainly for the service of the historian¹. At the same time serious attempts were also made to explore the origins and development of Catholic liturgy and many workers turned to the hymns and sequences of the Catholic Church.

Of the attempts to collect the sources of medieval hymnody, the most systematic was that of Dreves, Blume, and Bannister whose efforts culminated in the fifty-five volumes of the Analecta Hymnica², an immense array of Medieval Latin liturgical and non-liturgical texts of all degrees of importance and interest. This huge collection has not yet been explored and it is the task of scholars to produce a way of understanding and using these hymns.

In recent years interest in the field of medieval hymnody has increased and within the last ten years a method of analysing Latin hymns was used with satisfactory

¹ F. J. E. Raby, The History of Christian Latin Poetry, 2nd edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p. 456-457.

² C. Blume, G. Dreves, and H. M. Bannister, Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, Leipzig, [no publisher], 55 volumes, 1886-1922.

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results by Dr. Joseph Szovérffy³. This method investigates hymns for biographical elements, legendary elements, panegyric elements, metaphors, biblical motifs and other stock motifs which can be applied to many saints as well as to individual cases. The analysis also includes a study of the beginning and endings of hymns and prayers in the hymns.

Such an analysis not only reveals the dominant influence of different elements in a body of hymns but also shows the general factors that constitute a common tradition in hymnody and its development from century to century. A study of this hymnological tradition throughout each century will happily supplement the uncertain data provided by the manuscripts in determining the period to which each hymn belongs. The result of this overall study would help to establish a relationship between the hymns and serve as a source of information and background for scholars interested in preparing a complete history of hymnody.

In this thesis an internal analysis will be made of the Medieval Latin hymns⁴ in honor of St. Benedict of

³ Joseph Szovérffy, "The Legends of St. Peter in Medieval Hymns", in Traditio, Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion, New York, Fordham University Press, 1954, Vol. 10, p. 275-322.

⁴ The term "hymn" in this thesis is used in a general sense to designate a verbal composition sung in praise of God or the saints, viz., liturgical and non-liturgical hymns, tropes, sequences, and pia dictamina. Cf. H. O. Taylor, The Medieval Mind, Vol. II, London, MacMillan, 4th edition, 1938, p. 236.

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Nursia. This group of hymns is rich and replete with various elements which are components of a hymnic tradition. Because of the limits of a Master of Arts' thesis, the present study is intended to investigate the hymns for the following most striking and predominant elements: biographical elements, biblical allusions, and allusions to St. Benedict's Holy Rule.

All the hymns analysed in this thesis were collected from Blume and Dreves' Analecta Hymnica. They were arranged according to type (sequence, trope, breviary hymn) and date of the manuscript in which they appear. Though the St. Benedict hymns are in manuscripts dating from the tenth to the sixteenth century, only those from the tenth to the thirteenth century inclusive were selected for analysis. The hymns of subsequent centuries while being of an inferior quality⁵ also made the collection far too great for adequate treatment.

⁵"[...] By the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, the day of Latin Literature and especially of Latin poetry is over. In the monastic and cathedral schools and in the universities, the language of S. Thomas and of Duns Scotus was still read and spoken and a long array of hymns and sequences, composed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, bears witness to the obstinate strength of the old tradition which refused to accept the answer of death." Raby, op. cit., p. 453.

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The thesis will be divided into two parts. Part one will study the hymns for biographical elements in order to determine the sources used by the hymnwriters, i.e. whether they drew their subject matter from St. Gregory the Great's prose Vita of Benedict which antedated the hymns or whether other written sources or oral traditions were used. Such a study will reveal the different traditions in the development of the St. Benedict hymns.

Part two of the thesis will treat the hymns for comparisons made between St. Benedict and biblical persons, for metaphorical elements taken from Sacred Scripture and applied to the saint, and for allusions to Benedict's Holy Rule which helped to shape the culture of the Middle Ages.

The hymns honoring St. Benedict were selected for study because of the importance of this saint as founder of Western Monasticism which has served the Church and mankind in its special rôle of worship and work for over fourteen hundred years. In addition to this St. Benedict lived in the early Middle Ages and his life and work was a proximate reality for medieval man whose hymnody would in some way reveal the veneration for Benedict and the impression he made on the times. These hymns also merit study since a number of them are presently used in the breviaries and missals of the various Benedictine Congregations whose scholars and specialists would be interested in the history

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and background of such hymns.

The prose Vita of St. Benedict used as an aid to the study of these hymns is found in book two of the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great. The latest critical text edition of the Dialogues by Umberto Moricca was followed in this thesis and all the quotations made from the Dialogues are from this critical text edition which makes no change in the archaic spelling of words⁶.

The sources for the History of the Translation of Benedict's Relics and the Miracles of Benedict's Relics are from the respective collections of Migne and Mabillion.

There has been no previous detailed analysis of so vast and so select a number of hymns in honor of St. Benedict. It is hoped that this thesis will form a starting point for a more intensive study of the St. Benedict hymns and contribute in its own way to the great work which remains in the history of medieval hymnody.

⁶ The complete Dialogues are also printed in the collections of works of Migne, Patrologia Latina, Tomus LXXVII, pars tertia, 138-430. Book two of the Dialogues (containing the life of St. Benedict) is printed in Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana, Tomus IX, Martii Tomus Tertius, p. 276-287, and in Mabillon's Acta Sanctorum, O.S.B., Vol. I, p. 3-28.

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Table I - Hymns Referred to in the Text

Sigilla	1st Verse	Type	Date (century)	Source
B 1	Rex Christe, dignanter fave	H	10	AH 2 N° 66
B 2	Magno Canentes annua	H	10	AH 2 N° 67
B 3	Praeconia modo nectarea	S	10	AH 7 N°129
B 4	Christus sanctorum decus atque virtus	H	10	AH 14 N° 53
B 5	Arce superna cuncta	T	10	AH 40 N°165
B 6	Magnum patrem Benedictum	S	10	AH 44 N° 80
B 7	Clarissimae coniubila, Gallia	H	10	AH 48 N°258
B 8	In iubilo vocis Benedicto psallite	T	10	AH 49 N°215
B 9	A Domino impletum sacro	T	10	AH 49 N°216
B 10	Psallite doctilogum	T	10	AH 49 N°217
B 11	Laudibus, O Benedicte	T	10	AH 49 N°218
B 12	Vox canae vinnula Davidicas odas	T	10	AH 49 N°219
B 13	Concentu parili Domino laudes	T	10	AH 49 N°220
B 14	Quam bene laetatur	T	10	AH 49 N°711
B 15	In sancti huius laude celsa voce	T	10	AH 49 N°222
B 16	Gloriosus es Deus	T	10	AH 49 N°571
B 17	Qui benedici cupitis	T	10	AH 50 N°205
B 18	Magno canentes annua	H	10	AH 51 N°146
B 19	O fratres, animo, verbis	T	11	AH 49 N°221
B 20	Angelicis hodie obsequiis	T	11	AH 49 N°223
B 21	Tripudiatim beatificant	S	11	AH 7 N°128
B 22	Sancti patris Benedicti	S	11	AH 10 N°187
B 23	Conditor rerum omnium Deus	H	11	AH 11 N°141
B 24	Dilectus Dei Mummolus	H	11	AH 13 N° 23
B 25	Gloriosus Christicola	H	11	AH 13 N° 23
B 26	Omnes venite monachi per orbem	H	11	AH 14 N° 54
B 27	Ut tuae vitae, Benedicte, laudes	H	11	AH 27 N°133
B 28	Grege tuus, O Benedicte, tibi	H	11	AH 23 N°224
B 29	Sit in donis benedictus	T	11	AH 40 N°167
B 30	Dilectus hic pollet tuus	H	11	AH 43 N°158
B 31	Organa, plebs pia	T	11	AH 44 N° 81
B 32	Gemma caelestis	H	11	AH 48 N° 35
B 33	Signifer invictissime	H	11	AH 48 N° 36
B 34	Sancti Spiritus gratia	S	11	AH 49 N°479
B 35	Alleluia, Tu Benedicte legislator	T	11	AH 49 N°522
B 36	Laudum carmina, creatori, lira	T	11	AH 53 N°131
B 36a	Laudum carmina, creatori, lira*	T	11	AH 7 N°131
B 37	Sancti merita, Benedicti inclita	T	11	AH 54 N° 35

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Table I - Hymns Referred to in the Text (cont.)

Sigilla	1st Verse	Type	Date (century)	Source
B 38	Magna laudum	T	12	AH 7 N° 156
B 39	Aetherea laudant quem agmina	T	12	AH 7 N° 130
B 40	Laeta dies aureo jubare	T	12	AH 7 N° 132
B 41	Personae senilis fidem	H	12	AH 13 N° 69
B 42	Inclita nobis haec dies festa	T	12	AH 34 N° 211
B 43	Pater sanctus Benedictus	S	12	AH 37 N° 144
B 44	Victimam nostrae tibi	H	12	AH 48 N° 228
B 45	Christe fili Iesu summi	P	12	AH 51 N° 147
B 46	Ave, pater alme	H	12	AH 52 N° 132
B 47	Festa praesentis celebret diei	H	13	AH 23 N° 225
B 48	Vires augens et invictae	P	13	AH 29 N° 147
B 49	Benedicte, dilecte	S	13	AH 42 N° 175
B 50	Benedicto quod psallemus	H	13	AH 43 N° 159

B = Benedict
 H = Hymn
 P = Pia Dictamina
 S = Sequence
 T = Trope

* Hymns 36 and 36a are identical except for the respective stanzas 5 and 3a.

Part One

BIOGRAPHICAL ALLUSIONS IN THE ST. BENEDICT HYMNS

CHAPTER I

BENEDICT'S EARLY LIFE AND FIRST MIRACLES

The life and deeds of St. Benedict are recorded in the second book of the Dialogues¹ of St. Gregory the Great. The Dialogues were written at the beginning of St. Gregory's pontificate in the period 593-594, less than fifty years after the death of St. Benedict which occurred about the year 547². Although Gregory, a native of Italy and a Benedictine monk, never met Benedict, he was familiar with Subiaco and Monte Cassino where the Great Founder of Western Monasticism spent most of his life. Gregory had also been in contact with eye-witnesses to the deeds of Benedict and from whom he obtained his data contained in the Dialogues.

Huius ego omnia gesta non dedici, sed pauca quae narro quattuor discipulis illius referentibus agnovi; Constantino scilicet, reverentissimo viro, qui ei in multis annis Lateranensi monasterio praefuit; Simplicio, qui congregationem illius post eum tertius rexit; Honorato etiam, qui nunc adhuc cellae eius, in qua prius conversatus fuerat, praest³.

¹ Gregorius Magnus, Dialogi Libri Secundus, in Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana, Martii, Tomus Tertius, Paris and Rome, Palmé, 1867, p. 276-287.

² John Chapman, St. Benedict and the Sixth Century, London, Sheed and Ward, 1929, p. 143-146.

³ Dialogi, II, Praefatio. All quotations from the Dialogues listed in this thesis are from the text of the critical edition of Umberto Moricca, Gregorii Magni Dialogi Libri IV, Roma, Tipografia del Senato, 1924, 347 p. Moricca makes no orthographical corrections in Gregory's work.

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The Dialogues are a primary source for biographical data on St. Benedict and outline the general course of the saint's life and its chief events.

His [St. Gregory's] aim was to record, for the edification of his readers, a number of miracles wrought during the sixth century by Italian saints, and with this end in view he wrote what we know as the four books of the Dialogues. He himself is the narrator and his interlocutor is Peter the Deacon, whose function it is to put leading questions and to propound difficulties for solution. The second Dialogue is devoted exclusively to St. Benedict. It contains thirty-eight episodes, all of which, except the prologue and the thirty-sixth, contain a supernatural element⁴.

The pontifical biographer candidly admits that he does not regard his own sketch of the saint's life as entirely complete and recommends that one should go to the pages of Benedict's Rule for Monks for a more perfect knowledge of the Man of God's character, since the "holy man could not have lived otherwise than as he taught"⁵.

At the outset of this hymn analysis mention should be made of the chronological order of events as enumerated by Gregory in his Dialogues and the arrangement followed by the hymnwriters. The hymnwriters do not adhere to Gregory's order of narration of events and re-arrangements abound in

⁴ T. F. Lindsay, Saint Benedict, His Life and Work, London, Burnes and Oates, 1949, p. 4.

⁵ "Qui sanctus vir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam vixit." Dialogi, II, 36.

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the hymns. As to the importance of a strict chronological arrangement even on the part of Gregory, an appropriate conjecture has been offered by the eminent historian Abbot Justin McCann:

[...] When he deals with St. Benedict, St. Gregory is not concerned to give us a connected record of his life, but seeks chiefly to illustrate his sanctity by recounting his miraculous deeds. His biography is professedly selective, and the principle of selection is not history so much as edification. So there is a lack of ordinary detail and a complete absence of chronology, though it is possible to fix one or two events by inference from other sources. These are manifest defects from the point of view of the historian who seeks precise and accurate knowledge concerning St. Benedict. Indeed, it follows inevitably, since St. Gregory is our sole authority for his life, that no complete biography of St. Benedict is possible. We must be content with that series of episodes from his life which is⁶ all that St. Gregory's design allowed him to give us⁶.

In this hymn study the events and miracles of St. Benedict's life will be discussed as follows: His early life and first miracles down through his departure from Subiaco for Monte Cassino.

Benedict's miracles at Monte Cassino fall into three categories and will be treated according to these categories as follows: His power over Satan; His visionary and prophetic charisms; and his concern for the oppressed and the dead.

⁶ Justin McCann, Saint Benedict, Image Book Edition, Garden City, Doubleday and Co., 1958, p. 9-10.

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1. Benedict's youth and his life at Rome.

St. Gregory opens the second book of the Dialogues by paying witness to Benedict's sanctity. Benedict (the blessed one) was his name and he was blessed also with God's grace: "gratia Benedictus et nomine⁷."

This pun on Benedict's name appears in a hymn in a manuscript dated the thirteenth century which closely follows Gregory's description:

Benedictus digne dignus
Gratia seu nomine⁸.

Gregory's play on words is also reflected in two hymns from a manuscript dated the eleventh century. The verses of one speak of a blessing in name and life:

Doctor Christi
Bene nomine
Et vita dicte⁹,

while the other speaks of a blessing in gifts through Benedict:

Sit in donis benedictus,
Per quem pater Benedictus
Nostrae datur Galliae¹⁰.

⁷ Dialogi, II, Praefatio.

⁸ B 48, 7.

⁹ B 34, 2.

¹⁰ B 29, 1a.

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Even during his boyhood, continues the biographer, Benedict had a mature mind about the things of God and spurned the world and all it had to offer:

[...] ab ipso pueritiae suae tempore cor gerens senile. aetatem quippe moribus transiens, nulli animum voluptati dedit: sed, dum in hac terra adhuc esset, quo temporaliter libere uti potuisset, dispexit iam quasi aridum mundum cum flore¹¹.

A hymn from a tenth century manuscript speaks of the youth's mature outlook and spirit of detachment:

Cuius dono praecurrente
Puer aevo, senex mente
Manu eius innoxia,

Carnis frangens voluptatem,
Mundi spernens vanitatem
Procul arcet vitia¹².

In a paraphrase of Gregory's words two hymns from eleventh century manuscripts point out Benedict's youthful dislike for worldly attractions:

Namque florida temnens
spreverat
a pueritia¹³

A puero florida
sprevit munda cuncta
gliscendo caelica¹⁴.

¹¹ Dialogi, II, Praefatio.

¹² B 6, 2a-2b.

¹³ B 31, 3a.

¹⁴ B 36, 3.

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Verses from a tenth century manuscript indicate that Benedict despised worldly allurements (flowers of the world) at the very threshold of his youth:

Aetatis ipso limine
Despexit aevi florida¹⁵.

St. Gregory continues his narrative mentioning Nursia, a little town seventy miles northeast of Rome, as Benedict's birthplace. Without naming Benedict's parents¹⁶, Gregory merely states that they were distinguished and that the boy was sent to Rome for a liberal education:

[...] qui liberiori genere ex provincia Nursia
exortus, Romae liberalibus litterarum studiis
traditus fuerat¹⁷.

A hymn in a manuscript dated the eleventh century makes note of Benedict's stay at Nursia and Rome:

Nursia, felix
tulit natum genitrix

Domina mundi
Roma, fovit alitrix¹⁸.

¹⁵ B 18, 2.

¹⁶ "A late tradition assigns to the parents of Saint Benedict the names of Eutropius and Abundantia and makes them out to be descendants of a branch of the Anicii. It is useless to dilate on such unsupported figments of the imagination." Schuster, Ildephonse, St. Benedict and His Times, translated by Gregory J. Roettger, London, Herder, 1951, p. 28.

¹⁷ Dialogi, II, Praefatio.

¹⁸ B 37, 4-5.

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Young Benedict's arrival in Rome must have resulted in a complexity of impressions and a mixture of emotions. The serious young provincial from the Sabine Hills was confronted by a city dazzling in marble and bronze, with teeming crowds of people following manifold vices, attractions, and allurements. Even his new acquaintances at school boasted of their vice-ridden lives and worldly knowledge. But Benedict would have none of such knowledge, lest he would meet eternal ruin. He withdrew from Rome "knowingly ignorant" and yet "truly wise¹⁹;" Abandoning his studies he set out to seek the monastic life.

2. Benedict at Enfide.

Benedict left Rome accompanied by his faithful nurse²⁰ who had followed him there and made his way to the town of Enfide about thirty-five miles east of Rome. Here both were befriended by the townsfolk who were most charitable and hospitable. Young Benedict's stay at Enfide was

¹⁹ "Recessit igitur scienter necius et sapienter indoctus." Dialogi, II, Praefatio.

