

**The Monastery of Montevergine**  
**Its Foundation and Early Development (1118-1210)**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the institutional and socio-economic development of the monastery of Montevergine during the twelfth century in the Kingdom of Sicily. Founded as a hermitage c. 1119 by the Italian hermit, William of Vercelli, Montevergine grew into a conventional Benedictine establishment by the end of the twelfth century. Over the course of the century, the religious community of Montevergine built an extensive land patrimony that went hand in hand with the growth of its pool of donors, and consequently caused the institutional identity and structure to evolve, and the monastery to increase its network of dependencies across its landholdings. This thesis aims to disentangle the events surrounding the monastery's foundation, to explore its economic activities, and its relationships with its donors and the local lay community.

The thesis is divided into two sections, the first taking a linear narrative approach to the study of Montevergine's early development, and the second adopting a more thematic approach to the study of the economic, social, and institutional development of the monastery. Chapter 1 focusses on the foundation of Montevergine; Chapter 2 looks at its development during Norman rule of the Kingdom of Sicily; Chapter 3 follows its development during Hohenstaufen rule up to 1210; Chapter 4 surveys the geographical setting of Montevergine to provide a better understanding of its economic activities, which are the subject of Chapter 5. Chapter 6 explores the monastery's relationships with the laity and the networks it built among the local lay community; Chapter 7 looks at the internal administrative and institutional development of Montevergine, while Chapter 8 analyses the expansion of its monastic network, focussing on a number of the monastery's dependencies as case studies.

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I have omitted volume numbers from references to CDV and *Regesto*. Each volume of the CDV contains 100 documents; therefore, 'CDV 256', for example, will be found in volume 3. Similarly, each volume of Mongelli's *Regesto delle pergamene* contains 1000 documents. So 'Regesto 1256' will be found in volume 3.

CB	<i>Catalogus Baronum</i> , ed. by Evelyn Mary Jamison, FSI, 101 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, 1972)
CDV	<i>Codice Diplomatico Verginiano</i> , ed. by Placido Mario Tropeano, 13 vols (Montevergine: Ed. Padri Benedettini, 1977-2001)
<i>Commentario</i>	Cuozzo, Errico, <i>Catalogus Baronum: Commentarium</i> , FSI, 101.2 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medioevo, 1984)
FIID	<i>Friderici II. Diplomata</i> , ed. by Walter Koch, MGH, 14 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2002-2010)
FSI	Fonti per la Storia d'Italia
<i>Legenda</i>	Panarelli, Francesco, ed., <i>Scrittura Agiografica nel Mezzogiorno Normanno: La Vita di San Guglielmo da Vercelli</i> (Galatina: Congedo, 2004)
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
MBR	<i>Magnum Bullarium Romanorum</i> , 18 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1964-1966)
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
RB	<i>Revue Benedictine</i>
RoB	<i>The Rule of Benedict</i> , ed. and trans. by Bruce L. Venarde, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 6 (New York: Harvard UP, 2011)
<i>Regesto</i>	Mongelli, Giovanni, ed., <i>Regesto delle pergamene</i> , Pubblicazioni degli archivi di stato, 25, 7 vols (Rome: Ministero dell'Interno, 1956-62)
RIS	<i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</i>
TCI	Touring Club Italiano
<i>Vita</i>	'Vita S. Joannis a Mathera abbatis pulsanensi congregationis fundatoris ex perantiquo ms. Codice matherano cavensis monachi cura et studio edita', in <i>Acta Sanctorum, Iunii</i> , 5 (Paris, 1867), pp. 33-50

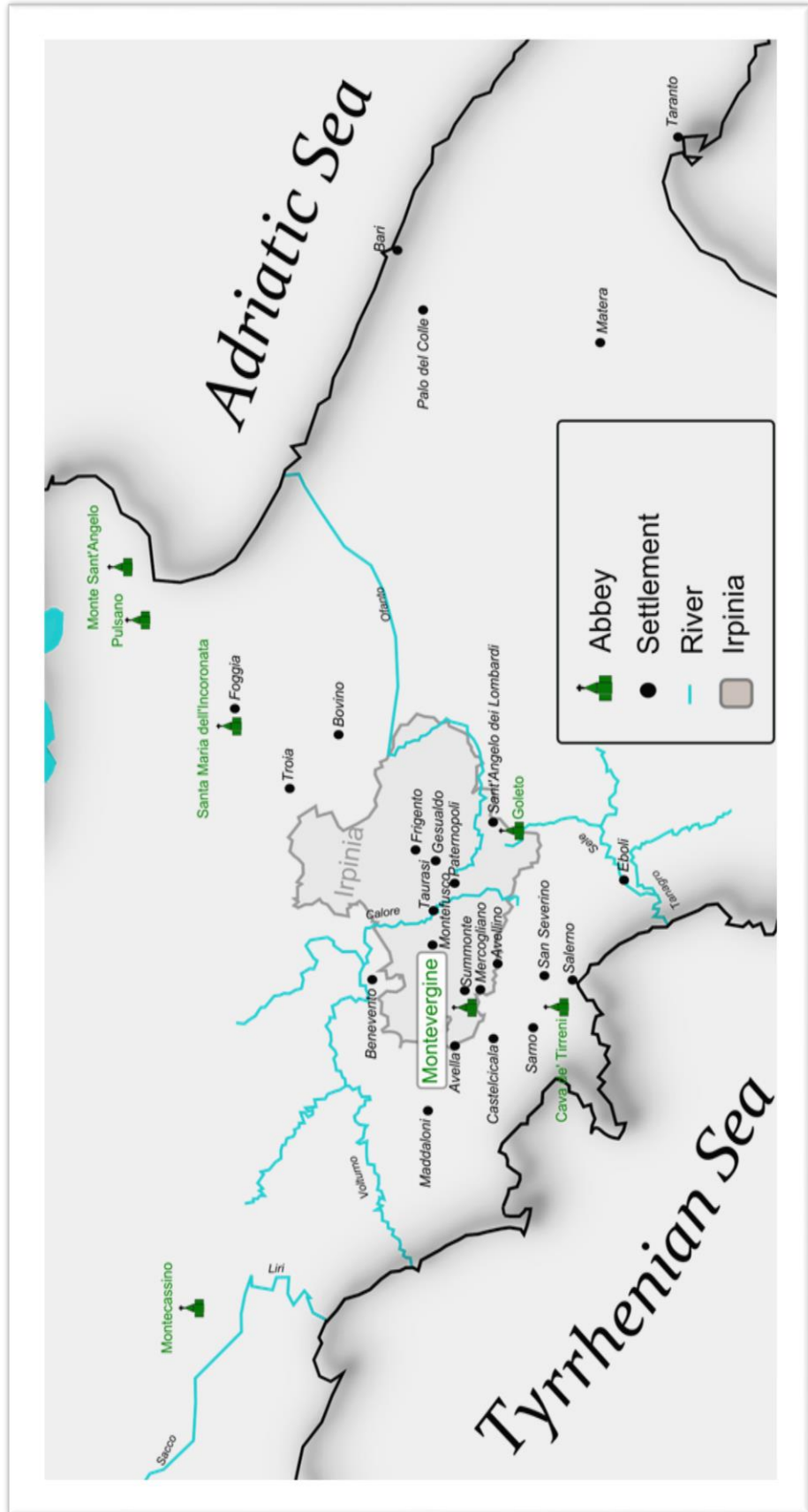


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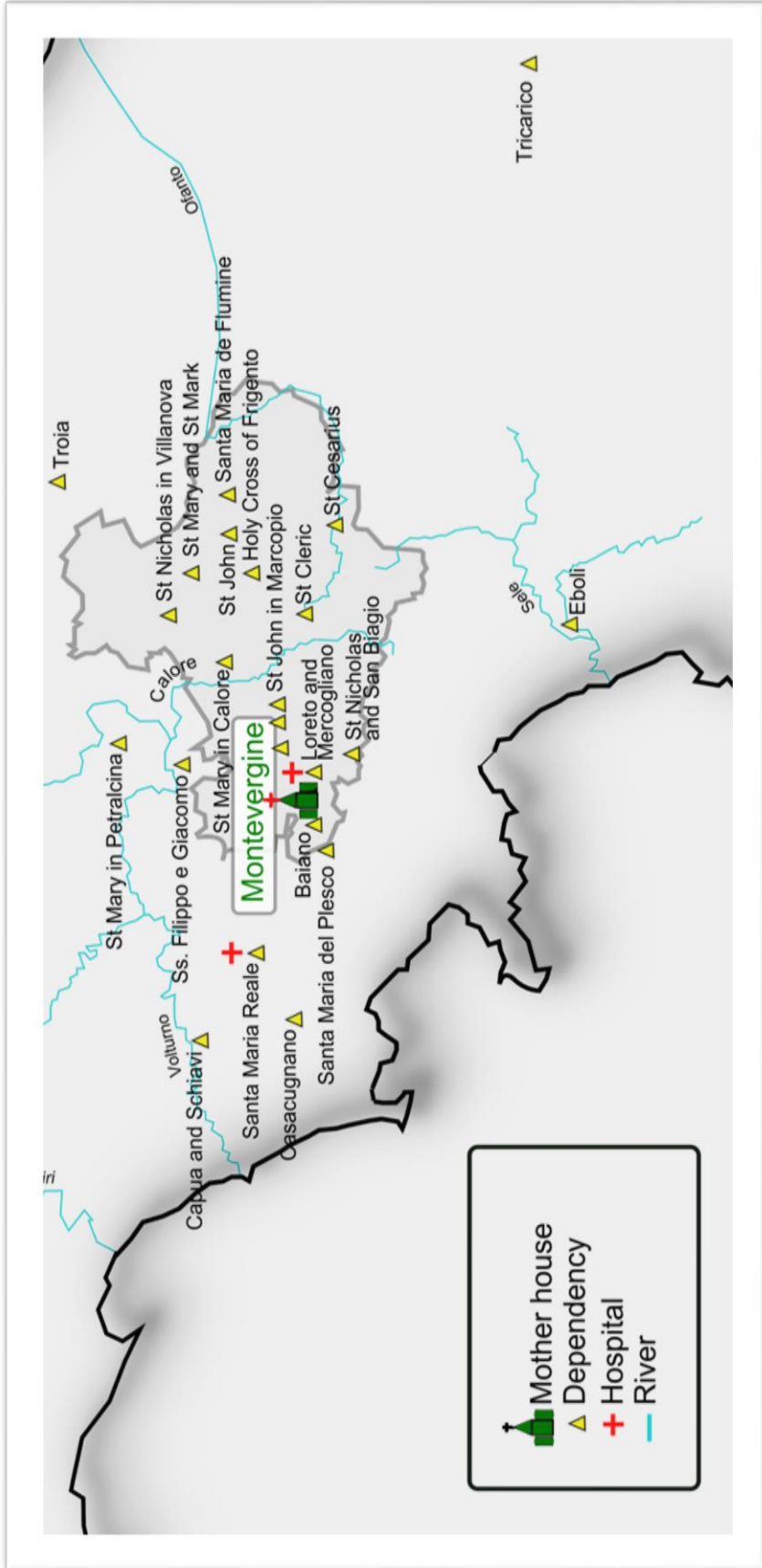
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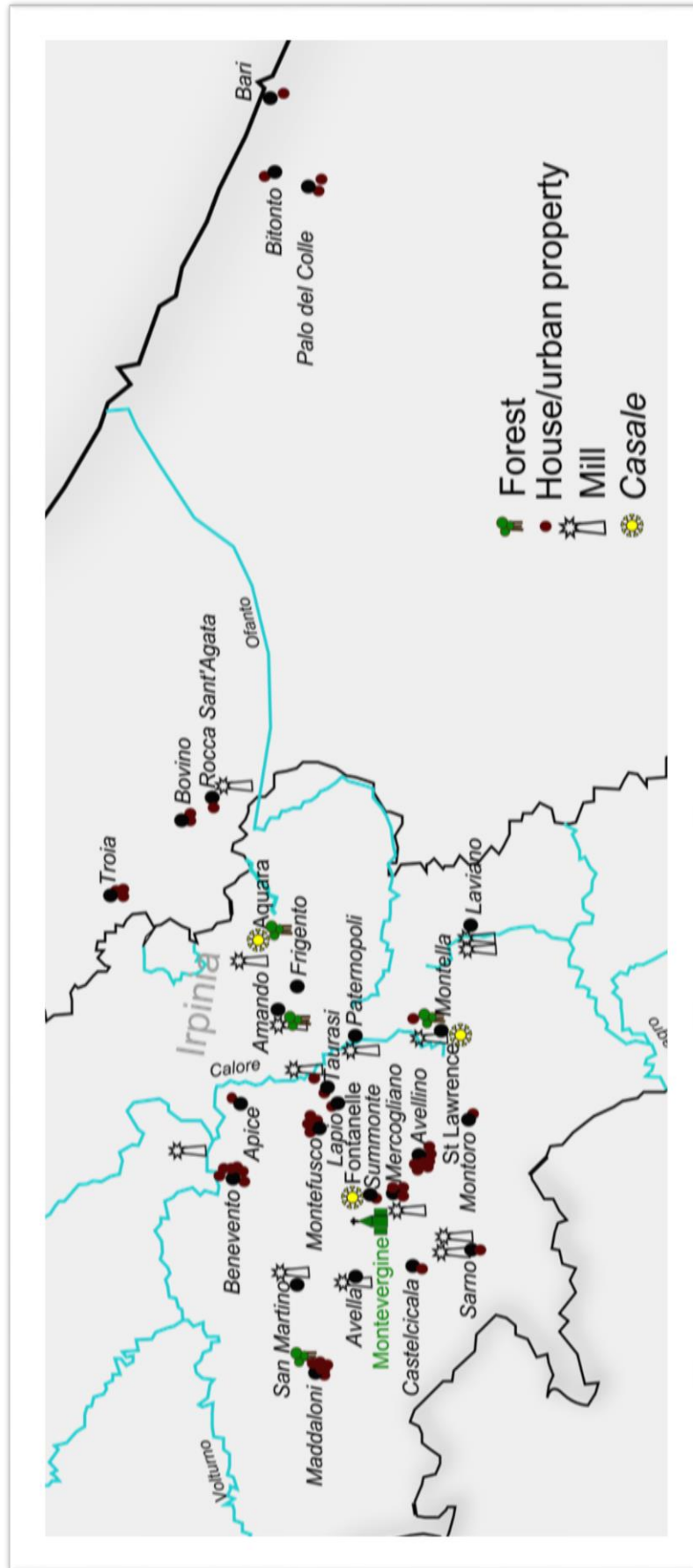
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Map 1: Main locations cited



Map 2: Montevergine's main dependencies 1120-1210



Map 3: Montevergine's urban properties, mills, and casalia 1120-1210

## INTRODUCTION

### Scope and Aims

In the spring of 2010, I sat victorious in the reading room of the Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine, having finally obtained permission to look at a small number of the earliest charters issued for Montevergine after its foundation. As I pored over them, not quite knowing where to start, a monk, dressed in a white habit, wheeled a trolley across the reading room to a group of young scholars like myself, sitting at the opposite side of the room from me. He smiled mischievously at them, and opened a small book, with a freshly-polished red cover. It was the only surviving manuscript (two bound together as one) of the *vita* of Montevergine's founder, William of Vercelli. Given its importance in improving our understanding of the foundation and early development of the monastery of Montevergine, this prized gem of the monastery's library has received surprisingly little attention in scholarship on the twelfth-century Kingdom of Sicily.

A small number of detailed studies of monastic institutions have appeared in recent years both in relation to southern-Italian monasteries and those in Europe in general.<sup>1</sup> In southern Italy this is due, to a certain extent, to the availability of new material slowly being uncovered, transcribed, and published. The monastery of Montevergine's quasi-continuous operation from the time of its foundation to the present day makes it ideal for a study of the monastic institutions of southern Italy, and their impact on the environment (social, political, economic, cultural, and so on). The archives are preserved almost in their entirety, with many documents pre-dating the monastery's foundation. Monks, albeit only a handful, still inhabit its walls, and it is they who, until now, have been most active in the preservation of the documents and in making them available to the public. The monks, who were well-known in the fifteenth century for their skills as apothecaries (though pharmacy was probably already practised in some guise in the twelfth century) still uphold this tradition today, and their concoctions are on

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Francesco Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana: Il monachesimo riformato latino dei pulsanesi (secc. XII-XIV)* (Rome: Istituto Storico per il Medio Evo, 1997); Hubert Houben, *Die Abtei Venosa und das Mönchtum im normannisch-staufischen Süditalien* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995); Luigi Fabiani, *La terra di S. Benedetto: Studio storico-giuridico sull'abbazia di Montecassino dall'VIII al XIII secolo*, Miscellanea Cassinese, 33-34, 2 vols (Montecassino: Badia di Montecassino, 1968); more recently, for the English establishments, see, for example, Emilia Jamrozak, *Rievaulx Abbey and its Social Context, 1132-1300: Memory, Locality, and Networks* (Woodbridge: Brepols, 2005).

sale in the Palace of Loreto at the foot of the mountain on which the monastery perches. Pilgrims still flock every year to the sanctuary of the Virgin adjoined to the abbey.

Scholarly interest has thus turned more and more to Montevergine, although this has often been only in passing, or in an ancillary fashion. To date, no comprehensive scholarly monograph on Montevergine's early history has yet been produced outside of the monastery itself, an omission in the scholarship of southern Italy that this thesis aims to remedy.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the existing article-length studies focussing on Montevergine have been restricted in their scope by the availability of edited charter material at the time of publication, and the present study has benefitted from the complete edition of charters up to 1210. What is more, this scholarship has mostly been the preoccupation of Italian scholars writing in Italian, in Italy, and this thesis also seeks to open up the discussion in Anglophone circles, and encourage participation in the debate by scholars with different training and academic backgrounds.<sup>3</sup> As with all monastic institutions of the Middle Ages, the study of Montevergine (perhaps this monastery in particular, with the wealth of primary sources it has to offer) is not just beneficial within its own geographical or even topical sphere, but can afford valuable insights into the society of southern Italy and of medieval Europe as a whole. With the benefit of the latest edited charters, and using an interdisciplinary approach combining textual analysis of the founder's *vita* with analysis of the data obtained from the charter material, in this study, I show that Montevergine's development over the first century of its history was an organic process. My emphasis is on the contextual and environmental factors — political, social, economic, as well as the natural environment — which shaped the monastery's relationship with the laity, and its own institutional identity.

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of a recent doctoral thesis, which includes a very thorough analysis of the sources and use of the existing historiography, but focuses for the most part on the institutional development of Montevergine — see Potito D'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis: La congregazione verginiana dalle origini all'età sveva (1126-1250)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Università degli studi di Milano, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> See for example the proceedings of the first international conference held at Montevergine in 1980, *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine. Relazioni e comunicazioni del primo convegno internazionale 28-31 ottobre 1980*, ed. by Placido Mario Tropeano (Montevergine: Edizioni Padri Benedettini, 1984).

I have limited the chronological scope of the thesis to the years 1118 – 1210, mostly because of the lack of edited material beyond the latter date. In some instances, I have ventured past this date, particularly in exploring the institutional development of Montevergine, thanks to the registers of charters compiled in the middle of the twentieth century by Giovanni Mongelli, a former monk and scholar of Montevergine, and to the royal documents issued by Frederick II which have been edited by Huillard-Bréholles and Winkelmann, and, more recently, by Walter Koch up to 1220 in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.<sup>4</sup> Montevergine's expansion, as will become apparent in the first section of the thesis, was limited for much of the twelfth century to the Irpinia region of Campania in southern Italy, and extended to Basilicata and Apulia in the latter half of the twelfth and in the early thirteenth century. These regions constitute the physical boundaries of this study.

Thus, three aspects inspired and drove forward the compilation of this work: the call of the sources, the need to open up debate on a topic which risks remaining closed in on itself, and a personal fascination with the topic. Preserved almost in their entirety, Montevergine's archives are a treasure trove for the study of southern Italy in the Middle Ages and beyond. They have been carefully transcribed and edited, with facsimiles for each document by the late Fr Placido Mario Tropeano, another monk of the monastery.<sup>5</sup> The hagiography of William of Vercelli also survives. This work, both for its content and for its very existence, has shaped the way in which I approached the charters. William was a defining figure not only in the foundation of the monastery, but in its institutional development throughout the twelfth century and beyond.

These documents have been used extensively by scholars in the past few decades since the beginning of their gradual publication. The lack of a scholarly monograph on Montevergine is partly due to the fact that the edition and publication of the charters is still continuing. Montevergine's Apulian counterpart of Pulsano, founded by John of Matera, a contemporary of William of Vercelli and belonging to the same eremitical movement, has, on the other hand, been the

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<sup>4</sup> *Regestro*; and *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi: sive constitutiones, privilegia, mandata, instrumenta quae supersunt istius Imperatoris et filiorum ejus*, ed. by Jean Louis A. Huillard-Bréholles, 6 vols (Paris: H. Plon, 1852-61; repr. Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1963); and FIID.

<sup>5</sup> CDV.

subject of a wonderful book by Francesco Panarelli, despite the much more meagre substance of this monastery's archives.<sup>6</sup> Comparison with Pulsano has been particularly fruitful in the study of Montevergine's foundation. This thesis will provide the necessary in-depth study to carry the analogy further and work towards a fuller picture and better understanding of the monastic climate of the twelfth century in southern Italy.

On a personal level, the monastic environment has always been oddly familiar to me. I grew up in the southern-Italian town of Altamura, behind a seventeenth-century Clarissan convent. From the terrace of my house, I could see the nuns sun-bathing in their roof-top cloister. The history of Altamura is rich in stories of monastic enterprises. This includes the brave defence of the city by the 'Monek' rann' ('great nuns' in the dialect of Altamura), the Clarissans who entered the cloister at the city walls, and, during the Republican uprisings of 1799, poured boiling oil over the invading troops led by Cardinal Ruffo to re-establish monarchical rule in the rebellious city. My father, an educator by profession, never tired of retelling these stories, to my siblings and me, and to anyone else who would listen. It is perhaps listening to these stories that I developed a strong interest in preserving and furthering our understanding of our collective past, which I have chosen to do through the study of the southern-Italian monastic heritage.

### **The Primary Sources**

While I have made extensive use of the relevant contemporary chronicles particularly in contextualising Montevergine in the first section of the thesis, the most important sources in this study, as has already been made clear, have been the charters and the hagiography of the founder.

The foundation of Montevergine is mentioned only in a handful of charters, and it is explained in some depth in a single document, the *vita* of the founder. Needless to say, this makes for a problematic reconstruction of the very first stages of the history of the monastery, and, indeed, the type of community which gathered there. Fortunately (and with a modicum of optimism), the *Legenda* itself is a relatively reliable source: the principal scholars of Montevergine, Giovanni

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<sup>6</sup> Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*.



Mongelli and Francesco Panarelli, have already convincingly attributed its compilation — at least the first redaction — to the decade immediately following the death of William of Vercelli.<sup>7</sup>

In order to approach the text critically, it has been necessary to identify the *topoi* of the genre. Hagiography has been used abundantly in medieval historiography in the past half century; the limitations of the genre are known, and have been discussed at length by historians.<sup>8</sup> I found perhaps the best advice in Jean Leclercq's article published in 1963, in which he described hagiographic writings as contextual variations on the same enduring themes, which are 'supra-historical'.<sup>9</sup> It is tempting to distance oneself entirely from the events recounted in the *vita*, not only because of the nature of the hagiographic genre, but also because of the apparent rupture in the founder's relationship with Montevergine described in the narrative. In spite of this rupture, the preservation of William's *vita* is in itself a sign that the founder's memory was treasured by the community, and this realisation has been key in my approach to, and use of the source.

The text survives today in two manuscripts, the first in Beneventan script, dating from between 1185 (the date of the last miracle told) and about 1250, and the second in gothic hand, containing two further miracles dated 1257-8, placing its compilation in the second half of the thirteenth century. The two manuscripts were bound together into a single codex by Abbot Giordano in the second half of the seventeenth century, as indicated by his seal on the back cover.<sup>10</sup> These are clearly derived from different versions of the text, as they present a number of differences, from the title itself (the Beneventan-hand manuscript starts 'incipit

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<sup>7</sup> For Panarelli's discussion of the manuscript see *Legenda*, pp. i-l. Giovanni Mongelli discusses the sources in *S. Guglielmo da Vercelli: Fondatore della Congregazione Verginiana, Patrono Primario dell'Irpinia* (Montevergine: Edizioni del Santuario Montevergine, 1960), pp. i-vi.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion and bibliography see Isabella Bolognese, 'Hermits in Space: Some Observations on Representational and Organisational Problems in a New Twelfth-Century Southern-Italian Hermitage', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 19: Special issue on Monastic Space through Time (2014 for 2013), 88-105.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Leclercq, 'L'écriture sainte dans l'historiographie monastique du Haut Moyen Âge', *La Bibbia nell'Alto Medioevo: Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* (1963), 103-28 (pp. 113-14). In saints' *vitae*, he says, there are 'comme deux plans superposés: l'intemporel et l'historique; ou, si l'on veut, les circonstances narrées ne sont plus qu'un contexte et de variations historiques autour de thèmes qui, eux, sont suprahistoriques'.

<sup>10</sup> This is found in numbers 8924-5 of the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* of the *Acta Sanctorum*: 'De sancto Guilielmo abate, fundatore eremitarum montis virginis sub regula s. p. Benedicti Guleti apud Nuscum in Apulia', in *Acta Sanctorum*, iunii 7 (Paris: Société des Bollandistes, 1867), pp. 97-116.

prologus de vita et obitu sancti Guilielmi confessoris et heremite', while the gothic-hand manuscript begins 'incipit prologus in legenda sancti Guilielmi vercellensis confessoris et heremite').<sup>11</sup> Panarelli suggests that ultimately they were derived from a common copy (directly copied by the scribe of the Beneventan-script, and through an intermediary manuscript with the altered title by the author of the gothic-hand manuscript) that has now been lost.

The codex is now preserved in the Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine. The Gothic manuscript presents a marginal note by a monk of Montevergine, Luigi de Pandarano, who is attested at Montevergine in the *necrologium* in the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Thus we know that this manuscript at least had reached Montevergine by the sixteenth century. The arrival of the Gothic text to Montevergine is harder to trace. A breviary printed in Venice in 1555, and intended for use at Montevergine, contains twelve lessons which summarise the events of William's life, using content from both Beneventan and Gothic texts.<sup>13</sup> This might indicate that the Gothic text was also held in Montevergine by this time, although the evidence is altogether inconclusive. The second half of the sixteenth century saw intense historiographical activity at Montevergine, with two works written by monks of the monastery, Vincenzo Verace, in 1576, and Felice Renda, in 1581, who chronicled the history of Montevergine using the *vita*, often changing the sequence of events, and omitting or adding information.<sup>14</sup> Both referred to a 'Lombard' text, suggesting that they were using the Beneventan manuscript. Verace's work was edited in 1585 by the monk Tommaso Costo, who wrote in Italian.<sup>15</sup> Abbot Giordano's edition was used in the *Acta Sanctorum*, referring to the manuscript as a 'Lombard' text, as if it had been just one manuscript, despite Giordano having been responsible for joining the two manuscripts together.<sup>16</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup> *Legenda*, p. xvi.

<sup>12</sup> *Legenda*, pp. xx-xxii.

<sup>13</sup> *Breviarium secundum usum inclyti coenobii Montisvirginis ordinis divi patris Benedicti* (Venice, 1555); see *Legenda*, pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>14</sup> Vincenzo Verace, *La vera istoria dell'origine e delle cose notabili di Montevergine* (Naples: Horatio Salviani & Cesare Cesari, 1585); Felice Renda, *Vita sancti Guilielmi fondator della chiesa e dell'ordine di Monte Vergine e di S. Amato suo discepolo vescovo della città di Nusco* (Vico Equense: Giuseppe Cacchii, 1584).

<sup>15</sup> V. Verace, *La vera istoria dell'origine e delle cose notabili di Montevergine*, ed. by Tommaso Costo (Venice: Barezzo Barezzi, 1591).

<sup>16</sup> 'De sancto Guilielmo abate', in *Acta Sanctorum*, iunii 7 (Paris: Société des Bollandistes, 1867), pp. 97-116.

the first half of the eighteenth century, Paolino Sandulli, prior of Montevergine, wrote a harsh criticism of Verace's and Renda's reworking of the *vita*, and pointed to the existence of two manuscripts.<sup>17</sup> The contents of the monastery's archives were transferred to the *Grande Archivio di Napoli* in the nineteenth century, when the *Legenda* received little attention. Only in the 1960s di Giovanni Mongelli compile an edition of the *vita* basing it on the original manuscripts, with most of their variants.<sup>18</sup> The latest edition, which I have used for the purposes of this thesis, was published by Panarelli in 2004, and uses the manuscript in Beneventan script as the base text on the grounds of greater accuracy compared to the one in Gothic script, and also because the Beneventan manuscript descends directly from an earlier archetype, to which the other is only indirectly related.<sup>19</sup>

At first glance, the work appears divided into three parts: a *Prologus*, the *Legenda*, and a final section dedicated to the miracles performed by William. Each manuscript includes liturgical texts regarding the cult of William in the final pages. These sections were, in turn, written by several different authors. Panarelli identified the author of the prologue and the first sixteen chapters of the *vita* as the monk John of Goleto, William's later foundation. In the prologue the author reveals that the biography of William had been commissioned by Abbot James, William's successor at Goleto. This allows us to date the writing of the common archetype to the years of Abbot James' abbacy: between 1142 — the year of William's death, and Abbot James' first year of rule — and 1150 — the year of James' death. The author's house of origin is also clear from the overall deprecatory tone used to describe William's first disciples in Montevergine — one of whom, John da Nusco, is cited twice in the *Legenda* as an eyewitness of the events recounted — in plain contrast with the holy and pure light shed over the monastery of Goleto during its brief description: Goleto was found in fertile ground, with copious wood, and flowing streams of water, and its community followed (apparently without protest) the very strict regimes assigned by William.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the liturgical texts at the end of the manuscripts refer explicitly to Goleto, so that these manuscripts were at

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<sup>17</sup> Paolino Sandulli, *Apologia in risposta ai discorsi critici di Francesco di Nola* (Naples: Felice Mosca, 1733).

<sup>18</sup> *Legenda s. Guilielmi*, ed. by G. Mongelli (Montevergine: Edizioni Padri Benedettini, 1962).

<sup>19</sup> *Legenda*.

<sup>20</sup> The description of Goleto is in *Legenda*, XIV, pp. 24-25.

least clearly intended for the female community there. Chapters XVII to XXIII, retelling William's death and most of the miracles, along with a few revisions in the first part, are attributed by Panarelli to an anonymous monk of Goletto, and dated between 1170 and 1180. This conclusion stems from recognition of the author's style of writing, and from the incoherence of certain passages in the first part of the manuscript. William is referred to as 'confessor Christi' from the chapter detailing the events of his death, for example, and the references to William's relationship with King Roger contained in these chapters also betray a later author's work. Chapters XXIV, XXV and XXVI relate post-mortem miracles, the first occurring in 1185, and the latter two occurring 1257-8. Panarelli accordingly attributes chapter XXIV to a third author from Goletto, writing after 1185, and chapters XXV-XXVI to a fourth, writing after 1258.<sup>21</sup> The final chapters are also evidence of the fact that at least one manuscript of the *Legenda*, the one being edited and expanded, was held in Goletto, where William was buried, and where the post-mortem miracles occur.

While Panarelli has argued for the *Legenda* to have been entirely a work of the monastery of Goletto, Mongelli, himself a monk of Montevergine, attributes the first sixteen chapters to another author from Montevergine. He gives as evidence for this the mention of John da Nusco as the source for the events narrated, but this seems hardly sufficient reason to assume that the writer was a monk of Montevergine, and not the same John da Nusco of the Prologue.<sup>22</sup> However, given the greater attention paid to the foundation of Montevergine in the *Legenda*, doubt still remains as to its authorship. Panarelli offers another explanation: that the second writer drew from a now lost manuscript entirely based on the eye-witness accounts of John da Nusco. This would explain the greater focus on the events of Montevergine, from the point of view of a devoted companion of William who was with him at Montevergine and was protective of him. This suggestion, however, on Panarelli's own admission, is still not necessarily preferable to the hypothesis that the author had simply heard the stories told by John da Nusco, and reported them in the *Legenda*.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Legenda*, pp. xlii-li.

<sup>22</sup> For Panarelli's criticism of Mongelli's argument see *Legenda*, pp. xli-xlii. For Mongelli's assessment see Mongelli, *S. Guglielmo da Vercelli*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>23</sup> *Legenda*, pp. xlii-xliii.

Thus, since the biography of the founder was written in Goletto, there are, in fact, no surviving internal records of the foundation of Montevergine. A collection of over one thousand legal documents pertaining to Montevergine, and dating from the tenth to the early thirteenth century has been elegantly published in the thirteen volumes of the *Codice Diplomatico Verginiano*. The charter relating to the consecration of Montevergine's first church found in the archives, and dated 1126, is in fact a forgery most likely produced in the first half of the thirteenth century, when a number of other forgeries were drawn up for the monastery, following Frederick II's revocation of privileges pre-dating William II.<sup>24</sup> The document, allegedly issued by bishop Giovanni of Avellino, upon William's explicit request and insistence (in the charter, he and his congregation threatened to leave the mountain if the bishop refused him), grants the monastery and all its dependencies several privileges and exemptions, including the right to elect their own abbot, baptismal and burial rights, the right to purchase temporal goods, and the bishop's consecration of new or desecrated churches, and new abbots and monks, without fee. The rather symbolic-looking payment on Montevergine's part was a yearly donation of wax to the bishop.<sup>25</sup>

An archival system for the charters of Montevergine can be traced back to 1179, when John, monk of Montevergine and prior of the church of San Giovanni a Marcopio, went to Montefusco before the judges Richard and Matthew to exhibit a document pertaining to a donation of land, in order to obtain a copy to be held at the priory in Marcopio, while the original would return to Montevergine.<sup>26</sup> The charter was inspected, and 'found to be worthy', and was thus copied by the notary Phillip. As we will see in Chapter 8, this process reflects the centralised administration that Montevergine applied to its network of dependencies. Inventories of the archives were drawn up in the thirteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth,

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<sup>24</sup> CDV 155. On the document's forgery see Giovanni Vitolo, 'Eremitismo, cenobitismo e religiosità locale', *Benedictina*, 30 (1983), 531-40 (pp. 536-37); Carmine Carlone, *Falsificazioni e falsari cavensi e verginiani del secolo XIII* (Altavilla Silentina: Studi storici medievali, 1984), p. 13; and Graham A. Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 473 (see also p. 319 for the other thirteenth-century forgeries).

<sup>25</sup> Beeswax was important for illuminating churches in the Middle Ages, and its economic and liturgical significance is discussed in Paul Fouracre, 'Eternal Light and Earthly Needs: Practical Aspects of the Development of Frankish Immunities', in *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 53-81.

<sup>26</sup> CDV 646.

seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>27</sup> The first two of these were executed by monks of the monastery, who made notes on the back of most documents, describing their content and state of conservation. The annotations of the fifteenth century already showed some concern for the state of conservation of the charters, with about 6% of the 4125 listed described as damaged.<sup>28</sup> In the seventeenth century, Abbot Mastrullo described the room in which the charters were kept. He pointed to two chests ('cassette') in the centre of the room, containing royal, papal, and episcopal privileges, as well as all other documents pertaining to the monastery.<sup>29</sup> The eighteenth-century inventory drawn up by Gaetano Iannuzzi, published in two volumes in 1714 and 1716, does not include those charters described as damaged in the fifteenth-century inventory, indicating that they were by then already beyond use.<sup>30</sup> In 1727, Pope Benedict XIII decreed that monasteries should make safe their archives, in the bull *Maxima vigilantia*, following precise archival norms.<sup>31</sup> A series of earthquakes which destroyed the hospital of Loreto between 1727 and 1732, made this task all the more pressing. The monastery's documents were temporarily transferred to the daughter house of San Giovanni d'Arienzo, where Carlo Cangiani compiled a new inventory, while the Abbey of Loreto was rebuilt.<sup>32</sup> The archives were transferred to the new site in 1761, but a century later, with the suppression of monasteries and confiscation of monastic property in 1855, they were moved to the Grande Archivio in Naples. They were returned to the monastery only in 1926. The most recent inventory was executed by the monk, Giovanni Mongelli, and published between 1956 and 1962.<sup>33</sup> The archives, which are currently housed in the eighteenth-century incarnation of the Abbey of Loreto, and contain about 7000 parchments, and many more paper documents, are kept in chronological order, and divided into four sections.

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<sup>27</sup> A history of the archives of Montevergine has been traced by P. Tropeano in *Civiltà del Partenio: La biblioteca di Montevergine nella cultura del Mezzogiorno* (Naples: Berisio, 1970); and G. Mongelli, *L'archivio dell'abbazia di Montevergine*, Quaderni per la Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato, 16 (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali, 1962).

<sup>28</sup> CDV I, p. XII.

<sup>29</sup> See Tropeano's introduction to CDV I, p. X.

<sup>30</sup> Gaetano Iannuzzi, *Regestum et epitomae scripturarum quae in pervetusto ac insigni archivio sacri ac regalis archicoenobii Montis Virginis Maioris asservantur*, 2 vols (Montevergine, 1714-16).

<sup>31</sup> MBR, XXII, pp. 559-67, n. 181.

<sup>32</sup> Carlo Cangiani, *Indice generale de' brevi, bolle e privilegi, così apostolici, imperiali, regi e baronali*, 4 vols (Montevergine, 1750).

<sup>33</sup> *Regesto*.

These charters present a serious problem: the forgery and interpolation of charters to prove the possession of rights and property which had not been officially granted or whose rights had been retracted were commonplace in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century monastic milieu, and the charters of Montevergine are no exception. Giles Constable argued that among other factors, the practice of forgery reached its peak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries because of 'the appeal to tradition in an age of rapid change, but also the shifting attitudes toward written evidence'.<sup>34</sup> Carmine Carlone also argued that it is natural in the 'second phase' of monastic development, that of economic development which follows the foundation, for a monastery to forge documents that would serve to ennoble its origins.<sup>35</sup> At Montevergine, the main reason for the proliferation of forgeries is far more practical: as mentioned above, in the Assizes of Capua promulgated in 1220, Frederick II decreed that all privileges issued by rulers before William II would be revoked, and would need to be reconfirmed. This initiated a sudden increase in the production of forgeries especially among the monasteries of southern Italy, with a number of forgery hubs developing, among which was Benevento. Many of the Montevergine charters have been deemed complete fabrications commissioned or created by the monks themselves, and a great many more than can be accurately identified are likely to contain additional clauses and details inserted at a later date for various reasons. As Tropeano put it:

the monks of Montevergine, in their precinct and in the silence of their budding scriptorium, fought furious battles and achieved brilliant results against the royal and imperial authorities for political independence, against the powerful southern barons for supremacy over the lands of the monastic *feudo*, and against neighbouring bishops for exemption for the local obediatory; especially when it came to immunities and exemptions, to the exercise of justice and of quasi-episcopal jurisdiction, the monks made recourse to falsifications of acts, tending to backdate and amplify these concessions, confusing their concrete origins and actual limitations.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Giles Constable, 'Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages', *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 29 (1983), 1-41, which is particularly helpful here for an overview of the practice of forgery in the Middle Ages.

<sup>35</sup> C. Carlone, 'Il problema dei falsi ed alcune presunte dipendenze verginiane', *Samnium*, 52 (1979), 78-102 (pp. 78-79).

<sup>36</sup> CDV II, p. xxvii. My translation.

These charters provide valuable evidence for the circumstances in which they were created. Carlone and Horst Enzensberger have been particularly concerned with the meticulous palaeographical and diplomatic evaluation of the documents of Montevergine, and I have made use of and built on their work where appropriate. Even when forged or interpolated, the charters can be indicative of rights and possessions that the monastery owned, but for which the original documentation had been somehow lost, for example, making careful scrutiny of each document all the more important.

For instance, a charter dated to 1136 shows Montevergine receiving a donation from Richard of Treviso, an elite member of the Norman administration: he was later sub-constable of the region of Troia, Bovino and Ascoli, and a royal baron owing seventeen knights and two *servientes* to the demesne, and forty knights and eighty *servientes* with the *augmentum*, a military obligation.<sup>37</sup> According to the document, he donated the church of San Giovanni and its *casale* (a small rural village) of Aquara near Treviso, about 70km east of Mercogliano.<sup>38</sup> This would have been a significant acquisition for Montevergine, as possession of a *casale* would increase both its income, by transferring fees and rents to the monastery's coffers, and its prestige, by elevating the monastery to the same social rank as one of the kingdom's lords, with the important difference that no bond of allegiance was required, as Richard expressly exempted Montevergine from any fees and removed the *casale* from his jurisdiction. The extent of the monastery's jurisdiction over such acquisitions is often unclear, but, in the case of Aquara, for example, Richard specified that the donation included all the *casale's* men, free from all 'pensione, iure conditione servicio et gravamine et ab omni qualicumque colta et exactione'. He continued by ordering that his own officials should not have any jurisdiction (*potestatem*) over the church or the men of the *casale*, either in

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<sup>37</sup> CDV 232. Cf. Carlone, 'Il problema dei falsi', 78-102. Richard of Treviso was a patron of the nunnery of Santa Maria di Porta Somma — cf. *Commentario*, 64-66. See also CB 291, p. 47. On the role of the sub-constable in the Norman administration see Jamison, *The Norman Administration of Apulia and Capua* (Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1913; repr. 1987), pp. 312-14. On the *augmentum*, see below, p. 52.

<sup>38</sup> On the *casale* see Jean-Marie Martin, 'Settlement and the Agrarian Economy', trans. by Gérard Héry, in *The Society of Norman Italy*, ed. by G. A. Loud and Alex Metcalfe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 17-46 (pp. 31-32).



requiring services (*servicium*) or fees (*gravamine*) from them.<sup>39</sup> He granted the monastery and the men of the *casale* use of the materials on his lands, including wood, water, grass and pasture, and anything else they might need. He also allowed his men to donate themselves and their land and goods to the monastery, and the right to ask to be buried there. The men of the parish of the bishopric of Trevico ('*parochia episcopati Vici*' — terminology which is unusual for the ecclesiastical administration of southern Italy in the first half of the twelfth century)<sup>40</sup> would have the same burial rights if they paid a fee to the bishop, and the bishop would provide the church of San Giovanni with holy oil in return. Finally, he recognised the right for Montevergine to offer asylum in the church of San Giovanni. This would have represented a shift in Montevergine's social and institutional status less than two decades after it had been founded, and the charter is for this reason extremely suspicious. However, the donation of a house to Prior Peter of San Giovanni in Acquara in September 1200, and another the following month are both genuine, and demonstrate that by the end of the twelfth century, Montevergine did have a church with a monastic community in Acquara.<sup>41</sup> In 1230, moreover, Frederick II confirmed both the church of San Giovanni and the *casale* of Acquara to Montevergine together with the rights granted in the donation of Richard of Trevico.<sup>42</sup> It seems likely, therefore, that Richard of Trevico's donation belongs to that group of forgeries created to backdate possessions and rights granted during the Norman period.

Thus, care has been taken wherever possible to reflect the extent and degree of "fabrication" of charters, and to explore their significance in terms of when and why they were created. The principal forgeries which will be discussed in the course of this thesis are the 1137 and 1139 royal privileges of Roger II;<sup>43</sup> the privileges of Bishop John of Avellino of 1126, and of Bishop Robert of Avellino of 1133;<sup>44</sup> and the 1170 and 1189 privileges of William II.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> CDV 232: 'Neque officialis meum habeat de cetero ius nullum neque potestatem pro parte mea et heredum meorum in dicta ecclesia et bonis suis omnibus neque in dicto casali et hominibus eiusdem ad precipiendum ibi et eis *servicium* aliquod et neque *facendum* eis *gravamine*...'

<sup>40</sup> See below, p. 216.

<sup>41</sup> CDV 1103, 1107.

<sup>42</sup> FIID, 1, pp. 209-12.

<sup>43</sup> See pp. 71-73.

<sup>44</sup> See p. 73.

<sup>45</sup> See pp. 198-99.

In order to optimise use of the charter material, I compiled a database of over 540 entries including all documents in the relevant time-frame directly pertinent to Montevergine. The archives also include many documents relating to properties (marriage contracts, quitclaims, property disputes) acquired by Montevergine which were stored at the monastery. Of these, I included only those which caught my attention for their potential to shed light on the socio-economic structures of the region (for example, because of the re-emergence of the same claimant of a certain property across several documents). While I have had to make constant reference to the complete documents from the published editions, the database was an essential tool in searching for relevant information and for navigating the charters with greater ease.

### **Structure and Methodology**

The thesis is divided into two sections. The first section looks at the historical background and gradual development of the monastery with a linear narrative perspective. Chapter 1 focuses on the foundation of the monastery, placing the foundation within the context of the eremitical movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and following the changes in devotional and institutional style as William adapted to his changing circumstances. Chapter 2 continues in this vein, following the development of Montevergine after William's departure from the monastery, against the backdrop of Norman consolidation and expansion of the kingdom. Chapter 3 looks at Montevergine's development during the rule of the Hohenstaufen, up to c. 1210, which brought about considerable change at Montevergine, with the first verifiably authentic royal and papal privileges issued for the monastery.

The second section of the thesis takes a more thematic approach, exploring the economic, social, and institutional peculiarities and developments of Montevergine. Having discussed the natural environmental setting of Montevergine in Chapter 4, in Chapter 5 I take an *Annaliste* approach, in the manner of Jean-Marie Martin on Apulia, and Pierre Toubert on Latium, using close analysis of data from the charters to extrapolate information on the estate

management and economic system adopted by the monastery of Montevergine.<sup>46</sup> The monastery functioned within an essentially agrarian society, and it positioned itself at the fore of the agrarian activities of the region. I analyse the various produce that constituted Montevergine's economic output, and argue that the monastery's economic development was dictated by its environmental context, and was inextricably bound to its relationship with its donors, the subject of Chapter 6. In the latter, I use prosopographical case studies combined with the application of social network theories used by Barbara Rosenwein for Cluny, or Emilia Jamroziak for the Cistercians in England, for example, look at the influence and interrelation between the laity and monastic institutions. These models have not yet been applied to twelfth-century southern-Italian monasteries. Given the natural correlation between the purposes, both spiritual and social, of monastic institutions across medieval Europe, viewing Montevergine through this prism offers fruitful new insights into the society of the Campania region. I argue that Montevergine fostered relationships particularly with members of the local lay community within the Irpinia region, and across all social classes, but especially with peasants and untitled wealthy land-owners of the region. Montevergine thus became a central node in the landscape of Irpinia, creating and fostering community bonds. In Chapter 7 I look at the internal institutional development of Montevergine. Its transition from eremitical to Benedictine community is an aspect which has received a great deal of attention. I argue that the debate has relied too heavily on a literal interpretation of the sources, and I attempt to reroute the discussion towards a broader and more inclusive overview of the sources, suggesting that the transition was more gradual and organic than has hitherto been recognised. This process is bound to Montevergine's role as middle ground between different social strata, a concept which can improve our reading of the sources. Finally, Chapter 8 looks at Montevergine's institutional network taking a small number of its most prominent dependent priories, churches and hospitals as case studies. These show that Montevergine adopted a simple hierarchical model in which the abbot of Montevergine acted as spiritual and administrative superior

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<sup>46</sup> See Jean-Marie Martin, *La Pouille du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1993), and Pierre Toubert, *Les structures du Latium médiéval* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1973).

to all the monastery's dependencies, mostly led directly by priors who were subordinate to the abbot.

**SECTION I: HISTORY**

## CHAPTER 1: WILLIAM OF VERCELLI AND THE FOUNDATION OF MONTEVERGINE

Although according to a careful reconstruction of events we can surmise that William of Vercelli settled on Montevergine in 1118, it would be misleading to assume that this year coincides with the foundation of the monastery of Montevergine. In fact, when William of Vercelli, a young man desirous to dedicate his life to God, undertook the arduous journey up the Partenio, he had no intention to begin a religious community, but wished to remain entirely alone, in order to deepen his relationship with God. He was accompanied by a single follower, and settled in a suitable place, near a water source which was indicated to him by another hermit living on Montevergine at the time. Every detail of this succinct summary of William's arrival on Montevergine, as described by his hagiographer in the *Legenda de Vita et Obitu Sancti Guilielmi Confessoris et Heremite*, underscores the eremitical nature of William's journey and settlement, thus marking it as a key feature of the early history of the monastery.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will examine the passage from eremitical to coenobitic life which characterised the foundation of the monastery of Montevergine, comparing it with the case of John of Matera's foundation of Pulsano in Apulia. It is crucial to this analysis to clarify that the transition to a coenobitic style did not automatically involve the adoption of the Rule of Benedict, as many historians have assumed.<sup>2</sup>

The foundation of Montevergine needs to be seen within the context of William's life and times, as it belongs to a category of eremitical foundations which was not unique in the twelfth-century monastic reform environment. Many contemporary hagiographies stress the saints' dissatisfaction with the lax observance and sometimes loose *mores* of their institutions. Romuald of Ravenna (951 – 1027), for example, seems to have been constantly in flight from

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<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> See de Palma, 'Intorno alla Legenda de vita et obitu sancti Guilielmi confessoris et heremite', *Irpinia*, 4 (1932), 3-98 (pp. 82-88); Mongelli, *S. Guglielmo da Vercelli*, pp. i-vi; Maria A. Tallarico, 'L'abbazia di Montevergine nelle età normanna: formazione e sviluppo di una potenza economica e politica', *Samnium*, 45 (1972), 197-231 (pp. 200-201); see also Tropeano's introductions to the CDV; cf. F. Panarelli, 'Quia religio monasterii non requirebat habere dignitatem abbatie: L'osservanza benedettina a Montevergine e Pulsano', in *Regulae, consuetudines, statuta: studi sulle fonti normative degli ordini religiosi nei secoli centrali del medioevo*, ed. by Cristina Andenna and Gert Melville (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005), pp. 169-78 (169-70).

monasteries that were either badly administered, or whose monks lacked the spiritual dedication that Romuald expected of them. At Sant'Apollinare in Classe, 'it was not long before Romuald noticed that some of the monks were living rather slackly and that he was not going to be able to keep the strict path of perfection that he had mapped out for himself'.<sup>3</sup> On several occasions, the monks who objected to the strict observance that Romuald brought to the monasteries rebelled against him.<sup>4</sup> When called by Emperor Otto III to reform ('ordinare') the abbey of Sant'Apollinare, Romuald 'ruled the monks with strict discipline, allowing no one, however wellborn, however learned to stray from the path of righteousness'. The monks, having realised 'the character of the man they had chosen', 'began to wound him by whispering malicious calumnies'.<sup>5</sup> In his life of Romuald, Peter Damian uses a rhetoric of moral and spiritual decadence, countered by the driven and divine intervention of the saint. This evokes a similar style implemented in the tenth-century English monastic reforms, where the crisis was often exaggerated by contemporary writers and sources to emphasise the need for renovation, and urge its adoption.<sup>6</sup> This common *topos* in twelfth century Italian monastic writings Even so, it is clear that Romuald was seen as a revolutionary spiritual figure in the south of Italy in the tenth century.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Damian, *Vita beati Romualdi*, ed. by Giovanni Tabacco, FSI, 94 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano, 1957), p. 19: 'Sed cum ibi cerneret nonnullos per lata gradientes remissius vivere, sibi autem arduam perfectionis semitam, quam mens dictabat, arripere non licere'. Translated by Henrietta Leyser in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. by Thomas Head (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 295-315 (p. 299). On the figure of Romuald, see especially Jean Leclercq, 'Saint Romuald et la monachisme missionnaire', *RB*, 77 (1962), 307-22.

<sup>4</sup> For example see *Vita beati Romualdi*, chapters 18, 22, 36, 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Vita beati Romualdi*, p. 48, 'Regebat itaque monachos sub discripta regule disciplina, neque alicui ab ea declinare inpune licebat: non denique nobilis, non litteris eruditus per actus illicitos in dextram levamque deviare. [...] Hoc autem suscepti fratres sero considerantes, semetipsos prius accusant quia hunc sibi preesse poposcerant; deinde multis detractionum susurrationibus lacerant et duris scandalorum aculeis vexant'. Translation by Leyser, in *Medieval Hagiography*, p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> See David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development From the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976), p. 33. Knowles points out that 'all available evidence from the reign of Alfred points to a complete collapse of monasticism by the end of the ninth century'. Subsequently, scholars have proven that, in fact, many English monasteries of the ninth and tenth centuries were far from decadent, and were the cradles of great literary, theological and artistic influences and achievements. See, for example Joanna Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750-870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 37-41.

<sup>7</sup> See G. Tobacco, 'Romualdo di Ravenna e gli inizi dell'eremitismo camaldolese', in *L'eremitismo in occidente nei secoli XI e XII*, Atti della seconda Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola 1963 (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1965), pp. 73-119; also Gregorio Penco, *Storia del monachesimo in Italia: Dalle origini alla fine del medioevo* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1961), pp. 197-204; and Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950-1200* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011), pp. 29-30.

The life of William is characterised by restless wanderings from one hermitage to the next, a lifestyle which immediately brings to mind the Irish *peregrini* monks, and it is not impossible that William was influenced by the Irish tradition, given the proximity of Vercelli to the monastery of Bobbio.<sup>8</sup> William left his own home to travel and lead an ascetic life, as if in physical pursuit of God; and like his Irish predecessors', his itinerary became imprinted in the landscape and in history through the religious communities and monasteries which he built along the way. He reached first Santiago at around fourteen years of age to venerate the relics of St James, then Rome, and then made his way down to Monte Sant'Angelo in Apulia, but he never achieved his ambition of travelling to Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> Years later, after he had left Montevergine c. 1128, he was first a hermit on Mount Laceno, and then on Mount Cognato, in Lucania, where another religious community was formed. He retired then to Goletto to live in the hollowed trunk of a tree, until he founded a primarily female monastery with a male component there in 1133. He then proceeded to found monasteries in Rocca San Felice (Campania), in Foggia (Apulia), and in Troia (Apulia), and finally returned to Goletto where he spent his dying days.

Kathleen Thompson also recalls the Celtic tradition in her article on the eleventh-century French abbot and ascetic Bernard of Abbeville, further confirming the unavoidable impact of this tradition on the minds of the eleventh- and twelfth-century ascetic monks, as well as on the minds of modern scholars.<sup>10</sup> Bernard, an active reformer throughout his career, also made his way onto the

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<sup>8</sup> The early Irish monastic tradition was jealously guarded by twelfth-century Irish monasteries: see Peter Harbison, 'Church Reform and the "Irish Monastic" Culture in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 52 (2000), 2-12. On the *peregrini* monks C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Harlow: Longman, 2001), pp. 39-46 remains an excellent guide; see also Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 158-90.

<sup>9</sup> *Legenda*, I, p. 5. Monte Sant'Angelo was important for the Normans, who were familiar with the cult of St Michael, and, according to the accounts of Amatus, monk of Montecassino and chronicler writing in the 1080s, and of William of Apulia, a lay chronicler writing in the 1090s, first arrived in southern Italy as pilgrims to the archangel's sanctuary. See Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni di Amato di Montecassino*, ed. by Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1935), pp. 21-22. Available in translation: *The History of the Normans*, trans. by Prescott N. Dunbar and G. A. Loud (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), pp. 49-50. William of Apulia, *Guillaume de Pouille: La geste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. by Marguerite Mathieu (Palermo: Istituto siciliano di studi bizantini e neoellenici, 1961), i.11-13, p. 98. The monastery's significance in the *Regno* is also illustrated in the life of Romuald, where Peter Damian recounts the pilgrimages of monks, counts, kings, and emperors to the sanctuary. See *Vita beati Romualdi*, XXV, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> See Kathleen Thompson, 'The Other Saint Bernard: The "Troubled and Varied Career" of Bernard of Abbeville, Abbot of Tiron', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 60 (2009), 657-672 (p. 670).



stage of the monastic reforms through pilgrimage and eremitism, and before he founded the community of Tiron (1109) his life was 'a restless round of wanderings'.<sup>11</sup> Bernard of Abbeville was by no means the sole other contemporary follower of William's and the Irish monastic style. The urge for the ascetic life had seen a strong revival in the eleventh and twelfth centuries across Europe. In fact, while eremitism had constantly been considered the purest and most perfect way of life through much of the Middle Ages, its function and practice assumed new facets from the eleventh century. It was a prerogative of the 'old hermits' to shun all forms of communal life, and to seek the harshness and solitude of the desert to fight and overcome an inward battle against all vices and worldly needs: traditional eremiticism was very much an individual affair.

On the other hand, the 'new hermits' were not entirely averse to communal living: they sought distance from the secular life, the hustle and bustle of the town, the habits and routines to which one was expected to comply within secular communities; but this did not exclude the possibility of like-minded individuals sharing the experience of isolation from the secular world shielded by the devotion and order of a religious community.<sup>12</sup> The Italian scholar Cinzio Violante argues that this is part of a recurring paradox in Christian spirituality, whereby the communal life led in coenobia tends to be more successful in achieving material separation from the world, whereas solitary and independent hermits tend to seek out temptations to confront them in open spiritual battle.<sup>13</sup>

During the eremitical movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the number of hermits did greatly increase, but it was only a selection of them who gave new interpretations to the old ways, and their presence and impact in history was largely overlooked until the 1960s. This was due to their 'chameleon' appearance, as Henrietta Leyser describes it, confusingly masked as they were in their *vitae* in the form of coenobitic founders.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See Thompson, 'The Other Saint Bernard', p. 664.

<sup>12</sup> See H. Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000-1150* (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 29-37.

<sup>13</sup> Cinzio Violante, 'Discorso di apertura', in *L'Eremitismo in Occidente nei Secoli XI e XII*, Atti della Seconda Settimana Internazionale di Studio, Mendola 30 Agosto-6 Settembre 1962 (Milan: Società Editrice Vita e Pensiero, 1963), pp. 9-27 (p. 17) — my translation.

<sup>14</sup> Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*, p. 18.

It was in these circumstances that the fame of hermits like Romuald of Ravenna rose, a man of noble birth, who turned to the contemplative life of the monastery after the shock of witnessing his father murder a kinsman in a duel.<sup>15</sup> At the monastery of Sant'Apollinare in Classe he began to criticise the monks' diversions from the Rule of Benedict, and soon left to join the hermit Marinus. The two hermits were then invited by the abbot of St Michael of Cuxa in the Pyrenees, to lead a small group of repentant nobles in a hermitage on their land. He later founded the Camaldolese order from his hermitage in Tuscany. Similarly, John Gualbert (999 – 1073), a noble from Florence, retreated to monastic life after he had forgiven a man who had just murdered his brother on the street as John was passing. Seeking greater perfection, he then spent a period as a hermit in Camaldoli, and then moved to Vallombrosa, where he was joined by several followers, and a monastic house rose soon thereafter.<sup>16</sup> Thus the ascetic life of the hermitage, initially viewed as a purer form of contemplation than the regular monastic life, became a communal experience.

From the north of Italy, the eremitical movement had meanwhile extended to France as well, where familiar figures like Stephen Harding and Robert of Arbrissel were equally dissatisfied with the standards of monastic practice of the time, and resorted to eremitical withdrawal, albeit communal.<sup>17</sup> It was, in fact, a perceived want of uncompromising austerity within pre-existing ascetic communities that lay at the heart of the new movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Though the crisis was felt in all regions of the Western world, the reaction in southern Italy took a different form: where new orders, especially the Cistercian order, quickly spread through Western Europe in the first decades of the twelfth century to take new measures against the “monastic crisis”, they did not make any significant appearance in the Italian south until the 1140s and 50s.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See *Vita beati Romualdi*, I, pp. 14-15.

<sup>16</sup> For the life of John Gualbert see Andrea Strumi, *Vita sancti Iohannis Gualberti*, ed. by Friedrich Baethgen, MGH, *Scriptores*, 30.2 (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1929), pp. 1076-104.

<sup>17</sup> On Robert of Arbrissel see especially Jacques Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Bruce L. Venarde (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> See especially G. Vitolo, “Vecchio” e “nuovo” monachesimo nel regno svevo di Sicilia, in *I Cistercensi nel Mezzogiorno Medioevale*, ed. by H. Houben and B. Vetere (Galatina: Congedo, 1994), pp. 182-200; also Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 470-93.

In the south of Italy, in Apulia, John of Matera attracted fame for his deep devotion, evident to all from his ascetic wanderings, his self-inflicted periods of silence and fasting, and his preaching. He became a monk while still very young in an island-monastery off the coast near Taranto, where he criticised the monks for their lax observance of the Rule, and his own extreme practices of self-mortification were not well-regarded — an introduction to monastic life very similar (even suspiciously so) to that of St Romuald in the *vita* written by Peter Damian.<sup>19</sup> John left the monastery to seek a more solitary and rigid life. He travelled as a hermit through much of Southern Italy, going as far as Sicily, after which he returned home in Ginosa, in Apulia, and, following two years of silence, he founded a monastery there. After a time of imprisonment due to conflict with a local count, John left Ginosa to retreat again to solitude, accompanied by a few brothers. They travelled to Tricarico and then to Bari, where John began to preach to the people. He then proceeded further north to the Gargano region, where he founded the monastery of Pulsano, near Monte Sant’Angelo.<sup>20</sup> As abbot of the community of Pulsano, he recruited many religious men wishing to follow a stricter monastic life, and founded several daughter houses during his lifetime. Born in the historical and geographic centre of this movement, William of Vercelli spent his childhood hearing stories of the fame of these holy men, and was only fourteen when he himself took monastic vows.<sup>21</sup>

William of Vercelli was a contemporary and good friend of John of Matera, and, according to their respective hagiographers, their paths intersected more than once. The separate accounts of their interactions are helpful in validating the legitimacy of both sources, as they act as mutual corroborators. Much as in the case of William, the events of John of Matera’s life and foundations are known to us largely through the *Vita S. Joannis a Mathera*, compiled shortly after his death in 1139, between 1145 and 1177.<sup>22</sup> The current edition in the *Acta Sanctorum* is a compilation of the first half of the nineteenth century based on two of three manuscripts available at the time, all of which are now lost; the *Vita* is anonymous,

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> According to William’s *vita*, John went to the Gargano region after he spent some time as a hermit with William (who had by then left Montevergine) on Mount Laceno and on Monte Cognato. See *Legenda*, X, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Legenda*, I, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> See Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, p. 6.

but we know that the author was a monk at the monastery of Pulsano.<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, nothing remains of the archives of Pulsano, and very little can be obtained from its daughter-houses, making the *Vita* an invaluable source, despite the drawbacks of its genre.

As these initial observations intimate, sources for the foundation and early years of Montevergine are patchy, to say the least. To compound this fact further, one must admit that, in dealing with saints' *vitae*, it is not only the authorship of the text that must be called into question, but also a good deal of its content. As previously discussed, the hagiography of William was intended to be read by the women and men of his religious communities, not only to remember and commemorate the life of the founder, but also to be inspired by it, and to strive towards the emulation of his life. The hagiography's edifying purpose was achieved through the use of *exempla*, especially modelled on the lives of Jesus and the apostles in the Gospels.<sup>24</sup> Hagiographical writings follow a prescribed pattern of themes, events, and even wording, and it can be an arduous task to sift through the familiar formulae in order to arrive at the basic facts of a saint's life.<sup>25</sup> These standards seem to have been implicit in the genre until the fifteenth century, when the first hagiography manuals appeared in Italy. These drew largely from the works of classical rhetoric and oratory authors, especially Cicero, adapting the model of the panegyric to the purpose of praising the saint.<sup>26</sup> It is no wonder, then, that much of a saint's *vita* will be similar, if not identical to many others'. So, for example, both William's and John's *vitae* begin roughly the same way, describing the saints' noble origins: William 'of noble ancestors, and truly by far the most excellent in nobility of character, was from Vercelli';<sup>27</sup> while John 'of singular morals, his parents being not of common stock, was born in the city of Matera, in

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<sup>23</sup> *Vita*, pp. 33-50. For a more detailed discussion of the origins of the *Vita* see Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, pp. 7-16, and pp. 279-86.

<sup>24</sup> See Régis Boyer, 'An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography', in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature: A Symposium* (Odense: Odense UP, 1981), pp. 27-36, especially pp. 28-33. See also John 13. 15, in which Jesus calls his apostles to live according to his example.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>26</sup> See Alison Frazier, 'The First Instructions on Writing about Saints: Aurelio Brandolini (c. 1454-1497) and Raffaele Maffei (1455-1522)', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 48 (2003), 171-202.

<sup>27</sup> *Legenda*, I, p. 4, ll. 19-20: 'nobili progenie, morum equidem nobilitate longe preclarior, bercellensis genere fuit'.

the province of Apulia'.<sup>28</sup> Good looks, sharp wits, a passion for knowledge, and a precocious gravity and sense of purpose are also usually part and parcel of a saint's lot. This corresponds to Cicero's instructions in his *De Oratore* firstly to discuss 'what was given to men by nature and fortune'.<sup>29</sup> In the case of saints, their nobility and exceptional good looks, manners, and intellect were a crucial aspect of their identity, since, within the narration of their lives, it allowed the saints to transcend from a mundane and superficial existence into a pure, spiritual existence by rejecting and forfeiting their privileged social status in the world, and turning all their skills and efforts to the service of God. Let us consider, for instance, the following passage in William's *vita*:

When, after his childhood, he was bereaved of both his parents, as soon as he was taken from their care, even from these he would choose to cull the forewarning of his future virtue, and he never surrendered his mind to jests and other childish pleasures, but, with the dignity of his manner transcending his youthful age, he constantly turned in spirit. Thus, having left his home and all his belongings, he hastened more freely to the service of God. After fourteen years meditating in this manner, he took the religious habit and satisfying his desire, having left his homeland, covered only in a cloak, he proceeded barefoot to see the blessed James and the relics of other saints.<sup>30</sup>

Here we may well surmise that the description of William's character is a commonplace, fulfilling the prerequisites for sainthood in hagiographical writing. The *topos* of the *puer senex*, the wise child, can be found already in Gregory's biography of Benedict, and was used constantly in hagiography thereafter.<sup>31</sup> What is important in this passage is the path chosen in William's wish to submit 'ad Dei servitium', that is, pilgrimage. In the case of William and John, pilgrimage went

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<sup>28</sup> *Vita*, I, p. 36: 'moribus egregius, parentibus non gregalibus genitus, Apulia provincia, civitate Mathera oriundus fuit'.

<sup>29</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore*, ed. and trans. by Harris Rackam, Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols (London: Heinemann, 1942), 2.45-46: 'quae natura aut fortuna darentur hominibus'.

<sup>30</sup> *Legenda*, I, pp. 4-5, l. 23-05.

<sup>31</sup> Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, p. 17. Frazier, 'The First Instructions on Writing about Saints', p. 174. See also Michael E. Goodich, 'Childhood and Adolescence among the Thirteenth-Century Saints', in *Lives and Miracles of the Saints: Studies in Medieval Latin Hagiography* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 285-309.

hand in hand with the eremitical life, which could take many guises during the eremitical movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>32</sup>

William's and John's careers have been treated together by several scholars, since, through their accomplishments and fame, the two monastic figures championed the eleventh-century South-Italian reform.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, their paths intersected at least twice, as mentioned in William's *vita*, both times during the monks' travels: first, William went to Ginosa precisely with the intention of visiting John. Here, John predicted that William would not be able to complete his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Indeed, his journey was cut short by a bandit attack which left him wounded and feeble, and he returned to John. Here, God appeared to John, predicting that William would soon bring together a community of faithful, and that he should leave at once to fulfil God's orders. A few years later, it was John who visited William, who had retreated on Mount Laceno after leaving Montevergine. The two travelled together to a mountain near Tricarico, where they lived for a time as hermits. Already the two men had embraced their religious vocations in an ascetic fashion, and perhaps it was this that brought them together. Certainly the outcomes of their encounters make for poignant examples of the rich exchange and flow of ideas which are indispensable tools inherent in any reform. The *Legenda* explicitly binds the life of the two holy men through divine apparitions. According to the *Legenda*, Jesus appeared to William on Mount Laceno, telling him he was needed elsewhere, and William asked him if he would speak to his friend John as well. Later, while they were travelling from Mount Laceno, God appeared to John, and told him that William was needed in the west, while he himself should go east. Thus, when they reached Mount Cuneo, they spent only a few days together before each went on his separate way, as instructed by God when he appeared to John.<sup>34</sup> Each is constantly referred to as 'famulus Dei', and the two are bound by the will and favour of God in a way that calls to mind the lives of Jesus and John the Baptist.

