

Montecassino after Desiderius: the Continuation to the Chronicle of Leo Marsicanus*

by Graham A. Loud

The Chronicle of Montecassino, begun by Leo Marsicanus at the end of the eleventh century, is a huge and complex work. After outlining how and why it was begun, and the structure of the work, this study turns to the continuation of Leo's chronicle, covering the years 1072-1138. It discusses the authorship of the continuation, and in particular the role of the final continuator Peter the Deacon, before turning to the themes and concerns of the various authors, and what these may tell us of the monastery of Montecassino during the first half of the twelfth century, at a time when the monks felt that their prestige, material interests and independence were increasingly under threat.

La Cronaca di Montecassino, iniziata da Leone Marsicano alla fine del secolo XI, è un'opera vasta e complessa. Dopo aver delineato come e perché fu iniziata, e la struttura dell'opera, questo studio si rivolge alla continuazione della cronaca di Leone, che descrive gli anni dal 1072 al 1138. Si discute la paternità della continuazione, e in particolare il ruolo dell'ultimo continuatore Pietro Diacono, prima di affrontare i temi e le preoccupazioni dei vari autori, e cosa questi possono dirci del monastero di Montecassino durante la prima metà del XII secolo, in un'epoca in cui i monaci sentivano sempre più minacciati il loro prestigio, i loro interessi materiali e la loro indipendenza.

Middle Ages, 12th century, Montecassino, Chronicle writing, Leo Marsicanus (Leo of Ostia), Papacy, Peter the Deacon.

Medioevo, secolo XII, Montecassino, Cronaca, Leo Marsicano (Leone Ostiense), Papato, Pietro Diacono.

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The Montecassino Chronicle of Leo Marsicanus and his continuators is a huge work, the text of which occupies more than 600 pages in the modern edition of Hartmut Hoffmann.¹ It would clearly be inappropriate, and indeed impossible, to do justice to such a *magnum opus* in a short article. Since much of what previous discussion there has been of this chronicle has been devoted to the original chronicle of Leo,² this study will concentrate upon only one part of this work, the last of the four books into which it is divided, describing the history of the monastery from after the death of the great abbot Desiderius (Pope Victor III) in 1087 until 1138.

1. *The Genesis of the Chronicle*

Before turning in earnest to the content of the continuation, it would probably be helpful to make clear the structure, transmission and authorship of the chronicle as a whole, for these are complex issues that may not be entirely clear even to those well-informed about twelfth-century historical writing in Italy. In his introduction Leo told his readers that he had originally been commissioned by Oderisius I of Montecassino (abbot 1087-1105) to write an account of the “splendid and mighty deeds” (*gloriosa ac magnifica gesta*) of his predecessor Desiderius. Subsequently, and before Leo had made much progress on this task, the abbot decided that his work should have a much more ambitious scope, and encompass the history of Montecassino from its foundation by St. Benedict onwards.³ This change of plan, we may note, was by no means unusual in twelfth-century historical writing. Thus Orderic Vitalis set out to write a history of his own monastery of St. Évroul before on his abbot’s instructions expanding it to become a history of Normandy and the Norman world.⁴ Similarly, the “History of the Events beyond the Sea” by Archbishop William of Tyre was originally intended simply to be a biography of the then ruler Amalric (King of Jerusalem 1163-74), but was subsequently expanded to become a history of the kingdom and the other Frankish states in the east from the First Crusade until the time of Amalric’s son, Baldwin IV.⁵ But the idea of writing a general history of Montecassino was not entirely new. Apparently some years earlier Desiderius had asked his friend Archbishop Alfanus of Salerno to write a history of the monastery, but the latter had never done this, according to Leo daunted by the scale of the task.⁶ He was also, of course, a busy metropolitan, whose archiepiscopal duties would hardly have

¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*.

² For example, Wolf, *Making History*, 70-86, which indeed, while purporting to discuss Leo’s chronicle, limits its focus to Book II only.

³ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, 3-5.

⁴ *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, vol. 2, xv-xvi, 2-4.

⁵ Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 24-6.

⁶ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, 6.

left him time for writing such an ambitious work or for prolonged absence from his see to undertake the necessary research. Despite his conventional protestations of his own inadequacy, Leo was a much more suitable choice, indeed the obvious one, for he was the librarian and archivist of the abbey, and was thus on the spot and had immediate access to its manuscripts. In the event, Leo did write this history, but his account of Desiderius was left incomplete, concluding with the dedication of the rebuilt abbey church by Pope Alexander II in October 1071 and some subsequent work on other churches within the precinct in the years immediately after that. Although the final continuator of the chronicle, Peter the Deacon, claimed that Leo “was prevented by death” from completing his work, the most likely reason for him laying down his pen was his appointment by Paschal II as Cardinal bishop of Ostia. While this appointment cannot be dated exactly, it would seem to have been between March 1102, the last time that his predecessor as Bishop of Ostia is attested, and the death of Oderisius in December 1105. Leo held his position as a cardinal for at least ten years – he died in May 1115.⁷

Leo divided his chronicle into three books. Book I covered from the foundation until the mid-tenth century, by which time the community had been in exile for more than sixty years after the destruction of the abbey by Muslim raiders in 883. Book II commenced from its re-establishment on its original site by Abbot Aligernus c. 950 and continued until the death of Abbot Frederick (Pope Stephen IX) in 1058. Book III was devoted to the abbacy of Desiderius, during which the wealth, prestige, influence and intellectual life of the abbey reached their zenith, although as said Leo left it incomplete. Subsequent continuators – and it seems clear that there was more than one such author – completed Book III, and then added a lengthy further continuation down to 1138, as a fourth book. One or more of these authors also revised Leo’s original chronicle, which now also exists in two subsequent recensions, both of which probably date from between 1105 and 1127.⁸

2. *The Authorship of the Continuation*

The question of authorship was, however, complicated by the eventual continuator of the chronicle, Peter the Deacon, the celebrated hagiographer, classical scholar, forger and plagiarist, who became the librarian and archivist of the abbey in 1131, at what was by his own account the precociously ear-

⁷ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV, Prologus, 458. Hüls, *Kardinäle*, 105, dated his appointment to between 1102-7, but since the chronicle was dedicated to Abbot Oderisius, Leo must have ceased writing before the latter’s death. Hoffmann, “Studien zur Chronik von Montecassino,” 136.