²⁰ "The nurse is an interesting, if somewhat puzzling, adjunct to the story of Benedict's early years. She enters the story abruptly and abruptly leaves it, having tended her charge devotedly and having before her exit given occasion for his first miracle, the immediate cause of his final flight from the world. She has been christened Cyrilla [...]" McCann, op. cit., p. 32.

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evidently quite shortlived for Gregory has nothing to report of it except the miraculous mending of the nurse's broken sieve which heralded his departure to Subiaco.

Gregory relates that the nurse borrowed a neighbor's sieve which dropped to the ground and broke. Benedict, observing the nurse's distress and tears, picked up the sieve, held it together and tearfully prayed. After the prayer the sieve was completely intact so that no sign of the fracture could be seen:

Benedictus autem religiosus et pius puer, cum nutricem suam flere conspiceret, eius dolori compassus, ablatis secum utrisque fracti capisterii partibus, sese cum lacrimis in orationem dedit. qui ab oratione surgens, ita iuxta se vas sanum repperit, ut in eo fracturae inveniri vestigia nulla potuissent. mox autem nutricem blande consolatus ei sanum capisterium reddedit, quod fractum tulerat²¹.

Hymns in manuscripts dated from the tenth to the twelfth century inclusive note young Benedict's first miracle²² of the mending of the sieve:

Stanzas from manuscripts dated the tenth and eleventh centuries, respectively, tell of the broken sieve's

²¹ Dialogi, II, 1.

²² "Le miracle peut se définir comme un fait dont l'apparition extraordinaire et le caractère religieux signifient une intervention spéciale de Dieu dans la nature en vue des fins de l'ordre spirituel." J. Bricout, Dictionnaire pratique des connaissances religieuses, Paris, Letouzey & Ané, 1926, vol. iv, p. 1045.

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repair:

Vas confractum reparatur²³,

Vas Deo plenum reparare fractum
promeruisti²⁴.

A stanza from an eleventh century manuscript notes that Benedict made a broken sieve whole by virtue of his pure life:

Per pueri puritatem
Confractum integritatem
Capit capisterium²⁵,

while a hymn in another manuscript dated for the same century says "he restores broken objects by the grace of the Lord":

Et Domini gratia²⁶
confracta restaurat.

A twelfth century manuscript tells that Benedict made firm the shattered container:

Vas confractum solidavit²⁷.

The news of the miracle spread throughout the village and the mended utensil was displayed over the door of the church at Enfide. Benedict, now the center of praise

²³ B 6, 4a.

²⁴ B 32, 2.

²⁵ B 29, 2a.

²⁶ B 36, 4.

²⁷ B 43, 6a.

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and admiration and totally embarrassed by the whole affair, made one more attempt to retire to complete solitude.

Secretly stealing away from his nurse, he sought refuge in the wilderness of Subiaco²⁸ about forty miles north of Rome:

Sed Benedictus plus appetens mala mundi perpeti quam laudes; pro Deo laboribus fatigari, vita huius favoribus extolli, nutricem suam occulte fugiens, deserti loci secessum petiit, cui Sublacus vocabulum est, qui a Romana urbe quadraginta fere milibus distans, frigidas adque perspicuas emanat aquas²⁸.

Benedict's escape to the wilderness in order to contemplate divine teachings is alluded to in two stanzas of a hymn on a tenth century manuscript:

Linquens solamina
sueta eremi spelaea
adortus est sine mora.

Illic mentem suam
in vita fixit theoricam
divina plenus gratia²⁹.

A thirteenth century manuscript continues the allusion pointing out Benedict's desire for solitude:

Monarchiam
studens solivagam
solus inisti eremum
istud exsecrando saeculum³⁰.

²⁸ Dialogi, II, 1.

²⁹ B 3, 3a-3b.

³⁰ B 49, 4a.

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3. Benedict at Subiaco.

In the cave at Subiaco "begins the monastic career of the patriarch of Western monks. The time is the end of the fifth century, about the year of Our Lord 500. Benedict is perhaps twenty years old³¹."

En route to his destination Benedict was met and befriended by a monk named Romanus, who lived in a nearby monastery. Providing the young hermit with a cave under a cliff and a plain sheepskin garment, Romanus kept Benedict's purpose secret. Romanus daily gave the hermit bread which was tied to the end of a long rope with a little bell attached as a signal and lowered over the cliff to the cave. For three years this secret correspondence continued and could not be interrupted by the devil who threw a stone at the bell and broke it³². No mention of Romanus or the incident of the devil and the bell is made in any of the hymns in honor of St. Benedict from manuscripts dated from the tenth to the thirteenth century. A hymn from a twelfth century manuscript, however, does make note of Benedict's three-year stay in the cave at Subiaco:

³¹ McCann, op. cit., p. 46.

³² Dialogi, II, 1.

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Cuius amore puer
dereliquit
saeculi gaudia

In specu tribus annis
macerando
membra tennerima³³.

In the next chapter of the Dialogues St. Gregory recounts another incident belonging to Benedict's period of solitude, namely, the conquering of a carnal temptation by rolling himself in a patch of thorns:

One day Benedict was annoyed by a little black bird which continuously flitted about his face. When Benedict made the sign of the cross the bird flew away. Immediately after, the Man of God suffered a most violent temptation resulting from an image of a woman which the evil spirit brought before his mind. Benedict stripped himself of his clothing and rolled in thorns until the temptation was subdued:

Quadam viro die dum solus essit, temptator adfuit, nam nigra parvaque avis, quae vulgo merola vocatur, circa eius faciem volitare coepit, eiusque vultui inopportune insistere, ita ut capi manu possit, si hanc vir sanctus tenere voluissit: sed signo crucis edito, recessit avis. tanta autem carnis temptatio, avi eadem recedente, secuta est, quantam vir sanctus vir numquam fuerat expertus. [...] cum subito superna gratia respectus, ad semetipsum re-versus est, adque orticarum et februm iuxta densa subcrescere frutecta conspiciens, exutus indumento, nudum se in illis spinarum aculeis et orticarum incendiis proiecit³⁴.

³³ B 42, 3a-3b.

³⁴ Dialogi, II, 2.

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The story of the great temptation became a popular motif for medieval hymnodists. One hymnodist succinctly summarizes in two stanzas the appearance of the black bird and the conquering of the temptation in the thorn bush:

Nam die quadam
daemonis impias
specie
avis commotas

Temptationes
superans spinea
vulnera
tractat dumeta³⁵.

Another hymnwriter relates how Benedict stripped himself and bled among the thorns:

amictu exutus
cruentabaris inter dumeta³⁶.

The following stanza from a hymn in an eleventh century manuscript uses striking images to show Benedict's power in ridding himself of the evil bird and the carnal temptation: By means of these weapons with which you drove the most loathesome black bird from your face, vanquish the cursed rage of the lion³⁷.

³⁵ B 42, 4a-4b.

³⁶ B 21, 5a.

³⁷ Satan is likened to a lion which stalks its prey and goes about in violence and rage: "Be sober and watch well; the devil who is your enemy, goes about roaring like a lion, to find his prey," I Peter 5, 8. (Knox translation: The New Testament, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1954, p. 624.)

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His armis execrabilem
 Leonis vince rabiem
 Quibus vince taeterrimam
 Pellis ab ore merulam³⁸.

In the very next stanza the hymnwriter describes the effects of Benedict's courageous fight against the temptation:

Urticae iunctae vepribus
 Vulnus curant vulneribus
 Flammata mens divinitus
 Ignes extinguit ignibus³⁹.

The foregoing stanza greatly resembles Gregory's account in substance and language:

Ibique diu volutatus, toto ex eis corpore
 vulneratus exiit, et per cutis vulnera eduxit a
 corpore vulnus mentis [...]⁴⁰

Benedict's powerful virtues in subduing the defects of his flesh are attested to in the following stanza:

Hostes fregit, mundum sprexit
 Carnis labem his subegit
 Virtutum potentiis⁴¹.

Benedict's three-year solitude came to a close by the intervention of Divine Providence. After a while Romanus no longer brought Benedict food and a certain priest, whom Gregory does not name, was instructed by Our Lord in a vision to carry his Easter Sunday dinner to the

³⁸ B 33, 2.

³⁹ B 33, 3.

⁴⁰ Dialogi, II, 2.

⁴¹ B 43, 1b.

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hermit Benedict who was starving in his cave. The priest searched for and found the Man of God and shared his victuals with him and returned to his church never to be heard of again. About this same time shepherds discovered the solitary in his cave, became his friends, and made his presence known throughout the countryside⁴². None of the hymns studies mentions the two foregoing incidents.

4. Benedict at Vicovaro and
his return to Subiaco.

The abbot of the monastery at Vicovaro, twenty miles from Subiaco, had recently died. A committee of monks from this community came to Benedict with the invitation to become their new abbot. Benedict tried to refuse their request, warning them that his way of life would not harmonize with theirs. The monks would take no refusal. Benedict accepted the responsibility and was a serious father to the community and tried firmly to turn them away from their lax ways. Benedict's efforts at correction only made them more sullen and they began to repent of their impulsive choice and plotted to remove the obnoxious abbot. One day at dinner the waiter brought in a jug of wine which the abbot customarily blessed and tasted before serving it at the meal.

⁴² Dialogi, II, 1.

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The vessel, containing a poisonous mixture of wine, was set a short distance in front of the abbot whose blessing shattered the container as though hit by a stone:

Benedictus, extensa manu, signum crucis ededit,
et vas quod longius tenebatur eodem signo rupit;
sicque confractum est, ac si in illo vase mortis pro
cruce lapidem dedisset. intellexit protinus vir Dei
qui potum ~~mortis~~ habuerat quod portare non potuit
signum vitae⁴³.

The frustrated poison attempt is alluded to in hymns appearing in manuscripts dated the eleventh and twelfth century.

One hymn from an eleventh century manuscript tells in two of its stanzas of Benedict's awareness of the harmful potion which he shattered with the sign of the cross:

Iusti mens praeclara
et digna quam nil
nocet pessima
fraus mortis conscia;

Felici qui dextra
dat crucis signa,
crepat fiala
mox pestis bajula⁴⁴.

Another hymn from a manuscript dated the same century describes how the sign of the cross broke the container

⁴³ Dialogi, II, 3.

⁴⁴ B 31, 6a-6b.

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Crucem mittens ut lapidem
 Veneni frangis calicem
 Non valet mortis vasculum
 Vitae ferre signaculum⁴⁵.

The following verse points out that Benedict put the poison to flight with the sign of the cross:

Cruce venenum effugat⁴⁶.

After this near fatal experience at Vicovaro, Benedict assembled the monks and chided them and returned to his cave at Subiaco. The whole story is combined in the following two stanzas from a thirteenth century manuscript:

Vas veneno tinctum
 Super mensam situm,
 Signum crucis agens
 Confregisti statim.

Increpasti fratres
 Vultu mente lenis
 Quibus noxam laxans
 Ad desertum redis⁴⁷.

5. Benedict's first disciples.

Benedict's reputation for sanctity had become very great and men eager to devote themselves to the service of God flocked to him in great numbers so that he was able to organize twelve monasteries with an abbot appointed over each of them:

⁴⁵ B 33, 4.

⁴⁶ B 37, 9.

⁴⁷ B 46, 4-5.

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Ita ut illuc duodecim monasteria cum omnipotentis
Ihesu Christi Domini opitulatione construerit, in
quibus statutis patribus duodenos monachos depotavit;
paucos viro secum retenuit, quos adhuc in sua presentia
aptius erudiri iudicavit⁴⁸.

One hymnodist tells of Benedict's spreading divine
seed as he founded the twelve monasteries:

Circumcirca
demum semina
propagans divina
duodena
fratrem inclita
fundavitque
monasteria

Cuncta per saecula⁴⁹.

In other hymns Benedict's new foundations are re-
ferred to as "coenobia"⁵⁰, a special type of monastery
approved by the Patriarch. Stanzas from a tenth and twelfth
century manuscript respectively tell of the founding of the
coenobia and the assigning of the twelve monks to each of
them:

⁴⁸ Dialogi, II, 3.

⁴⁹ B 39, 4b, 5.

⁵⁰ "[coenobium] hoc est monasteriale, militans sub
regula vel abbate." [Sanctus] Benedictus, Sancta Regula
Monachorum, textus critico-practico cura P. Schmitz, addita
C. Mohrmann enarratione in linguam S. Benedicti, Maredsous,
1955, 253 p. Caput I.

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(Post haec) coenobia
 Struis duodena
 Cuique assignans⁵¹
 Duodenos fratres⁵¹.

Nonnullam secum
 aggregavit turmam
 centum quatuor ac
 quadraginta,

Duo per dena
 condens coenobia,
 quae Deo redderet
 obsequia⁵².

In Benedict's monasteries all members were alike in heart though their past state of life were different:

Fundantur coenobia
 Quae non cordis sed colorum
 Variat distantia⁵³.

During these times of monastic beginnings, noblemen came from Rome to leave their young sons with Benedict to be schooled in the service of the Lord⁵⁴. Among the newcomers were two very promising boys, Maurus, the twelve-year old son of Equitius, and Placid, the seven-year old son of the patrician Tertullus⁵⁵.

⁵¹ B 46, 6.

⁵² B 3, 4a-4b.

⁵³ B 48, 6.

⁵⁴ "Constituenda est ergo nobis Dominici schola servitii." Sancta Regula, Prologus.

⁵⁵ Dialogi, II, 3.

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In one of the monasteries established at Subiaco the way of life had become rather dull for one of the older brethren. Each day after the recitation of the psalms a certain restless monk refused to remain in chapel with the rest of the community for silent prayer. As soon as all knelt he would go outside and pass his time aimlessly at whatever entered his mind. His abbot repeatedly corrected him and finally sent him to Abbot Benedict who gave him a strong rebuke for his folly. The amendment lasted only a day or two and the old habit of wandering off began again. Learning of this, Abbot Benedict himself came to the monastery to administer correction and discovered that the loiterer was being led away from chapel by a little black boy who was pulling at the edge of his habit. After young Maurus and the wayward monk's abbot had witnessed the scene, Benedict administered the final measure of discipline:

die igitur alia, explete oratione, vir Dei, oratorium egressus, stantem foris monachum repperit, quem pro cecitate cordis sui virga percussit: qui ex illo die nihil persuasionis ulterius a nigro puerolo pertulit, sed ad orationis studium immobilis permansit; sicque antiquus hostis dominari non ausus est in eius cogitatione, ac si ipse percussus fuisset ex verberibus⁵⁶.

Benedict's method of correcting the wayward monk is reflected in the following verses:

⁵⁶ Dialogi, II, 4.

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Virga vagus emendatur⁵⁷.

Fratrem [a] verbere miserum⁵⁸.

Another hymn tells the story more elaborately as it points out how the wayward brother whom the most wicked spirit led away was restored to stability when struck with a staff:

Frater, quem tunc nequissimus
Vagam raptabam spiritus,
Cum tua virga caeditur
Stabilitati redditur⁵⁹.

The wayward monk is also alluded to in verses from eleventh century manuscripts:

Vagam facis non vagari⁶⁰,

Vagae mentis
monachum reparat⁶¹.

The whole story is summarized in a stanza from a twelfth century manuscript:

Quorum fuit unus
In orando vagus
Quem daemon per vestem
Extrudebat foras

Hunc dum virga caedis,
Statim sanum reddis,
A quo daemon fugit⁶².
Sicut virga caesus⁶².

⁵⁷ B 6, 4a.

⁵⁸ B 36, 5; B 36a, 3b.

⁵⁹ B 33, 5.

⁶⁰ B 29, 5a.

⁶¹ B 37, 10.

⁶² B 46, 7-8.

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All was not going well in other monasteries of the Holy Abbot's little colony either. On one occasion the monks of three monasteries situated high on a rocky mountain lodged a protest with Benedict. They complained that it was a real hardship to take the long path down the steep dangerous craggy slopes every day to draw water from the lake for their needs. Their only solution was to have their monasteries moved somewhere else. Benedict listened to them patiently and sent them back with fatherly words of encouragement exemplifying what he later enjoined upon the cellarer of the monastery, who, if unable to fulfill a request, should answer with a kind word which was above the best gift⁶³. With immediate action Benedict complied with the monks' request and that same night climbed unnoticed to the rocky heights where he prayed for a long time. Afterwards he marked the spot where he prayed with three stones. When the monks returned to Benedict the next day, he sent them to the spot and instructed them to make a little hollow in the rock and God would provide water:

Qui euntes rupem montis, quam Benedictus praedixerat, iam sudantem invenerunt; cumque in ea concavum locum fecissent, statim aqua repletus est, quae tam sufficienter emanavit, ut nunc usque ubertim defluat, adque ab illo montis cacumine usque ad inferiora direvetur⁶⁴.

⁶³ Sancta Regula, XXXI.

⁶⁴ Dialogi, II, 5.

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Three hymnodists make a very brief allusion to the miraculous spring:

De rupe fons oritur⁶⁵,

Rupes flumina⁶⁶
dant insolita⁶⁶,

Fontem rivulat⁶⁷.

In the following stanza Benedict is compared to Moses⁶⁸ who also brought water from a rock for his followers:

Aequiperas meritum Moysi
Cum gregis annuerat oneri,
Eliciens prece nocticana⁶⁹.
Ex silicis laticem cavea⁶⁹.

Another hymnodist proclaims Benedict as God's instrument through whom He made fountains flow from a rock which "nearly touched the stars":

Per hunc Deus tribus cellis
Petra fere tacta stellis
Fontes facit fluere⁷⁰.

One of the many postulants who came to join Benedict's community was a Goth of simple spirit "who had been converted from his Arianism and felt drawn to the monastic

⁶⁵ B 6, 4a.

⁶⁶ B 37, 10.

⁶⁷ B 36, 7.