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<sup>32</sup> For the twelfth-century monastic reform in Europe see especially Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*, pp. 69-71, where Leyser describes reform efforts from hermits, bishops, popes, and lay 'agitators'.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 683-84; Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, pp. 1-64; G. Vitolo, 'Forme di eremitismo indipendente nel Mezzogiorno meridionale', *Benedictina*, 48 (2002), 309-23; and Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 470-83.

<sup>34</sup> *Legenda*, X, p. 21.

The section of the *vita* describing the hermits' travels and encounters plays on the rhetoric of the outsider which is common in hermit hagiographies, and serves to accentuate their exceptional nature. In the episode of the bandits, for example, both William and the bandits are outsiders, and their encounter reinforces the spatial and thematic liminality of William's life.<sup>35</sup> Karl-Heinz Steinmetz argues that these encounters are evocative of, and even based on Jesus' role as an outsider, and his interaction with others living on the fringes of society — not least his crucifixion as an outlaw between two other outlaws.<sup>36</sup> As both William and John chose to live on the margins, even in the 'desert', their lives are in direct synchrony with those of Jesus and the apostles. This is made clearer in William's case by the opposition of men who also chose to live on the margins, but whose life and ways are corrupted.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, John's attempts at preaching in cities was emblematic of the crucial difference in the two hermits' lives and personalities. John's life assumed a far more missionary direction than William could stand to follow, despite his friend's exhortations to do so. John, who had been critical of the life led by the monks on an island monastery off the coast of Taranto,<sup>38</sup> where he received his early formation, saw in the foundation of new monasteries the opportunity to escape established monastic structures, and the chance to reform them. In this sense, his experience echoes Romuald of Ravenna, who, according to Peter Damian, was trying 'to turn the whole world into a hermitage and have everyone become regular monks'.<sup>39</sup> William, on the other hand, pursued the eremitical lifestyle as the ideal path to salvation, and the foundation of new communities was, at least until he reached Goleto, incidental.

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<sup>35</sup> This theme is the subject of a thought-provoking article by Karl-Heinz Steinmetz, 'Eremita et Latro: Discourses of Hermits and Robbers as the "Rhetoric of the Outsider"', in *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 188-201.

<sup>36</sup> Steinmetz, 'Eremita et Latro', pp. 189-90.

<sup>37</sup> Steinmetz points to Aristotle's theory that those who cannot live in a *polis* are either wild animals or gods in their autonomy. See Steinmetz, 'Eremita et Latro', n. 10, p. 198.

<sup>38</sup> This was presumably the monastery of St Peter de Insula, first attested in 1113 (see *Italia Pontificia*, MGH, IX, p. 440).

<sup>39</sup> *Vita beati Romualdi*, p. 78: 'adeo ut putaretur totum mundum in heremum velle convertere et monachico ordini omnem populi multitudinem sotiare'. Translated by Leyser, *Medieval Hagiography*, p. 308 — I have amended the translation to include the word 'regular' to translate 'ordini' qualifying 'monachico'.

Like other ascetics of their time, William and John practised self-mortification as penance for their sins and to distance themselves from the worldly needs of the flesh, in imitation of the first desert fathers. While they chose different instruments to this end, both were remarkable in their severity: William's biographer records that the saint wore two iron circles on his body, one around the waist and one around the chest 'for the exhaustion of the flesh'.<sup>40</sup> He had these renewed on his return from Apulia, and added to them a chain mail 'of the greatest weight', given to him by a soldier in Salerno, that William 'would never take off'. Finally, he had a helmet made for him, 'that he may proceed safely in battle':<sup>41</sup> vivid symbols of his militant faith, and of his own belief in his role as God's soldier on earth — a title used by his biographer in the *Legenda*.<sup>42</sup> The hagiographer perhaps had in mind that William was the son of a noble (another *topos* that is difficult to verify), and had most likely in his youth had much to do with military life. John's austerity, on the other hand, was more limited to fasting and long periods of silence which pushed his body to the extreme: according to the *vita*, after he left the monastery of his formation, he took to going almost without drink, he ate only what fruits he could find, spent nights immersed in freezing water, or tied to a tree, in order to defeat the temptation of sleep. For over two years he wandered from one hermitage to the next, until he decided to return to his parents' home, in Ginosa. Here he did not cease his harsh dietary regime, and for a further two years he observed absolute silence.<sup>43</sup>

It was with these backgrounds that William and John began their careers as monastic founders. When John communicated God's will to William during their second meeting in Ginosa, William promptly set out for the Campania region. Upon reaching the Partenio mountains, a harsh-looking section of the Apennines in the province of Avellino, covered in dense forests, William was struck by them, and immediately decided to commence his eremitical life there.<sup>44</sup> He went to the *castellum* of Mercogliano (later, from 1195, to become property of the abbey of

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<sup>40</sup> *Legenda*, I, p. 6, l. 26, and II, p. 10, l. 14 — 'quoniam circuli, quos ad carnis macerationem induerat'. Panarelli points out that a similar choice was made by bishop Farulfo of Cisterna (see *Legenda*, p. 6, note 11). See also Licence, *Hermits and Recluses*, pp. 120-21.

<sup>41</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 12, ll. 5-9.

<sup>42</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 12, l. 7: 'Domini miles'. This is also a metaphor used by St Paul in his letters: see VI Ephesians 11. 40-41.

<sup>43</sup> *Vita*, p. 37.

<sup>44</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 12, l. 10.



Montevergine)<sup>45</sup> in the valley, and was a guest in an old matron's house. He asked her if there was water to be found on the mountains, and she pointed him to another hermit living on Montevergine who would surely know. Evidently, for there to be other known occupiers, the environment was particularly enticing to those seeking solitude and meditation. Having made his enquiries, and found the source of water, however, within a few days of his stay on the mountain, William and his disciple, Peter (whom he had "selected" in the town), were taken by the guards of the *castellum* of Mercogliano who thought they were brigands roaming their lord's territory.<sup>46</sup> Fortunately, William's reputation preceded him, and the two men were soon dismissed by the lord of the *castellum*, who recognised William as a holy man.

Because of William's need for solitude and isolation, it is difficult to know how he spent the first two years of his eremitical life on Montevergine. The little information given to us in the *Legenda* is, according to the biographer, the description of an eyewitness. After taming a bear who threatened to ruin the water source, William was approached by a monk who wished to be his follower. Our hagiographer says:

Meanwhile, a year having gone by, a certain monk, having learnt of William's holiness, came to him and begged to be allowed to live with him. After William became aware of his constance, he did not reject his wish, and accepted him in his sacred company.<sup>47</sup>

We are not told where the monk came from, but one can deduce that after a year, William's reputation had spread to nearby monastic houses. Furthermore, the text underscores William's reluctance to include another companion in his hermitage, despite John of Matera's revelation that God had intended him to lead a monastic community. Against the suggestion that this might be another hagiographic *topos* of the reluctant leader adopted by the hagiographer, one can argue that there is consistency throughout the tale when it comes to William's reclusive personality. Indeed, William's preference for absolute solitude appears to be a salient feature of his personality throughout the narrative of his life up to the foundation of Goletto,

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 8, p. 239 below.

<sup>46</sup> Mercogliano was a fortified settlement (*castellum*) at the foot of Montevergine. On *castella* see Chapter 4, p. 102.

<sup>47</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 13, ll. 28-31.

ten years after the foundation of the first church of Montevergine. After all, he had chosen the lonely path of the pilgrim already at a very young age. The episode of the miraculous cure of the blind man is especially telling in this respect. While on his way to Jerusalem, having neared Mount Serico in Apulia, William was approached by a blind man led by his daughter, asking the holy man for a miracle. William restored the man's eyesight, and fame of his holiness and the story of his life soon spread far and wide: 'hoc itaque audito miraculo, fama sue sanctitatis cepit clarescere eiusque vite continentia publice predicari'.<sup>48</sup> As soon as William realised this, we are told that he was 'saddened and afraid', and decided to leave and make for places where his anonymity remained intact.<sup>49</sup>

William's preference for solitude went hand in hand with the strict practices he observed. William's new companion — referred to as one of many who faithfully recounted their experiences with William — reported that William would sleep hardly at all, and even then on a hard rock, and would wake in the night to pray standing on one foot before a cross which he had fixed in the ground as the only ornament of his cell:

in nocturnis horis, quam primum scire poterat se obdormuisse, ylico a strato, si nudum saxum hoc poterit nomine appellari, consurgens, ante crucem, quam in cellula sibi ipse confixerat, uno pede innixus, sacris orationibus usque mane vacabat.<sup>50</sup>

Unfortunately, little more than this is said about William's eremitical lifestyle on Montevergine in the *Legenda*. However, one can glean more details about his ways from episodes and speeches recorded throughout the rest of his *vita*. During his first pilgrimages he is said to have eaten only bread and water, and to have rested only as much as was necessary to sustain his body, lying on the naked ground.<sup>51</sup> On his way back from Santiago he stopped in a hospice owned by the same blacksmith who would then craft William's iron bands. Here he declared: 'since I am mindful of my shortcomings, I abstain from delicious foods and drinks, just as most sinners',

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<sup>48</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 9, ll. 11-13.

<sup>49</sup> Jesus too was preoccupied with his anonymity, demonstrating humility and a desire to avoid fame when he cured a leper — see Mark 1. 40-44; Matthew 8. 1-4; Luke 5. 12-15.

<sup>50</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, ll. 2-4.

<sup>51</sup> *Legenda*, I, p. 5, ll. 15-18.

the penitent pilgrim's creed.<sup>52</sup> The blacksmith, in awe of William's deep devotion, begged him to stay and build a church with him for his hospice. William firmly refused, arguing diplomatically that while it was noble to serve God by managing a church, there could be no question of his abandoning his quest to visit the holy relics of the saints, which had always been his greatest desire, thus explicitly declaring his chosen status of pilgrim.<sup>53</sup>

Even less is said about John's practices in his hermitage of Pulsano. Instead, John's biographer goes into a great deal of detail about the signs and divine interventions which guided John's choice for his settlement in the Gargano. Similarly to Montevergine, the place is described as 'invitum et insolitum' and only approachable 'arctissimo tramite'. It was, in fact, founded 8 km south of Monte Sant'Angelo, on a steep cliff over the Adriatic Sea. He had arrived with six brothers, and the text says that within six months, fifty more had gathered.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, Montevergine's development appears to have been much slower, and this is not surprising when one takes into consideration the location of John's settlement — at only a few hours' walking distance from a major pilgrimage site on the way to Jerusalem. Furthermore, the progress of the two settlements reflects once again William's and John's attitudes to communal living: the former avoiding it, and the latter embracing and promoting it.

Notwithstanding the isolation and inapproachability of William's hermitage — 'difficult and very arduous to climb, except during the three months of summer, because of the frigid cold'<sup>55</sup> (Montevergine is, in fact, about 1300m above sea level) — the *Legenda* states that after two years from his first arrival, men and women from all over the region flocked to Montevergine to see him. This, of course, is a time-old phenomenon associated with religious hermits, and a popular theme in hagiographical narratives: those who shun company and attention inevitably become overwhelmed by them.<sup>56</sup> Among the crowds of admirers were a group of priests ('sacerdos') who wished to join William in his hermitage. They surrendered

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<sup>52</sup> *Legenda*, I, p. 6, ll. 1-3; cf. also note 8 above.

<sup>53</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 6, ll. 13-16.

<sup>54</sup> *Vita*, p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> *Legenda*, VI, p. 17, ll. 21-22.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. the life of St Benedict of Norcia in Adalbert de Vogüé, ed., *Les Dialogues de Grégoire le Grand*, Sources chrétiennes, 251, 260, 265 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978-80), chapter 3, pp. 138-39: 'coeperunt postmodum multi iam mundum relinquere, atque ad eius magisterium festinare'.

themselves to his instructions — ‘sub eius magisterio se ad Dei servitium mancipaverunt’<sup>57</sup> — and asked which religious rule they should follow. It is worth reporting here in full William’s answer to this crucial question:

brothers, it is my advice that working with our own hands, we may gain clothes and food for ourselves, and that which we are given may we give it to the poor, and, convening together, let us celebrate the divine office in the set hours.<sup>58</sup>

No other rule is mentioned, and we have no reason to believe that William provided his followers with any other, written or verbal, especially given the events that followed. The few instructions that were given emphasise simplicity, self-sufficiency, generosity, and piety. In as much as William stressed poverty and generosity, he appears closer to the mendicant orders, and one must look ahead a good sixty years for the birth of their founder, St Francis.<sup>59</sup> Like St Francis, he was adamant that the community should not have any secular possessions, and he valued knowledge of God over academic wisdom, which he demonstrated by teaming up with five ‘*idioti fratres*’ on Mount Laceno.<sup>60</sup> Aside from a gentle encouragement to embrace the coenobitic life, or at least to accept it, the only palpable trace of Benedictine practices in William’s ‘rule’ is the insistence on manual labour and the observance of the hours. This was a prominent feature of the Benedictine rule, the most commonly adopted by twelfth-century reformers, who aimed to regain utmost austerity in the observance of the Rule. It was also one of the main clauses with which the priests would later take issue. Nowhere in the *Legenda* or in the extant charters is William ever referred to as the abbot of Montevergine, but rather as ‘*dominus*’, ‘*custos*’ and ‘*rector*’.<sup>61</sup> This was the only sign of hierarchical structure present in the community: there were no specific tasks assigned to each member, so that William’s followers were left to depend on their own strength of devotion after their leader’s departure. The hagiographer remarks somewhat condescendingly that, unfortunately, not all religious men possessed William’s strength, so that it should come as no surprise that the priests

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<sup>57</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, ll. 8-9.

<sup>58</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, ll. 10-13.

<sup>59</sup> Tallarico, ‘L’abbazia di Montevergine’, 197-231.

<sup>60</sup> *Legenda*, VI, p. 18, l. 24.

<sup>61</sup> See CDV 148 (1125), 150 (1125), 152 (1125).

were only able to follow William's harsh precepts for a short while – 'brevi tempore'.<sup>62</sup>

The 'acquisitions' mentioned in William's advice refer to the donations which by this time had become more and more frequent and generous, offered by the people of Mercogliano and by others who had heard the stories of the miracles and of the holiness of William. At this stage, the donations would have amounted to monetary gifts, as well as artefacts of various making. It was only a little while after their first arrival, in fact, that the priests asked William to acquire books and priestly vestments, and to build a church for them to perform their duties, lamenting that it was not their place to perform manual labour, 'ut rusticos'.<sup>63</sup> The events that followed William's advice to his new brothers are reported by the author, who clearly condemns the behaviour of the first community of Montevergine, seen as disrespecting the authority of their spiritual leader, to the extent that they are charged with succumbing to the temptations of the devil – 'antiqui hostis perculti malitia'.<sup>64</sup> William thus travelled to Bari with a donkey, having left his 'solita tranquillitate mentis', where he is said to have found, 'inter amicos et notos', all that the priests had asked for.<sup>65</sup> William had evidently been to Bari before when he had been a pilgrim on his way to Jerusalem, and knew where to find the objects he was looking for.

In constant tension among Lombard, Norman, and Byzantine powers during the eleventh century, no doubt the coastal city of Bari was not only an important military and political centre, but also a vibrant cultural and intellectual hub. It was also an important religious centre: in 1025, Bari had become attached to the Holy See, and from 1087 the Norman Basilica of San Nicola was erected to house the relics of the great saint, making Bari a major pilgrimage destination. It was here that Pope Urban II held the council of 1098. There can be no doubt that this development boosted dramatically the pivotal role of an already bustling commercial centre, which had long been a standard stopover for pilgrims en route to Jerusalem, because of its strategic location on the coast facing the Balkans and the Middle East.

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<sup>62</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, l. 13.

<sup>63</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, l. 17.

<sup>64</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, l. 14.

<sup>65</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 14, ll. 19-21.

It was here, also, that John of Matera began his preaching career, with such vehemence that he came to be suspected and accused of heresy.<sup>66</sup> His trial in the episcopal curia was cut short by the intervention of Grimoald, Prince of Bari from 1119, and his chancellor Octavian, whose daughter had been miraculously cured by John.<sup>67</sup> The *Vita* of John suggests the accusation had been founded on John's preaching against the priesthood, which, in fact, 'ingens persecutio immineret'.<sup>68</sup> One must wonder how much of the sentiments of the period went into the narratives of the lives of John and William for both hagiographers to give such negative roles to the priesthood. Intolerance of nicolaism and simony in the clergy had played a prominent role in the reforms of the previous century, especially in the north of Italy, championed by the French-influenced Patarini in Lombardy, and John Gualbert and the Vallombrosans in Tuscany.<sup>69</sup> Romuald was also a strong opponent of these practices, which he found particularly common among the secular clergy. Peter Damian, a strong adherent to the papal reforms, tells us that 'throughout the whole region up to Romuald's time the custom of simony was so widespread that hardly anyone knew this heresy to be a sin', and Romuald 'took to task especially those secular clerks who had gained ordination by paying money'.<sup>70</sup> In both *vitae* the priests are portrayed as greedy, idle, and defiant. Although John's exhortations to virtue ('suadebat ebriosis sobrietatem, libidinis castitatem, discordantibus caritatem') appear addressed to all, his biographer attaches these vices to the priests, who had become envious of the prince's protection bestowed on John, and eventually 'abbati ejusque monasterio inimicanti'.<sup>71</sup> It is quite

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<sup>66</sup> *Vita*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>67</sup> *Vita*, p. 42, and see F. Panarelli, 'San Giovanni da Matera e le origini della congregazione pulsanese', *Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania*, 57 (1990), 5-105. See *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, 19 vols (Bari: Commissione Provinciale di Archeologia e Storia Patria, 1897-1950), V (1902), 121-22, n. 69, June 1123. This is dated in the fifth year of Grimoald's principate, and written by his chancellor, Octavian. The latter also wrote another document for Grimoald in November 1123 — see *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, V.123-24, n. 71.

<sup>68</sup> *Vita*, p. 42.

<sup>69</sup> See Panarelli, 'San Giovanni da Matera', pp. 36-37. For the Patarene reforms see Cinzio Violante, *La Pataria Milanese e la Riforma Ecclesiastica* (Roma: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1955).

<sup>70</sup> *Vita beati Romualdi*, p. 75: 'Inter ceteros autem, precipue seculares clericos qui per pecuniam ordinate fuerant, durissima severitate corripiebat [...] Per totam namque illam monarchiam usque ad Romualdi tempora, vulgare consuetudine, vix quisquam noverat symoniacam heresem esse peccatum'. Translated by Leyser, in *Medieval Hagiography*, p. 308.

<sup>71</sup> *Vita*, p. 42. It would seem that this was not necessarily the case in the contemporary Greek Church in southern Italy. In the life of Bartholomew of Simeri, a contemporary of William (died 1130), the priesthood is held in high esteem, and the saint considered himself unworthy at first to be ordained, but was then persuaded by his two companions, both priests, and 'the best and holiest

probable that the priests in William's and John's communities felt a certain degree of resentment, if not even contempt, for the two successful leaders, both of whom were self-taught laymen, who had undergone none of the required formation the priests must have been through, and were less subject to the scrutiny that the priesthood was undergoing during the Gregorian reforms. William, in fact, only learned to read psalm 109 during his travels, according to an episode recounted by his biographer.<sup>72</sup>

When William returned to Montevergine, the priests urged him to proceed with the building of the church. In a miraculous tone, the author recounts how, no sooner had William set down to pray for aid from God in the task, that crowds of townspeople, male and female, not only from Mercogliano, but from neighbouring villages as well were seen arriving at the site to offer their help. This is confirmed in the descriptions of the monastery in the first donation charters contained in the archives, dating from 1125, where the common formula 'a novo fundamine auxilio Dei et multorum christianorum construxit' is found to describe the monastery.<sup>73</sup> According to the *Legenda*, the work was supervised by William, and the people used the wood and lime quarry available in the area as raw materials for the church, melting stones to make cement:

No sooner had he finished his prayer, that a large multitude of people arrived who, at his command, started building the kiln and splitting firewood, and their commitment was so great that the following day, having fired the kiln, rocks were melted into cement. Without delay, with the help of neighbouring towns, the church was built within a few days, as well as the cells for the brothers.<sup>74</sup>

The workers appear to be using either lime mortar or pozzolanic cement ('*cementum*'), a volcanic material possibly obtained from Mount Vesuvius only 40 km away, to glue the lime stones from the quarry together.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately, very little of the original buildings remain, and no archaeological study has been

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of men', to join their ranks. For a modern edition of the *vita* of Bartholomew, see Gaia Zaccagni, 'Il Bios di S. Bartolomeo da Simeri: edizione, traduzione e commento', *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 33 (1996), 193-274. I consulted the unpublished English translation from the Greek by Prof. Michael Angold, to whom I am extremely grateful for supplying his translation.

<sup>72</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 8, ll. 1-5

<sup>73</sup> I.e. 'to the new foundation built with the help of God and of multitudes of Christians'. See note 96 below for document references.

<sup>74</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 15, ll. 18-22.

<sup>75</sup> For building materials consult Donald Hill, *A History of Engineering in Classical and Medieval Times* (Oxford: Routledge, 1996), pp. 102-04.

ventured thus far.<sup>76</sup> The author seems to be hinting at the miraculous completion of the building within few days from its commencement;<sup>77</sup> nevertheless, given the great number of people who came in aid of William, the time frame may well have been possible. Thus, with a church and cells for the brothers, Montevergine took the form of a coenobium. The church was dedicated to the Virgin, *ex comuni consilio*, possibly for toponymic consistency.<sup>78</sup> William's next preoccupation was to ask Bishop John of Avellino, who had judicial supremacy over Montevergine, to consecrate the church.<sup>79</sup> The consecration was carried out 'on the agreed day', for which no precise date is given. It may have occurred on or around the date of the forged charter ascribed to the bishop of Avellino, in May 1126. The transformation of Montevergine from eremitical to coenobitic community is a consequence of William's shifting attitude towards coenobitic monasticism, and, for this precise reason, a crucial marking point in his career. Nonetheless, the transition to conventional coenobitism does not yet appear complete, since William continued to lead his community in his own form of religious life: the early charters of Montevergine continuously referred to Montevergine as a 'novum monasterium', without ever referring to William as an abbot, and his successor, Albert, determinedly refused the title of abbot, claiming that 'the *religio* of the monastery did not require the rank of abbot'.<sup>80</sup> The much-debated transition to Benedictine

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<sup>76</sup> Unlike, for example, Montecassino — see especially Angelo Pantoni, *Montecassino: Scritti di archeologia e arte*, I (Montecassino: Biblioteca della Miscellanea Cassinese, 1998).

<sup>77</sup> As in John 2. 19 — 'Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"'. The speedy completion of a religious building was a miraculous feat that brought the protagonist of the hagiographer closer to the image of Jesus. The same theme found in the *Legenda* is found also in the life of Bartholomew of Simeri (died 1130), who built his first monastery after receiving a vision of the Virgin: 'Before long the work was brought to a successful conclusion, with many being moved to go to the help of the great man and to provide sufficient funds for the building'. The hagiographer tells us that Bartholomew had the support of *amiratus* Christodoulos, an important minister of Roger II: 'As anyone who wishes to know can find out, he relied entirely on his every injunction and admonishment, communicated to him by letter from this most famous of fathers'. This may be an interpolation similar to the insertion of Roger II's patronage of Montevergine in the life of William.

<sup>78</sup> Variations found in the charters — e.g. 'montis virgillii' — have been taken by Carlone, following Scandone's analysis) as indicators of forgery. See Carlone, *I falsi nell'ordinamento degli archivisti salernitani, cavensi e verginiani del XIII secolo* (Salerno: Quaderni Palladio, 1979), pp. 27-28; also *I falsi cavensi e verginiani*, p. 13; and Francesco Scandone, *Storia di Avellino dalle origini alla fine della dominazione normanna* (Naples: Michele d'Auria, 1905), p. 40.

<sup>79</sup> John was bishop of Avellino between 1114 and 1131: see *Legenda*, p. 15, note 36.

<sup>80</sup> CDV 210, and see below, pp. 71-72.



institution occurred much later in the century, and is unfortunately extremely poorly documented.<sup>81</sup>

The *Legenda* gives ample space to comments and stories about the donations made to Montevergine, underscoring its popularity and influence on the lay community from its very beginning. With every donation, of course, comes a reminder of William's generosity and commitment to poverty. He is described as a good provider, keeping only what was necessary for the sustenance of the community, and giving the rest to the poor.<sup>82</sup> The biographer is sure to include both nobles and common people in his accounts of donations. This theme of donations from a wide range of social strata would continue throughout Montevergine's early history. The interpolated stories concerning Roger II suggest that in the second half of the twelfth century, when these communities were making efforts to reconstruct relationships with the monarchy, and redefine their institutional character in line with other traditional monasteries, they also rethought their portrayal of the founder and his relationship with secular powers.<sup>83</sup> In John's life, Roger II is portrayed in various lights. John, and his hagiographer, were clearly adverse to a number of lords in Apulia, publicly denouncing the lord of Monte Sant'Angelo and Count Robert of Conversano who had imprisoned John during his stay in Ginosa.<sup>84</sup> After John's death, King Roger is said to have been invasive (it is actually referred to as an 'invasionem') in the affairs of Pulsano, sending daily legates to the abbey, and demanding the right to nominate the abbot. According to the hagiographer, the abbot asked for John's guidance, and Roger then renounced some of his demands and asked for forgiveness.<sup>85</sup>

In a probable interpolation from the third quarter of the twelfth-century by the second contributor to the *Legenda*, the author took the episode of William's encounter with the bandits as an opportunity to shower praise on King Roger II,

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<sup>81</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>82</sup> *Legenda*, pp. 17-18. William is referred to as 'bonus dispensator' (p. 18, l.1).

<sup>83</sup> See Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, pp. 62-63. Cf. also Cristina Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi" come "instrumenta regni": Linee di continuità e cambiamenti di una politica monastica?', in *Un regno nell'impero: I caratteri originari del regno normanno nell'età sveva. Persistenze e differenze (1194-1250)*, ed. by Pasquale Cordasco and Francesco Violante, Centro di studi normanno svevi, 18 (Bari: Adda, 2010), pp. 195-268 (p. 208).

<sup>84</sup> *Vita*, p. 38.

<sup>85</sup> *Vita*, pp. 49-50.

and make a connection between the king and William. Roger is referred to as ‘lover of fairness, destroyer of all evils, most excellent patron of tranquillity and peace, most magnificent king, happily triumphant, who freed Apulia from the jaws of rapacious beasts and bandits’.<sup>86</sup> This overtly propagandist insertion may have served in fact to incite Roger’s heirs to look favourably upon Montevergine as long-standing royal supporters. This is more likely when considering the second mention of King Roger in the *vita*. The longest chapter in the collection of miracles which follows the biographical section, purports to show that William was a personal counsellor of King Roger while he was in Apulia. While the king’s *amiratus*, George, ‘stood humbly and with flagrant devotion by the holy words which flowed from [William’s] mouth’, the king thought him ‘rather a hypocrite than an honest man’, and decided to put him to the test.<sup>87</sup> A prostitute offered to test William’s holiness by offering herself to him, and the king approved the plan. In an uncharacteristic show of cunning, William led the prostitute to believe he had accepted her offer, only to invite her to join him in a bed of flames, from which he emerged unscathed. Both the prostitute and the king were ashamed that they had doubted William, and asked him for forgiveness. The king’s trust in him was thus cemented, and henceforth ‘he had no one dearer or more beloved among all religious people in the kingdom’ than William.<sup>88</sup> The author of the miracle also claims that it was through William’s inspiration that Roger built the monastery of San Giovanni degli Eremiti, ‘opposite the royal palace in Palermo’, and populated it with William’s disciples.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Legenda*, II, p. 10, ll. 5-9. ‘Nondum etenim patruelia regna hereditario iure capessens, ille iniquorum omnium metus, equitatis amator, malorum omnium exterminator, optimus siquidem tranquillitatis et pacis patronus, Rogerius videlicet, rex magnificentissimus, feliciter triumphans a rapacium et latronum faucibus Apuliam liberarat’.

<sup>87</sup> *Legenda*, XXIII, pp. 38-39. Panarelli identifies George as the son of Michael of Antioch, and a faithful supporter of Roger, particularly in the African campaigns for his extensive knowledge of Arab fortifications. He was Roger’s principal minister from c. 1126 until his death in 1151. See Loud, *Roger II and the Creation of the Kingdom of Sicily* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2012), p. 80, n. 56. See also Romualdo Salernitano, *Chronicon*, ed. by Garufi, RIS, 7 (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1928), p. 233; and Alexandrini Telesini, *Ystoria*, ed. by L. De Nava, FSI, 112 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1991), p. 27, ll. 8.

<sup>88</sup> *Legenda*, XXIII, p. 42. ‘Rex, celitus inspiratus, de personis religiosis totius regni neminem cariorem vel amabiliorem sancto Guilielmo penes se habuit’.

<sup>89</sup> *Legenda*, XXIII, p. 43. ‘Amore et devotione illius inductus, de suis discipulis monasterium ad faciem Panormitani palatii, in visu aule regie, ad honorem Sancti Iohannis construere diligentissime studuit’.

The miraculous overcoming of the temptation of the prostitute is another common theme in hagiographical writings, and there is no evidence outside the *Legenda* that William ever met Roger II.<sup>90</sup> There is also direct reference to Mary Magdalen in the *Legenda*: the *amiratus*, George, is compared to her as he listens to William preaching, and Mary of Bethany, who chose to listen to Jesus rather than help her sister Martha with preparations for hosting Jesus in their home, was often conflated with Mary Magdalene in the Middle Ages.<sup>91</sup> Trial by fire also occurs in the lives of other contemporary saints. Bartholomew of Simeri (died 1130), a hermit and monastic founder in Calabria, in his *bios*, was also summoned to the court of Roger II, this time in Messina, and was put to the test by him through a trial by fire. Evidently conquering death was a suitable way of persuading the king of a person's sanctity, and trial by fire was an established way of proving innocence.<sup>92</sup> The charters issued by Roger for Montevergine have been proven to be thirteenth-century forgeries, and may have relied to a certain extent on the story in the *Legenda* to back their legitimacy.<sup>93</sup> The story is made all the more suspicious by William's role as an active preacher in the highest of social circles, when the original hagiographer had cast William as the 'reluctant saint', preaching only by example, and a social outcast who always preferred the isolation of the hermitage or the dispossession of the pilgrim life to the safety and communion of inhabited settlements. Moreover, San Giovanni degli Eremiti was never associated with Montevergine until the fourteenth century.<sup>94</sup> Thus William's relationship with

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<sup>90</sup> On the episode of the temptation by the prostitute, see Panarelli, 'Il santo, il re e la meretrice: osservazioni in margine ad un episodio della *legenda sancti Guilielmi*', *Studi bitontini*, 72 (2001), 25-34. Saint Benedict of Norcia was assailed by temptations of the flesh by 'the memory of a woman', and later, Thomas Aquinas's parents tried to dissuade him from following the religious life by sending him a prostitute. See de Vogüé, chapters 1-2, pp. 136-39; and Dominic M. Prümmer, ed. *Fontes vitae s. Thomae Aquinatis, notis historicis et criticis illustrati omnino*, 6 vols (Toulouse: Privat, 1912-37), 4 and 5, pp. 265-610.

<sup>91</sup> See *Legenda*, XXIII, p. 39: 'amiratus eiusdem regis, Georgius nomine, sancte exortationis verbis profluentibus de ore eius humiliter et flagranti devotione subsistebat, cupiens magis ac magis Marie Magdalene more sitibundo pectore sacri eloquii fluentia aurire, credens illum non ypocritam, set veracem Dei servum existere'. For the story of Mary and Martha see Luke 10. 38-42. See also Katherine L. Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalene: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), p. 34, where she points out that Gregory the Great referred to Mary of Magdalene being Martha's sister in one of his sermons.

<sup>92</sup> See the 'Bios of Bartholomew', trans. by Michael Angold (unpublished), chapter 28. On trial by fire see Ernst Benz, 'Ordeal by Fire', in *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade*, ed. by Joseph M. Kitagawa and Charles H. Long (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1969), pp. 241-64

<sup>93</sup> CDV 241, 264. See Chapter 2 below, p. 71.

<sup>94</sup> See Panarelli, 'S. Maria di Montevergine e S. Giovanni degli Eremiti a Palermo: appunti su una relazione inesistente', in *Monastica et Humanistica: Scritti in Onore di Gregorio Penco*, ed. by

Roger II was no more than a narrative device to increase Montevergine's prestige, and encourage the good will of subsequent rulers, and of their court and barons. The combination of interpolations in the *Legenda* and forged royal charters supporting each other's legitimacy was by no means beyond the abilities and dedication of the monks of Montevergine. In fact, it was a common solution to the problems medieval monasteries had in obtaining rights and lands they required. Carmine Carlone offers the example of the story in the *Vitae quatuor priorum abbatum cavensium* of three men condemned to death by Abbot Leo I of Cava (died 1079), carried out without the consent of Prince Gisulf II. The episode was written to give weight to the falsified documents which sought to prove that the abbots of Cava had the right to administer the death penalty.<sup>95</sup>

Other Verginian charters from this period include ten donations of land, oblates and relative goods, made before William's departure, between 1128 and 1129, and there were certainly more than the charters account for.<sup>96</sup> In fact, William's hagiographer refers to the donation by a noble named Adam, of a church of San Cesareo, made with the consent of the bishop of Frigento, for which no corresponding charter has been preserved, although the bishop's confirmation of the church in September 1170 is still extant.<sup>97</sup> This might point to interpolation in the *Legenda*, given that the confirmation by the bishop occurred in 1170. The charters in the archives attest mainly to donations of chestnut groves in the locality of Mandre, coming from donors in Avellino and Summonte, both at about a few hours' walking distance from the monastery. By 1129, however, donations came from further away: Lord William and his sister Bigolenda of Baiano, 16 km west of Mercogliano, donated some land to the monastery;<sup>98</sup> and later that year

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Francesco Trolese, *Italia Benedettina*, 23 (Cesena: Badia di S. Maria del Monte, 2003), pp. 83-94. Also Salvatore Fodale, 'San Giovanni degli Eremiti: una discussa presenza in Sicilia dei monaci di Montevergine', in *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine: I normanni chiamano gli Svevi. Atti del secondo convegno internazionale, 12-15 ottobre 1987* (Montevergine: Edizioni Padri Benedettini, 1989), pp. 91-100.

<sup>95</sup> See Carlone, *I falsi cavensi e verginiani*, pp. 20-21. For the episode in the *vita* see *Vita quatuor priorum abbatum cavensium: Alferii, Leonis, Petri et Constabilis*, ed. by L. Mattei-Cerasoli, RIS, 5 (Bologna: S. Lapi, 1942), p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> CDV 148; 150; 151; 152; 157; 161; 162; 164; 178; 179.

<sup>97</sup> *Legenda*, V, pp. 16-17, ll. 20-01; CDV 518.

<sup>98</sup> CDV 178.

Lord Alamo of the castle of Taurasi, 30 km north-east of Mercogliano, donated land with tools and means to build a windmill.<sup>99</sup>

Despite all his efforts to distance the community from secular affairs, William was soon forced to yield to necessity: the first exchange of land occurred in 1127, when William bought a piece of land in Summonte from Maraldo of Avellino, in exchange for some land in Capo di Botte, 112 gold tari, and the assurance that the tenant farmer living on the land would not be sent away.<sup>100</sup> This was only an equitable exchange of possessions, and it was only in 1137 that a direct purchase of a chestnut grove in Mandre was made, and only in 1160 that another was recorded.<sup>101</sup> An increase of land holdings is indicative of a growth in the number of monks in the community, a likely consequence of the popularity gained by William from his arrival at Montevergine. The monastery also accepted laymen as dependents of the community in response to the need for more men for the management of the expanding territories: these were men and women who would offer themselves to the monastery, and who would often maintain the same land they themselves offered to Montevergine. This was the case of Alferio son of John Toderico of the castle of Summonte, who, in January 1127, gave Montevergine a chestnut grove, all his goods, as well as his own self and service.<sup>102</sup> The charter documenting a large donation made by the lord of the *castellum* of Summonte in 1127 is a forgery.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, it sought to prove that Montevergine had been offered the entire family and all the heirs of the lord's vassal, Jacomo Pietro, together with all their possessions. To a large extent, donations like these were made with a mind to protecting the lands involved, since monastic property was more likely to be respected by attackers, and was often exempt from many taxes and duties with which lay properties were charged. Thus, it may have been in both parties' interests to compile the forgery.

The increasing donations soon became cause for tension within the community of Montevergine. The priests suggested that the money they were

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<sup>99</sup> CDV 180.

<sup>100</sup> CDV 164. See Lucia Travaini, *La Monetazione nell'Italia Normanna* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1995), pp. 130-33; and Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 443-85 on the various currencies in circulation in southern Italy in the Middle Ages.

<sup>101</sup> CDV 235, and 389.

<sup>102</sup> CDV 162.

<sup>103</sup> CDV 165.

given should be put aside for the church's needs, and not redistributed so easily outside the community.<sup>104</sup> William insisted that he and his community should not own any land or have any secular possessions at all, and that the church should be built and maintained with hard work and prayer, and not through donations, saying that he 'would rather see the church destroyed, than built through money'.<sup>105</sup> According to the hagiographer, it was this quarrel which finally led William to depart from the monastery:

William instead responded humbly and softly to their shouts, exhorting them with these words: "Why is it, my brothers, that you shout so heatedly? Why do you work yourselves up so inconsiderately? I have said to you, and I will not tire of repeating it: you gave up secular things, you chose God as your inheritance, you must love Him only, all you have is Him. Let worldly things be for the laymen, I beg you; prefer with all your heart spiritual to secular things. Yet, if (God forbid) it is fixed in your hearts and it is your irreversible determination to make money, know that you will not be able to do this as long as you are with me". Consequently, he placed a new leader in charge, as he could see that he could no longer achieve any good among them, and feared that through his acts greater damage might be caused to their souls: he took up five brothers from among the illiterate ones, withdrew from there, and, seeking out greater harshness in the region, he reached the Lacenum mount.<sup>106</sup>

William chose reluctantly to leave, in a resolute stand to preserve the foundations of his religious ideology intact. However, one might suggest an alternative scenario, in which William, according to the *Legenda*, was rather forced to leave, evicted even, and did not make the choice of leaving willingly himself. It would certainly benefit William's reputation (and therefore his houses' and his monks') if William was seen to make the sacrifice himself, in a quasi-chivalrous show of moral and ideological steadfastness. As always, the limitations of the hagiographical genre prove to be paradoxically damaging to our understanding of events.

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<sup>104</sup> See David Ganz, 'The Ideology of Sharing: Apostolic Community and Ecclesiastical Property in the Early Middle Ages', in *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 17-30.

<sup>105</sup> *Legenda*, VI, p. 18, l. 10.

<sup>106</sup> *Legenda*, p. 18, ll. 14-25. Romuald was physically attacked by the monks of a monastery he built in Bagno, because he redistributed the donation of Marquess Hugh of Tuscany of seven pounds to the poor, rather than investing them in his own institution. Cf. *Vita beati Romualdi*, XVIII, pp. 42-45.

After he left Montevergine, William continued to pursue his strict eremitical lifestyle. He built a small cell ('cellulam') on Mount Laceno, where he 'spent the nights praying silently, and the days castigating his body by walking through thorny and harsh forests to exhaustion'.<sup>107</sup> It was at this point that he was reunited with John of Matera, until both were called by God to go their separate ways (opposite, in fact, as one was told to go east, and the other west). John continued to found his monastery of Pulsano, while William founded Goleto, a double monastery, with a community of monks in place primarily to support the nuns in their daily activities.<sup>108</sup> Here his monastic ambivalence appears resolved: Goleto's beginnings were eremitic, like Montevergine's, but, once William was joined by new disciples, he built a monastery, took on the title of prior, and set out a *beata regula* for the sisters to observe. This is confirmed in a document of 1140 where William is referred to as 'prior monasterii sancti Salvatoris que situs est in territorio Munitculo'.<sup>109</sup> Panarelli argues that in Goleto William actively sought to define and consolidate lands for the community, stronger now from the experience of Montevergine, and mindful of his friend John's advice.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, for all the evidence that suggests that William followed a more conventional track in Goleto, there are still traces of the austerity which had been his hallmark in Montevergine, especially in the strict dietary regimen imposed on the sisters of the community of Goleto. The latter excludes wine altogether without exceptions, and 'consider[s] it to be a sin for meat, cheese and eggs even to be mentioned', so that the nuns would eat mostly fruit and vegetables, and only bread and water during fasting periods.<sup>111</sup> In John's monastery of Pulsano, too, neither wine nor cheese was consumed, and the punishment for disobedience could be expulsion from the monastery.<sup>112</sup>

While both William's and John's successors had adopted the title of 'abbas', it was not until 1197 that we have proof of Montevergine officially adopting the

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<sup>107</sup> *Legenda*, VII, p. 19. 'Huius ante adventum, venerabilis pater statuerat ut, quietis tempore in orationibus pernoctaret et diurnis horis ad cruciatum corporis usque ad fatigationem per sentosa et aspera nemoris loca incederet, quod devotius etiam ambo postea servaverunt'.

<sup>108</sup> On Goleto see Chapter 8.7 below.

<sup>109</sup> See Panarelli, 'Tre documenti sugli esordi della comunità di S. Salvatore al Goleto', in *Mediterraneo, Mezzogiorno, Europa: Studi in Onore di Cosimo Damiano Fonseca*, ed. by G. Andenna and H. Houben, 2 vols (Bari: M. Adda, 2004), I, 799-815 (p. 803).

<sup>110</sup> See Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 802.

<sup>111</sup> *Legenda*, XIV, p. 25, ll. 7-14 — this paragraph is translated in Loud, *Latin Church*, p. 475.

<sup>112</sup> *Vita*, p. 50.

Benedictine rule, when Pope Celestine III expressly declared that ‘the monastic order according to God and the rule of St Benedict [had] been set to be observed [in Montevergine] inviolably for all time’, in the first surviving papal bull for Montevergine.<sup>113</sup> Nonetheless William’s harsh asceticism seems to have been upheld not much longer than his own stay at Montevergine. The priesthood was clearly large enough a group in the first community to prevail in matters of monastic observance and management of the monastery’s possessions, which grew rapidly thanks to the esteem and generosity of the local population. In fact, even during William’s brief rectorship, Montevergine had basic coenobitic structures — including a church and cells — and established its first dependent church, San Cesareo, in the diocese of Frigento, near Goleto, though it is only mentioned in the *Legenda*, albeit twice (the second time, John da Nusco was charged with directing works on the church).<sup>114</sup> Moreover, Montevergine began to find its place in the local society and its economy: benefactions and patronage came from the local communities, occasionally from lower and middle-ranked members of the ruling class, though probably never directly from the king, as the *Legenda* would have it.<sup>115</sup>

Perhaps ironically, in the early stages of Montevergine’s history, William was instrumental in its social and economic development, despite his unwillingness and even obstinate refusal to fall in line with traditional coenobitic customs. Montevergine had already attracted the attention of the local nobility shortly after William’s departure: Alamo of Taurasi, a member of the rising San Severino family, made a generous donation in August 1129.<sup>116</sup> Meanwhile on Mount Cognato (where William stayed roughly between 1129 and 1134) William is said to have attracted the attention of a certain Count Robert Poletinus, whom De Palma identified with Robert I Count of Montescaglioso, attested between 1135 and 1139.<sup>117</sup> The author of the *Legenda* says that Count Robert would ‘rush to

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<sup>113</sup> MBR, III, p. 61, n. 24. ‘In primis siquidem statuentes, ut ordo Monasticus, qui secundum Deum, et B. Benedicti regulam, in eodem Monasterio institutus esse dignoscitur, perpetuis ibidem temporibus inviolabiliter observetur’.

<sup>114</sup> *Legenda*, XX, pp. 34-35, ll. 28-04; p. 17, note 38.

<sup>115</sup> See above, pp. 38-39.

<sup>116</sup> See Chapter 6 on the Sanseverino, p. 149.

<sup>117</sup> *Legenda*, X, p. 21. See also Eugenio De Palma, ‘Intorno alla *Legenda* de vita et obitu S. Guilielmi confessoris et heremite’, in *Irpinia*, 4 (1932), 130-52 (pp. 146, 150-52); Cuozzo, *Commentarium*, n. 7



watch and listen to the saint to satisfy the thirst of his heart'.<sup>118</sup> The persistent popularity of William was no doubt instrumental in ensuring that Montevergine obtained donations, enabling the monastery to expand. Therefore, while Montevergine appears to have lost most of its eremitical imprint soon after its birth, the fame of its founder allowed the monastery to continue to develop by adapting to the needs of the community within and outside of the monastery walls.

The monastery also started to participate in local agrarian activities, fitting into and contributing to the rural economy of its environs by putting lands into use and mobilising the local workforce. Thus, from a small hermitage comprising a few cells, Montevergine grew into a fairly conventional, if austere, coenobitic community, with its own church, lands, and dependencies. So much so that by the first decades of the thirteenth century, the monks were going to great pains to secure rights on their lands, by forging and backdating royal and episcopal documents.

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and 700; and Cuozzo, 'La contea di Montescaglioso nei secoli XI-XII', *Archivio storico per le province napoletane*, 103 (1985), pp. 3-37 (p. 13).

<sup>118</sup> *Legenda*, X, p. 21.



## CHAPTER 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONTEVERGINE UNDER THE NORMANS

Before he left Montevergine, William's final words to his vexed followers reminded them of their commitment to pursue God by renouncing earthly goods, and reproved them for their continued concern over the distribution of the monastery's wealth. Panarelli points out that this was not the most pragmatic stance William could have taken, given the generous flow of donations which was already rushing over Montevergine.<sup>1</sup> William's followers may have had a point in suggesting that these resources could be employed to meet the community's basic needs, and might be better administered with a more far-sighted strategy. This episode in the *Legenda* does demonstrate the extent of William's commitment to his eremitical lifestyle, an attitude which firmly set him apart from his friend John of Matera, a seemingly more adaptable and charismatic leader and monastic founder throughout his career. However, in spite of William's extreme minimalist teachings, the land acquired even during his final years in Montevergine appears to have been well administered by the community, and even by William himself, and the monastery continued to attract donations even after William's departure. In fact, William's departure marked a crucial step in Montevergine's institutional development; in the course of the following decades, the community he left behind had to reconcile the desire to uphold the founder's principles with the need to adapt to the growing number of members and of donations. An overview of the charters at Montevergine shows that there was a continuous flow of donations to the monastery, with a significant increase in the last years of the 1150s and in the 1160s, while economic activity remained altogether sparse for the first five decades until the 1170s.<sup>2</sup> Rather than seeing this as a reflection of the current political trends in the Benevento and Avellino regions, particularly given the relative isolation in which Montevergine was immersed, these figures should be seen as a manifestation of the monastery's own efforts at forging an institutional identity. The occasional acquisitions of land made during Norman rule had the effect of consolidating existing landholdings created through donations made by

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<sup>1</sup> Panarelli, *Dal Gargano alla Toscana*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> See Graph 1, p. 54, Graph 5, p. 93, and Graph 6, p. 93.

Montevergine's patrons. Only in the last few decades of the twelfth century did Montevergine seek to gain lands more actively and more consistently.

William of Vercelli is last mentioned at Montevergine in a charter from April 1127, in which he consented to an exchange of land between the monastery and a local landowner.<sup>3</sup> There is silence in the charters regarding the administration of the monastery in the ensuing few years, until Albert, William's chosen successor, is first mentioned in August 1129, receiving an oblation of a piece of land with a mill from the lord of Taurasi.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was between April 1127 and August 1129 that William left Montevergine, almost exiled by his own followers. William's departure also effectively coincided with the rise to power of the Norman ruler, Roger II (king 1129-1154), who in August 1127 took over the duchy of Apulia from his cousin, thus securing control over most of southern Italy. He was subsequently crowned king of the new Kingdom of Sicily, comprising also the principality of Capua and the duchy of Naples. Montevergine was founded on appropriately liminal land between Roger's Principality of Capua and the Duchy of Apulia, and also very close to the rebellious papal town of Benevento. Despite this there is very little to suggest the monastery was much affected by the political disorder by which it was submerged. Compared to the *vita* of John of Matera, there is in fact very little discussion of the political context of William's life by the author of the hagiography. Partly this is because William always preferred rural and uninhabited surroundings, whereas John spent more time preaching or living in isolation within populated areas, such as in Ginosola and Bari. John had more (negative) encounters with the authorities, having been imprisoned twice, and helped a prisoner of Roger II escape.<sup>5</sup> John's death in July 1139 coincided with the Anacletian schism which rocked the stability of the Church at the time.<sup>6</sup> The author's description of the environment of confusion and uncertainty in the Pulsano community that followed the founder's death, with King Roger's obtrusive intervention in the monastery's affairs, reflected the wider state of disarray that the Church was experiencing.

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<sup>3</sup> CDV 167.

<sup>4</sup> CDV 180.

<sup>5</sup> *Vita*, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> For the political consequences of the Anacletian schism in southern Italy, see Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 220-28.

There are, nevertheless, a few instances in which Montevergine's development offers a direct insight into its wider historical context. A clear glimpse of the challenges Roger II encountered in consolidating his hold on the kingdom can be found in one of the charters of Montevergine. In 1137, Iderno of Montefusco, a benefactor of Montevergine, died in battle helping King Roger fight the rebellious Count Rainulf of Caiazzo at the battle of Rignano, in the Gargano region of Apulia. Having heard of his death, in November 1137, his wife, Proserpina, asked Albert, then rector of Montevergine, to retrieve her husband's body from the battlefield, where it lay 'disgracefully protruding from the ground',<sup>7</sup> and to give him worthy burial on the monastery grounds:

Upon hearing this, Lord Albert consented to her request; he sent his monks to Apulia, in the place where the body lay, and he had them carry it to the abovementioned church, where they buried [Iderno] with great honour and prayers.<sup>8</sup>

Iderno's death is a reminder of the humiliating defeat Roger and his son suffered at Rignano at the hands of Rainulf, who opposed Roger's appointment of his eldest son, Roger, as Duke of Apulia, and claimed the duchy with the support of both the pope and the emperor. Iderno's burial in Montevergine was the first attested of this kind at the monastery. It is not clear whether he had previously expressed a wish to be buried at Montevergine, but his donation of the church of San Giovanni in the locality of San Vito only two years earlier would make this a plausible assumption.<sup>9</sup> The Verginians' journey to the Gargano to retrieve the body was nevertheless a profound act of loyalty, and was a way for the community of Montevergine to show its support of its benefactor.

Although Montevergine experienced slow and localised growth during the reign of Roger II, its boundaries began to expand in the following quarter century. The reign of William I (1154-1166) was marked by unrest and upheavals in the Kingdom, and treacherous plots at court, all recounted with unforgiving harshness by the most important chronicler we have for those times – the mysterious Hugo

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<sup>7</sup> CDV 243: 'corpus eiusdem viri mei super terram eminere turpiter ieiumatus'.

<sup>8</sup> CDV 243: 'Domnus Albertus, hoc audiens, precibus [suis] annuit et monachos suos mittens in Apuleam, illuc ubi corpus iacebat, ad iamdictam ecclesiam deferre fecit, ibique magno cum honore et orationibus sepelierunt'.

<sup>9</sup> CDV 220.

Falcandus.<sup>10</sup> Roger II's strong and productive rule had ensured a degree of peace and prosperity during his own time as ruler of Sicily, but the wide-scale reorganisation of the kingdom, not to mention his foreign policy and papal relations, all came to bear down on his successor's reign.<sup>11</sup> The Kingdom of Sicily had come to be, by now, the focus of the attention of both the emperor of the West, Frederick Barbarossa, in whose eyes the Normans there were usurpers of his empire, and the emperor of the East, Manuel Komnenos, who no doubt wished to beat Frederick in gaining control of this important bastion of the Mediterranean.<sup>12</sup> These were hard times for the people of the Kingdom of Sicily, with several cities, including Piazza Armerina and Butera in Sicily, the stronghold of Taverna in Calabria, and Bari in Apulia, levelled to the ground by William and his men within the space of a few years. He had prepared the same fate for Salerno in the summer of 1161, but the city was saved by a raging tempest which destroyed the king's camp, and forced him to retreat. It is significant though, that in his pillaging of Bari, William left the Cathedral, the magnificent church of San Nicola, and several other churches standing among the piles of rubble. Though it would have been outrageous for William to pillage the sacred buildings, and disastrous for his already shaky relations with the Church, the ruler's piety was still perhaps stronger than his often violent approach to public order.

The political situation in southern Italy was not improved when William died in 1166 leaving his kingdom to his only son, then just twelve years old, inevitably causing agitation at court as the Norman counts and barons attempted to take control of the *Regno* during the regency of Queen Margaret, William I's wife, and the controversial government of her cousin, Stephen of Perche, who ruled as chancellor during her regency (1166-1168). The number of magnates who became donors of Montevergine grew significantly during the 60s and early 70s. This can partially be seen as a consequence of the competition in action between the

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<sup>10</sup> On the uncertain identity of Hugo Falcandus see the introduction to the translation of the *Historia* in *The History of the Tyrants of Sicily by 'Hugo Falcandus', 1154-69*, trans. by G. A. Loud and T. Wiedemann (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998), pp. 29-40.

<sup>11</sup> For a reassessment of the achievements and shortcomings of William I's rule see G. A. Loud, 'William the Bad or William the Unlucky? Kingship in Sicily 1154-1166', *Haskins Society Journal*, 8 (1996), 99-113.

<sup>12</sup> See Berardo Pio, *Guglielmo I d'Altavilla: gestione del potere e lotta politica nell'Italia normanna (1154-1169)*, *Il mondo medievale*, 24 (Bologna: Pàtron editore, 1996), pp. 30-31, 51-52. Also Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Lombard and Norman population, which found an easy outlet — and a profitable one to local monasteries — in religious and monastic patronage.

The political events affecting the kingdom intersected with daily life at Montevergine once more towards the end of William II's reign (1166-1189). According to an anonymous chronicler of the monastery of Fossanova, in June 1185, William II launched a naval campaign against Byzantium which resulted in the march over Durres and the successful siege of Thessalonica, with Count Tancred of Lecce at the head of the fleet, and a certain Count Alduinus together with Count Richard of Acerra at the head of the land army.<sup>13</sup> The campaign, which resulted in the sack of Thessalonica, was attended by at least two donors of Montevergine. In July 1184, Roger of Castelvetere, the future Count of Avellino, borrowed ten ounces of gold in the weight of Salerno from the abbot of Montevergine. We know that Roger probably took part in the campaign because two of his vassals made provisions for their lands with the monks of Cava in case they did not return.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the loan is likely to indicate that Roger was buying supplies in preparation for the campaign.<sup>15</sup> The following year, in May 1185, Peter Boccaribocca donated some land to Montevergine, arranging for his properties to be returned to him if he came back, or in the event that he should die 'during the journey or in the fleet', they should remain the property of the monastery.<sup>16</sup> This type of transaction, entered into to protect the donor's lands during his absence, was not unique to Montevergine.<sup>17</sup> The choice of monastery by these particular

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<sup>13</sup> *Annales Ceccanenses*, MGH, *Scriptores*, xix, 275-302 (p. 287). The entry for 1185 reads: 'Indict. secunda, hoc anno Guilielmus Rex Siciliae fecit stolium maximum per mare, et terram; super stolium maris ordinavit Capitaneum Comitem Tancredum; super stolium terrae fecit Capitaneos Comitem Alduinum, et Comitem Richardum de Cerra, et mandavit eos omnes in Romaniam ad acquirendum Imperium Constantinopolitanum'. It is not clear who Count Alduinus might be. I found only one Alduinus in the CB, who held Candida directly from the royal demesne, and was seneschal to the king from 1176, but he was not a count. See CB, n. 711, p. 127. Chalandon interpreted the name as 'Baudouin', but similarly was unable to identify him; see Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile*, 2 vols (New York: Burt Franklin, 1907; repr. 1960), II, p. 405. On the siege of Thessalonica see Eusthadius of Thessalonica, *Eushasios of Thessaliniki: The Capture of Thessaloniki*, trans. by John R. Melville Jones, *Byzantina Australiensia*, 8 (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> L. Mattei-Cesaroli, 'Taurasi nei documenti cavensi', *Samnium*, 20 (1947), 9-19 (pp. 12-13).

<sup>15</sup> CDV 743.

<sup>16</sup> CDV 758: 'Hoc silicet modo ut si Dei iudicio contigerit me mori itinere vel in ipso stolio predictam terram a presenti habeat predictum monasterium'.

<sup>17</sup> It was common during the crusades — see Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade, the Limousin and Gascony, c. 970-c.1130* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), especially pp. 115-203.

donors does point to a rise in the monastery's prestige in the area, as well as an increased sensibility towards the needs of the area's population.

The charters are the main block of evidence for the strong support which Montevergine found among the barons, knights, vassals, and landlords in the provinces of Benevento and Avellino. The documents themselves were all redacted in the courts of Avellino and Benevento, and in the localities of Irpinia: Mercogliano, Summonte, Avella, Taurasi, Lapio, Serra, Rocca San Felice, Sarno, Montefusco, Sanseverino Rota, Castelcicala, Trevico, Nola and Mirabella.<sup>18</sup> Further evidence for this period is found in the *Catalogus Baronum*. This document is a list of the Kingdom's fief-holders on the mainland, detailing the military obligations owed by each, in the form of a stipulated number of men or military aids, as well as the same number doubled for the *augmentum*, which appears to be a separate obligation to be offered in case of urgent necessity, or *pro magna expeditione*.<sup>19</sup> First compiled around 1150, probably as a response to the threat of invasion by Manuel Komnenos and Conrad III, the *Catalogus* was subsequently revised around 1168. The effect of this census was to record an organised system of territorial government and defence, in a sense making it official and tangible in a time of need. One might argue that a similar process was occurring at Montevergine, where an increasing number of charters were being drawn up and carefully stored in the monastery's archives; the charters' legal framework evolved to suit the increasing need for consolidation and protection of the expanding monastic properties. What is striking in this context about the *Catalogus* is that it is not limited to the lay population of the kingdom, but included a number of abbeys as well. The abbot of Montecassino, for example, was required to offer sixty men for the *augmentum* as well as two-hundred sergeants.<sup>20</sup> Aside from bringing to the fore the extremely practical role of the Church in secular wars, these figures also suggest the vast assets and properties of which monasteries like Montecassino — which was by far the wealthiest abbey in southern Italy<sup>21</sup> — were in charge, helping to place them geographically and to gain a sense of the extent of their physical presence in southern Italian territory.

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<sup>18</sup> See Map 1.

<sup>19</sup> See the introduction in CB, esp. pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>20</sup> CB, 823. See Loud, *The Latin Church*, chapter 6 for a discussion of the Church and the CB.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix IV in Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 531-32.



William's fame had already raised the interest of local land-owners during his first years on Montevergine. His reputation, together with the able management of Abbot Albert and Prior Lando who upheld William's legacy after his departure, allowed the monastery to grow steadily in prosperity and influence. Already by the time of William's departure, Montevergine owned a great deal of land in the locality of Mandre, at the foot of the mountain, as well as a few other plots of land nearby, in the appurtenances of Summonte and Avellino.<sup>22</sup> The monastery experienced rapid growth during the reign of King Roger II, particularly in the 1130s, with over 50% of the charters issued for Montevergine between 1129 and 1154 contained in this decade, although, with a few exceptions, donations were made mainly within a 30km radius of Mercogliano and the monastery.<sup>23</sup> The 1140s, on the other hand, saw a significant drop in donations, with only four recorded in this decade (or five, depending on whether one accepts or not Carlone's dismissal of an *offertio* of a piece of land to a dependency of Montevergine, Santa Maria del Calore, made in August 1149 by Boniface of Lapio).<sup>24</sup> This might to some extent reflect Roger's efforts at consolidating his kingdom during the early years after the conquest, redistributing and reorganising lands. He followed these attempts in 1144 with a revocation of privileges seeking to inspect and confirm all 'privileges of the churches and subjects of his kingdom', with which any forgeries — abounding in the charters of Montevergine in the 1130s — would have been identified, and the deeds rectified.<sup>25</sup>

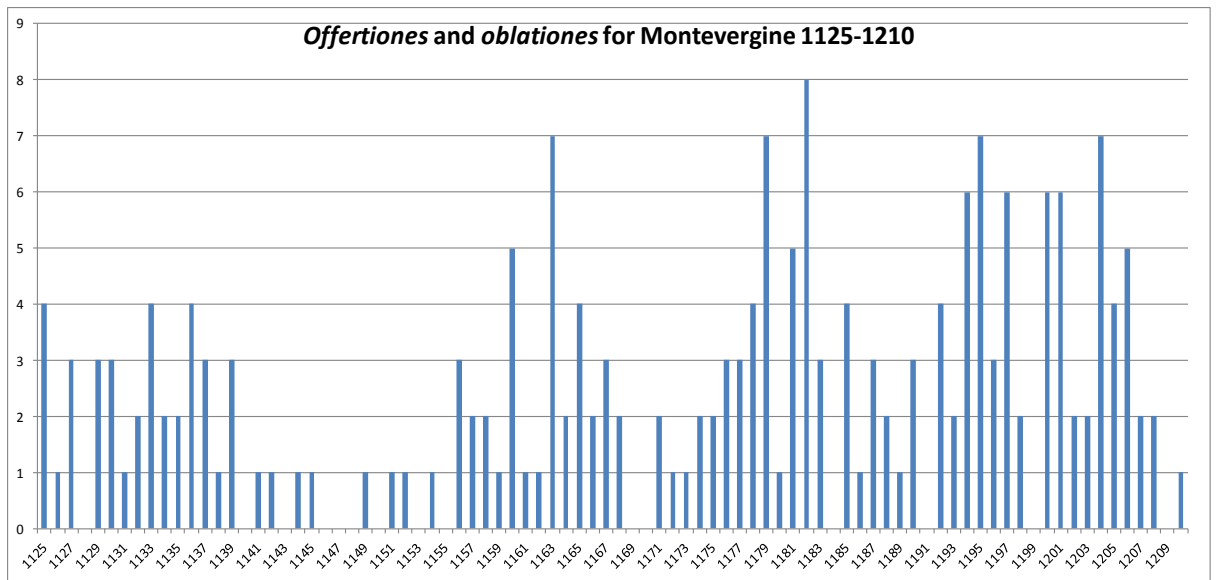
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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 41.

<sup>23</sup> See Graph 1, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> See C. Carlone, 'Il problema dei falsi', pp. 78-102. For the charter in question see CDV 292.

<sup>25</sup> G. A. Loud, 'The Chancery and Charters of the Kings of Sicily (1130-1212)', *English Historical Review*, 509 (2009), 779-810 (p. 789).



Graph 1: sourced from charters from CDV

The expansion of monastic lands was initially fuelled by the donations of local landowners, and by the mid-twelfth century, it was steered by the leaders of the monastic community, with no relations with the crown or with the pope, but with the support of some local authorities. The majority of charters of this period record donations from low-ranking laymen to the monastery. The story of the foundation told in the *Legenda* suggests that the first church was built thanks to (and as a consequence of) the wealth which was accumulating in the monastic community's coffers, offered by inhabitants of local townships and passers-by. The *Legenda* does not specify whether the crowds of people who came from the neighbouring townships in response to William's prayers helped build the structure merely through manual labour or with donations as well; and presumably it was with a bit of both. The *monastery* of Montevergine was thus born through its interaction with the local laity, it nourished and depended on a close bond with its local lay community from the very outset. Certainly, the initial development of Montevergine did not see any particular surge in the monastery's property and landholdings nor was there significant territorial expansion during the years up to 1154.

Avella, Lapio, Sanseverino and Castelcicala were the focal point of donations made to Montevergine and other transactions during the reign of Roger II, along with the area in the immediate vicinities of the monastery (especially Mandre and

Mercogliano); in the following two decades, Montevergine's old patrons continued to show their support, and the new benefactors who came into play in the monastery's acquisitions remained mostly concentrated in the Irpinia region. Up to the 1130s, Montevergine found support from the people of Avella, who contributed four donations between 1129 and 1139.<sup>26</sup> The only notable exception to the concentration of properties around Montevergine at this stage is the donation made in 1133 by Lord Artura, a knight of Avella, of oil produced from a parcel of land with olive orchard in Camigliano, north of Naples, and also a good 70km from Mercogliano.<sup>27</sup> This was not only a donation made in kind: the monastery would be entitled to the land should the tenants residing on it die without heirs, a fairly standard arrangement. It does not appear to be a large allotment, but it was nonetheless a point of contact with the Principality of Capua, away from the monastery itself. After 1139 support from the people of Avella appears to dwindle during the years of Norman rule, making only two other donations in 1141 and 1163.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, from 1130, the inhabitants of the *castellum* of Lapio, east of Montevergine, also took on a role in development of the monastery, making two donations in 1130 and 1149, both involving land in the *castellum* of Sala, just south of Lapio, flanking the Calore river, and another donation in 1176, for which the donors received a cow and twelve *tari* in return.<sup>29</sup> Their involvement was indeed not so significant under either the subsequent Norman reigns or under the Hohenstaufen: the only other donation to come from Lapio was from a priest of the *castellum* who left his house to the monastery in his will in 1195.<sup>30</sup> This may have had something to do with the monastery's switch of allegiance at the coronation of Henry VI as King of Sicily, since the lords of Lapio remained loyal to Tancred, but the fall in the number of donations from Lapio might be an indication that the church of Santa Maria del Calore in Lapio, a cell dependent on Montevergine,

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<sup>26</sup> CDV 187, 198, 209, 255.

<sup>27</sup> CDV 209.

<sup>28</sup> CDV 266, 423.

<sup>29</sup> CDV 190, 292, and 602.

<sup>30</sup> CDV 993.

received donations on Montevergine's behalf, and either began to keep its own records, which are now lost, or had none.<sup>31</sup>

Santa Maria del Calore was, in fact, a private church, a very common category of churches in southern Italy which had become popular during the Lombard period.<sup>32</sup> It was owned, and probably founded, by the lord of Lapio, who transferred his *ius patronatus* of the church to Montevergine in October 1130.<sup>33</sup> Proprietary churches were increasingly being "returned" to the Church following the Gregorian reforms, which condemned lay ownership of churches.<sup>34</sup> In practical terms, Montevergine may have sent one or more of its brothers to officiate the church, replacing the cleric who had been appointed by the lord of Lapio, as we later find a prior in charge.<sup>35</sup> The presence of a prior also indicates that the church may have hosted a small community of monks, though we do not have evidence of more clerics or monks living there.<sup>36</sup>

From June 1135, the inhabitants of nearby Montefusco became patrons of Montevergine, which received five donations of land from them between 1135 and 1154, all in the appurtenances of Montefusco itself, in the localities of San Vito and Marcopio, and others outside the neighbouring *castellum* of Tufo.<sup>37</sup> Among these was the donation of Iderno of Montefusco, discussed above. On the occasion of her husband's burial, Proserpina, the daughter of a certain Lord Umberto of Atripalda, also offered Montevergine a vineyard in the appurtenances of Montefusco, in the locality Sant'Angelo a Marcopio, thus cementing a strong patronal bond between the family and the monastery.<sup>38</sup> Montevergine's properties in Montefusco grew in the following decades through donations made by the people of Montefusco and others owning land there: these ranged from low-ranking landowners to important administrative officials (such as Judge Matthew of Montefusco in 1187 and 1189),

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<sup>31</sup> A dispute recorded in a charter in 1196 indicates that Santa Maria del Calore did hold and administer properties in the Lapio region. See especially 1009 detailing a dispute between the church of Santa Maria del Calore and some local inhabitants.