⁸ Hoffmann, 109-13. There is a convenient summary in English of the relevant German historiography, including Hoffmann’s work, on the manuscripts and recensions of the chronicle by Bloch, *Monte Cassino*, vol. 1, 113-7.

ly age of twenty-four. In his preface to Book IV of the chronicle, composed apparently in 1140, Peter claimed to have written the whole of the continuation, saying expressly that his work went from the reconstruction of the abbey by Desiderius onwards, first completing his *vita* and then describing subsequent abbacies from Oderisius I until his own day.⁹ Unfortunately, like so many of Peter's claims, this statement was deeply mendacious. Peter had indeed given the game away in one of his earlier works, his "Book about the Illustrious Men of the Abbey of Cassino", which dates, probably, from 1133. Among his brief record of other Cassinese authors, he discussed a certain Guido, a priest "who was most distinguished in human learning and of most admirable life", who among other works had in particular written "the History of Cassino, from the time of Oderisius I until this present day".¹⁰ Thus Peter, not for the only time in his career, was taking credit for somebody else's work. Furthermore, in his preface to the his "Book about the Illustrious Men", he admitted that this text itself had been begun by Guido, although he claimed that the latter had found the work too hard and had abandoned it.¹¹ So it comes as no surprise to find that he had taken over another work by Guido.

If we are to accept what Peter said in his preface to Book IV literally, this would still leave open the question of who wrote the first part of the continuation, the second half of Book III describing the later years of Abbot Desiderius (ca. 1072-87). And here the question of authorship has been complicated by John Cowdrey, who pointed out that these later stages of Book III, which are at times confused and repetitive, appear to be a composite composition, showing signs of inadequate revision by more than one person, as well as drawing upon earlier written works, including (probably) a now-lost polemical work about the election of a pope by another Cassinese monk Alberic, directed against Emperor Henry IV, and certainly the *libellus Against the Simoniacs* of cardinal Deusdedit, from which the long speech attributed to Desiderius at the council of Benevento in 1087 was copied. Whether Guido may have played some part in this process we cannot know.¹²

How much of the continuation did Peter the Deacon actually write? There is, in fact, a clear and obvious break in the later part of Book IV, that signifies a change in authorship. The detailed history of the abbey from 1087 until 1127

⁹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV, Prologus, 459. Peter left three versions of his autobiography, which are difficult to reconcile one with another (below, note 20), but the consensus is that he was born in 1107; see the classic study by Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, 21-2, and Bloch, *The Atina Dossier*, 16. Bloch, *The Atina Dossier*, 15-28, provides the best brief modern introduction to Peter's career; for a factual summary, Dell'Omo, "Pietro Diacono."

¹⁰ *Liber illustrium virorum archisterii Casinensis*, 254, cap. 41: *Guido Casinensis presbyter, vir in divina et humana eruditione clarissimus, religione et vita probatus, scripsit [...] preterea que in ystoria Casinensi deerant, a temporibus scilicet Oderisii primi usque ad hunc diem, adiunxit.*

¹¹ *Liber illustrium virorum archisterii Casinensis*, 194.

¹² Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius*, 239-44, 251-62. For Alberic's works, including this one, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III,35; 410-11, and *Liber illustrium virorum archisterii Casinensis*, 220-5, cap. 21. (For the problem raised by these passages, see below, at note 26)

takes up the first ninety-five chapters of this book. There is then a grinding gear change. The next two chapters cover the history of southern Italy after the death of Duke William of Apulia in 1127, the papal schism that arose in 1130, the creation of the new kingdom of Sicily, and the arrival of the German Emperor Lothar in Italy in 1136 – that is nine years’ history in less than two pages of Hoffmann’s monumental edition.¹³ What follows is a very detailed account of the abbey’s travails in the last months of 1136 and in 1137, faced by the attempts of King Roger’s officials to instal a garrison there to defend the *regno* against the Germans, disputes over the election of a new abbot following the death of Abbot Seniorectus in February 1137, and in particular the anger of Pope Innocent II, who was keen to punish the monks for their earlier support of his rival Anacletus II. This last issue came to a head when a delegation from the monastery met Innocent and the emperor at Lagopesole (on the border between southern Apulia and Lucania) in July 1137. At the subsequent hearing – effectively a trial – who was the abbey’s spokesman? It was none other than Peter the Deacon, who, according to this account, proceeded to dispute with, and defend the abbey against, the pope, the latter’s principal spokesman Cardinal Gerard of S. Croce (the future Pope Lucius II) and “a certain Cistercian”, unnamed, but undoubtedly the formidable Bernard of Clairvaux, whom we know to have been among the papal entourage.¹⁴ He also, allegedly, debated various doctrinal issues with a Greek monk who happened to be present as an envoy from the eastern emperor, and mightily impressed the Emperor Lothar, who was keen to take Peter back to Germany with him. This “blowing his own trumpet” (one might say in Italian, *se le cantava e se le suonava*) was in stark contrast to both Leo and Guido, neither of whom, apart from Leo in his preface, and in one other place, mentioned themselves at all in the chronicle.¹⁵ Not only was Peter the hero of his own account, but the long description of the debates at Lagopesole was based upon an earlier tract that he had written, which survives independently, the *Altercatio pro Coenobio Casinensis*.¹⁶ The chronicle’s account of the debate with the Greek monk was

¹³ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.96-7; 556-8.

¹⁴ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.109; 574, called him Abbot *Norbertus* of Clairvaux, but in Peter’s debate with him he was not named, IV.114; 587-8. For Bernard in southern Italy, Falcone di Benevento, *Chronicon Beneventanum*, 196, 202-4; *Vita Prima Sancti Bernardi*, II. vi.43-6, cols. 293-5.

¹⁵ Leo noted, in *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, II.16; 199, that Bishop John of Sora was his uncle, but here did not mention himself by name. He was named as the abbey’s spokesman in its legal case concerning Santa Sofia, Benevento c. 1078, in *Chron Cas.* III.42; 420, but this was in the continuation, not in his own part of the chronicle. It was indeed surprisingly rare for medieval chroniclers to mention themselves in their accounts, and when they did it was usually occasionally and briefly. See, for example, Bull, *Eyewitness and Crusade Narrative*, 32-5.