⁶⁸ Exodus 17, 5-6.

⁶⁹ B 28, 4.

⁷⁰ B 29, 4a.

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life⁷¹". One day during the period of manual labor the Goth was provided with a brush hook to clear away the briars from a place at the edge of the lake where a garden was to be planted. As he was hard at work, the blade of the instrument slipped from the handle and flew into a very deep part of the lake where there was no hope of recovery. When Benedict heard of the misfortune, he took the handle of the instrument and cast it into the water. Immediately the blade floated to the surface and adjusted itself on the handle:

Vir igitur Domini Benedictus haec audiens
accessit ad locum, tulit de manu Gothi manubrium
intravit. qui statim ferra mentum Gotho reddedit
dicens: ecce labora, et noti contristari⁷².

The miraculous recovery of the blade is succinctly told in the following verse from a twelfth century manuscript:

Ad falcastri ferrum
Excusum in aquam
Hasta ibi missa
Reducis ad eam⁷³.

Another hymnodist attributes the recovery of the blade to Benedict's sanctity:

⁷¹ McCann, op. cit., p. 62.

⁷² Dialogi, II, 6.

⁷³ B 46, 14.

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Cuius sentit sanctitatem
 Ferrum ferens gravitatem
 Suum ad manubrium⁷⁴.

A hymn from a manuscript of the eleventh century sees in Benedict the faith of Eliseus⁷⁵ who also recovered an iron blade from a body of water:

Compos Helisaicae fidei,
 Compatiens lacrimisque Gothi
 Gurgitis eximii scatebris
 Manubrio calibem revehis⁷⁶.

In the following stanzas the miracle of the iron is simply alluded to:

Ferrum enatat⁷⁷

De profundum ferrum mersum
 Eius iussu est reversum⁷⁸.

The vow of obedience is an essential element of monastic life; the monk fulfills his life in the service of God through his obedience to the monastic rule. In the very first sentence of the Rule, the Lawgiver Benedict speaks of obedience⁷⁹ and further on devotes the whole of chapter five to this principle.

⁷⁴ B 29, 2b.

⁷⁵ IV Kings, 6, 4-7.

⁷⁶ B 28, 5.

⁷⁷ B 36, 6; B 37, 11; B 36a, 3b.

⁷⁸ B 43, 5a.

⁷⁹ Sancta Regula, Prologus.

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In a special chapter St. Benedict's pontifical biographer describes simultaneously the wisdom of the teacher and the marvellous obedience of his disciple, Maurus, who at Benedict's command ran across the lake and saved young Placid who had fallen into the lake while drawing water from it. The current swiftly carried the boy out into deeper water. Benedict, who knew of Placid's peril, commanded Maurus to go out to save him:

Vir autem Dei intra cellam positus, hoc protinus agnovit, et Maurum festine vocavit dicens: "frater Maure, curre, qui puer ille qui ad auriendam aquam perrexerat, in lacu cecidit, iamque eum longius unda trahit." res mira et post Petrum Apostolum inusitata. benedictione etenim postolata adque percepta, ad patris sui imperium concitus perrexit Maurus, adque usque ad eum locum, quo ab unda ducebatur puer per terram se ire exaestimans, super aquas cucurrit, eumque per capillos tenuit, rapido quoque curso rediit⁸⁰.

Only when Maurus returned to the shore, did he become aware of the miracle and straightway gave Benedict credit for it. The Living Rule in turn attributed the miraculous happening to the obedience of Maurus who once more ascribed the event to the saint since he himself could not be the author of a miracle of which he was unaware. The humble contention was settled by Placid who claimed he saw the abbot's cowl over his head as he was being saved.

⁸⁰ Dialogi, II, 7.

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This charming story has enjoyed a long and popular tradition and ten medieval hymns from manuscripts embracing the tenth to the thirteenth century allude to it.

Maurus' obedience is especially pointed out in the following stanzas:

E quibus Maurus sedulus minister
Gurgite ductum Placidum puerum
Obsequens patri latice levatum
Aequore traxit⁸¹.

Ad praeceptum tuum
Super aquas Maurus
Currrens monachellum
Exinde reduxit⁸².

Sic Maurus tuis
obsecundans iussis
traxit Placidum
undis submersum⁸³.

Maurus' trip across the water is associated in the following stanzas with a similar miracle of the apostle Peter who walked across the water at Christ's command⁸⁴:

Ut Petrum Dominus
sic Maurus currere
fecerat pelagus
physin per fidem superans⁸⁵.

⁸¹ B 4, 5.

⁸² B 40, 13.

⁸³ B 49, 7b.

⁸⁴ Matthew 14, 28-29.

⁸⁵ B 23, 7.

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Stagno aquarum pedibus calcans⁸⁶.
 Petri ad instar signibus pollet⁸⁶.

Maurus sicut Petrus mari
 Per te fertur flumine⁸⁷

Dum oboedit Maurus patri
 Super undas plantis Petri
 Currens traxit Placidum⁸⁸.

One hymnodist uniquely says the waves became a solid path:

Solida fit undae semita⁸⁹,

while another says the disciple ran upon the water "with dry feet":

Discipulus super aquas
 siccis pedibus currit⁹⁰.

Benedict's reputation by now had reached wide dimensions and a continuous stream of pilgrims came to visit the Servant of God — the sick, the troubled, the disconsolate, and those who desired to enter the service of God at his monastery.

A certain Florentius, the pastor of a church nearby, became jealous of the abbot's popularity and by detraction

⁸⁶ B 23, 7.

⁸⁷ B 29, 5a.

⁸⁸ B 43, 6b.

⁸⁹ B 36, 6.

⁹⁰ B 37, 12.

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tried to divert the concourse of disciples from Benedict's door to his own. When he failed in this attempt, he resolved to remove the abbot altogether by treacherous means. Beside himself with envy, Florentius deceitfully sent the Holy Patriarch a present of blessed bread⁹¹, according to the custom of the times, as a token of Christian fellowship. Into the loaf Florentius put a lethal dose of poison. Benedict accepted the gift, fully aware of its deadly contents and disposed of it by having a raven carry it away.

Tunc corvus aperto ore expansis alis circa eundem panem, coepit discurrere, atque crocitare, ac si aperte dicerit et oboedire se velle et tamen iussa implere non posse. cui vir Dei iterum adque iterum praecipiebat dicens "leva, leva securus, adque ibi proice ubi invenire non possit"⁹².

The episode of the poisoned bread and the raven which disposed of it appears in hymns from manuscripts dated the eleventh century. In two stanzas one hymn comments on Florentius' evil act and gives a paraphrase of Benedict's command to the raven to dispose of the gift:

⁹¹ This gift called the "eulogia" was one of the blessed breads which were offered at the altar and which bishops and priests used to give to those who deserved well of the church as a special sign of friendship. Cf. Shuster, op. cit., p. 115-116.

⁹² Dialogi, II, 8.

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Et dum venata
mittit invidus hostis dona
viro Dei mente mala,

Refer, inquit, ista
quo nulli ferant exitia;
vir sanctus corvo imperat⁹³.

Two other hymns state the fact that the raven carried out Benedict's command:

corvus nil murmurans fert iussa⁹⁴.
corvus mandatum peragit⁹⁵.

Twice thwarted in his attempt to eliminate Benedict, Florentius struck a final blow at the saint by aiming destruction at the souls of his disciples. For this purpose he sent seven depraved women into the monastic garden where they joined hands and danced naked, exposing themselves to view of the whole monastery. Observing the scandalous spectacle from his own window, Benedict understood the diabolical malice back of it. Fearing for the virtue of his young disciples, the man of God let envy have its way and decided to leave Subiaco. Before his departure he reconstituted his monasteries as independent families and with a few monks set out to find a new home. About ten miles away from Subiaco, Benedict received news from a joyful Maurus

⁹³ B 31, 7a-7b.

⁹⁴ B 36, 7.

⁹⁵ B 37, 12.

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that Florentius had suddenly died. God's judgment had struck him when the balcony on which he was sunning himself unexpectedly collapsed. Refusing to return to Subiaco, the holy abbot continued his journey. He lamented his enemy's death and heavily penalized Maurus who dared to rejoice over it⁹⁶.

Two hymns from tenth century manuscripts recall the incident. One compares Benedict to David who also wept over his enemies⁹⁷:

Persequentium ruinas dolet
ut David⁹⁸,

while the other remarks of the evil end of Florentius:

In infernum morte cadit
Iustum qui persequitur⁹⁹.

The foregoing examination of the St. Benedict hymns has revealed that the data contained in the hymns correspond with the information contained in the saint's biography by St. Gregory. As the chapter developed it was shown how the hymnodists of different centuries utilized the data contained in the Dialogues and how the popularity of events as

⁹⁶ Dialogi, II, 8.

⁹⁷ II Kings, 1, 11-12; 18, 33.

⁹⁸ B 17, 6b.

⁹⁹ B 6, 4b.

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they were related in the hymns varied from century to century, e.g. Benedict's acquaintance with the raven is told only in hymns in manuscripts of the eleventh century while Benedict's command to Maurus to run across the waters appears in manuscripts from the tenth to the thirteenth century inclusive.

Thus far, no biographical material has appeared in the hymns which is not contained in the Dialogues, book two of St. Gregory.

CHAPTER TWO

BENEDICT'S MIRACLES AT MONTE CASSINO

1. Benedict's Power over Satan

This chapter continues the examination of the Saint Benedict hymns for biographical data which now tells of the saint's entire stay at Monte Cassino including his death and burial there.

After his sad departure from Subiaco where he had sanctified the beginnings of his monastic congregation, Benedict and his handful of monks travelled southeastward until they reached Casinum. This town lay at the foot of a mountain now known as Monte Cassino¹. On its summit was an ancient fortification which once made the mountaintop serve as a citadel for the town below. There were also very old shrines and sacred groves on top of the mountain where people still worshipped Apollo. On his arrival Benedict came upon the ruined fortification and survivals of pagan worship and took up residence in the castle of the old fortress. After clearing away the groves and destroying the pagan altars, he turned a temple of Apollo into a chapel

¹ "Monte Cassino is about seventy-five miles southeast of Rome. St. Benedict arrived there in 529." Zimmermann, op. cit., p. 27.

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which he dedicated to St. Martin of Tours, built a chapel in honor of St. John the Baptist, and converted the pagans of the countryside by his preaching:

Ibi itaque vir Dei perveniens, contrivit idolum subvertit aram succidit lucos, adque in ipso templo Apollenis oraculum Beati Martini, ubi vero ara eiusdem Apollenis fuit, oraculum Sancti construxit Iohannis; et commorantem circumquaque multitudinem praedicatione continua ad fidem vocabat².

Benedict's efforts against paganism are spoken of in three hymns in manuscripts of the twelfth century. One of the hymns gives noteworthy details which are found in Gregory's prose narrative:

Paganos convertens
Apollinis aram
Evertis et templum
Mox Martini struis³.

Another hymn underscores Benedict's preaching and apostolic zeal:

Hic idola destruit
Fidem rectam instruit⁴.
Christum praedicando⁴.

The following stanza briefly tells that he destroyed the old groves:

Confregit delubra
obsoleta⁵

² Dialogi, II, 8.

³ B 46, 9.

⁴ B 43, 3a.

⁵ B 39, 4a.

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During Benedict's efforts to construct a monastery on the heights of Monte Cassino these first days, St. Gregory cites instances of a diabolical nature which seemed to be attempts to hinder the saint's work.

Apparently the ancient gods did not want to abandon their pagan stronghold without a struggle. Enraged by the destruction of the temples and groves and at the success of Benedict's preaching, the devil, all aflame, appeared to the Man of God and cursed him so loudly that the other monks could hear him though they could not see him:

Prius enim hunc vocabat ex nomine. cui cum clamaret dicens: "Benedicte, Benedicte," et eum sibi nullo modo respondere conspiceret, protinus adiungebat: "maledicte, non benedicte; quid mecum habes? quid me persequeris⁶?"

Benedict's encounter with Satan is referred to in the following stanza from a twelfth century manuscript:

Inimicus dolens
Exclamabat fremens
Dicens: "Maledicte,
Quid persequeris me⁷?"

Satan's discomfort is aptly described in a hymn in a manuscript of the thirteenth century:

⁶ Dialogi, II, 8.

⁷ B 46, 10.

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Fractus humani generis videndo
 Hostis immanis gemit et dolendo,
 Invide frendens quaeritur coactus
 De Benedicto⁸.

The number of souls won by Benedict made Satan groan. This idea is expressed in a stanza appearing from an eleventh century manuscript:

Quantas Deo animas
 lucratus fuerit,
 Dominus numerat⁹
 et hostis ingemit⁹.

Satan's apparition was followed by a series of diabolical happenings. One day the brethren were hard at work building the cells of the new cloister. Nearby lay a stone which they intended to use in the walls of their structure. When a team of workers proved unable to lift the stone, they concluded that the old enemy was sitting on it; so the monks sought the help of the Man of God, Benedict:

Difficultate igitur facta, ad virum Dei missum est ut veniret, orando hostem repelleret, ut lapidem levare potuissent. qui mox venit, orationem faciens benedictionem dedit, et tanta lapis celeritate levatus est, ac si nullum prius pondus habuissit¹⁰.

The diabolical interference is referred to in two hymns in an eleventh century manuscript. Both simply speak of the lifting of the stone:

⁸ B 47, 8.

⁹ B 17, 5a.

¹⁰ Dialogi, II, 9.

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Petrum leve das levare¹¹

Ingentem laevigat petram¹².

In the place from which the stone had been taken, Benedict directed his monks to dig a little deeper. Further down they dug up a bronze idol which they tossed into the kitchen. A few minutes later the kitchen appeared to be on fire and all efforts to extinguish the blaze were in vain. When St. Benedict came to the scene, he could not see the fire and realized that his monks were victims of an illusion. Benedict bowed his head in silent prayer and immediately the monk's eyes were opened to the devil's deceit:

Cumque iacendo aquam et ignem quasi extinguendo perstreperent, pulsatus eodem tumultu vir Domini advenit. qui eundem ignem in oculus fratrum esse, in suis viro non esse considerans, caput protinus in orationem flexit, et eos quos phantastico repperit igne deludi, revocavit fratres ad oculos suos, ut et sanum illud quoquinae aedificium adsistere cernerent et flammam, quas antiquus hostis infinxerat, non viderent¹³.

The following verse tells that Benedict proved that the kitchen was not burning:

Et coquinam non cremari
Probas viso turbine¹⁴

¹¹ B 29, 5b.

¹² B 37, 13.

¹³ Dialogi, II, 10.

¹⁴ B 29, 5b.

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while another relates that he averted the brethren's eyes from the blaze:

Fratrum revocat
Oculos iam delusos
ignibus¹⁵.

During the construction of the monastic retaining wall the devil appeared to the Servant of God who was in his room praying and sarcastically remarked to the saint that he was on his way to visit the working brethren. Benedict sent an urgent warning to the workers. As soon as it reached them the devil overturned the wall and crushed a young monk to death. The mangled body in which every bone was broken was wrapped in a blanket and carried to the saint who prayed over it; that same hour Benedict sent the boy back to work healthy and sound:

Tunc isdem pater ad se delaceratum puerum
deferri iubet. [...] qui oratione instantius quam
solebat incubuit. mira res: hora eadem hunc incolomen adque, ut prius, valentem ad eundem iterum laborem misit [...]¹⁶.

Benedict's first resuscitation miracle accomplished through his prayers is told in the following stanza from an eleventh century manuscript:

Strage saxorum puerum sepultum
Mox ut orasti, prece suscitasti,
Sensus hinc carni, caro sanitati
Redditur aeque¹⁷.

¹⁵ B 27, 13.

¹⁶ Dialogi, II, 11.

¹⁷ B 32, 4.

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Another hymn from a manuscript of the same century tells the story of the miracle more simply:

Lapsum monachum,
per membra tritum,
sua prece
redonavit animae¹⁸.

A hymn from a twelfth century manuscript sums up the story and its circumstances in two of its stanzas:

Construebat murum
Laete tui fratres,
Quem daemon evertit
Et mox unum stinxit.

Tu vero defunctus
Iubes ad te ferri
Pro quo fundens preces
Facis vitae reddi¹⁹.

St. Gregory records two other instances of the Man of God's triumphs over Satan by curing those who were possessed.

A cleric from the Church at Aquino, a town about five miles from Monte Cassino, was possessed by the devil. His bishop sent him to the shrines of the martyrs who did not grant him a cure. Finally the man was sent to Benedict who healed him:

[Clericus] ductus itaque est ad omnipotentis Dei famulum Benedictum; qui Ihesu Christo Domino praeces fundens antiquum hostem de obsessio homine protinus expulit²⁰.

¹⁸ B 37, 14.

¹⁹ B 46, 11-12.

²⁰ Dialogi, II, 16.

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A hymn from an eleventh century manuscript makes note of the possessed cleric's cure:

Qui clericum
hoste pervasum
liberat²¹.

Another time while the Man of God was on his way to chapel to pray, he met the enemy of his monks disguised as a veterinarian bringing the monks some medicine. Benedict finished his prayer and hurried back to the cloister to find that the evil spirit had entered one of his monks whom he found drawing water and had thrown him into violent convulsions. Benedict approached the miserable monk and struck him on the cheek, thus driving out the evil spirit who never returned to the man:

Quem cum vir Dei ab oratione rediens tam crudeliter vexari conspicerit, ei solummodo alapam dedit, et malignum ab eo spiritum protinus excussit, ita ut redire ad eum ulterius non auderit²².

The departure of the unclean spirit is told of in a hymn from a twelfth century manuscript:

Spiritus rabies
immundi pestifera
nutu iubentis
effigit
obsessa corpora²³.

²¹ B 37, 18.

²² Dialogi, II, 30.