<sup>32</sup> See Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), pp. 58-65.

<sup>33</sup> CDV 190.

<sup>34</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 421-23.

<sup>35</sup> CDV 738. The specific request that the family priest be allowed to remain to officiate the church in CDV 419, would suggest that this was not normally the case.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 8 below for more examples of proprietary churches which were donated to Montevergine, and of some becoming monasteries, for example, Santa Maria del Plesco.

<sup>37</sup> CDV 220, 242, 243, 256, 257.

<sup>38</sup> CDV 243.

and low-ranking lords such as Tancred de Molisio, a vassal of Guimond of Montellari who owed twelve knights with the *augmentum*, and donated land in Montefusco to Montevergine in 1174.<sup>39</sup> By 1179 Montevergine had installed a priory in Marcopio of Montefusco, and in the early 1190s the monks of Montevergine were leasing their possessions in Montefusco to local farmers in exchange for both rent and services on the land.<sup>40</sup>

Although Montevergine mostly attracted donations from knights and minor lords and landowners, there are a few notable exceptions. In May 1142 (the month prior to William of Vercelli's death — was this a way of asking the saint, his namesake, to bear him in mind in heaven?),<sup>41</sup> William of Gesualdo, the illegitimate son of Duke Roger Borsa made a donation of two churches, the lands in his *startia* (the lord's demesne) in Bassano (?), six men, and a mill to Montevergine.<sup>42</sup> A further exception was the support Montevergine found from the San Severino family. In August 1135 Montevergine attracted its first donation from the powerful lords of San Severino, about 30km south of Mercogliano. Not only was this the first of a series of donations which created a relatively large landholding in the area around modern-day Mercato San Severino, but the San Severino family was part of the landed aristocracy, and was well connected with the crown: William of San Severino was royal justiciar, and his first cousin, Count Robert of Caserta, was royal master justiciar of the Kingdom of Sicily until his death in 1182. Henry of San Severino, the donor of twelve plots of land in a single charter of August 1135, was the son of Roger, the most important noble of the Avellino region, who had been a great patron of Cava and Santa Sofia of Benevento, and had died a monk of the Holy Trinity of Cava in 1125.<sup>43</sup> It may have been the San Severino's involvement with the monastery that inspired the neighbouring counts of Sarno to become patrons of Montevergine: Count Henry of Sarno made his first donation in February 1134,

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<sup>39</sup> See CDV 572, and CB 414.

<sup>40</sup> For the priory see CDV 646, and for the leases and *pastinatio* contracts see CDV 885 and 896. In *pastinatio* contracts, tenants were given use of the land in exchange for a share of the crops, and the *terraticum*.

<sup>41</sup> According to the *Legenda*, William, foreseeing his imminent death, had travelled to Salerno to visit the king, and had then died within weeks. It may be that news of William's imminent death had therefore reached the ears of William of Gesualdo. See *Legenda*, XVI, pp. 27-29.

<sup>42</sup> CDV 271.

<sup>43</sup> See Loud, 'The Abbey of Cava, its Property and Benefactors in the Norman Era', in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, ix, *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1986*, ed. by R. A. Brown (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987), 143-177 (esp. pp. 159-61).

which included a mill and one of his vassals, Peter Grallo, with all of the vassal's heirs and possessions.<sup>44</sup> However, the Count of Sarno disappears from the charters after 1138, and may have fallen foul of Roger II after the Capuan revolt, when the twelfth-century chronicler, Falco of Benevento, who was a notary and scribe at the papal court, describes him fleeing his home with Rao of Fragneto and others.<sup>45</sup> It was around this same time that Lord Rao of Malerba, one of the earliest supporters of Montevergine, was given the *castellum* of Summonte after its previous lord, Rao of Fragneto, an adamant opponent of the Hautevilles, also participated in the barons' revolt and fell out of favour with King Roger.<sup>46</sup> For this reason, Rao of Malerba's donation of 1127 has been called into question, as the lord of Summonte at the time should have been Rao of Fragneto. His son, Boamund, is listed in the *Catalogus* as 'holding Summonte', a fief of two knights, and offering four knights and ten *servientes* (sergeants) for the *augmentum*.<sup>47</sup> He also had a great deal to do with the monastery, first donating a vassal with his lands in 1154, a further two vassals in 1163 and 1168, and then accusing the monks of illegally building an oven on his lands in 1178.<sup>48</sup> Rao of Malerba's donation consisted of a man, Peter, with his family and their possessions in Summonte. It seems therefore likely that this was a forgery created perhaps in the late-twelfth or in the first half of the thirteenth century to claim possession of the lands owned by Peter's family, taking advantage of the strong bond between the monastery and the Malerba family. In fact, Montevergine had clearly been adopted by the Malerba family as its monastery of choice, as in 1201 a Nicholas Malerba is found confirming the donations made by his predecessors, and offering a further vassal to the monastery.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the monastery also acquired lands in the appurtenances of Castelcicala, a fortified settlement about 25km west of Mercogliano, located between Avella and Naples, with a first donation in March 1136, and two further

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<sup>44</sup> CDV 214, pp. 52-56, and CDV 245. See below, pp. 132-33 on people donated to the monastery.

<sup>45</sup> Falco of Benevento, 'Chronicon', 1138.3.5, p. 208.

<sup>46</sup> For the (mis-)fortunes of Rao of Fragneto see Falco of Benevento, 'Chronicon', 1127 and 1134. For Rao of Malerba's donation see CDV 169.

<sup>47</sup> See CB 393, p. 70. For a discussion on the *augmentum* see Jamison's introduction to the CB, especially pp. xxi-xxii. On the *servientes*, see James Hill, 'The *Catalogus Baronum* and the Recruitment and Administration of the Armies of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily: A Re-examination', *Historical Research*, 86 (2013), 1-14 (p. 7). On donors' descendents see Chapter 6.1.3 below.

<sup>48</sup> For Boamund's donations see CDV 366, 435, 482, and 640.

<sup>49</sup> CDV 1133.

donations being made only in the 1150s, the first in December 1151, and the second in September 1154.<sup>50</sup> The lands acquired through these donations in the localities of Casamarciano and Comiziano, extended the monastery's possessions further towards the Tyrrhenian coast. This was beneficial not only in terms of territorial expansions, but also because it established an enduring connection with the de Molinis family.<sup>51</sup> A further donation in Casamarciano was made under the auspices of this family: a knight of Castelcicala, William de Patricio, offered land in Casamarciano to Montevergine in 1183, with the consent and in the presence of his lord, Aymo de Molinis.<sup>52</sup> Donations from the inhabitants of Castelcicala were often received by Montevergine's daughter house of Santa Maria del Plesco, as the phrasing of the documents would suggest: the donations are made to Montevergine, but 'in the hands of' the prior of its dependency. Santa Maria del Plesco received donations of land on Montevergine's behalf in 1176, through the will of Martin of Castelcicala, in 1178 from Richard de Cicciano of Castelcicala, and in 1179 from knight Matthew de Marino of Castelcicala.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Santa Maria del Plesco was also developing as a priory with a strong connection with the local community, mostly people of modest backgrounds.<sup>54</sup>

Montevergine's territories in 1154 were concentrated mainly around Mercogliano and Summonte, both in close proximity of the monastery itself; to the west of the mountain, Montevergine acquired land in and around Avella and Castelcicala; to the east, its properties extended around the *castella* of Lapio and Montefusco; and south of Montevergine, its landholdings grew around San Severino and Sarno. It becomes evident from the analysis of the mill and church donations that Montevergine's domain was concentrated and expanding along the two main rivers in the region, the Sarno and the Calore, which created fertility, mobility, as well as liminality. Many religious sites favour river locations, for the metaphorical significance it bestowed on them, as well as for their practicality.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> CDV 231, 305, 327.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 6, p. 159 for Aymo de Molinis, and p. 173 for Maria de Molinis.

<sup>52</sup> CDV 724.

<sup>53</sup> CDV 605, 641, 660.

<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 8 p. 227 for further discussion of this dependency.

<sup>55</sup> The significance of water in monastic space has been a fruitful area of study particularly in the fields of landscape archaeology and anthropology. See especially Paolo Squatriti, *Water and Society in Early Medieval Italy, AD 400-1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), pp. 33-35, 39-40, 60; also Paul Everson and David Stocker, *Custodians of Continuity? The Premonstratensian Abbey at Barlings*

Between 1129 and 1154 the monastery acquired three mills along these rivers. These were very important assets, which saved the monastery a lot of expense, and could be used to offer milling services to locals.<sup>56</sup> Two of these were situated along the Calore, between Paternopoli and Taurasi. Another made use of the waters of the river Sarno. The first, found in Isca la Spina, was given by lord Alamo of Taurasi in August 1129, in the form of a piece of land with raw materials to build one, together with the use of the water of the river.<sup>57</sup> The second was part of the large donation made by Count Henry of Sarno in February 1134, and is described as being in the locality Foce (presumably at the mouth of the river Sarno).<sup>58</sup> The third mill was given as an oblation in May 1142 by Lord William of Gesualdo.<sup>59</sup> The mill was found along the Calore near Paternopoli, and was offered in conjunction with its *arcatura*, the mill race, and *sedium*, the raft or foundation on which the mill rests, with rights of entrance and exit, and with wood from the nearby church of Santo Chierico (also donated to Montevergine), in sufficient quantities to serve for the maintenance of the mill.

Montevergine also acquired a number of churches.<sup>60</sup> Of the seven charters which mention the donation of a church during the reign of Roger II, one appears to be a forgery. Thus, Montevergine had acquired six churches before 1154. The church of Santa Maria del Calore, donated by Roger of Lapio in 1130 was evidently so close to the mill donated by Alamo of Taurasi in 1129, that it seemed only logical for the monk or monks in charge of the mill to preside over the church as well.<sup>61</sup> The church of San Giovanni in the locality of San Vito near Montefusco, donated by Lord Iderno of Montefusco in 1135 still exists to this day in the same locality, now in the *comune* of Apice, south of Benevento.<sup>62</sup> The church of San Giovanni of Aquara was a priory of Montevergine by 1200.<sup>63</sup> The church of Santa

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*and the Landscape of Ritual*, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series, 11 (Sleaford: Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 159.

<sup>57</sup> CDV 180.

<sup>58</sup> CDV 214.

<sup>59</sup> CDV 271.

<sup>60</sup> See Map 2.

<sup>61</sup> CDV 190, and 180 for Alamo's donation. See also Tropeano's note in the former, p. 380.

<sup>62</sup> CDV 220; this document is suspect of forgery according to Carlone, because it refers to Montevergine as built on the mountain of Virgil. The spelling of the donor's name is also different from the spelling used in the donation made by his wife after his death, for which see p. 49 above.

<sup>63</sup> *Regesto*, n. 1098 records a donation of a *casalina* (a small cottage) in September 1200 by Count Robert son of Roger to Montevergine in the hands of the prior of San Giovanni of Aquara.



Maria in Auria, donated by Guerrerius son of Accardo, constable and baron of Montefusco, in 1139, was in the appurtenances of Montefusco, where Montevergine would later be called to officiate in the church of San Leonardo.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the small church of Santa Maria in Auria on the outskirts of the *castellum* was soon overshadowed, so that after the bull of 1264 by Urban IV, it is no longer mentioned among the possessions of Montevergine.<sup>65</sup> The churches of Santo Chierico and of the Holy Cross along the Calore given in 1142 by Lord William of Gesualdo seem to have encountered some success.<sup>66</sup> The first, in fact, attracted several donations in the course of the twelfth century, and is indeed mentioned in the bull of 1264 'cum hominibus domibus molendinis et possessionibus suis'.<sup>67</sup>

To these churches one must add the church of San Caeseo mentioned in the *Legenda*, and said to have been donated during William's rectorship. In the latter case, the rector of Montevergine immediately provided for the occupation of the church by his monks.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, though, sources for the churches acquired before 1154 are limited, and it is difficult to know what their role in the community was at this stage. The fact that all but one are not mentioned in the *Legenda* (written in the second half of the twelfth century) suggests that they had not been turned into cells officiated by Montevergine's monks, but were entrusted by the monks to secular clergy.<sup>69</sup> Celestine III's bull of November 1197 lists thirty-nine dependent churches of Montevergine, along with their appurtenances, and other possessions as well, indicating that a much more significant growth occurred between the 1150s and the 1190s.<sup>70</sup>

Montevergine was entrusted with ten new churches between 1154 and 1172. Together with the seven churches acquired before 1154, these make up seventeen

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<sup>64</sup> CDV 256.

<sup>65</sup> See Table 5; also d'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', p. 32; and Tropeano's note in CDV 256, p. 236. Tropeano suggests that the church was taken over by monks of the monastery of S. Incoronata di Puglia, and then subsequently passed into the possession of Montevergine in the second half of the twelfth century, before it was taken over by Goletto. It certainly appears in Celestine's bull of 1197. The charters Tropeano indicates, however, do not match.

<sup>66</sup> CDV 271.

<sup>67</sup> For later donations to the church of St Cleric see CDV 588; and *Regesto*, n. 1572, and n. 2131 for the papal bull, also in MBR, III, pp. 416-17.

<sup>68</sup> *Legenda*, V, pp. 16-17, ll. 20-01.

<sup>69</sup> For a comparison of the churches acquired in the early stages of development by the monastery of Santa Sofia of Benevento see, Loud, 'A Lombard Abbey in a Norman World', in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xix, VIII, pp. 273-306 (pp. 284-86).

<sup>70</sup> MBR, III, pp. 61-63.

of the thirty-nine churches listed in Celestine's bull of 1197. Many were small churches which ministered to the local lay community, and continued to run independently of Montevergine, as rarely are records found among Montevergine's charters in this period detailing donations or other transactions involving the new churches. Others were dependent monastic cells with monastic communities of their own. Santa Maria del Plesco, near Nola, is one such example: there are two donation charters, the first in 1165 and the second in 1166, involving the monastic church of Santa Maria, constantly referred to as dependent on Montevergine and responding to Montevergine's abbot.<sup>71</sup> Santa Maria del Plesco had a monastic community of its own to sustain, and thus it is feasible that only a relatively small annual canon would have been assigned to its motherhouse. On the other hand, the small churches, or indeed parts of churches, that were donated to Montevergine, may not even have received a priest from the monastery, and may have continued to be operated by secular clergy.<sup>72</sup>

It appears that the number of monks at Montevergine must have been increasing, as in August 1164, the hospital of Montevergine was first mentioned in a charter drawn up at the hospital itself.<sup>73</sup> The charter mentions the hospital's chapel, and locates the hospital at the foot of the mountain. The location of the hospital perhaps points to the need for a better climate to cure the sick monks of the community, if this was the actual purpose of the hospital. Hospitals in the Middle Ages were not necessarily places of healing as we think of them today, but were intended more as sites for hospitality: they could be pilgrim stations, or even guest houses, for rich and poor alike.<sup>74</sup> The hospital of Montevergine was probably where the knight, Eleazar of Amando, stayed on his pilgrimage earlier that month,<sup>75</sup> indicating that it was intended as an arrival point for guests or pilgrims, the latter arriving numerous already at the time of the monastery's foundation. If the hospital was intended as a place of healing, as the appearance of an *infirmarius* in final decade of the twelfth century would suggest, the monks' presence closer to Mercogliano than the monastic buildings might point to a

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<sup>71</sup> CDV 451, 459.

<sup>72</sup> On the churches received through partible inheritance see Loud, 'Continuity and Change', pp. 317 and 325.

<sup>73</sup> CDV 444.

<sup>74</sup> See Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 90-93.

<sup>75</sup> CDV 443.

purposeful shift aimed at achieving close interaction with the local township, with the monks tending to the people's health as well as to their spiritual needs.<sup>76</sup>

Unfortunately, no records remain to help reconstruct the exact sequence of events which brought about the foundation of the hospital, so that it remains unknown whether this was the result of an endowment or donation, or whether it was built by the monks using monastic funds. Henceforth, the reputation and indeed the size of the hospital grew together with the monastery itself. It seems to have started out as a fairly large foundation, since already in December 1166 the cellarer of the hospital complained to Bohemond Malerba that the hospital's lands were being misused by his vassals, indicating not only the hospital's management of lands of its own, but also its nature as an independent institution, with its own kitchen and provisions for the monks and guests living there.<sup>77</sup> The hospital soon became the recipient of separate donations from the patrons of Montevergine. In October 1170, Landulf, the son of judge Petracco of Ascoli, gave some land and a *casalina* (a small hut) to Montevergine and the 'hospital of Jerusalem', specifying the recipient monks of each institution, and referring to them as separate 'ecclesiae'.<sup>78</sup> It is interesting to note that in the case of the monastery itself, the lands were not handed over to the prior or the abbot, as was customary, but to two monks, Landulf and John, whereas the point of contact for the hospital was 'lord priest Maio'.

The limited expansion of Montevergine at this stage was certainly beneficial to the monastery, as it allowed the community to maintain a strong and secure control over its slowly expanding territory during a period of political unrest for the region.<sup>79</sup> This apparent control is likely to have played a part in attracting donations from the local lay community. Of course, there is also the alleged favour of Roger II himself to take into account.<sup>80</sup> While, as previously discussed, the stories in the *Legenda* have been discredited, Montevergine certainly would have

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<sup>76</sup> On the *infirmararius* see below, p. 203. Mongelli claims that a monk of Montevergine was listed in a fourteenth-century survey of the doctors of the Avellino region, which would point perhaps to the hospital specialising in medicine and healing, but he gives no reference for the document, and I have not been able to retrieve it, so its existence is doubtful.

<sup>77</sup> CDV 467.

<sup>78</sup> CDV 520.

<sup>79</sup> Loud, 'A Lombard Abbey in a Norman World', pp. 288-89.

<sup>80</sup> See especially Panarelli, 'S. Maria di Montevergine e S. Giovanni degli eremiti', pp. 83-94.

profited from rumours of such noble esteem had the manuscript of the *Legenda* entered into wider circulation than the monasteries founded by William alone.

The relationship between the new Norman settlers and the native Italian (especially Lombard) population in the Kingdom of Sicily has been a fruitful topic of discussion in the past few decades.<sup>81</sup> The modern Italian scholarship on the Norman Mezzogiorno speaks of ‘change’ and ‘renewal’ under the Norman dynasty.<sup>82</sup> Part of this might be seen in terms of their apparent competition with the local nobility in asserting their dominance, including in monastic benefaction. A close look at the legal, administrative, religious and cultural customs brought in by the Normans compared to those adopted and assimilated from the native population shows that the Normans went through a complex process of integration.<sup>83</sup> In the charters of Montevergine at least part of these aspects appear to unfold rather belatedly, or at least in an inconsistent manner. It seems for example that when it came to marital law, the Lombard customs of *morgengab*, or ‘morning gift’, and of the *mundoald*, or ‘guardian’ appear mostly in charters which point to native Lombard population in the archives of Montevergine in the twelfth century, and were not assimilated by the Norman population.<sup>84</sup> In September 1132 Alfa daughter of Mari gave Rao of Montefusco the goods she had received as her *morgengab* from her first husband, in exchange for a cloak and 32 *tari*, the typical make-up of the *launegild*, literally ‘cloak gift’, required by Lombard law to ratify gifts and donations.<sup>85</sup> In 1137, Sica, widow of Daddeo son of Landulf, gave her *dodarium* to Montevergine, specifying that it consisted of half the lands of her

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<sup>81</sup> Especially Loud, ‘How “Norman” was the Norman Conquest of Southern Italy?’, *Nottingham Medieval Studies* xxv (1981), 3-34; and cf. *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 278-89 for a discussion of “Lombard” vs “Norman”.

<sup>82</sup> See for example Francesco Giunta, ‘I normanni in Irpinia e la fondazione di Montevergine’, in *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine. Relazioni e comunicazioni del primo convegno internazionale 28-31 ottobre 1980*, pp. 52-81; and Loud, ‘Continuity and Change in Norman Italy: The Campania during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 22 (1996), 313-43, pp. 316-31.

<sup>83</sup> See Loud, ‘Continuity and Change’, pp. 324-32.

<sup>84</sup> CDV 203.

<sup>85</sup> Counter-gifts were meticulously regulated in Lombard Law. See Fischer Drew, *Lombard Laws*, Rothair 175, 184; Liutprand 43, 54, 73; Aistulf 12; Rothair n. 46. See also Chris Wickham, ‘Compulsory Gift Exchange in Lombard Italy, 650-1150’, in *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), pp. 193-216; and Pietro de Leo, ‘Aspetti di vita quotidiana e forme di pietà nel Mezzogiorno d’Italia attraverso il Codice Diplomatico Verginiano’, *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine. Relazioni e comunicazioni del primo convegno internazionale 28-31 ottobre 1980*, pp. 131-45 (pp. 142-43).

husband 'moribus Normannorum'. She made the donation with the consent of her *mundwald*, in this case her father.<sup>86</sup> Here the combination of Lombard and Norman laws operating in the same framework reflects the partial merging of customs from each side of the family: in the Lombard law, the *morgengab* consisted of a quarter of the groom's possessions, while the Norman dowry consisted of a half, and Sica still observed the Lombard law of the *mundwald* to dispose of her dowry.<sup>87</sup> In July 1150 a certain Richard gave a fourth of his mobile and immobile goods to his new wife Maria, 'according to the rite of our Lombard people'.<sup>88</sup> The name of the groom suggests some cultural exchange with the Norman population at least, but Richard clearly states that he is of Lombard descent, and observing Lombard law. Even in August 1200, the provost of Montevergine was called to end a dispute which had arisen because William of Castelcicala denied the two women for whom he acted as *mundwald*, Gemma and her daughter Palomba, the right to their *morgengab* from their deceased husbands, as he disapproved of 'this bad custom kept in Summonte'.<sup>89</sup>

Relations between Montevergine and its patrons seem to have been peaceful for the most part during this period. It was not uncommon for monastic houses in the Middle Ages to have to fend off claims to lands and property by the descendants of donors who did not share their ancestors' piety, for example. This was the main reason for monasteries to draw up *memoratoria*, in which the donor or his or her next of kin would confirm the donations made, and agree on a penalty for breaches of contract. In one of the earliest cases of a *memoratorium* drawn up at Montevergine, the prior had to deal with a dispute over land in November 1136 by four local landowners, each of whom claimed some of Montevergine's property to belong to them.<sup>90</sup> The script of the trial is preserved in Montevergine's archive:

With the assistance of his lawyer, Lando, prior of Montevergine, accuses  
[John Cardillo, John Franco son of Alferio, William Palumbo son of John, and  
Falco Bonande son of Falco] of unlawfully holding possessions of the

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<sup>86</sup> CDV 244. See Giovanni Cassandro, 'Il diritto nelle carte di Montevergine', in *Società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine* (Montevergine: Edizioni Padri Benedettini, 1984), pp. 87-119 (pp. 104-09).

<sup>87</sup> On this example see also Loud, 'Continuity and Change', pp. 331-32.

<sup>88</sup> CDV 296: 'secundum ritum gentis nostre Longobardorum'.

<sup>89</sup> CDV 1099: 'qui renuebant dare propter pravam consuetudinem ipsius terra Submontis'.

<sup>90</sup> CDV 234.

monastery. The judge gives them three days to present their reasons and documentations. On the third day they reconvene: John Cardillo claims to have received the land in inheritance from his ancestors, who held it on behalf of some men of Avellino who gave it to the monastery; when asked if he had other reasons, he replied he did not. John Franco claims he has no reasons but submits himself to the will of the lord of the coenobium, and his brothers William and Alferio are interrogated and they say they received the land from the lord of the abbey. William Palumbo claims he had the documentation but he entrusted it to the men of Monteforte and it was burnt in a fire, and when asked about the men he had entrusted the documents to, he said they were dead. Falco Bonande says he has no reason and commends himself to the sentence of the judge. The lawyer of the monastery asked for the fruits and labour of the men, and justice for their invasions. But before the judge had pronounced his verdict, the four men, through the mediation of certain men present, agreed peacefully with Lando and the lawyer.

The evidence presented by the brothers for the trial is inconsistent, but there is a clear wish on their part to obtain the land in question. Unfortunately, it is probably the case that Montevergine did not keep records in its archives of cases it had lost, and the evidence we do have is therefore heavily skewed in the monastery's favour: according to the charters, claims of this sort were rarely won by the monastery's opponents, whether their evidence was satisfactory or not. When more of these cases are observed together, it becomes apparent that the final result was the same, if not always, for the great majority of cases: claims to Montevergine's lands or properties would be abandoned, usually in a private settlement before or just after the sentence was pronounced. A quick and unexpected settlement was also reached in March 1153, for example, when the knight Umfrid claimed the sum of 9 *denari* from Montevergine, which he said was owed to him from the 40 *denari* left by Gemma Sofia (presumably his wife) to the monastery, as per the agreement in place between the Beneventans and the lords of Montefusco.<sup>91</sup> The prior of Montevergine argued that his monastery fell under royal and not under Beneventan jurisdiction, and therefore the levy did not apply to his community. The judges were inclined to rule in favour of Umfrid, and were preparing a Bible

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<sup>91</sup> CDV 315. Umfrid was claiming the *fidantia*. This and other charges were re-instituted after Roger's victory over Innocent II and the German emperor.

for him to swear on, when Umfrid himself 'sua gratuite voluntate' renounced the 9 *denari*, and the dispute was settled peacefully between the two parties. Montevergine thus enjoyed a degree of respectability already by the mid-twelfth century that allowed it to overcome the obstacles encountered as a result of its growing assets.

As disputes and property violations became more frequent, the charters started to become more complex, reflecting a need for more careful provisions to be taken to protect the monastery's property and acquisitions. By the 1160s, in addition to fixing a penalty fee in case either party should violate the terms of the contract, and to the usual curses with which perpetrators were threatened, the donor was also required to give '*guadia*', or *vadium*, which involved calling upon a witness – though often the donor himself would 'place himself as *guadia*' – to promise that the terms of the contract would be respected. This was a standard practice in Italian charters already in the eleventh century, but one that was only adopted at Montevergine several decades after its foundation.<sup>92</sup>

The increase in the monastery's landholdings experienced in the 1130s under the administration of Prior Lando, in conjunction with the peaceful supervision of Abbot Alfred, and later in the 1150s under the administration of Prior Rossemanno, called for a more pro-active administration of the lands, which Lando and Rossemanno were able to provide. The wealth of cultivated land, structures and manpower acquired, in fact, motivated the monastery's drive towards an organised and structured community. Even from 1130, very early on in the monastery's history, Montevergine had the support of its own lawyer and notary, for example, who would assist the prior in settling contracts and disputes, and the division of the roles of abbot and prior are another manifestation of this process.<sup>93</sup> The first papal bull promulgated in favour of Montevergine, Celestine III's bull of November 1197, indicates that by the end of the century Montevergine was a Benedictine institution, suggesting that its structural developments eventually led Montevergine to fall in line with the traditional coenobitic monasticism which was prevalent at the time.

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<sup>92</sup> See Cassandro, 'Il diritto nelle carte di Montevergine', pp. 110-11.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter 7 on the internal institutional development of Montevergine.

Even from an economic standpoint, the evidence shows that as Montevergine's donations increased its territorial assets, the monastery's administration began to cater for a more elaborate and sophisticated system to manage its resources. In the first few decades Montevergine is rarely seen to part with any liquid funds at all. In fact, with the exception of two purchases, and a few instances in which an unequal land exchange was rounded up with a sum of money, all the sales and leases recorded in the charters were made by the monastery. The fact that some purchases are recorded would suggest that they always were, and that, therefore, these were indeed the only ones which actually took place. As previously mentioned, a consistent system for recording and archiving transactions may not have been in place yet, so some early transactions may be missing from the the collection of charters. One might argue, on the other hand, that Montevergine might have been concealing evidence of sales and leases, as they might have been considered to conflict with its founding values. The monastery was originally based on the principles of absolute poverty and self sufficiency, with a foundation history which stressed the founder's passionate insistence on these values to the point that he left his own community when it refused to uphold them. Thus, as the community grew and actively built a reputation based on its founder (considering that the second section of William's *vita*, containing most of his miracle stories, was written between 1170 and 1180), any evidence of monetary gain might be considered shameful or wrong, and perhaps hidden. On the other hand, Constance Bouchard argues that sales were perfectly normal and reasonable transactions, and that they would not have been frowned upon at the time, even among religious communities.<sup>94</sup> The Cistercian General Chapter with which Bouchard is concerned felt the need to make restrictions on the monasteries' acquisitions for a matter of scale, rather than morality; on the other hand, Joan Wardrop points out, 'by the close of the twelfth century, the English Cistercians had acquired, along with their vast estates, a reputation for greed and avarice'.<sup>95</sup> Though sales and purchases were certainly reasonable, and, in most cases, necessary transactions, one should not underestimate the fact that their holy

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<sup>94</sup> Constance Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs: Cistercians, Knights, and Economic Exchange in Twelfth-Century Burgundy* (London: Cornell UP, 1991), pp. 60-61.

<sup>95</sup> Joan Wardrop, *Fountains Abbey and its Benefactors, 1132-1300* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987), p. 67.



context inevitably raised doubts about the moral correctness of such exchanges. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that so few are recorded in the charters, whether because none were actually performed, or because those that were were not recorded.

As the records stand, the territorial management of Montevergine during the reigns of William I and his son seems characterised by a stringent savings economy, focused on consolidating funds and assets and turning them to profit, without making many investments. There is, however, an increase in purchases compared to earlier rates of acquisitions: four are registered in the charters during this period, plus a fifth in 1171 which is called a *venditio*, but is actually a donation on condition that the donor could have use of the lands until he died.<sup>96</sup> These charters describe acquisitions by Montevergine in the Mandre, Cerreto and Sariano areas — all in the direct vicinity of the monastery. To these one can also add three exchanges of land, two of which involve land and small houses (*casalinae*) in Urbiniano, and one exchanging a house in the city of Avellino with some land in Mandre.<sup>97</sup> In the first exchange, in March 1162, it is clearly a case of Montevergine acquiring a bigger stretch of land, and perhaps one closer to its other territories, as both lands being exchanged were in Urbiniano, and Montevergine added 32 *tari* to make the transaction equal. Furthermore, in two of the three exchanges, a Lombard law is cited according to which the monastery should profit the most from an exchange.<sup>98</sup> When Mabilia donated her land to Montevergine in March 1162, she specified:

it seemed a good and excellent thing to do — that I gave the aforementioned piece of my land [to Montevergine], and that the exchange be made between us for the benefit of the monastery and for the improvement of the land, in accordance with Lombard Law.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> CDV 440, 472, 493, 519, 520.

<sup>97</sup> CDV 412, 417, 428.

<sup>98</sup> I was not able to identify a law to this precise effect, but Liutprand 73 concerns the exemption from counter-gifts in the case of a donation made to an ecclesiastical institution ‘pro anima’. See MGH, *Leges*, 4, p. 137; also *The Lombard Laws*, trans. by Katherine Fischer Drew (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), p. 174.

<sup>99</sup> CDV 412, p. 40. ‘et ego darem ei ipsa predicta pecia de terra mea, que utraque partes commutatione ipsa inter nos faciendum pro utilitatis ipsius monasterii et pro remelioratione, sicut in lege Langobardorum continetur, bonum et optimum faciendum esse comparuit’.

It must have been a well known decree as both the notaries Tristan and William who wrote the charters were familiar with it. Especially in cases like this, these charters show that Montevergine was “filling the gaps” in its territorial expanse, selecting and purchasing properties in regions over which it already had a degree of control, and parting with property, such as the house in Avellino, which was removed from the bulk of the monastery’s property, and was of little use to it. Montevergine still concentrated on solidifying the heart of its monastic territory, and its spiritual focus was still on the growth of the original community — for this reason there were still no new dependent communities as far as the documents show us, nor was the monastery interested in using the house in Avellino for any sort of missionary or expansionary activity.

The lack of royal support continued throughout the Norman period. William II’s privileges of 1170 and 1189 have also been categorised as forgeries by Enzensberger, whose careful scrutiny of the royal charters in the Verginian archives revealed that Henry VI’s privileges were the first royal privileges received by Montevergine.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, while Celestine III’s bull purports to confirm those of Lucius III and Alexander III before him, neither of these survive, and the 1197 bull survives only in a sixteenth-century copy, so that papal support for Montevergine in the Norman years cannot be ascertained beyond doubt. Montevergine was clearly very anxious under the German administration to provide evidence for relationships with both local and higher authorities, lay and religious: there is thus an abundance of forgeries drawn up in the later twelfth century and first half of the thirteenth, and back-dated to the years of Norman rule.<sup>101</sup>

Sifting through the charters in order to identify those which were forged, interpolated, or back-dated is an arduous task. It is hard to go along with Carmine Carlone’s assessment of the Montevergine archives, which would regard as forgeries or at least strongly suspicious any documents referring to Montevergine as being built on mount Virgil.<sup>102</sup> He does not, however, take into consideration the

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<sup>100</sup> See Horst Enzensberger, ‘I privilegi normanno-svevi a favore della “congregazione” verginiana’, in *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine: I normanni chiamano gli svevi. Atti del secondo convegno internazionale, 12-15 ottobre 1987*, pp. 71-89.

<sup>101</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 86.

<sup>102</sup> Carlone, *Falsificazioni e falsari*, p. 13.

possibility that original documents may have been copied in the thirteenth century using the toponym by then made more common by the *Legenda*, which speaks of the 'Virgilianus mons'. Even so, this less common denomination does appear in the documents which might be suspected of being later fabrications, and one must therefore approach with scepticism charters with this feature. The three episcopal privileges, dated 1126, 1133, and 1170, and four royal privileges, dated 1137, 1140, 1170, and 1189, all deemed to be forgeries (though Tropeano marks the episcopal privileges as originals), do not, however, bear this marker. They are likely to have been fabricated in or after the 1190s, when Montevergine had started to lay claim to Santa Maria dell'Incoronata di Foggia, another of William's foundations. These documents must be taken into consideration within the context of their creation or interpolation, as evidence for what the community wished to achieve at the time of the complete forgery or partial alteration of the document.

In the charter purportedly dated August 1137, 'upon request of William *prelatus* of Montevergine', Roger II proclaimed the complete dependence and submission to the mother house of all churches and lands already owned by Montevergine, as well as all those which the monastery would acquire in future. In another charter of May 1134, five years after Albert's appointment to the rectorship of Montevergine, 'lord William' is recorded as receiving a plot of land with vineyard in Montevergine's name.<sup>103</sup> Tropeano suggests the document was created to demonstrate that William returned to Montevergine, maintaining not only his right of pre-eminence over the monastery, despite now being abbot of Goleto, but also his jurisdictional rights as head of the community, without Albert, the local superior of the time, being involved in the legal act. This proved that the founder of Montevergine remained the superior of all later foundations by William (i.e. daughter foundations), and that William's successor at Montevergine inherited the same rights. Tropeano therefore dates the document to the years comprised between May 1197 and November 1199, when a dispute was unravelling between the abbot Gabriel of Montevergine and the abbess Agnes of Goleto.<sup>104</sup> There is, in fact, no further evidence of a spurious and fleeting return of the founder to Montevergine, though, of course, his presence at Goleto cannot be verified, given

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<sup>103</sup> CDV 215.

<sup>104</sup> CDV, III, pp. xvii.

the lack of documentary evidence. There remains the question, however, of whether the document was created anew at the end of the twelfth century, or whether an original was merely altered and copied to substitute William to Albert as the receiver of the donation.

Thus, it is likely that the royal document was forged around the same time further to support Montevergine's and its abbot's claim to supremacy over later houses and acquisitions, sanctioning the right by authority of the king.<sup>105</sup> The second royal privilege, dated 1140, was probably drawn up in the second decade of the thirteenth century, when many monasteries were going to great pains to validate donations and possession in a way that would fit the requisites demanded by Frederick II. These aimed to regain control of the lands alienated from the crown by revoking all privileges that were not issued by the kings before 1189.<sup>106</sup> Not surprisingly, the bulk of forged documents were dated to the 1130s, during the height of Roger's power.

The second royal privilege rests and draws on the first, reiterating that Montevergine had the right to quiet possession of the goods and properties already acquired, and of all those it would acquire in future. In addition, King Roger gave Montevergine the church of Santa Maria Incoronata, 'as per William's request'.<sup>107</sup> Once again, William's role of authority in the charter long after his departure from Montevergine — he would by then have been in Goletto — suggests that the rector or abbot of Montevergine had authority over any of the daughter houses, no matter where he was, by virtue of the fact that Montevergine was the first of William's foundations. Thus, as Tropeano argued, this document would have served well when this right was challenged, as in the late 1190s by the monks of Santa Maria Incoronata. As far as the authentic sources show, Santa Maria Incoronata was never subject to Montevergine until the third decade of the thirteenth century.<sup>108</sup>

Montevergine fell under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Avellino, and came under the archbishopric of Benevento, as listed in an 1153 bull by Pope Anastasius

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<sup>105</sup> CDV 241 and notes.

<sup>106</sup> CDV 264 and notes. On the revocation of privileges see Horst Enzensberger, 'Chanceries, Charters and Administration in Norman Italy', in *The Society of Norman Italy*, ed. by G. A. Loud and A. Metcalfe, Medieval Mediterranean, v. 38 (Boston: Brill, 2002), pp. 117-50; see also Loud, 'The Chancery and Charters of the Kings of Sicily', pp. 804-806.

<sup>107</sup> CDV 264. King Roger states that 'petitione tue pietate moti acquiescere dignum duximus'.

<sup>108</sup> See Chapter 8, p. 249.

IV.<sup>109</sup> There are two charters allegedly issued by the bishop of Avellino preserved in the Montevergine archives, dated 1126 and 1133. The episcopal privilege of 1133 is a *confirmatio* of the first privilege allegedly issued by Bishop John of Avellino in May 1126. His successor, Bishop Robert, confirmed the exemptions and privileges granted previously, and also offered to consecrate Albert as abbot of Montevergine (which would conflict with the reference to William as abbot in the first privilege, given that Albert would have naturally inherited William's title; this helps to confirm the invalidity of the first privilege).<sup>110</sup> It is reported that Albert refused, stating that he was 'the prior, for the *religio* of the monastery did not require the rank of abbot', and he would leave the monastery if the title of abbot was imposed upon him.<sup>111</sup> Robert then took counsel and decided to desist from the consecration and to discontinue control over the monastery and its appurtenances, effectively giving Montevergine independence from episcopal jurisdiction. If the document — about which Tropeano does not comment in his edition — is an invention, as such generous consideration towards the young monastery (which even the likes of Cava did not receive until the 1190s) seems likely to be, it is nonetheless peculiar that the episode of Albert's refusal of the title of abbot — and thus of the Benedictine rule — is incorporated in the act.<sup>112</sup>

There is obvious motivation for the charter to have been forged, possibly at the same time as the royal charters, and under the same incentive. However, there is no reason why the monastery, certainly Benedictine by the thirteenth century, should want to bring to the forefront Albert's unwavering stance on the monastic organisational structure, especially since this clashed with the information in the privilege it sought to confirm. This suggests that the document is a forgery based on a genuine original, or drawing on a genuine tradition, confirming that William's precepts were upheld at least in the first instance by Albert. The bishop's munificent reaction to Albert's refusal would also suggest that he was supporting, if not even promoting eremitical foundations in his region.

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<sup>109</sup> MBR, II, p. 599, n. 2. See also Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, 'L'organizzazione ecclesiastica dell'Italia normanna tra l'XI e il XII secolo: I nuovi assetti istituzionali', in *Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche della "Societas christiana" dei secoli XI-XII: diocesi, pievi e parrocchie (Atti della sesta Settimana internazionale di studio, Milano 1974)* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero: 1977), pp. 327-52, especially p. 336.

<sup>110</sup> CDV 210.

<sup>111</sup> CDV 210: 'prior, quia religio monasterii non requirebat habere dignitatem abbatie'.

<sup>112</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 197-202 on the expansion of Cava; and also Vitolo, 'Eremitismo, cenobitismo e religiosità laicale', pp. 536-37.

Montevergine also received support from Bishop Iaquinto of Frigento, who, in 1170 issued a charter confirming the donation of the church of San Caesareo, as previously mentioned, and granting also the church of San Nicola in Rocca San Felice, requesting an annual payment to the bishopric of a pound of wax in return.<sup>113</sup> In 1208, Abbot Donato was the recipient of a privilege from the bishop of Caserta, who consented to the erection of a church in Maddaloni.<sup>114</sup> These donations were important for Montevergine as they allowed the monastery to extend its spiritual reach further into dioceses other than its own, and obtain important rights and exemptions: while the monks had obtained its blanket exemption from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Avellino, its churches and cells outside the Avellino diocese were still subject to local episcopal powers.<sup>115</sup>

While it is frequently difficult to determine the degree of support that Montevergine received from both religious and lay authorities, it remains clear that its development from the time of its foundation until 1189 occurred at a local level, with very little intervention or aid from higher authorities. Its expansion was focussed on the Irpinia region, so that its profile in this area reached levels of great prestige. This caused the monastery to take on crucial roles in the local community. While it certainly had strayed from the founder's original intentions within a few decades of its foundation, the monastery found its place in the community as an active participant in, and indeed primary driver of the local agrarian economy. It also served on occasion as an aid to vassals of the king, whose patronage was returned through protection of their lands and financial help to support kingdom-wide causes. Indeed, the monastery's institutional identity (the focus of Chapter 7), developed as a result of these close interactions with the members of the local community, shifting its focus quite clearly and swiftly from a poor eremitical community, to an economically and socially influential coenobitic one. This being said, it had by no means reached the level of power or authority of other institutions in the area like Montecassino, Cava dei Tirreni, or Santa Sofia Benevento. For this reason, Montevergine features much less prominently in the

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<sup>113</sup> CDV 518.

<sup>114</sup> CDV 1272. See also p. 234 below.

<sup>115</sup> See d'Arcangelo's discussion of Montevergine and its diocese in 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', pp. 41-42; see Fonseca on the importance of monasteries in the *cura animarum*, particularly in local rural settings, in 'L'organizzazione ecclesiastica dell'Italia normanna', pp. 347-49.

affairs of the Kingdom during most of the twelfth century, with occasional appearances in major events discussed in the contemporary chronicles. Later efforts at creating links with royalty and asserting the monastery's institutional independence from the local religious authorities reflected the monastery's anxiety over the lack of evidence to support its claims to various rights and privileges over its lands, people, and property. These had perhaps been tacitly enjoyed prior to the German takeover of the kingdom, but came into question with the change of administration and renewed vigilance over the power of religious institutions that came with Henry VI's rise to the throne of the *Regno*.

### CHAPTER 3: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONTEVERGINE UNDER THE HOHENSTAUFEN

William II's death without heirs left the Kingdom of Sicily once more in disarray. There were two main claimants to the throne: Tancred of Lecce, the illegitimate son of Duke Roger III of Apulia (the eldest son of King Roger II); and Roger II's daughter, Constance, together with her husband, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI of Hohenstaufen, son of Frederick Barbarossa. Tancred was crowned King of Sicily in January 1190, greatly aided by the anti-German propaganda of William II's vice-chancellor, Matthew of Ajello. Even then, however, a great number of the nobility had sided with Henry VI, and Tancred's short reign was characterised by constant pressure from the German forces. When Tancred died in February 1194, leaving the kingdom to his wife, Sybil, ruling on behalf of their younger son, William III, Henry took full advantage, and led a campaign which culminated with his coronation as King of Sicily in December that year.

While the final decades of the twelfth century and the early decades of the thirteenth were not without difficulties for Montevergine, the disruptions caused by the political schism and the dynastic upheaval of the time did not affect the monastery in so dramatic a way as they did other religious institutions in the kingdom. Partly, this may be attributed to the continuous running of the administrative system set up by the Normans. The last Norman kings and both Henry VI and Constance ensured a degree of continuity and regularity in the administration of the kingdom, with few major changes in its structural make-up.<sup>1</sup> The central administration set up by Roger II remained largely in place throughout the twelfth-century, and royal donations to the monasteries of the kingdom if anything increased, though this varied across the kingdom. Certainly Montevergine received its first verifiably original royal diploma during the reign of Henry VI. Indeed, this relative stability allowed Montevergine to make provisions to ensure that its rights and possessions acquired during Norman times were maintained and upheld. Montevergine's success in this period can thus be attributed both to

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<sup>1</sup> See J.-M. Martin, 'L'administration du royaume entre Normandes et Souabes', in *Die Staufer im Süden. Sizilien und das Reich*, ed. by Theo Kölzer (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1996), pp. 113-40.



fortuitous political circumstances, and to the monastery's leaders' ability to adapt to and negotiate the challenges and situations with which they were presented.

The years spanning the crossover from Hauteville to Hohenstaufen rule were dealt with very cautiously by the monks of Montevergine. The comital rebellions of the previous decades, and their consequences for those directly involved, had made starkly evident the importance of treading carefully when it came to relationships with the king as well as his allies. William II's unexpected death in November 1189 was lamented by contemporary chroniclers,<sup>2</sup> and Montevergine had been loyal to the Norman line from the start, or at least tried to present itself in this light through the *Legenda*, even though the monks had received little or no tangible favour from the Norman monarchs.<sup>3</sup> As a number of studies have shown, at Montevergine we find some of the most telling evidence of the diplomatic tensions existing after the death of William II, in November 1189.<sup>4</sup> Between January and August 1190, the notaries of Montevergine abstained from specifying the regnal year in dating the charters issued in that time-frame. In particular, as Pietro De Leo has pointed out, in a *scriptum convenientie* issued in July 1190, the notaries and judges explicitly justified their decision. After concluding the terms of the transaction, they wrote:

It should be noted that after the death of our most glorious King William [II], of blessed memory, the king's rule has not been generally determined; therefore we judges and notaries have not put the time of the king's reign above with his name on this document at all.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard of San Germano, for example, included a 'verse lamentation' for William's death in his chronicle, in which William is called 'the wonder of his age', and his death is said to have left the kingdom 'desolate,/ in ruins and disturbed,/ and thus it must suffer/ the arrival of all its enemies'. See Ryccardus de Sancto Germano, *Chronica*, ed. by Carlo Alberto Garufi, RIS, VII.2 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1937-38), pp. 6-8. Translated by G. A. Loud, 'The Chronicle of Richard of S. Germano, 1189-1199', in *Leeds Medieval History Texts in Translation*, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/downloads/file/1123/the\\_chronicle\\_of\\_richard\\_of\\_s\\_germano\\_1189-99](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/downloads/file/1123/the_chronicle_of_richard_of_s_germano_1189-99) [accessed 30/01/2013], pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the forged Norman royal charters in the Montevergine archives, and especially Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 71-89.

<sup>4</sup> See especially Pietro de Leo, 'L'abbazia di Montevergine tra Normanni e Svevi', in *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine: I normanni chiamano gli Svevi. Atti del secondo convegno internazionale, 12-15 ottobre 1987*, pp. 43-69 (p. 52); Hubert Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore? Enrico VI e Montevergine', in *Federico II e Montevergine*, ed. by Placido Mario Tropeano (Roma: Edizioni De Luca, 1998), pp. 49-63 (especially pp. 53-54); and Cristina Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi" come *instrumenta regni*', particularly pp. 224-25.

<sup>5</sup> CDV 839. The passage reads: 'et notandum est quod cum post mortem domini nostri Guilielmi gloriosissimi regis felicissime memorie de rege regnum non esse generaliter ordinatum, ideo nos

Between January 1191 and February 1194, the monks of Montevergine chose to side with Tancred, who had been officially recognised as King of Sicily by Pope Celestine III, and was effectively in control of the mainland, with exception of the Abruzzi, after the withdrawal of Henry VI's army. For a brief period, in the summer of 1194, the monks continued to support the Norman rulers, dating their documents according to the regnal years of the young William III. However, already in October that year, before Henry's coronation as King of Sicily, the Verginian monks wasted no time in switching their allegiance to the new king, as demonstrated by the regnal dating in the charters.<sup>6</sup> Cava followed a similar path: all documents from January 1190 up to October 1194 are dated according to the regnal years of Tancred and William III, with the exception of a few documents in January and February 1194, after Tancred's death, which omit the regnal year altogether, although without explaining why in the way that the Montevergine notaries had.<sup>7</sup>

By taking these precautions, Montevergine was able to avoid the very serious consequences that other monasteries incurred. The great monasteries of the Mezzogiorno had to take position one way or another, and those that appeared to oppose Henry's claim to the Kingdom of Sicily paid the price. The Holy Trinity of Venosa, for example, where Robert Guiscard and his relatives were buried, was severely disciplined by Henry VI: the abbot was deposed, and the administration handed over to the dean of Montecassino.<sup>8</sup> The latter monastery, on the other hand, was physically at the heart of much of the turmoil and unrest of the succession years (its lands plagued by war and famine),<sup>9</sup> and consequently experienced internal divisions in this period; eventually, Abbot Roffred, who was in line with

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preominati iudices et notarii huic documento regis nomine eisque regni tempus minime preposuimus'. My thanks to Dr William Flynn for his help in translating this passage.

<sup>6</sup> For Tancred see CDV 852, 856, 860, 867, 880, 884, 885, 886, 889, 890, 912, 914, 917, 920, 921, 922, 923. For William III see CDV 925 and 936. Henry first appears in CDV 943.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Archivio della Badia di S. Trinità, Cava dei Tirreni, Arca xlii.53 onwards for Tancred's reign, Arca xliii.102-3 for documents without regnal year in 1194, and Arca xliii.104-119 for William III's reign. Arca xliii.120 is the first document with Henry VI's regnal year. My thanks to G. A. Loud for generously providing this information from his own edition of the Cava documents.

<sup>8</sup> See Houben, *Die Abtei Venosa und das Mönchtum im normannisch-staufischen Süditalien* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), pp. 164-166.

<sup>9</sup> See *Annales Casinenses*, MGH, *Scriptores*, xix.314-18. Translated by G.A. Loud, 'The Annals of Montecassino, 1189-1195', *Leeds Medieval History Texts in Translation*, [http://medievalsicily.com/Docs/04\\_Kingdom\\_of\\_Sicily/Annales%20Casinenses%20trans%20gl.pdf](http://medievalsicily.com/Docs/04_Kingdom_of_Sicily/Annales%20Casinenses%20trans%20gl.pdf) [Accessed 30/01/2013], pp. 2-4.

the pope's policies, and supported Tancred, was made to join the group of pro-imperial monks led by Dean Atenulf after a visit from Henry VI in Summer 1191.<sup>10</sup> As he passed through southern Italy with his army, Henry VI persuaded the monks to give him their support, and indeed Richard of San Germano assured his readers that the abbot of Montecassino's 'pure loyalty was well-known to the emperor'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Santa Sofia in Benevento supported Henry VI, and switched allegiance to Tancred only for a brief time, as Loud has shown.<sup>12</sup> The Abbey of Cava had supported Henry VI from the outset, but Hubert Houben suggests that careful analysis of a number of unedited documents from 1194 shows that shortfalls in allegiance could also be punished: the name of the abbot of Cava is excluded in Henry's confirmation of Cava's possessions issued in September 1194, and the same abbot, Roger, is also excluded from the abbey's list of abbots. Houben suggests Henry's condition for granting the royal confirmation was the deposition of Abbot Roger, in a bid to remove all political opposition to the new emperor's reign.<sup>13</sup>

Conversely, those monasteries that played their cards well were generously rewarded by Henry and Constance. Montecassino received three diplomas from the emperor on the day of his coronation in 1194.<sup>14</sup> Santa Sofia of Benevento was exempted from Henry's crusade levy in 1197.<sup>15</sup> Montevergine received its first imperial privilege in March 1195, during Henry's visit to Apulia. Henry attended an assembly held in Bari on 30 March and issued several privileges, including one to the monastery of Sant'Angelo in Volto, on the river Ofanto, but Montevergine was the only one to receive two privileges that day.<sup>16</sup> The content of the privileges was in itself of exceptional value to Montevergine. The first mostly granted the

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<sup>10</sup> Roffred was taken prisoner by Henry VI, and his brother taken hostage upon Roffred's release in 1192. See Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande*, p. 453.

<sup>11</sup> See Ryccardus de Sancto Germano, *Chronica*, p. 17: '[...] dicto Casinensi abbate preeunte, cuius fidei puritas satis erat ipsi imperatori experta'. Translation is by Loud, 'The Chronicle of Richard of S. Germano', p. 13. See also Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande*, pp. 452-53.

<sup>12</sup> See Loud, 'Monarchy and Monastery in the Mezzogiorno: The Abbey of St. Sofia, Benevento and the Staufers', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 59 (1991), 364-73.

<sup>13</sup> Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 52. See also P. Guillaume (to whom Houben refers), *Essai historique sur l'abbaye de Cava d'après des documents inédits* (Cava dei Tirreni, 1877), p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> See Dione Clementi, 'Calendar of the Diplomas of the Hohenstaufen Emperor Henry VI', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 35 (1955), 86-225 (pp. 129-31).

<sup>15</sup> Loud, 'A Lombard Abbey in a Norman World', p. 273.

<sup>16</sup> Clementi, 'Calendar of the Diplomas', pp. 152-55. See also Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 55. Also Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 71-89; and Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', p. 255.

monastery a number of fiscal exemptions, as well as taking the monastery under the protective wing of the emperor. Enzensberger noted that the grant of unlimited pasture rights without incurring the usual levies was less ordinary, but it was accorded that same day to Sant'Angelo as well.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the emperor wanted to express his gratitude for the monks' support, and make an example of the two monasteries by rewarding them in this unusual manner. With the second privilege, the emperor gave Montevergine the *castellum* of Mercogliano.

This has been considered a landmark in the history of Montevergine by its historiographers, as it effectively gave the monastery the status of 'baron of the kingdom', as Tropeano remarked.<sup>18</sup> The land of Mercogliano was among the properties confiscated by Henry VI from the Norman count of Avellino in 1194 during his military campaign in the Kingdom of Sicily.<sup>19</sup> The rumour spread by Peter of Eboli of a *white* monk revealing to Henry VI a plot to depose him was interpreted by Verginian historiographers as referring to a monk of Montevergine. Houben has already clarified that there is no reason to attribute this role to a Verginian monk, and, in fact, the description of the monk's white habit suggests he was a Cistercian, not a Benedictine.<sup>20</sup> Tropeano believed this story set the scene for Henry's generous privileges. Certainly, the conferral of the lordship of Mercogliano upon Montevergine not only strengthened the monastery's political ties to the King of Sicily, but also, and most importantly, it gave Montevergine unprecedented administrative and legal rights and powers, though there is some doubt as to whether all of these are original or interpolated (the privilege survives in a fifteenth-century copy).<sup>21</sup> In order to ensure the quiet possession of the monastery's lands, the king removed the monastery from secular and episcopal

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<sup>17</sup> Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 77-78.

<sup>18</sup> Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte* (Napoli: Arturo Beirsio Editore, 1973), pp. 126-34. Tropeano also suggests that the twelfth-century wooden throne displayed at the museum in Montevergine may have been built to inaugurate the abbot of Montevergine's new role as 'lord of Mercogliano' (p. 134).

<sup>19</sup> On Henry's military entrance into the kingdom, see Ryccardus de Sancto Germano, *Chronica*, pp. 16-17; Also Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> See Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, pp. 132-33. On the other hand, see Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 54.

<sup>21</sup> See Enzenberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 87-88. Enzensberger points out that the lack of mention of civil court rights in later Frederick privileges is surprising and suggests that this particular privilege is a later interpolation. However, the example of Santa Sofia in Benevento suggests that Frederick II's government was later less generous than Henry VI's, even towards favoured monasteries. See Loud, 'Monastery and Monarchy', p. 291.

jurisdiction, so that the abbey would have to take any cases directly to the king. Thus a local legal court evolved, for the monastery to solve its own issues and disputes, subsidiary to, or competing with, the count's or king's courts.<sup>22</sup>

The lordship of Mercogliano, however, also brought with it the same duties and obligations to which all the kings' barons and vassals were held. As Panarelli has argued, it is with this in mind that one should consider the *magnum adiutorium* imposed by the emperor and his men on Montevergine in the last years of the century — between 1196 and 1197, according to Houben's calculations.<sup>23</sup> The event was presented with a great sense of urgency in the charters, with reports that the monastery 'magnum debebat debitum', following payment of the *adiutorium*, a general levy that could be imposed by the king on his vassals, and exacted either in military personnel (i.e. a stipulated number of knights), or in money (more likely in the case of church institutions); but it is clear that overall Montevergine had both the resources and the managerial skills to overcome this set-back. Provost Roger and Cellarer Andrew organised a number of sales and leases in 1199-1200 to cover the monastery's debts, and there is little sign of disruption to the rest of Montevergine's economic activities in these years or in the following ones.<sup>24</sup> Montevergine was not the only institution to suffer financially in these years of political upheaval: Santa Sofia of Benevento proved particularly sensitive to the problems of the dynastic overturn in the late twelfth century. The first signs of trouble occurred in 1193, and the abbey did not fully recover for the following forty years.<sup>25</sup> Montevergine's strong ties with the local community and with its donors proved paramount in these circumstances: in a few instances, Montevergine's creditors gave up their reimbursements, transforming their loans into donations to the monastery; in one case, in May 1197, an inhabitant of

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<sup>22</sup> For further discussion of Montevergine's management of Mercogliano see Chapter 8, p. 239 below. See also Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> CDV 1070, 1071, 1072. See Francesco Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II: il caso di Montevergine', in *Federico II nel Regno di Sicilia. Realtà locali e aspirazioni universali*, ed. by Hubert Houben and Georg Vogeler, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Barletta, 19-20 ottobre 2007) (Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 2008), pp. 189-220 (pp. 196-97). Houben postulates that Henry VI could have imposed the *adiutorium* on his way through the Irpinia area in preparation for his crusade, which left Messina early in September 1197 though the emperor was too ill to accompany it; see Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', pp. 61-62.

<sup>24</sup> See CDV 1070, 1071, 1072, 1075, 1976, 1077, 1078 etc.

<sup>25</sup> Loud, 'A Lombard Abbey in a Norman World', pp. 295-96.

Montefusco gave Montevergine the right to collect debts owed to him by a number of men.<sup>26</sup>

In the end, Henry was not resented for his actions towards Montevergine, and was indeed remembered in the monastery's *necrologium*, on 1 October (although he died on 28 September 1197).<sup>27</sup> Tropeano saw the imposition of the *adiutorium* on Montevergine as punishment for the monastery's temporary support of Tancred, and while there may have been some veiled resentment on the emperor's part in issuing the order, Henry's plans to leave on crusade before his death in 1197 no doubt affected more than just one monastery.<sup>28</sup> Hubert Houben concluded in a study on Henry's relationship with Montevergine that Henry granted Montevergine important privileges during his reign, and both he and his wife, Constance, were regarded as benefactors, not exploiters of Montevergine.<sup>29</sup> It is clear in fact that Henry VI did more for Montevergine than any other monarch before him. The same cannot be said for his son, Frederick II, who, despite the many diplomas he issued to the monastery, was not included in the monastery's book of remembrance.

At first this appears contradictory, as there was a steep increase in charters issued from the royal chancery to Montevergine during the reign of Frederick II, with a total of twenty-two diplomas issued between 1198 and 1251.<sup>30</sup> When compared to the two issued during the entirety of the previous century, the figure stands out. Graph 3 shows the overall issuing trends of Frederick's chancery. It has also been noted that Frederick had marked preference for the Cistercian order, and there is the possibility that he died wearing the white habit of the Cistercians. This may have influenced his attitude to Montevergine, with a tendency to issue fewer privileges to non-Cistercian houses, on the one hand, and, perhaps later, a more favourable attitude to Montevergine, which displayed an economic aptitude typical

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<sup>26</sup> See CDV 1027, 1071. See also Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', pp. 196-97.

<sup>27</sup> *Monachesimo e mondo dei laici: Il necrologio di Montevergine*, ed. by Matteo Villani, *Fonti per la storia del Mezzogiorno medievale*, 8 (Altavilla Silentina: Edizioni Studi Meridionali, 1990), p. 83.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Franco Bartoloni, 'Due documenti per la storia della terra santa', *Bullettino dell'archivio paleografico italiano*, 5 (1955), 133-8 (137-8). See Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 132.

<sup>29</sup> See Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> FIID, nos. 59, 108, 522. The post-November 1220 diplomas are either in *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi: sive constitutiones, privilegia, mandata, instrumenta quae supersunt istius Imperatoris et filiorum ejus*, ed. by Jean Louis A. Huillard-Bréholles, 6 vols (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1963), or in Mongelli's *Regesti*.

of the Cistercians.<sup>31</sup> Cristina Andenna argues with particular reference to Montevergine that rather than assisting the birth of new orders, Frederick and his chancellor, Walter of Pagliara, were supporters of the orders' expansions.<sup>32</sup> Yet a first glance at these documents reveals that the majority were confirmations of the monastery's existing possessions, and very rarely did Frederick make any new concessions. This has been observed by Panarelli in his study of Montevergine's relationship with Frederick II.<sup>33</sup> Moreover it is misleading on Andenna's part to talk about the assistance of the birth of the Verginian community in the time of Frederick II, when Montevergine had existed and continued to develop for almost a century. It seems important to further stress, too, that in the first twenty years of his reign, Frederick II issued only two documents to Montevergine, and only the first of these was issued by Frederick personally, while the second was carried out by Walter of Pagliara in the emperor's name.<sup>34</sup>

The relationship between Frederick II and Montevergine is not a straightforward one. The diplomas issued by the chancery do not necessarily speak of Frederick's pious support of the monasteries, as Houben's revision of the emperor's life warned historians, but one needs to take into consideration a number of complex factors.<sup>35</sup> The two main factors are: 1) Frederick II secured allegiances with monasteries and local nobility in order to maintain control and garner support at a local administrative level;<sup>36</sup> 2) the first of Frederick's Capuan reforms in 1220, the *de resignandis privilegiis*, meant that previous grants made since the death of William II in 1189 were considered illegitimate, and needed to be confirmed by the new king — this explains the number of confirmations issued,

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<sup>31</sup> See Theo Kölzer, 'La monarchia normanno-sveva e l'ordine cistercense', in *I cistercensi nel Mezzogiorno medioevale: atti del Convegno internazionale di studio in occasione del IX centenario della nascita di Bernardo di Clairvaux (Martano-Latiano-Lecce, 25-27 febbraio 1991)*, ed. by Hubert Houben and Benedetto Vetere (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1994), pp. 91-116.

<sup>32</sup> Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', pp. 126-27. On Walter of Pagliara see Norbert Kamp, *Kirche und Monarchie im staufischen Königreich Sizilien*

<sup>33</sup> See Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', pp. 219-220.

<sup>34</sup> FIID, nos. 59, 108.

<sup>35</sup> See Houben, *Kaiser Friedrich II. (1194-1250). Herrscher, Mensch und Mythos* (Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 2008), pp. 150-58; David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London: Pimlico, 2002), especially pp. 436-39.

<sup>36</sup> See Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', pp. 226-56.

and, to a certain extent, the number of contemporary copies and forgeries made in this period.<sup>37</sup>

Both Henry VI and Frederick II were threatened in their rule of the Kingdom of Sicily by the temperamental and sometimes unpredictable changes of loyalty of the lords and barons of the kingdom, and of other claimants to power. Moreover, particularly in Frederick's case, the two rulers constantly struggled or failed to maintain the papacy on their side, which naturally had repercussions on their relationships with monasteries. The loyalty of their ecclesiastical allies was therefore important to Henry and Frederick. Indeed many of the major monasteries wielded a great deal of power in their own right, and could be powerful allies — the abbot of Montecassino, for example, joined Henry in the siege of Naples in 1191 with his troops, and was later instrumental in opposing Markward of Anweiler's claims to the throne by swearing fealty to Innocent III as regent during Frederick's minority;<sup>38</sup> not to mention the monasteries' role in offering asylum to political fugitives — Montevergine played its part in this respect harbouring William Francisio, an eye-witness of Frederick II's imprisonment in 1201, and was fined 120 golden ounces by Markward.<sup>39</sup> For this reason Cristina Andenna speaks of the kingdom's monasteries, in particular the 'new' orders of the twelfth century as '*instrumenta regni*', and not as the objects of royal patronage for its own sake.<sup>40</sup>

The extent to which this can be applied to Frederick's early privileges for Montevergine is debatable. It is true that these stress elements of dynastic continuity, with strong references to the young emperor's parents, particularly his mother, Constance. In light of other similar privileges to other monasteries, it makes sense to read this rhetoric as a tool to consolidate Frederick's legitimacy and impress the allegiance owed by the monasteries to him and to his line.<sup>41</sup> In a privilege issued at the court in Palermo, in March 1206, when he was only eleven years old, not only did Frederick explain his particular devotion (or perhaps duty or allegiance) to the monastery of Montevergine by emphasising his mother's love

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<sup>37</sup> For the Capuan decrees see See Richard of San Germano, *Chronica*, pp. 83-93

<sup>38</sup> See Richard of San Germano, *Chronica*, p. 13 and pp. 19-20.

<sup>39</sup> CDV 1276; see also Chapter 6 p. 158; and Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', p. 203.

<sup>40</sup> Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', pp. 195-268, particularly pp. 195-209.

<sup>41</sup> Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', pp. 224-60.



of the Verginians, but he placed particular importance on the monastery's own connection both to Constance and especially to the Holy Mother, to the Virgin Mary.<sup>42</sup> Naturally it is hard to comment on how much of the very emotive language used in the charter was a reflection of the young emperor's genuine feelings for both his mother and the monastery; there is no doubt, however, that the mother-son relationship was very much on his mind, and it is also peculiar that the emperor's father, Henry, should not be directly mentioned at all in the document.<sup>43</sup> There is affection and emotional resonance in the words of the boy emperor, and one must not underestimate the power of this affection and perhaps nostalgia for his mother in leading Frederick to follow in her footsteps at this young age — for example, when he specified that it was 'in his childhood' that Frederick learned to venerate the Virgin Mary, an otherwise peculiar thing to say for an eleven-year-old boy.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, Montevergine's own rights were challenged by local laymen, sometimes by the benefactors themselves, and the monastery needed to be able to assert and prove its rights over its possessions.<sup>45</sup> When in 1220 Frederick II effectively made void thirty years of privileges involving demesne land, the need to have these re-issued and to have the monastery's possessions confirmed became all the more urgent for Montevergine. Frederick II's main purpose was to regain control of the land which had been alienated either through careless governance or through the abuses of the king's vassals and counsellors,

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<sup>42</sup> FIID, n. 59. The following passage is particularly telling: 'Tunc enim melius nostri disponuntur iura regiminis, si grate devotionis obsequio matrem prevenimus salvatoris, ut nos in nostro regimine semper conservet incolumen, qui dat salutem regibus et quem fatemur et profitemur corde, voce et opera salvatorem, maxime autem, o virgo virginum, illud tuum duximus monasterium pia devotione colendum, quod speciali vocabulo de Monte Virginis dicitur, religione et nomine prerogativam optinens, loci positione in regno nostro veneratione prepollens, ut vere, sicut in puericia nostra didicimus, oleum effusum sit nomen eius, quod in viscera misericordie semper diffunditur, sanctitate attollitur, religione et Gloria exaltatur. Odoris itaque huius sanctissimi loci plena suavitate refecti piaque domine genitricis nostre excellentissime quondam Romanorum imperatricis auguste ab annis nostris teneris vestigia immitati, que monasterium ipsum et dilexit et suis beneficiis extullit, de pia nostra largitione regia concedimus...'

<sup>43</sup> See Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', p. 227; also Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', pp. 198-99, where he argues that the document reflects the uncertainty experienced at court during this the period: the charter, surviving as a copy from 1232, lacks the *corroboratio*, resulting in doubts about the professionalism of its scribes.

<sup>44</sup> The emperor says of Montevergine: 'religione et nomine prerogativam optinens, loci positione in regno nostro veneratione prepollens, ut vere, sicut in puericia nostra didicimus, oleum effusum sit nomen eius, quod in viscera misericordie semper diffunditur, sanctitate attollitur, religione et Gloria exaltatur'. FIID, n. 59, p. 120.