¹⁶ The Lagopesole hearing: *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.108-16; 569-91. The *Altercatio* was edited by Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, 248-80. Most scholars have regarded the *Altercatio* as essentially a literary work designed largely to bolster Peter’s own self-esteem, and quite possibly greatly exaggerating his own role in these proceedings, e.g. Caspar, 183-5, but it has more recently been tentatively suggested either that it was intended to provide a summary for future reference of legal arguments in defence of the abbey, Treseler, “Lothar III.,” 314-6 (I am grateful

a severely abridged version of another independent tract by Peter, the *Altercatio pro Romana Ecclesia*, which was intended to demonstrate the orthodoxy of the monastery, an important issue given that the abbey had picked the wrong side in the schism.¹⁷ Furthermore this section of the chronicle shows a clear stylistic difference with what came before, much it composed of long rhetorical speeches, which are not a feature of the rest of the continuation.

Peter therefore wrote the last part of the continuation, comprising Book IV, chapters 96-130. But did he write any other part of this work? The answer is complicated because the chronicle continuation survives in only a single manuscript, Cod. Cas. 450, written, in Beneventan script, during the 1140s, and clearly under Peter's supervision, although not by him. (There was more than one scribe, and anyway those manuscripts which survive in Peter's own hand are written in minuscule, not Beneventan).¹⁸ By contrast, much of Leo's chronicle survives in his own autograph copy, and can be compared with later manuscripts containing the two subsequent recensions. (Cod. Cas. 450 contains the text of the second recension of Leo's chronicle, to which the continuation has been added).¹⁹ It is clear that Peter must have reworked, and added some material to, the earlier part of the continuation. Most obviously, there is a substantial part of Book IV chapter 66, which describes the life and work of Peter himself, the last of three different versions he wrote of his 'autobiography' – although most of this 'life' is a list of his various compositions.²⁰ Then there are the occasional mentions of donations to the monastery by the Counts of Tusculum and their relations, or other events involving this family, of which Peter alleged that he was a member, a claim that Hoffmann suggested was probably true – even if not all modern historians have been disposed to accept this.²¹ The two references to the Cassinese relationship with the French monastery of St. Maur at Glanfeuil must surely be insertions by Peter, related as they are to the various forgeries which he composed in

to Markus Krumm for drawing this article to my attention), or that it was a full-blown attack on papal claims to authority, especially over monasteries, Veneziani, "Alcune osservazioni preliminari." One wonders also whether this tract, and the more extended account of these events in the chronicle, may have been intended by Peter to defend his own role, especially in currying favour with Lothar, against criticism by his fellow monks.

¹⁷ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.115-6; 590-1. Martin, "Petri Diaconi Altercatio", which gives a new edition of this tract.

¹⁸ Meyvaert, "The autographs of Peter the Deacon," 114-38.

¹⁹ Hoffmann, "Studien zur Chronik," 101-9, and 113-28 on Leo's original MS; Bloch, *Monte Cassino*, vol. 1, 115-6.

²⁰ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.66; 529-31. Dell'Omo, "Le tre redazioni," with an edition of the three versions in parallel on 179-85. The two earlier versions, both preserved in Peter's autograph manuscripts, are also edited respectively in *Liber illustrium virorum archisterii Casinensis*, 255-71, cap. 47, and *Bibliotheca Casinensis*, 51-2. See Bloch, *The Atina Dossier*, 15-6.

²¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.61, IV.25, 39, 6; 441, 492, 507, 524. Peter also said that he had dedicated two of his works to Count Ptolemy II of Tusculum, IV.66; 531. Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, 22-3, thought that his claim to be related to this family was fiction, but cf. Hoffmann, "Petrus Diaconus," especially 61-7.

1133 to invent this relationship, during the visit of Abbot Drogo of Glanfeuil to Montecassino.²² More problematic are the various hagiographical accounts of the deaths of virtuous Cassinese monks, and the signs and wonders that marked their passing. Most of these were also recounted in another work by Peter, the *Ortus et Vita Iustorum Cenobii Casinensis* of 1137. But we cannot be sure whether Peter inserted these into the chronicle from his earlier composition, or if they were part of the original continuation by Guido which Peter then copied into the *Ortus et Vita*.²³ Given Peter's record as a plagiarist, one certainly cannot discount the latter explanation. His exegetical works, for example, were almost entirely copied from other authors, and show virtually no original contribution.²⁴ There is, however, one such passage in the chronicle that undoubtedly shows Peter's handiwork, where in the first part of the continuation, in Book III, a miracle involving a saintly monk called Guinizo was recounted. The story concluded: "If anyone wants to know more about the wonderful miracles of this man and his disciple Januarius he should read a text about his life that we wrote almost seven years ago". This text was undoubtedly the chapter about Guinizo in the *Ortus et Vita*, and since the date of that tract is pretty certain, it means that Peter wrote these words in 1144.²⁵ But even here we cannot be certain whether the actual miracle story was written by Peter, or copied by him from the chronicle into the *Ortus et Vita*. There are similar doubts about the section near the beginning of the continuation about Alberic the deacon, one of the abbey's leading intellectuals at the time of Desiderius. There is a clear interdependence with the biography of Alberic in the *Book about the Illustrious Men*, but we cannot be sure if this was an insertion by Peter into the chronicle, a section written by the first continuator (whether Guido or someone else) that was interpolated by Peter, or if this section was part of the original continuation which was then copied and expanded by Peter in the *Liber illustrium Virorum* – some of which may anyway have been written by Guido.²⁶

²² *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.18, 76; 486, 541. Bloch, "Monte Cassino in the Schism of Anacletus II," especially 969 onwards.

²³ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.43; 420-1, cf. Petrus Diaconus, *Ortus et Vita Iustorum Cenobii Casinensis*, 67-8, cap. 38, 40-1 (two of these stories had in turn been copied from the *Dialogues* of Abbot Desiderius); *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.51; 434, cf. *Ortus et Vita*, 78, cap. 59; *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.64; 446, cf. *Ortus et Vita*, 77, cap. 56 (but again ultimately from the *Dialogues* of Desiderius); *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.51; 517, cf. *Ortus et Vita*, 79-80, cap. 61; *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.55; 520, cf. *Ortus et Vita*, 75, cap. 52; *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.58; 522, cf. *Ortus et Vita*, 79, cap. 60. Leo had made frequent use of the *Dialogues* in his original chronicle, but invariably recast these episodes in his own words, and sometimes expanded or reframed them, whereas Peter tended to copy them *verbatim*, McCready, "Leo of Ostia," especially 130-42.