²³ B 42, 5b.

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In the following verses from an eleventh century manuscript there is a simultaneous mention of the cleric's and the old monk's cure from the wrath of the evil spirit:

Binos zabuli salvavit ab ira²⁴.

2. Benedict's Visionary and Prophetic Charisms.

In the early days at Monte Cassino Benedict began to show signs of supernatural insight into the deeds and affairs of others. He had the ability to reveal to others their deeds which were performed in his absence even though they were done far away from the monastery. He also manifested the spirit of prophecy by foretelling future events and he could also disclose to others in his presence their secret thoughts.

St. Gregory relates several stories which reveal the saint's charisms²⁵. In chapter twelve the biographer

²⁴ B 36, 9.

²⁵ "Charismata or Charisms, the gifts or graces of an extraordinary type, called 'gratis datae' given to individual Christians for the benefit of others. They may be defined as functions which are present continuously and exercised at a particular time and which, whether or not they are extraordinary, by their very nature tend to aid the faithful either locally or universally. St. Paul (I Cor. 12:8-10; 12:31) lists nine of these 'gratis datae', including prophecy and the working of miracles, etc., and declares them to be of the Holy Spirit." The Catholic Concise Encyclopedia, compiled and edited by Robert C. Broderick, St. Paul, Catechetical Guild Educational Society, 1957, p. 86.

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tells of some brethren who had been sent on a journey and stayed longer than usual. Overcome with fatigue and hunger, they refreshed themselves at the house of a devout woman acquaintance²⁶. That evening when the monks returned to the enclosure and presented themselves to Abbot Benedict for his blessing, he asked them where they had dined and they told him *they* had eaten nowhere. Immediately the saint upbraided them for this lie and told them exactly where they ate, what they ate, and the quantity consumed²⁷.

In the next chapter of the Dialogues, Gregory continues to point out the Servant of God's watchfulness over his absent brethren.

The monk Valentinian had a brother, a devout layman, who used to visit the monastery every year. During his journey to Monte Cassino he was accustomed to fast. On one such journey the devout layman was joined by a stranger who after long intervals of walking suggested that they eat and refresh themselves. At the first and second suggestion the layman demurred; the third prompting was so appealing that

²⁶ By so doing they failed to observe Chapter fifty-one of the Holy Rule which provided for such emergencies outside the monastery: "[...] non presumat foris manducare, etiam si omnino rogetur a quovis, nisi forte ei ab abbate suo praeciatur [...]".

²⁷ Dialogi, II, 12.

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the layman gave in. Upon his arrival at the monastery Benedict reproved the devout man for his conduct on the journey and revealed to him that the companion who persuaded him to break his fast was none other than the evil spirit²⁸.

Benedict's reprimand for the monks who ate outside the monastery and for the travelling guest who broke his fast is alluded to in a hymn in an eleventh century manuscript:

Culpani prodidit
Praesumpti cibi
et hospitem notat
culpa simili²⁹

In chapters eighteen and nineteen respectively, Gregory concludes his discussion of Benedict's ability to know the activities of those absent from him.

Chapter eighteen tells of a nobleman who sent his servant to Abbot Benedict with two kegs of wine. The servant delivered one keg and secretly kept the other for himself. Benedict thanked the servant for the gift and exhorted him not to drink from the absconded keg without examining its contents. Full of shame and wonderment at the Man of God's awareness of his act, the servant tilted the keg and found that it contained a serpent.

²⁸ Dialogi, II, 13.

²⁹ B 37, 15.

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Chapter nineteen tells of a group of nuns not far from the monastery who used to receive spiritual instruction from one of Benedict's monks. After one of the instructions the nuns made a gift of some handkerchiefs to the monk who accepted them and hid them in his habit³⁰. Upon his return to the abbey the monk, who had already forgotten about the gift, received a stern rebuke from Abbot Benedict who claimed he was present at the entire transaction.

Though no hymn makes a particular mention of the two foregoing stories, nevertheless there is a general allusion to them in a hymn in a tenth century manuscript which speaks of Benedict's faculty of knowing the acts and thoughts of those absent:

Visu mentis hic absentes
Intuetur ut praesentes
Notat actus, notat mentes,
Spiritus indicio³¹.

A hymn from a thirteenth century manuscript notes that Benedict could "see absent events":

Res et absentes videt³².

³⁰ The acceptance of the handkerchiefs was contrary to the monk's Rule: "Nullatenus liceat monacho neque a parentibus suis neque a quoquam hominum nec sibi invicem literas, eulogias, vel quaelibet munuscula accipere aut dare sine praecepto. [...] qui autem aliter praesumpserit, disciplinae regulari subiaceat." Sancta Regula, LII.

³¹ B 6, 5b.

³² B 47, 5.

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The Patriarch's power to read the thoughts of those in his presence is first learned of in chapter twenty of the Dialogues regarding a proud young monk of noble lineage. This monk, a son of a "defensor"³³, was holding a candle to provide light for the Holy Abbot at supper. Overcome with thoughts of pride, the youth wondered why one born of his status should be made to serve others. Benedict perceived the monk's thoughts and scolded him, and removed him from his position:

Qui, requisitus a fratribus, quid habuerit in corde, per ordinem narravit, quanto superbiae spiritu intumuerat, et quae contra virum Dei verba per cogitationem tacitus dicebat. tunc liquido omnibus patuit, quod venerabilem Benedictum latere nihil possit, in cuius aure etiam cogitationis verba sonuissent³⁴.

The proud thoughts of the young monk are referred to in the following verse from an eleventh century manuscript:

Pueri superba divinat³⁵.

³³ "Literally 'a protector'; very like a 'protector of the municipality' (defensor civitatis), the city official who safeguarded the people from exorbitant prices and the dishonesty of private tax collectors. In St. Benedict's time he was one of the most prominent figures in the cities of Italy, a fact which may account for the spirit of pride in this young monk." Zimmermann, op. cit., p. 46.

³⁴ Dialogi, II, 20.

³⁵ B 36, 11.

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Two verses from a twelfth century manuscript indicate the uncovering of the disciple's heart:

Corque fratris denudavit,
Producens in lucidum³⁶.

A more well-known incident which occasioned Benedict to lay bare the interior designs of another took place when the Goth leader Totila tried to make a laughing stock of the Holy Patriarch³⁷.

While passing through the town of Casinum, Totila sent a messenger to Benedict to announce his coming. When the Man of God replied that Totila was welcome, the Goth king commanded his shield-bearer, Riggo, to dress in royal garb and impersonate him. Decked in robes, buskins, and armour, and surrounded by escorts, the simulated royal cortege came within the monastery gate. From his balcony where he sat reading, the holy abbot immediately perceived the falsity of the whole affair and bade Riggo put an end to the sham: "Pone, fili, pone hoc quod portas; non est tuum"³⁸. Unmasked and terrified, the imitation king and

the

³⁶ B 43, 6a.

³⁷ "This narrative of the saint's encounter with King Totila is almost the only narrative in the Dialogues to which we may assign a definite date. The encounter, as we have said, probably took place in the year 542 when Totila was marching through Campania and preparing for his assault on Naples." McCann, op. cit., p. 157.

³⁸ Dialogi, II, 14.

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his retainers fell to the ground. The event is recalled in the following stanza:

Perfidi regis
machinamenta sagax³⁹.

The following stanzas report Totila's trick with more detail and with a paraphrase of Gregory's dialogue:

Totila rex ferus
Te probare nisus,
Si propheta esses,
Spatarium misit,

Quem videns exclamans;
Pone, fili, pone,
Ornamenta regis,
Non sunt quippe tua⁴⁰.

When Totila's soldiers related their experience with Benedict, the Goth leader desired to see the abbot all the more and went to the monastery in person. Noticing Benedict sitting at a distance, Totila was afraid to come closer and fell prostrate to the ground. Hesitating to arise even though Benedict requested him several times to do so, Totila was assisted from the ground by Benedict who rebuked him for his crimes, and prophesied to the Goth that he would enter Rome, cross the sea, rule for nine years and die in the tenth. According to Gregory, the prediction was fulfilled to the letter:

³⁹ B 37, 16.

⁴⁰ B 46, 20-21.

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Cum non multo post Roma adiit, ad Siciliam per-
rexit; anno autem regni sui decimo omnipotentis Dei
iudicio regnum cum vita perdidit⁴¹.

Two medieval hymnwriters tell of this famous meeting
of Totila and Benedict. The following stanza is taken from
a tenth century manuscript:

De futuris prophetavit
Et tyranno nuntiavit
Pro pace, quem perturbavit,
Quae manere ultio⁴²

A hymn from a twelfth century manuscript makes
special note of the prophecy:

(Post haec) ad venit
Rex ipse Totila
Cui praedixisti
Eventura sibi⁴³.

After Totila's visit with Benedict St. Gregory tells
of the saint's conversation with Sabinus, the aged bishop
of Canossa who feared for the total destruction of Rome at
Totila's hands⁴⁴. The Patriarch assured him that barbarians
would not destroy Rome but predicted that the city would
lie buried in its own ruins brought about by tempests,

⁴¹ Dialogi, II, 14.

⁴² B 6, 5a.

⁴³ B 46, 22.

⁴⁴ Dialogi, II, 15.

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lightning, hurricanes, and earthquakes⁴⁵.

Cuius prophetiae mysteria nobis iam facta sunt
luce clariora qui in hac orbe dissoluta moenia,
eversas domus, distructas aecclesias turbine cernimus,
eiusque aedificia longo senio lassata, quia ruinis
crebriscentibus prosternantur, videmus⁴⁶.

A hymn from a twelfth century manuscript tells of
Benedict's prophecy concerning the destruction of the walls
of the city of Rome:

Urbis moenia
spiritu sancto
iam praedixerat
hoste non casura⁴⁷.

At the time when the Patriarch exorcised the cleric
of Aquino⁴⁸, he warned him to abstain from meat thereafter
and never to advance to sacred orders for he would certainly
fall back into Satan's power. With the passing of years
this cleric's priestly seniors died and he sadly watched

⁴⁵ In his first homily on the Gospel (Migne, P.L. LXXII, Pt. 2, 1080 D) Pope Gregory again describes the extensive damage caused to the city of Rome at that time by the elements: 'Nudiustertius, fratres, agnovistis quod subito annosa arbusta eruta, destructae domus, atque ecclesiae a fundamentis erutae sunt. Quanti ad vesperum sani atque incolumes, acturos se in crastinum aliquid putabant, et tamen nocte eadem repentina morte defuncti sunt, in laqueo ruinae deprehensi?' The cloudburst came at night. In the same homily the saint mentions some other atmospheric phenomena that were observed soon after St. Benedict's death: 'Priusquam Italia gentili gladio ferienda traderetur, igneas in caelo acies vidimus, ipsum qui postea humani generis est, sanguinem coruscantem.'" Cf. Schuster, op. cit., p. 335.

⁴⁶ Dialogi, II, 15.

⁴⁷ B 42, 6b.

⁴⁸ Dialogi, II, 16.

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newly ordained young men move ahead of him in rank. Disregarding the saint's warning and pretending to have forgotten it, he presented himself for ordination and was mercilessly tormented by the devil until his death. The prediction to the cleric is seen in the following stanza from an eleventh century manuscript:

Qui clericum
 hoste pervasum
 liberat
 et ventura nuntiat⁴⁹

In the years 537-538 while Belisarius was besieging Italy⁵⁰, the whole grain supply failed and the whole nation suffered great famine. Benedict and his monks suffered equally with the rest of the land. From the storeroom of the monastery the holy Abbot did his share to alleviate the miseries of others until nothing was left in the monastery except five loaves of bread for his monks. At mealtime Benedict noticed his monks sad-faced concern over their plight and promised them food for the next day. The next morning the monks found two-hundred sacks of grain before the gates of the monastery:

⁴⁹ B 37, 18.

⁵⁰ C.W. Oman, The Dark Ages, London, Rivingtons, 1949, p. 83-88.

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Sequenti autem die ducenti farinae modii ante
foris cellae in saccis inventi sunt, quos omnipotens
Deus, quibus deferentibus transmissit, nunc usque
manet incognitum⁵¹.

A hymn from a twelfth century manuscript mentions
this food prophecy and its fulfillment in language similar
to that of the Dialogues as it describes the sad monks and
tells of the measure of grain received:

Incumbente fame
Contristatos fratres
Adhortans promittis
Meliora satis;

En die sequenti
Modii ducenti
Farinae frumenti
Cernuntur ad portam⁵².

It was during the same famine that the Man of God
was angered by his disobedient cellarer who refused to give
away the last vessel of oil from the storeroom. A stanza
from an eleventh century manuscript tells of the saint's
reprimand for the cellarer:

Qui secretam
superbi mentem
increpat
atque famem mitigat⁵³.

⁵¹ Dialogi, II, 21.

⁵² B 46, 15-16.

⁵³ B 37, 19.

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At Benedict's request, the jar of oil, a symbol of disobedience, was cast out of the window down the stony mountainside, remained intact and without any loss of oil:

Projectum itaque, vas vitreum venit in saxis,
sed sic mansit incolome, ac si proiectum menime
fuissit, ita ut neque frangi neque effundi oleum
potuissit⁵⁴.

The miraculous happening and the saint's lament for his disobedient rival is commented on in the following stanza:

Cautes absque periculo
servant vas vitreum
ipse pressum⁵⁵
plangit aemulum.

Benedict then called his monks together and lectured to them on obedience and trust in God and afterwards knelt down to pray. In the same room of assembly was an empty oil cask which slowly filled to overflowing during the saint's prayer. This marvellous increase of oil is spoken of in a hymn in a manuscript of the tenth century:

Quod probans factis fidei vigore
Fratribus junctis, precibus refusis
Vas redundare oleo fluente
Illico pandit⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Dialogi, II, 28.

⁵⁵ B 37, 21.

⁵⁶ B 4, 6.

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Another hymnodist speaks of Benedict as another Eliseus who also brought about a miraculous increase of oil⁵⁷.

His est alter Eliseus,
Propter cuius preces Deus
Auxit fratrum oleum⁵⁸.

Referring to Benedict's visionary powers, the Dialogues relate that the Man of God was capable of appearing to others in visions as well as having such presentiments himself. Benedict's first appearance to others was occasioned by a request from a devout layman to build a monastery on his estate near the town of Terracina, a seaport town some thirty miles southwest of Monte Cassino. Benedict consented and dispatched a group of workers to the project, promising the two senior members of the group that he would come on a certain day and show them where to build the oratory, refectory and other necessary buildings. The promise was fulfilled, St. Gregory tells, when the holy abbot made his appearance to the two superiors in a vision.

The apparition of the Patriarch to his monks in their sleep is referred to in a stanza from a thirteenth century manuscript:

Praebet in somnis documenta mire⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ IV Kings, 4, 1-7.

⁵⁸ B 43, 4b.

⁵⁹ B 47, 7.

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In chapter thirty-three of the Dialogues St. Gregory tells of the vision which St. Benedict himself had concerning the death of his sister, the nun, Scholastica. This holy nun was accustomed to visit her brother twice a year. At their last visit, as it drew toward nightfall, Scholastica prevailed upon her brother to stay and talk a little longer instead of hurrying off to the monastery. Benedict refused the request. At this Scholastica prayed and cried and brought about such a powerful thunderstorm that Benedict could not return to his monastery that night:

Cumque levaret de mensa capud, tanta coruscationis et tonitruum virtus, tantaque inundatio pluviae erupit, ut neque venerabilis Benedictus, neque fratres, qui cum eo aderant, extra loci limen, quo consederant, pedem movere potuissent⁶⁰.

The following stanza from a tenth century manuscript tells of Scholastica's plea with her brother to prolong the visit and of the ensuing rainstorm:

Hunc soror sacra nimium sequendo
Tardius visum retinere malens,
Imbre obtento valide fluente
Artius vinxit⁶¹.

The holy conversation was prolonged into the night and three days later Benedict had a vision of his sister's soul ascending to heaven in the form of a dove:

⁶⁰ Dialogi, II, 33.

⁶¹ B 4, 8.

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Cum ecce, post triduum, in cella consistens,
 elevatis in aera oculis vidit eiusdem sororis suae
 animam, de eius corpore egressam, in columbae spe-
 ciae caeli secreta penetrare⁶².

Scholastica's flight to heaven is related in a hymn
 from a tenth century manuscript:

Triduum postque residens beatus
 Cernit eiusdem animam sororis
 Celsa secreta petere volucris
 Pernicite⁶³.

Another hymn from a tenth century manuscript simply
 states the return of the virgin's soul to heaven as a dove:

Sororisque spiritum
 In columba contemplatur
 Deo caeli redditum⁶⁴.

Another hymnodist is more descriptive as he speaks
 of the charming dove penetrating the heights of the starry
 heaven:

Iure sub blandae specie columbae
 Nesciam fellis animam sororis
 Summa stellati penetrare caeli
 Culmina cernis⁶⁵.

The following stanza from an eleventh century manu-
 script is less elaborate in its reference to Scholastica's
 death:

⁶² Dialogi, II, 34.

⁶³ B 4, 9.

⁶⁴ B 6, 6a.

⁶⁵ B 32, 5.

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Post haec anima
Sororis ad alta evolat⁶⁶.

However, the same hymn adds two stanzas which state that Benedict gave praise to Christ when he heard of his sister's death:

Frater haec ita
Audiens mox laudem decantat:

Laus et honor
sit Christo et cunctis
omnibus gloria⁶⁷.

The two foregoing stanzas reflect the Patriarch's sentiments of praise recorded in the Dialogues:

Qui tantae eius gloriae congaudens, omnipotenti Deo in hymnis et laudibus gratias reddedit⁶⁸.