<sup>45</sup> For further discussion of land disputes involving Montevergine, see especially p. 170 below.

particularly Markward of Anweiler, who had held the royal seals during the reign of Henry and Constance, and issued documents in their name.<sup>46</sup> The immediate result was a surge in documents issued to the monasteries of the *Regno*. As previously discussed, the number of forgeries and interpolations created and backdated to the time of the emperor's predecessors in the post-1220 environment is significant and even troublesome. In fact, this was also the opportunity for Montevergine to recast its Norman connections, as is irrefutably evidenced by the fact that the four "Norman" royal privileges preserved in the Montevergine archives are forgeries, probably created after the Capuan decree.<sup>47</sup> One of these, a privilege of Roger II dated 1140, included the confirmation of the monastery of Santa Maria Incoronata of Foggia, over which the monks of Montevergine were at great pains to claim lordship in the first quarter of the thirteenth century; and Montevergine shifted its attention to Goleto in the 1230s, generating further forgeries and interpolations.<sup>48</sup> Two letters issued by the emperor in December 1222 further confirm this: both contained orders which the abbot of Montevergine had requested from the emperor, and the second specifically addressed the abbot's concerns for his lands which had been violated by the king's own officials taking advantage of the Capuan decrees.<sup>49</sup>

Only the year prior to the promulgation of the assizes of Capua, in May 1219, Abbot Donato of Montevergine had sent his monks to Frederick II's court in Germany to obtain confirmation of the donations made after the death of William II by 'counts, barons and knights, and other faithful [to the king]'.<sup>50</sup> This ability to foresee the direction of the political tides in the kingdom demonstrates a shrewdness on the part of the abbots of Montevergine which allowed the monastery not only to stay on top of the political currents, but to thrive within

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<sup>46</sup> See Richard of San Germano, *Chronica*, pp. 83–93, especially 91. See also discussion in Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 140–42; Loud, 'The Chancery and Charters', p. 805.

<sup>47</sup> For these see Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 71–89, especially 71–75 and 79–87. On the thirteenth-century forgeries in general see Carlone, *Falsificazioni e falsari*, esp. pp. 11–22. A charter dated February 1228 claims that Gregory IX delegated Bishop Roger of Avellino to transfer the churches of Santa Maria di Paterno, S. Pietro di Chiusano and San Leonardo di Montemarano, disputed between Goleto and Montevergine, into the full possession of Montevergine. See *Regesto* 1617.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 8, p. 243.

<sup>49</sup> *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi*, ii:1, pp. 280–81.

<sup>50</sup> FIID, n. 522.

them as well.<sup>51</sup> The privileges and confirmations secured by Montevergine in the first two decades of the thirteenth century, and the economic progress made at this time are testament to this. The role of individual abbots and obedientiaries of the monastery in maintaining the momentum of Montevergine's success has been highlighted by Cristina Andenna.<sup>52</sup> This can be seen in Abbot John's supposed building campaign in the 1180s,<sup>53</sup> and Donato's achievements in securing both papal and royal support, as well as establishing the beginnings of a customary for Montevergine. The so-called 'Statute of Abbot Donato' of 1210 contains some of the earliest evidence of institutional practices unique to Montevergine.<sup>54</sup>

Panarelli argues that the exclusion of Frederick II from the *necrologium* of Montevergine should not be interpreted as a slight to the emperor on the monastery's part. It was not a way to punish the emperor for his misgivings in involving the *Regno's* monasteries in his attempts to secure his hold over his own domain, as one might at first be inclined to believe. After all, both his parents are commemorated in the same *necrologium*.<sup>55</sup> The charters, on the other hand, indicate that Frederick was the ruler who cooperated most closely with Montevergine, issuing ten times more documents in the monastery's favour than any ruler before him.<sup>56</sup> It seems more likely, as Panarelli suggests, that this was a case of judicious distancing from the emperor by Montevergine, in order to preserve the monastery's relationship with Pope Innocent IV, whose rapport with Frederick II was disastrous to say the least.<sup>57</sup> His relationship with Montevergine should also be viewed within the wider context of Frederick's position to other monasteries in the kingdom. Frederick's devotion is in fact far more evident in his interactions with the Cistercian houses of the kingdom: there are one hundred and forty-one diplomas issued by Frederick II to twenty Cistercian houses in southern-

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<sup>51</sup> See Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', p. 198.

<sup>52</sup> See Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', pp. 234-37.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 7, p. 208 below on Abbot John's building campaign, the evidence for which comes through Tommaso Costo, the sixteenth-century chronicler of Montevergine, and finds little support in the charter material.

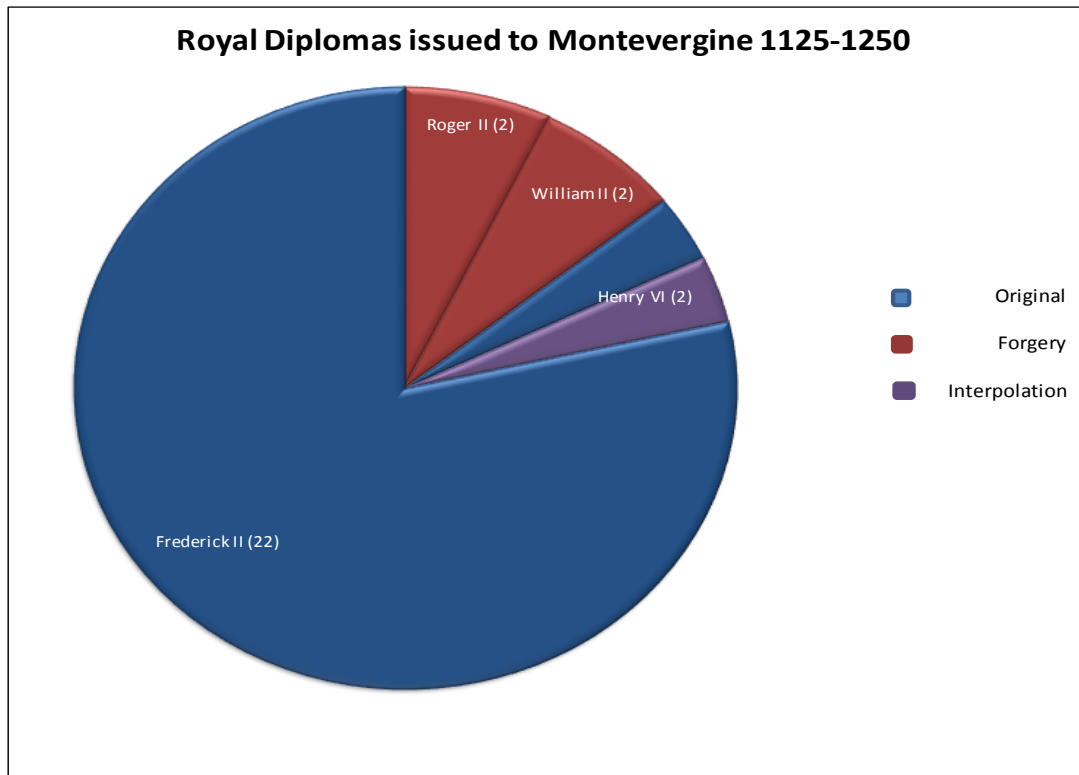
<sup>54</sup> On the statute see Chapter 7 below, and Teresa Colamarco, 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"', in *Virtute et labore: studi offerti a Giuseppe Avarucci per i suoi settant'anni*, ed. by Rosa M. Borraccini and Giammarco Borri (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2008), pp. 131-50.

<sup>55</sup> Empress Constance is remembered on 26 November, see *Monachesimo e mondo dei laici*, p. 93.

<sup>56</sup> See Graph 2, p. 88.

<sup>57</sup> Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', p. 192.

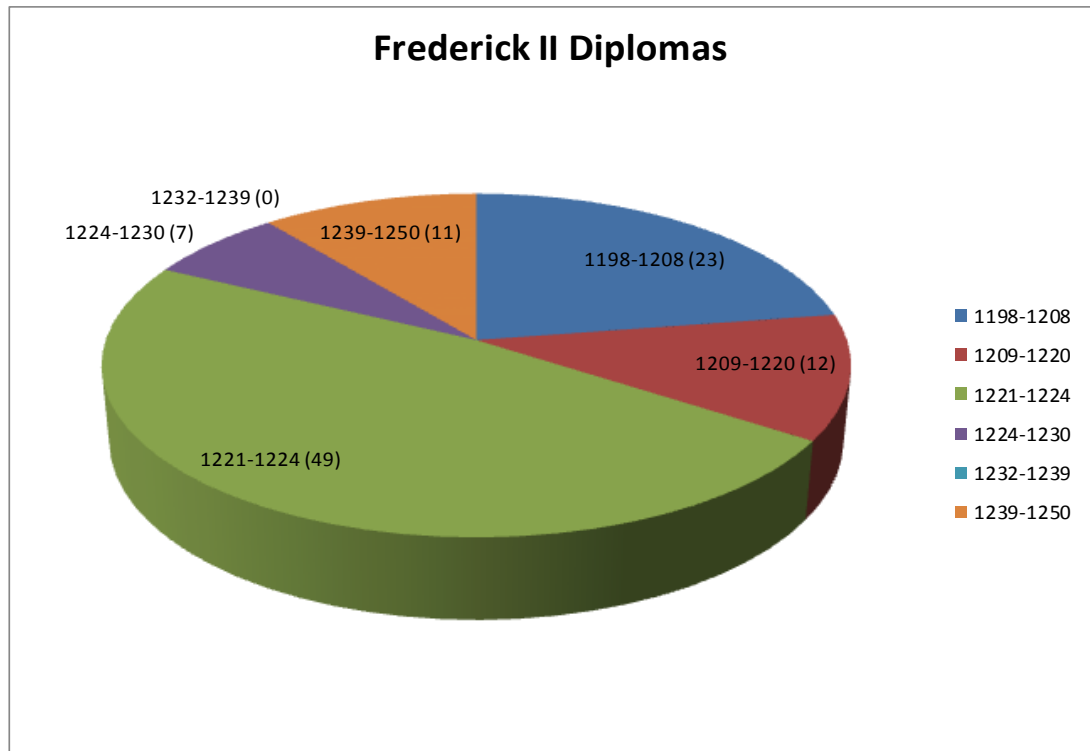
Italy during his rule.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the emperor appointed the abbot of the Cistercian house of Casamari as head of the royal chancery in 1221, and rumour has it that Frederick died wearing the Cistercian habit.<sup>59</sup> It would appear that Frederick was closer to the Cistercian monasteries than to Benedictine institutions like Montevergine, and this is reflected in the scarcity of new endowments towards Montevergine, and in the emperor's absence from the *necrologium*.



Graph 2: Sourced from *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi*.

<sup>58</sup> See Kölzer, 'La monarchia normanno-sveva', pp. 99-100.

<sup>59</sup> See Kölzer, 'La monarchia normanno-sveva', p. 109.



**Graph 3:** Sourced from *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi*.

Given the complete lack of documentary evidence for the papacy's involvement with Montevergine for the majority of the twelfth century, the privilege issued by Celestine III in November 1197 and the evidence of the pope's involvement in the political affairs of the monastery in the first half of the thirteenth century represent a marked improvement for the historiography regarding Montevergine's relations with the papacy. Celestine III's privilege confirmed the (alleged) bulls issued by Celestine's predecessors Alexander III and Lucius III. It did little more than confirm the monastery's existing possessions, even omitting a number of them, but it set a welcome precedent for Montevergine.<sup>60</sup> It includes forty-two dependencies, along with a number of other possessions, such as land, mills, and *casales*, in the monastery's major territorial hubs. We know that the list is not exhaustive, however, as it does not include the church of San Cesareo, for example, which is described in the *Legenda* as a donation of a noble named Adam to William of Vercelli, and confirmed by a charter dated September 1170, in which Bishop Iaquinto of Frigento confirmed the church to Abbot John of Montevergine, together with the church of San Nicola in the

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<sup>60</sup> MBR, III, pp. 61-63, n. 24.

territory of Rocca San Felice.<sup>61</sup> The bull came at a time of need for the monastery, and this perhaps was not a coincidence. It followed Henry's exaction of the *adiutorium*, and it preceded Provost Roger and Cellarer Andrew's efforts to secure the necessary funds to pay the fee demanded by Diepold of Acerra two years later in 1199.<sup>62</sup> It is likely, then, that the monks had requested the confirmation from Pope Celestine III, in preparation for the sale and lease of the monastery's lands. In May 1197, Abbot Gabriel had requested the confirmation of the church of San Marco in Pietrelcina and all its landholdings from Lord Bartholomew of Pietralcina, the next of kin of the original donor, Lord Richard, who had made the donation to Abbot John.<sup>63</sup> In return, Abbot Gabriel gave Lord Bartholomew 20 golden ounces, and livestock to the value of a further 20 golden ounces. This conspicuous remuneration is an indication that the monastery's possessions were not always secure, and was perhaps the warning sign that led Abbot Gabriel to seek confirmation of Montevergine's lands.

The pope's interest in the community of Montevergine is also evident in Honorius III's decision to depose its abbot in 1220, a task he entrusted to the abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria di Ferraria, and which is reported by the anonymous chronicler of the latter institution.<sup>64</sup> Quite what prompted this drastic action is not specified, and there is no indication of this occurrence in the Verginian documents, nor in the later historiography, which was only recently unearthed by Tropeano.<sup>65</sup> The event is in any case a subtle reminder of the reforming influence that the Cistercians were now exerting in southern Italy.<sup>66</sup> Troubles in the community of Montevergine are hinted at in its archives the

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<sup>61</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 41.

<sup>62</sup> On Diepold, see especially Norbert Kamp, 'Die deutsche Präsenz im Königreich Sizilien (1194-1266)', in *Die Staufer im Süden*, ed. by Theo Kölzer (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1996), pp. 141-85 (pp. 148-49, 154-55). See also Kölzer in *Lexicon des Mittelalters*, 9 vols (München: Artemis-Verlag, 1980-1999), iii, 108-09.

<sup>63</sup> CDV 1030. The original donation is not recorded, or the charter has gone missing. The reference to the names of the parties involved in the original donation indicate perhaps that it had been an oral transaction.

<sup>64</sup> *Chronica romanorum pp. et imperatorum ac de rebus in Apulia gestis, Auctore ignoto monacho cisterciensi*, ed. by A. Gaudenzi, Monumenti storici, serie I (Naples: Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, 1888), p. 37. S. Maria di Ferraria had experienced internal strife itself, probably due to mixed political loyalties during the Norman-Swabian succession years, and the abbot was deposed between 1190-93. See Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"', p. 220.

<sup>65</sup> CDV, XIII, 'Introduzione', p. xxiv. See also Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', pp. 204-06.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 23 for the Cistercian presence in southern Italy. On their role as reformers here, see particularly Kölzer, 'La monarchia normanno-sveva', p. 109.

following year, in August 1221, when two monks of Montevergine went to Rome, to the church of Santo Stefano de Laterano, to terminate the case of monk Robert, who had posed as procurator of Montevergine at the papal court to make an accusation against the abbot, displaying forged letters and forged seals.<sup>67</sup> Tropeano suggests Donato may have been the abbot deposed in 1220, given that there is a nine month gap between the last document to mention Donato, and the first to mention his successor John II; but Panarelli points out that Donato had good relations with the pope, and that the monk Robert may have been among the monks disciplined by the abbot of Ferraria.<sup>68</sup> It seems plausible that the monk Robert was unhappy with the new abbot, or was simply voicing his loyalty to Donato at the papal court. In either case, the emphasis on obedience is another reminder of the strength of Benedictine observance at Montevergine in the thirteenth-century — Robert was made to admit his wrong-doings and promise obedience to the abbot.

Local support for Montevergine remained nevertheless strong during German rule, in spite of the number of disputes it faced, and the monastery was able to expand its landholdings and its network of dependent churches. The number of charters preserved for this period in the Montevergine archives improved somewhat from the time of Tancred's reign as King of Sicily, with an average of nine charters preserved per year during his reign, and ten under German rule, compared to six under William II, and only three under Roger II and his son.<sup>69</sup> This is due to the increase in the monastery's economic activities, with more lease and *pastinatio* contracts issued to local tenants, a slight increase in sales and purchases of land, particularly around the turn of the century, as discussed above, coupled with a steady flow of donations.<sup>70</sup> The bulk of donations continued to come from within the Irpinia region, particularly around Montevergine's established centres, such as Avella, Sarno, Taurasi, Summonte and Mercogliano. The most noticeable development is in the donations made to Montevergine's new dependencies, most of which emerged in the last three

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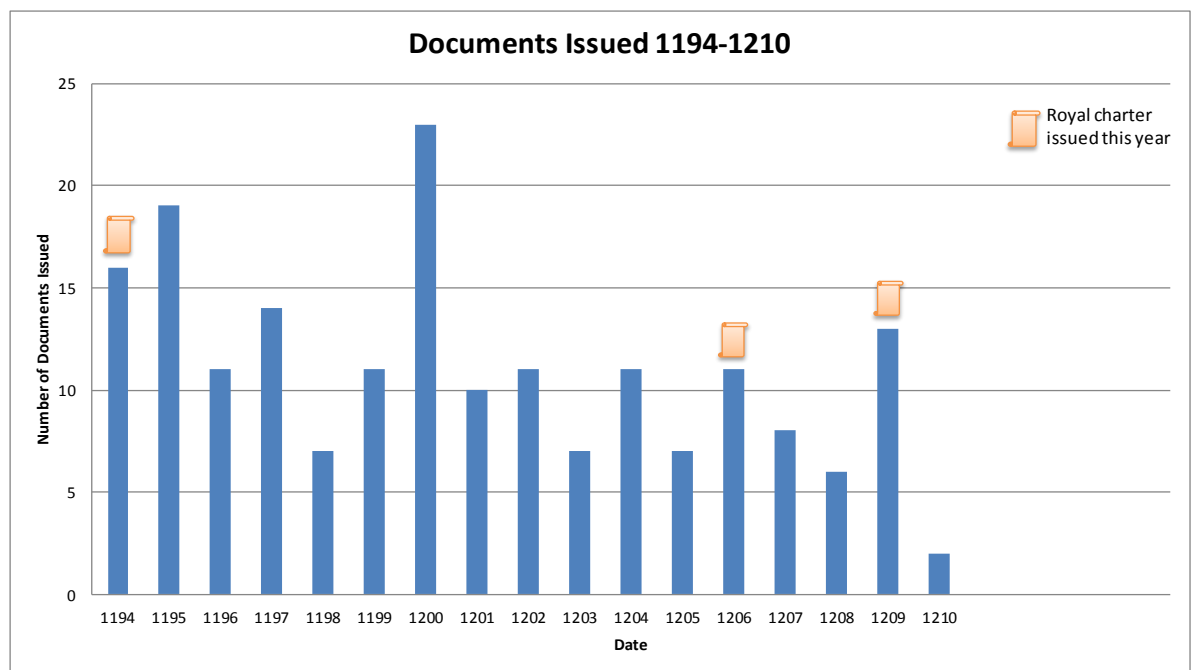
<sup>67</sup> *Regesto* 1472. The document reveals that the seals were forged at a workshop in Pietrastornina. See Carlone, *Falsificazioni e falsari*, p. 58.

<sup>68</sup> Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Montevergine', p. 205.

<sup>69</sup> See Graph 2.

<sup>70</sup> See Graph 1, Graph 5, Graph 6. The figures shown in these graphs are indicative, as some transactions recorded in *memoratoria* contracts may have been omitted.

decades of the twelfth century, particularly around Nola (Santa Maria del Plesco, established around 1165),<sup>71</sup> but also Baiano (1188),<sup>72</sup> in Capua (1191),<sup>73</sup> Casacugnano (1195),<sup>74</sup> and Benevento (the house of San Giacomo, which long predated the Montevergine charters, attested here as dependency of Montevergine from 1197).<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the donations of Mercogliano and Maddaloni by Henry VI and Frederick II in 1195 and 1206 respectively increased the monastery's focus on these areas, and we find many more charters issued there both for and from the monastery.<sup>76</sup> A Verginian procurator is found in Mercogliano from around 1200, and by 1205 a new dependency had been established there.<sup>77</sup> In Maddaloni, where a Verginian dependency is attested from 1178, and a hospital from 1199, the construction of a new church was licensed by the Bishop of Caserta in 1208.<sup>78</sup>



Graph 4: Sourced from charters in CDV.

<sup>71</sup> CDV 956, 957, 982, 998, 1084, 1159, 1205.

<sup>72</sup> CDV 1121, 1129, 1131, 1186, 1198, 1206, 1207, 1213, 1236, 1268.

<sup>73</sup> CDV 965, 1165.

<sup>74</sup> CDV 979, 991, 1017, 1037.

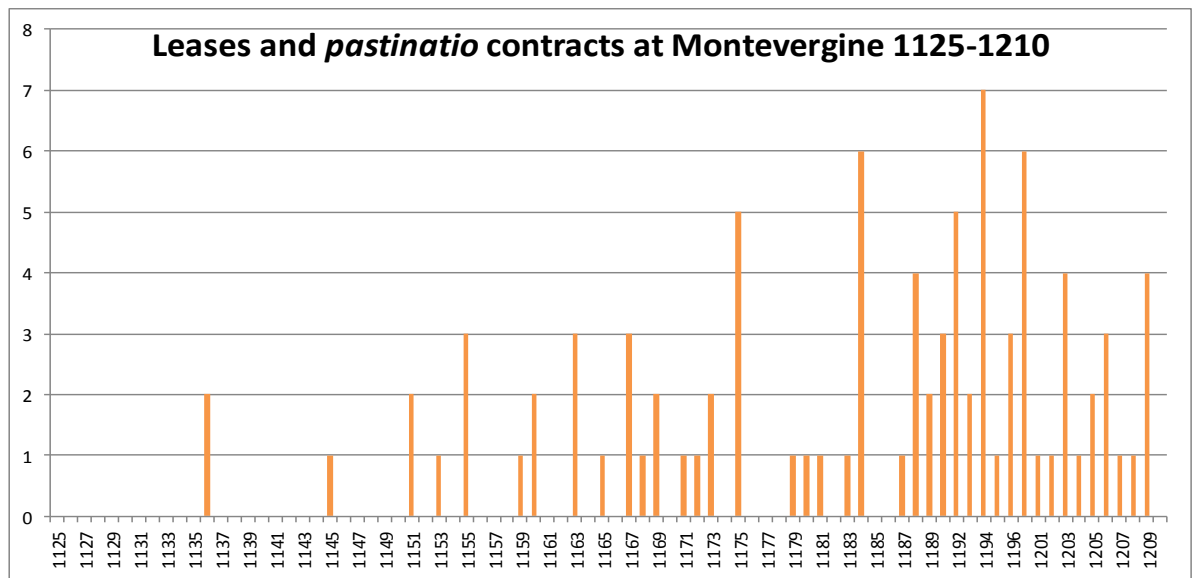
<sup>75</sup> CDV 1030, 1031.

<sup>76</sup> For Maddaloni see for example CDV 965, 1058, 1077, 1128, 1232, 1242. For Mercogliano see for example CDV 994, 1033, 1082, 1110, 1226, 1228, 1239, 1240, 1252, 1253.

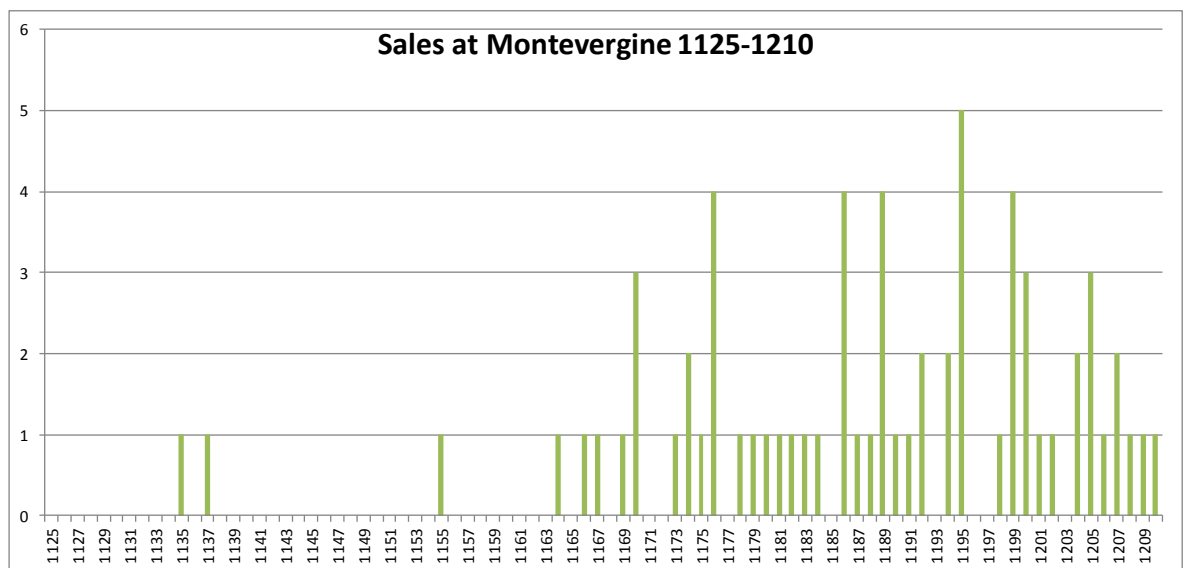
<sup>77</sup> See CDV 1136 and 1226.

<sup>78</sup> See CDV 1272 for the bishop's licence.





Graph 5: Sourced from charters in CDV.



Graph 6: Sourced from charters in CDV.

These new establishments were also part of Montevergine's shift towards more densely inhabited areas, as the monastery adapted to more suitable surroundings that would enable its economic progress, even though these were no longer necessarily in line with the founder's original intentions. Indeed Montevergine acquired a number of new properties that not only differed from the traditional land donations, such as houses, workshops, and other urban structures, but there were also many more donations emerging in the adjacent regions than there previously had been, as Martin has shown in his study on the presence of

Montevergine and Goleto in Apulia and Basilicata.<sup>79</sup> He argues that there are three key areas outside Irpinia in which Montevergine developed at the end of the twelfth century and throughout the thirteenth: Capitanata (the northern region of Apulia), Basilicata, and central Apulia.<sup>80</sup> In Basilicata, the monastery's expansion was aided to a large extent by Count James of Tricarico, catepan and master justiciar of Apulia, whose generosity was praised in a charter of October 1202 detailing his donation of land in Forenza to the church of Santa Maria degli Armeni, listed in Celestine III's bull as a dependency of Montevergine.<sup>81</sup> Frederick's 1209 privilege lists a handful of other churches in Basilicata, where the nobility was more supportive of Goleto and even Pulsano at this time.<sup>82</sup> In Capitanata, Montevergine benefited from donations particularly in Troia, Sant'Agata, and Ascoli Satriano, all west of Foggia and adjacent to the Irpinia region.<sup>83</sup> The first donation from Sant'Agata is found in a charter dated January 1210, which records Judge Gerard of Bovino and Rocca Sant'Agata's pilgrimage to Montevergine with his wife and son in order to join the monastic life, on which occasion he thought it only decent to 'give all the possessions they hold in Bovino and Rocca Sant'Agata' to Montevergine 'since it is disagreeable to enter such a great monastery with empty hands'.<sup>84</sup> In central Apulia, Montevergine acquired possessions in Bari and Bitonto. In January 1201, Montevergine received a donation of a house in Bitonto by the abbot of the local monastery of San Luca.<sup>85</sup> A first donation from Bari was received in October 1202 through the will of Urso de Leone, consisting of a house with annexe in Bari. In a peculiar diversion from the usual format, the procedure of the donation is described in the charter: '[the deceased's brothers] accompanied monk Peter da Bari, sent by Abbot Robert of Montevergine, to Bari to assign the house and cottage to the monastery, opening the house with the keys, and handing

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<sup>79</sup> See J.-M. Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine en Pouille et Basilicate', in *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine: I normanni chiamano gli svevi. Atti del secondo convegno internazionale 1987*, pp. 101-28 (p. 123).

<sup>80</sup> Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 118.

<sup>81</sup> CDV 1174. See CB, n. 100 for Count Roger of Tricarico.

<sup>82</sup> For Frederick's privilege see FIID, n. 1, pp. 209-12, and also CDV 1294. On the churches of Basilicata see Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', pp. 113-18.

<sup>83</sup> Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 119.

<sup>84</sup> CDV 1296. 'Unde quia inportunum esset vacui accedere ad tantum et tale monasterium damus et concedimus ipsi monasterio totas et integras portiones nostras de possessionibus nostris, quas possidemus in civitate Bibini et in Rocca Sancte Agathe iure quieto', p. 316.

<sup>85</sup> CDV 1117.

them to him and his lawyer'.<sup>86</sup> The collection of the donation by monk Peter of Bari on Abbot Robert's order suggests that contacts with the city had started earlier, emphasising the importance of community networks in shaping the fortunes of the monastery.

The prevalence of clerics, judges, and notaries among the benefactors, as Martin points out, reinforces Montevergine's shift of focus towards urban environments.<sup>87</sup> On the one hand this appears to be a natural progression for an institution which had become far more involved in the political scene than it had been up to that point. On the other, one might argue that in certain respects the particular direction taken by Montevergine was forced upon it by the political environment in which it developed: the succession problems called for the sort of caution and flexibility with which the community of Montevergine was able to respond; and the abbots were clearly equal to the situation when Frederick II asserted his authority with the Assizes of Capua, pressuring the emperor and their patrons for confirmations of their possessions. Indeed, having obtained royal confirmation in Germany in 1219, the monks obtained from Frederick II, while the emperor was in San Germano in December 1220, a further confirmation of their possessions, rights, privileges and exemptions which they had gained from the time of William II; on the same occasion the emperor also took the monastery under royal protection (again making note of his connection with the monastery's name — 'pro reverentia regine virginum ad cuius laudem et gloriam ipsum monasterium est constructum').<sup>88</sup> There is no denying that the monastery took its share of blows on the field, and it seems likely that grave mistakes were made along the way, if Pope Honorius III felt the need to intervene and depose the abbot of Montevergine in 1220. The disputes the monastery entered into with San Salvatore al Goleto and Santa Maria dell'Incoronata in Apulia further demonstrate that the abbots of the end of the twelfth and of the first decades of the thirteenth centuries (whose leadership, as demonstrated, was key in guiding the monastery

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<sup>86</sup> CDV 1172. 'ipsum venerabili monacho usque in Pusterulam [a Baro] ad predictam domum et casalinum conduximus [...] predictam domum clausam stantem clave aperuimus et eam cum predicto casalino et omnibus eorum pertinentiis, monacho pro iamdicto sacro cenobio Montis Virginis cum [\*\*] suo advocato ei dedimus'.

<sup>87</sup> Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 123.

<sup>88</sup> *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi*, ii:1, pp. 86-91 (the charter has not yet been published in the new MGH edition of Frederick II's charters).

forward) had their sights on institutional as well as economic growth. The following section of this thesis aims to explore in greater depth the economic, social, and institutional developments that Montevergine saw during the first century of its existence, against the backdrop of the historical setting provided in the first three chapters.

**SECTION II: THEMES**

## CHAPTER 4: MONTEVERGINE AND THE ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1. The Campania

#### 4.1.1 Introduction

Montevergine was founded in an appropriate liminal landscape between Roger's Principality of Capua and the Duchy of Apulia, and also very close to the independent papal town of Benevento. It was thus physically at the heart of many of the scrambles for power and the seats of Lombard resistance. Its physical location, as we have seen in the previous chapters, impacted on Montevergine's experience of the political scene unfolding around it, and on its own relationships with the society outside its immediate precincts.

The complicated political situation of the twelfth century is reflected in the political geography of southern-Italy, where boundaries, especially the northern ones, were ill-defined and constantly changing. For this reason, for the purposes of this chapter, the modern political boundaries of Campania will be adopted as a point of reference to discuss the physical characteristics of the area relevant to the monastery's landholdings.

In reality, the term 'Campania' is an early evolution of the already more indicative '*ager Campanus*', referring specifically to the fertile plains surrounding Capua. However, already in the first century AD, in Pliny's time, 'Campania' included the Marsican hills which still form its most northern frontier. Not long after, in the second century AD, Augustus extended this area eastwards to include Benevento and parts of the Irpinia region, as well. When the Lombards settled in the area in the ninth century, the term 'Campania' fell into disuse, and was replaced by denominations of new and smaller political-administrative subdivisions — the Principalities of Capua, Benevento and Salerno, and the Duchy of Amalfi.

Moreover, during the High Middle Ages, the name '*Terra di Lavoro*' came to denote the area previously known as the *ager Campanus* or *Campania Felix*.<sup>2</sup> This is

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<sup>1</sup> For this chapter I am greatly indebted to the advice and assistance of Dr Martin Purvis of the School of Geography, University of Leeds.

<sup>2</sup> Originally *Terra di Lavoro* referred to the *terra Leborini*, inhabited by the Leborini tribe in Antiquity. Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, ed. by E. H. Warmington and trans. by H. Rackham, *Loeb Classical Library*, 10 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1969), II, Book XVIII, 29.

a Norman development, coinciding with Norman settlement in Aversa, which replaced the nearby Leborine town of Atella in the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>3</sup>

It was only with the advent of the unification of the *Regno* in 1861 that the new Italian state re-appropriated its ancient historical nomenclature. The term 'Campania' re-emerged, now to signify the region encompassing the provinces of Naples, Benevento, Salerno, Caserta and Avellino.

This chapter on the physical setting of the Campania and Irpinia will aim to describe the environment within which Montevergine was born and developed. In particular it will examine the characteristics which determined the monastery's agrarian economy. The latter will be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter.

#### **4.1.2. Physical geography of the region**

The Campania in its modern form (as it is used for the purpose of this study) is a political-administrative region which borders with the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west and south, with Lazio and Molise to the north, and Apulia and Basilicata to the east and south-east. By and large, the Campania is delineated in its physical form by the Apennine ridge (Appennino Campano) which appears, in this section, to spill over towards the Tyrrhenian coast. More precise geographic features are rarely found marking the region's borders. The Garigliano river marks the northern border for about a 20 km stretch, and similarly the Volturno for about 15 km further along the border with Molise; the Matese massifs (Monti del Matese) complete the physical delineation of the northern border. The Ofanto river acts in the same way for the Apulian border, but this too represents only a short and almost incidental tract.

The overall geographical picture of the Campania suggests a triple-banded structure: the higher Apennine massifs line the inland boundary of the region; the coastal flatlands take over the majority of the western side of the region; and the area in between is lined by a typically volcanic landscape connecting the volcanic mountains of Roccamonfina in the north, and Vesuvius, also known as the Anti-Apennines of the Campania. This morphology would play an important part in shaping the distribution of Montevergine's estates and its agricultural output.

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<sup>3</sup> Aversa was the first Norman base in southern Italy (see William of Apulia, p. 108).



Map 4: Physical map of Campania showing reliefs and major rivers. From 'Campania Maps', *Mapsof*, <http://mapsof.net/map/physical-map-of-campania> [accessed 14/02/2012].

Of the 13,590 km<sup>2</sup> covered by the Campania, half (50.8%) are covered by hills, 34.6% by mountains, and 14.7% by plains, most of them coastal.<sup>4</sup> A marked contrast between the mountainous and hilly Apennine landscape and the coastal flatlands is the salient feature of the Campania region. In fact, the *Terra di Lavoro* and the Cilento plain in the south represent the only significant low flat areas in Campania. These are run through by the most important rivers of the region,

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<sup>4</sup> Data obtained from the Agricultural Bureau of the Campania region: Emilia Casillo, 'L'agricoltura campana: le cifre del 2005', [http://www.sito.regione.campania.it/agricoltura/statistica/pdf/cifre\\_2005.pdf](http://www.sito.regione.campania.it/agricoltura/statistica/pdf/cifre_2005.pdf) [accessed 03/02/2012]. Refer to Map 4.



namely the Volturno and the Sele respectively, both of which are born in the Apennines and flow out into the Tyrrhenian Sea. While Montevergine acquired some lands in this area, particularly in the territory of Aversa, most of its donations were concentrated in the more mountainous Irpinia area. Here, there are a few Apennine valley flatlands, where the Volturno meets the Calore river, for example, and the Diano valley (Valdiano) in the Salerno province. Both the Volturno and the Sele act as spines to a dense water network, and the many tributaries of these rivers partially caused both coastal plains and inland valleys to be particularly subject to marshy swamplands. The Volturno, the largest river in southern Italy, was especially problematic, prone to overflowing, and creating a major obstacle in the road network.

The frequent overflowing of the river would have restricted cultivation along the Volturno, and in fact there are virtually no arable properties along the river recorded in the Montevergine charters. The only exception is quite a significant one: in March 1174, Count Roger d'Aquila gave Montevergine a mill, a harbour and six pieces of land pertaining to the *casale* Sclavi (modern-day Liberi, 25km east of Caserta) all along the Volturno river, as it ran south of Benevento.<sup>5</sup> The presence of the harbour suggests that the river was navigable and being used as a transport route for internal trade,<sup>6</sup> while the presence of the *casale* suggests that drainage and water control had been carried out along this section of the river.<sup>7</sup> The many rivers which run (or, in some cases, ran) through the region, led to the formation of alluvial plains, depositing nutrients carried from the mountains through the valley with seasonal flooding of the rivers. Such floodplains, when appropriately drained, are typically areas of great fertility (a characteristic example is the Nile river). In fact, many of the land donations made to Montevergine consist of riverside land, with rivers often found as boundary markers in the donation descriptions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See CDV 569. The modern-day attribution is made by Tropeano in a note to the charter.

<sup>6</sup> This is confirmed by the geographical manual compiled for Roger II by Al-Idrîsî, *La première géographie de l'Occident*, ed. by Henri Bresc and Anlièse Nef, and trans. by Sir Jaubert and Anlièse Nef (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), pp. 378-80. Here Al-Idrîsî describes several coastal and river-side settlements in Campania, noting the harbours of each, and the navigability of the rivers. Translations from the French edition are my own.

<sup>7</sup> See CDV 569 for earliest reference to Sclavi.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, CDV 180, 209, 279.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the population, in the twelfth century as in modern times, was concentrated in the coastal plains, which were more fertile and offered a better climate, and better communication routes. However, at regular intervals in history, the region experienced a shift of the population towards the higher plains and to the mountains to escape the unhygienic conditions of the encroaching marshlands.<sup>9</sup> In his *Histories*, Polybius, talking of Hannibal's foray across the Apennines, emphasised the protection offered by the mountains:

the whole plain of Capua is strongly protected by nature and difficult to approach, being completely surrounded on one side by the sea and for the greater part by lofty mountain-ranges, through which there are only three passes from the interior, all of them narrow and difficult, one from Samnium, the second from Latium, and the third from the country of the Hirpini.<sup>10</sup>

The three routes described by Jules de Foucault in his edition of the *Histories* are: 1. The Via Appia, via Benevento and the Caudine Forks; 2. the Via Latina, from Venafro; 3. the route from Avellino to Nocera, through the Irpinian Apennines.<sup>11</sup>

This third route would have constituted an important means of communication for Montevergine with its southern patrons and assets, and it may have facilitated the initial establishment of patronage ties with the lords of Sanseverino and Sarno.<sup>12</sup>

A note on the types of settlement and land measurements which feature in the charters is apt here. The most common types of settlements are *castella* and *casalia*. The latter were small, sometimes lightly fortified villages, with populations of several hundred inhabitants, and were found scattered across the entire southern-Italian landscape.<sup>13</sup> Particularly in the eleventh century, during the Norman conquest, the population of the Campania region took advantage of the protection offered by the mountains by building its fortified settlements, or *castella*, there; to this day these settlements dot the landscape's skyline.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> See Paolo Macry and Pasquale Villani, eds, *La Campania*, Storia d'Italia: Le Regioni dall'Unità a Oggi (Torino: Einaudi, 1990), pp. 263-64. Also Braudel, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Polybius, *Histories*, trans. by W. R. Paton, 6 vols (London: Heinemann, 1922-27), II, Book III, ch. 91, p. 225. The second pass is actually absent in the manuscript, and is therefore the product of conjecture.

<sup>11</sup> See Polybius, *Histories*, ed. by Jules de Foucault (Paris: Société d'Édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1971), note on p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> See Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 282-89.

<sup>14</sup> On *castella* see especially Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 272-76. On the phenomenon of *incastellamento* in southern Italy see Chris Wickham, *Il problema dell'incastellamento nell'Italia centrale: l'esempio di San Vincenzo al Volturno. Studi sulla società appenninica nell'alto medioevo* (Florence: All'insegna

*castella* could be both developments of pre-existing *casalia*, or built from scratch. A papal bull detailing Montecassino's properties in 1059 listed twenty fortified villages on the abbey's lands.<sup>15</sup> They were fortified usually by a wall, with the addition of a fort. They were normally associated to a lordship, as shown by the *Catalogus Baronum*, where the Kingdom's barons are often referred to as lords of one or more *castella*. In general, *castella* seem to have been inhabited by families of a higher social status than *casalia*: while the former were associated with 'domini' along with peasants and workers, the latter were more likely to be inhabited exclusively by peasants and workers in the charters.<sup>16</sup>

The greatest elevation of the Campania extends from the Garigliano river (marking the modern border between Campania and Lazio) to the Basilicata border in the south-east. It is not, however, a single chain, but a series of isolated massifs and limestone mountain groups, separated by depressions filled with more recent layers of soil. The limestone mountains, which dominate in height over the lower clay-based mountains, are thus the most prominent feature of the landscape in the northern and eastern parts of the region. The lower mountains mark the division between the rivers flowing into the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seas. This section of the Apennines roughly maintains a height of 1000 m above sea level in Irpinia and modern-day Samnium areas,<sup>17</sup> forming a long, monotonous elevation which appears almost flat at times, and presents a number of gently sloping lateral spurs. These features facilitated the development of agriculture in the region, and would point to the development of an agrarian economy which would later be combined with animal farming on the higher pasture areas.<sup>18</sup> Evidence for animal

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del Giglio, 1985); Hubert Houben, 'I castelli del Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo nelle fonti scritte', in *Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo: monasteri e castelli, ebrei e musulmani* (Napoli: Liguori Editore, 1996), pp. 159-76; Loud, 'Continuity and Change in Norman Italy', pp. 319-23; G. A. Loud, 'The Liri Valley in the Middle Ages', in *Archaeological Survey in the Lower Liri Valley, Central Italy*, ed. by J. W. Hayes and I. P. Martini (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, International Series 595, 1994), pp. 53-68.

<sup>15</sup> Loud, *The Latin Church*, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, CDV 232, 382, 520, 533; in CDV 569 we find two *casalia* belonging to Count Roger of Avellino.

<sup>17</sup> The Samnium area is in the province of Benevento, and roughly equivalent to the Duchy of Benevento. It refers to one of Augustus' eleven *regiones*, specifically the one inhabited by the Samnite people.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Martin's study of the geography and economy of the Puglia region, in which he points out that the mountainous terrain in the Apennine section of Puglia implies a 'séparation plus forte qu'ailleurs entre agriculture et élevage; besoin, pour les agriculteurs, de déplacements considérables, qu'accentue encore la structure de l'habitat; immensité enfin de certains finages du

farming on a significant scale appears only towards the end of the twelfth century. Before then, there are scattered references to animals used to operate farming equipment, for transport, and the occasional gift in kind.<sup>19</sup> It is only later, in 1192, when we find the monastery receiving a fulling mill, and in 1197, when we find a donation of one hundred sheep, eleven cows, three bulls and one nag, that one might suggest that Montevergine had developed a pastoral economy alongside its thriving agricultural activities.<sup>20</sup> The increasing number of urban properties acquired from the 1180s onwards by the monks might also confirm the possibility of development of the monastery's pastoral activities, as the monks may have been using the houses as bases to take the animals to trade in the region's market centres (see Table 3).<sup>21</sup>

The Campania presents four main terrain types: limestone, clay-based soil, alluvial soils (mentioned above), and tuffaceous volcanic soils.<sup>22</sup> The limestone formations create two great arches which meet at the Monti Lattari, which form the Sorrentine peninsula. The limestone mountains are formed by layers of calcereous deposits emerged from the sea, and are thus internally fragmented by a complicated underground gorge network, making this a typically karstic landscape.<sup>23</sup> Limestone areas are generally conducive to a number of tree and crop plantations (such as olives) due to their mineral nutrients and porous quality which facilitates drainage of the water below the rock's surface, but the karstic landscape can be very difficult to manage for farming, and often requires extensive rock clearance.<sup>24</sup> Montevergine's use and perfection of the *cultura promiscua*, which involved growing a mixture of trees with cereals or other crops in the soil around them, is indicative of the monks' adaptation and manipulation of this environment.<sup>25</sup> Limestone was also commonly quarried for use in building.<sup>26</sup> In the

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Tavoliere au XIe siècle, des Murge nord-occidentales au XIIe encore, qui ajoutent à un terroir cultivé de taille moyenne un appendice démesuré de terres incultes'. Martin, *La Pouille*, p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> See my discussion below, p. 130.

<sup>20</sup> CDV 871 for the fulling mill, and CDV 1030 (and discussion below, p.130), for the large donation of animals. This fits in with Chris Wickham's conclusions on the rise of pastoralism in the thirteenth century in Tuscany, in *The Mountains and the City: The Tuscan Appennines in the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 167-70.

<sup>21</sup> Below, p. 135.

<sup>22</sup> TCI, *Campania*, pp. 18-25.

<sup>23</sup> TCI, *Campania*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> See Lorenzo Quillici, *Interventi di bonifica agraria nell'Italia romana* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1995), pp. 170-82.

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 121.

*Legenda*, we are told that the local lay population sourced the stone necessary to build the church of Montevergine at a local lime quarry, as well as wood from the surrounding forests.<sup>27</sup>

The limestone mountains are often surrounded by clay soils, which form the Appennine watershed, and are particularly dense in the Ariano Irpino basin, and in the valleys of the Adriatic rivers. They generally form reliefs up to 1500m in height, but also take the form of hilly landscapes, and in both cases the reliefs are generally not harsh but smooth and gentle.<sup>28</sup> Clay soils possess poor drainage, and are therefore moist in winter, but dry and arid in summer. Some calcereous clay soils, such as those found in the Irpinia region, contain limestone which is able to regulate the acidity content of the soil, and are therefore more fertile than clay soils, and can be conducive to viticulture.<sup>29</sup> Viticulture was in fact the second most popular cultivation in Montevergine's charters.<sup>30</sup>

The presence of Vesuvius and of Roccamonfina had incisive impact on the topography of the region. Large-scale eruptions that occurred thousands of years ago have caused the landscape to be covered in a thick layer of deposits, which, over time, have weathered into extremely nutrient-rich soils.<sup>31</sup> These cover many of the alluvial plains as well. The last eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the Middle Ages occurred in June 1139 (or 1137 or 1138, depending on the source), and lasted eight days. The eruption is described in a number of contemporary sources, including the Cava annals, Romuald of Salerno's Chronicle, and Falco of Benevento's Chronicle.<sup>32</sup> The latter records:

In this year [1139], on 29 May, that mountain which appears near the city of Naples emitted a great fire, and spewed forth visible flames for eight days, so that the nearby settlements and *castra* expected death to come at any moment; and

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<sup>26</sup> See Quillici, p. 175.

<sup>27</sup> See references in Chapter 1, p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> TCI, *Campania*, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> See Guido Fabiani and Fara Favia, 'Vitalismo produttivo e precarietà strutturale nell'agricoltura campana contemporanea', in TCI, *Campania*, pp. 1089-90.

<sup>30</sup> See Graph 7, p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> See R.V. Fisher, G. Heiken, and J. B. Hulen, *Volcanoes: Crucibles of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1997), pp. 231-44.

<sup>32</sup> See *Annales Cavenses*, ed. by Fulvio delle Donne, RIS, 9 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2011), pp. 48-49 — the description is remarkably similar to Falco's, with the exception of the date, which the chronicler fixes at the end of May 1137. The dust is described as 'of such density that it covered the entire area in tenebrous shadows' ('pulvis tantae densitudinis, ut totum aerem obtenebraret'); see also Romuald of Salerno, *Chronicon*, p. 226.

from this fire a black and horrible dust arose, which travelled with the wind to Salerno, Benevento, Capua and Naples; the fire was seen for eight days, and the people of Benevento, and the writer of this work, collected the ashes, which were seen on the ground for thirty days.<sup>33</sup>

This eruption may have destroyed many crops that year in the Capuan plain, apparently as far as Salerno, and, only a few months before harvest time, this must have been a harsh blow for locals. But the long term effect was no doubt rewarding. Volcanic soil is very fertile, so that, notwithstanding their acute awareness of the dangers of living in the surroundings of Vesuvius, the authors of antiquity as well as inhabitants of Campania today have praised the entire region around Naples for its fertility. Pliny seemed especially enamoured with the region:

Then comes that happy country of Campania; from this valley begin those vine-clad hills and the noble inebriation by the wine, famous the world over, and (as is known of old) the scene of the severest competition between Father Liber and Ceres. [...] Here spread the plains of Leborium, where the wheat crop is sedulously tended to produce delicious emmer. These shores are irrigated by hot springs, and are noted beyond all others throughout the whole of the noble sea for their famous shell and other fish. Nowhere is there nobler olive oil — another competition of man's pleasure.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, Al-Idrîsî, Roger II's court geographer, whose curt and practical style rarely left room for the appreciation of natural resources, merely remarked that Vesuvius (the 'Mountain of Fire' as he refers to it), 'cannot be climbed, as it continuously spews forth fire and rocks'.<sup>35</sup> He did, however, note the thriving markets and good food found in the major towns of Campania. Of Sorrento, for example, he said 'the houses are pretty, and the resources abundant', and noted the ship-building industry there; Amalfi, he claimed, had a 'numerous and prosperous'

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<sup>33</sup> Falco of Benevento, *Chronicon Beneventanum*, pp. 218-19. The Latin reads: 'Hoc anno iv kalen. Junii, mons ille, qui prope civitatem Neapolim esse videbatur, ignem validum, et flammas visibiles projecit, per dies octo, ita ut civitates ei contiguae, et castra mortem expectabant, ex cujus incendio pulvis niger, et horribilis exivit, et usque Salernum, et Beneventum, et Capuam, et Neapolim pulvis ille facie venti pervolavit; ignis vero ille per dies octo visus est, de quo pulvere cives multi Beneventanorum, et ego iustius operis descriptor collegimus, per dies vero triginta pulvis ille super terram visus est'. Translation is my own. Cf. Loud, *Roger II and the Creation of the Kingdom*, p. 236.

<sup>34</sup> Pliny, Book III, 60, p. 47. ('hinc felix illa Campania, ab hoc sinu incipiunt vitiferi colles et temulentia nobilis suco per omnes terras incluto atque, ut veteres dixere, summum Liberi Patris cum Cerere certamen. [...] ibi Leborini campi sternuntur et in delicias alicae politur messis. haec litora fontibus calidis rigantur praeterque cetera in toto mari conchylio et pisce nobili adnotantur. nusquam generosior oleae liquor est, hoc quoque certamen humanae voluptatis').

<sup>35</sup> Al-Idrîsî, p. 378. Cf. Loud, *Roger II*, p. 362-63.

population; and Salerno, he informed the reader, was 'a remarkable town with well-provisioned markets and goods of all sorts, particularly wheat and other cereals'.<sup>36</sup> Amatus of Montecassino famously stated that the Normans had been deeply impressed by this 'land of milk and honey', claiming that they sent 'citrus fruit, almonds, preserved nuts, purple cloth, and instruments of iron adorned with gold' to persuade their compatriots to join them in settling in the region.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.1.3. Climate

The climate in Campania is similar to other Italian regions, in that it is Mediterranean, with dry summers followed by abundant winter rainfalls. The region benefits from the warm, humid air currents originating from the south and from the sea, and is protected from the continental currents by the internal reliefs. Nonetheless, temperatures and weather conditions vary widely according to altitude, distance from the sea, and orientation. Thus, mean temperatures today range from 9°C in Montevergine to 18°C in Naples.<sup>38</sup> Temperatures in the twelfth century can of course be expected to differ from twentieth-century temperatures, but the data would remain proportional according to the physical setting: temperatures are cooler in more elevated and inland areas, and warmer and drier the lower and closer to the coast one goes, with little to no rain in the summer months particularly in the western part of the region.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, climate change is not a phenomenon affecting only the modern world: Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie already best alerted historians to the problems of climate change over the second millennium AD in the study of history. However, while he concluded that the twelfth century would have coincided with the height of the "Medieval Warm Period", more recent scientific studies seem to point to the twelfth century coinciding with the first "cooling off" phase of the Medieval Warm Period. These studies have shown that the century saw two great winters (1114/15 and

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<sup>36</sup> Al-Idrîsî, pp. 378-79. Cf. Loud, *Roger II*, p. 362.

<sup>37</sup> Amatus of Montecassino, p. 24 (l.19).

<sup>38</sup> Meteorological analysis data sourced from the SCIA (Sistema nazionale per la raccolta, elaborazione e diffusione di dati Climatologici di Interesse Ambientale), a department of the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, <http://www.scia.sinanet.apat.it/documentazione/postertemperature> [accessed 03/02/2012], using information for the decades 1961-1990. The mean temperatures are calculated by dividing the sum of maximum and minimum average temperatures for the year by two.

<sup>39</sup> Precipitation data relative to the years 2000-2011 retrieved from the Agricultural Bureau of the Campania region, <http://www.sito.regione.campania.it/agricoltura/meteo/riepiloghi.html> [accessed 03/02/2012].

1149/50), the second of which was particularly felt in northern and central Italy.<sup>40</sup> There is clearly great scope for further investigation in this field, especially in applying the more recent scientific studies to historical contexts.

The combination of the fertile volcanic soils, the humid climate, and the protection of the mountains made this area ideal for chestnut cultivation.<sup>41</sup> This is in fact by far the most popular product to feature in the Montevergine charters, accounting for about 35% of the crop distribution.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.1.4. Conclusions

Overall the region is characterised by a varied geological make-up and landscape, which presents itself in gradual and fairly regular succession. Its wealth of volcanic soils and rich hydrographic network combine to make this region very rich in natural resources, and potentially suited to a number of primary activities, such as agriculture and farming, as well as providing materials for construction. The exploitation of these resources requires, however, a high degree of human interaction, which, especially in rural areas, was often coordinated by monastic institutions. The chronicler of San Vincenzo al Volturno in the twelfth century recorded how the monastery had been ordered to ‘inhabit the area [of Santa Maria in Oliveto, now a fraction of Pozzilli, in the province of Isernia], work and clear (*colere*) the land’.<sup>43</sup> This was a typical instance in which monastic intervention led to the formation of a new settlement, a development often encouraged by local lay rulers.

Montevergine also co-ordinated the local workforce to administer and cultivate its lands. When the abbot brought its workers together in the new colony of Fontanelle, the monks chose the location of the settlement strategically.<sup>44</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup> See especially C. Pfister, J. Luterbacher, G. Schwarz-Zanetti, and M. Wegmann, ‘Winter Air Temperature Variations in Western Europe During the Early and High Middle Ages (AD 750–1300)’, *The Holocene*, 8 (1998), 535–52. And also M. E. Mann, R. S. Bradley, and M. K. Hughes, ‘Northern Hemisphere Temperatures During the Past Millennium: Inferences, uncertainties, and limitations’, *Geophysical Research Letters*, 26 (1999), 759–62. Cf. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A History of Climate Since the Year 1000*, trans. by Barbara Bray (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972).

<sup>41</sup> See Paolo Squatriti, *Landscape and Change in Early Medieval Europe: Chestnuts, Economy and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), especially Chapter 4 on ‘Chestnuts in Early Medieval Campania’, pp. 130–63.

<sup>42</sup> See Graph 7, p. 122.

<sup>43</sup> *Chronicon Vulturense del Monaco Giovanni*, ed. by Vincenzo Federici, FSI, 58–60 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1924–38), II, p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> On Fontanelle see Chapter 6, p. 172.



colony was founded on land near Summonte which had previously been donated to Montevergine, on the northern side of the mountain.<sup>45</sup> The name of the colony points to a location at a water source, perhaps at the mouth of a stream. There is now a road leading from Montevergine to Summonte called Via Fontanelle, pointing to the colony's location. This would allow the monastery to have a close relationship with its workers, to communicate regularly with them and supervise them. Moreover, the location close to the river was of course advantageous not only for cultivation purposes, but the river could be used as a source of food and as a communication route.

## 4.2. Montevergine and Irpinia<sup>46</sup>

### 4.2.1. Introduction

The monastery of Montevergine is located at 1263m on the eponymous mountain which, at 1480m, is the second highest peak of the Partenio group. The Partenio is among the limestone groups of the southern Apennines. It is divided by a longitudinal groove into two parts culminating with Mount Avella (1591m) on one side and Montevergine on the other. The salient characteristics of this mountainous section are the magnesium limestone rock, and the dales and karstic valleys, which are interspersed with caves, a feature relished by followers of the new monasticism of the twelfth century. The majority of the area, as in the case of Montevergine, is blanketed by a layer of volcanic deposits. The *Legenda* devotes several passages to the depiction of the natural setting of Montevergine. It describes the mountain as 'difficult and very arduous to climb, except during the three months of summer, because of the frigid cold'.<sup>47</sup>

These features were specifically sought after by William of Vercelli when he set out to build his hermitage. When he settled on the mountain, arability of the land or the availability of pasture were far from his mind. As discussed in Chapter 1, the hagiographer tells us that William was concerned only with the availability of water, and contented himself with whatever fruits and herbs he could find for his physical nourishment. The isolation and harshness of Montevergine, and its

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<sup>45</sup> CDV 498 and 611.

<sup>46</sup> Particular thanks are due for this section to Prof. Ventura Moramarco for his advice and reading suggestions.

<sup>47</sup> *Legenda*, VI, p. 17, ll. 21-22.

location in a politically ambiguous area appealed to him. Being in a liminal area of Campania, on the mountains, the monastery of Montevergine was removed from the major centres of the plains, and from the otherwise preferable natural features of the lower plains and river valleys. It was also, however, removed from the swampy marshlands which plagued many of the areas closer to sea level. Nevertheless, the monastery's lands ran over into a much more varied and gentler terrain. Human settlement and production patterns are evidently dependent on the natural physical geography of the area, as well as the geological make-up of the soil. The type of economy that was developed in the Montevergine community, therefore, was to a large extent, if not entirely, tied to the setting chosen by the founder (who, on the other hand, had no consideration for the development of a monastic community when he chose the location of his hermitage), and to the land offered by its patrons. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, these donations played a crucial part not only in the economic development of Montevergine, but in its establishment as a crucial nodal element in the society of the Irpinia region.

#### **4.2.2. Physical geography of the region**

Irpinia is an administrative district now roughly equivalent to the province of Avellino. It covers the central-western part of the Campania region, and is characterised by a prevalently mountainous terrain. Geographically, it coincides with the Avellino conclave, a vast irregular depression between the relief massifs of the Appennine and of the Anti-Appennine of the Campania region. It is marked by the following physical features: the eastern border is marked by the Monti Dauni in the Capitanata region, which also mark the border with the Salerno valley; the Ofanto river and the Monti Picentini (Monti di Lauro) define its southern border, separating Irpinia from the province of Benevento and the *ager Campanus*; the Partenio lines the western perimeter, and the Caudio valley, the river Ufita, and Miscano valley separate the Irpinia region from the Samnium region to the north, while at the same time facilitating access to Apulia.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, when Al-Idrîsî

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<sup>48</sup> See Pierfrancesco Talamo, 'La preistoria', in *Storia Illustrata di Avellino e dell'Irpinia*, ed. by Gabriella Pescatori Colucci, Errico Cuzzo, and Francesco Barra, 2 vols (Serra: Sellino e Barra Eds, 1996), I, *L'Irpinia Antica*, ed. by Gabriella Pescatori Colucci, pp. 1-12. This volume is a very useful interdisciplinary study of Irpinia throughout history up to the present day, including valuable archaeological information.

described the route from Benevento to Salerno, he followed the natural features which outline Irpinia, taking the traveller along its borders via Montesarchio, Airola, then over to Arnone, south of Naples, and back through Palma and Sarno in the south of Irpinia.<sup>49</sup>

The Avellino valley is run through by several water courses, the most important of which is the Sabato river. The Sabato reaches the Calore river near Benevento. The Calore, which is born on the eastern slope of Monte Terminio, opposite the site of the Sabato spring, runs almost parallel to the latter for a long tract, before receiving the river Ufita in its course near Apice. From this point on the Calore tends east, passing Benevento and running into the Volturno. The Calore is particularly prominent in the Montevergine charters, especially in its middle valley (the high valley being subject to frequent landslides and seismic activity), as the monastery acquired many properties along its banks.<sup>50</sup> Like the Volturno and the Sele, these were abundant rivers, prone to flooding. The *Annales Beneventani*, for example, record major flooding of the Calore and the Sabato rivers in 1029, and again in 1031, leaving 'many fish dead'.<sup>51</sup> The Clanio river runs from Summonte through Avella, between Risigliano and Tufino, and between Cutignano and Camposano. Its valleys remained major marshlands until the sixteenth century, and thus were sparsely inhabited.<sup>52</sup> The danger of these areas must have been quite real, as it was taken into consideration in drawing up contracts. For example, when Lando, a monk of Montevergine secured the windmill on the Calore river previously donated by Lord Alamo of Taurasi, he made sure to insert a clause for the eventuality 'of total destruction either by war or natural calamities'.<sup>53</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly, there is little evidence of river control in the Montevergine charters, though a number of land donations were accompanied by permission to use the water of an adjoining river, presumably for irrigation purposes, for fishing, transportation, or to power the many mills Montevergine

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<sup>49</sup> Al- Idrīsī, p. 397.

<sup>50</sup> TCI, *Campania*, p. 17. See, for example, CDV 180, 271, 292, 371, 533, 1028.

<sup>51</sup> *Annales Beneventani*, ed. by O. Bertolini, *Bullettino dell'istituto storico italiano per il medio evo*, 42 (1923), 1-163 (p. 133). The record for 1029 reads: 'facta est inundatio fluminum Caloris et Sabbati'; and the record for 1031: 'flumen Sabbati inundavit et multi pisces mortui sunt'.

<sup>52</sup> Martin Frederiksen, *Campania*, ed. by Nicholas Purcell (Rome: British School at Rome, 1984), p. 18.

<sup>53</sup> CDV 186.

acquired through its donors.<sup>54</sup> One notable exception is the donation made by Roger of Laviano in March 1192, of two mills, one of them for fulling, which had fallen into disrepair.<sup>55</sup> He expressly gave the monks permission to change the course of the river Colonna to restore and make use of the mills. Water control must have occurred around the site of the monastery itself, given the primary importance accorded to water in monastic communities, both practically and metaphorically, as water's purifying attributes have always been attractive to followers of Christianity, and indeed many other religions. In fact, as mentioned above, the mountain is very rich in natural springs, and it is no coincidence that William chose this site, regardless of the credibility of the *Legenda*. The latter tells how William asked around in the village of Atripalda, a few kilometres east of Avellino, where he might find a suitable spot for his hermitage, asking specifically where he could find a source of water, for obvious purposes of survival.<sup>56</sup> It is here that the *Legenda* recounts a first primitive attempt at water control, as William looked for water to build his first hermitage on the mountain. The *vita* tells how he dug out a well near a spring of water on the mountain, and had problems sharing his new water supply with an obstinate bear.<sup>57</sup> No doubt, as the community grew and its lifestyle became more 'regular', the monks must have found new and more efficient ways of putting the mountain's water resources to fruition.

There are several passes on the edges of the Avellino valley which create a means of communication with the coastal areas — for example the Monteforte pass connects with the Vesuvian area, and the pass of Solofra connects the plain with the Salerno coast via the Irno valley. Thus the rivers, together with other natural routes, formed an essential natural means of communication through the otherwise impassable landscape.<sup>58</sup> They also represented natural boundary

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<sup>54</sup> For example, CDV 585, 719, 871.

<sup>55</sup> CDV 871.

<sup>56</sup> *Legenda*, p. 12. The Latin reads: 'Inde cum prefata matrona cepit habere consilium quo modo in predicto monte illo posset aquam invenire. Et illa: "Domine, est in iugo eiusdem montis, prout fama refert prenuntia veri, quidam heremita. Is, si qua est aqua in hoc monte, certissime docebit". The presence of another, apparently well known hermit on the mountain emphasises the suitability of the location for this sort of endeavour.

<sup>57</sup> *Legenda*, pp. 13-16. See also Mick Aston, *Monasteries in the Landscape* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), pp. 24-25, on monastic water requirements.

<sup>58</sup> Talamo, p. 2.

measures for the local population: rivers, valleys, forests and roads are often found to describe the perimeters of land donations in the Montevergine charters.<sup>59</sup>

The karstic soils of the middle Sabato valley emerge only in a few places, as they are for the most part covered by debris of the quaternary era, which reach approximately 30m in depth. These sediments are composed mostly of volcanic soil on the most superficial layer, of Vesuvian provenance and, to a minor degree, from the Campi Flegrei, and also of secondary deposits and debris of these volcanic formations. They cover 70% of the Partenio mountains. Several other types of soil have encroached on these layers. Overall, the soils owe their characteristic fertility to the large amounts of volcanic ashes, which enriches this area as opposed to those surrounding it; the latter are characterised by a calcareous substratum. Hazelnut cultivation, which is typical of Irpinia, owes its success to the special conditions of this soil. In fact, particularly at an altitude of 500m the land is rich in hazel and chestnuts, which pervade the Montevergine charters. They also made up a good proportion of William's diet in the first years of his hermitage, together with beans and barley bread, according to the *Legenda*.<sup>60</sup> Al-Idrîsi comments on the general fertility of this land in describing the route from Taranto to Naples; in the penultimate stage of the journey he suggests crossing Irpinia from Frigento (on the north-eastern frontier of the region, and held in the twelfth century by Duke Roger's descendents, who were among the elite patrons of Montevergine),<sup>61</sup> to Cimitile. Of all the settlements he mentions in outlining the route, including Frigento, he says:

[they] are all populated settlements, where merchandise of all sorts arrive, and where the territory is extremely fertile and safety is assured; they are also well-known fortified and impenetrable localities.<sup>62</sup>

Another feature prominent in the charters is woodland, for which the documentation is unfortunately not so uniform that one can gather a suitably well-rounded overview of its distribution. Nonetheless, a cartographic reconstruction of the evidence found in the charters points to quite extensive woodland areas, with

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<sup>59</sup> See Table 1, p. 116 for some examples.

<sup>60</sup> *Legenda*, p. 13. The Latin reads: 'Victus eius erat eo quidam tempore tantum fabe et castanee, quas propriis manibus collegebat, et ordeicius panim idemque subcinericius'.

<sup>61</sup> See CB, 707, p. 126, which lists Helyas of Gesualdo (the son of William of Gesualdo) in possession of the fief. See also CDV 271, 586, and 1235 for patronage of Montevergine.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Idrîsî, p. 389.

particularly densely forested mountains. The Partenio mountains were covered in chestnuts and hazelnuts, for example, which were then duly cultivated by the Montevergine community, as will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. Chestnut cultivation had been practiced in the region for centuries — it is attested in a 1037 charter in the Montevergine archives, and as far back as 793 in the Cava archives.<sup>63</sup> Forests in the Middle Ages were an important source of livelihood, and an economic necessity.<sup>64</sup> They were a source of food supplies, of timber and firewood, they provided grazing land for livestock, and were the stage for exhibition of social status when used as hunting grounds. Table 1 (pp. 108-09) shows the forests and demesnal forest rights acquired by Montevergine in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The relative frequency of these grants attests to their desirability for monastic communities. Forests in the Montevergine charters were sometimes given specifying the use they should be put to, usually to obtain wood for the construction and maintenance of churches and mills. In 1221 the monks received a confirmation from Frederick II for the exemption from hunting levies in the Garigliano area, specifically for rabbits. Whether this was an indication of the monks practising hunting themselves, or whether it only demonstrates an evolution in the monks' diet, it is an indication of the monastery's rise in social status.