²⁴ Meyvaert, "The exegetical treatises of Peter the Deacon," especially 133-8.

²⁵ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.48; 425-6: *Huius autem viri gesta magnifica discipulique Ianuarii miracula si quis plenius nosse desiderat, testium vite eius a nobis ante hoc ferme septennium exaratum relegat*. Cf. *Ortus et Vita*, 52-64, cap. 30.

²⁶ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.35; 410-1; *Liber illustrium virorum archisterii Casinensis*, 220-5, cap. 21. Meyvaert, "Alberic of Montecassino or St. Peter Damian," 178-9.

The most substantial section that was probably added by Peter to the original text of the chronicle continuation is the long account of the First Crusade. Peter alluded to this in his preface to Book IV, in which he said that Abbot Rainald II had instructed him to describe “what in our time Christ has accomplished in the lands of the east through the pilgrim knights.”²⁷ While, as we have seen, what Peter wrote in this preface was not always trustworthy, in this particular case it should probably be given credence. Yet even here there are problems. Almost all of the chronicle account of the Crusade was very similar to, or perhaps directly derived from, a separate work, the *Hystoria de via et recuperatione Antiochiae atque Ierusalem*, which most modern commentators suggest was written at Montecassino during the 1130s, and certainly no later than 1145. Admittedly, it seems generally to be thought that these two accounts were compiled separately, albeit perhaps from a common source. But while this section of the chronicle did not follow the *Hystoria* word-for-word, the textual similarities still appear remarkably close. It is at least possible, therefore, that this section of the chronicle was directly derived from the other text. And given that the latter appears to have been written no earlier than the 1130s, this was too late for it to have been incorporated into the text by Guido. What is more difficult to explain, however, is why the account in the chronicle broke off with the Crusade’s arrival at Antioch, even though the text on which it appears to draw continued to describe the capture of Jerusalem, and indeed Bohemond’s attack upon the Byzantine empire in 1107.²⁸ One can only presume that the exemplar was incomplete, and was perhaps an earlier draft of the *Hystoria* – it cannot anyway have been copied directly from what is now the only complete surviving manuscript, Cod. Cas. 300, fols. 1-166, for this dates from the second half of the twelfth century.²⁹ (That the chronicle account was incomplete would seem, incidentally, to argue against Peter himself having been the author of the *Hystoria*, which has occasionally been alleged).³⁰

Hoffmann also drew attention to one other significant modification to the continuation that must necessarily be ascribed to Peter. This was the inser-

²⁷ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, 459: *que nostro videlicet tempore in orientali climate per peregrinos milites operates est Christus*. Rainald II was abbot from November 1137 until October 1166.

²⁸ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.11; 475-81, drawn from *Hystoria de via et recuperatione*, 12-34, for the date of which, *Hystoria*, xv-xvi, and for the theory of the common source, xlvi-liii. Cf. Russo, “The Monte Cassino tradition,” 57-60.

²⁹ Dating confirmed by don Mariano Dell’Omo, e-mail communication 17/xi/2022. The other MS., Paris, BNF, lat. 6041A, from the 14th century, contains only some sections. A recent suggestion that the Chronicle account of the Crusade broke off because “the south Italian interest virtually stops at Antioch”, seems implausible, France, “A textual puzzle,” 66.

³⁰ *Hystoria de via et recuperatione*, xv-xvi, lvi. Hoffmann’s suggestion, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, introduction, xxviii-xxx, that Leo Marsicanus was the author of the *Hystoria* is equally implausible, although Peter the Deacon claimed that Leo had written an *ystoria peregrinorum* (which seems not to survive), *Liber illustrium virorum archisterii Casinensis*, 239, c. 30. See now *The Road to Antioch and Jerusalem*, trans. Petrizzo, especially 2-5.

tion into the manuscript of a bifolio at c. 368, towards the end of the account of the abbacy of Oderisius I, which he suggested replaced an earlier quaternion. He further suggested that the reason for this was an alteration to the structure of the continuation. He speculated that originally a separate, albeit short, book had been devoted to the abbacy of Oderisius, and another, fifth, book had commenced with the election of his successor Otto – that is at what is now Book IV chapter 26. Peter had therefore decided to eliminate this division, and to have the whole post-Desiderius continuation as one long book. This hypothesis is certainly plausible, if in the last resort unprovable.³¹

There is another feature of Cod. Cas. 450 that may also shed light on the process of composition, and which relates to the final part of the continuation, from c. 96 onwards, of which Peter was the author, rather than simply a reviser. Even a cursory inspection suggests that the character of the manuscript changes at this point (p. 456). Not only did a new scribe start writing, but from then on the manuscript is much more utilitarian than before. There are only very occasional, and very simple, coloured capitals, rather than the very striking red initials to chapters in the preceding part. Those occasional initials that are still in red, for example at the start of c. 112, are very much smaller and simpler than those in earlier chapters. No names are picked out in red anymore. Furthermore, at the start of Book IV, the chapter headings for cc. 99-130 (the account of the events of 1136-7) are on a different page to those listing the earlier chapter headings, and by a different scribe, which may imply that these have been added later.³² One might therefore suggest that there was a pause between the writing in this manuscript of the chronicle and continuation up to 1127, even though the whole process was under Peter's supervision and with his additions and revisions, and the, perhaps rather hurried, addition of this final section. Such an observation does not, however, necessarily alter the accepted chronology for the completion of the continuation, which allows ample time for such a pause. The preface to Book IV must have been drafted in 1140 – it refers to Emperor Lothar having come to the abbey three years before – while the final version of the text as a whole cannot have been finished before 1144. Not only do we have two references to the *Ortus et Vita* having been written seven years earlier (to Guinizo, discussed above, and to miracles stories about a monk, Benedict, who became a bishop in Sardinia), but it was also noted that Cardinal Gerard, the prosecutor at the Lagopesole hearing, later became pope, which he did in March 1144.³³ There is also a reference to a dying monk prophesying the confiscation of the

³¹ Hoffmann, "Studien zur Chronik," 144-7.

³² Cod. Cas. 450, 343. Hoffmann, "Studien zur Chronik," 147-8.