Benedict told his monks of his sister's death and sent some of them for the body which he buried in the tomb he had prepared for himself:

[...] eiusque obitum fratribus denuntiavit; quos etiam protinus misit, ut eius corpus ad monasterium deferrent, adque in sepulchro, quod sibi ipse paraverat, ponerent⁶⁹.

Scholastica's holy death and burial and also her brother's joy are spoken of in the following stanza from a tenth century manuscript:

⁶⁶ B 36, 13.

⁶⁷ B 36, 14-15; B 36a, 7b-8.

⁶⁸ Dialogi, II, 34.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

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Inde gaudendo fratribus vocatis
 Corpus afferri tumulto humandum
 Praecipit dudum sibi praeparato,
 Mox secuturus⁷⁰.

Two stanzas from a twelfth century manuscript give a brief but detailed summary of Benedict's vision of Scholastica's soul, including the fact that he gave thanks to God, and sent for the body which he buried in his own tomb:

In cella considens
 Cernis ut columbam
 Sororis animam
 Penetrare caelum;

Grates Deo reddis,
 Fratres cito mittis
 Corpus eius tuo
 Condīs in sepulcro⁷¹.

St. Gregory further tells in chapter thirty-five that Benedict had another vision which was of a great and extraordinary character.

One night while the rest of the community was asleep, Benedict was standing in prayer at his window. Suddenly in the direction of Capua, about forty miles south-east of Monte Cassino, God's Servant saw the darkness of the night dispelled by an intense illumination, and the entire universe seemed gathered up into one beam of light and brought before his eyes:

⁷⁰ B 4, 10.

⁷¹ B 46, 24-25.

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Mira autem valde res in hac speculatione secuta est; quia sicut post ipse narravit, omnis etiam mundus, velut sub uno solis radio, collectus ante oculos eius adductus est⁷².

Two hymns from a tenth century manuscript describe the Great Vision using the word "iubar"⁷³ instead of "radius"⁷⁴, as found in the Dialogues, to depict the ray seen by the saint:

Collectum mundi globum
nocte ceu
sub solis iubare vidit⁷⁵.

Non ante saeculis cognitum
Noctu iubar effulserat,
Quo totus orbis cernitur
Et haec terra conspicitur⁷⁶.

A hymn from a manuscript dated the eleventh century makes note of the spherical shape of the world:

Vidit sphaericam
mundi machinam⁷⁷,
radio sub uno collectam⁷⁷,

⁷² Dialogi, II, 35.

⁷³ "The radiance of heavenly bodies, light, splendor, brightness, sunshine. [...] II. Transf. a splendid appearance, splendor, glory, radiance." C. T. Lewis, Chas. Short, A Latin Dictionary, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1951, p. 1014.

⁷⁴ "A ray or beam of any shining object; the sun." Lewis and Short, op. cit., p. 1521.

⁷⁵ B 17, 86.

⁷⁶ B 2, 4.

⁷⁷ B 36, 8; 36a, 4b.

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while another manuscript dated the twelfth century speaks of the ray of light as an offshoot of the sun:

Visa Dei luce
In obscura nocte
Totum mundum cernis
Ut sub prole solis⁷⁸.

The composer of the following stanza tells that the world in a phenomenal way unfolded to Saint Benedict:

Panditur mundus simul omnis illi,
Visque naturae violenta cedit,
Spiritus iustos hominum petentes
Sidera cernit⁷⁹.

The vision is described in the following stanza using the classical word *Titaneus*⁸⁰ to describe the sun:

Tibi cuncta mundi
machina
nocte intempesta
instar sub Titanis
speculo ostenditur
prorsus collecta⁸¹.

A hymn from a thirteenth century manuscript briefly paraphrases the narrative description of the vision given in the Dialogues:

⁷⁸ B 46, 26.

⁷⁹ B 47, 6.

⁸⁰ "Titan/ sun 6th century; -eus, of or ~~for~~ the sun 550 (A.D.)", J. Baxter and C. Johnson, Medieval Word List, London, Oxford Press, 1947, p. 431.

⁸¹ B 21, 6a.

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Hic mundum collectum
 sub radio,
 confessorum inclita
 videras ut speculo⁸².

Toward the end of the Great Vision Benedict saw angels bearing the soul of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, to heaven in a fiery sphere:

Qui venerabilis pater, dum intentam oculorum
 aciem in hoc splendore coruscae lucis infigerit,
 vidit Germani Capuani episcopi animam in spera
 ignea ab angelis in caelum ferri⁸³.

The death of Germanus is described in the following stanza from an eleventh century manuscript:

Momento postmodum
 modico
 exutum corpore
 Germanum praesulem
 cernapas nantem ad superna
 adyta⁸⁴.

Benedict's vision of Germanus is told in one line of a hymn from a tenth century manuscript. Germanus is referred to as "pius,"

Flammisque subvehi pius⁸⁵.

The following stanza depicts the soul of the Bishop of Capua as being carried to celestial seats:

⁸² B 49, 8b.

⁸³ Dialogi, II, 35.

⁸⁴ B 21, 6b.

⁸⁵ B 18, 4.

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Ipsē animam
 Capuani praesulis
 Vidit lumine
 Insolito supernis⁸⁶
 Importari sedibus⁸⁶.

The following verse taken from a twelfth century manuscript is very near to Gregory's description of the death of Germanus:

Et supernos cives
 Caelis inferentes
 Germani animam⁸⁷
 In sphaera ignea⁸⁷.

Benedict's own life was now reaching its end. He warned his disciples of his approaching death⁸⁸ and told those who were far distant from the monastery of a sign by which they would know of his departure:

Eodem viro anno, quo de hac vita erat exiturus, quibusdam discipulis secum conversantibus, quibusdam longe manentibus sanctissimi sui obitus denuntiavit diem: praesentibus indicens ut audita per silentium tegerent, absentibus indicans, quod vel quale eis⁸⁹ signum fierit, quando eius anima de corpore exiret⁸⁹.

The saint's foreknowledge of his death is mentioned in a hymn in a manuscript of the tenth century:

Praescius posthinc finis adfuturi⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ B 37, 23.

⁸⁷ B 46, 27.

⁸⁸ The generally accepted date for St. Benedict's death is March 21, 547. Cf. Chapman, op. cit., p. 143-146.

⁸⁹ Dialogi, II, 37.

⁹⁰ B 4, 11.

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Another hymn from a tenth century manuscript speaks of Benedict's prediction concerning his death and of the sign which would be given his brethren:

Diu praescriptum
beati sui transitus

Diem praenoscens
signavit caris fratribus⁹¹.

Six days before he expired, Benedict ordered his tomb opened. Gradually a violent fever sapped his energy:

Ante sextum viro sui exitus diem, aperiri sibi
sepulturam iubet, qui mox correptus febribus acri
coepit ardore fatigari⁹².

The following verse tells of the prompt preparation of Benedict's tomb:

Promptus insistit tumulum parare⁹³.

A stanza from a twelfth century manuscript speaks of Benedict's illness as well as the preparation of the tomb:

Languore correptus
Aperire tibi
Sepulcrum mox iubes
Mortis diem sciens⁹⁴.

On the sixth day the holy Abbot was taken to the chapel where he received Viaticum, and standing in the

⁹¹ B 17, 9a-9b.

⁹² Dialogi, II, 37.

⁹³ B 4, 11.

⁹⁴ B 46, 28.

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oratory with his arms raised to heaven breathed his last:

Cumque per dies singulos languor ingraviscerit
sexto die portari se in oratorium a discipulis
fecit, ibique exitum suum Dominici corporis et san-
guinis perceptione munivit [...] erectis in caelis
manibus, stetit, et ultimum spiritum inter verba
orationis efflavit⁹⁵.

The final acts of the Man of God are thus described
in a twelfth century manuscript:

Morbo gravescente
Sexto demum die
Templum deportatus
Sumis Christi corpus

Hinc palmis erectis
Verbis Dei dicis
Sicque coram tuis⁹⁶
Carnis iura solvis⁹⁶.

One hymnodist describes the saint's death as a call
to heaven where Christ places him on a seat among the
blissful:

Ipsa tandem evocatur
Ad caeli palatium
Et a Christo collocatur
In sede felicitum⁹⁷.

Two monks, one at the monastery and another who was
away from the enclosure, received the promised sign of their
holy abbot's death. In a vision they saw a magnificent road

⁹⁵ Dialogi, II, 37.

⁹⁶ B 46, 29-30.

⁹⁷ B 6, 6b.

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stretching eastward from the monastery to heaven. The entire road was covered with rich carpeting and glittered with innumerable lights:

Viderunt namque quia strata palleis adque innumeris corusca lampadibus via recto orientis tramite ab eius cella in caelum usque tendebatur⁹⁸.

The vision of the monks is thus alluded to in a stanza from a tenth century manuscript:

Obeunte eodem
quidam pulcherrimam
viderant viam⁹⁹.

The heavenly way is described in greater detail in a hymn from an eleventh century manuscript:

Luce flammantem radiante callem
Pallis sternunt¹⁰⁰.

A twelfth century manuscript devotes two stanzas to the celestial route over which the Patriarch travelled, with a play on the words "cella" and "caelum" in the second stanza:

At tui alumni
Duo cernunt viam
Palliis ornatam
Lampadibus claram,

Protensam e tua
Caelum usque cella,
Per quam ovans ipsum
Conscendisti caelum¹⁰¹.

⁹⁸ Dialogi, II, 37.

⁹⁹ B 17, 10a.

¹⁰⁰ B 32, 6.

¹⁰¹ B 46, 33-34.

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Along the path stood a man in majestic garments who pointed to the road as the way by which Blessed Benedict ascended into heaven: "Cui venerando habitu vir desuper clarus adsistens, cuius essit via, quam cernerent, inquisivit¹⁰²."

Two hymns from tenth century manuscripts tell of the message given to the deceased Patriarch's disciples:

Cuius ad coelum via clara fulgens
Angeloteste Benedicti esse,
Auribus fratrum resonare visa est
Voce sonora¹⁰³.

Per quam illis est dictum
Benedictum patrem
Caelos advectum¹⁰⁴.

Apart from the specific instances which the medieval hymns relate concerning Benedict's charisms, there are many general allusions also which point out that Benedict was a prophet and a visionary.

Speaking of Benedict's spirit of prophecy, a hymn from a tenth century manuscript points out his foretelling of coming events of the world:

Ventura saeculi praecinens¹⁰⁵,

¹⁰² Dialogi, II, 37.

¹⁰³ B 4, 12.

¹⁰⁴ B 17, 10b.

¹⁰⁵ B 2, 3.

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while an eleventh century manuscript says that the Man of God had a foreknowledge of future happenings and could understand the secrets of men's hearts:

Praescius futurorum
agnitor cordium
arcana¹⁰⁶.

Another hymn in a manuscript dated the eleventh century calls the holy Abbot a diviner who made visible the minds of all:

Praesagus exstitit omnium mentes¹⁰⁷,

and two other hymnwriters tell that Benedict had a prophetic spirit:

Spiritu prophetis¹⁰⁸.

Hymn texts from twelfth century manuscripts indicate that Benedict was ornamented with prophetic grace:

Prophetali comptus gratia¹⁰⁹

and spoke with a divining voice:

Voce praesaga¹¹⁰

and that he was a prophet:

Vir fuit propheticus¹¹¹.

106 B 21, 5b.

107 B 23, 4.

108 B 26, 5; B 27, 3.

109 B 39, 4a.

110 B 44, 4.

111 B 43, 3b.

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Finally a hymn from a thirteenth century manuscript speaks simultaneously of Benedict as a prophet and a visionary:

Res et absentes videt et futuras¹¹².

3. Benedict's Concern for the Oppressed and the Dead.

Among the many other miracles performed by St. Benedict during his lifetime at Monte Cassino, St. Gregory also tells of the Patriarch's power of raising the dead and his help in absolving those who died impenitent or excommunicated.

In chapter thirty-three of the Dialogues there is the human and dramatic story of the peasant's young son whom Benedict raised from the dead.

One day while Benedict was laboring in the fields with his monks, a peasant arrived at the monastery carrying a dead child in his arms. Learning that Benedict was in the fields the man deposited the dead boy at the monastery door and went to fetch the Man of God. Hurrying to the side of the dead child, Benedict stretched himself over the corpse, raised his hands and eyes to heaven and prayed. Scarcely had he finished his prayer, when the boy began to breathe, open his eyes and move as if from a deep sleep.

¹¹² B 47, 5.

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Vix in oratione verba compleverat, et regredi-
ente anima, ita corpusculum pueri omne contremuit
ut sub oculis omnium, qui aderant, apparuerit con-
cussione mirifica tremendo palpitasse. cuius mox
manum tenuit, et eum patri viventem adque incolomem
dedit¹¹³.

When the dead youth was restored to life, Benedict
wiped away the bereaved father's sorrow. This idea is ex-
pressed in the following stanza from a tenth century manu-
script:

Orbati patris luctum
abstersit
defuncto vitae reddite¹¹⁴.

Two stanzas, one from an eleventh century manuscript
and the other from a twelfth century manuscript, respec-
tively speak of Benedict's prayer through which he brought the
dead child to life:

Sed oramine
iam extinctum rustici
suscitavit filium¹¹⁵.

Puer vita functus
Ad te pie latus
Mox oratu tuo¹¹⁶
Auras vitae carpit.

while a hymn stanza from a thirteenth century manuscript
tells of the saint giving the boy back to his father:

¹¹³ Dialogi, II, 32.

¹¹⁴ B 17, 8a.

¹¹⁵ B 37, 22.

¹¹⁶ B 46, 23.

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Tu patri suum
 suscitasti natum
 donans misero
 vitam puero¹¹⁷.

When St. Gregory tells of Benedict's raising from the dead the young monk who was crushed by a wall¹¹⁸ and the giving of life to the peasant's dead son, he refers to each youth as "puer"¹¹⁹. Some of the hymnwriters who speak of Benedict's resuscitation miracles likewise use the word "puer" but do not give sufficient detail to determine which one of the two miracles reference is being made. Thus, a hymn from a tenth century manuscript speaking of St. Benedict's miracles tells that a boy is restored to life:

Puer vitae redonatur¹²⁰

while a hymn from a twelfth century manuscript notes that the "Admirable Father raises a dead boy":

Pater praeclarus
 puerum
 defunctum suscitatur¹²¹.

¹¹⁷ B 49, 7a.

¹¹⁸ Dialogi, II, 11.

¹¹⁹ "Puer, i, m., ---- enfant, garçon ou fille, dans la période de la vie qui succède à l'infantia et précède l'adulescentia." A. Ernout & A. Meillet, Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue latine, Histoire des mots, 3rd ed., Paris, Klincksieck, 1951, p. 960.

¹²⁰ B 6, 6a.

¹²¹ B 42, 5.

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Another hymn from a tenth century manuscript points out that Benedict brought back the soul to the body of a dead person:

Te precans certus animam reduxit
Corpore functi¹²².

A general reference is made to both resuscitation miracles in the following hymns:

"He raised dead bodies" says a hymn from a manuscript dated the tenth century:

Resuscitavit corpora
defuncta¹²³.

A stanza in a manuscript dated the eleventh century tells of Benedict's restoring souls to bodies decaying from death:

Restituens animas precibus
Tabifluis nece corporibus¹²⁴.

A hymn in a manuscript dated the thirteenth century indicates that the dead as well as the limbs of the sick returned to health:

Membra languentum redeunt saluti,
Mortua vitae¹²⁵.

¹²² B 4, 7.

¹²³ B 3, 5a.

¹²⁴ B 28, 6.

¹²⁵ B 47, 5.

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Benedict's power to absolve the impenitent dead is mentioned only in a hymn in a twelfth century manuscript. Before quoting the stanza it would be well to summarize the two stories which form the background for this allusion in the hymn in order to better appreciate it.

Chapter twenty-three of book two of the Dialogues tells the story of two noble ladies in the vicinity of Casinum who lived the religious life in their own homes. Besides their nurse, they had a pious and zealous old man to serve them. Even though consecrated to the religious life, the nuns were not only haughty about their noble lineage but also lacked control over their sharp tongues and subjected their kindly old servant to insults and criticisms. The old gentlemen complained to Abbot Benedict who forthwith urged the nuns to amend and warned them with a threat of excommunication. Soon after this, both nuns died without any sign of amendment and were buried in the parish church according to the custom of the day¹²⁶. The devoted nurse went to Mass regularly with offerings and at the gospel, when the

¹²⁶ "About the fifth century there arose the practice of burying the faithful in the churches; the Christians, particularly those in the villages, did this in order to avoid having to bury their dead among the pagans" Schuster, op. cit., p. 194.

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deacon used to dismiss the catechumens¹²⁷, the good nurse noticed that her two mistresses were among those who withdrew. The grief-stricken nurse sent news of the strange happening to Abbot Benedict who sent an oblation of altar breads with the order to have them offered to the Lord for the deceased nuns who thereafter would no longer feel the penalty of excommunication. The order was obeyed and the two nuns rested in peace in their tombs.

Immediately following the story of the two nuns, Gregory adds the story of the absolution of the young monk who left the monastery without permission to visit his parents to whom he was still very much attached. The day the monk reached home he died; the day after his burial the ground cast up his body. After each reburial the same phenomena occurred. The distressed parents had recourse to Abbot Benedict who gave them a consecrated host with the instruction to place it on the breast of the young monk and bury him once more. When this was done the corpse was never seen again atop the earth.

¹²⁷ "In the early church it was customary for the faithful to receive Communion every time they assisted at Mass. The deacon's words therefore applied to the unbaptized and the excommunicated, who were not allowed to remain for the Mass of the faithful. Their dismissal took place after the Gospel and sermon." Zimmermann, op. cit., p. 53.

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A stanza from a manuscript of the twelfth century states that Benedict absolved souls with the Mystical Bread:

Verbo carne solutas
ligat iam animas,
sed absolvit
pane mystico¹²⁸.