#### 4.2.3. Conclusions

The Irpinia region is characterised by various landscapes and terrain types, which sometimes run contrary to the expected pattern: the Partenio for example presented highly fertile soils due to its volcanic substratum, whereas the lower river valleys were sometimes either too marshy for cultivation or settlement, or constituted of clay soils which are not ideal for farming. The problem of high altitude low temperatures sifted out most cultivation types, so that hazels and chestnuts were found as the most prominent type of plantation where other plants could not grow. Grape vines, which are able to grow in most types of soil, were found particularly on the lower slopes of the region, and their growth was aided by the Mediterranean climate, while cereals were found especially on the lower slopes

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<sup>63</sup> CDV 37, and cf. Paolo Squatriti, *Landscape and Change*, p. 132.

<sup>64</sup> See Massimo Montanari, 'La foresta come spazio economico e culturale', *Uomo e spazio nell'alto medioevo: Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 50 (2003), 301-40.

and valleys where climatic and soil conditions allowed. These were combined with fruit and nut tree cultivation in the *cultura promiscua* system by the monks of Montevergine, to maximise production and exploitation of the soil.

When William settled in his hermitage on Montevergine, he chose his location based on the harshness and inhospitality of the Partenio. These conditions were ideal for him and his companion to follow the simple but strict lifestyle that William believed would bring them closer to God. With time, as the community grew and the institution of Montevergine evolved, the monks looked beyond Montevergine, adapting their economic strategy to the location and typology of the lands they acquired. This shaped Montevergine's economic activities — the products Montevergine farmed, its ability to farm animals, the availability of building materials, etc., which will be discussed in the following chapter — but also, by extension, the development of its own institutional identity, the way the monks thought about their founder, and their own mission, as I will argue in Chapter 7.

**Table 1: Landscape and other features mentioned in the Montevergine charters 1124-1210**

Landscape feature	Document Number	Date	Details
<b>Aqueduct</b>	162	Jan 1127	Boundary between donated land and monastery of San Silvestro.
<b>'ballone' (ie vallone - valley) with water</b>	178	Aug 1129	Boundary
<b>Natural disasters</b>	186	May 1130	Windmills: in the case of total destruction by war events or natural calamities expenses split btw 2 parties.
<b>Valley</b>	200	Aug 1132	'cuius ballonis'
<b>Forest</b>	220	Jun 1135	Donation from lord of Montefusco including privileges over land and forest.
<b>Forest</b>	233	Sep 1136	Forest in Iscla Rotonda near river Bella (Fiumarella)
<b>Forest</b>	533	Sep 1171	Count of Acerra grants exemption from forest dues in Montella
<b>Famine</b>	619	Mar 1177	Donors ask monastery to provide for them should they ever be in dire need of food and clothing.
<b>Famine</b>	Reg. 1415	Dec 1217	Donor receives counter-gift from monastery, 'given the famine experienced at the time'.
<b>Forest</b>	703	Jul 1182	Forest in Lu Cervetu near Avella
<b>Forest</b>	756	Mar 1185	Use of wood of Monte Tolino forest, near Malepersone
<b>Famine</b>	976	May 1195	Marotta, daughter of Pascale Racco was in great need of food and clothing to carry on.
<b>Famine and poverty</b>	978	Jun 1195	Truda wife of Amato Nasolungo asks to sell her house to avoid starving to death.
<b>Forest</b>	1034	Oct 1197	Forest near <i>castellum</i> of Ferraraia
<b>Forest</b>	1127	Apr 1201	Demesnal forest of Palombolete
<b>Forest</b>	1134	Sep 1201	Forest near Serra to build church
<b>Forest</b>	1232	Mar 1206	Demesnal forest near Maddaloni given by Frederick II
<b>Forest</b>	1244	Dec 1206	Forest of Grefolleta (Rocabascerana)
<b>Forest</b>	1294	Oct 1209	Frederick II confirmation of previous grant.



## CHAPTER 5: THE ECONOMY OF MONTEVERGINE: PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE CHARTERS OF MONTEVERGINE

'...the venerable father deemed that the church would be destroyed with the money rather than being built with it, and that they should not have any earthly possessions...'<sup>1</sup>

If Montevergine was not always involved in the real estate activities of the surrounding area, it very soon was at their centre. Montevergine's input in the economic growth and activities of the Irpinia region was sporadic at the most in the first three decades of its history. A few leases begin to appear in the documents from 1136, and a few *commutationes*, exchanges of land, property, and sometimes money, occur as early as 1127. These are limited to a very low percentage of the transactions which occurred in those years, most of which were donations made by the surrounding landlords and barons to Montevergine, as previously discussed. By mid-twelfth century, however, Montevergine documents suggest that it was, to varying degrees, involved in every one of the region's major economic activities, including land and property management, agriculture (particularly of chestnuts, cereal, and vines), animal rearing, milling, as well as a number of urban activities, including building and baking.

Thus, though at least part of the community was initially reluctant to participate in any economic activity which was not strictly intended for the monastery's self-sufficiency, in accordance with the will of its founder, it soon contributed actively to both agricultural and urban activities in the region. Nonetheless, within the context of other major monasteries in the Kingdom of Sicily, it is important to point out that Montevergine was far from reaching the economic success of its contemporaries, even those which were similarly new foundations. For example, Montevergine's recorded expenditures on land purchase for the nine decades ranging from 1120 to 1210 were less than a fifth of the expenditures recorded for Cava de' Tirreni in just the single decade between 1110 and 1119.<sup>2</sup> This chapter aims to identify Montevergine's economic activities, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Legenda*, VI, p. 18, l. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See Loud, 'The Monastic Economy in the Principality of Salerno during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 71 (2003), 141-70 (p. 164).

explore the extent of its impact on the local community and landscape. This will be achieved by looking closely at the monastery's involvement in both rural and urban settings.

The lack of financial accounts for monasteries, registers of bishops' visitations, taxation registers, registers of parochial income etc. prior to the fourteenth century in southern Italy constitutes a great lacuna in the otherwise patchy sources for the eleventh and twelfth centuries in southern Italy.<sup>3</sup> This documentary deficiency both at the monastery and in the individual towns and villages makes an analysis of its economic resources and activities somewhat difficult. Unlike the sources of some of the English or even northern-Italian institutional counterparts, which can be both abundant and extraordinarily precise and complex, sources of this nature survive only from the later-thirteenth century onwards in southern Italy, and even then they remain sparse.<sup>4</sup> Partial sources will present a partial picture of the overall economic *cadre* of the region. Nonetheless, what the monastery lacks in terms of detailed and accurate registers, it fully makes up for with the sheer volume of contracts and deeds which go a long way in explaining farming products, processes and arrangements. They demonstrate that despite its harsh appearances, the Irpinia region relied heavily on a relatively intense agricultural output. Farming was a central part of the lives of many in the Irpinia region, and many farmers became linked to and governed by the monastery of Montevergine. This was not the case in the rest of *Regno*, as Martin has shown in his study of Apulia, where farming contracts were relatively rare.<sup>5</sup> This chapter will also begin to explore the relationships, both communal and contractual, which were formed between Montevergine and workers of the land.

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<sup>3</sup> See Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 34-53 for an account of the extant source material for the early Middle Ages in southern Puglia. Martin argues that the relatively undeveloped ecclesiastical administration in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Puglia especially and in southern Italy in general, with the exception of the great monastic complexes, is partly to blame for this scarcity of material. This slow development is evident, Martin argues, from the small number of bishoprics and new parishes present especially in Puglia in the period. The synthesis, though, is still wanting of a deeper analysis of the source material, in comparison, for example, with the abundance of sources, including financial accounts and records of bishops' visitations available for the same period in England.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory: A Study in Monastic Administration* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1943), pp. 14-28. Cava and Montecassino both start to have some abbatial registers from the later-thirteenth century, though their survival is patchy. See also Robert Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1968), especially chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup> See Martin, *La Pouille*, particularly pp. 324-27.

In spite of the political turmoil brought about by the Norman conquest, agricultural activity appears to have continued largely undeterred throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Indeed the arrival of the itinerant monk, William, from Apulia had most likely been one of the most momentous occasions the locals had experienced in a long time. In the mountainous Irpinia region, in fact, communication routes were scarce and often inefficient, meaning that development, as well, occurred slowly. It seems perhaps redundant to point out that the lives of the communities of the Irpinia region and its economy were greatly influenced and affected by the environment they lived in, and yet it is necessary in order to comprehend just how much this was the case.<sup>7</sup> Mountain-dwelling can be a double-edged sword, providing protection on the one hand, but forcing its occupiers into isolation on the other. And not only did the mountains shape settlement patterns, provide refuge in war time, and slow development, but they also dictated work patterns and diets.

Jean-Marie Martin has argued that agricultural production in southern Italy was by no means harmonious, and indeed it was not just the types of culture which varied according to the suitability of the soil, but also work rhythms, the length and required payment of leases and *pastinatio* contracts, and even storage provisions and the tools in use.<sup>8</sup> What is evident from the Montevergine charters is that the monastery was prolific in the production of primary consumption goods, and that it relied heavily on property income. This is not unusual in monastic economies, and thus unsurprising. The relatively low income and expenditure figures, however, are less expected. The total income recorded in the charters is of 6388.5

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<sup>6</sup> See Giovanni Cherubini, 'Il Contadino', in *Condizione umana e ruoli sociali nel Mezzogiorno Normanno-Svevo*, ed. by Giosué Musca (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1991), pp. 131-51 (p. 131). Evidence of violent acts by the Normans on rural population is found in the narratives of the time, though these tended to inflate events and damage. See Loud, 'Continuity and Change', pp. 313-43

<sup>7</sup> The importance of the environment in the study of History, with particular regard to the Mediterranean, is, of course, the subject of the monumental work by Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. by Siân Reynolds, 2 vols (London: Collins, 1972), especially vol. 1, pp. 25-52, which deal specifically with the characteristics of mountainous areas.

<sup>8</sup> I am greatly indebted to Martin's studies of the agrarian economy of southern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and wish to thank him for offering his availability to discuss the case of Montevergine in particular. See J.-M. Martin, 'Le travail agricole: rythmes, corvées, outillage', in *Terra e Uomini nel Mezzogiorno Normanno-Svevo*, ed. by Giosué Musca, pp. 115-57; and Martin, 'Settlement and the Agrarian Economy', pp. 17-46.

Sicilian *tari* between 1120 and 1210, whereas the total expenditure on land purchases in the same period was of 2424 *tari*.<sup>9</sup>

It is perhaps surprising to us that by far the most common product found in the charters of Montevergine is chestnut. While some cereals are generally equally capable of growing at high altitude,<sup>10</sup> chestnuts are native to the area, and they grow especially well in the mountainous terrain of Irpinia. Aside from being perfectly capable of surviving the low temperatures found further up on the mountain slopes, they have the added advantage of benefitting from the humidity of the Tyrrhenian Sea, which make this section of the Appenines highly suited to this plant. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the inhabitants of Irpinia were privy to the chestnut's particular aptitude to their local terrain, and evidence of chestnut farming is found in monastic archives as early as 793. Paolo Squatriti writes about chestnuts that 'one obvious characteristic [...] that lent them to becoming human possessions in the Mediterranean is their predilection for mid-altitude hilly terrains'.<sup>11</sup> In the Montevergine charters, in fact, chestnuts are found especially on the slopes of Montevergine. In the first decade of Montevergine's existence, between 1125 and 1135, of the eighteen land donations made to Montevergine, eight included chestnuts found in Mandre, a locality on the mountain slope, over 40%. Of the remaining donations, three specified olive trees, one apple trees, and one included a vineyard. The remaining five do not specify the type of crop, or indeed if there was any at all.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in the decade between 1155 and 1165, fifteen of thirty-six arable land exchanges included chestnuts (41%). Of the remaining 59% of transactions, vineyards (five documents) and olive groves (seven documents) were the most frequent, the rest being either unspecified crops,

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<sup>9</sup> These calculations are based on the approximation of Amalfitan and Salernitan *tari* being of equal value, and calculating an ounce in the weight of Salerno as roughly 30 *tari*. See Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 463-65.

<sup>10</sup> Braudel, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Squatriti, *Landscape and Change*, pp. 81-82; see also Paul Vidal de la Blache, *Principles of Human Geography*, trans. by Milliant Bingham (London: Constable, 1926), p. 141. Braudel also explains that 'the further south one goes, the higher is the upper limit for the cultivation of crops and usable trees. In the northern Appenines today, chestnut trees grow as far up as 900 metres; at L'Aquila, wheat and barley are found up to 1680 metres; at Cosenza, maize, a new arrival in the sixteenth century, grows at 1400 metres, and oats at 1500 metres; on the slopes of Mount Etna, vines are grown up to a level of 1500 metres and chestnut trees at 1500 metres', p. 42.

<sup>12</sup> Chestnut groves are the subjects of CDV, 148, 150, 151, 152, 157, 162, 164, 211; olive trees are found in CDV, 178, 198, and 209, though the latter actually donates the oil product of the harvest, adding that the land will go to the monastery should the current tenants die without heirs or leave the property; apple trees are found in CDV, 191.

nuts, “shrubs” or “fruits”.<sup>13</sup> Of these “fruits”, we know that apple trees are found in conjunction with hazels and chestnuts, and figs are found in one instance alongside olive trees.<sup>14</sup> Oak trees were also valued for their acorns, used to feed animals, as well as their wood.

These products were often planted alongside chestnuts, in the *cultura promiscua* system, which, in the context of chestnut culture, was peculiar to the Campania region.<sup>15</sup> This is in contrast to earlier centuries, when chestnuts were found as a single crop, proving Montevergine’s dynamic innovative role in the agriculture of the region.<sup>16</sup> The chestnuts provided support for vines, and protection during winter for shrub plants. Cereals, on the other hand, need more exposure to the sun, so they were less likely to be planted under chestnut trees, but were commonly found in vineyards in Campania, because the latter do not offer a great deal of shade.<sup>17</sup> Chestnut trees were also essential in compacting and stabilising the soil along the mountain slopes to prevent landslides.<sup>18</sup>

The figures for chestnut plantation in the region demand further investigation. How were they grown? And most of all, what did the monks and the rest of the population do with all the chestnuts?<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Chestnut groves are found in CDV, 332, 333, 334, 391, 395, 396, 397, 399, 402, 412, 421, 428, 430, 434, 440. Vineyards are found in CDV, 339, 402, 417, 436, 439. Olive groves are in CDV, 343, 349, 392, 398, 420, 422, 423, 424.

<sup>14</sup> Apples are found in CDV 191, 505 and 1148. Figs are in CDV 559.

<sup>15</sup> Martin, ‘Settlement’, p. 41.

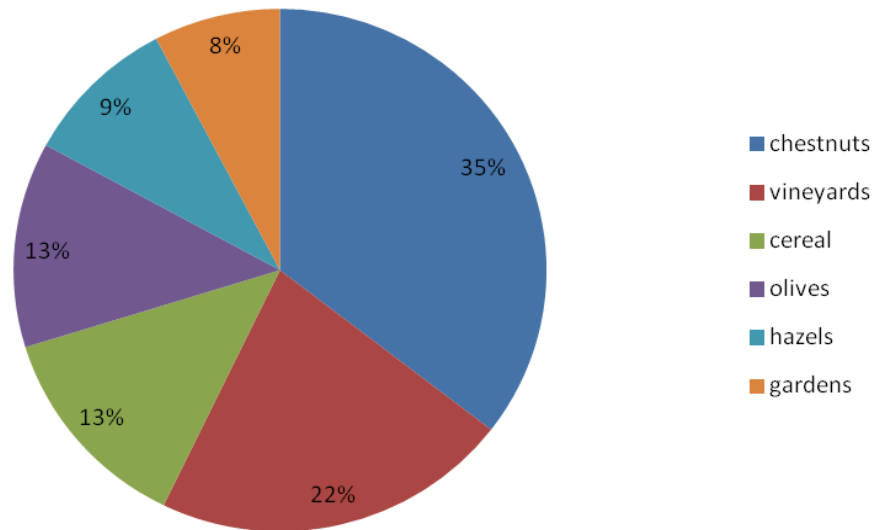
<sup>16</sup> See Squatriti, *Landscape and Change*, pp. 154-55.

<sup>17</sup> Martin, ‘Le travail agricole’, pp. 119-20.

<sup>18</sup> Vidal de la Blache, p. 221.

<sup>19</sup> These questions recently attracted the attention of the scholar Paolo Squatriti, who devoted his book *Landscape and Change* to them.

### Montevergine crop distribution in the surviving documents (1120-1210)



Graph 7: Sourced from charters in CDV

Although chestnut cultivation was not a particularly labour-intensive business, it was a time consuming one.<sup>20</sup> The lease contracts, specifically the *pastinatio* contracts, found in the Montevergine charters reflect this. They usually lasted twenty years,<sup>21</sup> and required the farmer to prepare the soil, ‘renew the bad trees’, plant the new chestnuts, remove the *grecculi* (the trees bearing inedible fruits), graft new branches onto the trees, and grow the trees — ‘*castanei pastinare et palumbare et insitare et surgere*’.<sup>22</sup> This was clearly a process which had been refined and perfected over years of cultivation: the *palumbula* variety of chestnut which most Montevergine charters instruct the farmers to cultivate were chosen both for their suitability to the local soil and weather conditions, and for the quality of the chestnuts produced. The reason the contracts were so long is that chestnut trees only reach maturity after their twentieth year, and reach maximum productivity between their fortieth and sixtieth years of growth.<sup>23</sup> For this reason also, chestnut *pastinatio* documents towards the end of the twelfth century describe the plantation process less frequently: having filled empty areas with new

<sup>20</sup> See Squatriti, *Landscape and Change*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>21</sup> This varies, e.g. sixteen years in CDV 795, and twenty-nine years in CDV 1087.

<sup>22</sup> Though these terms are found in any number of *pastinatio* documents, this one is in CDV 332.

<sup>23</sup> Martin, ‘Le travail agricole’, pp. 129-30.

chestnuts, it was now a matter of performing the routine maintenance necessary on the mature trees, and gathering and desiccating the fruits.<sup>24</sup> Though many of the *pastinatio* contracts closely resemble one another in their terms, there were some variations: sometimes the contract was stipulated to last sixteen years. In almost all cases, it was stipulated that the resulting chestnuts would be split equally in half between the monastery and the farmer. Internal arrangements were made occasionally as well. In March 1200, for example, a *pastinatio* contract between the dependency of San Nicola of Avellino and the farmer, William, stipulated that of the portion of chestnuts (half) owed to the dependency (a church led by the archdeacon, Benedict), forty-three chestnuts a year should be allocated to Montevergine.<sup>25</sup>

A clue to the use of chestnuts is found in the monastery's frequent wish to collect part of the fruits dry and part fresh (*'viridae vel siccae'*).<sup>26</sup> The desiccation was done by smoking the chestnuts on a grill, a practice which is still used in modern Corsica.<sup>27</sup> The dried chestnuts kept much longer than the fresh ones, and were then boiled or ground into meal or flour to substitute wheat or barley flour in the winter — the monastery owned or held milling rights to several mills, mostly water mills along the rivers — primarily to make bread, which, according to the early-twentieth-century *Grocer's Encyclopedia*, can last longer than cereal flour bread.<sup>28</sup> The fresh chestnuts, aside from being used for general consumption (though there is no evidence suggesting to what extent and in what manner this was the case in twelfth-century Campania), could also be fermented, and used to extract sugar or to replace hops to make beer and liquor. Furthermore they were used in conjunction with or instead of acorns as an important part of pigs' diets, as well as other grazing animals. These were common in the area, as suggested by the frequent reference to the *glanaticum*, a fee that could be exacted by a lord on the

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<sup>24</sup> CDV 732, 749, 764, 790, 865 (this is one example where the contract specifies that new chestnuts should be planted 'ubi necessita', where it is doable or possible. These occur earlier as well, but they become more frequent in the last quarter of the twelfth century).

<sup>25</sup> CDV 1087.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. CDV 916, 920.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., CDV 300 and 910. On the modern usage in Corsica see Martin, 'Le travail agricole', pp. 135-36, and Braudel, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> See Squatriti, p. 48; also Artemis Ward, *The Grocer's Encyclopedia* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1911), p. 79. 'The chestnut bread of the Corsican mountaineers is agreeable and healthful and will keep fresh for as long as two weeks'. See also Ariane Bruneton-Governatori, *Le pain de bois: ethnohistoire de la châtaigne et du châtaignier* (Toulouse: Eché, 1984). Fernand Braudel points to evidence that inhabitants of Campania 'ate bread from the trees'. See Braudel, p. 41.

use of acorns, exemption from which was highly sought after. Finally, the wood itself of the chestnut trees was clearly also quite precious. In December 1186, Lord William of the *castellum* of Atripalda granted Montevergine permission to use both fresh and dry wood from the woodlands in his domain, 'except for the wood of the chestnuts which they must not take without the consent of Lord William'.<sup>29</sup> The tannin-rich wood of chestnuts, similar to oak, is very durable and weather-resistant, aside from being of a pleasant, luxurious dark tonality, so it was likely used in building as well as furniture.

Hazel *pastinatio* contracts were shorter in length, and were often divided in phases, reflecting the growth pattern of hazels. These too varied from six to sixteen years.<sup>30</sup> Though the usual agreement entailed splitting the products in half, sometimes the two parties would agree that during growth, in the first twelve years, the monastery would receive one fifth of the hazelnuts, and the rest would remain with the farmers. With the twelve years having elapsed, the fruits would then be divided in half.<sup>31</sup> Many of the monastery's hazel groves were found in the eponymous Nucicle locality, suggesting the soil here was particularly apt to growing hazels. The lack of specificity with regards to the growing process would suggest that it was not as complicated as with chestnuts, and that little maintenance was necessary after planting the trees.<sup>32</sup>

Overall there are twenty-four contracts which involve the plantation of hazels on Montevergine land (and only a few donations with hazels), a fraction of the number of chestnut *pastinatio* contracts.<sup>33</sup> They were clearly not considered as suitable to the region's environmental conditions as chestnuts, but their fruits were still a common staple of people's diets, and the wood must also have been used, perhaps more as fuel. Wood was a commonly sought-after commodity, providing building material and fuel. In a confirmation granted by Frederick II in May 1219 on Abbot Donato's request, the emperor gave the monastery use of the wood found across his kingdom, and this was an important achievement for the

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<sup>29</sup> CDV 780.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, CDV 1284.

<sup>31</sup> For example, CDV 282.

<sup>32</sup> Martin, 'Le travail agricole', p.129.

<sup>33</sup> CDV, 282, 365, 382, 430, 475, 477, 478, 488, 489, 505, 625, 673, 732, 810, 920, 931, 1000, 1033, 1075, 1240, 1270, 1284, 1285.



monastery.<sup>34</sup> Both hazel and chestnut contracts stipulate that the farmers ‘must help the monastery’s envoys load their shares of the products on the backs of animals’, confirmation that communication routes in this mountainous area were rudimentary and not suitable for carts. Martin suggests that these envoys were usually men employed by the monastery, as opposed to monks or oblates, and in receipt of a wage.<sup>35</sup>

Montevergine received many vineyards from its early days, and only issued about a dozen *pastinatio* contracts for vineyards in the first century of its existence. This suggests two conclusions: first of all, it indicates the area was already quite well covered in terms of viticulture; and secondly that the monastery was not very active in the grape and wine industry, and certainly not as much as it was involved in chestnut production.<sup>36</sup> In a number of other contracts involving vineyards, usually in conjunction with other types of cultivation, such as cereals, chestnuts, hazelnuts, or garden patches, Montevergine received rent on the vineyard, rather than requesting the farmer work on the vineyards on behalf of the monastery. This was perhaps because it was the most labour-intensive of agricultural endeavours, the soil requiring particular care according to whether a second or third culture was carried out alongside the vines. Specifically, a typical vineyard *pastinatio* contract lasted twelve years,<sup>37</sup> and instructed the farmer to ‘hoe the land, and, where necessary, to sow the seeds (*propaginare*) and prepare the soil for a good vineyard (*pastinare*), and grow (*surgere*), trim (*potare*), and tie the vines to support them with stakes (*de lignamine bene contiare*)’.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned above, cereals were often sown in vineyards, in which case the soil needed to be worked with the plough to accommodate this, and more carefully with the hoe around the trunks, and the supporting trees or posts (*lignamina*). Furthermore, the supporting trees (often chestnuts) also needed to

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<sup>34</sup> *Regesto* 1440.

<sup>35</sup> See Martin, ‘Le travail agricole’, p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Contracts involving viticulture for Montevergine include: CDV 456, 498, 581, 582, 583, 584, 607, 608, 749, 803, 823.

<sup>37</sup> This varies — a contract from March 1175, for example, specifies nine years (CDV 581).

<sup>38</sup> Martin, ‘Le travail agricole’, p. 134. See CDV 498 for the most detailed description of the duties involved in viticulture: ‘et ipsam vineam debent ipse Formentinus et eius heredes annualiter zappare et, ubi necessitum fuerit, propaginare et pastinare de bono vitineo et surgere et potare et ligare et de lignamine bene contiare’.

be pruned and maintained. The vines themselves also needed to be trimmed every year, usually during winter.

Come harvest time, the grapes needed to be collected, and gathered 'for pressing and weighing', to make wine:

the grapes which the Lord gives us must be harvested (*salvas facere et vindemiare*), and taken to the press, weighed, and, as is customary, water should be added to the must, and half given to [the monks], and the other half should remain with [the farmers].<sup>39</sup>

Vineyard properties tended to include a '*torcular*' or '*palmentum*', a wine press, and sometimes it is specified that this should be kept in a shack or cottage on the property.<sup>40</sup>

Although the wine may well have been sold at markets, there is good reason to believe that much of it was consumed internally at Montevergine and its various daughter-communities. Those vineyards which were not leased out in *pastinatio* contracts were in fact likely to have been used by the monks for their own production of grapes and wine. In fact, the monastery's own involvement in wine production is further evidence of the monks' adoption of the Benedictine rule, which specifically allows for one or two *heminae* (about half a pint) of wine a day, contrary to the far more rigid regimen of the anchoritic lifestyle upheld and promoted by William of Vercelli.<sup>41</sup> The first evidence of the monastery receiving wine from a patron is in the oblation charter of April 1133, and the first instance of the monastery commissioning wine is in July 1169.<sup>42</sup> This fits in with the suggestion that the monastery shifted its eremitical focus beginning already with the abbacy of Albert, who succeeded William; as we have seen, in spite of the controversial events leading to William's departure, Albert remained keen to uphold the founder's principles, so a more definite shift occurred after Albert's time, toward the middle of the century.

Cereal fields are rarely found on their own in the Montevergine charters. *Terra vacua* was sometimes used to sow cereals, but the charters make it difficult

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<sup>39</sup> Continuing in CDV 498: 'et uve, quas Dominus nobis ibidem dederit, debent iusta ordine salvas facere et vindemiare et ad torcular congregare et pisare et, secundum consuetudinem, aquam in piczzolum mittere et dare nobis et ad nobis aliorum arborum similer inclitam medietatem, relinqua medietatem eis remaneant'.

<sup>40</sup> CDV 581, 582, 583, 584, 607, 608, 749 (here the press is kept in the hayshed).

<sup>41</sup> *RoB* 40.

<sup>42</sup> CDV 207 and 498.

to interpret exactly when this happened. One example occurs in December 1165, when Abbess Sicelgarda of San Paolo Apostolo in Avellino gave Peter son of John of Cicala a plot of land with vineyard 'and other fruit trees', a plot of land with orchard for Peter to reside on, and two empty plots of land. Sicelgarda instructed Peter to give the monastery half of the wine and fruits obtained from the vineyard, and one fifth of 'any crops sown on the empty lands'.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, cereals are very commonly found accompanying other types of cultivation in *cultura promiscua* — most commonly chestnut, but also hazel, vine, olive, and other fruit trees.<sup>44</sup> The Montevergine contracts do not specify the processes involved in cereal culture, but rather are limited to stipulating the percentage of the crop which the farmer owed the monastery for the *terraticum*, a sort of payment in kind which seems only to be exacted from cereal culture. This was usually a tenth of the yearly crops, but in a few instances, the payment is larger during the growth years of the accompanying culture, usually a fifth, and then reduced to a tenth once the trees or vines reach maturity.<sup>45</sup> This was a regional custom, as is pointed out in one of the documents.<sup>46</sup>

For this reason, information on the processes involved must be gathered and pieced together from other sources. The traditional annual cereal cycle began in the spring with fallowing and weeding, and working the land in preparation for sowing. This entailed tilling the land with ploughs operated by animals or the farmers themselves; the ploughs could be very large and require up to six oxen to operate them.<sup>47</sup> In the eleventh century, harrowing was also introduced in the Campania region to finish the soil before sowing.<sup>48</sup> The harvest was then carried out, followed by the threshing and winnowing to separate the chaff.

Wheat and barley are the main types of cereal found in the Montevergine charters. The many measurement units used in relation to both wheat and barley show both how deeply ingrained in everyday life the exchange and use of cereal

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<sup>43</sup> CDV 456.

<sup>44</sup> Cereals with chestnut grove: CDV 421, 434, 498, 503, 734, 735, 749, 795, 823, 865, 916, 920, 1087, 1095, 1100, 1138, 1245; cereals with vineyard: CDV 498, 581, 582, 583, 584, 803, 823; cereals with hazel grove: 475, 488, 489, 922, 931, 1270, 1284, 1285; cereal with olive grove: CDV 823, 1188.

<sup>45</sup> For example, CDV 581, 582, 583 and 584 with vineyard, 625 specifies that the *terraticum* will be reduced after twelve years, when the hazel trees are mature.

<sup>46</sup> See CDV 810; and Loud, 'Monastic Economy', pp. 160-61.

<sup>47</sup> See CDV 1030.

<sup>48</sup> Martin, 'Le travail agricole', p. 132. See also Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. by Cynthia Postan (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 22-25.

was, and how each localised settlement even within a relatively limited area had developed its own terminology, an indication of the rise of local dialects.<sup>49</sup> These measurements include the *moggia*, *grimpa*, *coscina*, *sauma*, *quarta*, and *ordeus* (for barley). In May 1196, Prior Peter of Santa Maria di Lapio, a daughter house of Montevergine, accused two brothers of withholding rent they owed the monastery. The rent was in kind as well as monetary, and included a *grimpa* of wheat and one of barley, two measures of wine, a chicken, a pork shoulder, and two pairs of *buccellata*.<sup>50</sup> While the document's authenticity has come under scrutiny, and it is likely to be a later fabrication, the terms used remain of interest. These *buccellata*, known also as "soldiers' biscuits", were made from ground cereal packed into a biscuit, a method used by Roman soldiers to ensure the longevity of their supplies.<sup>51</sup> Its format was obviously well-suited for bartering, but the isolated instance of its usage in the charters is perhaps more indicative of the charter's forgery than it is of the common usage of *buccellata*.

The number of *pastinatio* contracts involving olive orchards is small compared to the donations of olive trees and orchards — only six, as opposed to thirty-two donations. There is an obvious preoccupation in some of the charters with the suitability of olive trees to the region's terrain, which may well explain Montevergine's avoidance of olive plantation. In May 1160, the donor of five olive trees in the locality Lu Cervitu, in the province of Avellino, gave the monastery permission to change cultivation if the olive trees died.<sup>52</sup> In November 1176 the donors of an olive orchard in the same locality also gave Montevergine permission to replace the trees if they were uprooted by the wind.<sup>53</sup> In June 1195, offering all her possessions to Montevergine, Maria daughter of the deceased John Bove of Sant'Agata, and widow of Richard Sarlatto asked to have use of the lands until she died, paying an annual rent of a pound of oil 'when the olive trees give fruit', and

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<sup>49</sup> See Cherubini, 'Il Contadino', p. 133.

<sup>50</sup> CDV 1009.

<sup>51</sup> The process is described in Ammianus Marcellinus's *Historia Romana*, ed. and trans. by John C. Rolfe, *Loeb Classical Library*, 3 vols (London: Heinemann, 1971-1972), II, book 17, ch. 8, par. 2, p. 140. 'sed ut est difficultatum paene omnium diligens ratio victrix, multa mente versans et varia id tandem reperit solum, ut anni maturitate non expectata barbaris occurreret insperatus firmatoque consilio XX dierum frumentum ex eo, quod erat in sedibus consumendum, ad usus diurnitatem excoctum bucellatum, ut vulgo appellant, umeris inposuit libentium militum, hocque subsidio fretus secundis, ut ante, auspiciis profectus est, intra mensem quintum vel sextum duas expeditiones consummari posse urgentes et necessarias arbitratus'.

<sup>52</sup> CDV 392.

<sup>53</sup> CDV 638.

half a pound of oil when they do not.<sup>54</sup> These sorts of conditions are not found in relation to other types of cultivation. The large number of donations, however, meant that the monastery certainly had enough sources of olives and oil for its own communities.

The oil, aside from use for consumption, was also used in certain services where holy oil was required, such as baptisms. In November 1208, for example, Bishop Stabile of Caserta granted Abbot Donato of Montevergine permission to build a church and have a cemetery in his diocese, and declared that he and his successors would give the monastery 'enough holy oil for the ill' every year on the day of the Last Supper.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, in May 1136, the bishop of Vico was instructed to provide the monastery's new acquisition of the church of San Giovanni in Aquara with holy oil, on condition that the parishioners of the bishopric pay the bishop the due emoluments.<sup>56</sup>

As with the cereal-culture processes, the charters are not specific about the operations involved in growing and maintaining olive orchards, and are limited to instructing that the farmers plant and grow the trees (*cultare et studiare*), and collect the fruits, of which the monastery usually claimed half. The farmers were also sometimes instructed to store the olives, indicating the presence of storage facilities on the land. A donation in August 1185 included olive trees and use of the olive press, which, in fact, was a heavier and altogether different machine from the wine press.<sup>57</sup>

The olive groves are frequently found alongside vegetable gardens (*hortus*), or indeed planted in the gardens.<sup>58</sup> Little can be deduced about the type of vegetables that were commonly planted. There is frequent enough mention of cabbage and *arbusta*, which may have included blackberries, commonly found in south Calabria, but found also in Campania and Sicily.<sup>59</sup> There is also evidence of legume plantation in donation charters where residents of land given to the monastery are obliged to pay a yearly rent in kind or money.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> CDV 980.

<sup>55</sup> CDV 1272.

<sup>56</sup> CDV 232.

<sup>57</sup> CDV 760.

<sup>58</sup> For example CDV 677, 823, 1188, 1195.

<sup>59</sup> On blackberries and mulberry trees see Martin, 'Le travail agricole', p. 123. Examples of cabbage crops are in CDV 581, 749, 823.

<sup>60</sup> For example, CDV 357 and 483.

Animal rearing is not much mentioned in the charters until the end of the twelfth century, which, as previously discussed, can be interpreted as a sign that it was not central to the monastery's activities during its early development. Nonetheless there are clues to its practice in the region. We have already seen that animals were used for the transportation of the monastery's dues from its various landholdings. Pigs were fed on acorns and reared for their meat, which is mentioned as payment, particularly the shoulder.<sup>61</sup> Working animals mentioned in the charters include mules, oxen and horses.<sup>62</sup> The latter only appear as donations made by the monastery in confirmation of their patrons' offers, indicating perhaps that Montevergine had more horses than it had use for, or that it could spare more horses than it could spare money, or simply that its monks did not ride them.<sup>63</sup> Another effect of the prolific chestnut cultivation was that it resulted in particularly nutritious grasses that were ideally suited for grazing.<sup>64</sup> The monastery also owned sheep and cattle, which, like the work animals, appear in the charters almost exclusively as donations made by the monastery in confirmation of other gifts, effectively as payment. They appear in particular abundance towards the end of the twelfth century: in May 1197, in return for a church and land in Pietralcina, Montevergine gave Bartholomew Lord of Pietralcina one hundred sheep, eleven cows, three young bulls and a nag.<sup>65</sup> And in September 1199 Abbot Gabriel gave the widow of a deceased oblate of the monastery:

216 sheep, a bed with bedding (down quilt and silk linen), which James had left the monastery, two ounces of gold, and a quarter of her husband's villa [palazzum], the other three parts pertaining to the monastery, which she would have use of during her life time, except if she should become a nun or take a second husband. He also [gave] her a quarter of the vineyards left by her husband, in return for Maria's dowry of 110 *romanati*.<sup>66</sup> This was evidently not an oblate of humble means, and one highly regarded in the Montevergine community.

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<sup>61</sup> CDV 564, 570, 1009. In July 1168, knight Gerard donated land to the monastery, instructing the land's occupiers to pay the monastery the *escaticus*, a food payment, for the pigs. CDV 483.

<sup>62</sup> Mules are frequently mentioned as transport animals as well, and a day's work with oxen is demanded in CDV 570.

<sup>63</sup> CDV 586, 652, 755.

<sup>64</sup> See Squatriti, *Landscape and Change*, p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> CDV 1030.

<sup>66</sup> CDV 1063.

Animals could, like everything else, be cause for dispute. This is evident in an interesting document compiled in May 1149, in which Archbishop William of Salerno gave permission to seventy monks of Santa Maria Incoronata to transfer to the monastery of Goletto, William of Vercelli's second largest foundation. The reasons behind this decree are far from clear. What is relevant in this context is that the archbishop took the opportunity to proclaim all disputes 'about things mobile and immobile' between the two monasteries settled. He lists these as including complaints about 'mules, sheep, pigs, cows, grain, barley, oil, cheese, gold, silver, utensils and whatever other furniture'.<sup>67</sup> Most of all, the document invites considerations on the relationship between Santa Maria Incoronata and the Verginian monasteries (of which Santa Maria was not a part), and on this sort of "human traffic" between monasteries.<sup>68</sup> At a stretch, though, this might be much-needed evidence of transhumance occurring in the twelfth century between Apulia and Campania.<sup>69</sup> Currently archaeological and documentary evidence suggest that the practice of transhumance of animals moving from Abruzzo in summer to winter pastures in Apulia had ceased by the seventh century, and was reintroduced only in the thirteenth century.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately this document shows little more than shared pasture between the two monasteries, and it is further undermined by the possibility that it might be a forgery created by the Verginian monks to give strength to their claims over the monastery of Santa Maria Incoronata.

In some instances, the monastery would exact a yearly monetary fee for *pastinatio* contracts, usually of a few *tari* per year, as well as *salutes*, 'gifts' expected on certain days every year (usually Christmas and Easter), and more arbitrary payments, such as a stipulated number of chicken or measures of wheat or wax per year, as well as a certain number of unpaid work days, which the tenant was obliged to carry out at the bequest of the monastery. Furthermore, especially from

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<sup>67</sup> CDV 290.

<sup>68</sup> The phenomenon of monastic '*transitus*' is currently being researched by Dr Jochen Schenk of the German Historical Institute, London. He presented a paper on the subject as part of the University of Leeds, School of History Medieval History Seminar in Spring 2010.

<sup>69</sup> See Enzensberger, '*Privilegi normanno-svevi*', p. 78.

<sup>70</sup> On transhumance see Martin, '*Settlement*', p. 43.

the last quarter of the twelfth century, the monastery also received entry fees in confirmation of the deed when the contract was first drawn up.<sup>71</sup>

The rent ranged from a single *tari* a year to fourteen. There is only one case in which the rent rose so high, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, it is a telling example. In fact, this was a *remissio* contract made in August 1205, in which the brothers Peregrinus and John Amata were absolved from the labour services to which they were bound.<sup>72</sup> Their unpaid work was replaced by an increase in the yearly rent on the two pieces of land they held from the monastery (the rent was formerly 3 *tari* per year), which they also needed to cultivate with olive trees, giving half of the olives to the monastery's daughter house of Santa Maria del Plesco, as per a regular *pastinatio* contract. Whether this represented an improvement on the tenants' lifestyle is debatable.

In the Montevergine charters the practice of exacting labour obligations appears as *operae*, *servitia* and *angaria*. The *angaria* and *servitia* were only ever owed to the monastery by men and women given to the monastery by its patrons, or by men and women who offered themselves as *conversi*, or by oblates.<sup>73</sup> The *angaria* was mostly a standard obligation due on royal demesne. As Loud noted in relation to the Cava transactions, those who owed Montevergine unpaid labour services were 'clearly un-free [men and women], and regarded as property like any other'.<sup>74</sup> This is evident in the wording of the formula for granting people to the monastery, in which people were simply given away in the same fashion as land or livestock; for example, in 1171, Count Richard of Acerra offered (*optulit*) to Montevergine:

all the men pertaining to [him] in the *casale* of San Lorenzo with all their heirs and with all their tenements and appurtenances, and with the services and salaries and whatever fee which they usually render or give to [the Count] or [his] predecessors (*decessoribus*).<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> CDV 678 (48 *tari*), 889 (40 *tari*), 1146 (20 *tari*).

<sup>72</sup> CDV 1205.

<sup>73</sup> See CDV 843, and Chapter 6, p. 173 on these members of the monastic community.

<sup>74</sup> Loud, 'The Monastic Economy', p. 150.

<sup>75</sup> CDV 533. For a comparison with the language used in north-western French charters in the eleventh century, which is surprisingly similar to the one found in the charters of Montevergine, see Paul Fouracre, 'Marmoutier: *Familia* versus Family. The Relations between Monastery and Serfs in Eleventh-Century North-West France', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300-1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 255-74 (p. 263).



For this reason, too, the gift of one or more people to the monastery was regarded as a gesture deserving of spiritual salvation, just as the renunciation of any other earthly possession.

The *operae*, on the other hand, were exacted as payment in *pastinatio* arrangements, specifically for chestnut groves and vineyards, or in simple rental contracts. In practice, they seem to all indicate the same sort of fee: they entailed payment or obligations in unpaid physical labour.<sup>76</sup> This type of “part-time” slavery was quite common in the monastery’s transactions, but Montevergine also owned and had access to un-free men and women who were frequently traded in the region.<sup>77</sup> Aside from these clauses in transaction contracts, we have little evidence for the status and activities, and indeed the degree of servitude or freedom of the people owned by the monastery. The implication, however, is that there were few limitations to the uses the monastery could have of these men and women, given that it had control over their property, their rights, their bodies (for labour), and even their offspring.

**Table 2: Labour services 1120-1210**

Doc. number	Date	Labour service
245	Jan. 1138	<i>angaria, operae, datione, servitia</i>
311	Nov. 1152	1 day <i>servitium</i>
345	Mar. 1156	<i>servitia</i>
378	Mar. 1159	<i>servitia</i>
483	Jul. 1168	<i>angaria</i> for the week and 2 <i>operae</i> weekly
509	Mar. 1169	<i>servitia</i>
533	Sep. 1171	<i>servitia</i>
544	Feb. 1172	<i>servitia</i>

<sup>76</sup> See Cassandro, ‘Il diritto nelle carte di Montevergine’, p. 100, where he argues that in the charters of the eleventh century which he had analysed, there were no un-free labourers working for Montevergine (‘dunque una popolazione di uomini liberi’, he states), on the basis that land was often given to them with the *natinascentes* provision, that is, in perpetuity, making it effectively their land; possession of part of the land was also sometimes transferred to the tenant once the stipulated work had been carried out (eg. CDV 63). He cites only two cases in which he found mention of ‘*ospites*’ (CDV 1, and CDV 17). The phenomenon of *angaria*, *servitia* and *operae* might be more strictly associated with Norman usage then, as they emerge and become more frequent once the conquerors had established themselves in the region.

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter 6, p. 172; and Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 188-89.

569	Mar. 1174	<i>angaria</i>
570	Apr. 1174	<i>operae</i> : 15 days of work with oxen per year
619	Mar. 1177	<i>servitia</i>
634	Aug. 1178	<i>angaria</i>
738	Apr. 1184	<i>operae</i> : 24 days of work with axe
749	Nov. 1184	<i>operae</i> : 2 days of work per month
756	Mar. 1185	<i>servitia</i>
760	Aug. 1185	<i>servitia</i>
932	May 1194	<i>operae</i> : 2 days of work per year; <i>salutes</i> : on Christmas and Easter
1000	Mar. 1196	<i>angaria</i> , <i>operae</i> , and <i>servitia</i>
1009	May 1196	<i>salutes</i> : <i>buccellata</i> ; <i>operae</i> : 1 day of work per week in the monastery
1138	Dec. 1201	<i>operae</i> : 1 day's work per month yearly
1205	Aug. 1204	<i>operae</i> : 2 days of work per year

The financial and physical burden which the labour obligations constituted is made evident by the frequent exemptions from *angaria* made either in favour of the monastery or in certain cases in favour of the monastery's men.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, some documents include a clause specifically preventing either the donor or the monastery from exacting labour obligations from the monastery or the lands' tenants. For example in the forged royal privilege of March 1170, King William II exempted the monastery from paying *angaria* on all royal demesne.<sup>79</sup> And, in March 1174, Count Roger d'Aquila promised not to exact either the *angaria* or the *adiutorium* from Montevergine over a large donation of land, indicating perhaps that there had been breaches of the royal exemption.<sup>80</sup>

The exaction of labour services, which varied from a few days a year to a few weeks, was rarely waived from the monastery's men. Only one incident occurs in the twelfth-century charters: in March 1196, Abbot Daniel ordered that William Racco and his heirs should be absolved from 'all the rent, *angaria* and work, and all other exactions which William and his heirs needed to see through in the *curia*, so

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<sup>78</sup> On the importance of privileges for monasteries in the early Middle Ages see Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999).

<sup>79</sup> CDV 509.

<sup>80</sup> CDV 569.

that William and his heirs might remain free and absolved [...] and he might be a free man like those of Mercogliano'.<sup>81</sup> Ostensibly this was 'for his good services rendered to the monastery and those of his ancestors', however, the monastery received from William on the same occasion a hazel grove bordering with monastic land, as well as his son James with a piece of land in Macera. The monastery was never eager to part with its property without practical reason to do so.

Overall, about 80% of the monastery's recorded income was derived from its agrarian pursuits and rural property rental. About a fifth of the monastery's income came from investment in urban properties. Montevergine, in fact, owned a relatively small number of houses and workshops in urban areas, including Avellino, Urbiniano, Capua, Aversa, Curti, Maddaloni, Montoro, and Bari.<sup>82</sup> The majority of the monastery's urban properties were located in Avellino, or just outside its walls. Aside from leases, sales and purchases, there is other evidence of the monastery's possessions in urban areas. In 1163, for example, Montevergine swapped a *casalina* and a workshop which it had in Avellino with a chestnut grove and a *casalina* near Mercogliano offered by William son of Alferio.<sup>83</sup> Several other urban properties were exchanged for rural properties in the twelfth century, further evidence of the monastery's strength in and reliance on the agrarian economy.

**Table 3: Montevergine's urban properties 1120-1210**

Doc. Number	Year	Property	Location	Income
448	1165	<i>casalina</i>	Avellino	2 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
563	1173	workshop	Avellino	6 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
746	1184	½ house	Avellino	2 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
766	1185	house with land	Urbiniano	1 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
796	1188	house	Avellino	1 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
813	1189	house	Avellino	2 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
856	1191	workshop with land	Capua	5 <i>tarìp.y.</i>

<sup>81</sup> CDV 1000.

<sup>82</sup> See Table 3, p. 135.

<sup>83</sup> CDV 428.

869	1192	house with land	Curti	5 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
887	1192	house	Aversa	4 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
889	1192	house	Urbiniانو	1 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
1041	1198	house in suburbs	Avellino	3 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
1058	1199	house	Maddaloni	2 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
1072	1199	house	Avellino	150 <i>tarì</i>
1130	1201	house with land	Montoro (?)	2 <i>tarìp.y.</i>
1172	1202	house and cottage	Bari	?
1278	1209	house with land	Benevento (?)	2 <i>tarìp.y.</i>

In the towns, the main economic drive came from trade. During the twelfth century, south-Italian markets suffered from a shift of the trading economy to the northern Italian cities, where the Lombard League, the central Italian city-states and the great maritime republics were all beginning to develop, corresponding with the increasing demographics.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, the coastal cities of the Kingdom, and of the island of Sicily especially, still benefited both from long-distance trade and from trade with the northern-Italian cities.<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately Montevergine's participation in the local trading networks can only be surmised through fleeting yet tantalising references, given the evident gaps in documentation. As pointed out above, by the third quarter of the twelfth century Montevergine was certainly producing more primary materials than its own communities could possibly need, and it is safe to assume that the surplus was taken to and sold in the local markets. The spurious 1137 royal privilege of Roger II and the genuine 1195 privilege of

<sup>84</sup> Paul Oldfield, *City and Community in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009). On the urban economy in general see especially chapter 9, 'The Urban Economy', pp. 246-62, where Oldfield argues that the economy was not 'stifled' by the Norman conquest or by 'the northern shift of the Western economy', but rather it rose to the challenge to keep pace, primarily through trade of raw materials, especially with northern Italy. He also points to the birth of 'consuls of the merchants' in the northern cities as evidence of greater progress in the trading profession in the north; in the south it is difficult to find any mention at all of merchants (pp. 253-5). David Abulafia took a slightly different position in *The Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977), pointing to 'the failure of urban industry to develop in Sicily after the precocious commercial growth of Amalfi and Bari in the eleventh century', p. 284. He further argued in his work on Frederick II that southern trade suffered from 'the heavy hand of Norman rule' controlling towns' supplies; see Abulafia, *Frederick II*, p. 16. See also Sydney R. Packard *Twelfth Century Europe: An Interpretative Essay* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), pp. 59-77, for an overview of trade patterns in Western Europe in the twelfth century.

<sup>85</sup> On the western-Italian coastal cities see Patricia Skinner, 'The Tyrrhenian Coastal Cities Under the Normans', in *The Society of Norman Italy*, pp. 75-96.

Henry VI both specified exemption from the *plateaticum*, 'a charge on transactions within the *plateae* (squares)', taken as a percentage of the price of the transaction.<sup>86</sup> Exemption from dues on goods for the monks' own use is a frequent privilege given to monastic houses by powerful lords. The Normans had carried over the use of the *plateaticum* from the previous Lombard administration.<sup>87</sup> Evidence of the monastery's involvement in trade is found in the Emperor's charter, which specifies that

should the brothers sell any of their possessions, they should not be forced to pay the *plateaticum* for the price of the sale. Wherever in the kingdom and empire the church buys cloth for the brothers' clothes and for their other men, may no one exact the *plaza* or any other tax on behalf of the *curia*, but may they buy and sell freely without exaction.<sup>88</sup>

Tight royal control over trade through various fees and taxations was already a feature of the Norman administration of King Roger II: Lynn White argued that even when granting privileges to monasteries, the Norman rulers had their limitations, making sure that the exemptions applied exclusively to the monastic communities' own needs, as is the case in this example.<sup>89</sup>

The monastery's town properties were valued especially for their lucrative worth. They were in fact among Provost Roger's first recourses when Montevergine experienced grave financial debt at the end of the twelfth century. Rather satisfyingly, the reason for the monastery's misfortunes is given explicitly in a charter dated December 1199:

Provost Roger and cellarer Andrew declared that the monastery was in great financial debt, because Emperor Henry had imposed a great *adiutorium* fee, from which the monastery was absolved; not long after [the Emperor's] death, Markward came and oppressed them until he had taken a great treasure, which they did not have, the money having been promised to him by Count Roger of Labiano,<sup>90</sup> and they needed to give the money they did not have to Count Roger. Abbot William, having taken counsel with the monks, decided to sell all the assets

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<sup>86</sup> See Loud, *Latin Church*, pp. 320-21.

<sup>87</sup> Oldfield, p. 259.

<sup>88</sup> Clementi, 'Calendar of the Diplomas', pp. 152-55.

<sup>89</sup> Lynn T. White, *Latin Monasticism in Norman Sicily* (Cambridge, MS: The Medieval Academy of America, 1938), pp. 66-69.

<sup>90</sup> This is perhaps a misspelling of Count Roger of Balvano, son of Philip of Balvano, who held the county from 1199, since there was no County of Labiano, to my knowledge. See Takayama, *The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), p. 203.

they had in the city of Avellino, ordering the provost and cellarer to carry out the order with the sealed letter with which he entrusted them.<sup>91</sup>

Caught in the power struggles of the years of Frederick II's minority, Montevergine was able to rise to the urgency of the situation by selling and leasing their urban properties.<sup>92</sup> The alarm was first raised in December 1199 when Abbot William, 'in order to appease the debts of the monastery', sold a vineyard in Urbiniano near the church of Santo Stefano, receiving an ounce of gold.<sup>93</sup> They then sold the house in Avellino near Porta Maggiore, receiving five ounces of gold. In the same month, Montevergine also settled all its debts with a number of creditors, revealing the monastery's retrospective tactic of borrowing the sum necessary to pay Count Roger, and then turning to the task of refilling its own coffers.<sup>94</sup> In total, the monastery's debts amounted to 120 ounces of gold, roughly equivalent to 3600 *tari*, over half of the monastery's total income recorded in the charters for its first nine decades of activity. They were, however, absolved from fifty ounces from their first creditor who himself owed the monastery forty-eight ounces, because 'the monastery had sold him various goods', further evidence of Montevergine's trading activity in the local lay community. Finally, the urban houses, as mentioned earlier could well have been used by the monks as temporary lodging when they took their goods to market.

Montevergine's own purchases of land were few and far between in the first half of the twelfth century (there were only two — one in 1127, the other in 1131), though they began to intensify in the second half, particularly from the late 1160s, during the enterprising priory of Rossemanno. They peaked only in the last decade of the twelfth century, when Montevergine's daughter house of Santa Maria del Plesco and the hospital of Loreto also became significantly active in the region's economy.<sup>95</sup> The former made three purchases between 1190 and 1202, and bought the remaining share of a house, two thirds of which it already owned in 1178; the hospital acquired five pieces of land in the decade between 1195 and 1205.

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<sup>91</sup> CDV 1072, and similarly in 1075.

<sup>92</sup> See Ryccardus de Sancto Germano, *Chronica*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>93</sup> CDV 1070.

<sup>94</sup> CDV 1071.

<sup>95</sup> See Table 4, p. 141. Houben points out that the sense of urgency in these charters should be explained by Montevergine's lack of liquid funds, rather than its inability to pay the debts at all. Montevergine had plenty of immobile assets it could use to this end, and simply needed the time to turn these into liquid funds. See Houben, 'Sfruttore o benefattore?', p. 62.

Additionally, the houses of Capua and Schiavi, the hospital of Maddaloni, and the church of Santa Maria del Flumine, all dependents of Montevergine, each made single acquisitions from 1195. Overall, purchases from Montevergine's daughter houses made up the majority of purchases from 1195 onwards, which indicates that as Montevergine began to struggle with financial problems, it delegated more financial responsibilities on the priors of its dependencies.

Buying land constituted the bulk of Montevergine's expenses in the charters, which amounted to about two and a half thousand *tari* between 1120 and 1210. This figure cannot, however, be an accurate representation of the monastery's expenses, for, especially in the first decades from its foundation, there were sure to have been considerable building costs in the erection of the monastic complex, and further maintenance and repair costs later in the century. The charters offer only very few, important pieces of evidence in this respect. For example, in January 1191, Montevergine reserved the right to build a church on a plot of land leased to Peregrinus, son of notary Philip.<sup>96</sup> Montevergine was given two mills in a state of disrepair in March 1191, and given permission to restore them.<sup>97</sup> In June 1197, Montevergine received a piece of land 'which it needed for the works it [had] started on the church of San Giacomo of Civitanova, dependent on Montevergine'.<sup>98</sup> The royal charter of Frederick II of March 1206 gave Montevergine permission to build a church near Capua.<sup>99</sup>

With few exceptions, the majority of purchases were of arable land, especially in the areas of Mercogliano, Summonte and Urbiniano. They included chestnut groves, vineyards, hazel groves, olive orchards, empty land and all other usual types of crops found in the monastery's possessions. Montevergine also bought a small number of houses and a mill.<sup>100</sup> Most purchases were presented as offers compensated by the monks with often generous monetary donations. In November 1190, in exchange for a mill, for example, Provost Alferius of Santa Maria del Plesco gave the knight John 100 *tari* of Amalfi, as well as promising a

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<sup>96</sup> CDV 852

<sup>97</sup> CDV 871.

<sup>98</sup> CDV 1031.

<sup>99</sup> CDV 1232.

<sup>100</sup> Four of six houses acquired by the monastery were bought between 1205 and 1209 (CDV 1225, 1236, 1248, 1292). The mill was acquired as part of the generously compensated donation of knight John de Artura in November 1190 (CDV 848).

yearly rent of half a *tari*.<sup>101</sup> Other purchases were made at significantly low costs, such as the land with garden in Urbiniano bought in 1179 for the price of four *tari*. As with other financial transactions, purchases were for the most part carried out by the prior or provost, and, on occasion, by the cellarer. The abbot rarely took charge of transactions, and mostly appeared in charters giving permission to or instructing his officials to proceed with the transaction. Tropeano noted that Abbot Robert only participated personally in acts which involved men of high social status, leaving most ordinary dealings to Prior Rossemanno.<sup>102</sup>

The idea that Montevergine's eremitical origins and its founder's insistence on poverty influenced its economic trends and strategies certainly stands as a plausible solution to the monastery's initial financial reticence. It does not account, however, for the two individual purchases made by the monastery while William of Vercelli was still practicing his strict eremitical lifestyle, the first of which may even have been made during the abbacy of William himself. Nonetheless, as subsequent abbots became more comfortable with the notion of the monastery owning property, Montevergine still never reached the same level of wealth as some of its contemporaries, despite its involvement in wealthy social circles through its patrons.

With only a few urban bases, and little to no evidence of urban crafts or activities, the monastery's greatest assets remained its considerable rural landholdings. Its impact on the local economy is difficult to assess without the figures for trade activity, but its role in bringing uncultivated rural areas to fruition, and organising crops in cultivated areas benefited the otherwise ill-connected settlements of the Partenio mountains and the Irpinia region. The overall impression is that Montevergine helped to maintain and strengthen areas of productivity that were already a feature of the agrarian economy of the Campania region, as with, for example, chestnut and olive cultivation. Plots of land with chestnut groves and olive orchards were, in fact, given to the monastery as pious donations from its early years. These were subsequently redistributed to local farmers, thus providing work and encouraging settlement in the area. The monastery's experimentation with multiple crop arrangements, known as *cultura*

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<sup>101</sup> CDV 848.

<sup>102</sup> Tropeano, CDV, IV, p. xxviii.



*promiscua*, also made the monastery an important innovator in the agricultural environment of twelfth-century Campania and southern Italy.

One might argue that the privileges and tax exemptions which were granted to Montevergine by its patrons, while obviously beneficial to the monastery's own economic circles, were actually detrimental to the region's economy as a whole, subtracting income from both private and public economic sectors.<sup>103</sup> Exemption from the *plateaticum*, *herbaticum*, *glandaticum*, *aquaticum* and other levies (including rabbit hunting in the Golisano area)<sup>104</sup> meant that the monks and their people circulated freely in markets, pasture lands, woodlands and rivers (both as communication routes and fishing resources), at the expense of the lands' owners, and perhaps preventing fees from decreasing in favour of the rest of the population.<sup>105</sup> What is more is that these terms were almost certainly inserted in the charters by the monks themselves, suggesting they were indeed considerable amounts of money or goods at stake; furthermore, the monks themselves exacted levies from people on the monastery's lands.<sup>106</sup>

**Table 4: Montevergine's land purchase expenses 1120-1210**

Doc. number	Year	Acquisition	Price in <i>tari</i>
164	1127	Acquire land with vineyard, chestnut grove and other trees, in the appurtenances of Summonte	112
191	1131	Acquire land with apples and other trees	16
308	1152	Acquire 2 vassals with their incomes and possessions	200
365	1158	Confirmation of hazel grove in Nucicle held by Domenic Cardillo from the monastery	10
412	1162	Acquire land with chestnut grove in Urbiniano	32
439	1164	Acquire land in Mammabona	2
470	1167	Acquire land with vineyard in Mercogliano	22
493	1169	Acquire two pieces of land in Saraino	30
519	1170	Acquire land <i>vacua</i> in Sariano	32
566	1173	Acquire land <i>vacua</i> in Valle di Cazzola	64

<sup>103</sup> On this aspect of monastic economies see White, *Latin Monasticism*, pp. 66-67, and Federico Ciccaglione, 'La vita economica siciliana nel periodo normanno-svevo', *ASSO*, X (1913), 342-3.

<sup>104</sup> See *Regesto* 1470 – Frederick II confirmed a donation from lord Paolo de Cicala in July 1221, in which he also granted the special hunting exemption.

<sup>105</sup> References to fishing rights are found in CDV 509 and 533.

<sup>106</sup> See above, p. 131.

591	1176	Acquire land with vineyard and fruit trees	228
602	1176	Acquire land in Lapio	12
609	1176	Acquire land <i>vacua</i> near Santa Maria del Preposito	32
641	1178	Acquire 1/3 of two houses in Girone Castelcicala	11
647	1179	Acquire land with garden in Urbiniano	4
664	1180	Acquire land in Fenalta near Maddaloni	100
719	1183	Acquire land in the appurtenances of Acuniano, a court in the place called Sala dei Monaci, a garden found in the place called Liuprandi, and land in the place called Sala, as well as 1/4 of land along the river Rigino	30
816	1189	Acquire a vineyard in Casalnuovo	200
829	1189	Acquire empty land in Strata	60.5
832	1190	Acquire a house with courtyard in Urbiniano	64
848	1190	Acquire a mill	100
866	1192	Acquire land in Aurano	11
880	1192	Acquire vineyard in Preturo	60
934	1194	Acquire land with vineyard in Vesta	16
943	1194	Acquire land with olives in Veterina	165
944	1194	Acquire land with olives in Veterina	90
956	1195	Acquire land in Fontana di San Nicola	60
964	1195	Acquire land in Villa Nova	50
965	1195	Houses of Capua and Schiavi acquire land in Gualdo	25
978	1195	Acquire land with Vineyard in Copone	15
987	1195	Acquire land in Valle di San Nicola	10
990	1195	Acquire land in territory of Montefusco	13.5
1032	1197	Acquire garden in Taurasi	17
1047	1198	Acquire land with vineyard in Urbiniano	40
1077	1200	Acquire land	10
1117	1201	Pay a debt attached to a house donated by	180
1159	1202	Pay a yearly rent on a land in Villa Casamarciana	40
1190	1203	In confirmation of rent of land in Tufo	7.5
1225	1205	Acquire house in Mercogliano	15
1236	1206	Acquire brick house with adjoining land <i>vacua</i> in Avella	70
1248	1207	Acquire 1/4 share of house in Taurasi	90
1292	1209	Acquire landholding with houses and possessions in Mercogliano	60

## CHAPTER 6: MONTEVERGINE AND THE SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN ITALY: RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS IN THE CHARTERS OF MONTEVERGINE

Montevergine functioned as much as an overlord as a pastor and administrator in the society of southern Italy. Although the charter evidence is focussed primarily on the monastery's role as a dominant economic force in the region, there is no doubting that Montevergine fulfilled its fundamental role as a powerful intercessor between this life and the next within the wider lay community.<sup>1</sup> Donations to the monastery in one form or another constitute about 40% of the charters pertaining to Montevergine and its dependencies. The vast majority of these were made 'pro anima', that is, for the soul of a specified person or people. This points to the common understanding in medieval society that donations to the monastery would help the deceased in the afterlife, and would prepare the donors and their family members who were still with them for the afterlife. This belief can be traced in the Gospel of Matthew to Christ's declaration that 'anyone who has left houses, or brothers or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or land for the sake of [Christ's] name will be repaid many times over, and gain eternal life'.<sup>2</sup> Although they are by no means consistent, these donations show patronage and benefaction patterns that point to the development of trends linked to networks of donors. These networks appear to be formed either by kinship groups or by interactions between close settlements. There is a large and burgeoning field of research on monastic and lay gift-giving applying anthropological approaches to the medieval context.<sup>3</sup> Donation patterns involving family groups have been explored in a

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<sup>1</sup> See R. N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-c. 1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 136-71; Bouchard, *Sword, Miter and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987), pp. 225-46; Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbour of St Peter*, especially pp. 37-43; Ludo Milis, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men: Monasticism and its Meaning to Medieval Society* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992); Emilia Jamroziak, *Rievaulx Abbey and its Social Context, 1132-1300: Memory, Locality, and Networks* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 57-110. In a southern-Italian context, the most important work has been done on Montecassino — Heinrich Dormeier, *Montecassino und die Laien im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert*, *Schriften der MHG*, 27 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1979), pp. 58-80; and Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 183-93.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 19:29. See Philippe Jobert, *La notion de donation: convergences, 630-750* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1977), p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, *Do ut des: Gift Giving, Memoria, and Conflict Management in the Medieval Low Countries* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2007); Ilana F. Silber, *Virtuosity, Charisma and Social Order: A Comparative Sociological Study of Monasticism in Theravada Buddhism and Medieval Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); David Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000-1300* (London: Routledge, 1992); Victoria Chandler, 'Politics and Piety: Influences on Charitable Donations during the Anglo-Norman Period', *Revue Bénédictine*, 90 (1980),

number of case studies, mostly in northern-European contexts.<sup>4</sup> In a southern-Italian context, while family patronage of monasteries has been explored in great detail, this has not been seen within a wider perspective of monastic donation trends. In the first section of this chapter the charters of Montevergine will be analysed to describe donors' motivations for choosing to aid the monastery. It will also show that family ties, and proximity to the monastery and to other donors contributed to form the monastery's sphere of influence, which in turn made Montevergine an essential institution in forging community bonds and networks.

Linda Rasmussen has emphasised the potential danger of overlooking other important benefactors when exploring monastic patronage within the 'family' framework.<sup>5</sup> In order to avoid this pitfall, I will take into consideration other transactions such as burial, bequests, oblations, leases, and gift exchange, which show the ways in which the monastery interacted with the lay community, and the sort of services and provisions for which the monastery was sought after by lay men and women. The fundamental mutuality of the relationship between monasteries and the lay community within which they were immersed in the medieval period has received a great deal of attention from scholars using different approaches and case studies.<sup>6</sup> This thesis does not aim to challenge these notions, but rather to include Montevergine in the existing debate, and thus to broaden its parameters and its force. An important aspect of Montevergine which comes across clearly from its charters is the degree of interaction with untitled landowners. Given the political, environmental, and economic factors already

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63-71; Derek Baker, ed., *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, Studies in Church History, 15 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. by Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen and West, 1954).

<sup>4</sup> Jamroziak, *Rievaulx Abbey*, pp. 62-110; Kim Esmark, 'Religious Patronage and Family Consciousness: Sorø Abbey and the "Hvide Family", c. 1150-1250', in *Religious and Laity in Western Europe*, ed. by Emilia Jamroziak and Janet Burton (Woodbridge: Brepols, 2006), pp. 93-110.

<sup>5</sup> See Linda Rasmussen, 'Monastic Benefactors in England and Denmark: Their Social Background and Gender Distribution', in *Religious and Laity in Western Europe*, ed. by Emilia Jamroziak and Janet Burton (Woodbridge: Brepols, 2006), pp. 77-91 (82).