³³ The reference to Bishop Benedict was not a direct citation of the *Ortus et Vita*. After his appointment was mentioned, Peter added, "Anybody who wants to know about the miracles of this Benedict should read the book entitled 'About the Miracles' which we wrote some seven years ago", *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.7; 471. This was surely a reference to *Ortus et Vita*, 69-70, cap. 46. For Cardinal Gerard, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.109, 574; Hoffmann, "Studien zur Chronik," 151-2.

abbey's treasures by King Roger, which occurred in 1143.³⁴ The continuation would seem, therefore to have been completed in its final form no earlier than the mid-1140s. But, as Hoffmann concluded, there can be no doubt that the greater part of the continuation, at least after 1087, was written by Guido, probably in the 1120s.³⁵

3. *Themes and Context*

What therefore were Guido's primary concerns, and how did his continuation differ from what came before, and particularly from Leo's original chronicle? One can of course also note continuities. Both Leo and Guido were very much concerned with the abbey's property, and were anxious to list donations and benefactors.³⁶ This may well suggest that Guido was Leo's successor (and Peter's predecessor) as librarian and archivist, since he was every bit as well informed about the abbey's charters as was Leo. It seems probable that both Leo and Guido must have had access to some sort of list or guide to the charters. The modern editors of the abbey's chartulary, the so-called Register of Peter the Deacon, which was completed in 1133 (again under Peter's supervision, but not written by him), have drawn attention to two surviving lists of charters, both dating from the 1120s, which they suggest were part of the preparatory material for the compilation of the chartulary.³⁷ One might well suggest that these documents were also used for the writing of Guido's continuation, and that Leo must have compiled, or had access to, similar material from a somewhat earlier date. One might indeed go further. The two surviving lists, which were produced before Peter became librarian and archivist, were undoubtedly used to help draw up the chartulary. Peter claimed, in his preface, that he himself had compiled this chartulary, which now bears his name, from the beginning, on the instructions of Abbot Seniorectus.³⁸ But, even though the manuscript shows clear signs that it was written in haste, can we assume that such a large and complex chartulary, comprising 269 folios containing 640 individual documents, was compiled in less than two years (1131 to spring 1133)? As with the chronicle continuation, might Peter not have been claiming the credit for work which was largely done, or certainly commenced, by somebody else? And it seems quite probable that this somebody was actually Guido, the author of the original post-1087 continuation of the

³⁴ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.99; 561. *Annales Casinenses*, 310.

³⁵ Hoffmann, "Studien zur Chronik," 150.

³⁶ In the continuations, see for example *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.44, 59-61; IV.6, 12, 15-16, 19-20, 22, 34, 47, 67, 71.

³⁷ *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, vol. 4, 1754-60. On the use of charters in the chronicle, see more generally, Hoffmann, "Chronik und Urkunden in Montecassino," especially 173-98.

³⁸ *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, vol. 1, 29.

chronicle, whose “Book about the Illustrious Men” Peter had also taken over and completed.³⁹

Be that as it may, the account of the chronicle continuation does show some very definite themes and preoccupations. Compared with Leo’s earlier chronicle, and even the earlier part of the continuation describing the last years of Desiderius, there was a narrowing of focus and a diminution of horizons. Of course the primary concern of the chronicle was always the fortunes of the abbey itself, but Leo did often take account of the wider history of southern Italy, whether this was discussing the conquest of Italy by Charlemagne, the Arab invasions of the ninth century, the Ottonian take-over in the later tenth century or the coming of the Normans in the eleventh. Even the first continuation interrupted its account of the abbacy of Desiderius to insert a chapter about the conquest of Sicily and the siege and capture of Salerno – drawn largely from the contemporary history of Amatus, which Leo seems, oddly, not to have used – given that it was also written by a monk of Montecassino.⁴⁰ By contrast, Book IV of the chronicle says very little about the rest of southern Italy, outside the immediate orbit of the monastery, that is the northern part of the principality of Capua. Even the princes were rarely mentioned, nor the dukes of Apulia, unless they should, for example, visit the monastery, as Duke William did in 1114.⁴¹ Guido did retain some interest in the papacy and events in Rome – there was a lengthy account of the crisis of 1111 and Henry V’s extortion of the Treaty of Ponte Mammolo, and there was mention too of the emperor’s next visit in 1118 and the renewed schism that followed, although this was much less detailed.⁴² This is explicable partly because of direct Cassinese involvement in these events: Abbot Bruno was among the most strident critics of Paschal II’s concessions in 1111, and in retaliation the pope forced him to resign his abbacy,⁴³ and in the crisis of 1118 a former monk of the abbey, the papal chancellor John of Gaeta, was himself elected pope as Paschal’s successor (as Gelasius II). But, in addition, Peter claimed in his introduction to Book IV to have had access, among other sources, to the registers of the popes from Gregory VII onward.⁴⁴ It seems likely

³⁹ Hoffmann, “Chronik und Urkunden,” 170, noted that the chronological sequence of donations recorded in the chartulary ended in 1125, although a few random donations were subsequently added. This might suggest, therefore, that work on the chartulary was already well underway at that point.

⁴⁰ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.45; 422-3; drawn from Amato di Montecassino, *Storia de’ normanni*, V.8-10, 18, 20, 23, 27; VI.14, 19; VIII.13-18, 25, 35; 229-33, 237-8, 240-3, 248, 276-7, 279-82, 353-8, 366-7, 374.

⁴¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.48; 515. The deaths and accession of the princes of Capua were mentioned, and their occasionally privileges for Montecassino, but virtually nothing else about them.

⁴² *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.35-40, 61, 64; 500-9, 523-4, 525-7.

⁴³ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.42; 510-11. For Bruno’s opposition to the pope, see especially his letter to him written soon after the treaty. But in another letter of about the same time, Bruno confessed that: “the lord pope loves neither me nor my advice”, *Brunonis episcopi Signini epistolae quatuor*, 564-5, nos. 2-3.

⁴⁴ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV, prologus, 459.

that his predecessor as chronicler also had some access to these – the detailed account of the negotiations of 1111 may well have been drawn from Paschal's (now lost) register. Could these registers have been inspected at the abbey's Roman dependency of Santa Maria de Pallara on the Palatine, where the register of John VIII was copied during the pontificate of Gregory VII, and where also Gelasius was elected pope?⁴⁵ Later events in Rome also directly impinged on the abbey – the election of Honorius II led, as we shall see, to significant papal interference in Cassinese affairs.