Not all of Benedict's miracles concerned prophecies or visions or solicitude for the dead. St. Gregory also related two miracles which showed the saint's care for the sick and the oppressed.

Benedict's only miraculous cure of a sick person is noted in the second book of the Dialogues, chapter twenty-six where St. Gregory briefly tells that the Man of God restored to perfect health a servant-boy who was ready to succumb to the final stages of leprosy: "puerum morbo elephantino fuisse correptum¹²⁹."

The cure of the leper is told in a stanza from a twelfth century manuscript:

Manu posita
parvulum quendam
liberat atra
ab elephantia¹³⁰

¹²⁸ B 37, 20.

¹²⁹ Dialogi, II, 26.

¹³⁰ B 42, 6a.

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A thirteenth century manuscript remarks that the limbs of the sick return to health:

Membra languentum redeunt saluti¹³¹.

Showing St. Benedict's concern for the oppressed, some manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth century tell of saint's encounter with Zalla, Totila's fierce first captain, who was persecuting a farmer.

The farmer, whom Zalla was torturing for his savings, told the leader that Benedict was keeping all of his money. Zalla bound the captive's hands and led him away to the monastery where they found Benedict sitting and reading. With angry and harsh words the Goth thus addressed Benedict: "Surge, surge, et res istius rustici redde, quas accepisti¹³²."

The encounter of Benedict and Zalla with a paraphrase of the foregoing dialogue is described in a stanza from a twelfth century manuscript:

Ialla¹³³, Gothus dirus
Trahens ad te vinctum
Rusticum virum
Inclamare coepit:

¹³¹ B 45, 7.

¹³² Dialogi, II, 31.

¹³³ Though this spelling of the Goth's name appears in the hymn stanza, it differs from those given in the manuscripts noted in the critical text edition of Moricca, viz. Tzalla, Thalla, Zalla. Cf. Moricca, op. cit., p. 123.

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Surge, surge, et da
 Huius mihi bona
 Tibi commendata
 Prorsus absque mora¹³⁴.

Benedict calmly looked up and with one glance at the bonds around the captive's wrists, instantly loosened them so that they fell to the ground.

The freeing of the captive is told in the following stanza:

Vocem eius audis
 Caput sursum tendis
 O res mira nimis
 Viri vincla solvis¹³⁵.

Verses from respective twelfth and thirteenth century manuscripts tell how a glance from Benedict loosened the bonds of the captive:

Visu solvit vincula¹³⁶.
 Vincla tortoris vacuat videndo¹³⁷.

The biographical elements contained in the St. Benedict hymns concerning the Patriarch's miracles and deeds at Monte Cassino continues to show to what extent the hymn-dists drew upon St. Gregory's biography for their subject

¹³⁴ B 46, 17-18.

¹³⁵ B 46, 19.

¹³⁶ B 43, 5a.

¹³⁷ B 47, 7.

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matter. The popularity of certain of Benedict's miracles varied with hymnodists from century to century, e.g. Totila's encounter with Benedict, the Great Vision, and the visions of the souls of Scholastica and Germanus and Benedict's own death were popular subjects of hymns in manuscripts dated the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth century while only a twelfth and thirteenth century manuscript tell of Benedict's healing of the leper. No hymn in manuscripts dated the tenth or eleventh century makes mention of Benedict's encounter with Zalla. Throughout each century there can be seen a gradual development both in the enumeration of miracles and in descriptive detail culminating in elaborate and profuse accounts in hymns ascribed to the twelfth century while a great number of the hymns dated the thirteenth century tend to be less specific in their detail and are satisfied to give general allusions to the different aspects of St. Benedict's miraculous powers.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSLATION OF SAINT BENEDICT'S RELICS

Saint Benedict died about the year 547¹ and was buried at Monte Cassino in the same grave as his sister, Scholastica². When the Lombards sacked Monte Cassino around the year 589³, the monks fled to Rome leaving the body of their founder at Monte Cassino; until 717 Monte Cassino was deserted⁴. Within this period a mission was sent from Fleury in France to Monte Cassino for the secret purpose of transferring the saint's relics to France.

Medieval Latin hymn-texts refer to this posthumous history of St. Benedict and in this chapter an examination will be made of these texts to see to what extent the hymn-writers were influenced by the various documents and oral traditions which tell of the removal of the relics.

¹ John Chapman, St. Benedict and the Sixth Century, London, Sheed and Ward, 1929, p. 143-146.

² Dialogi, II, 35.

³ Luigi Tosti, St. Benedict, an Historical Discourse on his Life, transl. by William Woods, London, Paul, Trench, and Trubner, 1896, p. 161. Cf. also Chapman, op. cit., p. 130.

⁴ Lindsay, op. cit., p. 179.

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The chief documents on the translation of the relics are by Adrevald, a ninth century monk of Fleury⁵. His two works, Historia Translationis Sancti Benedicti and De Miraculis Sancti Benedicti are noted for their help in establishing a chronology for the translation and details of name and place.

According to Adrevald's Historia Translationis⁶, Abbot Mummolus of Fleury in the early years of his office⁷ while reading the Dialogues and thinking about the destruction of Monte Cassino, by Divine revelation conceived the idea of sending to Italy for Benedict's remains:

Mummolus gregis sibi commissi custodias optime servans, et lectioni assidue studium dans, inter cetera reperit in libris beati ac praecellentissimi viri Gregorii Antistitis, quomodo sanctus ac Deo dilectus Benedictus agonis sui cursum in Beneventum provincia consummaverit. [...] sic namque sibi fuisse revelatum divinitus dicebat, ut praedictus vir [Aigulphus] illuc pergens, corpus iam dicti transferret Benedicti⁸.

⁵ "Adrevaldus, ordinis Benedictini Monachus Floriacensis, quem Ludovici Pii temporibus vixisse probat Ruinortus in Apologia Missionis S. Mauri Gallice edita p. 52 seqq." Migne, Patrologia Latina, Tomus CXXIV, Pars secunda, Paris, Petit-Montrouge, 1852, 899-900.

⁶ Historia Translationis Sancti Benedicti, Auctore Adrevaldo Monacho, in Migne, op. cit., 902-947.

⁷ McCann, op. cit., p. 167-168.

⁸ Adrevaldus, Historia, 902 B.

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The first stanza of a hymn from a manuscript dated the eleventh century in honor of the Translation, Dilectus Dei Mummolus, tells of Mummolus' revelation:

Dilectus Dei Mummolus,
Pastor gregis Dominici,
Amicus coeli civibus,
Ut transferret in Galliam
Patris Benedicti glebam,
Divinitati placuit,
Quâ admoneri meruit⁹.

In Mummolus' monastery at Fleury there was a monk named Aigulph who was of very outstanding character, and who, by a divine sign was to undertake the expedition to Italy:

Fuit namque idem Aigulphus, venerabilis vir et Deo omnimodo placere gestiens; qui quantae sanctitatis fuerit cuiusve virtutis, finis probavit, in quo omnis laus secure canitur. Hic namque sibi fuisse revelatum divinitus dicebat, ut praedictus vir illuc pergens, corpus iam dicti transferret Benedicti¹⁰.

The following verses of Dilectus Dei Mummolus, attest to Aigulph's eminent character,

Quidam Aigulphus nomine
Flos candens innocentiae
Pollebat privilegio¹¹,
Disciplinae monasticae¹¹,

while the next stanza relates the divine revelation of his appointment:

⁹ B 24, 1. "

¹⁰ Adrevaldus, Historia, 902 C.

¹¹ B 24, 2.

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Hunc pater ille Mummolus,
 Ut meruit oraculo
 Edoceri divinitus,
 Direxit ad Italiam,
 Beneventi provinciam,
 Quae tunc patris corpoream
 Retinebat praesentiam¹².

When the expedition set out for Italy and finally arrived at the ruins of Monte Cassino¹³, Benedict's grave, hidden by rubble and debris, could not be located. So the group asked divine help in locating the Patriarch's tomb:

Tandem itaque pervenit ad locum castris, quod vocatur Casinum: ibidemque paulisper itineri finem imponens, expectabat eventum rei, orans illum, qui visionem superius prolatam revelare dignatus est, [...] ut non vacuum tantum iter consumi vellet; sed sicut promiserat, thecam thesauri sui ei revelare dignaretur¹⁴.

The hymn Dilectus Dei Mummolus in telling of the expedition's arrival at Monte Cassino, uses language which very closely resembles Adrevald's prose account:

Tandem perveniens ad oppidum
 Quod incolae vocant Casinum
 Prostratus orabat ad Dominum
 Qui visionis auctor fuerat,
 Monstrari sibi thecam placeat
 Thesauri sui, quem promiserat¹⁵.

¹² B 24, 3.

¹³ Adrevaldus, Historia, 903 C.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ B 24, 4.

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Help came to the group in the form of an old man who had been observing the expedition and whom Aigulph was afraid to inform of its purpose. The old man tried to win Aigulph's confidence by telling him of what great profit his help would be:

Nam, si delatoris scandalum caves, securus esto,
in me tutam reperis fidem: et si dictis meis fidem
accomodaveris, fortassis etiam negotio tuo profutu-
rum erit¹⁶.

The hymnwriter gives a paraphrase in verse of the old man's speech:

Intuens annosus homo
Hunc explorantem sedule,
Si inquit, fidei meae
Tuam placet committere,
Puto me ocius dare¹⁷.
Finem tuae solertiae¹⁷.

The venerable man won the confidence of Aigulph who told him of their purpose and the vision which had occasioned the journey:

Ista vero cum praedictus Dei famulus auribus
hausisset, [...] compellanti ex ordine rei gestae
texuit historias, qua caussa venisset, quaeque¹⁸
visio propter hanc rem sibi fuerit demonstrata¹⁸.

This part of the story of the Translation of the relics is continued in a hymn from a twelfth century manuscript told in language noticeably similar to Adrevald's:

¹⁶ Adrevaldus, Historia, 903 D.

¹⁷ B 24^r, 5.

¹⁸ Adrevaldus, Historia, 904 A.

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Personae senilis fidem
 Vir Dei probans stabilem
 Visionis historiam
 Et tanti laboris viam
 Beato seni texuit
 Et promissionis memor
 Ut fieret, obtinuit¹⁹.

The venerable helper urged the group to keep vigil during which they would see a sign, a ray of light, which would lead them to the end of their search:

Cumque solitudinis huius locum aliquem lumine clarissimo radiare conspexeris nivei montis instar, notato certa mente locum: namque ibi inveniendum est, unde tuae curae finis imponantur²⁰.

The hymn from the eleventh century manuscript of the Translation tells of this phase of the expedition:

Tanti secreti conscius
 Ille senex angelicus
 Huic inquit: vigil lectulo
 Primo noctis crepusculo
 Splendore notabis locum,
 Ubi tui reperias²¹.
 Laboris desiderium²¹.

Aigulph, relying on the old man's words, kept an all night vigil which was rewarded with an apparition of light designating the burial place of St. Benedict:

Igitur praedictus vir, verbis fidem dans, ardens autem desiderio, primo quietis somno percepto stratu sese excutiens, praeceptorum senis haud segnis

¹⁹ B 41, 1.

²⁰ Adrevaldus, Historia, 904 B.

²¹ B 24, 6.

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obtemperator extitit. Namque praedictae solitudinis
plagam respiciens, conspicit eminus locum lumine
claro micantem²².

The all-night vigil and the miracle of the light are
combined in the following stanza from the twelfth century
manuscript:

Cordis amore credulus
Senis promissionibus
Noctem perfigil excubat
Precibus coelum penetrat,
Hinc sanctorum reliquiae²³.
Claro monstrantur jubare²³.

Before dawn Aigulph found the object of his mission
to Cassino and gave praise to God who had prospered his
journey:

Qui cum diu praestolatus affuisset, solisque
globus necdum iubare suo mundi spatia ampla compleret;
ad locum intrepidus properat, cuius notator extiterat.
[...] Prosperatori itineris sui grates innumeras
rependit²⁴.

The following stanza is interesting for its ideas
and choice of language which resemble the above prose of
Adrevald:

Nondum sol per orbem suos
Coelo fundebat radios,
Aigulphus venerabilis
Ovanter locum adiit,
Cuius notator extitit,
Coelorum regi iubilat²⁵.
Reperto quod quaesierat²⁵.

²² Adrevaldus, Historia, 904 C.

²³ B 41, 2.

²⁴ Adrevaldus, Historia, 904 C.

²⁵ B 41, 3.

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When the relics were found, Aigulph removed them from the tomb and placed them in a basket; the caravan quickly made its way back to France and was warned in a vision not to delay on the way:

His sicut diu optaverat inventis patefacto a latere, evacuatosque locello, thesaurum inventum unius sportellae conclusit sinu, quae sporta hactenus penes nos quasi nova habetur. [...] Bajulis sanctorum corporum Benedicti et S. Scholasticae sororis eius celeriter repedantibus, iamque oris finium suarum attingentibus, vox allata divinitus per alta silentia noctis prohibuit eos moras innectere in eundo²⁶.

These events are recalled in the following stanzas:

His inventis vir Domini
Latus apertum loculi
Sancto thesauro vacuat
Quem texta palmis sportula
Includit, quam paraverat,
Mox magno cum tripudio
Pede fertur retrogrado.

Iam securi pacifice
Fines intrabant patriae,
Insinuatur praesuli
Furto felices insequi,
Coelesti oraculo
Moras vetantur negtere
Potiti desiderio²⁷.

²⁶ Adrevaldus, Historia, 904 D, 905 B.

²⁷ B 41, 4, 5.

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At this same time the pope²⁸ had a vision which informed him of the stealthy proceedings at Monte Cassino and employing the aid of the Lombards he tried to overtake the group which had already travelled far:

Eadem hora Papam Romanum per visionem quidam assistens, talia compellare visus est. His auditis Romanus Antistes protinus relicto thoro arma comitesque inquiri, ac persequi conatur recedentes, iunctis sibi Longobardorum auxiliis²⁹.

Aigulph was warned in a vision of the chase and later seeing his pursuers close at hand, prayed for divine help which was sent in the form of a cloud of darkness to hide the group:

Quorum precibus divinae pietati annuere libuit: nam Omnipotentis potentia tenebrarum densitate ita eos occuluit, ut sibi quidem nihil obessent, persecutoribus vero eorum omnem facultatem se inveniendi auferent³⁰.

The escape from the pope and the miraculous darkness is told in the following three verses from the twelfth century manuscript of the Translation hymn:

²⁸ "Deodatus nacione Romanus ex monacho de patre Iobiano sedit annis 4, mensibus 2, diebus 5, et cessavit episcopatus mensibus 4, diebus 15. Huius tempore translatus est corpus beati Benedicti a monte Cassino ad cenobium Floriacense, quod est sompne in Aurelianensi diocesi, et etiam corpus sororis ipsius Scolastice," Martini Opaviensis Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, ed. Georgius H. Pertz, Tomus XXII, Hiersemann, Leipzig, 1872, p. 424.

²⁹ Adrevaldus, Historia, 905 B.

³⁰ Ibid.

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Romanum papam fugerent,
 Divinitas nos protegit,
 Hostes tenebris abigit³¹.

After the danger had passed, the expedition quickly returned to France: "Sicque famuli Dei malorum timore sublata ocius redirent³²". Their return is more elaborately told in the opening stanza of another Translation hymn from an eleventh century manuscript:

Gloriosus Christicola
 Rediens ab Italia
 Cum thesauro, quam repperit,
 Gallias ovans rediit,
 Patrem Mummolum repetit
 Gestans sanctorum corpora
 Gallis aeterna gaudia³³.

Upon their arrival in Gaul they journeyed to Bon-née³⁴ in the canton of Orleans and deposited their treasure there:

Tanto confecto itinere, in praediolum quoddam
 diverterunt Bonodium nomine, situm in pago Aurelia-nensi, lassitudine cogente³⁵.

Aigulph's safe arrival is told in the following hymn stanza:

³¹ B 41, 6.

³² Adrevaldus, Historia, 905 C.

³³ B 25, 1.

³⁴ "Bonodium 'Bonnée', viculus una leuca supra Floriacensi monasterium [...]" Migne P.L., CXXIV, pars secunda, 905 (note).

³⁵ Adrevaldus, Historia, 905 D.

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Facti hoc imperio
 Securi Dei famuli
 Ab hostium periculo
 Amoenis tandem floridi
 Requiescunt praedioli,
 Quod Bonodium dicitur,
 Aurelianensis pagi³⁶

As soon as the caravan settled a man blind from birth approached the relics and invoked Benedict to restore his sight. The favor was granted:

In quo loco cum paulisper indulgerent quiete
 ecce quidem sine oculis materno fusus utero advenit
 magnisque vocibus oris ac fidei sanctum interpelle-
 bat, ut quae natura negaverat, sibi lumina prae-
 staret. [...] Discussa caligine caecitatis, lumen
 sibi diu negatum coepit aspicere³⁷.

This first miracle at Benedict's relics is told in the Translation hymn in the manuscript dated the eleventh century though the added quotation of the blind man does not appear in the prose story:

Ecce, privatus lumine
 Ab utero matris suae
 Interpellat sanctissimum
 Dum Benedicti meritum
 Caecitatem deseruit,
 Solem cernere meruit
 Orans: sancte, propitius³⁸.
 Adesto nostris precibus³⁸.

Adrevald relates a second miracle at the saint's relics, viz., the cure of a crippled man who had lost the

³⁶ B 25, 2.

³⁷ Adrevaldus, Historia, 905 D.

³⁸ B 25, 3.