<sup>6</sup> On Cluny, see Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbour of St Peter*, pp. 38-77; on southern Italy, see Martin, *La Pouille*, pp. 659-91, where he argues that monasteries in southern Italy had a strong pastoral as well as economic role, although he tends to concentrate mainly on the latter. Linda Rasmussen has argued for a systematic re-evaluation of the evidence for the social background of monastic benefactors, as the literature on the subject — she looked at England and Denmark — tends to emphasise only the donations from members of the nobility and gentry. See Rasmussen, 'Monastic Benefactors in England and Denmark', pp. 77-91.

discussed in this thesis, Montevergine developed a close relationship with the local lay communities, particularly with the lower echelons of society. Relatively wealthy peasants and untitled landowners looked to Montevergine not only as a spiritual asset, but as a provider of employment and insurance, and as an institution which contributed in a very real way to the livelihood of the lay community. In turn, Montevergine relied on the material contributions of lay people to support its religious community, as well as to maintain and increase its reputation and the prestige of its founder saint. The mutuality of the relationship was crucial in preserving the sustainability of both religious and lay communities.<sup>7</sup>

### **6.1. Trends and Community**

Discussion of the development of Montevergine under the Normans and Hohenstaufen has shown that the monastery's property expanded gradually, mostly through donations of land. Montevergine did not acquire land through purchases in a consistent way until the 1160s, yet its landed properties had increased considerably in the first three decades of its history. Its territorial expansion thus coincided to a large extent with the growth of its pool of donors, and thus of its influence and reputation. This trend worked through both familiar and unfamiliar conduits: a donation by one lay person often invited donations from others within the person's relationship network, be it a family member, a lord, a tenant or a vassal. Alternatively, Montevergine could come into contact with people through physical proximity: a donation by a lay person might invite a donation from his or her neighbour.<sup>8</sup>

Looking at Montevergine's interactions from this perspective presupposes that the lay population readily considered making donations to monasteries. As with other religious institutions, donors' motivations for choosing to interact with Montevergine were both spiritual and material. Montevergine's peculiarity lay in the history and circumstances of its foundation and development, as well as its location in relation to the lay communities around it and to other monasteries. In

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<sup>7</sup> Most recently, the social function of monasteries has been the subject of a study by Iñaki Martín Viso, 'Monasterios y redes sociales en el Bierzo altomedieval', *Hispania*, 71 (2011), 9-38. Viso concludes that monasteries in the Bierzo region of Spain in the late Middle Ages were 'one of the principle ways of articulating social and religious prestige'.

<sup>8</sup> See Cf. Jamroziak, *Rievaulx Abbey*, pp. 41-55, where this approach is applied to the benefactors of Rievaulx Abbey.

the first instance, it is clear that Montevergine held onto its original institutional identity to some degree. The monks of Montevergine maintained a strong reverence for their founder throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as attested by the survival of the manuscripts of the *Legenda*, written at various stages throughout these two centuries. William of Vercelli represented the principles of poverty and simplicity of devotion upon which Montevergine had been founded, and to keep his 'legend' alive was, in a sense, to keep his *ethos* alive in the institutional identity of the monastery. However, William was not the only saint making Montevergine a strong competitor in the region's patronal networks. Devotion to the Virgin Mary, to whom the church of Montevergine was dedicated, and from whom the monastery took its name, was a similarly motivating factor. This is evident in many donation charters, particularly the young Frederick II's first privilege to the monastery, discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>9</sup> In November 1197, Lord Gisulf Botrumile of Castellammare asked specifically for the lighting of a candle on the altar of St Mary every day and night in return for his donation of the landholdings of two of his vassals.<sup>10</sup> Mary's role as mother made her the ideal mediator and fit in perfectly with the monks' own role as intercessors.<sup>11</sup>

Naturally, the two aspects of donors taken into consideration here could overlap, as neighbours could also be family members. In fact, a donation was almost never about a single individual. Donors asked for the monks to pray not only for their own soul (if at all) but for their parents', their relatives', their communities', and sometimes even the souls of 'all the faithful'. The very act of writing the charter for a donation, and the processes and rituals involved brought a number of distinct community members together: not just the donor and the representative(s) of the receiving institution, but the *boni homines* and the witnesses, who could be representatives of various social strata, and the notaries and judges. Nevertheless, family and neighbourhood donors will be treated

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<sup>9</sup> See p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> CDV 1036. Lord Gisulf of Castellammare was also an interactor of Cava. In September 1185 he remitted all his claims to property once held by two deceased lords in his territory of Tevicello to Cava, in return for 30 *unciae* (Cava, *Arm. Mag.* L.13 — unpublished).

<sup>11</sup> On the cult of the Virgin Mary in the twelfth century see Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, pp. 144-45; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Yale UP, 2009), pp. 121-90, especially 121-57 on Mary in a monastic context; Elizabeth A. Johnson, 'Marian Devotion in the Western Church', in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. by Jill Raitt, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1987), II, pp. 392-414, who argues that the cult of Mary originated in monasteries, which then engaged the laity in practices of devotion of the Virgin Mary.

separately to emphasise the different social structures that are manifested in each case.

### 6.1.2. Neighbourhood Donors

No sooner had [William of Vercelli] finished his prayer, than a large multitude of people arrived who, at his command, started building the kiln and splitting firewood, and their commitment was so great that the following day, having fired the kiln, rocks were melted into cement. Without delay, with the help of neighbouring towns, the church was built within a few days, as well as the cells for the brothers.<sup>12</sup>

From the erection of the first church and cells, Montevergine had relied on the help and support of the local lay community. William's popularity in the area drew crowds of people from the settlements around Montevergine. This comes across clearly in the charters. Roffrid son of Madelfrid, for example, the first donor to feature in the charters, gave a chestnut grove to William of Vercelli in September 1125.<sup>13</sup> He was an inhabitant of Summonte, with a son, Maio, and his land bordered with the monastery's land so that interaction was almost inevitable. Another inhabitant of Summonte, Maggio son of Landulf, gave a chestnut grove in Mandre just two months later;<sup>14</sup> the third charter in the archives of Montevergine to register a donation to the monastery involves another local landholder from Summonte, Peter son of John Toderico, and his wife, Gemma.<sup>15</sup> From November 1125, Montevergine started to receive donations of small plots of land from the people of Avellino, and in August 1129 it received its first donation from Baiano, near Avella, a small fortified village about 25km north-west of Montevergine, which was followed by another in May 1130, and another in April 1132.<sup>16</sup>

This sequence of donations shows that donation trends were built through proximity to the monastery, but also through neighbourhood; these people influenced each other in the decision and choice to donate to Montevergine. The

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<sup>12</sup> *Legenda*, III, p. 15. 'Vix oratione completa, tanta multitudo populi supervenit ut ad eius imperium et calcariam laborare cepissent et ligna incidere, tantaque servivit instantia, ut altero die igne supposito lapides solverentur in cementum. Nec mora, auxilio adiacentium civitatum, ecclesia edificatur paucis diebus necnon et cellule ad utilitatem fratrum'.

<sup>13</sup> CDV 148.

<sup>14</sup> CDV 150.

<sup>15</sup> CDV 151.

<sup>16</sup> CDV 152, 164, 178, 187, 198.

communities of southern-Italy in the twelfth-century were close-knit, as evidenced by the descriptions of boundaries in the charters. These show that each plot of land was enclosed by properties belonging to the owner's neighbours. The boundaries were physically ill-defined, but the most common information given was the names of neighbours, either landowners or tenants, or sometimes both. For example, in November 1137, Sica, the widow of Daddeo, gave Montevergine her dowry, which consisted of half a plot of land, and outlined its boundaries thus: on one side, there was a public road bordering with lands of the heirs of Iderno of Montefusco, and, following the road, the property reached an aqueduct in an uncultivated stretch of land called Coniulum, and then the lands of Ugo son of Gilbert; on another side, it bordered with the land of Landulf son of Mirandus; and on another, a forest belonging to Iderno of Montefusco.<sup>17</sup>

The charter which precedes Sica's donation is useful in illustrating the way neighbours could influence each other, and how Montevergine contributed to the creation of communal bonds. Montevergine received another donation the same month from Proserpina, the wife of the *miles* Iderno of Montefusco, who had died in battle at Rignano. His wife offered some property to Montevergine in exchange for burial of her husband on monastery grounds.<sup>18</sup> Both Daddeo and Iderno had been donors of Montevergine, and perhaps Daddeo had also died at Rignano, given the temporal proximity of the donations. In any case, it does not seem farfetched to postulate that these donations, made by two widowed women, consisting of neighbouring land, were the result of communication among neighbours of the role that Montevergine could play in their community. In this particular case, Montevergine was seen as the ideal intercessor for the dead among the women of Montefusco. Both women had in fact specified that they had offered the lands for the redemption of their own and their husbands' souls, reserving nothing for themselves or their heirs. The need for intercession thus clearly took precedence over the need to provide for their heirs, underscoring the importance of Montevergine's functions.

This neighbourhood network developed across the Irpinia region. Montevergine's pool of donors gradually extended further east to include lord

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<sup>17</sup> CDV 244.

<sup>18</sup> CDV 243. See also Chapter 2, p. 49.



Alamo of Taurasi in August 1129;<sup>19</sup> lord Roger of the *castellum* of Lapio, just south of Taurasi, in October 1130, followed in March of the subsequent year by Boniface son of Franco of Lapio;<sup>20</sup> and just south of Lapio, lord Hugh of the *castellum* of Serra, in November 1131.<sup>21</sup> To the south, Montevergine's properties grew around the neighbouring *castella* of Sarno and Sanseverino, through a donation of Count Henry of Sarno in February 1134, followed in August 1135 by a donation from lord Henry of Sanseverino.<sup>22</sup>

While the initial surge of gifts from Summonte and Avella was the product of the devotion of untitled landowners, the catalysts for further donations in the surrounding settlements were, more often than not, lords or even members of the higher nobility. There are many *domini* among Montevergine's donors, and frequently these lords encountered in the charters of Montevergine cannot be traced in other sources, such as the *Catalogus Baronum* or contemporary chronicles. The term *dominus* had certainly acquired broader usage in the twelfth than in previous centuries, when it had referred only to exclusive members of the Norman nobility.<sup>23</sup> Its usage in the Montevergine charters is ambiguous. It appears to denote a form of lordship, which is often associated to a specific *castellum* or other settlement, but which rarely appears tied to any vassalic properties, and does not necessarily denote nobility. Its most notable feature in the charters is its association with land ownership. Use of this title in the monastic charters was in itself a public exposition and performance of the donor's social status. So, while we have no further information for lord William of Baiano and his sister Bigolenda, who offered a piece of land to Montevergine in 1129, lord Alamo of Taurasi who, the same year, made a donation of land with the tools and materials to build a mill, was a member of the Sanseverino family, one of the most powerful and influential

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<sup>19</sup> CDV 180.

<sup>20</sup> CDV 190, 191.

<sup>21</sup> CDV 194.

<sup>22</sup> CDV 214, 223.

<sup>23</sup> See Joanna Drell, *Kinship and Conquest: Family Strategies in the Principality of Salerno during the Norman Period, 1077-1194* (London: Cornell UP, 2002), pp. 35-37; Huguette Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne (9<sup>e</sup>-11<sup>e</sup> siècle): pouvoir et société en Italie lombarde méridionale* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991), pp. 871-97, where it is observed that in the Principality of Salerno, the terms *dominus* and *senior* were used only to refer to the prince until the second or third decade of the eleventh century; in Martin's analysis of the term in Puglia he warns that the word is very ambiguous, and might not necessarily denote a relationship of lordship/submission — see *La Pouille*, pp. 756-61.

families of the southern-Italian Norman nobility.<sup>24</sup> Alamo was the son of Torgisius of Sanseverino and the uncle of Roger of Castelvete, who became Count of Avellino before 1191.<sup>25</sup> Montevergine's interaction with the lower ranks of society was in itself a reason for influential donors to forge ties with the monastery, which could use its position as a central node in the region and the community to promote its patrons' reputations, for example, through ceremonial remembrance.<sup>26</sup>

The limited expansion of Montevergine at this stage was certainly beneficial to the monastery, as it allowed the community to maintain a strong and secure control over its slowly expanding territory during a period of political unrest for the region.<sup>27</sup> This control is likely to have played a part in attracting donations from the local lay community, who must have already looked to the monastery as a source of spiritual stability and security in the afterlife. By the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century, however, Montevergine's landholdings spread as far as Bisceglie, Bitonto, and Bari in Apulia to the east, to central Basilicata in the south, and Castellammare on the Tyrrhenian coast to the west. Donations from outside the Irpinia region were still quite rare, but how does one explain the more isolated donations that Montevergine received from much farther than the "neighbourhood" of the Irpinia region? In 1185, Montevergine received its first donation in Apulia, consisting of three pieces of land with olives in Palo del Colle, near Bari, from Simon de Sora, lord of Valenzano, Palo and Campoli, as well as use of the lord's olive press.<sup>28</sup> In June 1197, Roger Malalma gave Montevergine a piece of land with part of a house found on the property in Tricarico, near Matera, in Basilicata, which Montevergine needed for the renovation works it had started on the church of San Giacomo of Civitanova, dependent on Montevergine.<sup>29</sup> In Apulia, Montevergine also acquired a house in Bitonto in 1201,<sup>30</sup> and some land in the

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<sup>24</sup> CDV 178 and 180. On the Sanseverino family, see especially Gregorio Portanova, 'I Sanseverino dal 1125 allo sterminio del 1246', *Benedictina*, 23 (1976), 319-63 (pp. 340-47).

<sup>25</sup> For Torgisius of Sanseverino see CB 713, and for Alamo, cf. Cuzzo's *Commentario*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>26</sup> See below, p. 166.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Loud, 'A Lombard abbey in a Norman world', pp. 289-91.

<sup>28</sup> CDV 760. In a charter from November 1254 we learn that Montevergine's lands in Palo del Colle had been occupied by Walter de Victarius, lord of Celenza di Val Fortore, and the pope was called on to intervene so that the lands would be returned. See *Regesto*, 2043.

<sup>29</sup> CDV 1031.

<sup>30</sup> CDV 1117.

province of Foggia through a donation in 1210 from Judge Gerard of the city of Rocca Sant'Agata and Bovino.<sup>31</sup>

Two common factors emerge from these data: first of all, it is apparent that in most of these cases, there is evidence of specific agency on Montevergine's part to reach out beyond its established landholdings in the Irpinia region. In the latter instance, for example, the charter specifies that Abbot Donato of Montevergine had visited the city '*conventus causa*' with a few of his monks, apparently to meet Judge Gerard; the latter tells that the monks '*commendaverunt propositum nostrum*', and he responded by enlisting himself, his wife Trotta and their son Marco to the service of the monastery ('*et eorum consilio mediante, disposuimus in predicto monasterio Montis virginis vitam ducere monachalem*'), as well as leaving all their possessions to Montevergine.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, William of Vercelli had been to Bari on several occasions, and thus some knowledge of his institution may well have spread in the area. The donation in Tricarico seems to have been solicited by the monastery as well, since the charter points out that Montevergine needed the land to make repairs on an appropriated church. In addition, one might speculate that donors from the Matera area might have been influenced by John of Matera's close interaction with William of Vercelli. The recurring preoccupation with the monastery's precarious financial situation around the turn of the century should be factored in among the motivations leading head monastic officials to seek out aid from old and new patrons alike.

The second observation to be made is that expansion outside the Irpinia region only occurred fifty years after the monastery's foundation, and even then, mostly in the Hohenstaufen period. This can be attributed to a number of factors. Overtly, there is the fact that, in the Norman era, different regions, particularly Calabria and Apulia, were already abundantly endowed with their own religious institutions, which commanded the allegiance of the local population. One need only mention San Benedetto of Conversano, the Augustinian abbey of San Leonardo in Siponto, and Santa Maria of Pulsano in Apulia; the Holy Trinity of Venosa in Basilicata; Sant'Eufemia and the Cistercian abbey of Santa Maria of Sambucina in Calabria, while Greek monasticism was still relatively strong in

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<sup>31</sup> CDV 1296.

<sup>32</sup> CDV 1296.

Calabria, Apulia, and Sicily, and Cistercian houses were slowly taking root in the Kingdom as well.<sup>33</sup> The lack of support from the majority of the Norman nobility did not help Montevergine's cause, and the emergence of privileges from the Hohenstaufen monarchs also helps to explain the monastery's surge in extra-regional popularity in that specific period.

The monastery's reputation had in fact grown visibly in the later and post-Norman period: it finally received papal recognition, though it is hard to pinpoint exactly when this occurred. The first surviving papal bull addressed to Montevergine, in fact, was issued by Celestine III and dates to 1197.<sup>34</sup> This bull, however, claims to confirm the privileges and confirmations granted by Pope Lucius III (1181-85), and Pope Alexander III (1159-81). Montevergine also received its first seemingly genuine royal privilege from Henry VI in 1195.<sup>35</sup> Given the strict laws in place for the Norman king to exert control over his counts and barons (who, for example, could not marry without his consent), his ability to influence their choice in monastic patronage should not be underestimated. These privileges and confirmations contributed to bringing the monastery to the attention of a wider range of donors, both further away from the monastery, as well as further up the social scale.

The significant lack of royal or papal interest in the monastery until the 1180s meant that any donations and rights conferred on the monastery beforehand were still precarious, which led to more frequent land disputes. This may have contributed to directing patrons' generosity to the security of more well-established institutions. The lacuna in royal patronage of Montevergine may well have prompted the author of the founder's *vita* to insert questionable accounts of William of Vercelli's close relationship with Roger II, to boost the monastery's self-image and reputation, and in an effort to encourage patronage from the upper

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<sup>33</sup> For a general overview of the state of monasticism in the kingdom in the twelfth century see Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 430-93. The important Greek monastery of Ss. Elias and Anastasius, Carbone, in Basilicata, had close links with the local nobility. See also Theo Kölzer, 'La monarchia normanno-sveva e l'ordine cistercensi', pp. 91-116 on the insertion of the Cistercians in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily.

<sup>34</sup> MBR, III, pp. 61-63, n. 24.

<sup>35</sup> CDV 966, and Dione Clementi, 'Calendar of the Diplomas of the Hohenstaufen Emperor Henry VI', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 35 (1955), 86-225 (pp. 152-55).

echelons of society.<sup>36</sup> And while ambitions of following 'donation trends' may have played an important part in attracting barons and counts during the Norman and Hohenstaufen period, Montevergine's reputation also rested greatly on the eremitical character of its founder. This figure of poverty and humility contributed to attract wealthy people interested in projecting an image of charitable Christians, more than nobility interested in associating themselves with an image of power, culture or erudition. The latter were more likely to choose monasteries like Montecassino or Cava with famous libraries and powerful patrons.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, aside from the obvious propensity to devotional donations found and indeed expected among the more affluent members of society,<sup>38</sup> the able estate management shown by Montevergine from its early years played an important part in attracting the local landlords. Historically, according to the *Legenda*, in fact, it had been the desire for more judicious use of its newly acquired assets which led the first monks of Montevergine to confront their leader, William of Vercelli, and which eventually drove him away from the monastery. In years to come, the monastery would benefit from its evident regional pre-eminence in agricultural and economic productivity, gaining the trust and respect of the local barons.

### 6.1.3. Kinship Donors

Family members, as has already been pointed out, were frequently at the fore of donors' minds when making gifts to the monastery. Many donation charters include specific requests from both spouses, and sometimes their children or other relatives. Donations to monasteries were thus very often family matters. To some extent this was down to legal constraints on family property, as Lombard and Norman law strove to ensure that property remained within the family, but it was also a way to ensure the protection, spiritual, physical, and, not least, socio-political, of the donors' families. The monastery could pray for the entire family, but it could also agree to offer certain assurances and benefits in return, be it inclusion in the monastery's *familia*, a corrody, or the restitution of land to donors' heirs after a set period of time. Donations to any monastery, moreover, enriched and consolidated the donors' and their families' prestige, through the ritual and

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<sup>36</sup> *Legenda*, XXIII, pp. 38-43, and also Chapter 1, p. 38.

<sup>37</sup> Loud, 'A Lombard abbey in a Norman world', p. 275.

<sup>38</sup> See Bijsterveld, *Do ut des*, who focuses on aristocratic donations to monasteries of the Low Countries.

public nature of the donation itself.<sup>39</sup>

The de Rachisio family is a good example of how Montevergine and members of the local lay society contributed to each other's livelihoods in the Irpinia region. Richard de Rachisio was a farmer in the appurtenances of Summonte, and referred to as a 'fidelis' of Montevergine in January 1178, indicating he already worked in the service of the monastery: when Montevergine set up its colony in Fontanelle to house its *fideles*, Richard de Rachisio and his brother John were among the men who received houses and land there.<sup>40</sup> Richard also had another brother, William, who acted as guarantor for the sale of a piece of land to Montevergine by Richard in 1181.<sup>41</sup> We learn later that Richard married a woman named Satalia, and that they had at least two children: Nicholas, and a daughter whom we know of only through the mention of a son-in-law, Bartholomew.<sup>42</sup> It seems that Richard and Satalia had initially elected Nicholas as their only heir, but that he probably died before his parents.<sup>43</sup> In fact, while Nicholas, who undertook an ecclesiastical career and became a deacon, joined his father in the sale of a piece of land to Montevergine in 1181, giving his consent for the alienation of the land, in a donation made by Richard and Satalia in October 1193, consent for the donation was given by their son-in-law, Bartholomew, and their grandson, Matthew.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Bijsterveld, *Do ut des*, pp. 81-82, 117-18. He admits that this sort of conclusion can only be made in general terms, as not enough is known about mechanisms of power and lordship in the medieval period. In the southern-Italian context, Skinner's (particularly on the duchies of Amalfi and Gaeta) and Drell's pioneering contributions on the subject allow better understanding of this social phenomenon. See Patricia Skinner, *Family Power in Southern Italy: The Duchy of Gaeta and its Neighbours, 850-1139* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 247-92, especially pp. 252-64, and Drell, *Kinship and Conquest*, pp. 125-70.

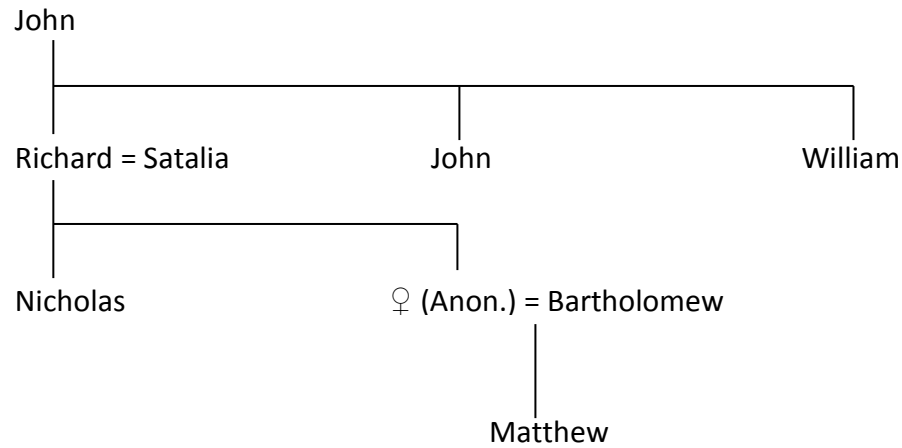
<sup>40</sup> CDV 621.

<sup>41</sup> CDV 678.

<sup>42</sup> For Nicholas see CDV 678, and for Bartholomew and his wife see CDV 911.

<sup>43</sup> Giuseppe Galasso argues that the frequent use of 'quondam' as a qualifier of men and women mentioned in the charters of Montevergine indicates that life expectancy in the area around Montevergine was fairly low. He suggests that the insertion of 'quondam' into the legal formulae reflects the inability to keep track of the births and deaths. For the same reason, he argues, there was no need of surnames, as there was little risk of confusion from one generation to another. See Giuseppe Galasso, 'La società campana nelle carte di Montevergine', in *La società meridionale nelle pergamenine di Montevergine. Relazioni e comunicazioni del primo convegno internazionale 28-31 ottobre 1980*, pp. 9-37 (p. 29). I would suggest that it is more an indication of bureaucratic and administrative inadequacies of a rural area.

<sup>44</sup> CDV 678.



**Figure 1: The de Rachisio family tree based on charters dating 1178-1193 sourced from CDV.**

The de Rachisio family illustrates how family ties shaped the society of the Irpinia region, by concentrating properties and allegiances within single kinship groups, and how land and property, in turn, were central to family relationships.<sup>45</sup> It is telling that even with multiple heirs to inherit the family property, Richard and Satalia were eager to contribute their own assets to the monastic life of Montevergine, and preferred to donate their land to the monastery in the absence of direct male heirs. Richard de Rachisio eventually donated not only parts of his land to Montevergine, but also ‘himself with all his mind and his resources, to serve God and the monastery for the rest of his days, according to the rule and the orders of the abbot’.<sup>46</sup> He did this with the consent of his wife, in accordance with the requirements of canon law.<sup>47</sup> It seems undeniable that genuine devotion played at least some part in Richard’s donations.

Donations came not only from members of the same family nucleus, such as in the examples above, but could also become a custom observed from one generation to the next. The extraordinary nature of Montevergine’s archives allows this phenomenon to be traced across the century under consideration in this thesis,

<sup>45</sup> See Drell, *Kinship and Conquest*, pp. 147-49, 153-58. Drell refers here primarily to the higher echelons of society, but includes some evidence of untitled landowners. On the relationship between family and land see also Skinner, *Family Power in Southern Italy*, pp. 263-64.

<sup>46</sup> CDV 911. ‘Ego prephatus Riccardus cum consensus et voluntate et licentiam Satalie prephate uxoris mee tradidi me cum propria persona mea cum tota mente et cum totis virilibus meis Deo et iamdicto monasterio ad serviendum ibi cuntis diebus vite mee, secundum regulam et preceptum domini abbatis’.

<sup>47</sup> C. 27 q. 2 c. 22, in *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. by Emil Friedberg, 2 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959), I, p. 1069.

and sometimes even further. This pattern can be observed especially among members of the Norman aristocracy, but it is also found with families of lower social status. Status and devotion were certainly high on the list of motivators for families to continue to support Montevergine from one generation to the next, although there is evidence suggesting that interest in the lands donated by one's parents or other ancestors could also bring about the continuation of interaction with the monastery. Moreover, in some instances, patronage of Montevergine appears associated to certain comital titles, such as in the case of the Counts of Avellino.

In August 1167 the Count of Avellino gave Montevergine two pieces of land in the surroundings of Mercogliano, the first with orchard, and the second with vineyard; he also gave the monks the use of the river which ran at the bottom of the mountain to irrigate the lands.<sup>48</sup> In November of the same year, Roger of Castelvetero, nephew of Alamo of Taurasi, and lord of Taurasi and Rocca San Felice, gave Montevergine a priest in the *castellum* of Taurasi, called Serbato, with his annual wage of one *denaro* and all his possessions.<sup>49</sup> Count Roger made two more donations to Montevergine in 1174 and 1177. The first consisted of several pieces of land along the river Volturno, together with a mill along the same river;<sup>50</sup> with the second he transferred a piece of land he had acquired from his *stratigota* Bernard to the monastery.<sup>51</sup> The first two donations in particular demonstrate a degree of awareness of the monastery's work and necessities, as the count made active contributions to Montevergine's economic activities. Perhaps the count had been influenced to an extent by his vassal Bohemond Malerba, the lord of Summonte, who features prominently in the charters.<sup>52</sup> A strong relationship with Count Roger was especially beneficial to Montevergine, since he held Mercogliano,

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<sup>48</sup> CDV 474. He is also mentioned in CDV 453 as the owner of land bordering with a donation to Montevergine made in July 1165, and may, therefore, already have returned to his County by this date, having been forced to flee when he married Marotta, sister of William of Sanseverino, against the king's disposition. In fact, this date coincides with Falcandus' report of Queen Margaret's revocation of the Count of Acerra's and the Count of Avellino's exiles, 'roughly a year' after the king's death. Having regained favour at the royal court, Roger was appointed counsellor to Stephen of Perche and *familiares regis*, but he lost both privileges when Stephen returned to France in 1169. See See Falcandus, pp. 156-58, and *Commentario*, p. 101.

<sup>49</sup> CDV 476. For Roger of Castelvetero see CB, n. 713.

<sup>50</sup> CDV 569.

<sup>51</sup> CDV 614. The *stratigota* Bernard appears again in a donation of August 1181, as son of viscount Bernard — CDV 687.

<sup>52</sup> CB, p. 70, n. 393.



Capriglia, and Sant'Angelo a Scala as royal fiefs.<sup>53</sup> He had also been in the care of his grandmother, Adelia, the niece of King Roger, after the death of his uncle (from whom he inherited the county) in 1152. He was an influential figure, with ties with the Kingdom's nobility, and was an active monastic patron of Cava as well.<sup>54</sup> Count Roger's only attested heir, his daughter Perrona, married Roger of Castelvetere, who thus inherited the county of Avellino sometime before 1191. It was perhaps the influence of his father-in-law which, already in 1167, before he had married Perrona and inherited the county of Avellino, had informed Roger of Castelvetere's own disposition towards Montevergine. Avellino and Castelvetere are only 20km apart, and Roger of Castelvetere's donation came only three months after the count's. In June 1180, he gave Montevergine 'the entire land concession of Lord Leonard son of Roduald, in the appurtenances of the *castellum* of Taurasi'.<sup>55</sup> In November 1182 he granted Abbot John the *ius* and *patronatus* of the church of San Martino in the appurtenances of Taurasi.<sup>56</sup> Roger of Castelvetere was the recipient of a very rare loan made by Montevergine in July 1184, which will be discussed further below.

The county appears to have remained vacant after the deportation of Count Roger of Castelvetere following the coronation of Henry VI in 1194, until it was granted to Pagano of Paris and his brother Walter in 1195.<sup>57</sup> In May 1197, Count Pagano of Avellino offered Montevergine a mill along the Calore in the territory of Taurasi 'near a mill belonging to Cava', as well as half the yearly milled products from another two mills in the same area.<sup>58</sup> The Count of Avellino continued to support Montevergine even after it changed hands. By 1202, the titular of the county of Avellino was James of Sanseverino, Master Justiciar of Apulia and Terra di Lavoro, who married a daughter of Diepold, incurring the king's wrath — though he was able to prove his loyalty to Frederick II when he was ordered by the king to

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<sup>53</sup> CB, p. 70, n. 392.

<sup>54</sup> He issued a privilege to Cava at the request of its *vestiarius* in June 1184 granting various exemptions to Cava's church of St Cataldus of Taurasi (Cava, *Arm. Mag.* L.8; ed. by L. Mattei-Cerasoli, *Samnium*, 20 (1947), 181-3, n. 5); in February 1185 he gave Cava a garden in Taurasi (Cava, *Arm. Mag.* L.5); and in May 1188, he gave Cava a church in the territory of Taurasi (Cava, *Arm. Mag.* L.29).

<sup>55</sup> CDV, 669. 'Donamus concedimus et perpetuo confirmamus nostra spontanea et libera voluntate vobis dompno Iohanni venerabili abbati monasterii Sancte Marie montis Virginis, ad partem monasterii memorati, totam concessionem tenimenti olim domini Leonardi filii Rodualdi, quod est in pertinentiis eiusdem castelli Taurasie'.

<sup>56</sup> CDV, 669.

<sup>57</sup> CDV, 1028, p. 98, n. 2.

<sup>58</sup> CDV, 1028, pp. 97-101.

arrest his father-in-law in 1218.<sup>59</sup> James of Sanseverino became another supporter of Montevergine, and appeared as Count of Tricarico in a charter of October 1202, ordering a certain Roger, son of master Andrew de Carafica, to give a piece of land to the church of Santa Maria di Forenza, dependent on Montevergine, receiving a piece of land of equal value in return from the count.<sup>60</sup> James made a similar donation in the spring of 1203, when he ordered William son of Florius of Forenza to give a vineyard in his possession to Santa Maria degli Armeni, compensating him with another piece of land of equal value.<sup>61</sup> The Counts of Tricarico were also benefactors of Cava. James' father, Count Roger, gave privileges to Cava in September 1187 and in February 1188, both involving grants of jurisdiction over men attached to Cava's subordinate churches.<sup>62</sup> This sort of donation allowed James to remain, at least ostensibly, in control of his lands, and showed his own interest in managing his properties presumably by prioritising the lands he wanted to keep within his domain, and alienating those that were less valuable to him or to his vassals. In the latter transaction, for example, the count may have preferred to donate a vineyard to the church, and relocate his vassal to a property of greater strategic value for the count.

Family donations could lead to strong bonds of allegiance between the monastery and its donors. The most telling example of this occurred during Montevergine's years of financial crisis at the turn of the century. On 28 January 1209, the community of Montevergine was fined 120 ounces of gold in the weight of Salerno 'for aiding William Francisio in his flight, and for the *castellum* of Capua, and other agreements which were to be fulfilled by William Francisio towards [Diepold and his brother Siffrid]'.<sup>63</sup> The man the community had protected from Diepold, William Francisio, belonged to a family with a long history of patronage

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<sup>59</sup> Not in 1221, as reported by Tropeano. Furthermore, James maintains the title of *comes* in the chronicle and in the charters, confuting Tropeano's claim that he lost the county as a result of his dangerous marriage alliance. See Ryccardus de Sancto Germano, *Chronica*, p. 81. See CDV, 1028, p. 98, n.2.

<sup>60</sup> The church of Santa Maria degli Armeni is found among the possessions of Montevergine confirmed in Celestine III's bull of 1197.

<sup>61</sup> CDV 108.

<sup>62</sup> Cava, *Arm. Mag.* L.23 and L.27, unpublished.

<sup>63</sup> CDV 1276, pp. 249-251. The Latin reads: 'pro fuga quam fecit dominus Guilielmus Francisius et pro castello Capuatii et ceteris pactis que nobis ab ipso domino Guilielmo debebant complere'. For the events leading up to this see Ryccardus de Sancto Germano, *Chronica*, p. 13. I am greatly indebted to G. A. Loud's unpublished translation of the *Chronica* in English for subsequent references as well. Also *Annales Casinenses*, 314-18.

towards Montevergine: in May 1156, a John Francisio, lord of Castelcicala, gave two pieces of land to the church of Santa Maria dell'Arco in Villa Cintura, a grange of Montevergine, and in the territory of another patron of Montevergine, the Norman baron of Aversa, Aymo de Molinis, who gave John his consent for the donation.<sup>64</sup> John Francisio is to be identified with the lord of Aversa found in the *Catalogus Baronum*, with two knights, and three for the *augmentum*, as well as three men holding lands from him in the territory of Avella, and the fief in Salerno which belonged to Guido Gatelgrima.<sup>65</sup> He is found as *baiulus* of Aymo de Argentia in the donation of 1151, and is described as 'unus ex militibus de castello Cikale' in the donation of 1156.<sup>66</sup> William's brothers Robert, John, Peter, and Matthew also appear in the charters of Montevergine.<sup>67</sup> John (Jr) made a donation to Montevergine as lord of Monteforte, together with his wife Mabilia, daughter of Lord Geoffrey of Monteforte, in February 1172. William Francisio had been an eye witness of Frederick II's imprisonment in 1201 by Markward, and was the messenger who informed Raynald of Capua, who, in turn, wrote an account of the emperor's imprisonment in a letter to the pope.<sup>68</sup>

In fact, so profound was the connection of the Francisio family with Montevergine that, in February 1200, Provost Roger gave John Francisio a piece of land in Urbiniano for his services to Montevergine.<sup>69</sup> The contracts registered in the charters, however, are set up to protect both parties from mutual injury or betrayal: they bind both parties to respect the donation, with the donor promising to defend the property in case of any legal dispute, and guaranteeing, usually through a mediator, that he or she or the heirs would relinquish any entitlement to the property, and will not interfere with its management. On their part, the monks were often bound to provide something in return, be it burial in the monastic grounds, acceptance of the donor into the community, a canon or fee on the property, or, more usually, salvation of the donors' and their families' souls. In

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<sup>64</sup> CDV 348. The de Molinis family made at least one donation to Montevergine in 1198, when Maria de Molinis, wife of Robert de Molinis offered herself as well as a large land donation. See CDV 1048.

<sup>65</sup> CB, 868, p. 157; but also 517, p. 97.

<sup>66</sup> CDV 305.

<sup>67</sup> CDV 517; 544.

<sup>68</sup> Panarelli, 'Il mondo monastico e Federico II', p. 203. On Markward see Karl Bösl, *Die Reichsministerialität der Salier und Staufer : ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des hochmittelalterlichen deutschen Volkes, Staates und Reiches* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950-51), pp. 228-30, 588-98.

<sup>69</sup> CDV 1081.

William II's privilege of March 1170, the king asked for prayers from Abbot Robert and his monks for the salvation of his own soul, and of his father's.<sup>70</sup> The agreement was usually mutually binding, and set up, in many cases more tangibly than in others, a long-lasting relationship between the monastery and its patrons. That the community of Montevergine was willing to put itself at risk to help William Francisio by harbouring him in his flight from authority shows just how deep the bond of mutual loyalty created through monastic patronage could be.

The continuation in support by established families in the region from the reign of Roger II into the reign of his son William suggests that they did regard any initial contact or transaction with the monastery as the beginning of a longstanding relationship, which was not only legal and spiritual — as, for example, continued possession or use of land and properties was exchanged for regular and eternal prayers (the phrase *in aeternum* appears in almost all charters) — but also assumed certain quasi-vassalic characteristics. A donation appears to invite a degree of allegiance to the monastery, and the charters themselves include a standard formula which binds the donor to protect and defend the lands given, so that even after the transition of goods had occurred, there remained a physical and legal obligation on the part of the donor toward the monastery and the properties he or she had relinquished.<sup>71</sup> As with the feudo-vassalic relations of this time, this allegiance often followed a pattern of inheritance. In fact, one could almost speak solely of families of donors, rather than single donors, as, in most cases, donors either followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, or began a tradition of patronage for future generations in the same kin group. The importance of families in donations is underscored by the quasi-formulaic mention of the donors' father, and sometimes mother, and, on occasion, the notaries traced the donors' lineage even further back. This was particularly common when donors wanted to stress

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<sup>70</sup> CDV 509. The Latin reads: 'Ideo Robbertus, Sancte Marie montis Virginis venerabilis abbas, quia religiose Dei servitio orando pervigilans tuis fratrumque tuorum sanctis orationibus confidimus relevari, tue petitioni misericordia moti acquiescere duximus esse dignum et tam ob amorem celestis regis, per quem subsistimus et regnamus, quam pro salute anime predicti patris nostri Guillelmi gloriose memorie magnifici regis et nostra nostrorum denique parentum confirmamus [...]'.  
<sup>71</sup> The formula reads something like '[Iohannes Faber] per ipsam guadium obligavit se et suos heredes semper defendere ipsi emptori et eius heredibus suprascriptam venditionem/offertionem ab omnibus hominibus omnibusque partibus'. The social significance of monastic patronage is discussed in Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbour of Saint Peter*, and also Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs*, especially pp. 31-65.

noble origins, as was the case with Elyas of Gesualdo, who is introduced in a charter in Montevergine as the son of Lord William, son of Duke Roger.<sup>72</sup> In other instances, the donation appears to come from an entire family nucleus, consisting of siblings, and/or spouses, and their parents, and, in most cases, a donation is made in name of, or for the spiritual salvation of deceased family members.<sup>73</sup>

Montevergine could also act as protector of family property during the not-uncommon periods of unrest in the kingdom. Unlike its sales, the monastery's leases occur before and throughout the uprisings in the Kingdom, and they show the monks consolidating their existing landholdings, busying themselves to put the lands already acquired to fruition with chestnuts and olives. Montevergine's role in maintaining the area's economic stability is evident from the steady issue of leasing contracts during the riots. The land alienated to the monastery, in fact, escaped the complicated changes of hand which befell a large number of royal fiefs. For instance, Lord Roger de Candida and his son Aldoynus of Lapio donated the church of Santa Maria del Calore, and several plots of land in 1130.<sup>74</sup> They feature in the *Catalogus Baronum* as lords of Candida, Lapio and Arianello.<sup>75</sup> Aldoynus and his father were supporters of the French counsellors brought in by Queen Margaret in aid of her young son William, heir to the throne of Sicily after the death of William I.<sup>76</sup> When in 1168 Stephen of Perche, the young chancellor to William, was exiled, Roger and Aldoynus lost all their land. The fiefs of Arianello, Lapio, and Candida were confiscated by the royal *curia*, and subsequently bought by Waldo of Serpico and his brother Roger. These, in turn, donated a house in Lapio to Montevergine in 1179. The de Candida family did return into favour in the second half of the 1170s when William II came of age and officially took the throne: Aldoynus was made seneschal to the king in 1176, and is seen as a witness for the *dotarium* of Queen Joanna in 1177.<sup>77</sup> In the latter document, Aldoynus maintained his surname 'de Candida', suggesting he may have been reinstated to his original

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<sup>72</sup> CDV 371.

<sup>73</sup> On the prominence of family ties in the charters of Norman Italy see the work of Drell, *Kinship and Conquest*, and also in her article 'The Aristocratic Family', in *The Society of Norman Italy*, ed. by G. A. Loud and A. Metcalfe (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), pp. 97-113.

<sup>74</sup> CDV 190.

<sup>75</sup> CB, 711, p. 127. Cf. also *Commentario*, n. 711, pp. 198-99.

<sup>76</sup> CDV, 190, pp. 378-81.

<sup>77</sup> CB, 711, p. 127.

landholdings. All the while, of course, the church of Santa Maria and the land in Lapio remained in the quiet possession of Montevergine.

Besides storing documents directly relating to the monastery and its lands, Montevergine also served as a repository for contracts between private persons drawn up in the region. These are useful to gain an understanding of the members of society who had no share in either the king's or his counts' lands. For instance, these documents reveal that despite being greatly responsible in the region's economic productivity, Montevergine was not, in fact, the only driving force behind the agricultural and economic growth of the region.

This is apparent through the career of Sarno de Angela, an individual whose activities, as well as those of his sons and grandsons, are well-recorded in the Montevergine charters, due primarily to a large donation made in 1240 by his grandson, Judge Unfrid, which came with a backlog of charters of acquisition.<sup>78</sup> The charters allow us partially to reconstruct the de Angela family tree across four generations. Sarno de Angela appears to be a self-made land baron, who built a large estate in and around the *castellum* of Sarno, buying and renting large amounts of property from private individuals, as well as from the episcopal estates.<sup>79</sup>

The activities reported in the Montevergine charters span four decades (1166-1200). Sarno died between May and October 1200, leaving his estates to his two sons, Bartholomew and Leonard, who continued to manage and expand their father's properties. In August 1205, the two brothers proceeded with the partition of their father's estates, continuing with their expansion separately.<sup>80</sup> Leonard eventually divided his share among his three sons, Sarno, Bartholomew, and Thomas;<sup>81</sup> whereas Bartholomew divided his portion between his sons, Peter and Unfrid. When Unfrid died, his wife, Finicia, having remarried to Judge Margarito, saw it fit to renounce her share of Unfrid's properties, and donated it to

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<sup>78</sup> *Regesto* 1902.

<sup>79</sup> Though brief, Gino Barbieri's study of a similar fourteenth-century case, the life of Fuccillo Boccamusto, an accountant in Naples acquiring land in the Irpinia region, is a very informative example of the role of the lower classes in the economic progress of the time. See G. Barbieri, 'Società ed economia meridionale nei documenti di Montevergine X-II', *Economia e storia*, 2 (1981), 181-92.

<sup>80</sup> CDV 1222.

<sup>81</sup> *Regesto* 2159.

Montevergine, together with a large donation she made with her second husband.<sup>82</sup>

Bartholomew undertook an ecclesiastical career, appearing as priest in a *cartula locationis* of October 1175, and later reaching the prestigious position of *primicerius* of the cathedral of Sarno.<sup>83</sup> Already in 1175 he held a piece of land *in feudo* from the bishopric of Sarno which came with his office at the parish church he presided over. While Bartholomew became a clergyman early on in life, he did not renounce the comforts of family life, and, in fact, had three sons, Peter, Sisto and Unfrid.<sup>84</sup> Of these, Peter followed his father's footsteps and can perhaps be identified with the Peter rector of the Verginian properties of San Marzano mentioned in a donation of 1229;<sup>85</sup> Unfrid had a long career as judge of Sarno, and had a son, Unfrid, who was a notary of Sarno.<sup>86</sup> No doubt, their grandfather's efforts in the previous century contributed to the family's success.

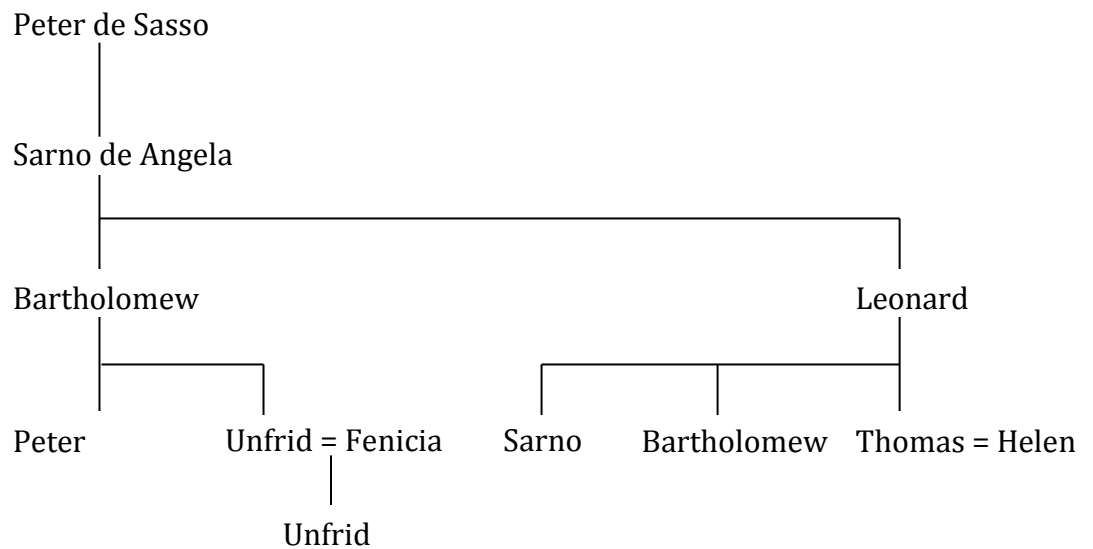


Figure 2: The de Angela family tree based on CDV charters dating 1172-1210, and *Regesto* entries up to 1240.

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<sup>82</sup> *Regesto*, 2175.

<sup>83</sup> CDV 588.

<sup>84</sup> Bartholomew's and Leonard's sons are mentioned in the charter for the division of their paternal inheritance — see above. See also *Regesto*. n. 1352: while Tropeano only acknowledges two sons of the *primicerius* Bartholomew, I see no reason why the Sisto son of *primicerius* Bartholomew in this sale of June 1213 in Sarno should not be a third son of Bartholomew's who was not included in the division of 1205. See CDV, 603, pp. 12-14 for Tropeano's notes on the de Angela family.

<sup>85</sup> *Regesto*, 1649. A church was only erected on San Marzano in 1242, when Bishop John of Sarno gave his consent to Montevergine on condition that an annual census be paid to the bishopric — *Regesto*, 1919.

<sup>86</sup> *Regesto*, 1931.

Perhaps it was also thanks to his son Bartholomew's position that Sarno de Angela was able to create and maintain a fruitful relationship with the clergy of Sarno. It was the land held by Bartholomew which had been leased in perpetuity to Sarno de Angela by Bishop John of Sarno himself, who later gave his consent to several other tenants to lease or hand over the lands that they held from the bishopric to Sarno de Angela, as did his successor, Bishop Unfrid of Sarno, who was bishop from c. 1180. This alone illustrates the close ties that Sarno fostered with the local ecclesiastical powers as well as with the local administration and the nobility. In April 1173, in fact, Sarno had bought three pieces of land bordering with his own from the sons of Viscount Martin of Sarno, Peter and Richard.<sup>87</sup> He also had dealings with local knights, judges, and notaries. In May 1175 he acquired the rights over a mill from Judge John Partispalla of Sarno, who, in turn, held the mill from the bishopric, retaining half of its profits;<sup>88</sup> in November of the same year, he bought two pieces of land from Peter son of Ferrante, notary of Sarno;<sup>89</sup> in May 1176 he bought a piece of land outside Sarno from the son of the knight Guimundus.<sup>90</sup>

While there are many other examples of private sales and leases in the Campania community in the charters of Montevergine of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, none is quite as intense or abundant as the activities of Sarno and his heirs. In total there are twenty-five charters in the archives of Montevergine detailing property acquisitions made by Sarno alone. All together, the charters of Montevergine show that he invested over 800 *tari* of Salerno in land in and around the *castellum* of Sarno, excluding annual canons on leased lands. The properties acquired are fairly eclectic, ranging from small allotments of uncultivated land, to large tenements with woods, fruit trees, chestnuts, and shrubbery, to building land with or without existing edifices (for example, the mill, or, in another charter, the land with a cottage house). Sarno's private enterprising set him apart from other landlords who held fiefs from the royal or ecclesiastic demesne, and placed him in a category of lower class proto-capitalists who fuelled the escape from the "feudo-

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<sup>87</sup> CDV 560.

<sup>88</sup> CDV 585.

<sup>89</sup> CDV 589.

<sup>90</sup> CDV 593.



vassalic” system.<sup>91</sup> Sarno’s career is laid out parallel and contiguous to Montevergine, rather than in any close contact with it, given that, though he himself was never a patron of the monastery, he nevertheless partook in the productive drive the institution injected in the region’s economy.

Of course, Sarno’s activities did not go unnoticed, and they did not proceed without a few obstacles along the way. It was with the aid of his community and the network of friends and business connections he created through his career that Sarno was able to overcome these complications. In 1172, Sarno was accused by the *stratigotus* of Nocera and Sarno, John de Monticello, of defrauding the royal court by failing to pay the services due over two pieces of land he had acquired in Sarno from Peter Stivoli, ‘who used to pay service to the *curia*, and now that service appears to be reduced’.<sup>92</sup> Once Sarno had proven that the land had been sold to him free from all service and obligations, the judges Enrico and Palmerio of Sarno, who were present at many of Sarno’s court procedures, sentenced that ‘ita debeat libere et absolute absque servitio et redditus tenere et possidere omni molestia et contrarietate seu exactione partium rei puplice exinde remota’, and the charter was drawn up to avoid any further conflicts. Six years later, however, in August 1178, Sarno was accused by John Rascico, the royal chamberlain, of not paying the *angaria* (labour services) over a land of public property. Once again, Sarno was able to defend his case, claiming that ‘neither his ancestors during Lombard rule, nor his father nor he himself from the occupation of King Roger, ever had to make any payment to the curia’. He produced six witnesses, all of whom were either his neighbours, or had had dealings with Sarno in the past, and who confirmed his claims.<sup>93</sup>

The preservation of charters like those pertaining to the de Angela estates, aside from allowing us a singular glimpse into the life of a twelfth-century south-Italian everyman, completes the miscellany of persons inhabiting the written documentation, and thus adds a degree of vibrancy to our modern day portrayal of twelfth-century Campania. Sarno’s input in the local socio-economic cadre risks

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<sup>91</sup> Similar entrepreneurial activities can be observed in the life of Vivo *vicecomes*, who features in the charters of Cava between 1067 and 1100, building up his lands at Dragonara and Vietri near the monastery (see Taviani-Carozzi, *La princeauté lombarde de Salerne*, ii, pp. 784-800).

<sup>92</sup> CDV 549.

<sup>93</sup> CDV 634.

being overshadowed by the effect of Montevergine's energetic estate management, much greater by comparison, and meticulous by necessity. However, the contribution of Sarno and his family must not be overlooked precisely because it affords such a detailed account of the impact that an entrepreneur of his social status could create in his community.

## 6.2. Needs and Interdependence

The concept of mutuality in monastic interactions is by no means a novel one. We have already seen that Montevergine benefited from the patronage of the lay community, and indeed relied on it for the sustenance and development of its religious. There were many reasons other than preoccupation for one's salvation for lay men and women to direct their generosity to Montevergine, which could offer burial, employment, insurance and protection, care for the sick, and restoration for pilgrims.

The charter of May 1126 concerning Montevergine's acquisition of burial rights from the Bishop of Avellino is generally considered a later forgery.<sup>94</sup> It is nevertheless useful to consider the document, as it clearly sets out the rights and exemptions which Montevergine sought to achieve. In particular, the bishop granted the right to 'receive and bury the dead in the same monastery and in all its churches', as well as the right to keep anything that was bequeathed to the monastery by the same deceased without interference from the bishop.<sup>95</sup> Being buried on monastic grounds was also evidently important to the local lay community, as this was one of the rights granted to people given to Montevergine in donations, either as oblates or vassals, or as part of entire *casalia*.

Evidence for burial on the monastery grounds is relatively rare, and comes mostly from the area north-east of Montevergine, from Montefusco, Taurasi and Benevento. The documents show that Montevergine received requests for burial from men and women from all social backgrounds, although it appears to have initially been mainly the prerogative of knights. The very first case was of the

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<sup>94</sup> See p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> CDV 155: 'licentiam et potestatem abeatis [sic] in ipsum iamdictum monasterium et in omnibus eius hecclesiis [sic] mortuos recipere et sepelire et quicquit ibidem ab ipsis mortuis iudicata fuerint tue sit potestati et de successoribus tuis et de parte de iamdicto monasterio, faciendum exinde omnia quecumque volueritis sine contradictione mea et de successoribus meis et de parte de iamdicto episcopio'; p. 238.

burial of the knight Iderno of Montefusco, discussed above. In July 1154, the burial of Manasex, also a knight, was the cause of dispute between Abbot Robert of Montevergine and Abbot Peter of Santa Maria Venticano, near Taurasi.<sup>96</sup> The evidence gathered by the court showed that Manasex, being gravely ill, had expressed the wish to be made a monk at Montevergine. Fearing, however, that Abbot Robert would not arrive in time before he died, Manasex was taken to the nearby monastery of Santa Maria Venticano by his brother, who gave Manasex's donation of land to Abbot Peter. It appears then that Manasex's brother carried Manasex's body to Montevergine to be buried there. The judge finally ruled in favour of Montevergine, and the donation of land was transferred to Abbot Robert. This case, showing two monasteries competing for a donation of land, also reinforces the importance that was placed on respecting the will of the dead, and the strong belief (studied by Constance Bouchard in the Burgundian setting) among the knightly class that monasteries could help them atone for their sins, and achieve salvation in the afterlife.<sup>97</sup>

The case would suggest that burial on the grounds of Montevergine was accessible to all who could afford it. Indeed, in the next half-century, Montevergine buried tradesmen, un-titled landowners, and members of the aristocracy. It was always a case of *do ut des*, the concept best explored by Bijstervelds, which, in the case of Montevergine, mostly involved exchanging burial and sometimes protection or corrody for land and other related possessions. In 1157, Montevergine accorded the right to be buried to a blacksmith and his wife, who were referred to as free people living in Benevento, in exchange for their donation of a house in the city.<sup>98</sup> In 1194, Lodoysius of Montefusco and his wife gave themselves and all their possessions to the monastery, asking that, when they died, they might be buried 'suitably' ('congrue') in the monastery.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, in 1195, Maria of Montefusco, a widow, offered herself and her possessions to the monastery, on the condition that in her old age the monks 'succour her according to the means that they [had], and when she die[d] her body must be buried in the

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<sup>96</sup> CDV 454. Possibly to be identified with the knight Manasses in the CB, n. 822, holding a fief from Count Richard d'Aigle of one knight, or with the Manasseus (CB, n. 973) holding several fiefs from William of Montefusco (CB, n. 971), amounting to forty knights and sixty *servientes*.

<sup>97</sup> Bouchard, *Sword, Miter and Cloister*.

<sup>98</sup> CDV 358.

<sup>99</sup> CDV 921.

monastery as well as it [could] be'.<sup>100</sup> In 1200 another couple, this time from Montoro, made an offering of land to Montevergine asking for burial on monastic ground.<sup>101</sup> In 1206, Count Roger of Gesualdo and his brother donated the *plescum* of Morra to Montevergine, which included land and a church, for the salvation of their own souls and of their parents.<sup>102</sup> They specified that their father, Elyas of Gesualdo, had given twelve ounces of gold to Montevergine in his will, while their mother, Diomeda, had asked to be buried there. This, according to Tropeano, is a notary copy from December 1500 requested by the monks of Montevergine, so the title of count might have been assigned in error to Roger of Gesualdo. Elyas was not a count, and so his son's title would point to the formation of a new comital title after 1194. Elyas of Gesualdo was the son of William of Gesualdo, the illegitimate son of Duke Roger Borsa, and also a patron of Montevergine.<sup>103</sup> He was royal constable and justiciar with Count Philip of Balvano, and made several donations to Montevergine.<sup>104</sup> He was in charge of a miscellany of small fiefs held from the king according to the *Catalogus*, which, all together, made up a substantial domain: he held three knights in Gesualdo, three in Frigento, three in Mirabella Eclano (then Aquapudida), two in Paternopoli, two in San Mango, one in Bonito, three in Lucera (in modern day Apulia), and one in *Sancto Lupulo*, with a total of

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<sup>100</sup> CDV 980: 'Si vero necessit[as] mihi evenerit egritudine senectude seu quocumque modo prelibatum monasterium debet mihi subvenire secundum asium quod habuerit, et cum obiero pars ipsius monasterii corpus meum ibidem sepeliendum deferri facere debet si asium ei fuerit ut fieri possit', p. 266.

<sup>101</sup> CDV 1098.

<sup>102</sup> CDV 1235.

<sup>103</sup> See *Commentario*, pp. 193-95. Elyas' father, William, together with his son, donated the *casale* of S. Pietro di Paterno to Cava in 1141, and a mill in 1188.

<sup>104</sup> He is mentioned in three separate charters at Montevergine: the first, in March 1150, describes his restitution of a mill to the rector of the church of Santa Maria di Paternopoli, a daughter cell of Montevergine (see CDV 294). This was probably the same mill which had been donated to the monastery by his father, in May 1142, together with two churches, Santo Clerico and Santa Croce (which was still under construction), four men in Frigento, and two in Paternopoli, as well as a *starza*, a piece of land within the royal demesne, in Bassano, and the lands pertaining to the men and churches donated (CDV, 271). The monks were offered the church of the Holy Cross 'nuper fabricandam', and asked to celebrate mass there, 'cum visa expleta fuerit' - pp. 292-293). Elyas had been among the witnesses of that donation, and thus his claim over the mill stood little chance. He then appeared in a donation of 1158 in favour of Santa Maria dell'Incoronata; however, this is probably a forged document, as Santa Maria dell'Incoronata of Puglia was never a dependency of Montevergine, so it is probable that the monks were relying on his longstanding patronage of the monastery of Montevergine to support their claims over Santa Maria dell'Incoronata. In July 1175, together with his sons William and Geoffrey, Elyas gave some lands to the church of St Cleric, 'knowing in his heart that this life is temporary and transitory, while the next one to come perpetual and unending' (CDV, 586. 'previdentes et in cordibus nostris premeditantes istam presentem vitam temporalem et transitoriam esse et aliam futuram in qua venturi sumus perpetuam et infinitam...').

forty knights' and 200 sergents' fee for the *augmentum*.<sup>105</sup> His family's tradition of patronage was thus important for Montevergine, and Diomeda's burial at the monastery was likely to have played as much a part in raising Montevergine's prestige as it did in raising her family's.

Burial on the monastery grounds was a privilege for lay men and women. Possession of the *casale* of Acquara and of the rights conferred upon the abbot in the forgery discussed in the introduction are premature for the 1130s, but they were confirmed in 1230, in an imperial diploma.<sup>106</sup> The *casale* came with the right for the men and women of the *casale* to ask to be buried in the monastery.<sup>107</sup> In granting this right, the lord of the *casale* was responding to a demand in a way that would maintain good relations between all parties involved. Particularly in the case of Montevergine, a known pilgrimage site, the monastery constituted an "extra" holy space, and the bodies and souls of those buried there would benefit even more from the intercessory prayers of the religious community residing there, and potentially also from pilgrims who arrived to pray at the monastery.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, burial at Montevergine afforded a degree of prestige to both the deceased and their family.<sup>109</sup> There is mention in a few of the burial charters of the procession to carry the body of the dead to the place of burial, which would involve both the community of monks and the members of the public. When he granted burial rights for the new church in Maddaloni erected by Abbot Donato in 1208, Bishop Stabile of Caserta gave permission for the monks to lead the procession for the dead up to a specified well to receive the body of the deceased.<sup>110</sup> This solemn public ceremony was an occasion to exalt the memory of the deceased.<sup>111</sup> It was a matter of great concern for those who requested burial in the monastery, who even specified that they wanted the monks to spare no resources for the ceremony. The blacksmith, Paganus of Benevento, made the following request in his will: 'and if it should happen that I, Paganus, should now die, part of the said monastery must carry me honourably at their expense and bury me in the same monastery, having

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<sup>105</sup> See CB, n. 707.

<sup>106</sup> FIID, 1, pp. 209-12. See above, pp. 13-13.

<sup>107</sup> CDV 232.

<sup>108</sup> See Roberta Gilchrist and Barney Sloane, *Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005), p. 159.

<sup>109</sup> See Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbour of Saint Peter*, pp. 41-43; Bijsterveld, *Do ut des*, pp. 200-01.

<sup>110</sup> CDV 1272.

<sup>111</sup> On remembrance as a motivator for burial see Bijsterveld, *Do ut des*, pp. 158-72.

from my [kin] a hundred pairs of horse-shoes', in what was perhaps a final attempt at social elevation.<sup>112</sup> The monastery was certainly not the normal place of burial for the surrounding lay communities, as we have few instances of people requesting burial at Montevergine, so that there was also an element of exclusivity in receiving burial by the monks, which added to the sense of prestige that was sought after by Montevergine's patrons.

Especially when it came to patrons of lower social standing, it is evident that, when considering donating to Montevergine, they sought security for themselves and their lands in the present life as much as in the next. In five of the six cases described above, the donors requested use during their lifetimes of the lands they were giving to the monastery.<sup>113</sup> Three of the charters indicate that a rent was paid to the monastery by the donors for use of their land: of 5 *tari* a year for Lodoysius and his wife, Laressana; of one pound of oil from the olive trees on her property for Maria, and half a pound of oil if they did not bear fruit; and of 3 *tari* a year on Christmas Day for Urso and his wife, Gemma.<sup>114</sup> This was presumably done to avoid any future disputes or claims by the donors' heirs or family members, and to ensure that the land would effectively pass into Montevergine's property once the donors died. Indeed, when donors did wish to reserve the land or parts of it for their heirs, this was specified by the notary. Urso and Gemma, for example, clarified that a part of the land they would be living on belonged to their daughter-in-law, Trotta, wife of their deceased son Urso.<sup>115</sup>

The exchanges made between Montevergine and the lay community were usually mutually binding, and created, in many cases more tangibly than in others, a long-lasting relationship between the monastery and its patrons. In essence, good friendship and peaceful relations were no more automatically achievable in the Middle Ages than they are now. Good relationships had to be carefully built and constantly nurtured. Countergifts were an established tool in the early medieval society of southern-Italy to achieve this equilibrium. As Georges Duby argued in the 1970s, and more recently Chris Wickham and Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, gift-

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<sup>112</sup> CDV 358. The Latin reads: 'Et si contingerit me Paganum modo mori, pars prefati monasterii debeat me cum suo expendio honorifice portare et sepeliri in ipso monasterio, habendo de meis centum paria de ferris'; p. 218.

<sup>113</sup> CDV 358, 921, 980, 1098 and 1164.

<sup>114</sup> CDV 921, 980 and 1098.

<sup>115</sup> CDV 1098.

giving was the framework within which the medieval economy operated, rather than merely being a part of the framework.<sup>116</sup> The gift exchanges encountered in our charters were the framework's currency, assuming a holistic character, whereby value was related not just to a monetary system, but to a much broader spectrum. Countergifts are not uncommon in the charters of Montevergine, though they are not the norm. They were occasionally given by the monastery in return for donations and sales, and were sometimes monetary gifts and sometimes gifts in kind. Richard of Cicciano's donation of two houses in Castelcicala in 1178, was graciously accepted by Prior Prefectus of Montevergine's priory of Santa Maria del Plesco by giving Richard 11 *tari* of Amalfi.<sup>117</sup> In September of the following year, Guido Racanella of Avellino and his sons gave Montevergine their annual income of 3 *tari* of Salerno, and received a horse in exchange.<sup>118</sup> In some instances the monks observed the Lombard custom of the *launegild*. In March 1209, for example, the prior of Montevergine's dependency of San Giacomo of Civitanova, in charge of the transaction, gave Maria a cloak as *launegild* for Maria's donation of the fourth part of a house, three quarters of which were owned by Montevergine, which she offered in return for burial in the church of San Giacomo, and use of the house and land pertaining to it for twenty-seven years.<sup>119</sup>

These countergifts have been interpreted as largely symbolic gestures made with the specific intent of building and maintaining lasting relationships with the monastery's donors.<sup>120</sup> In the example of Maria, this was a particularly real and relevant necessity, as Montevergine needed to ensure the return of the house from Maria and her husband, and from their children as well, at the end of the stipulated period of time. The couple had to pay rent on the property as well, consisting of one *tari* of Amalfi a year; this ensured that there was no ambiguity over the ownership of the property. The countergift, on the other hand, had the additional function of keeping the tenants in the monastery's debt — whereas Montevergine would receive a yearly rent, in addition to what they paid for, the tenants received

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<sup>116</sup> See Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the seventh to the Twelfth Centuries*, trans. by Howard B. Clarke, World Economy Series (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1974; Wickham, 'Compulsory Gift Exchange', pp. 193-216, especially pp. 197-200; Bijsterveld, *Do ut Des*, Chapters 1 and 2, and especially pp. 33-39.

<sup>117</sup> CDV 641.

<sup>118</sup> CDV 653.

<sup>119</sup> CDV 1278.

<sup>120</sup> See for example Jamroziak, *Rievaulx Abbey*, pp. 212-16.

a one-off gift, be it a cloak, or a sum of money, or food or livestock. The gift reopened the need for gratitude, tipping the balance of the relationship in the monastery's favour.

As seen in the previous chapter, Montevergine also played an important role in providing employment as well as basic livelihood for the community, particularly the peasantry. Montevergine employed local men and women to work on the monastery's land, which, in *pastinatio* contracts, entitled them to a part of the ensuing produce.<sup>121</sup> Abbot John in particular made an ostentatious display of the monastery's gratitude for the work of its lay labourers when, in January 1178, he allotted land and a house to each in Fontanelle with the purpose of bringing the workers together and providing shelter to those who had none.<sup>122</sup> Even so, in these and in regular leases, the exaction of labour services was still common practice in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, although the *operae*, *servitia* and *angaria* in the Montevergine charters hardly ever exceeded a few days a year.

These exactions are a rare indication offered by the charters of the social status of peasants. When Count Henry of Sarno gave Montevergine two men, he stated that they came with all the *angaria*, *operae*, *servitia*, *dationae*, and *censum* that the men had previously owed the count.<sup>123</sup> The donation also comprised the men's family and heirs. They were, in other words, valuable property as much as land was. References to free peasants are similarly rare: Paganus and his wife Trotta boasted of their status as *homines franci*, which allowed them to give their possessions and themselves to the monastery.<sup>124</sup> Free men and women also enjoyed certain rights granted by the lords of the *castella* they inhabited: Lord Henry of Tufo gave a man to Montevergine with his heirs and possessions, specifying that they would enjoy the same rights to pasture and use of wood and water to which the free men of his *castellum* had access.<sup>125</sup> This appears to imply the un-free status of the men given to Montevergine. It is likely that un-free peasants given to the monastery were not necessarily freed by the abbot, given that there is only one instance of the monastery freeing its workers of their labour

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<sup>121</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 122.

<sup>122</sup> CDV 621. The initiative brings to mind the similar enterprises of nineteenth-century English industrialists, like Cadbury and Saltaire.

<sup>123</sup> CDV 245.

<sup>124</sup> CDV 358.

<sup>125</sup> CDV 345.



obligations, and granting them status as *homines franci*.<sup>126</sup> This also suggests that the people given to Montevergine as un-free were generally deployed for agrarian or domestic tasks.

In a donation of August 1190, Gervasius, son of John, a monk of the monastery of San Lupo of Benevento, gave himself and his possessions to Montevergine, and asked the following:

[That] during his lifetime as a layman, the monastery [would] give him victuals and all that is necessary like an oblate of the monastery, who are laymen and live at the monastery, and he will serve the monastery as best he can. And should he wish to take the religious habit, the monks must accept him among them, and give him all necessary things as if he were a monk of the monastery.<sup>127</sup>

The request lays out two groups in the monastic hierarchy: the oblates, who were provided with basic commodities and sustenance by the monks; and the monks themselves. The forged charter of William I of 1170 exempted ‘*monachi seu conversi*’ from a number of levies.<sup>128</sup> If this is a thirteenth-century forgery as has been proposed by Enzenberger, then the charter would suggest that certainly by then the lay community of the monastery was defined as an order of *conversi*. They were both men and women, as we have evidence of couples giving themselves to the monastery together, and of women requesting to be taken in by the monastery as lay people. In September 1198, Maria de Molinis, the wife of Robert de Molinis, gave herself to the monastery, and asked that, in return for a piece of land worth 600 *tari*, the monastery would provide her with the tunic, cape, stockings and shoes according to the customs of the monastery.<sup>129</sup> She thus became a *corrodian* of the monastery, effectively a pensioner, who simply paid the monastery to be looked after by the monks, as opposed to *donati* or *oblati* who would become active members of the community, and often help the monks by serving the

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<sup>126</sup> CDV 1000.