The continuator's concentration otherwise on the immediate environs of the abbey was not necessarily the result of any lack of wider vision or failure of imagination but rather a reflection of the immediate circumstances of the time. From 1090 onwards Montecassino faced challenges on a number of fronts, which intensified during the early twelfth century. Montecassino under Desiderius had benefited substantially from the Norman conquest, above all through his alliance with the new Norman princes of Capua. This had led both to material benefits – there were a whole series of territorial grants, especially by Richard I in 1065-6, and his son Jordan was also a benefactor, albeit on a less generous scale – but also gave the abbey princely protection.⁴⁶ The earlier chronicler Amatus, writing c. 1080, made this clear:

After Richard became Prince of Capua, he sought to make joyful our church, which his predecessors had troubled. With his strong hand he punished those who persecuted and looted our church, and he destroyed those who harmed the monastery's possessions. He took the monastery's *castelli* from the tyrants who occupied them.⁴⁷

After 1090, however, the authority of the princes disintegrated – Capua itself was in rebellion against Richard II for some years – and thereafter, insofar as they still exercised authority, this was largely limited to the Capuan plain, and the princes only rarely intervened north of Roccamonfina. This narrowing of their horizons was reflected in their patronage – they remained benefactors of the Cassinese dependency of Sant'Angelo in Formis, just outside Capua, but had relatively little direct contact with the mother house.⁴⁸ It is notable that among the later princes only one, Jordan II, was commemorated in the mid-twelfth century Cassinese necrology.⁴⁹ But what this also

⁴⁵ The account of the crisis of 1111 in *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.35-40 seems closely to resemble that in surviving fragments from Paschal's register, edited in *Tractatus cum Paschali II et Coronatio Romana*. Lohrmann, *Das Register Papst Johannes' VIII.*, 102-3, 128. For the election of Gelasius, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, II.312-3.

⁴⁶ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.16; 380, cf. *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, vol. 3, 1153-63 nos. 408-11, for the 1065-6 donations.

⁴⁷ Amato di Montecassino, *Storia de' normanni*, VIII.36; 374-5. Translation from *The History of the Normans by Amatus of Montecassino*, trans. Dunbar and Loud, 205.

⁴⁸ Between 1090 and 1130 the princes issued 15 *diplomata* for Sant'Angelo, most of which involved donations, as against six directly to Montecassino, of which four were confirmations and only two donations. Loud, "A calendar," 127-42.

⁴⁹ *Il Necrologio di Cod. Cassinese 47*, 43. More generally, Loud, *Church and Society*, 86-95, 126-8; and Loud, "I Principi di Capua."

meant was that the nobility in the north of the principality were no longer constrained by the threat of princely authority. Admittedly, in 1108 when the counts of Aquino, “drunk with devilish madness” (*diabolica debriati vesania*), seized the *castello* of Interamna, Prince Robert I did intervene at the abbot’s request to recover it for the monastery.⁵⁰ But subsequently Montecassino was increasingly forced to rely on its own efforts to defend its land against the claims and depredations of its neighbours, and not surprisingly these attacks and the abbots’ often warlike responses were at the forefront of the chronicler’s attention. So in 1114-5 Abbot Gerard “gathered an army and began to ravage the land of Suessa with fire and sword” in response to attacks on the abbey’s property by its lords, and in 1122 did the same to the lands of Pandulf of Sesto, who “made drunk with the wickedness of the ancient serpent” was launching attacks on the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* and disputing possession of the abbey’s *castello* of Viticuso.⁵¹ Yet for all the stress by the chronicler on the wickedness of those who attacked the lands of the monastery, these lords sometimes had legitimate claims on property that Montecassino had acquired. Interamna had been confiscated from the counts of Aquino by Richard I of Capua and given by him to Montecassino in 1066, and so the attempts by their descendants to recover it were hardly surprising.⁵² Pandulf of Sesto was probably a relative of the former counts of Venafrò, who had once owned Viticuso. One of these counts had given his half-share of this *castello* to Montecassino in 1064,⁵³ and Viticuso had subsequently been given, or confirmed, to the abbey by Count Hugh of Boiano in 1105.⁵⁴ It is probable therefore that either Pandulf’s claims had been ignored in this later grant, or that he regretted the generosity of his ancestor, or indeed both.

Another equally serious problem was the increasing restiveness of the inhabitants of the *Terra Sancti Benedicti*, who clearly found abbatial rule oppressive, however much the chronicler might portray this discontent as disloyalty and ingratitude. Thus the men of San Germano (the town at the foot of the mountain of Cassino) were “often mutinous and rebelled against the abbot”, and so in 1115 Abbot Gerard sought to “restrain their wickedness” by building a fortress on the Janula hill to overawe the town.⁵⁵ Similarly, the inhabitants of Sant’Angelo in Theodice and San Vittore refused to swear fealty to the new abbot in 1123. But for all the chronicler’s insistence that the men of Sant’Angelo “were always the ringleaders and authors of every tribulation and persecution visited upon this place”, this refusal appears to have been

⁵⁰ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.32; 498-9.

⁵¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.54, 75; 519, 540. Cf. for other instances of such warfare, *ibid.*, IV.56, 82, 85.

⁵² *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, vol. 3, 1155-7, no. 409.

⁵³ *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, vol. 3, 1350-1, no. 489.

⁵⁴ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.25; 492; *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, vol. 1, 495-8, no. 164, and vol. 3, 1466-8, no. 533 (both the copies in the Register are interpolated, but probably only slightly altered from the original).