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use of his limbs:

Namque debilis quidam, erectus ire nequibat,
per terram rependo se trahens, [...] advenit im-
plorans auxilium ab omnipotente Deo per famulum
illius Benedictum. Itaque miro modo coeperunt se
nervi diu contracti extendere [...] atque ita Deo
volente accepto robore laetus super pedes constituit,
et Curatori suo magnis vocibus benedixit³⁹.

This cure is told in the Translation hymn Gloriosus

Christicola:

Infertur quidam languidus
Nervis membrorum perditus
Poscens Dei auxilium
Per Benedictum famulum;
Cuius ut sportam attigit,
Gaudens in pedes constitit,
Hinc benedicit sedulus⁴⁰.
Per quem sibi est redditus⁴⁰.

A third miracle took place at Benedict's relics when a controversy arose over the identification and separation of the Patriarch's bones from those of his sister, Scholastica. At Benedict's relics a dead boy was restored to life and at Scholastica's bones a dead girl received new life:

Quod cum factum esset, masculi corpus prope ossa
poni fecerunt quae magnitudine praestare videbantur.
Miroque modo mox ut mortui mortua tetigere ossa
iacentis per mortuum mortuo et reddita est. [...] Similiter autem eis placuit, ut penes minora mortuae
puellae corpus poni debere⁴¹.

³⁹ Adrevaldus, Historia, 906 A.

⁴⁰ B 25, 4.

⁴¹ Adrevaldus, Historia, 907 C.

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The hymn, Claris conjubila, Gallia, from a tenth century manuscript tells of the resuscitation miracle at Benedict's relics and makes an allusion to similar miracles in his lifetime when he was identified with the prophets of old who also raised the dead:

Hinc vatum veterum facta resuscitat,
Morti, quod libuit, mortuus imperat,
Extinctum propriis ossibus excitat,
O quam mira potentia!⁴²

The same hymn speaks of the wonderful deeds of Benedict in Italy and the great signs worked at his tomb in Gaul:

Miris Italiae fulserat actibus
Gallos irradiat corpore mortuus
Signis ad tumulum crebrius, emicat
Illustrans patriam novam⁴³.

After the separation of Benedict's and Scholastica's relics the procession carried the remains of Benedict on to Old Fleury and were joined along the way by monks and people of Orleans with praise and jubilation:

Post haec vero cum in eundo nulla mora fieret,
agmina monachorum cum plebe territorii Aurelianensis
obviam eis processerunt, milliaro a monasterio in
vico qui dicitur Vetus-floriacus; ibi que cum gaudio
et laetitia atque honore magno exceperunt corpora
Sanctorum supradictorum sub die quinto Iduum Iuliorum⁴⁴.

⁴² B 7, 3.

⁴³ B 7, 2.

⁴⁴ Adrevaldus, Historia, 906 C.

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The final stanza of the second Translation hymn in the eleventh century manuscript tells of the joyous procession which came to meet Benedict's relics:

Procedens pater Mummolus
 Obviam sanctis ossibus
 Cum monachorum agmine
 Et sacro plebis ordine
 Laudum Deo praeconia,
 Dat Benédicto cantica,
 Per quem iuvári poscimus
 Suis ovantes laudibus⁴⁵.

According to Adrevald the relics of Benedict did not remain at Old Fleury very long. In the month of December they were moved to another township (present day Fleury) in the canton of Orleans and reburied in the Basilica of St. Peter⁴⁶.

As the relics were placed on the boat which would transport them up the Loire River, the ice-capped waters are said to have miraculously yielded to this boat which sailed along without a steersman. When the relics arrived at Fleury, the flowers and trees miraculously burst into bloom⁴⁷. Rodulfus Tortarius, a twelfth century monk

⁴⁵ B 25, 5.

⁴⁶ Adrevaldus, *Historia*, 908 B.

⁴⁷ "Hinc colligunt socii Bollandiani, suspecta esse quae a Diederico Monacho Teutonico in historia Relationis S. Benedicti ex urbe contigisse referuntur, scilicet glaciem ultro liquefactum ac dissolutam, et arbores hieme floruisse. Quae nonnisi hac occasione gesta dici posse existimant, nec ab Adrevaldo hic praetermittenda, si vera fuissent, Haec alias." A note on Adrevald's *Miracula Sancti Benedicti*, *Patratra in Gallia*, J. Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benédicti*, Saec. 2^{um}, 600-800 AD, Paris, Savreux, 1773, p. 389.

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historian of Fleury, tells of these happenings in the following verses:

Post tumulata pius quae gessit membra patronus
 Haec simul hac una congero paginula
 Astrictus glacie Liger amnis, tempore brumae
 Praebet iter sancto nobile legifero
 Imponunt navi sine remige membra magistri
 Oppositum flumen quo secat et glaciem
 Floret Floriacus, visu spectabile, vicus,
 Patris ad introitum, luc erat effugium.
 Hinc sumpsit nomen, cuius fuit ante, vocamen
 Aurea Vallis, eo quod opimus humo⁴⁸.

The twin miracles of the unpiloted ship and the blossoming flowers which accompanied the removal of Benedict's relics to Fleury are spoken of in the following stanza of the hymn Glaris conjubila, Gallia:

Navis per fluvium nat sine remige,
 Mirando glaciem desecat impetu
 Sancti membra ferens obvia flumini
 Undas retro reverberat.

Eductum fluvio sensit ut arida,
 Non curans gelidi frigora temporis
 Vestit cuncta novis, illico floribus
 Mutata facie soli⁴⁹.

A hymn from an eleventh century manuscript from Fleury asks God to bless Fleury through Benedict. A play on words is used regarding both the name of the saint and

⁴⁸ "In hymno Breviarii Cluniacensis p. 378 duo miracula subnectuntur, uti etiam in MS Poemate Rodulfi Tortarius ex quo ea damus: Post tumulata etc." Note "e" in Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana IX, Martii, Tomus Tertius, p. 303.

⁴⁹ B 7, 4-5.

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the town:

Sit in donis benedictus
Per quem pater Benedictus
Nostrae datur Galliae;

Isto flore floret pictus
Floriacus locus dictus⁵⁰
Suae dono gratiae.

This examination of the hymns written in honor of St. Benedict's Translation has revealed how heavily the hymnodists relied upon documentary material for their subject matter. This was clearly seen as the two hymns in manuscripts dated the eleventh century and another dated the twelfth century succinctly expressed the ideas and details given in Adrevald's Historia Translationis Sancti Benedicti. These hymns together formed a complete story as Adrevald's account of the Translation was continued in each one of them.

The only Translation hymn in a manuscript dated the tenth century made a general allusion to resuscitation miracles spoken of by Adrevald but the account which this hymn gives of the twin miracles of the unpiloted ship and the blossoming flowers are not related by Adrevald. It is believed by Mabillon that Adrevald made an indirect reference to these miracles when he wrote as follows:

⁵⁰ B 29, 1a-1b.

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Quo etiam in loco corpus beatissimi deferunt Benedicti, in loculo adhuc gestatorio positum. Dum igitur sancta eo quiescerent membra, Deo operante tale quoddam accidit miraculum⁵¹.

The twin miracles seem to form a part of an oral tradition connected with the Translation of Benedict's remains and most probably are of legendary character⁵².

⁵¹ Adrevaldus, Miracula S. Benedicti, in Mabillion, op. cit., p. 389, Ch. 34. Cf. also footnote 47 supra which is an editor's comment on this passage of Adrevald.

⁵² "[...] Legends, considered as connected narrations, in contradistinction to myths and tales, presuppose an historical fact as a basis or pretext: such is the first essential element of the species. This historical fact may either be developed or disfigured by popular imagination: and here we have the second element. Both elements may be combined in very unequal proportions, and according as the preponderance is to be found on the side of fact or on that of fiction, the narrative may be classed as history or legend." H. Delehaye, The Legends of the Saints, London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907, p. 9.

Part Two

OTHER ALLUSIONS IN THE ST. BENEDICT HYMNS

CHAPTER IV

BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS IN THE ST. BENEDICT HYMNS

Many allusions to Holy Scripture are evident in some of the St. Benedict Hymns. These allusions come about because of a close likeness which is seen between a person in Scripture and Benedict, due to similar experiences in the life of each. Events from Sacred Scripture which are similar to happenings in Benedict's life also give rise to an allusion.

This chapter will be divided into two parts. Part one will treat the allusions to the Old Testament and part two will consider the allusions to the New Testament.

Part One

Benedict is compared to Scriptural persons in chapter eight of the Dialogues by Peter the Deacon, Gregory's interlocutor, who thought of Moses, Elias, Eliseus, David, and the Apostle Peter, when he heard how closely Benedict's deeds resembled these men's:

Mira sunt et multum stupenda, quae dicis: nam in aqua ex petra producta Moysen, in ferro viro quod ex profundo aquae rediit Helisaeum, in aquae itinere Petrum in corvi oboedientiam Heliam, in luctu autem mortis inimici David video¹.

¹ Dialogi, II, 8.

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These same scriptural allusions and many others have been incorporated in many of the Medieval hymn texts in honor of St. Benedict.

Starting first with the Old Testament, the name of Moses is associated with Benedict because both the Holy Abbot and Moses brought forth water from a rock to quench the thirst of their followers. Holy Scripture thus records the miracle of Moses:

En ego stabo ibi coram te, supra petram Horeb:
percutiesque petram, et exhibit ex aqua, ut bibat
populus. Fecit Moyses ita coram senioribus Israel².

When Benedict was prevailed upon by the three communities of monks for permission to move their monastery rather than walk down a mountain everyday to draw water from a lake, the Man of God through prayer caused the rocky surface to give water³. A hymn in a tenth century manuscript tells how Benedict, like Moses, brought forth a flow of water from a rock:

Ut sacer Moyses
de rupe fluvium
precibus elecit⁴.

² Exodus, 17, 1-7; Cf. also Numbers, 20, 1-11.

³ Dialogi, II, 5.

⁴ B 17, 7a.

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A stanza from a thirteenth century manuscript considers Benedict equal to Moses who also had to nod to the requests of a burdensome group of followers:

Aequiperas meritum Moysi
Cum gregis annueres oneri⁵.

Moving from the Pentateuch to the Book of Kings, David was another personage to whom St. Benedict was compared. A likeness was seen between the great King and the Man of God because both sorrowed over the death of their enemies. David wept and mourned over his enemy Saul who had been slain in battle⁶ and also lamented the loss of his hostile son, Absalom⁷.

Benedict was aggrieved over the death of his enemy Florentius. In the following verse from a tenth century manuscript the Patriarch is compared to David:

Persequentium
ruinas dolet ut David⁸.

The Old Testament prophets had the task of correcting the wayward chosen people of God. They were also outstanding for their visionary powers and the ability to foretell future happenings. Like the prophets, Benedict made

⁵ B 28, 4.

⁶ II Kings, 1, 11.

⁷ II Kings, 18, 32-33.

⁸ B 17, 6b.

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the wayward amend⁹ and was also outstanding for his gifts as a visionary and seer of future happenings¹⁰. Two hymns from twelfth century manuscripts speak of Benedict's prophetic qualities. One points out he was ornamented with the grace of prophecy:

Prophetali
comptus gratia¹¹.

The other directly calls him a prophet:

Vir fuit propheticus¹².

Some of the allusions clearly name the prophet with whom Benedict is identified. A hymn in a manuscript dated the eleventh century associates Benedict with Elias and the prophets:

Eliae particeps exstitit vatum¹³.

Elias was succeeded by Eliseus whose prophetic career was outstanding for the miracles he performed. The Book of Kings records how Eliseus miraculously increased a little oil for a poor woman who sold it to pay her creditors¹⁴.

⁹ Dialogi, II, 4, 12, 13 et seq.

¹⁰ Dialogi, II, 15, 17, 20 et seq.

¹¹ B 39, 4a.

¹² B 43, 3b.

¹³ B 23, 5.

¹⁴ IV Kings, 4, 4.

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During the great famine in Italy, Benedict, by his prayers, caused an empty keg to overflow with oil in order to feed the hungry¹⁵. Referring to the Patriarch's miracle a hymn in a twelfth century manuscript calls Benedict "another Eliseus."

Hic est alter Elisaeus
Propter cuius preces Deus
Auxit fratrem oleum¹⁶.

The similarity between Benedict and Eliseus is further shown in the miraculous recovery of an iron blade which had fallen into a body of water and its replacement on the handle. Eliseus' miracle is told in the Fourth Book of Kings:

Dixit autem homo Dei; Ubi cecidit? At ille monstravit ei locum. Praecidit ergo lignum, et misit illuc: natavitque ferrum et ait: Tolle, Qui extendit manum, et tulit illud¹⁷.

Like Eliseus, Benedict caused the lost axe-blade of his workman to emerge from the bottom of the lake where it had fallen¹⁸. By his compassion for the Goth, Benedict is considered by a hymn in a manuscript dated the eleventh century as having possessed the faith of Eliseus:

¹⁵ Dialogi, II, 29.

¹⁶ B 43, 4a.

¹⁷ IV Kings, 6, 6.

¹⁸ Dialogi, II, 6.

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Compos Helisaicae fidei
 Compatiens lacrimisque Gothi
 Gurgitis eximii scatebris
 Manubrio calibem revehis¹⁹.

The final parallel noted in the hymns between the prophet Eliseus and Benedict is based on the visionary gifts which empowered both saints to observe the activities of the absent.

Eliseus revealed to his servant Giezi the business transactions which he had made on a journey, and punished Giezi accordingly²⁰.

More than once Benedict informed others of their deeds performed away from the monastery²¹. A hymn on a tenth century manuscript relates that Benedict, with the spirit of Eliseus, knew the works of the absent:

opera
 absentum
 cognoscit Helisaico²².

¹⁹ B 28, 5.

²⁰ IV Kings, 5, 25-27.

²¹ Dialogi, II, 12, 13, 18, 19.

²² B 17, 6b.

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Part Two

NEW TESTAMENT ALLUSIONS

The various New Testament allusions found in the St. Benedict Hymns are taken from some of the Gospels, Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ, speaking figuratively, told his listeners to let their lives shine before others as a light on a lampstand:

Neque accendunt lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio
sed super candelabrum ut luceat omnibus qui in domo
sunt²³.

This same figure of "light" is used in chapter one of the Dialogues where St. Gregory tells that God wished Benedict to shine as a lamp set upon a lampstand: "Ut posita super candelabrum lucerna clariscerit."

Using the word "lumen" instead of "lucerna" this New Testament simile is applied to Benedict in a hymn in a manuscript dated the twelfth century:

Fulgebat in mundo
lumen ut in candelabro²⁴.

The following stanza from a thirteenth century manuscript calls Benedict the bright light of the world:

²³ Matthew 5, 15.

²⁴ B 38, 5b.

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Te lumen clarum
mundi per circulum
statuit amplum²⁵.

This stanza reflects the figure which Christ applied to himself: "Ego sum lux mundi²⁶"; and to his hearers: "Vos estis lux mundi²⁷".

A miracle similar to that of Peter, who walked upon the water at Christ's command, is also found in the life of St. Benedict. Maurus, at Benedict's command, ran out upon the waters to rescue the boy Placid who had fallen into the deep part of a lake. Benedict, in sending Maurus out on the lake, is said in a hymn ascribed to the tenth century to have acted as the Lord who bade Peter walk on the waters:

Ut Petrum Dominus
sic Maurum currere
fecerat pelagus
physin per fidem superans²⁸.

An eleventh century manuscript continuing the allusion, tells how the young disciple at Benedict's command walked the water in the fashion of Peter:

Discipulumque imperans verbo
Stagno aquarum pedibus calcans
Petri ad instar, signibus pollet²⁹.

²⁵ B 49, 5a.

²⁶ John 8, 12.

²⁷ Matthew 5, 14.

²⁸ B 17, 7b.

²⁹ B 23, 7.

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Peter is again alluded to in a manuscript from the thirteenth century which describes Maurus as running upon the waves with the soles of the feet of Peter in obedience to Benedict's rescue order:

Dum oboedit Maurus patri
Super undas plantis Petri
Currrens traxit Placidum³⁰.

Alluding to the Gospel teachings, a stanza from a hymn which calls Benedict a prophet, concludes with lines referring to Benedict as "wholely evangelical by loving others."

Vir fuit propheticus
Totus evangelicus
Proximus amando³¹.

Another hymn from a twelfth century manuscript looks upon Benedict as ruler, a teacher, and an apostle:

Rector modestus
doctor et apostolicus³².

A hymn in a manuscript dated the eleventh century relates that the Church established a worldwide reverence for Benedict after that of the apostles:

Nunc merito
post beatos
apostolos
venerandum sancta sanxit
per orbem ecclesia³³.

³⁰ B 43, 6b.

³¹ B 43, 3b.

³² B 38, 4.

³³ B 22, 3a.

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Another hymn from an eleventh century manuscript showing the various ways in which Benedict is equal to the angels, prophets, and patriarchs, makes him equal to Christ's ministers by example or lesson:

O nimis felix pater alme semper
Angelis vita, spiritu prophetis
Patribus signis, Domini ministris
Par documentis³⁴.

On the feast of Pentecost the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit: "et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto³⁵." A hymn in an eleventh century manuscript indicates that Benedict was also filled with the Holy Spirit:

Spiritu sancto repletus manet³⁶.

It was through the Holy Spirit that the apostles were empowered to work miracles. Among their many wondrous deeds, the Acts of the Apostles tell how Peter raised the young girl Tabitha from the dead³⁷ and how Paul restored the young Eutychus to life after he had fallen to his death from a three-story window³⁸.

³⁴ B 27, 3.

³⁵ Acts of the Apostles, 1, 4.

³⁶ B 23, 4.

³⁷ Acts of the Apostles, 9, 40.

³⁸ Ibid., 20, 10.