<sup>127</sup> CDV 843: ‘Pars vero monasterii, dum vivus fuero et laycalem duxero vitam, deti mihi vidandam et cuncta alia necessaria sicut uni ex oblati illius monasterii, qui sunt layci et ibi manent, faciendo et operando ego que scio et possum ad imperata monasterii; et si voluero sancte religionis habitum suscipere, pars monasterii me recipere debeat et vita mea dare mihi cuncta necessaria sicut uni ex monachis illius monasterii ibi manentibus’, p. 148.

<sup>128</sup> CDV 509.

<sup>129</sup> CDV 1048: ‘et ipsum monasterium pro ipsis frugibus nichil sibi debeat imputare veruntamen ipsi domine Marie largiri debeat tunicas mantellos calicas et alia calciamenta secundum morem et abitum ipsius sacri cenobium’. For Robert de Molinis see CB, n. 962. See also the *Commentario*, p. 269, for the reference to his position as royal justiciar. The de Molinis were a powerful Norman family, and thus important allies for Montevergine. See CDV 327, 348, and 459.

poor.<sup>130</sup> The reasons for giving oneself to the monastery were varied, but a common thread can be found in the desire for security of one's health and of one's lands. A regular stipulation, in fact, was that the lay people would have use of the lands given, until they died, at which point the land would enter into full possession of the monastery, as in the example of Maria and her husband discussed above.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, this was not just a matter of men and women seeking security in their old age, particularly if they had no heirs. Richard Rachisio gave himself to the monastery, with the consent of his wife, Satalia, 'with all his body and heart, to serve the monastery for the rest of his days, according to the rule and orders of the abbot'.<sup>132</sup> As we have no customary for Montevergine, and given the difficulties in determining when the Rule of Benedict was adopted by the monks, Richard's request may have been to join the community as a monk, or it may indicate that there was some sort of rule in place by the end of the twelfth century for the lay community of the monastery.<sup>133</sup> Montevergine also took oblates in the community, though it is unclear whether the term *oblati* refers only to children given to the monastery.<sup>134</sup> The oblates retained a degree of possession of the land given to the monastery when the oblate entered the community. In November 1184, the oblate Augustus Lupaione gave his consent to Provost Matthew of Montevergine to lease a piece of land which Augustus had given the monastery.<sup>135</sup>

There is also a single mention of a 'fraternitas et societas' at Montevergine. In May 1144, Peter and his wife Trotta "offered" themselves to the confraternity and society of the monastery, donating all their immobile goods, including their land with a house on it in Sarno:

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<sup>130</sup> On corrodians and *donati* see James William Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), pp. 232-41.

<sup>131</sup> See, for example, CDV 186, 232, 284, 424, 452, 520, 590, 605, 616, 758, 792, 799, 886, 896, 1058, 1117, 1130, 1295.

<sup>132</sup> CDV 911: 'ego prephatus Riccardus cum consensus et voluntate et licentiam Satalie prephate uxoris mee tradidi me cum propria persona mea cum tota mente et cum totis virilibus meis Deo et iamdicto monasterio ad serviendum ibi cunctis diebus vite mee, secundum regulam et preceptum domini abbatis', p. 40.

<sup>133</sup> Constance H. Berman, 'Distinguishing between the Humble Peasant Lay Brother and Sister, and the Converted Knight in Medieval Southern France', in *Religious and Laity*, pp. 263-83.

<sup>134</sup> Tropeano argues that Montevergine did not take child oblates, and that the practice was in decline in southern Italy at this time. See CDV 278, n. 2.

<sup>135</sup> CDV 746.

Et quoniam ipsi vir et uxor optulerunt se in fraternitate et societate ipsius monasterii, idcirco sicut eis placuerunt sponte per convenientia per hanc cartulam et per nostram licentiam optulerunt eidem monasterio omnes res stabiles et terram cum casa.<sup>136</sup>

This appears to be a standard transaction in which the donors gave up their possessions to the monastery in order to enter the monastic *fraternitas*. Monastic confraternities could be centered around prayer for the deceased of the members of that community, or, as in this case, they grouped together members of the lay community who wished to be associated with the monastery, and perhaps buried on monastic grounds, in exchange for a gift.<sup>137</sup> In the case of Montevergine the formation of a confraternity relatively early in the monastery's history reflects the opportunity for religious expression and involvement of the lay community which the monastery represented for the communities around it.

Finally, a note on Montevergine's role as a centre of healing, and of physical care for the sick, poor, and for pilgrims. The first community of Montevergine gathered as a result of pilgrimage to the site of William's hermitage. Attracted by the fame of his holiness, they travelled to visit William, some bringing gifts, others to join him in pursuit of the apostolic life. Montevergine had thus been a pilgrimage destination from its birth, and there are a few examples of pilgrims making their way there contributing to the monastery's assets in return for salvation, protection and acceptance in the community, in a manner not unlike William's first followers. We know that the knight Eleazar of the *castellum* of Amando (possibly modern-day Oiano, a village east of Gesualdo), after retracting a claim on the church of San Marco in Amando, climbed the mountain to confirm his and his wife Beatrix's quitclaim, and to confirm his possessions and his father's donation to the monastery.<sup>138</sup> The pilgrimage in this case appears to have been an act of penance and reconciliation between the two parties after a dispute.<sup>139</sup> Once again, this shows how good relations within the monastery's network and neighbourhood

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<sup>136</sup> CDV 278.

<sup>137</sup> See Brodman, *Charity and Religion*, pp. 187-207, especially 197-201 for Italian confraternities. See also Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, 'Looking for Common Ground: From Monastic *Fraternitas* to Lay Confraternity in the Southern Low Countries in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries', in *Religious and the Laity*, pp. 287-309.

<sup>138</sup> CDV 443.

<sup>139</sup> See Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (I. B. Tauris, 2001), pp. 51-56.

were paramount. The fact that his father, Paganus, had been a donor of Montevergine came to bear on Eleazar's own relationship with the monastery: it made his claim over the *Eigenkirche* that had been given to Montevergine by Paganus all the more serious, as he was violating the bond of friendship established between Paganus and the monastery through the original donation; at the same time, it facilitated the reconciliation process, as both Eleazar and the monks of Montevergine could fall back on the pre-existing bond to agree on the claim's legitimacy.<sup>140</sup> The importance of this friendship is reinforced by Eleazar's pilgrimage to the mountain.

Perhaps because of its strong association with pilgrimage, Montevergine received donations of land that were in fact a way of protecting a donor's lands until his or her return from a campaign or pilgrimage. In May 1185, Peter Boccaribocca of Acerra donated a piece of land with all its appurtenances, declaring that the land would enter full possession of the monastery if he were to die during the campaign to Thessalonica, but that, were he to return, he would be entitled to use of the land upon payment of a yearly canon.<sup>141</sup> The donation served the double function of contributing to Peter's salvation (whether he died on the campaign or not), and securing his property until his return.

By 1164, Montevergine also possessed a hospital which may have functioned as a pilgrims' hospital as well as a centre of healing. The hospital attracted donations from the lay community in a separate capacity from Montevergine.<sup>142</sup> Eleazar praised the monastery's work in caring for the sick when he made his pilgrimage, stating that 'because of all that [the Verginians] have accomplished for the sick, they [became] the instruments of truth to which future generations can testify'.<sup>143</sup> This reputation is confirmed by the request for aid which came with certain donations. The widowed Maria, for example, asked that the monastery help her in her old age; Roger and his wife Susanna of Summonte gave Montevergine some land on the condition that they could live on it until they died, and that the monastery would help them if they were ever in such a dire state

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<sup>140</sup> For the donation of Eleazar's father, Pagano, son of Richard, lord of Amando, see CDV 233. He also donated the church of Santa Maria at the same time.

<sup>141</sup> CDV 758. See Chapter 2 p. 51 on William's naval campaign to Byzantium.

<sup>142</sup> See CDV 444, and Chapter 8, p. 236.

<sup>143</sup> CDV 443. The Latin reads: 'Set quia multa conficiuntur que pro infectis habentur, ideo fiunt instrumenta quibus rei veritas posteris temporibus possit comprobari'; p. 152.

that they needed food or clothing.<sup>144</sup> In June 1195, Truda wife of Amato Nasolungo of Mercogliano asked to sell her possessions to Montevergine, as 'she was in great need of food and clothes and other necessary things to live, and unless she sold her property, tormented by hunger and destitute of clothing, she feared that she was in great danger of death'.<sup>145</sup>

Women were clearly particularly vulnerable, as they are most often found asking for help to overcome dire situations of poverty.<sup>146</sup> While women were entitled to up to a quarter of their husband's property as *morgengab*, or marriage gift, and to inherit their husband's property in the case of his death without heirs, their property was largely administered by their *munduold*, which could leave women with little independence and security. In 1200, William, the son and brother-in-law of two women summoned to court (Gemma, and her daughter Palumba), 'disapproved' of the custom of the *morgengab* which was followed in Summonte, and thus denied Gemma and Palumba the use of their deceased husband and father's (Stephen) lands.<sup>147</sup> William nevertheless felt entitled to the lands as he was married to another of Stephen's daughters (presumably from a previous marriage). The case was resolved with a compromise in which tradition, to a certain extent, prevailed: Gemma and Palumba were given use of the lands until their deaths, when the lands would pass to William and his wife Maria. Nevertheless, the case showed how precarious the financial security of the region's women could be.

Abbot Donato brought Montevergine's almsgiving duties to the fore when he made arrangements for the annual revenues from a donation in Eboli received in (or just before) 1210.<sup>148</sup> Donato ordered that 50 *tari* should be distributed to the poor who go to the monastery for the Maundy on Holy Thursday;<sup>149</sup> and anything they obtained from the property in Eboli, as well as bread and beans, should be distributed to the poor on Holy Thursday. Montevergine's dependency of Maddaloni also developed a prominent hospital which attracted donations from

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<sup>144</sup> CDV 619.

<sup>145</sup> CDV 978.

<sup>146</sup> See also CDV 976 and 1206.

<sup>147</sup> CDV 1099.

<sup>148</sup> See Chapter 7 below, especially p. 209.

<sup>149</sup> See John 13:1-15.

the laity.<sup>150</sup> Both William of Vercelli and the Virgin Mary were associated with healing. William's *vita* contains several examples of miraculous healing by the saint both during his life and after his death — the first catalyst for his popularity was his miraculous healing of a blind man in Melfi, while his later healing miracles performed during his lifetime all involved women.<sup>151</sup> Perhaps for this reason also, there is a higher number of women asking for aid from Montevergine in the charters. Montevergine thus had a special relationship with the poor and the sick in the region. This role contributed to the image of the monastery as a benevolent social force for the laity, and, consequently, to the continuous flow of donations to the religious community.

All exchanges and interactions between the monastery and the laity were underpinned by a common acknowledgment of the role of the monastery as a powerful intercessor — not only between this world and the world of the afterlife, but between people, institutions, and social categories. Montevergine played a central and vital role in the wider lay and ecclesiastical communities of the Irpinia region. It fostered strong relationships with its donors, with its contractors, with pilgrims, with the parishioners of its dependent churches, with the rich and powerful, and with the poor and weak, as well as with the land itself. By coming into contact with people and institutions from all social milieux, Montevergine positioned itself as a central node in the region's social network, assuming a critical role in its communications, economic, legal and even political systems. In this respect, Montevergine's interactions with members of the lower echelons of society were just as significant as those with its higher-ranking patrons. Rasmussen has argued for a systematic re-evaluation of the evidence for the social background of monastic benefactors, as the literature on the subject — with reference to England and Denmark in her study — tends to emphasise only the donations from members of the nobility and gentry.<sup>152</sup> While the monastery's spiritual functions were certainly a dominant feature of Montevergine's social character, its practical role in the community was essential to its success in effectively gaining a degree of control over the region's people and institutions. On

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<sup>150</sup> CDV 1058.

<sup>151</sup> See *Legenda*, II, pp. 7-9; IV p. 16; VIII, p. 20; XIII, p. 24; XV, p. 25.

<sup>152</sup> See Rasmussen, 'Monastic Benefactors in England and Denmark', pp. 77-91.

the other hand, all manner of society could stand to benefit from the monastery's presence. Assurance deeds and witness lists are a good example of interaction between members of several social strata, and the charters of monastic archives, especially ones as complete as Montevergine's, attest to the diversity and the level of sophistication or of simplicity of local communities in the area. Most witnesses, for example, were either family members, men and women from the same or neighbouring *castellum* or, in rare instances, local counts or high-ranking clergymen, suggesting that travelling long-distances was uncommon, both because of the difficult mountainous landscape, and because there were not the means (financial and technological) to undertake long journeys.

It is significant also that the monastery itself served as an aggregating force, physically as well as spiritually, by shifting the boundaries between lay and ecclesiastic property, and by reallocating land to new tenants. This aspect may also have facilitated Montevergine's transition towards Benedictine observance: Henry Mayr-Harting pointed out the general need for monasteries to tackle the problem of social diversity among its recruits, and Benedict's heightened awareness of this issue.<sup>153</sup> Benedict excused no one from kitchen duties, for example, and expressly prohibited his monks from protecting their kinsmen and from exchanging gifts with the outside world, and among themselves. These tenets were highly pertinent to Montevergine's circumstances, and constituted an integral part of the institution's monastic social thinking. Even so, there is no denying that Montevergine's presence in the Irpinia region facilitated the formation of a local social elite, made up of those people who could afford to be patrons of the monastery, and thus assert and publicise their social standing in a region where political supremacy was not yet solidified.<sup>154</sup>

Finally, this study has shown the depth of the bonds implicit in monastic patronage. In the case of Lord Roger of Castelvetere, later count of Avellino, Montevergine proved itself to be a reliable ally, supporting its patrons in need even in a time of financial crisis for the monastery. Most telling, however, is the example

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<sup>153</sup> Henry Mayr-Harting, 'The Venerable Bede, the Rule of St. Benedict, and Social Class', in *Religion and Society in the Medieval West, 600-1200*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), III, pp. 1-28 (pp. 1-5), originally given as a lecture in Jarrow, 1976, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1977.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Viso, 'Monasterios y redes', pp. 36-38. See also my discussion on the political situation in southern Italy on pp. 47-51, and 76-80.

of William Francisio, whose family's history of goodwill towards Montevergine earned him the abbot's complete trust to the point that the community of Montevergine placed itself at great risk, and paid the price, to help its benefactor escape his pursuers. The monastery was involved in the political administration of the kingdom through its possession of lands and influence on and through its donors that were desirable to high-profile figures. In more extreme cases, as with William Francisio, and particularly after its acquisition of Mercogliano as a royal fief, Montevergine's involvement was far more direct. It is fair to conclude that Montevergine's profile was constantly attuned to the socioeconomic priorities of the Campania region as well as to the broader aspirations of the kingdom. Needless to say, its mission never strayed from the spiritual care that underpinned the monastery's success as intermediary at all levels of society.



**CHAPTER 7: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK (I):  
THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION, AND THE  
'INSTITUTIONALISATION' OF MONTEVERGINE**

The institutional identity of Montevergine underwent radical redevelopment in the twelfth century. From an eremitical house, to an undefined-coenobitic one, to a conventional Benedictine establishment, the monastery was both shaped by, and adapted to the needs of the monastic community and of its patrons. Its internal organisation, the purpose of the community members, and the roles assigned to each changed throughout the monastery's history. The study of this evolution, naturally, is essential in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of Montevergine's make-up, and thus of its very identity. Describing and pinpointing the circumstances and characteristics of the above-mentioned transitions has, in fact, been one of the greatest challenges — and the source of often fiery debate (as Panarelli has pointed out)<sup>1</sup> — for scholars approaching the study of the history of Montevergine. Nonetheless, the progression was gradual, and, I would argue, occurred in an unconscious and reactionary fashion, rather than being planned out for the purpose of adhering to a prescribed institutional pattern, as it has so far been described. Overall, the immediate effects of these new developments were perhaps of much less import than historiography would ascribe to them.

Even in the most recent study of Montevergine, namely Potito D'Arcangelo's unpublished doctoral thesis on the early history of the monastery, the author addressed this question only to confirm a number of hypotheses put forward in previous works, favouring instead a meticulous analysis of the genealogy and development of offices within Montevergine.<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Vitolo, in introducing the edition of the monastery's *necrologium*, noted that:

what remained to be clarified [was] the extent to which pressure from the 'political and ecclesiastical worlds' surrounding the monastery, pushed the hermitage towards traditional forms of Benedictine monastic life, and caused the Verginian

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<sup>1</sup> See Panarelli, '*Quia religio monasterii*', pp. 169-70.

<sup>2</sup> See D'Arcangelo, '*Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis*', pp. 76-109.

movement to lose the characteristics of a lay movement with eremitical-penitential imprint.<sup>3</sup>

This is a more plausible approach to the problem, addressing a wider variety of factors which may have influenced Montevergine's development, rather than fixing on a single event or piece of evidence that might confirm a definitive 'conversion' to a new institutional organisation.

A general overview of the institutional structure of Montevergine in the twelfth century will reveal not only the origins of the debate itself, but also the tendency to appropriate evidence to fit a pre-meditated model, and, hopefully, the redundancy of this method when the evidence is left to speak for itself.<sup>4</sup> As the first chapter showed, the first community to gather on Montevergine was probably made up of men and women from a variety of social backgrounds, and including both lay and clergymen. These, according to the *Legenda*, were all brought together inspired by the example of William of Vercelli, a hermit and '*religiosissimus homus*', who had established a hermitage with a single companion on the mountain. As far as it is possible to infer from the *vita*, his followers all had equal status within the community for the first few years, with no explicit role given to anyone until William's departure. The only separation was between priests and lay men and women. Given the relatively high percentage of priests in the community, the men and women of Montevergine were able to attend mass, officiated by the priests, a practical advantage allowing the hermits to pursue their lifestyle at the site of the hermitage, without needing to travel to attend mass. It is very hard to give an estimate of the number of monks at Montevergine: even in 1210, when a dozen or so signed the statute of Abbot Donato in addition to the various priors and other obedientiaries, the community may have counted many more members. There is evidence for other monasteries of similar repute counting many dozens of monks, if not hundreds. We know that Goleto probably had a congregation of about 100

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<sup>3</sup> See Giovanni Vitolo, 'Monachesimo verginiano e tradizione commemorativa', in *Monachesimo e mondo dei laici nel mezzogiorno medievale: Il necrologio di Montevergine*, ed. by Matteo Villani, Fonti per la storia del Mezzogiorno medievale, 8 (Altavilla Silentina: Edizioni Studi Meridionali, 1990), p. 7. Translation is my own.

<sup>4</sup> This sort of account of the monastery's internal structure has been attempted in various other places. See, for examples, Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, pp. 152-55; and d'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', pp. 101-05. Nonetheless, a thesis on Montevergine would not be complete without it, and thus here the fruit of my own research on the subject will be presented, supported by and in corroboration of the existing literature, and developing this further.

monks after 1149, when seventy were given licence to transfer to Goletto from Santa Maria Incoronata of Apulia.<sup>5</sup> The abbey of Cava, itself a much wealthier and larger community than Montevergine, was also able to send 100 monks to populate the abbey of Monreale in 1176, so that the presence of 100 monks at Montevergine by the end of the twelfth-century is a fair estimate.<sup>6</sup> It is clear from the evolution of the monastery's internal structure and its economic dealings, however, that the community grew and expanded in the twelfth century. Certain monks were assigned to specific duties, which often (though not always) came with office titles.<sup>7</sup> These initially conformed to the traditional administrative layout for coenobitic monasteries, but towards the end of the twelfth century the need for new structures was apparent.

The need for structure, as far as the sources reveal, arose when William left Montevergine: he nominated Albert as prior, to lead the community in his stead. At this stage, between 1125 and 1135, the titles 'custos et rector', 'prior', and 'abbas', while never used interchangeably within the same document, were all used to denote the role of leader of the community, both spiritual and administrative.<sup>8</sup> William and Albert were in fact the only members of the community named as recipients of donations or as supervisors of transactions in this decade. By 1135, however, a more detailed and structured definition of roles had already begun to take shape within the community: in June 1135 Lord Iderno of Montefusco made his donation in the hands of monks John and Lando.<sup>9</sup> Economic transactions were no longer the exclusive preoccupation of the leader of the community. Lando emerged as prior only a few months later supervising the lease of monastic land, in February 1136, within months of Albert accepting the title of abbot.<sup>10</sup> From this point onwards, the prior, cellarer, or other monks are often seen in charge of the monastery's exchanges with the extra-mural community, with the abbot usually appearing as the symbolic titular of the monastery. Whereas the monastery would

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<sup>5</sup> CDV 290.

<sup>6</sup> See Panarelli, 'S. Maria di Montevergine e S. Giovanni degli Eremiti', pp. 92-93.

<sup>7</sup> See discussion below on ordinary monks in administrative roles, p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> William was also referred to as 'prelatus' in the royal privilege of 1137, and 1140, both of which are strongly suspected to be thirteenth-century forgeries. See CDV 241 and 264, and discussion of the documents' authenticity on p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> CDV 220.

<sup>10</sup> CDV 228.

be defined by its rectorship ('Montevergine ubi X abbatem preesse videtur'), the donation itself would be received 'in manu priori Montis Virgine'.<sup>11</sup>

The appearance of this first new official role, together with the switch from the leadership title 'rector' to 'abbot', are the first signs singled out by scholars to point to the adoption of the Benedictine Rule within the Montevergine community. De Palma argued that William was using Benedictine practices during his stay at Montevergine, pointing to the lexicon used in the *vita*.<sup>12</sup> Tallarico, however, has pointed out that the *vita* was written after William's death, and thus the lexicon used did not necessarily accurately describe practices in use decades earlier.<sup>13</sup> Tallarico herself dates the adoption of the Benedictine Rule to the years of Robert's abbacy (1143-44), on the basis of Robert's definitive adoption of the abbatial title.<sup>14</sup> The strongest contingent, however, argues for the adoption of the Benedictine rule at some point between 1159 and 1181, when a bull was allegedly issued in favour of Montevergine by Pope Alexander III.<sup>15</sup> This solution is as problematic as the rest given that a) the bull does not survive and is only mentioned and confirmed in the bull of Celestine III in 1197, which also states that the bull was confirmed by Lucius III during his papacy; and b) the bull of Celestine III does not survive in its original form either, with the only extant copies dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.<sup>16</sup>

Sources are as problematic as ever in the study of this aspect of the community. The descriptions of events in the *vita* are often unreliable, and the most tantalising diplomatic evidence is almost certainly counterfeit. There are two crucial early charters in the Montevergine archives which, if authentic, would go a long way in explaining Montevergine's institutional identity. One is the papal bull discussed above. The other is the episcopal privilege of May 1133 granting

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<sup>11</sup> Count Henry of Sarno's donation in 1138, for example, continuously cites the 'rectores' of the abbey as receivers and owners of his gifts (CDV 245). In CDV 284, a priest and his mother donated their goods 'in manus tibi domni Iohannis monachi dicti Pantasye prioris prefati monasterii ad partem iamdicte virginis Marie'. During Rossemanno's priorship in particular, the two aspects were joined into a formulaic clause in which the donor would make his donation in the hands of the prior of Montevergine, where the abbot ruled — see for example, CDV 609.

<sup>12</sup> de Palma, 'Intorno alla Legenda', pp. 82-88.

<sup>13</sup> Tallarico, 'L'abbazia di Montevergine nell'età normanna', p. 206.

<sup>14</sup> Tallarico, 'L'abbazia di Montevergine nell'età normanna', pp. 200-201.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Panarelli, '*Quia religio monasterii*', pp. 169-70, including references therein; Mongelli, *S. Guglielmo da Vercelli*; and Tropeano's introductions to the CDV.

<sup>16</sup> See *Italia Pontificia*, IX, 130-1, n. 3.

Montevergine exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, which, according to some accounts, would provide crucial evidence of Montevergine's eremitical identity, if only it were not of dubious authenticity.<sup>17</sup> What makes it suspicious, as has been previously discussed, is its purported intention of confirming a previous privilege, of even more dubious authenticity. What is peculiar is Abbot Albert's refusal of the title of 'abbot', as reported in the charter:

In his retreat [William of Vercelli] chose an abbot for the monastery according to the wish of the monks, that is Albert; when I [the bishop] asked to consecrate him without charge in line with our privilege, he refused to be consecrated, as he said that he lived in the hermitage with his brothers for the service of God and his mother; he did not want for himself the honour of the abbey, and those who called him 'abbot', did so in honour of the Virgin Mary mother of God, for he did not call himself an abbot but a prior, because the rule of the monastery did not require the title of abbot.<sup>18</sup>

This has been seen as definite evidence of Albert's intention of carrying out William's instructions, and his proposed set up for the community. One must be cautious, however, not to rely too heavily on Albert's behaviour as a stamp of Montevergine's eremitical identity. In fact, Albert did not claim to refuse the title because this was not in keeping with William's intentions, but because 'he called himself a prior', a title which in itself is a mark of a more regular monastic style. It would seem that Albert was nevertheless trying to create a link with the founder by invoking William in the charter.

Moreover, Albert did in the end accept the abbatial title, having spent some time as '*rector et custos*', in the manner of William of Vercelli. This conforms with the fairly standard convention in hagiographical writing and monastic chronicles whereby the candidate chosen as abbot demonstrated the perfect humility and self-abasement which was sought after for the role, by refusing the offer, only

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<sup>17</sup> CDV 210.

<sup>18</sup> The Latin reads: 'Set in ipso recessu de voluntate monachorum elegit abbatem in ipso monasterio silicet Albertum qui, cum peterem ut ipsum abbatem consecrarem sine pecunia ut in nostro privilegio continetur, ipse autem renuntiabat se velle consecrare, quia cum diceret se cum fratribus suis in heremo morari pro servitio Dei et eius genitricis, nolebat honorem habere abbatie et si qui illum vocabant abbatem pro honore sancte virginis Marie Dei genitricis faciebant, quia ipse non dicebat se esse abbatem set priorem quia religio monasterii non requirebat habere dignitatem abbatie.'

eventually to give in.<sup>19</sup> Then again, one can be too sceptical in analysing such cases, and a genuine wish to avoid the power and responsibilities which come with the role of abbot may well have been the source of Albert's vacillation. Maria Aurora Tallarico even suggests that Albert's refusal of the title was an attempt to gain leverage with the bishop, to ensure Montevergine's independence.<sup>20</sup> The change of title in the charters, which initially refer to Albert as *rector* and later as *abbas* seem to support the evidence in the 1133 privilege for Albert's slow acceptance of the title of abbot.<sup>21</sup> If the charter is a later forgery or interpolation, it could very well be seen as an attempt by the community of Montevergine to remember and assert its eremitical origins.

Moreover, one must not overlook the fact that Montevergine was developing during a period of vibrant religious revival, in which the diversification of spiritual practices and monastic observance had made usage of the Rule of Benedict — which, during the Carolingian era, had been obligatory in all monasteries — fairly adaptable according to individual interpretations.<sup>22</sup> This makes identifying a "Benedictine" monastery on the basis of mostly legal-economic documentation even harder. Departure from certain instructions of the Rule was common-place in eleventh- and twelfth-century Italy, particularly with regards to the naming and appointment of monastic offices. The abbot's right-hand man is called prior, provost or dean, sometimes interchangeably; a '*decanus*' is hardly ever found at Montevergine, despite this being described as the most important role in a monastery after the abbot in Benedict's Rule.<sup>23</sup> From May 1194, the prior is occasionally referred to as *prior claustrensi*, probably to differentiate the prior of Montevergine from the priors of its dependencies.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Contrary to John of Matera, who was eager to found and lead monastic communities, and egged William on to do the same.

<sup>20</sup> See Tallarico, 'L'abbazia di Montevergine nell'età normanna', p. 206.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix A, p. 261.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion, but the eremitical movement of Pulsano, as well as the Camaldolese and Carthusian are obvious examples.

<sup>23</sup> See examples in Giovanni Lunardi, 'L'ideale monastico e l'organizzazione interna dei monasteri', in *L'esperienza monastica benedettina e la Puglia: Atti del convegno di studio organizzato in occasione del XV centenario della nascita di San Benedetto (Bari - Noci - Lecce - Picciano, 6-10 ottobre 1980)*, ed. by C. D. Fonseca, 2 vols (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1983), I, pp. 137-59, (155-56). A *decanus* is found both at Montecassino and at Santa Sofia, Benevento (e.g. *Chron. Cas.* IV, 94, p. 556; Falco of Benevento, *Chronicon*, p. 54).

<sup>24</sup> For the *prior claustrensi* see CDV 932 (1194), 1094 (1200), 1235 (1206), 1287 (1209).

There are obvious and serious limitations to this overly literal, if not altogether erroneous approach to the description of Montevergine's institutional evolution in the relative historiography. The method so far has been to scout out Benedictine traces in Montevergine's charter material, fitting these either to an eremitical or Benedictine model. However, given that the extant sources relate for the most part to the economic development of the monastery, it is more pertinent and more realistic to analyse, interpret and describe the evolution from an economic perspective. In other words, Montevergine's institutionalisation followed the peaks and troughs of the monastery's economic growth and expansion. As was the case in the initial controversy sparked by the Verginian priests' dissatisfaction with William's management of monastic assets, institutional change came to Montevergine through social and economic necessity; it was not, as far as the evidence shows, forced upon it by the pressures of current religious principles or tendencies, nor by a need to pursue the founder's ideals.

Montevergine's *familia* comprised both traditional and new roles, merging conventional Benedictine practices with adaptations of existing secular offices in the post-Norman conquest administration, particularly from the late twelfth century.<sup>25</sup> The complexity and sophistication of the internal organisation of Montevergine reached by the end of the twelfth century certainly rivalled those of the great southern-Italian monastic houses, including Montecassino, Cava and Santa Sofia of Benevento.<sup>26</sup> While there was certainly a core component of the monastic administration, originally made up of the abbot and prior, which then progressively came to include new offices, this was only part of a much wider *familia*. The term *familia* is never used in the charters, but the abbot is, at least in

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<sup>25</sup> Tropeano stressed the analogy between the Norman administration and the monastic administration of Montevergine in *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 41. He even draws a parallel between the life of the founder of Montevergine and that of Roger II, whose centralising efforts were applied and concentrated in different spheres: 'One might say that the lives of Roger and William were the expression, at different levels, of a single wish for conquest, synthesis and ecumenicalism. Whereas in Roger's military career this expression manifested as a law code, eclectic and tolerant, able to integrate various peoples of southern Italy, and to give birth to a powerful and feared dynasty; in the religious career of William it was entrusted to the enthusiastic passion of an evangelical expression and of a few imprecise oral dispositions. These caused a long and arduous battle in the succession to the founder, and led the congregation to adopt the prevailing Rule of Benedict' (p. 41). My translation.

<sup>26</sup> For a comparative discussion of the extent of these monasteries' organisations see Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 459-70, particularly pp. 459-60 on the monasteries' internal administration.

one instance, referred to as the main elder, 'maior senior'.<sup>27</sup> Those closest to the abbot are those in his *consilium*, and the charters refer to the *monasterium*, and then, later, to the *coenobium*, to the *monachi* and *fratres*. People employed by or subservient to the monks (either lay brothers, oblates, or servants) are *homini monasterii*, so their inclusion in the monastic community is clear and explicit.<sup>28</sup> The emphasis on community can be noted in the frequent acknowledgment of the consent of the abbot and the consensus of the brothers, usually to lease or sell a piece of land. The typical formula is 'per licentiam et voluntate domini abbatis et fratrum monachorum ipsius predicti monasterio'.<sup>29</sup> Even the abbot consulted the monks before disposing of monastic property.<sup>30</sup>

The space inhabited by the monastic community itself is difficult to define. Of the original building, only parts of the church nave survive. The building described in the *vita* was a rudimentary *ad hoc* construction, built through the labour of the inhabitants of nearby settlements, aided by a certain architect Walter.<sup>31</sup> While normally referred to as a *monasterium*, in November 1136, the monastic institution was referred to as a *coenobium* in a *scriptum securitatis* issued to record the results of a dispute between the monastery and three men who were allegedly abusing monastic lands.<sup>32</sup> In the second half of the twelfth century the term *coenobium* is used more frequently, though it continues to denote the institution rather than the space of the central monastic complex of Montevergine.<sup>33</sup> For example, in the four lease contracts issued in March 1175, the word *coenobium* is used interchangeably with the word *monasterium*, both being

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<sup>27</sup> See CDV 266.

<sup>28</sup> See for example CDV 621.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. CDV 300, 301, 311, 317, 396, 421, 434, 498, 532, 564, 581, 607, 798, 916.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. CDV 790, 1041.

<sup>31</sup> The episode of the miraculous cure of Walter's arm, and his subsequent devotion to William is in *Legenda*, pp. 29-31. Here Walter claims to be from Liguria, '*architectonica arte non ignarus, sed peritissimus estiti[t] et instructus*'. Giovanni Andenna argued Liguria is to be identified with the current Lombardy, the centre of Romanesque art at the time, but Cuozzo pointed to Liburia as Walter's origins, the classical denomination of the northern region of Campania, where the Leburine tribes dwelt. See Giovanni Andenna, 'Guglielmo da Vercelli e Montevergine: note per l'interpretazione di una esperienza religiosa del XII secolo nell'Italia meridionale', in *L'esperienza monastica benedettina in Puglia*, ed. by C. D. Fonseca, 2 vols (Congedo: Galatina, 1983-84), I, pp. 87-118 (p. 102, f. 59); Cuozzo, 'Gli insediamenti verginiani in Irpinia', in *La società meridionale nelle pergamene di Montevergine: I normanni chiamano gli Svevi. Atti del secondo convegno internazionale, 12-15 ottobre 1987*, pp. 129-40 (p. 131, f. 8); and Panarelli, *Legenda*, p. 30 (n. 78).

<sup>32</sup> CDV 234.

<sup>33</sup> See for example CDV 454 (1154), 437, 443 (1164), 476 (1167), 498 (1169), 544 (1172), 581, 582, 583, 584 (1175), 602 (1176), 616 (1177), 658 (1179), 678 (1181), 1032 (1197), 1041 (1198).



the entity to which land belongs and to which services and fees are due. On a few occasions, Montevergine is also referred to as a *conventus*, from 1176.<sup>34</sup> The term *coenobium* in the twelfth century might very generally be associated to Benedictine practice, as the most common in existence, with its connotations of *regulated* monastic life; but it should, in theory, denote a much less specific monastic category, simply implying communal asceticism (as in Basil's *coenobium*, and according to Jerome's classification).<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the use of the word *conventus* appears to do little more than emphasise the communal element of the Montevergine congregation, perhaps as synonymous with *familia*, to include Montevergine's dependencies. Nonetheless, while this terminological development might coincide with institutional developments at Montevergine, it is impossible to tell with certainty whether it is a reflection (conscious or not) of any real change to the community's self-awareness, or any real institutional or organisational change (be it physical or abstract) at Montevergine.

During the decades ranging from 1130 to 1180, under the direction of the first four abbots, Montevergine saw fairly limited expansion, receiving few large donations, and no certainly demonstrable attention from royal or papal authorities.<sup>36</sup> The institutional development, as far as the charters show, was similarly slow: while a definite separation between the positions of abbot and prior occurred in the 1130s, the new office of the provost (*prepositus*) was introduced only in the 1160s, with the first occurrence in September 1160. It was John, probably the monk who accompanied Lando in the abovementioned 1135 transaction, who first took on the title of provost of Montevergine.<sup>37</sup> There is also a John occupying the role of prior between 1160 and 1162. The roles of prior and provost present some difficulty of interpretation. They appear at first to have been interchangeable titles. The priests John and Rossemanno, for example, took on either title interchangeably in the charters, the former between 1160 and 1162, and the latter between 1163 and 1179. John was not very active in the

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<sup>34</sup> For Montevergine as *conventus* see CDV 602 (1176), 833 (1190), 1296 (1210).

<sup>35</sup> On the significance of the coenobitic lifestyle in Benedictine practice see James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 12-17. For a more strictly semantic analysis of the term *coenobium*, see James E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert: Studies in Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1999), pp. 53-71.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>37</sup> CDV 332.

management of the monastery, especially when compared to Rossemanno: the former appears less than ten times in a seventeen-year period in office (if the John Pantasye found in some charters can be identified with the John found in others in the same period),<sup>38</sup> while the latter appeared in about forty charters in twenty-two years in office, just five more years than John. The lack of specificity in defining this role might point to the influence of other neighbouring monasteries with which Montevergine communicated, and the synonymy of the titles in monasteries of this region. The early preponderance of the title *prior* to define Rossemanno, compared to the later overwhelming frequency, but not constant use of *prepositus* from November 1167 to the end of his monastic career at Montevergine in October 1179, combined with the absence of a prior in this period suggests a gradual evolution of the office and of the monastery's institutional structure as a whole. It points to uncertainty in a period of change and adaptation.

The two terms clearly developed into two distinct offices in the last two decades of the twelfth-century. As far as economic and legal transactions were concerned, however, the roles of prior and provost appear to have had the same duties attached to them. In fact, the charters show both prior and provost supervising leases, purchases and sales, and receiving donations. Perhaps, on occasion, the two officials took over one another's duties in the absence of either from the monastery, a common practice in other monastic institutions of the time.<sup>39</sup> This would explain the isolated instances of monks taking on the title of provost or prior, during the more extended careers of the regular official.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, given the nature of the evidence, the presence of someone other than the usual monk in one of the top administrative roles might also be considered grounds for judging the document a forgery. Undoubtedly where the roles differed was in the internal administration of the community, where each

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<sup>38</sup> See CDV 284, n. 2.

<sup>39</sup> This was not an unusual solution in monasteries, which, despite Benedict's suspicious attitude towards the substitution of the abbot by a lower-ranking monk during his absence (and the influence of Benedict's Rule even in non-Benedictine institutions must not be overlooked), even allowed for the prior or provost or dean, or still other monks within the confidence of the abbot, to take on his duties during his absence. See Lunardi, 'L'ideale monastico', p. 156.

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix A, pp. 261-62.

officer would have been in charge of either disciplinary or spiritual matters with regards to the monks.<sup>41</sup>

The office of the cellarer only appeared at Montevergine as late as March 1177.<sup>42</sup> The cellarer clearly took on the conventional Benedictine duties attached to the role, being in charge not only of the monastery's provisions, but also partaking in the management of the monastery's property and estates.<sup>43</sup> His first intervention was in receiving a couple from Summonte, Roger and his wife Susan, into the community of the monastery's lay brothers, as well as receiving their property, agreeing to 'help them if they [were] ever in such dire state that they should need food or clothing'.<sup>44</sup> Aside from administering the cellar itself, it was in fact the cellarer's duty to see to the maintenance of the monastery's men and women, both lay and clerical, both regular and secular, free and un-free. Only a few years earlier, Montevergine had acquired two *casalia*, including all of their men and women, which, together with the growing income from land, both monetary and in kind, would no doubt have required an update of the administrative structures at Montevergine, and coincides nicely with the introduction of the cellarer in 1177.<sup>45</sup> At Montevergine, then, the higher-ranking monastic officials all partook in administration of the monastery's property, often performing interchangeable roles in the charters, whether it was receiving a donation, overseeing a lease or *pastinatio* contract, a purchase or a sale.

It is worth noting that, though the presence of a provost was fairly common in Benedictine institutions of the time, the Rule of Benedict did not have provisions for the provost as a separate office, but regulated the appointment of the abbot, dean, prior, and cellarer. These were the core highest-ranking administrative offices in Benedictine monasteries to manage institutional affairs, and ensure that the crucial element of obedience was upheld within the community. In particular,

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<sup>41</sup> On the figures of the prior and provost see for example Paolo Grossi, *Le abbazie benedettine nell'alto medioevo italiano: struttura giuridica, amministrazione e giurisdizione* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1957), pp. 90-94;

<sup>42</sup> CDV 619.

<sup>43</sup> On the traditional duties of the cellarer see Penco, pp. 95-96; for examples of the cellarer's role in England and, to a certain extent, France, see Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, pp. 429-34.

<sup>44</sup> CDV 619 – 'si forte fortuito ad tantam debilitatem pervenerimus, ut alere nos minime valebimus et nec ... induere nequimus, tunc deinceps dum vivi essemus debet nobis subvenire in omnibus nostris agendis ipsum predictum monasterium'.

<sup>45</sup> Montevergine received the *casale* of San Lorenzo in September 1171 (CDV 533), and the *casale* of Cerbaro, near Monteforte, in February 1172 (CDV 544).

the appointment of a dean was called for only if the monastery's community grew to an extent that the prior and abbot could no longer realistically oversee the discipline of the monks on their own.<sup>46</sup> The absence of a dean at Montevergine can either be interpreted as evidence that the community was not a large one, or that it was not following the Benedictine Rule in its strictest form, perhaps without the heavy focus on discipline and obedience. However, if one replaces the dean with the provost, there was certainly a similar "team" formation of top monks which was clearly in charge of Montevergine's administration: in the Fontanelle contract of January 1178, in which Abbot John allocated land to the monastery's tenant farmers, the abbot is said to have taken 'counsel with many wise men, including provost Rossemanno, monk Daniel, priest and cellarer John, and other monks', before reaching the solution of gathering the monastery's men to live together in Fontanelle.<sup>47</sup> The degree to which Montevergine was ascribing to Benedictine norms appears here to be very much open to interpretation.

From the time of Abbot John (1170-1191), the monastic offices began to change both in their description, and in the length of their tenure. Montevergine's abbots, priors, provosts, and cellarers had much more frequent turnover rates from the 1180s than the core administrative officers had had earlier in the century: the abbots, who had previously remained in office from about one to two decades (John being the longest-standing abbot), were replaced every two years between 1196 and 1200. Similarly, the first cellarer, Gratian, was only in office for about a year, and no less than twelve cellarers succeeded each other between 1180 and 1210. Of these, no cellarer remained in office for more than two years, with the exception of Vivo's five-year stint between 1185 and 1190, and Andrew's ten-year term between 1196 and 1206. Taken on its own, the cellarer's average two-year placement might be seen as a conscious decision on the abbot's part to prevent the cellarer from falling prey to the dreaded sin of avarice. Given that this was not a

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<sup>46</sup> *RoB* 32.

<sup>47</sup> CDV 621. Daniel would become abbot in 1191. His career started as a low-ranking monk, who had nonetheless been taken into the confidence of the abbot, for reasons on which we can only speculate: perhaps he had demonstrated a certain maturity of values essential for a monastic leader, and was on trial to prove his aptitude for the role; or perhaps he had entered the monastery with a donation significant enough to earn the abbot's respect; given that transfers of monks from one monastery to another were not so rare, he may also have had desirable experience from another monastic institution. In any case, the evidence of the possibility of career progression in Montevergine is not limited to this instance, and shows the sort of opportunities the monastery provided for the people of the area.

fate reserved to the cellarer, however, a general shift towards shorter periods of office tenure is more likely to reflect the faster-paced growth which Montevergine was experiencing in the two decades either side of 1200.

In fact, as has been previously observed, the sheer number of charters surviving from the years of Hohenstaufen rule, as opposed to the years of Norman dominion relative to the monastery, while certainly to a certain extent attributable to the improvement in archiving and record-keeping in the Kingdom, are also telling evidence of Montevergine's growing influence and expansion.<sup>48</sup> The content of the charters further confirms this, as more economic transactions than ever before were recorded, and the monastery started to receive both royal (or indeed imperial) and (to a lesser degree) papal attention — though the former was not always welcome<sup>49</sup> — which naturally helped the monastery's internal affairs, as well as boosting its renown. Finally, Montevergine acquired a number of new churches and new daughter cells in the thirty years from 1180, and made active attempts at asserting its primacy among William of Vercelli's original foundations.

After the introduction of the cellarer in 1177, Montevergine saw a number of other institutional changes, with new offices appearing in rapid succession: a *vicarius abbati* is found in 1185, a *baiulus* in 1192, an *infirmararius* in 1193, a *bestararius* in 1197, a *familiares et procurator monasterii* in 1209, and the *castellanus Merculiani* the same year, reflecting Henry VI's grant of Mercogliano.<sup>50</sup> While to a certain extent this new progressive impetus can be attributed to the drive and charisma of individual abbots, particularly Donato at the very end of the period under discussion, it was also in itself the cause of internal developments within Montevergine. Viewed from within this framework, the introduction of new offices no longer necessitates a forceful and perforce inconclusive inquiry into the alleged Benedictine origin of these roles. Rather, they become more evidently the means to an end, which was not to ascribe rigidly and faithfully to the Benedictine

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<sup>48</sup> This is clear when one compares the survival rates for the charters of Montevergine to others in the *Regno*. For example, Graham Loud argues that the survival of royal documents from the administration of Tancred and William III are much worse than for the Hohenstaufen reign due to the '*damnatio memoriae*' to which they were subjected after 1194. See Loud, 'The Chancery and Charters of the Kings of Sicily', p. 785. See also the table on the same page for survival rate figures to 1212.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 38, and Chapter 3, p. 81.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix A, and Chapter 8, p. 239 for the donation of Mercogliano.

Rule, but to cope with the new challenges and stresses brought about by the monastery's expansion and economic development.

While the absence of a customary and the uncertainty regarding the time of adoption of Benedict's Rule prevent us from knowing the exact customs and regulations in place at Montevergine for electing the abbot and his *familia*, some information can be gathered from the charters. To begin with, it appears that the new abbot would usher in new monks to the higher offices. For example, after the second abbot (not including William), Alferius became abbot in February 1145, John Pantasye took over the position of prior from Lando. For his part, Lando had become the first prior of Montevergine within a year of Albert becoming the first abbot in August 1135. In 1191 at least three new appointments were made: Abbot Daniel succeeded Abbot John of Murcone, last attested in January 1191; Robert was prior from January, and John of Gualdo is first seen as provost in August.<sup>51</sup> This pattern however is not always consistent. For example, Rossemanno became prior in January 1163, a full two years after Robert succeeded Alferius in his abbacy.<sup>52</sup> As to the source of the new appointments, in many cases from the second half of the twelfth century, it is clear that the abbot and top administrators were chosen from within the community. Abbot Daniel (April 1191 – August 1196) for example, when a mere monk, was among the members of Abbot John's close council, besides provost Rossemanno, priest and cellarer John 'and other monks', in the formation of the Fontanelle colony in January 1178.<sup>53</sup> Donato too was only a monk in March 1192, when he received the *guadatio* from Lord Roger of Laviano for a donation, before becoming abbot in 1206.<sup>54</sup> Abbot Gabriel (May/October 1197 – October/December 1199) made a single appearance as prior in July 1197 in the witness list of a transaction overseen by Abbot Eustasius.<sup>55</sup> This was standard in monasteries in southern Italy and beyond, where it was through these posts that abbots would acquire the requisite skills to perform their abbatial role.<sup>56</sup> There is a pattern of progression in the other offices as well. We find the priest, John,

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<sup>51</sup> Abbot John's death is remembered on 12 May in the monastery's *necrologium*. *Necrologium Verginianum*, p. 57.

<sup>52</sup> See Appendix A, p. 261.

<sup>53</sup> CDV 621.

<sup>54</sup> CDV 871.

<sup>55</sup> CDV 1033.

<sup>56</sup> Loud, *The Latin Church*, p. 461.

successively as a monk (May 1151), provost (April 1155 to Jan 1162), then cellarer (January 1178 to July 1179).<sup>57</sup> Vivo was cellarer between November 1185 and January 1190, then provost between October 1193 and May 1194. Monk Peter was sacristan in 1197 then cellarer in 1206.<sup>58</sup>

The forged privilege of Bishop John of Avellino dating to 1126 suggests that at least in the years after William's death, the new abbot was chosen by his predecessor: the charter is dated to William of Vercelli's rectorship, and was probably created to address problems that arose after Albert's death, sometime between May 1142 and February 1145, and thus drawn up around those years.<sup>59</sup> If an abbot died suddenly without having made the decision, the monks would choose the new abbot, probably by election, but needed the bishop's approval of the elected candidate. In December 1185, Bishop William of Avellino confirmed Bishop John's privilege, which exempted the monastery from episcopal jurisdiction, including the obligation to obtain the bishop's approval for a new abbot. William clearly had doubts about the authenticity of the charter, which he analysed thoroughly before confirming.<sup>60</sup> Of his predecessor's privileges, he only explicitly mentioned the exemption from the fee for the consecration of the new abbot, clearly an onus the monks were eager to avoid.

A figure who appeared very early in Montevergine's administration was the monastic 'cleric and notary', who normally, but not consistently, also performed the function of legal representative (*advocatus*), and was active from 1130. His

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<sup>57</sup> I think Prior John Pantasya and Abbot John de Murcone (who was referred to as such in only one instance in March 1188 [CDV 798]) followed different career paths, and are not to be confused with Provost and Cellarer John.

<sup>58</sup> CDV 1027, 1233.

<sup>59</sup> His last appearance in the Montevergine charters is in May 1142, leaving a two and a half year gap before Alferius first appears in the charters. Albert's death is remembered on 6 February, and dated to 1142 in the *necrologium*, so that either the year or the day is probably wrong. See *Necrologium Verginianum*, p. 42.

<sup>60</sup> Bishop John: CDV 210; Bishop William: CDV 767. The latter says that Bishop William 'having seen and read through the abovementioned privilege, in which [he was] unable to find any scratch or vituperation', and having checked that Bishop Robert's signature was authentic, he confirmed the privilege. The Latin reads: 'Nos vero attendentes religionem monachorum dicti monasterii et honestam eorum conversationem et ipsius fratris Iohannis petitionem venerabilis abbatis devote supplicantis, viso et perlecto privilegio suprascripto in quo ullam rasuram seu vituperationem nequivimus invenire, sed in figura manere eciam per eundem dominum Robbertum quondam episcopum taliter subscriptum esse: Ego Robbertus gratia Dei predictus episcopus, et fore subscriptione clericorum et iudicum roboratum; et quia ea que in dicto privilegio continentur a quibusdam antiquioribus et veteribus clericis nostri episcopii cognovimus esse vera, et usque nunc sunt taliter a nostris antecessoribus eidem monasterio observata [...] presenti scripto [...] confirmamus'.

appearance is sporadic, possibly because most charters were issued outside the monastery, employing the services of local administrative officials. In May 1130 John Gerard is found helping Lando, then acting as an ordinary monk, in obtaining the necessary guarantees for the quiet possession of a piece of land which had previously been donated to the monastery, under the title of *advocatus monasterii*.<sup>61</sup> Later, in November 1136, Lando, now prior of Montevergine, accused certain men of illegally holding possessions belonging to Montevergine, 'with the assistance of his *advocatus*'.<sup>62</sup> Between February 1145 and July 1159 William was cleric, notary and lawyer. His roles included assisting the prior in leasing land in *pastinatio* contracts, and, in his capacity of cleric and notary, redacting the legal *memoratoria* documents.<sup>63</sup> Whether William was an unaffiliated layman, or the same William who was later prior of Montevergine in March 1188, and then abbot in 1199 and 1200, it is very hard to tell with any certainty. Presumably a different John (not John Gerard) was with the abbot as *advocatus* in 1188 when the monastery received a donation of land, and the donors themselves as lay brothers ('they promise[d] obedience to the monastery in every precept and order as [was] customary there').<sup>64</sup> Clerical and notarial duties at Montevergine were eventually taken on by the monastery's scribe, who is first attested at the earliest in 1194, but certainly from 1210, when Landulf, 'humilis monachus et scriptor' is found among the signatories of the statute of Abbot Donato.<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately there is no other evidence of a *scriptorium* at Montevergine in the twelfth century, and very little until the fifteenth century.<sup>66</sup>

While the *advocatus*'s was a well-established role in Benedictine observance (made compulsory by an 802 capitulary), the position did not involve the same practices and functions in every monastery. The Benedictine *advocatus* in

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<sup>61</sup> CDV 186. 'Memoratorium factum a me Landus monachus et Iohannes Gerardi, qui sum advocatus monasterii Sancte Marie de monte Virginis [...]'.  
<sup>62</sup> CDV 234. 'advocatus ipsius cenobii taliter ipsos prenomatos homines loquentes et respondententes audiret, querebat eis fruges et labores ipsorum hereditatum et iustitiam de invasionibus'; p. 142.

<sup>63</sup> CDV 282, 300, 301, 317, 332, 333, 334.  
<sup>64</sup> CDV 799.

<sup>65</sup> See Colamarco, 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"', p. 139. Colamarco refers to a charter from 1194 which is unedited, and found as a facsimile on microfilm in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli, which I was unable to access. Colamarco's article sheds belated light on the important Statute of Abbot Donato.

<sup>66</sup> Colamarco, 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"', p. 139.



Italy generally dealt with all legal matters pertaining to the monastery.<sup>67</sup> Benedictine observance, however, varied extensively in the twelfth-century, and in many monasteries, especially in the north, the *sindacus* had taken over this role from the *advocatus*. In Germany the *vogt* administered the abbatial judicial rights, and was often a member of the founding family. The *advocatus* in the north of Italy became a military protector of the monastery, the role often being held by a local lord or baron with the means to fulfil it.<sup>68</sup> In most cases, the position was held by a layman, since the Rule of Benedict forbade monks from dealing with earthly affairs.<sup>69</sup> Certainly this does not seem to correspond entirely to the role of the *advocatus* at Montevergine, who was at least in some instances a priest.<sup>70</sup> Thus, at Montevergine, the introduction of an *advocatus* might be seen as a symptom of the monastery's growth, and its necessary involvement with worldly affairs, rather than the actuation of a prescribed set of rules. The role of Montevergine's *advocatus* was to advise on legal procedure, but also to compile charters, hence the combination of the roles of cleric, notary and advisor of the monastery in many cases.<sup>71</sup>

Montevergine's judicial system also emerged and evolved to incorporate changes in the monastic institutional make-up. For at least the greater part of the twelfth century, Montevergine was subject to secular jurisdiction under the Norman, and later Hohenstaufen judicial system. This meant that any legal transaction or dispute had to go through the local secular authorities, in most cases the *iudices* who were effectively delegates of the local count, invested with his judicial powers.<sup>72</sup> Only rarely was the local count directly involved in the process. One instance of this was in May 1177, when Count Roger d'Aigle of Avellino

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<sup>67</sup> See Grossi, *Le abbazie benedettine*, pp. 141-49. Here he quotes the Carolingian capitulary which orders 'ut abbates, episcopi atque abbatissae advocatos [...] habeant' (p. 142).

<sup>68</sup> Military arrangements were largely and profoundly shaped by Norman administration in southern Italy, which is well-documented; particularly with regards to the arrangements in place for monastic military obligations, see Loud, *The Latin Church*, chapter 6; and 'The Church, Warfare and Military Obligation in Norman Italy', in *Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy*, Variorum Collected Studies (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), first published in *Studies in Church History*, 20 (*The Church and War*) (1983), 31-45.

<sup>69</sup> See *RoB* 4.

<sup>70</sup> In November 1152, the post was held by *presbyter* Urso (CDV 311), and the *advocator* John who appeared in May 1188 (CDV 799) was also a *prelatus*. Cf. Fabiani, *La Terra di S. Benedetto*, II, pp. 47-53.

<sup>71</sup> It remains to be seen whether Montevergine's *advocati* were also employed by other private individuals or institutions.

<sup>72</sup> See Cassandro, 'Il diritto nelle carte di Montevergine', p. 112.

transferred his own land to Montevergine's possessions: he called no less than five judges of Avellino to preside over the transfer, which was actuated by the *baiulus* of Avellino, Raynarius.<sup>73</sup> The *baiuli* were local administrative officials ranked below the justiciars, who were in charge of lesser offences, and were usually the first point of contact to begin proceedings over a legal case.<sup>74</sup> Under William II, they were charged with aiding the Church in cases of adultery, which had previously been entirely under the jurisdiction of the *baiuli*. The *baiulus montis Virginis* found in December 1192 is another manifestation of the new powers held by the abbot as lord of Mercogliano, whose legal interests were now also supported by the local bailiff.

The many examples of court procedures in the Montevergine charters show that it was usually a delegate of the abbot, most frequently the prior, provost or cellarer, who represented Montevergine and put forth the community's case. Count Roger's land transfer was made in the hands of monks John and Matthew, who acted on behalf of the monastery. In November 1136 Prior Lando accused three men of withholding monastic land, presenting his case to Judge Richard.<sup>75</sup> Prior Lando's case was argued by the monastery's *advocatus*. It was he, in fact, who 'asked for the fruits and labour of the men, and justice for their invasions'. The judge required that the four accused men present whatever reasons and documentation they had in their defence, giving them three days to gather their evidence and reconvene. The *ostensionem chartae* and *guadatio* were in fact central to the judicial system — the first, the displaying of legal documents to support one's claim, would resolve the trial (sometimes in conjunction with the corroboration of witnesses), and the second provided the winner with the guarantee that the judge's decision would be upheld.<sup>76</sup> In the example in question, William Palumbo, one of the accused, maintained that his supporting documents had been burnt in a fire, and his witnesses had died, thus no doubt weakening his claim in the eyes of the judge. However, before the judge could pronounce his sentence, the parties had settled the dispute peacefully among themselves. This sort of compromise settlement was frequently resorted to before formal judgment

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<sup>73</sup> CDV 614.

<sup>74</sup> See Loud, *The Society of Norman Italy*, pp. 130-31.

<sup>75</sup> CDV 234.

<sup>76</sup> Cassandro, 'Il diritto', p. 115.

was passed, especially when it became clear that one party's case was failing. Thus, a close look at Montevergine's legal output reveals that for much of the twelfth century in the judicial field the monks relied on pre-existing systems and institutional figures.<sup>77</sup>

This was apparently to change at the end of the twelfth century. During a diet held in Bari on 30 March 1195, Emperor Henry VI issued two privileges to Montevergine, the first taking the monastery under his protective wing, confirming its possessions, and exempting it from a number of dues (this privilege has been preserved in its original form); the second invested Montevergine with the *terra Mercuriani*, which Henry had recently confiscated from the Montefalcione family of Mercogliano (this privilege is known to us through a 1536 notarial copy).<sup>78</sup> The latter privilege also endowed Montevergine with civil jurisdiction over its lands and the people therein.<sup>79</sup> This gave Montevergine the right to hold its own court and preside over its own cases:

We [the Emperor] grant the aforementioned monastery the right to hold *curia* over civil matters relating to the same lands [granted] and the monastery's people; and in our benevolent imperial authority we forbid the same monastery and people from being dragged to a different *curia* over any of the abovementioned matters, nor should monks or *conversi*, having been dismissed from the divine offices, be harassed through charges and work outside the monastery.<sup>80</sup>

Powers of civic jurisdiction over the monastery's possessions and people had been granted to Montevergine also in William II's privilege of 1170, proven by Horst Enzensberger to be a (probably thirteenth-century) forgery.<sup>81</sup> In fact, Count Roger d'Aigle had also granted Montevergine jurisdiction over the monastery's men,

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. d'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', p. 180.

<sup>78</sup> On the Montefalcione family see CDV 890 (Nov. 1192), when Turgisio, son of Bartholomew was lord of Mercogliano; and 976 (May 1195), in which Marotta sold a cottage that had been given to her father by Lord Turgisio of Montefalcione, 'when he had been lord of Mercogliano'.

<sup>79</sup> On the grant of Mercogliano to Montevergine see especially P. d'Arcangelo, 'La signoria composita: poteri signorili a Montevergine dalle origini all'età sveva (seconda metà del XII secolo – prima metà del XIII secolo)', *Società e storia*, 140 (2013), 1-37; cf. Tropeano's interpretation of this privilege in *Montevergine nella storia*, pp. 126-34. Both Houben and d'Arcangelo have already commented on the colourful title Tropeano gave this chapter, 'Il barone del regno'. See Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 63; and d'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', pp. 163-64.

<sup>80</sup> 'Et de possessionibus eiusdem terrae et hominibus eius in civilibus questionibus curiam praedictum monasterium clementer habere concedimus, et ipsum monasterium et homines ad alienam curiam trahi in omnibus praedictis benigne imperiali auctoritate prohibemus, ne dimissis divinis officiis extra monasterium monachi seu conversi sumptibus et laboribus fatigentur'.

<sup>81</sup> CDV 509. On its authenticity see Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 75, 78, 80.

which would not have been necessary if the privilege had already been granted by William II.<sup>82</sup> Both Enzensberger and Houben, however, despite upholding both of Henry's privileges as genuine, remarked how this particular clause of Henry VI's privilege was never mentioned in any of Frederick II's privileges or confirmations, so that it is also likely to be an interpolation added after Frederick II's reign.<sup>83</sup>

However, a number of legal cases found in the charters of Montevergine show that Montevergine had its own internal court already in the 1180s, and thus lend support to the legitimacy of either Count Roger's or King William's concession of civil jurisdiction. In April 1184 Montevergine transferred a piece of land to Roger, the nephew of the land's previous owner, specifying that 'any wrongdoings which Roger or his heirs perform on the land will be judged in the monastery's court, and if they are found guilty elsewhere, it must be agreed upon in the monastery'.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, in August 1192, Provost Mark returned to Gregory son of Urso Pandenolfo a house, which his stepfather Raynald Corviserius had previously given to the monastery. Gregory had to pay a yearly census of three *tari*, and agreed that he and his heirs would also be accountable for any crimes in the *curia monasterii*.<sup>85</sup> Thus it would appear that already in 1184, Montevergine possessed some degree of jurisdiction over its men and possessions, and held a *curia*, which we can infer was presided over by monastic officials.

With regards to Montevergine's jurisdictional powers after Henry's 1195 privilege, the documentary evidence suggests Montevergine's involvement in local administration of justice was increased. In October 1195, a *curia* was held in the hospital of Loreto, presided over by the prior of Montevergine.<sup>86</sup> The case involved two brothers, Geoffrey and Henry, of the *castellum* of Sant'Angelo a Scala, who claimed to be the closest relations of their deceased uncle, Judge Aminadab, and therefore the rightful heirs to his estates. Duke Conrad of Spoleto had entrusted the case to Abbot Donato, who had forwarded it, via Prior Robert, to the judges of Mercogliano, Biagio and Richard. Together, and assisted by a 'multitudine veterum

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<sup>82</sup> CDV 569. See Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', p. 87.

<sup>83</sup> Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', pp. 87-89; Houben, 'Sfruttatore o benefattore?', p. 58.

<sup>84</sup> CDV 738: 'et si in eodem feudo forisfactum ipse Roggerius vel sui heredes fecerint, in curia eiusdem monasterii debeant se constringere ad iustitiam persequendam, et si in aliquo damnandus fuerit in predicto monasterio compositionem faciant'.

<sup>85</sup> CDV 885: 'et si ibi forisfecerimus in curia prefati monasterii iustitiam faciamus'.

<sup>86</sup> CDV 994. See analysis in d'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', p. 166.

et bonorum hominum seu sacerdotum', the *curia* was unable to find proof of closer relations, and the provost determined that the lands should go to the two brothers, 'in accordance with the customs of Mercogliano'.<sup>87</sup> The prior 'reminded them of the prophetic warning: to love justice and to hate iniquity, and everyone saw that justice appeared in the staff which he had in his hand, and, joining the orders of the duke, [...] and the provost invested them [with the landholdings] with his staff'.<sup>88</sup> This document was dismissed by Enzensberger as inconsequential in proving Montevergine's receipt of jurisdictional powers, or the existence of a *curia abbatis*.<sup>89</sup> D'Arcangelo contested that the abbot's and prior's roles in the legal procedure should not so easily be dismissed, as the document 'on the one hand demonstrates the judges' prerogatives and the advisory and approval functions of the *boni homines*, while on the other hand it lets transpire the coenobium's involvement in local judicial matters, which is not found before this date'.<sup>90</sup> Neither scholar observed the charter's peculiar final clause, vividly highlighting the prior's judicial powers, emblemised in no uncertain terms by his staff, which he uses to 'invest' the brothers with the lands. This break from the habitual formula can be explained in three ways: either Montevergine's new-found powers in the secular sphere (the charter was issued only five months after Henry VI's conferral) were being highlighted here in a sort of triumphal gesture; alternatively, this was an *ad hoc* investment of Montevergine with powers of jurisdiction by the Duke of Spoleto, which Montevergine was all too eager to display: the provisional nature of the investment is reflected in the bespoke formulaic addition to the charter; or the entire document is a forgery created to support Montevergine's claim to powers of jurisdiction in the secular sphere.

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<sup>87</sup> CDV 994: 'subsequentes gradus geniculi iure et secundum usus predicti Merculiani eis predictum tenimentum pertinetur'.

<sup>88</sup> The Latin reads: 'sepedictus prepositus sequens quod prophetica ammonet vaticinatio: diligere iusticiam odire iniquitatem, quod vidit equitatem adesse per fustem quem in manus tenebat, adiuncto precepto domini ducis, ex universo tenimento quod olim fuit dicti iudicis Abminade partui eorum tam domorum quam et proscessorum terrarium montis et plani in toto tenimento Merculiani seu alibi iure pertinens ei, deinceps predicti germane vel eorum heredes habeant et possedant, et per dictum fustem eos investivit, ut per defensionem dicti almi cenobii ab omni parte semper existat'. In this charter 'prior' and 'prepositus' are used interchangeably.

<sup>89</sup> Enzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', p. 88.

<sup>90</sup> d'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', p. 166.

Finally, in December 1210, the prior of Mercogliano held court in Mercogliano to resolve a dispute between Melelaus and Peter Racco.<sup>91</sup> D’Arcangelo argued that the men involved in the 1210 case, were *fideles* of the monastery, and suggested that perhaps Montevergine had circumvented its jurisdictional limitations by incorporating the lay community into its own. This way, Montevergine could exert the jurisdictional powers it had over its *own* men and lands, on people who were otherwise legally unaffiliated to the monastery.<sup>92</sup> However, there may be a problem with d’Arcangelo’s reading of the document, which is reported in Mongelli’s *Regesti*. Here it appears that, despite the sentence being pronounced by the prior, the court was nonetheless presided over by the local judge, Biagio, as well. The format therefore resembles very closely the standard procedure for the resolution of disputes, in which the case is taken before the local *iudices*. Moreover, d’Arcangelo himself admits that the interpretation of the word *fideles* is by no means straightforward, and a monastery’s *fidelis* was not necessarily legally bound to the monastery.<sup>93</sup> Thus this document does not clarify whether Montevergine had jurisdiction over all people of Mercogliano — since Henry VI had given the *terra Mercuriani* to Montevergine — nor, for that matter, does it lend itself to proving Montevergine’s jurisdiction over its own land and people.

Enzensberger’s suggestion that the clause contained in Henry VI’s privilege conferring powers of jurisdiction ‘de possessionibus eiusdem terrae et hominibus eius in civilibus questionibus’ is a later interpolation holds true when cases which followed and were reported in Montevergine’s charters are examined. Montevergine certainly did hold its own court, presided over by monastic officials, but this was only for cases involving the monastery’s own lands, and, at least in some cases, the people who worked on them, and only in matters directly relating to monastic affairs, as contained in Count Roger’s concession. Indeed the latter specified that Roger’s own men should be judged in his own court if they committed crimes against Montevergine.

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<sup>91</sup> *Regesto*, 1300, p. 60. See d’Arcangelo, ‘Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis’, p. 166, who identifies Melelaus as the judge who oversaw a dispute involving the monastery in 1207 (CDV 1253), and Peter Raccus as a man who appears in several of the Montevergine charters, and is probably related to the man made free by the monastery in 1196 (CDV 1000).

<sup>92</sup> D’Arcangelo, ‘Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis’, pp. 167-68.

<sup>93</sup> D’Arcangelo, ‘Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis’, p. 167.