⁵⁵ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.56; 520.

a protest intended to secure a lowering of dues owed to the abbey, and the right to be judged in their own courts. The response of Abbot Oderisius (II) was, however, to raise an army and ravage the fields of these *castelli* until the inhabitants surrendered unconditionally.⁵⁶ In the short term this policy of intimidation may have worked, but during the 1140s, around the time that Peter was completing the chronicle, the abbey started to make concessions, lightening the burdens laid upon its dependents.⁵⁷

Furthermore, the abbey began to have sporadic problems with the local episcopate and secular clergy, to which the continuation also devoted some attention. Such difficulties were a, perhaps inevitable, product of Montecassino's earlier success. During the eleventh century more than 200 churches had been donated to the abbey, some 2/3 of these during the abbacies of Desiderius and Oderisius I (1058-105).⁵⁸ Most such gifts, particularly those of small rural *Eigenkirchen*, were uncontroversial, but in a few cases, especially those of more significant and valuable churches, prelates tried either to reclaim possession of the church or at least to assert their spiritual authority over it. The archbishops and clergy of Capua, for example, clearly resented the donation of Sant'Angelo in Formis to Montecassino by Prince Richard in 1072 and the building there by Desiderius of a large and wealthy monastery. While a legal case launched to recover this church (which had previously belonged to the archbishop) failed, in 1078, the dedication of one of its chapels by Bruno of Segni in 1106, in contravention of archiepiscopal right, led to an armed attack on the church and the theft of some of the relics preserved there.⁵⁹ Other prelates raised legal claims against Cassinese possession of churches – while a bishop of Trivento even fraudulently obtained and destroyed a charter granting the abbey a church in his diocese.⁶⁰ Meanwhile Montecassino itself continued its unavailing efforts to reclaim the wealthy monastery of Santa Sofia, Benevento, which had long ago been subject to it.⁶¹ A number of these cases engaged the chronicler's attention, as did a bitter dispute in 1121-2 with the powerful Norman Count of Caiazzo and the abbess of Santa Maria, Capua, about possession of Santa Maria, Cingla, a historic nunnery which the chronicle claimed had been subject to Montecassino since the eighth century. In the course of this dispute the abbess, "filled with feminine guile" resorted

⁵⁶ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.79; 543-4.

⁵⁷ Toubert, "La terre et les hommes," especially 67-8.

⁵⁸ Dormeier, *Montecassino und die Laien*, 56.

⁵⁹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.28; 493-4. For the legal case, Inguanez, *Regesto di S. Angelo in Formis*, 6-8, no. 3. Discussion, Loud, *Church and Society*, 50-5. Bruno was acting as a bishop, although he had by then probably abandoned his see to become a monk; but he had not yet been elected as abbot.

⁶⁰ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.34; 499-500. For legal cases concerning Cassinese churches, IV.48; 515 (with the abbot of Torremaggiore), IV.52; 517-18 (with the bishop of Aversa) and IV.69; 533-4 (with the archbishop of Capua).

⁶¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III.42, IV.7,48, 60; 420, 471, 514-5, 523.

to large-scale bribery and openly defied Pope Calixtus II, or so the chronicler alleged, in a long and notably misogynist account.⁶²

A further theme which becomes increasingly prominent in the continuation is internal dissension within the monastery. This is not to assume that this may never have existed before the twelfth century, but it was not something to which Leo had drawn attention, save perhaps in the time of Abbot Manso (986-96), whom he clearly considered unsatisfactory. Even then, according to Leo, the monks who disliked the manner of his election, and perhaps also his autocratic style of rule, simply left the monastery and moved elsewhere.⁶³ But after the death of Oderisius I in 1105, the monks seem to have been increasingly restive. The election of his successor Otto was disputed, and when he subsequently refused a request to relax some of the austerities of the Rule, some brothers sent a letter to the pope claiming that this election was uncanonical. The abbot then expelled the culprits from the monastery.⁶⁴ The deposition of Bruno of Segni in 1111, while caused by his dispute with Paschal II, was accompanied by disorder within the abbey – although in this case the chronicler may have played down the scale of this – Bruno’s contemporary *Vita*, written at Segni, claimed that, rather than resigning his post voluntarily to avoid dispute with the papacy, as the chronicler suggested, “he was driven from the monastery not just with insults but with blows”.⁶⁵ At the time of the election of Oderisius II in 1123 the congregation was, so the chronicler said, “deeply divided by many quarrels”.⁶⁶ These were exacerbated by this abbot’s dispute with, and eventual deposition by, Pope Honorius II. His successor Nicholas was almost immediately undermined by some of the senior monks sending a letter to the pope claiming that his election was uncanonical and that he was a troublemaker, and his support among the wider congregation collapsed when he showed himself incapable of defending the *Terra Sancti Benedicti*. The monks, we are told, came to loathe him for his failure to uphold their interests.⁶⁷ Meanwhile the determination of Pope Honorius to enforce the election of the former dean, Seniorectus, to replace him was motivated by the latter’s reputation as a strict disciplinarian, who as dean had been “extremely austere and inflexible (*nimum austerus et rigidus*) [...] it was for this reason that he was made abbot by the Roman Church.” Not perhaps surprisingly, the monks were less than enthusiastic about the prospect of him becoming the head of their community. And yet the chronicler admitted that by 1127 internal problems had reduced the monastery to a parlous state, which suggests that a new broom was badly needed.

⁶² *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.70; 534-7; *facibus succensa femineis*, 536. Loud, *Church and Society*, 118, 120-1.

⁶³ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, II.12; 189-90.

⁶⁴ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.29; 494.

⁶⁵ *Vita Brunonis*, 483, in contrast to *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.42; 511.

⁶⁶ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.78; 542.

⁶⁷ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV. 89, 93; 550, 554.

For indeed it was from the time that he [Seniorectus] left the position of dean, and especially after the death of the venerable Abbot Gerard, when almost all the senior men who had been made monks by Desiderius had passed from this world, that we were beset by those ambitious for the abbot's position, secret plotting among the brothers, and the expulsion of abbots. The brothers were reduced to such poverty that they lacked almost everything that they needed, and as a result the religious life began to break down, which was hardly surprising since, forced by hard necessity, many could not hold to our way of life because of want.⁶⁸

A third theme apparent in the continuation is the deteriorating relationship between the monks and the papacy, and the former's increasing resentment at what they saw as papal interference in their internal affairs and infringement of the traditional rights and independence of the monastery. This too came to a head with the deposition of Oderisius II in 1126 and the attempts by Honorius to reject the monks' choice of his successor and to impose his own candidate, Seniorectus. A cardinal was sent to the monastery to inform the brothers of the pope's wishes.