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An eleventh century manuscript making note of Benedict's power to raise the dead points out that he worked these miracles by the merits of an apostolic prerogative:

Juris apostolici meritis
Justitiae es socius parilis
Restituens animas precibus
Tabifluis nece corporibus³⁹.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul depicts the Christian life as a warfare between the Christian and the enemies of his soul. He uses similes from military life to illustrate his point:

Propterea accipite armaturam Dei, [...] State ergo succincti lumbos vestros in veritate, et induti loricae justitiae, et calceati pedes in praeparatione evangelii pacis: in omnibus sumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere: et galeam salutis assumite, et gladium spiritus (quod est verbum Dei)⁴⁰

The following stanza from an eleventh century manuscript mirrors St. Paul's idea of spiritual combat as it tells how St. Benedict conquered the ancient enemy:

Arma adsumens praeclara sancta,
Praecinctus ense, clipeo, hasta
Caritas quaeque, spes, fides, certa
Indutus vicit hostem antiquum⁴¹.

The final New Testament Allusion comes from the Apocalypse where it is said that all who serve God are

³⁹ B 28, 6.

⁴⁰ Epistle to the Ephesians, 6, 13-17.

⁴¹ B 23, 6.

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marked with a sign upon their forehead:

Nolite nocere terrae et mari, neque arboribus,
quoadusque signemus servos Dei nostri in frontibus
eorum⁴².

Like the servants of God, declares a hymn from an eleventh century manuscript, the meek and humble who serve Benedict are also signified by their foreheads which are marked with the grace of redemption:

Huic omnis populi
fronte signati
tam magno, tam celso
subdite patri
mites, humiles
percepta
redemptionis gratia⁴³.

The Bible for medieval man was like a text-book. It had an immediate appeal for him and the lives of its sacred personages were deeply rooted in his mind.

In writing the panegyrics of the saints medieval man referred to Holy Scripture for illustrative comparisons and parallel features between the scriptural personage and his favorite saint.

The preceding study of St. Benedict hymns show a definite collaboration between Scripture and hymnody. In the eyes of the hymnodist Benedict appeared equal to the

⁴² Apocalypse, 7, 4.

⁴³ B 22, 4a.

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Patriarchs, Kings, and Prophets of the Old Testament. In their allusions to the New Testament, the hymnodists considered Benedict similar to the Apostles; more than this, he was a true imitator of Christ and, because of his miraculous powers, possessed the spirit of Christ⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ Dialogi, II, 8.

CHAPTER V

ALLUSIONS TO THE HOLY RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Besides the many prodigies which made Benedict famous, St. Gregory points out that the Holy Patriarch was also eminent for his teachings. These teachings are contained in his Regula Monachorum, a work which Gregory finds "commendable for its discretion and attractive style¹". This Rule mirrors the soul of Benedict and in its ordinances a precise knowledge of his character and life can be found since "the holy man could not have taught otherwise than he himself lived²". Thus does the biographer draw attention to the most authentic source of knowledge of the work of Benedict. It is his monastic Rule which assures Benedict a prominent place among the masters of the Universal Church.

In composing the Rule Benedict wished to chart out for his followers a God-centered, yet practical way of community life under the guidance of an abbot. With the growth and spread of monasticism the practices and doctrine of the

¹ "Nam scripsit monachorum regulam discretionem praecipuam, sermone luculentam." Dialogi, II, 36.

² "Quia sanctus vir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam vixit." Ibid.

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Rule became widely known.

The Medieval hymnwriters were acquainted with the great Sancta Regula Monachorum and this chapter will show how their hymntexts reflect their awareness and regard for this great norm by their many allusions to it.

The hymnodists allude to the Rule under many different terms. Some of these terms are found in the Rule itself and there are others which the writers appropriately apply to it.

Directly speaking of the Regula, verses from a tenth century manuscript proclaim that the tongue will speak of the judgment which Benedict had as he ratified the teachings of the Rule:

Quod Benedictum habet, regulae qui dogmata sancit
et linguae eius loquetur iudicium³.

In his allusion to the Rule a hymnodist metaphorically invokes Benedict as a star to illuminate those whom he forms by his mild rule of a holy life:

Magna coeli stella
Eos semper illustra
Quos sanctae vitae placida
formas regula⁴.

³ B 10, 2.

⁴ B 31, 9a. The last three lines of this stanza are also found in another eleventh century hymn B 35, 3a.

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In picturesque and poetic language a stanza from a hymn from a twelfth century manuscript calls the Rule a mirror of true philosophy and likens it to a spiritual hoe fashioned to rid the earth of thorns and troubles spoken of in a preceding stanza⁵:

Ad quod et quendam quasi spiritalem
Sarculum mira fabricavit arte,
Regulam vitae speculumque verae
Philosophiae⁶.

Benedict's Rule is noted for its discretion and balance. Since it therefore admits of neither excess nor defect, it can be considered a standard, a pattern, or a norm of monastic living. This concept of the Rule as a "norma" was not absent from the mind of Benedict⁷ nor the medieval hymnwriters and is present in hymns appearing on manuscripts from the tenth to the thirteenth century inclusive.

⁵ Terra delictus maledicta nostra / Proferens spinas tribulosque nobis / Uberes fructus benedicta reddit / Per Benedictum. B 44, 6.

⁶ B 44, 7. According to the manuscript in which it appears this hymn is from the Liber Tertius Abelardi. Dreves however, rejects this hymn as a work of Abelard: "Unde tamquam spurium eum omnino rejecissem, nisi quaedam rationes impedirent, quominus ab Abaelardo confectum pernegem." Cf. Petrus Abelardus, Hymnarius Paraclitensis, edited by C. M. Dreves, Paris, Lethielloux, 1891, p. 14.

⁷ In Chapter LXXII of the Holy Rule, Benedict refers to it as "rectissima norma vitae."

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The following stanza pictures the Rule as a norm which guides those who leave the crossroads of the world and pursue God's work:

Arta sed mira
 ipsius est norma
 praemonstrans
 liquenda mundi
 compita
 ac sequenda
 tua munia⁸.

A hymn in a manuscript dated the twelfth century prays for a final union with God and Benedict brought about by observing the holy norm of life:

Utque observata
 Sancta tua norma
 Demum Dei regnum⁹
 Perfruamur tecum⁹.

The opening stanza of a hymn from an eleventh century manuscript calls to all monks to praise Christ who has given Benedict as the norm of a holy life, thereby considering Benedict as a personification of his teachings:

Omnes venite monachi per orbem
 Christum laudantes, alium creatorem,
 Qui nobis dedit vitae sacrae normam
 Hunc Benedictum¹⁰.

⁸ B 39, 3b.

⁹ B 46, 37.

¹⁰ B 26, 1.

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A twelfth century manuscript pictures Benedict as a judge seated on a heavenly throne and who is kindly disposed to his monks whom he will give the law of God by means of his norm:

Sederit in solio caeli iudex duodenus,
Optatus monachis, quos sua norma dabit:
lex Dei eius in corde ipsius¹¹.

In the Prologue to the Holy Rule, Benedict begins with an invitation to the monk to listen to and wholeheartedly embrace the precepts of his master:

Ausculata, o fili, praecepta magistri et inclina
aurem cordis tui et admonitionem pii patris libenter
excipe et efficaciter comple¹².

These precepts are eternal and are to be clung to forever, admonishes a hymn in a thirteenth century manuscript:

Aeterna praecepta monet sine fine tenenda,
lex Dei eius in corde ipsius¹³.

An eleventh century manuscript acknowledges Benedict as a holy father and master who not only displayed a chaste life but also proved his doctrinal teachings by signs:

¹¹ B 13, 3.

¹² Prologus, Sancta Regula.

¹³ B 11, 3.

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Tu monachorum pater et magister
 Caelibem vitam sacer edidisti
 Atque doctrinae documenta signis
 Ipse probasti¹⁴.

Codification was a principal activity of the early sixth century. At that time Dionysius Exiguus produced his code of ecclesiastical law¹⁵, Justinian gave the world his famous code of civil law¹⁶, and Benedict wrote his Rule in which he incorporated and adapted the teachings of the Eastern desert Fathers and the Fathers of the Church as a law¹⁷ for Western monastic life. Because of this great work Benedict is recognized as a Legislator and his Rule is known as a Law¹⁸.

The following hymn from a thirteenth century manuscript invokes Benedict as a kind lawmaker who has been presented with a heavenly stole, i.e., a symbol of authority:

¹⁴ B 26, 4.

¹⁵ Amleto G. Cicognani, Canon Law, Philadelphia, Dolphin Press, 1935, p. 215-216.

¹⁶ Cambridge Medieval History, edited by H. Gwatkin and J. P. Whitney, Cambridge, University Press, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 59.

¹⁷ Benedict refers to his Rule as a law: "Lege qua supra diximus," Ch. 43; "legatur coram hospite lex," Ch. 53; "Ecce lex sub qua militare vis," Ch. 58, Sancta Regula.

¹⁸ Chapman, op. cit., p. 57-74.

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Caelesti donatus stola,
 Tu Benedicte,
 legislator alme,
 vota vide nostra
 et data hodie
 cantica¹⁹.

The following verse looks upon the Patriarch as a proposer of a new law:

Hic est lator novae legis²⁰.

The legislative idea is seen too in an opening stanza of another hymn in a twelfth century manuscript which specifically hails Benedict as the lawgiver for the monks of the west:

Ave, Pater alme,
 Lator legis sacrae
 Monachorum vitae
 Occidentis plagae²¹.

Benedict is also recognized as the mirror of his holy law:

Legis sanctae speculum²²,

while the following verse identifies him with the law itself:

qui es lex, rex, et lux²³.

¹⁹ B 31, 5a. The verses: Tu Benedicte / legislator alme / vota vide nostra, also appear in B 35, 2a.

²⁰ B 43, 4a.

²¹ B 46, 1.

²² B 48, 3.

²³ B 34, 3.

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A line from a tenth century manuscript asks St. Benedict to shape his monks by laws concerning the work of Christ:

Legibus informat monachos de munere Christi
et lingua eius loquetur iudicium²⁴.

Many references made by the Medieval hymnodists to the Holy Rule are not as specific as the foregoing examples, "lex", "regula", but are of a more general character such as teachings, "dogmata"; counsels, "monita"; lessons, "documenta"; writings, "scripta"; instruction, "doctrina".

The following verses from a tenth century manuscript urge songs in honor of Benedict from whose deeds heavenly teachings gleam:

Vox cane vinnula Davidicas odas Benedicto
Ex cuius gestis caelestia dogmata fulgent²⁵.

Verses from an eleventh century manuscript tell that the just man's tongue will speak of the judgment which Benedict taught by his counsels:

et lingua eius loquetur iudicium,
Quod docuit monitis, operum virtutibus implens²⁶.

Another stanza tells that Benedict won innumerable souls by his writings:

²⁴ B 11, 2.

²⁵ B 12, 1.

²⁶ B 19, 2-3.

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O tot a Christo redimite sertis
 Quot tuis scriptis animas lucraris,
 Inter has et nos simul adnotari,
 Sancte, precare²⁷.

The same allusion to Benedict's writings is found in a variation of the foregoing stanza from an eleventh century manuscript:

Castra per orbem cantibus resultant,
 Et tuis scriptis animae lucentur,
 Inter has et nos simul adnotari,
 Sanctae, precamur²⁸.

According to identical verses taken from two hymns in other manuscripts dated the eleventh century, Benedict has proved by signs the lessons of his teachings:

Atque doctrinae documenta signis
 Ipse probasti²⁹.

This discussion on the allusions to the Rule and its teachings is aptly concluded by a hymn in a manuscript of the twelfth century: May all the earth be filled with Benedict's teachings:

Terra doctrinis repleatur omnis³⁰.

This examination of the St. Benedict hymns for allusions to the Holy Rule reveals first of all that the

²⁷ B 27, 5.

²⁸ B 26, 7.

²⁹ B 26, 4; B 27, 2.

³⁰ B 12, 5: 2 17, 2.

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hymnodists were aware of the prominence and importance of this legislative work as shown by their expressions of praise and admiration for it.

No particular part of the Rule or any aspect of its teachings are contained or referred to in the hymns; nor is there any hymn written entirely in honor of the Rule. The writers seem only satisfied to acknowledge the greatness and purpose of the document and to acknowledge Benedict as its author and promulgator.

The hymns in manuscripts dated the eleventh century contain more reference to the Rule than any other century. It was during this century that the life according to Benedict's Rule was flourishing and spreading extensively under the leadership of the Abbey of Cluny. The eleventh century also saw the beginning of monastic reform and the founding of new Orders which followed the Holy Rule in whole or in part.

CONCLUSION

From the preceding analysis of the St. Benedict hymns the following conclusions are evident.

After making a thorough study of the hymns which tell of the saint's miracles and deeds from his early life to his death, it was clearly seen that the hymnodists closely adhered to the only known life of St. Benedict, St. Gregory's second book of the Dialogues for their subject matter. All the biographical data contained in the hymns corresponded exactly to the information given by St. Gregory and there were no facts incorporated in the hymns which could not be also found in the Dialogues. In some hymns the composers' dependence on Gregory's prose text was so great that their stanzas not only concisely retold stories from Gregory's narrative but also paraphrased the story using some of the vocabulary of the pontifical biographer¹.

In the hymns which told of the Translation of Benedict's relics and the accompanying miracles, the Dialogues no longer provided information here since the Translation took place after the writing of the Dialogues. An analysis of the hymns in honor of the Translation revealed the composers' close collaboration with a ninth century history of

¹ B 4, B 6, B 28, B 32, B 33, B 39, B 46, B 49.

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the Translation by the monk Adrevald. The hymns followed Adrevald's succession of events so faithfully and used parts of his vocabulary in such detail, that the hymns could easily be called a versification of this source on which they depend. Furthermore, the two syllabled rime in the stanzas of the three hymns in the eleventh and twelfth century manuscripts, a quality of the hymnody of these periods², certainly reveals that these hymns came after the ninth century document of Adrevald.

In only one instance did a hymn show evidence of using subject matter which could not be authenticated by historical documents but rather seemed to draw upon oral tradition for its source of information³.

Of the three groups of elements searched for in the hymns, those which pointed out Benedict's works and his miraculous deeds dominated the hymns. Thirty-six of the fifty hymns selected for analysis were found to contain a specific or general reference to facts of Benedict's life and miracles. The fourteen remaining hymns made no allusion to biographical events. Hymns in manuscripts of each century (tenth to the thirteenth inclusive) developed their

² Raby, op. cit., p. 276.

³ B 7.

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verses around this data provided by Gregory's Dialogues, with noticeably elaborate descriptions in hymns of the eleventh and twelfth centuries manuscripts and unadorned allusions in the thirteenth century manuscripts.

A second dominant element which was found to have influenced the development of the St. Benedict hymns was the saint's Holy Rule. This trend based on the Holy Rule is first seen in the tropes where eight of the nineteen tropes in tenth and eleventh century manuscripts used the motif of the Rule⁴. This theme is carried into the sequences and hymns of succeeding centuries, where hymns of the eleventh century, the Age of Monastic Reform and the pontificate of a Benedictine Pope, Gregory VII, show a preponderance of allusions to the Holy Rule.

Biblical themes provided another trend in the hymns in honor of St. Benedict. Scriptural elements have long had a part in Medieval hymnody and the composers writing in honor of St. Benedict continued this tradition by appropriating to their favorite saint, scriptural metaphors, attributes and miracles of scriptural personages. Hymns in manuscripts from the tenth to the thirteenth century inclusive reflected scriptural motifs.

⁴ B 10, B 11, B 12, B 13, B 17, B 19, B 31, B 35.

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Though the St. Benedict hymns show development along three different trends, these trends converge to form a complete picture of the saint's life in the group of hymns analysed. It is clearly seen that these hymns are directly related to each other by reason of these three trends which draw all the dominating elements together in order to form an integral view of Benedict's life.

Apart from these internal characteristics which show a relationship between the hymns, a glance at the external characteristics of many of the hymns (structure, meter, prototypes) indicate that a closer study of these qualities would afford more information on the development of the St. Benedict hymns. Other future research on these hymns should include an analysis of the incipits and doxologies of the hymns, a study of metaphors, classical words, prayer elements which altogether would supply such data needed for the complete history of hymnody.

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ABSTRACT OF

A Study of Biographical and Biblical Elements
and other allusions in the Hymns in honor of
St. Benedict of Nursia from the 10th through
the 13th century.

A complete history of medieval hymnody has not yet been written. One means of helping to accomplish this great task is through an internal analysis of medieval hymns developed by Dr. Joseph Szoverffy in order to determine the influence of dominant elements and general factors which constitute a common tradition in hymnody from century to century. Such a study of hymnological traditions not only supplements the uncertain data which manuscripts provide in dating medieval hymns but also helps to establish relationships between hymns and serves as a source of information and background for scholars interested in obtaining a complete history of hymnody.

This thesis made an internal analysis of the hymns in honor of St. Benedict of Nursia in manuscripts from the tenth to the thirteenth century inclusive in order to find the most striking and predominant elements which influenced the development of these hymns and to discover the sources used by the hymnodists.

After studying the hymns dealing with Benedict's life and miracles at Subiaco and Monte Cassino, the most

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predominant elements were found to be biographical facts concerning the saint, comparisons between Benedict and Scriptural personages, and allusions to the saint's Holy Rule. These elements came together to form a complete picture of Benedict's life as told in the hymns thus establishing a relationship between the hymns. It was also discovered that the second book of the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great was the main source from which the hymnologists took their biographical data on Benedict.

The hymns dealing with the Translation of St. Benedict's relics contained data from a prose text of Adrevald as well as from an oral tradition.

This preliminary study is only a part of the work which remains to be done with the St. Benedict hymns. A further analysis of these hymns for their use of metaphors, classical words, prayer elements, and their beginning and endings would provide a greater knowledge of their development, background, and sources, all of which would contribute to a more complete history of medieval hymnody.