But when the brothers heard this, a great muttering suddenly arose in their ranks. They said that the election of the Abbot of Cassino ought not to be handed over to any other power, and that it was quite unworthy and unsuitable that the church of Cassino, which under their predecessors had always remained free, should to its detriment be made subject to disgrace at the hands of the cardinals.⁶⁹

Eventually the brothers gave way, after another cardinal, the Bishop of Albano had interviewed them in the chapter house, and asked each of them individually whether they were willing to accept the election of Seniorectus. The chronicler (Guido) was quite clear that they did this "through fear and unwillingly".⁷⁰

The independence of the abbatial election was once again an issue after the death of Seniorectus in 1137, as recounted by Peter the Deacon in the final part of the continuation. First, King Roger's chancellor, who was co-ordinating the defence of the region against the impending invasion by Emperor Lothar, refused to allow an election unless he was present to oversee it. When the monks showed him their privileges, which guaranteed the free election of the abbot, he claimed that these had no value.⁷¹ But after an abbot who was

⁶⁸ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.94; 555: *Denique ab ipso fere tempore, quo decaniam dimisit, et precipue a morte venerabilis abbatis Gerardi, cum omnes fere priores, qui a Desiderio monachi facti fuerant, ex hoc mundo recessissent, nunc ipsius abbatis ambitione, nunc per fratrum clandestinas seditiones, nunc per abbatum expulsiones, cum fratres ad tantam inopiam devenissent, ut omnium rerum necessitatem permaximam sustinerent, ordinis religio de hoc cepit labefactari; nec inmerito, cum quamplurimi necessitate coacti ardue vite tramitem ob paupertatem retinere non possent.*

⁶⁹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.89; 550: *Quod dum fratres audissent, murmur inter eos ingens repente exoritur, dicentes non debere Casinensis abbatis electionem in alterius potestate transire et nimis indignum et inconueniens esse, ut Casinensis ecclesia, que sub antecessoribus suis libera semper extiterat, ad sue confusionis obprobrium cardinalibus subiceretur.*

⁷⁰ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.94; 554-5: *timore ducti hoc egre ferrent.*

⁷¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.104; 564-5.

acceptable to the royal government *was* elected, and his election was then confirmed by Pope Anacletus, this was unacceptable to his rival Innocent II, who had accompanied the emperor's army. He demanded that the monks curse Anacletus, and swear fealty and obedience to him and his successors. The monks by contrast said that such oaths had never been their custom, and "the Lord in the Gospel and Father Benedict in the Rule had instructed that they should not swear [oaths]".⁷² During the debates that followed Peter himself repeated this claim. Not only, he said, did the Rule forbid this, but so too did various privileges of previous emperors.⁷³ But eventually the monks were forced to give way. Finally the offending abbot-elect, Rainald, was deposed. Cardinal Gerard then told the monks that in these circumstances a new election must take place under papal supervision. The brothers still held out for "a free election according to ancient custom". After much argument, the cardinal forbade them to hold an election, and it was only after the interference of the emperor (who was portrayed throughout this account as the monastery's friend) that they were allowed to choose whom they wished. And even then, when they tactfully elected Lothar's confidant, the German abbot Guibald of Stavelot, the papal entourage tried to interfere to prevent this.⁷⁴

This concern for the free election of the abbot, and the reluctance to swear any oath of fealty to the Roman Church, was common to both the accounts, of Guido and of Peter. Pope Honorius, we are told, had demanded such an oath from Abbot Seniorectus in 1127, but the monks had resisted, saying that there was no precedent for this.⁷⁵ Underlying this issue was their sense of the unique historical importance of Montecassino within western monasticism. So, we are told, that when Abbot Pons of Cluny appeared at Rome in 1116 and vaingloriously wanted to be acclaimed as "the abbot of abbots", he was reproved by the former Cassinese monk John of Gaeta, the papal chancellor, who forced Pons publicly to admit that not only the Cluniacs but the whole of western monasticism had received the rule of St. Benedict from Montecassino.⁷⁶ It was even claimed that at the Lateran Council of 1123, where the monastic order as a whole came under attack from the episcopate, Calixtus II had specifically defended Montecassino in the most flattering terms.

The church of Cassino was founded 'not of men, neither by man',⁷⁷ but by Jesus Christ, on whose instructions Father Benedict came to that place, purged it of the filthiness of idolatry, and by writing the Rule, by the working of miracles and by the burial of his body there has rendered it famous throughout the world and made it the head of the

⁷² *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.108; 572. The Rule of St. Benedict, cap. 4, instructed monks "not to swear, lest perchance one forswear oneself", *Benedicti Regula*, ed. Hanslik, 30.

⁷³ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.109; 575-6.

⁷⁴ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.122-4; 596-9.

⁷⁵ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.95; 556.

⁷⁶ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.60; 521-2.

⁷⁷ *Galatians*, 1: 1.

whole monastic order. As a result this same venerable place has been restored by the Roman pontiffs, and has remained a special son of the Roman Church.⁷⁸

Whether the pope actually said something along these lines is irrelevant – this was clearly what the chronicler (in this case probably Guido) believed, or felt that he should have said.

Yet while the chroniclers proclaimed the traditional independence of their house, and its special position within the Church, derived from St. Benedict, confirmed by papal and imperial privileges, and validated by signs and miracles, and the frequent appearance of Benedict himself in dreams and visions, in fact Montecassino's position was becoming increasingly threatened. Internal dissension was threatening the stability of the monastery. Its alliance with the papacy was breaking down. Cassinese monks were no longer appointed cardinals, as they had been during the Gregorian reform. Its local situation was far less secure than it had been during the age of Desiderius, and the neighbouring nobility cast covetous eyes on its lands. The crisis of 1137 showed how vulnerable it was to political changes beyond its control. Even the monks' claim to possess the body of St. Benedict was challenged by that of the French monastery of Fleury.⁷⁹ The appeal to the historic glories and reputation of the abbey, like the improbable historical tradition 'created' by the forgeries of Peter the Deacon, was a response to a changing world in which the monks realised that they were facing new and very difficult challenges.

⁷⁸ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, IV.78; 543: *Casinensis ecclesia non ab hominibus neque per hominem, sed per Iesum Christum fundata est, cuius imperio pater Benedictus ad eundem locum deveniens illumque ab idolorum sordibus emundans sancte regule description et miraculorum prodigiis et sui corporis sepultura toto orbi spectabilem reddidit et totius monastici ordinis caput effecit. Accedit ad hoc, quod idem venerabilis locus a Romanis pontificibus restauratus et Romane ecclesie filiorum unicum [...] perseverat.*

⁷⁹ Both Leo and his continuator were sensitive to these claims, and anxious to dismiss them, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, II.44, IV.29; 252, 494-5, and by implication also in the story of St. Benedict appearing in a dream to Urban II, after the latter had expressed doubts as to whether he was really buried at Montecassino, IV.5; 470.

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