Nowhere is Montevergine's spirit of institutional innovation more evident than in the somewhat sudden apparition of a *vicarius abbati*: in August 1185 the monk Hugh received a donation of land from the lord of the *castellum* of Valenzano.<sup>94</sup> In the charter he is referred to as the 'vicar' of Abbot John. This is the sole instance of this role appearing in the charters, and Hugh is not found holding an office after this occasion, though he had previously been provost for a year between February 1181 and April 1182. In the monastic environment of twelfth-century Italy, a *vicarius* had no set prescriptions. The year 1185 saw a general renewal of the officers serving Abbot John in the administration of the monastery, including a new prior and provost, as well as a new cellarer. It seems likely, therefore, that in order to carry out this transaction with a high-status donor, Abbot John felt he should appoint a temporary aide with the necessary experience and prestige to perform the task. One might equally speculate that John was appointed during an interim period in which the normal officers had not yet been elected. Either way, Tropeano notes that this was not the first time that Abbot John had required the skills of ordinary monks, who, for whatever reason, were better suited to the situation at hand than those who would regularly be called to oversee the transaction: the monk John Frank had overseen four separate transactions between April 1181 and May 1185, all involving high-status donors.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, the monk Urso Fellicola received the donation of a vassal of the lord of Mercogliano, Turgisio of Montefalcione in November 1192, and in October 1198, he was called to testify over the dispute of the will of a man of Montevergine, which he had previously overseen.<sup>96</sup> One might deduce from this that Urso specialised in Montevergine's closest assets, being those physically closest to the monastery, and those intimately tied to the community by blood. Thus, the position of vicar seems to have been introduced with the literal sense of a 'replacement' substituting the abbot. His *ad hoc* appointment is symptomatic of Montevergine's ability to adapt to the challenges presented to it, and its willingness to innovate when the Rule did not provide the necessary solutions.

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<sup>94</sup> CDV 760.

<sup>95</sup> See documents CDV 679, 738, 751 and 753, and Tropeano's note for CDV 679, pp. 279-80.

<sup>96</sup> CDV 890 and 1051.

The infirmary and vestry also became separate administrative units in the 1190s. The former is significant because it reinforces the link between the monastery and the monastery's hospital, which was built at the foot of the mountain c. 1164. The evidence for this is a seventeenth-century etching commissioned by Abbot Giordano to accompany his description of the monastery in his chronicles, showing the old infirmary near Mercogliano.<sup>97</sup> Benedict of course valued hospitality and the cure of the sick 'ante omnia et super omnia', so that insistence on this aspect on Montevergine's part, if not a basic necessity, might be an indication of Montevergine's Benedictine observance.<sup>98</sup> At Montevergine, the *infirmarius*, too, was part of the monastery's administrative team, and was regularly present at leases, donations and wills. In December 1193 he acted with the cellarer, Elias, under the supervision of Provost Vivo, to entrust a piece of land to Donusdei, a man of the monastery, for a sixteen-year *pastinatio* contract.<sup>99</sup> In March 1195, Montevergine acquired Mercogliano as a fief from the Emperor, together with all the rights and powers attached to it. It was at this point that the hospital also developed into the monastery's *curia*.<sup>100</sup> For this reason the *infirmarius* was present at a hearing in October 1198 to settle the contents of the will of John *diaconus*, and at the *curia* in July 1209 to resolve a dispute among priests of Montevergine's dependencies.<sup>101</sup>

Montevergine, it must be noted, may well have felt the influence of the celebrated *Scuola Medica Salernitana*, which became the central hub for medical training and research in the *Regno*, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>102</sup> In 1231, Frederick II declared that the medical profession could be

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<sup>97</sup> I was not able to locate this at the Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine, but there are several reproductions on their website. See 'Platee', *Biblioteca Statale con Annesso Archivio del Monumento Nazionale di Montevergine*, <http://www.montevergine.librari.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/135/platee> [accessed 20/07/2013].

<sup>98</sup> *RoB* 36.

<sup>99</sup> CDV 914.

<sup>100</sup> CDV 966.

<sup>101</sup> CDV 1051 and 1287.

<sup>102</sup> On the Scuola Medica Salernitana see important contributions by Patricia Skinner, *Health and Medicine in Early Medieval Southern Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 127-36; C. H. Haskins, 'Science at the Court of the Emperor Frederick II', in *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science* (New York: Harvard UP, 1960; first published 1924), pp. 242-71; also P. O. Kristeller, 'Fonti per la medicina salernitana del sec. XII', *Salerno-Civitas Hippocratica*, 1 (1967), 5-18.



entered only by obtaining a diploma from the Scuola Medica Salernitana, or by undergoing strict examination by dedicated royal officials.<sup>103</sup>

The purpose of the vestry was to store the monks' habits and priests' robes, as well as the monastery's treasure. The *vesterarius* makes his first appearance at Montevergine in May 1197, when John de Leto of the *castellum* of Montefusco offered Montevergine the right to claim back a number of loans he had given in previous years, to the total of about 100 *tari*.<sup>104</sup> The *vesterarius* was accompanied by the provost and cellarer of Montevergine, all of whom were, in their administrative capacities, concerned with the monastery's possessions. In September 1202, he received guarantees from Maria de Guadio that she would desist from her accusations towards the Abbot of Montevergine, whom she accused of withholding money that she had loaned to the prior of Montevergine's dependency in Capua.<sup>105</sup> At the abbey of Cava, the *vesterarius* was a crucial component of the administrative body of the monastery, surpassing the cellarer in hierarchy, and frequently seen with the provost in managing the monastery's properties.<sup>106</sup> The coincidence of the role appearing in the last decades of the twelfth century at both monasteries warrants consideration: at the very least it may be a sign of communication between the monasteries, about which our scarce sources are otherwise silent. At Montevergine, 'treasurer' seems to be an appropriate interpretation of the role of *vesterarius*, given that in two of his three appearances in this period he appears when money is exchanged. In some cases, the roles of the cellarer and treasurer appear to overlap. This is evident particularly in a charter from May 1209, in which the treasurer oversees a *locatio* contract, where one would usually expect to see the cellarer, prior or provost. Nonetheless, as has already been seen with regards to the *infirmararius* and the vicar, Montevergine's administrative set-up was malleable, its organisation ready to adapt to changing circumstances and suit the needs of the developing community.

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<sup>103</sup> MGH, Konst. 47, p. 415. 'Presenti etiam lege statuimus, ut nullus in medicina vel cyurgia nisi apud Salernum regat in regno nec magistri nomen assumat, nisi diligenter examinatus in presentia nostrorum officialium et magistrorum artis eiusdem.'

<sup>104</sup> CDV 1027.

<sup>105</sup> CDV 1165.

<sup>106</sup> See Paul Mosher, *The Abbey of Cava in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Cava, the Normans and the Greeks in Southern Italy*, reprint of original thesis, 1969 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1984), pp. 78-80. Cf. Loud, 'Abbey of Cava', pp. 170-71.

Eventually, this entailed the formation of a general chapter. The chapter first convened in December 1203 under the designation of *capitulus monasterii* to authorise and confirm a sale and census contract which had originally been settled between an oblate of the monastery and a certain Turdinus son of William of Ariano.<sup>107</sup> A letter was sent to the supervising judge upon his request by Abbot Robert. The signatories of the letter are not included, so that aside from the abbot himself, the exact constitution of the chapter is not specified. Were it founded on a Cistercian model, aside from the abbot and other monastic officials, one would expect the priors of Montevergine's dependencies to have been there as well. Why was this a matter for the chapter to decide rather than for the abbot alone? The letter of confirmation had been specifically demanded by the judge, suggesting the latter was keen to avoid any later dispute about the contract's contents. The issue may have simply arisen during a chapter meeting. While the abbot or his representatives had previously taken counsel with the monks, and had often acted together with priors of Montevergine's dependencies, the occurrence of a distinctly Cistercian-like format is a novelty in the Montevergine charters.<sup>108</sup> It does not, however, come as any surprise: monastic organisations were thickening everywhere in Europe, to the point that a chapter based on the Cistercian model, and initially with the support of Cistercian abbots, was made compulsory by Innocent III during the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, Montevergine's dependencies, including cells, churches, granges, and lands had increased in the last decades of the twelfth-century to the point that the development of a centralised administration had become unavoidable. Thus, the

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<sup>107</sup> CDV 1190. The letter reads: 'ad quos lictere presentes pervenit, frater Robbertus monasterii Montisvirginis abbas cum toto eiusdem monasterii capitulo eternam in Domino salutem, vestre caritati dignum duximus intimandum quod nos, voluntate tocius capituli, ordinavimus ut frater Iohannes lator presencium oblatas noster redditas monasterii [...]'. p. 290. On the oblates see Chapter 6, p. 173. This predates by many years Potito d'Arcangelo's thesis for the appearance of a chapter at Montevergine only in the second half of the thirteenth century — D'Arcangelo, p. 70.

<sup>108</sup> See for example CDV 621, 994.

<sup>109</sup> The constitution states: 'In singulis regnis sive provinciis fiat de triennio in triennium, salvo iure dioecesanorum pontificum, commune capitulum abbatum atque priorum abbates proprios non habentium, qui non consueverunt tale capitulum celebrare. [...] Advocent autem caritative in huius novitatis primordiis duos Cisterciensis ordinis abbates vicinos, ad praestandum sibi consilium et auxilium opportunum, cum sint in huiusmodi capitulis celebrandis ex longa consuetudine plenius informati. Qui absque contradictione duos sibi de ipsis associant, quos viderint expedire; ac ipsi quatuor praesint capitulo universo, ita quod ex hoc nullus eorum auctoritatem praelationis assumat, unde, cum expedierit, provida possint deliberatione mutari. Huiusmodi vero capitulum aliquot certis diebus continue iuxta morem Cisterciensium celebretur.' *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, v. 2, liber 3, cap. VII, p. 600.

emergence of a chapter, from the natural conference of the abbot and those in his counsel, to a formalised institution involving members of the entire monastic *familia* (such as the oblate involved in the document in question), was an organic pre-emption of the pope's mandate over a decade later.

By the time of Abbot Donato's statute in 1210, Montevergine's practice of convening with the priors of its dependencies had taken clearer form. The charter of the statute which is preserved in the archives of Montevergine is a document compiled in 1217, containing a copy of a transaction which occurred in 1210, of a gift of land from a couple in Eboli, and Abbot Donato's regulation as to how the land should be put to fruition, and how the income should be distributed. The document also includes the papal confirmation received in 1217. The statute was signed by the abbot, prior, deacon, provost, cellarer, sacristan, and *infirmararius*, as well as a number of other new administrative roles, representative officials from Montevergine's dependencies, and a dozen monks.<sup>110</sup> The similarity to the Cistercian model might suggest Montevergine may have been influenced by the Cistercians in introducing the general chapter as a core administrative body. However, Cistercian presence in the Campania was still scarce by the early thirteenth century, with as yet only two houses there: the abbey of Santa Maria of Ferraria founded in 1174 near Vairano in the diocese of Teano, a long way north of Montevergine, and its daughter cell Santa Maria Vallis Luceda in 1208, in the diocese of Acerra.<sup>111</sup> Neither of these appears in Montevergine's charters, but Montevergine had a strong presence in and a strong connection with Acerra, and more so in nearby Maddaloni, which could justify the plausibility of Cistercian influence on Montevergine's institutional structure.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Transcription in Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, pp. 230-33. See Colamarco's 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"' (also containing a transcription) in which she flags the importance of this document, particularly in illuminating aspects of Montevergine's institutionalisation. She points out (on p. 132) that the document, a copy of the original including Honorius III's confirmation of the abbot's statute, was redacted between 1216 and 1217, and so the signatures may not be an accurate reflection of the monastery's *familia* in 1210.

<sup>111</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, p. 533. On S. Maria di Ferraria and its expansion see F. Scandone, 'S. Maria di Ferraria', *Rivista di Scienze e Lettere*, IX (1908/09), pp. 110-124; 183-197; 427-445.

<sup>112</sup> Count Richard of Acerra had donated the *casale* of San Lorenzo to Montevergine in 1171 (CDV 533), and in 1209, Count Diepold of Acerra granted concessions to Montevergine, absolving the community from punishment for harbouring a fugitive, upon payment of a fine (CDV 1276). See also CDV 1077, for evidence of the hospital of Montevergine in Maddaloni.

The statute reveals a number of other offices at Montevergine: the *corveserius*, *palmentarius*, *ferrarius*, the *custos ycone*, and *custos altaris maioris*, as well as others involved in Montevergine's possessions and dependencies.<sup>113</sup> The trade-based offices, on the one hand, the cordwainer (*corveserius*), wine cellarer (*palmentarius*), and blacksmith (*ferrarius*), held by brothers John, John and Roger respectively, are witness to the monks' self-sufficiency and their involvement in the monastery's economic activities.<sup>114</sup> The cordwainer is especially important in the context of Donato's statute, which orders that 50 *tari* should be spent on new shoes for the monks performing the Maundy ceremony on Good Thursday every year. The shoes were obviously crafted *in situ*. The wine cellarer was in charge of the torque, the *palmentum* found in many of Montevergine's contracts involving vineyards.<sup>115</sup> Although this extremely localised production might be seen as fulfilment of monastic aspiration for self-sufficiency, it also points to the less sophisticated economy of the Irpinia region, particularly when compared to monasteries like Cava and Montecassino, which franchised out such operations to the laity.<sup>116</sup>

Along more strictly devotional lines are the remaining offices, concerned with keeping and guarding the main altar and the church's icons. Colamarco notes that the *custos ycone* and the *custos altaris maioris* are unique to the Montevergine administration.<sup>117</sup> The icon of the Virgin Mary, locally known as *Madonna di San Guglielmo*, and now preserved in the monastery's adjoined museum, is thought to date to the late twelfth-century, and is the object of a long-standing local cult.<sup>118</sup> This is perhaps what led Tropeano to accept Tommaso Costo's unsubstantiated

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<sup>113</sup> These will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

<sup>114</sup> The presence of a cordwainer (unless it is here being used as synonymous with coveser or simply a cobbler) implies also either horse husbandry carried out by the monks or their dependents, or the buying of horsehide at markets. Cordwaining could also simply imply embossed leather at this point, rather than specifically the use of horsehide. In either case the quality was of high standard. Discussions of the cordwaining and blacksmith's trades in an English context are found in John Blair and Nigel Ramsay, eds, *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products* (London: Hambledon, 1991), pp. 308-09, and pp. 167-83.

<sup>115</sup> See for example CDV 581, 582, 583, 584.

<sup>116</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 445-446.

<sup>117</sup> Colamarco, 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"', p. 136.

<sup>118</sup> See Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 25. He attributes the icon to the local artist and architect Walter, whom he also identifies as the architect of the first monastic complex. These suggestions are unfortunately unsubstantiated.

claim that a major building campaign was carried out by Abbot John in 1182.<sup>119</sup> Abbot Amato Mastrullo, writing in the seventeenth century, listed ten relics which he claimed were placed under the main altar on the occasion of the consecration of the new church in 1182. Any evidence of this is now lost, though a building campaign towards the end of the twelfth century would help explain the debilitating financial debt which plagued Montevergine at the turn of the century. Moreover, the great number of icons listed by Costo (thirty-six including icons placed under the supposed new church's four altars, and counting among others, relics of St Benedict and the rule 'written in his hand', and of the apostles James and Peter) would warrant the need for a guardian in charge of the icons, which would no doubt have increased Montevergine's attraction as a pilgrimage destination.

The hierarchy of roles is made absolutely clear in the unique miniatures incorporated into the formatting of the document containing the statute of Donato, a notary copy of the original also containing Pope Honorius III's confirmation of Donato's statute. These miniatures are drawn in the same ink used to write the document, with a few touches of red ink.<sup>120</sup> At the very top and centre of the charter, Christ sits in majesty, *traditio legis*, looking out towards the reader, one hand in blessing, the other holding a scroll (the charter?). The text occupies half the page, with Abbot Donato's signature in majuscule bold letters across the middle of the document, acting as a division between the text and the other signatures. The abbot is depicted on the left-hand side, seated, quill in hand, charter in the other, in the act of signing the document. Opposite him, on the right-hand side of the document is Pope Honorius, who ratified Donato's statute, dressed in his mitre and ceremonial robes, with a scroll just visible in his hand, despite damage to the document. Below the abbot's signature, between the two rows of signatories, nine other figures are represented: the crowned Virgin Mary stands between two angels, with relatively intricate details on their robes, her face, like the pope's, dotted in red ink; below her stands the prior holding a book,<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, pp. 119-23. His account comes from the accounts of Mastrullo, and Tommaso Costo's edition of Vincenzo Verace's chronicle of Montevergine before him; see Mastrullo, *Montevergine Sagro* (Naples: Luc'Antonio di Fusco, 1663), pp. 15-20.

<sup>120</sup> Colamarco, 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"', p. 133.

<sup>121</sup> Colamarco suggests this is the Rule of Benedict, 'Il cosiddetto "Statuto dell'Abate Donato"', p. 133.

between the deacon and the provost, dressed in the simple monk's robes with their hoods up; below them stands the monk Martin holding the hands of the donors, a married couple from Eboli. All are identified by "captions" confirming their signatures. Thus, in the top half of the document, Christ is identified as supreme ruler, with his vicars on earth (the pope and the abbot) passing on his message, symbolised in the scroll that all three hold. In the bottom half, Mary, patron saint of the monastery (not William, who was not formally canonised) looks over the prior (whose imposing bifurcate beard attests to his seniority), provost and deacon. These, in turn, are superior in rank to the monk Martin. The monastery's earthly patrons are found at the bottom of the document, joined physically, however, to the monastic *familia* through the act of linking hands with Martin.

Perhaps the most striking observation to make with regards to Montevergine's institutional development is the apparent lack of concern with perpetuating the myth of its founder. William's absence in the scheme depicted on Donato's statute is a telling gap in the evidence. Even the relics listed by Costo as the pride of Montevergine's new church counted nothing of the founder saint. If the evidence in William's *vita* is true, and he was an adamant supporter of the strictest form of *vita apostolica*, a herald of anti-institutional spirituality, rejecting the need for any rule other than that of purity and simplicity of life, then one would expect the founder's charisma to be perpetuated in the monastery's observance, in its way of life, and in its institutional structure. Giovanni Lunardi observed that

it is common usage among monasteries — particularly the richer and most powerful ones — to try and construct noble origins for themselves, demonstrating at whatever cost their precocious adoption of the Rule, even in some instances received directly from the hands of an immediate disciple of Saint Benedict.<sup>122</sup>

Undoubtedly by the sixteenth century, in Costo's time, Montevergine was eager to prove its noble origins and demonstrate its precocious adoption of the Benedictine Rule. It was an especially pressing prerogative during the Reformation, when monasteries across Italy were threatened with loss of independence by the dreaded *Commenda*. The monks of Montevergine went so far as to claim to have a

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<sup>122</sup> See Lunardi, 'L'ideale monastico', p. 140. '[...] è usanza piuttosto diffusa che i monasteri — particolarmente quelli più ricchi e potenti — cerchino di costruirsi una nobiltà di origine dimostrando ad ogni costo la loro precoce adozione della Regola, ricevuta addirittura dalle mani stesse di qualche immediato discepolo di San Benedetto'.

relic of the Rule itself 'in Benedict's own hand' under the church's main altar. In this respect also, the figure of William was bypassed completely in favour of the more illustrious — and more practical at the time — association to Benedict.

Complicating matters for historians in pursuit of Montevergine's institutional identity in its first century of history is the fact that the Rule of Benedict had, at its core, very similar prerogatives to those of William of Vercelli. This is the cause of some ambiguity when considering the statute of Donato, a document which more than any other helps fill the gap left by the absence of a monastic customary at Montevergine. Abbot Donato's particular concern with the internal organisation of the monastery is revealed in his attempt to regulate annual rituals described in his statute. Abbot Donato decreed that the money received from the couple from Eboli should be spent on a property ('hortum sancte margarite') which would generate an annual income of 300 *tari*, to be secured by the claustral prior or the dean ('prior claustralis sive decanus percipiat'). These, he ordered, should be divided up into: 50 *tari* for the poor who go to the monastery for the Maundy on Holy Thursday;<sup>123</sup> 50 for the refectio of the brothers who convene at the monastery on that day; 50 for the vestments ('infulis' — chasubles?) of these brothers;<sup>124</sup> 50 for the refectio of the oblates on Easter; 50 for oil for the monastery's church; and, finally, as mentioned above, 50 to provide shoes for the brothers who perform the Maundy on the day of the last supper. He further declares that 'secundum consuetudine Monasterii est', anything they obtain from the property in Eboli, as well as bread and beans should be distributed to the destitute on Holy Thursday. Anything left over can be distributed according to the discretion of the abbot. Moreover, he ordered that the statute should be read every year on Holy Thursday, lest it be forgotten ('ne forte hec a memoria excludantur'). The document reveals an emphasis on charity which is characteristic of the Rule of Benedict, but also brings to mind the founder's core commandment, as reported in the *vita*: 'it is my advice that working with our own hands, we may gain clothes and food for ourselves, and that which we are given may we give it to the poor, and, convening together, let us celebrate the divine office in the set hours'.<sup>125</sup> Once

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<sup>123</sup> See John 13: 1-15. Foot washing of the monks every Saturday, and of guests is regulated in the Rule of Benedict: *RoB* 35.9, 53.13-14, but not for the poor.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. *RoB* 55.

<sup>125</sup> See p. 33.

again, however, it is worth noting that Donato was concerned here as well with the management of Montevergine's economic assets. This document, like the others in Montevergine's archives, demonstrates how Montevergine's abbots and monks sought to reconcile the monastery's pragmatic concern with its own economic affairs, and the evolution of its community with its need to minister to the community, and fulfil its role as a primary spiritual and social intercessor in the lay community.





Figure 3: The Statute of Abbot Donato (*Regesto* 1297). Reproduced with the consent of the Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine.



Figure 4: Close up of the miniatures in *Regesto* 1297. Reproduced with the consent of the Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine.

## **CHAPTER 8: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK (II): MONTEVERGINE AS MOTHER**

It is difficult to tell, from the donation charters alone, what a donation of a church to Montevergine actually meant in practical terms for both the church and the community of Montevergine. After all, the legal documentation was — in most cases — merely a starting point for ‘cooperation’ between the two establishments, and evidence of what happened next is often lost to historians. Indeed, it would appear that not all of Montevergine’s new acquisitions transferred their archives over to the mother-house, though this was certainly the case for many churches. To what extent Montevergine developed its centralised administration is only one of the questions one might ask about its twelfth- and thirteenth-century institutional development. Did anything change at all for the newly acquired churches when they were assumed into the Verginian network? Would there be monks at the new church? Would there be fewer monks at Montevergine because some were transferred to the new church? Would there be visitations to the church by the abbot or the monks or the chapter? Did the new church continue in its usual liturgies, or did it adopt prayers and rituals different from the Verginian custom? Did the church pay a tribute to the mother house? The degree of involvement that Montevergine exercised with its dependent churches and monasteries can be gleaned from a number of examples in the extant charters. The picture painted by these cases is of a complex structure of institutional organisation which catered for the needs of both the mother house and its new dependencies. This often entailed compromising between Montevergine’s desire to control and create a united and homogenous community, and the dependencies’ desire for autonomy. The result was a varied overall institutional structure, with Montevergine exercising different degrees of control over its dependencies, from churches which ran virtually independently of the mother house, to others whose every action was closely supervised by the Verginian central administration.

Before launching into a close analysis of the monastery’s dependencies, it is worth looking at the local ecclesiastical structures into which Montevergine weaved its path. By the twelfth century the diocesan structure of southern Italy had undergone several changes, among which was the reorganisation of the old

*plebes* into archpresbyteries, which were directly subject to the bishop.<sup>1</sup> These district churches responded to the need, especially in larger sees, to administer to the growing, and thus spreading, local population, and were also part of the Church's strategy to bring the many *Eigenkirchen* of the Kingdom back under its wing. We therefore find the occasional *archpresbyter* witnessing or overseeing transactions in the charters of Montevergine, from 1170 onwards, as in other southern-Italian monasteries.<sup>2</sup> Regional variations were determined by the density of the population and settlements: while the diocese of Salerno, for example, comprised of eleven archpresbyteries by 1182, as confirmed in a bull of Lucius III, none were identified the same year for Ravello, a much smaller diocese west of Salerno.<sup>3</sup> The archpresbyteries reserved for themselves full rights and duties of the *cura animarum*, while small rural churches, such as most local churches mentioned in the Montevergine charters, often only had baptismal rights and not burial rights, for example, and therefore could not perform the liturgy of the dead.<sup>4</sup> The concept of the parish as it was understood in the north of Italy — small units subordinate to the archpresbyteries, which administered at an even more local level and were centred on a relatively small church — was only properly established in southern Italy during the twelfth century, and in Benevento only at the end of the twelfth century.<sup>5</sup> Evidence of this is found in a charter of April 1199 when Sergius of Scala, son of Lord Leo Zito de Filicto, had his will drawn up, distributing his money and possessions among the churches, monasteries, and bishops of the area.<sup>6</sup> Among his donations were an ounce of gold for his burial to the bishop of Scala, and four ounces of gold to the church of Sant'Eustachio for his burial.

Large monastic houses, such as Cava and Montevergine, often functioned alongside this system, as they were exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, and they had networks of churches of their own, which, while mostly administered by the religious community of the monastery, were still subject to their local bishoprics, and would thus pay usually nominal dues to the bishop. Moreover, as the examples

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<sup>1</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 414-16; Bruno Ruggiero, 'Per una storia della pieve rurale nel Mezzogiorno medievale', *Studi medievali*, 16 (1975), 583-626 (pp. 589-91).

<sup>2</sup> For example CDV 518, 719, 756, 767, 1051, 1188. See also the references for Monte Sacro and Tremiti in Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 415-16.

<sup>3</sup> Loud, *The Latin Church*, pp. 413-16.

<sup>4</sup> Ruggiero, 'Per una storia della pieve rurale', p. 593.

<sup>5</sup> Loud, *The Latin Church*, p. 417-18.

<sup>6</sup> CDV 1057.

to follow will demonstrate, Montevergine's churches were not always staffed by the monastery's monks, but could continue to be staffed by the secular clerics who had previously been in charge of the offices and administration of the church. Montevergine's dependencies served a variety of functions, from administering the monastery's distant lands, to hosting new communities of monks, some functioned as hospitals, and others as local churches providing sacramental services for local communities.

Jean-Marie Martin pointed out several decades ago now, within the context of a conference on the Verginian presence in Apulia, that an analysis of Montevergine's dependent churches in Apulia must necessarily extend beyond the twelfth century, as the monastery's presence in the region only really took off in the thirteenth.<sup>7</sup> This is certainly true of most other southern regions touched by Verginian expansion, in Basilicata, Calabria, or Sicily. The same cannot be said for Montevergine's native ground, however, where the community experienced a comparatively rapid growth, and new dependencies came into their own particularly from the 1170s. Santa Maria del Plesco in the territory of Casamarciano, near Nola, attested in the Montevergine charters from 1165, is the most prominent example, with the semblances of its own organised administration clearly discernible from 1176. An obvious deterrent in this analysis, however, is the limitations of the edited material for Montevergine — reliance on Mongelli's registers for the years after 1210 can be problematic, as it involves accepting his sometimes biased, sometimes arbitrary interpretation of the texts.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, lack of documentation for any church could indicate lack of any significant activity just as much as it could be an indication of administrative independence from the mother house.

As previous chapters have demonstrated, Montevergine was primarily a locally-based community, interacting with nearby patrons, donors, and workers. Distant landholdings or other estates and possessions were very much a rarity rather than the norm in the twelfth century. Nevertheless, a number of churches outside the Irpinia region and its immediate surroundings were merged into the

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<sup>7</sup> Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', pp. 101-28.

<sup>8</sup> Tropeano differs in several occasions with Mongelli's identification of locations or people, his dating of charters, or his sometimes questionable interpretation of events. See, for example, CDV 207, 542, 598, 722.

Montevergine community despite the distance. After land had been acquired by Montevergine at the end of the century in Troia for example, a hospital was founded in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Montevergine's greatest expansionary phase occurred in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The majority of Montevergine's dependencies were acquired in the last three decades of the twelfth century. This amounted on average to no more than one church per year, but the development of some of these churches can be indicative of the overall evolution of the Verginian community's administration. Montevergine applied a hierarchical model to its extended family of dependent churches and houses as well. From very early in its history, Montevergine began to acquire churches through benefactions. Forty-two dependent churches can be counted in Pope Celestine's bull of 1197, and fifty-seven in Pope Urban IV's bull of 1264. These numbers are by no means definitive — there were bound to be other churches that the popes failed to mention (the archives certainly indicate that one could easily double these figures),<sup>10</sup> and some of those referred to as churches were not just places for lay devotion, as we might understand the word now, and had resident monastic communities.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the numbers reveal that most of Montevergine's churches in the third quarter of the thirteenth century had been acquired in the previous century. Montevergine did not, however, have an active spiritually expansionary attitude. Rarely is there any evidence of Montevergine doing anything more than taking over an existing church or community given to the monastery by a local donor, and carrying on its activities. For the most part we find that these churches were in possession of land of their own, that was administered locally by the priest, rector, or prior of the church. Occasionally we find the monastery building or re-building a church, as was the case in Maddaloni, for example, when Frederick II specified that his donation of land there was for the purposes of building a new church. A further complication stems from the separation of a church's spiritualities and temporalities, which did not always pass to Montevergine together. To those churches for which Montevergine acquired the *ius patronatus*, the abbot would normally send a single monk to staff the church, as

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<sup>9</sup> See CDV 1022 for land acquisitions in Troia, and *Regesto* 1559 for the hospital there.

<sup>10</sup> See Table 5, p. 252 with a list of Montevergine's dependent churches recorded in Celestine III's bull.

<sup>11</sup> This was the case of Santo Chierico, for example, which, although not mentioned in the papal bull of 1197, was a Verginian dependency by 1142, with a small monastic community. See p. 225 below.

was the case for San Nicola in Villanova. A Roger son of Roffrid declared in November 1155 that he was in possession of the church of San Nicola in Villanova, and, being very ill, gave it over to Montevergine with its lands and appurtenances.<sup>12</sup> As well as receiving the church and its lands, Montevergine also acquired patronage rights over the church which had been obtained by local laymen and passed down through Lombard inheritance law.<sup>13</sup> A number of inhabitants of Mercogliano offered their patronage rights over the church in Villanova to Montevergine in May 1171, specifying that although they had already offered part of their *ius patronatus* to a local deacon, Bernard, the latter should transfer any benefits he received to Montevergine, while still maintaining his duties towards the inhabitants of Mercogliano.<sup>14</sup> Montevergine acquired a further portion of the *ius patronatus* of San Nicola in October 1179 from two pairs of brothers who had inherited the rights from their ancestors.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Montevergine was able to regather the church's temporal and spiritual assets into its own property, and place them under its own supervision.

Martin also points out that Montevergine's geographical position allowed it to take advantage of the spiritual niche it had found in the Irpinia region, where previously a reformed monastic presence had been lacking.<sup>16</sup> But on the frontiers of the region, Montevergine found itself encroaching on territories with a strong reformed monastic presence: Pulsano to the east, Goleto to the south, and Benevento and Capua to the north. This meant that where distant dependencies did exist, bonds had to be strong for the mother house to exert its influence there. For this reason the organisational pattern found in the Montevergine dependencies is not dissimilar to that of other large Benedictine communities in the region, which faced similar problems. Pulsano for example, was clearly preoccupied with ensuring tight control over its dependencies, of which it had nineteen by the end of the twelfth century.<sup>17</sup> This was particularly problematic for

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<sup>12</sup> CDV 339.

<sup>13</sup> On the Lombard law of inheritance which governed the *ius patronatus* see Dormeier, *Montecassino und die Laien*, pp. 81-87; and Bruno Ruggiero, *Principi, nobiltà e chiesa nel Mezzogiorno longobardo. L'esempio di s. Massimo di Salerno* (Naples: Università di Napoli, 1973); cf. also Wood, *The Proprietary Church*, pp. 60-61, and 734-35.

<sup>14</sup> CDV 526.

<sup>15</sup> CDV 656.

<sup>16</sup> See Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 110.

<sup>17</sup> See Panarelli, 'Quia religio monasterii', p. 177; also Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 107.

dependencies further afield, a number of which eventually gained independence from the mother house.<sup>18</sup> Montevergine appears to have had fewer problems in this respect, if any at all in the twelfth and early thirteenth century, most likely thanks to the close proximity of its dependencies. Indeed only one year after John of Matera's death, Pulsano already had a daughter house in Piacenza, in the Po valley, whereas Montevergine's reach never extended further than the Kingdom of Sicily, and no further than the Irpinia region in the first few decades of its existence.<sup>19</sup>

As the internal administration of Montevergine developed a better-defined hierarchical structure in the 1160s and 1170s, so too did changes become manifest in the administrative systems of its dependencies. The emergence of the use of a prior within the Verginian administrative structure is evidence of the streamlining in the way it administered its dependencies. It is not until 1176 that we learn of a prior, Lord Prefectus, administering the church of Santa Maria del Plesco. Similarly, in the church of San Giovanni a Marcopio, in the territory of Montefusco, Provost Gratian, who appeared to be in charge of the congregation in August 1174, was replaced by a prior later in the same decade.<sup>20</sup> The latter is explicitly described as a monk of Montevergine as well as prior of San Giovanni a Marcopio. At Santa Maria del Plesco, the prior represented the interests of the church in all legal transactions, making and receiving transactions for the church, often 'in the name of Montevergine'. Most Verginian dependencies were headed by a prior who represented the church or community in all transactions or disputes. In some cases one finds a provost or rector in charge, though these are a minority. At least in some instances, the prior was selected from among the monks of the mother house: in November 1178, Lord Prefectus was both the prior of Santa Maria del Plesco, and a monk of Montevergine.<sup>21</sup> In March 1179, the dependency of San Giovanni a Marcopio was headed by William, prior of San Giovanni and monk of Montevergine.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, p. 481; and Panarelli, '*Quia religio monasterii*', p. 177

<sup>19</sup> See Panarelli, '*Quia religio monasterii*', p. 176.

<sup>20</sup> CDV 572, 646.

<sup>21</sup> CDV 641.

<sup>22</sup> CDV 646.



However the qualifier 'montis virginis' does not always accompany the word 'monachus' in the documents. Where the prior is referred to as a monk of the dependency (e.g. 'monachus et prior ecclesiae sancti iohannis'), it is unclear whether this indicated the presence of a community of monks or whether this was simply a monk of Montevergine who had been sent to govern the new dependency. In many cases, both are possible. Prior Peter of Santa Maria de Flumine, in Flumeri, in Taurasi territory, was referred to as 'monachus sanctae mariae fluminis' in February 1196, but 'monachus montis virginis et prior sanctae mariae fluminis' in July 1197.<sup>23</sup> This suggests that the appellation 'monk' in both documents was primarily an indication of Peter's vocation, rather than a reference to his position either at Montevergine or at its dependency. This philological picture is complicated, however, by the fact that Santa Maria de Flumine was, certainly by 1181, a monastic house dependent on Montevergine. In fact, in November 1181, a court was held at Santa Maria de Flumine to resolve a dispute between Roggeronus of the *castellum* of Arigenello (Arianello?) and a priest, Nicholas.<sup>24</sup> The two both laid claim to a piece of land which Roggeronus argued had been left to him by his ancestor on his deathbed, in the presence of Abbot Alferius. The judges were assisted in their ruling in favour of priest Nicholas by Provost Ugo of Montevergine, and 'other monks of Santa Maria de Flumine, whose provost was holding court elsewhere'. Thus the presence of a monk at a dependency is not always useful in determining whether the dependency was a monastic house or merely a church or grange whose primary purpose was to see to the economic interests of the monastery in the area.

Aside from throwing into question again the interpretation of the appellation 'monachus' in conjunction with the ruler of the dependency's other title in such documents, this case shows a degree of collaboration between the mother house and its dependency. The members of the court included officials from Montevergine as well as monks of Santa Maria de Flumine, collaborating over an issue that at best involved the deceased abbot of Montevergine as a witness, since the priest Nicholas appears to be unaffiliated to the monastery or to the church of Santa Maria de Flumine. Even so, and although the court was held on the premises

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<sup>23</sup> CDV 1002, 1032.

<sup>24</sup> CDV 690.

of the monastery of Santa Maria de Flumine, Montevergine's input was significant: Provost Ugo had travelled from Montevergine to assist the judges of Taurasi in the case. Nevertheless, more than a case of interference from the mother house, this could be a case of Montevergine coming to the aid of its dependency, given that, according to the account recorded in the charter, the provost of Santa Maria de Flumine 'was holding court elsewhere'. Thus, an official from the mother house could be called upon to guide the congregation or replace the prior of a dependency in his duties during the latter's absence.

Priors of Montevergine's dependencies thus represented the dependency (and therefore the mother house) in all manner of legal transactions, from acquisitions, to sales, to legal disputes. In April 1195, Prior Servatus of the houses of Capua and Sclavo gave a piece of land with a workshop in Capua to two brothers to rent from the monastery in perpetuity for a yearly payment of 5 *tari* of Amalfi.<sup>25</sup> In January 1200, the prior of the hospital of Maddaloni, Peter of Trentenaria, is found receiving the donation of two pieces of land which bordered with Maddaloni's existing landholdings from a couple who resided in the territory of Maddaloni. In exchange, he gave the couple, John son of Gottfrid, and his wife Maria, 10 *tari* of Amalfi 'in charity'.<sup>26</sup> In both cases, the priors were referred to not only as representatives of their own congregations, but as representatives of Montevergine as well. Indeed, in most donation transactions, the donation is made to Montevergine in the first place, 'through the hands of' the prior of the dependency. This formula served a triple purpose: it conveys the impression that the Verginian identity had been stamped on its dependencies, as much as it acted as a reminder to donors and users of the act of Montevergine's far reach, and to the monks of the daughter-houses that their institutions were dependents of Montevergine. Montevergine thus was able to assert its authority and supremacy over its dependencies, but at the same time convey a sense of the breadth of its piety, charity, and, not least, its popularity.

The dependencies performed important functions, both with respect to the mother house and to the community with which they came into contact. On the one hand, they often carried out similar economic functions as the ones performed by

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<sup>25</sup> CDV 856.

<sup>26</sup> CDV 1077.

the administration and community of the mother house, and, on the other hand, they could adapt their spiritual activities to the needs of Montevergine's more distant patrons. In September 1183, a piece of land was given by a knight of Castalcicala to Santa Maria del Plesco, 'obediencia montis virginis', on the condition that the monks of Santa Maria del Plesco 'say an anniversary mass every year after the death of William and his wife Eme for the salvation of their souls'.<sup>27</sup> This would have made it easier for the spouses' relatives and their community to pray for their salvation at a local celebration, rather than having to climb to the Montevergine summit to perform this duty.<sup>28</sup> Santa Maria del Plesco was also chosen as the burial place of Mary of Avella (only a few kilometres north-east of Casamarciano, where Santa Maria del Plesco was located) in August 1204, when she arranged that her land would be given over to Montevergine on the condition that she be allowed to work the land with oxen during her lifetime, and that the monks would carry her body to the church of Santa Maria del Plesco for burial when she died.<sup>29</sup> Thus, while it is clear that donors held the Verginians in high regard, and their devotion to the monastery of Montevergine could sometimes extend to the wish to be buried within the premises of the monastery or one affiliated to it, the need to preserve their ties with their own local community, and to be preserved in the fabric of the communities' collective memory, was met by Montevergine's dependencies.<sup>30</sup>

The promise of salvation was also a powerful motive for the donation of churches to Montevergine in the first place. Even in these cases, the importance of the church to the local community was sometimes stressed by the donor. The churches of San Nicola and San Biagio outside the city of Avellino were given to Montevergine in February 1163 by John de Sancto Michaele and his wife Murica,

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<sup>27</sup> CDV 724.

<sup>28</sup> It is also possible that the Montevergine 'calendar' was already full, as only one mass intention may be offered daily. See *Codex Iuris Canonici*, c. 948, in *The Code of Canon Law: Latin English Edition* (Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1998-99).

<sup>29</sup> CDV 1203.

<sup>30</sup> I am unaware of any in-depth studies of the role of monastic dependencies in the formation of collective memory; however, an analysis of the roles of local communities in forging monastic memory is found in Antonio Sennis, 'Narrating Places: Memory and Space in Medieval Monasteries', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300-1300*, pp. 275-94 (especially pp. 289-94). The possession of good *memoria* was an essential condition for a man or a woman to draw up their will. The charters for these legal acts almost always contain the clause 'dum in possessio bona memoria'; e.g. CDV 671, 804. One donation even states explicitly: 'So that memory may not fade from the holy church, that is in life and in burial, we must always increase the advantage of our benefices'. CDV 1234.

daughter of the deceased Robert de Vernengario, with the proviso that the churches should 'continue to pay the yearly census to the bishopric of the Holy Mary in Avellino, and the priest Berteramus should continue to preside over mass in the church for the rest of his life, and this priest must do for the monastery what he did for John and his wife'.<sup>31</sup> Aside from the obvious concern with maintaining healthy relations with the bishop, the agreement also reveals an attempt to preserve the local customs in place at the churches, and the relationships forged between the patrons and the local clergy. The church of San Nicola appears to have maintained a good degree of independence from Montevergine, at least initially: indeed, there is no mention at all of Montevergine in the charters detailing a transaction which occurred only a few months later. A priest, Berteramus, granted a chestnut grove to existing tenants of other church land, specifying that the contract would last twenty-nine years, and the tenants would pay half the annual chestnut produce to the church.<sup>32</sup>

Our extant charters for the church of Santa Maria de Flumine further illustrate a dependency's social and economic roles. The church's position along the river Calore, and near a major Irpinian town, Taurasi, with its Norman castle, made it an ideal centre for Verginian activity. Indeed, the church became the focus of a number of donations from the lords of Taurasi, accumulating significant landholdings in the area. The church was also in charge of two mills on the river Calore, which had been donated to Montevergine in August 1129 by Lord Torgisio of Taurasi, and received the produce of two further mills in the property of the lord of Taurasi, as stipulated in a document dating to May 1197.<sup>33</sup> These were particularly precious assets, and the cause of a furious legal battle. In April 1228, Lord Henry of Taurasi and his mother, donna Sarrano, reclaimed the mills, accusing Montevergine of presenting false evidence in support of its claim to the mills, and invoking the *pugnam iure francorum*.<sup>34</sup> Unsurprisingly, the judges

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<sup>31</sup> CDV 419.

<sup>32</sup> CDV 430.

<sup>33</sup> CDV 180, 1032.

<sup>34</sup> Only three years later, in 1231, Frederick II abolished the Frankish custom of resolving disputes through duels, ordering that all disputes, whether they involved Franks or Lombards ('Francus aliquis a Franco vel etiam a Longobardo'), should be resolved through the presentation of documentary evidence and the declarations of witnesses. The relative article in the Constitutions of Melfi regulated that the witnesses called to testify should be of an appropriate status to match the status of those they testified against — e.g. testimony against a baron required two barons, the

argued this could not take place, given that his opponents were monks.<sup>35</sup> Henry did not give in, arguing that, in their secular activities, the monks were ‘non monachos sed ut privatos’, and so he appealed to the emperor. This is in itself a very interesting understanding of the division between the monastery’s spiritual and secular roles. The mill was returned to the monastery in May 1229.<sup>36</sup> The water mill was, of course, of primary importance not only to the monastery’s community, but probably to several neighbouring villages and the town of Taurasi itself.<sup>37</sup> The mill’s economic revenue is enough to explain the tenacity of both parties in their wish to retain possession of the mill. But the mill represented more than that: it reinforced the sense of community which Santa Maria de Flumine fostered and relied on, and it represented a further extension of Montevergine’s reach.

Similarly telling is the church of Santo Chierico in Paternopoli.<sup>38</sup> This church had been donated to Montevergine by Lord William of Gesualdo, the son of Roger Borsa, in 1142. It received two donations in the following century, and has all the semblances of a small grange. We know that in July 1175, a priest Nicholas was identified as a monk and prior of the church, suggesting there was perhaps a small religious community here. Over the course of the twelfth century, Santo Chierico received two pieces of land, a mill and a number of men, and was then confirmed to Montevergine by Pope Urban IV in 1264 (even though it does not appear in Celestine III’s bull of 1197).<sup>39</sup> Both property acquisitions (neither is recorded as a sale — the first is part of a larger donation made by the Lord of Gesualdo, and the second is an exchange of lands) were compensated by the prior — the first with four ounces of gold and a horse, and the second with a piece of land and half an ounce of gold and 8 *solidi* — suggesting that these donations of land, tools and men were necessary for the economic functions of the church. The men may have

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acceptable equivalent being four knights, or eight townsmen, etc. The article does not, however, include provisions for cases involving churchmen. See *Die Konstitutionen Friedrichs II von Hohenstaufen für sein Königreich Sizilien: nach einer lateinischen Handschrift des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. and trans. by Hermann Conrad, Thea von der Lieck-Buyken and Wolfgang Wagner (Köln: Böhlau, 1973), book II, arts XXXIII and XXXIV. For the English translation see *The Liber Augustalis or Constitutions of Melfi Promulgated by the Emperor Frederick II for the Kingdom of Sicily in 1231*, trans. by James M. Powell (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse UP, 1971), pp. 90-93.

<sup>35</sup> *Regesto*, 1625.

<sup>36</sup> *Regesto*, 1647.

<sup>37</sup> We know, in fact, that there were several mills along this section of the Calore: e.g. CDV 271, 371, 1028.

<sup>38</sup> CDV 586.

<sup>39</sup> CDV 271, 586, and MBR, III, pp. 416-17 (also in *Regesto* 1572).

remained as unpaid labourers on the land, or they could have been made lay brothers to form a religious community. The evidence is simply insufficient to make a definitive assessment. While Santo Chierico was a centre of spiritual and economic activity in Paternopoli, this place also hosted dependencies of Goletto and Santa Maria Incoronata, a fact which perhaps helped boost Montevergine's spiritual and production activities there through competition.<sup>40</sup>

Disputes such as the ones described for Santa Maria de Flumine were not-uncommon displays of power tensions between the Montevergine community and other lay and ecclesiastic powers, such as counts and bishops who tried to retain and assert their own rights on lands and possessions. In November 1208, for instance, the bishop of Caserta gave Abbot Donato of Montevergine the right to found a church in Maddaloni, including cemetery and burial rights, and the right to have bells, in exchange for an annual share of the church's income and donations received.<sup>41</sup> It is evident, however, that the bishop was wary of forfeiting any control over the parishioners of Maddaloni, forbidding the monks of Maddaloni from receiving the inhabitants for mass if he had placed an interdict on the *castrum*. Disputes with lay donors in particular could be drawn-out and even violent, as we have seen, with Bohemond of Malerba, for instance. These tensions could escalate into violent attacks: this was the case when Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino received the church of Sant'Angelo in Fomis on Monte Tifata from the prince of Capua, which had previously belonged of the archbishop of Capua. Desiderius rebuilt the church and turned it into a successful monastic cell, provoking the archbishop's jealousy, which even resulted in an armed attack in 1106 when another bishop was invited to dedicate the church.<sup>42</sup> For this reason, Montevergine regularly sought reassurances and confirmations of its possessions and dependencies, not only directly from the donors or the local authorities, but from kings and popes as well. Abbot Donato in particular became very concerned with ensuring the monastery's claims over its dependencies were cemented, sending his monks as envoys to the emperor to ask for confirmation of Montevergine's

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<sup>40</sup> See *Regesto* 1613. Also Maria Aurora Tallarico, 'Montevergine e la Puglia (XII-XVI secc.)', in *L'esperienza monastica benedettina e la Puglia*, pp. 55-85 (p. 76).

<sup>41</sup> CDV 1272.

<sup>42</sup> See Loud, *The Latin Church*, p. 433.

possessions.<sup>43</sup> According to a document dated May 1219, in an act of evident urgency, Donato sent two monks all the way to Germany to meet with Frederick II for this purpose.<sup>44</sup> We have seen as well that he obtained confirmation from Pope Honorius of his statute regulating the use of income from a particular donation for ceremonial proceedings regarding the monks of Montevergine and its dependencies.<sup>45</sup> His successor, Abbot John, was specifically concerned about the *casale* of Acquara, for which the monastery had drawn up a charter claiming possession since 1136.<sup>46</sup> Although we have no records of disputes involving these lands, we do know that in 1230, Abbot John sent two of his monks to the imperial court to obtain confirmation of the possessions, even though they were among the properties confirmed and accorded royal protection by Frederick II in 1209.<sup>47</sup> This suggests that either the *casale* had come under attack, or that the monks felt the need to make up for lost or spurious documentation.

In the following few paragraphs an attempt will be made to reconstruct the profiles of those dependencies for which sources are more numerous or at least more telling. Even so, information for these, as has already been underlined, is sporadic at the best of times. Nevertheless, these snapshot views will assist in demonstrating the variety of communities which formed in Montevergine's environment, and the range of relations in place among them.

### **8.1. Santa Maria del Plesco**

The church of Santa Maria del Plesco was found on a mountain near Casamarciano, in the diocese of Nola, west of Montevergine.<sup>48</sup> It first appeared in the charters of Montevergine in April 1165, being referred to as 'obedencia Sancte Marie montis Virginis'.<sup>49</sup> The document in question is the will of Matthew son of judge John, who arranged for a number of his vassals (William Arpagenses and the sons of John de Arbusto) to be given to the church of Santa Maria del Plesco together with their

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<sup>43</sup> *Regesto* 1440.

<sup>44</sup> See FIID, n. 522. The role of abbots and monks as petitioners for privileges on behalf of monasteries is emphasised in Cristina Andenna, 'Gli ordini "nuovi"' p. 209, and notes therein.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 7, p. 209, and n. 110.

<sup>46</sup> CDV 232.

<sup>47</sup> For John's request see *Regesto* 1662, and for the 1209 privilege see FIID, n. 1, pp. 209-12; and also CDV 1294.

<sup>48</sup> For the church's mountain-top location see Mongelli, *Regesto*, nos 2046 and 2250.

<sup>49</sup> CDV 451.

possessions, leaving them, however, under the supervision of his wife Sabbia until her death or second marriage. Thus by 1165 Santa Maria del Plesco was at least a modestly endowed church, and it was already part of the extended family of Montevergine. Unfortunately there is no reference to the church prior to this date in either the archives of Montevergine or in other archives of the region, so that little, if anything, is known about the church before 1165. One can only speculate that the church was donated to Montevergine relatively soon before this date, given the contemporary trend of relinquishing churches from lay ownership.<sup>50</sup> The Montevergine archives do show, however, that Santa Maria del Plesco grew to be Montevergine's most successful and prolific dependency. It seems to have been staffed by a religious community of monks (*fratres*), from the time of its entrance into the Verginian community. In fact, only a few months after the first donation, in February 1166, another donation of land was made to the church 'for the rectors and brothers of this church' ('rectorum omnium et fratrum') to own in perpetuity.<sup>51</sup> As to numbers, the sources are of little use here — there may have been anything between two and a dozen monks.

Compared to most other dependencies, Santa Maria del Plesco displayed unusual initiative in the economic and social spheres. Of the twenty-eight transactions involving Santa Maria del Plesco which occurred in the period up to 1210, twelve were straightforward donations, five were leases made by the monastery to local tenants, three stipulated a yearly census to be paid by the monastery to the donors, two were purchases made by the monastery, and one even suggests that Santa Maria del Plesco was also supporting locals financially by lending money.<sup>52</sup> By 1210, the cell had considerable landholdings concentrated in and around Castelcicala and Casamarciiano, including a mill near Avella, which the monastery rented from a knight of Avella for  $\frac{1}{2}$  *tari* per year.<sup>53</sup> The church's purchases were likely to have been made in the vicinities (the localities specified in

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<sup>50</sup> See Loud, 'A Lombard Abbey in a Norman World', especially pp. 273-82. Here Loud argues that great south-Italian monasteries benefited from changes in power structures and landholdings brought by Normans, and from the influence of the Gregorian reforms. These insisted on the sinfulness of proprietary churches, which led to laymen returning churches in their possession to the clergy.

<sup>51</sup> CDV 459.

<sup>52</sup> See CDV 451, 459, 598, 605, 609, 641, 660, 693, 700, 734, 729, 762, 798, 848, 866, 923, 925, 957, 982, 998, 1021, 1035, 1084, 1159, 120, 1203, 1205, 1294.

<sup>53</sup> CDV 848.



the charters, 'La Cerasa' and 'Aurano' are of difficult identification). In the earliest of these in 1182, Prior Vivo of Santa Maria del Plesco paid 150 *tari* of Salerno to Robert of Maddaloni and his wife Altruda;<sup>54</sup> far from being a simple appeasement sum, this offer represents an active attempt on the monastery's part to increase its estates, showing a degree of independence which was not typical for most Verginian dependencies.

It is significant that this purchase was made by Vivo, whose Verginian career was active and varied. He had been cellarer of Montevergine between 1179 and 1181, and, after his time as prior of Santa Maria del Plesco from 1182 to 1183, went on to become cellarer of the hospital of Montevergine, and then provost of Montevergine in 1193-4. His experience at the mother house led him not only to acquire estates for the dependency, but also to turn profit from them by leasing land to tenants; in fact, in 1183 it was under his supervision that the first lease contract was issued by Santa Maria del Plesco, giving ten pieces of land in perpetual lease to a certain David in exchange for a yearly canon of 10 *tari* of Amalfi.<sup>55</sup> This sort of career was not unusual for a monk who showed administrative ability. It was customary for these monks to take on a number of roles within their community, or even to be deployed by the abbot to one of the community's dependencies.<sup>56</sup>

Vivo's appointment as prior of Santa Maria del Plesco is also a clear example of Montevergine's efforts to centralise its administration by deploying monks of the mother house to administer its dependencies. Indeed, the majority of transactions made by priors of Santa Maria del Plesco were done with the consent of the abbot of Montevergine, this being an almost formulaic clause present at the beginning of the relevant documents.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Montevergine appears to have had a greater deal of involvement in some transactions pertaining to Santa Maria del Plesco. Indeed in some instances donations were made directly to the abbot of Montevergine, acting on behalf of Santa Maria del Plesco,<sup>58</sup> and for the reception of

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<sup>54</sup> CDV 700.

<sup>55</sup> CDV 729.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. the biography of Abbot Seniorectus at Montecassino, 1127-37, in *Chronicon Cassinense*, IV.94, p. 554.

<sup>57</sup> See for example, CDV 700, 729, 798, 1205.

<sup>58</sup> CDV 848 and *Regesto* 2250.

an oblate into the congregation of the dependency in 1226, the prior of Montevergine and a monk from the mother house were both present.<sup>59</sup>

Aside from a community of monks and the monastery's tenants — and evidently by the first half of the thirteenth century some oblates — Santa Maria del Plesco also had a number of vassals, lay brothers and sisters, and unpaid labourers at its service. Donations of people, in fact, ranged from the extremely secular to the patently spiritual, and the margin between the two was often blurred. In September 1185, Lord Gisulf Botrumile 'offered in the hands of Lord John de Nusco monk and prior of Santa Maria del Plesco, obedient to Montevergine, all the *ius dominium* which he [had] over the knight John de Curia, as well as all of the vassal's possessions and appurtenances'.<sup>60</sup> There is no reason to believe that this 'vassallum' was expected to join in the religious life of the monks, in the way that an oblate or the lay brethren would. Instead, the donation begs the question of why Santa Maria del Plesco needed *ius dominium* over a knight. To take a different example, in November 1197, Lord Gisulf of Castellammare (possibly the same donor as in the previous example, now in possession of Castellammare) gave 'his beloved Lord John de Artura', and his wife Solombria to Santa Maria del Plesco.<sup>61</sup> The possibility of joining the monastery, either to partake of the benefits of entering the *familia*, or to follow a contemplative lifestyle, was not open exclusively to men and women of status, and the oblate mentioned above who was received by officers of both Santa Maria del Plesco and Montevergine was an ordinary inhabitant of Casamarciano, wishing to be buried in the premises of the church.<sup>62</sup> Peasants had ample interaction with the monastery as labourers working on monastic land, but we have limited evidence for their spiritual connection to the monastery, given that most documents concerning peasants are more secular in nature.<sup>63</sup>

These particular donations also show the sort of donors which Santa Maria del Plesco attracted. Like its mother house, Santa Maria del Plesco included in its community and received donations from men and women from a wide social

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<sup>59</sup> *Regesto* 1577. For a discussion of the monastery's oblates see Chapter 6, p. 173.

<sup>60</sup> CDV 762.

<sup>61</sup> CDV 1035.

<sup>62</sup> See *Regesto*, 1577.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. most *pastinatio* documents, such as the ones cited above on p. 121 - n. 13, p. 124 - n. 33, p. 125 - n. 36, p. 127 - n. 44.

spectrum: from members of the noble elite, to the local peasantry, men and women were attracted by the spiritual, social and economic benefits offered by the monastery. A good number of them were high status donors, holding land from the king or from his barons. Aymo de Molinis, son of Walter de Molinis, a baron of Aversa, though never a donor himself, was present at two donations, one involving William de Patricio, knight of Castelcicala, as well as at Lord Gisulf Botrumile's donation.<sup>64</sup> Other donors included the rector of the church of Sant'Adonio in Castelcicala, a local church subject to the bishopric (the priest specified that he had obtained the permission of Bishop Marinus of Nola). The priest gave a piece of land in Casamarciano, adjacent to land already in possession of Santa Maria del Plesco, *ad censum* to Santa Maria del Plesco in 1202, agreeing on a yearly canon of 5 *tari* of Amalfi.<sup>65</sup> However, there were also much humbler donors, such as a couple from Arbusto who, 'to earn pardon of their sins' gave 'a small piece of land near the road to Avella' to Santa Maria del Plesco in 1166.<sup>66</sup> We also find family attachments to the church, such as the case of William de Patricio and his wife Emma, who made a donation to the monastery asking that mass be said by the monks every year after their death;<sup>67</sup> and the case of Solombria, the widow of John Artura, knight of Castelcicala, the donor of the monastery's mill, acting out her deceased husband's last wishes by offering her dowry to Santa Maria del Plesco.<sup>68</sup> The local community's appreciation for this church might also be reflected in the complete absence, during the twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries of records of any disputes involving Santa Maria del Plesco. The calm was not to last, however, and in April 1223 Prior John da Monteforte entered a dispute with two brothers over a land census; the dispute was swiftly resolved in favour of the monastery.<sup>69</sup>

Following over a decade of silence in the charters regarding Santa Maria del Plesco spanning from 1204 to 1219, later in the thirteenth century the church continued to prosper. In 1219 we find a rare record of a man taking the monastic habit at a dependency of MotneverGINE: notary Rao de Pellegrino converted to the monastic life at Santa Maria del Plesco, donating a vassal to the monastery in the

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<sup>64</sup> CDV 724, 762.

<sup>65</sup> CDV 1159.

<sup>66</sup> CDV 459.

<sup>67</sup> CDV 724.

<sup>68</sup> CDV 848 and 1021.

<sup>69</sup> *Regesto* 1509.

meantime. By 1222, the monastic community was such that a groom and infirmarer to the monks was brought in to shave, apply leeches, and cure the monks during his lifetime in exchange for the use of a piece of land.<sup>70</sup> However, it was not until 1264 that the monastery obtained independence from the bishopric, and Santa Maria del Plesco remained a dependency of Montevergine until Pope Paul V conferred abbatial status to the monastery in 1611.<sup>71</sup>

## 8.2. Baiano

The first documentary evidence of a Verginian community in Baiano, not too far east of Santa Maria del Plesco, comes in a donation by the knight Girard of Avella and his son Bartholomew, who in July 1168 gave to Montevergine a *casalina*, including its occupant family. The family members in turn had to give their incomes and *angaria* to the monastery, as well as a number of yearly payments in kind, and the *exaticus* for pigs.<sup>72</sup> The knights also gave ten feet of olive trees to Montevergine in the place called Apranico, and 'the right for the monks residing in the house of Baiano to mill for free'.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Baiano is introduced as an economically active dependency staffed by a community of monks. Prior to this donation, steady donations of land in Baiano had been received by Montevergine from as early as 1129.<sup>74</sup> The monks owned olive orchards, vineyards, and other land in Baiano territory.<sup>75</sup> The priory had therefore probably been set up to manage and take more direct control of these estates. At first, the priory was under the strict supervision and close control of Montevergine: in October 1188, a *pastinatio* contract giving local farmers a vineyard in Baiano was overseen by the provost of Montevergine, Alferius, who stated he had been given consent by the abbot of Montevergine and the rector of the house of Baiano, Richard.<sup>76</sup> From the thirteenth century, however, there is a shift to the standard administrative model for Verginian dependencies, accompanied by a less stringent control of its

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<sup>70</sup> *Regesto* 1484. On the practice of seyney, or blood-letting, see Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100-1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 97-98. Here she points out that it is likely that often the barber employed by the infirmarer would also perform the blood-letting on the monks.

<sup>71</sup> *Regesto* 2131.

<sup>72</sup> On the *angaria*, or render labour services, see p. 132 above.

<sup>73</sup> CDV 483.

<sup>74</sup> CDV 178.

<sup>75</sup> See also CDV 207, 420, 430.

<sup>76</sup> CDV 803.

activities by the mother house. The prior of Baiano became the house's representative in legal transactions, albeit still receiving permission from the abbot of Montevergine. Nevertheless, perhaps not all land in Baiano territory was supervised by the Verginian house there, with the mother house still taking control of transactions involving land in Baiano even completely independently of the house of Baiano — for instance, in 1208 the sale of a chestnut grove in Baiano was performed by monk Martin of Montevergine, with no mention of the prior of Baiano. It could be that cases of alienation of monastic land were overseen by the mother house, since the transaction in question was classified as a sale, although the contract stipulated an annual canon to be paid to the monastery.<sup>77</sup>

From 1201 until at least 1215 the priory of Baiano was led by Prior Paul. A Prior Paul is found at Montevergine during this time on two separate occasions in August 1204 and March 1210, and it is likely that he was the same monk who was at Baiano.<sup>78</sup> A number of donations were made to the Verginian dependency under Paul's leadership, including mostly small land donations, and on one occasion a house in Avella.<sup>79</sup> The dependency did attract an unusual number of men offering themselves and their possessions to Baiano.<sup>80</sup> One of these, a priest Iulianus of Avella, in August 1204, after donating all his possessions to Baiano, 'as it is written that unless one renounces all one's possessions, one cannot be a follower of Christ', asked that the monastery make provisions for his housekeeper if he died before her, and that 'should he wish to become a monk of the monastery, the monastery must give him whatever is necessary to this end'.<sup>81</sup> A further two men offered themselves to the monastery in 1203 and 1204.<sup>82</sup>

Political tensions in the area may be the cause of this flow of men in the region to the monastery of Baiano. Indeed in April 1203, Lucius son of Daniel Armia specified he offered himself to the monastery 'driven by necessity';<sup>83</sup> moreover a donation of land to Baiano in January 1205 was made by Martin

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<sup>77</sup> CDV 1274.

<sup>78</sup> See CDV 1203 and 1297.

<sup>79</sup> See CDV 1129, 1198, 1206, 1207, 1213, 1236 (for the donation of the house), 1268; also *Regesto* 1301, 1375.

<sup>80</sup> See CDV 1186, 1206, 1207.

<sup>81</sup> CDV 1206.

<sup>82</sup> CDV 1186 and 1207.

<sup>83</sup> CDV 1186.

because he was 'afflicted by great necessity from the incursion of the Germans'.<sup>84</sup> It was at this time, in fact, that German barons were seizing the opportunity of Frederick II's minority to gain land and power for themselves in the Kingdom of Sicily, providing various claims to lordship. In June 1205, Diepold (whom the monks of Montevergine would soon have good reason to fear as well) had assassinated the pope's elected regent of Sicily, Walter III of Brienne (who had married the daughter of Tancred of Sicily), by ambushing him in his camp near Sarno, only 20 km south of Baiano.<sup>85</sup> Diepold was not the only contestant for power in the south of Italy: aside from German and native lords, there were others too, such as Alamanno da Costa, a Genoese pirate who in 1204 attacked Syracuse and claimed to be its count.<sup>86</sup> Thus, those threatened by impending danger from the persistent upheavals in the area could plausibly turn to Baiano for support and a safe haven.

### **8.3. Santa Maria Reale di Maddaloni**

After the entry of the church of Santa Maria Reale di Maddaloni into the Montevergine congregation, there was an increase in interest in land in and around Maddaloni from the monks of Montevergine. The precise date of the acquisition or foundation of a church in Maddaloni is unknown, but a monastery is first recorded there in March 1178. A land tenement given to Montevergine in the appurtenances of Maddaloni on this date was then leased by Prior Rossemanno of Montevergine to a local in October that year. In February 1180, a monk of Montevergine bought a piece of land near Maddaloni for 200 *tari*. Before the close of the century, a hospital rose near the church in Maddaloni, first mentioned in April 1199.<sup>87</sup> By this stage, the standard Verginian administrative model had easily been adopted: we find a prior in charge of the hospital, run together with the church. William de Argencio, in fact, is referred to as prior of the hospital but also rector of the goods of the church of Maddaloni in two documents from the same year.<sup>88</sup> Of course, according to the royal privilege of March 1206, Frederick II donated 'sex curbas ad curbam

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<sup>84</sup> CDV 1213.

<sup>85</sup> See CDV 1209 for Diepold's intervention at Montevergine.

<sup>86</sup> See here Abulafia, *Frederick II*, p. 142; and Martin, 'L'administration du royaume', p. 125.

<sup>87</sup> CDV 1058.

<sup>88</sup> See CDV 628 and 630

capue'<sup>89</sup> of a forest in the demesne of Maddaloni to Montevergine, so that the monks might build a church there.<sup>90</sup> Although one can only speculate, this seems to point to extensions on the existing monastic site at Maddaloni, with the erection of a new church endowed by the king himself. In October 1209, Frederick II confirmed his previous donation, adding eight households of 'villani' in Maddaloni in gift to Montevergine.<sup>91</sup> The new church of Maddaloni was evidently located on a prominent road leading directly to the monastery of Montevergine, as proven in a document of March 1218.<sup>92</sup> Maddaloni was also the site of other monastic dependencies: Cava, for example, had long held two churches in Maddaloni territory.<sup>93</sup> In this case, Cava paid the church 10 *tari* annually plus a quarter of the burial fees.<sup>94</sup> Montevergine's control over Maddaloni remained strong to the end of the fourteenth century and beyond: the prior sometimes needed the approval not only of the abbot of Montevergine for certain transactions, but also of the prior, provost, deacon, and other monks as well.<sup>95</sup>

#### **8.4. SS. Filippo e Giacomo in Benevento<sup>96</sup>**

Most churches under Montevergine's supervision seem to have come through donations, although for the majority we do not have documents confirming when and how the church came into Montevergine's possession. The church of Santi Filippo e Giacomo in Benevento is one such example.<sup>97</sup> The church had been in existence since as early as 1007, and thus predated the Norman conquest of southern Italy.<sup>98</sup> When it passed into Montevergine's administration, the monastery inherited the church's archives, so that many documents pre-dating the transfer can be found among the Montevergine documents. It remained a church without monastic precincts until at least July 1176, when the church was under the

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<sup>89</sup> A *curba* is probably a variant of *corba*, a Capuan unit of measure for wheat. Thus, Frederick was allowing the monastery as much land as was necessary to sow six *curbas* of wheat.

<sup>90</sup> See FIID, n. 59.

<sup>91</sup> See MGH, XIV,1, pp. 209-12, and CDV 1232.

<sup>92</sup> *Regesto* 1420.

<sup>93</sup> Cava, *Arm. Mag.* H.31 (May 1158)

<sup>94</sup> See Giacinto de Sivo, ed., *Storia di Galazia Campana e di Maddaloni* (Naples: Nabu Press, 1860-65), pp. 338-40, n. 2.

<sup>95</sup> *Regesto* 1573, 1615, 1659 (1230), 1730, 2530, 2555, 3905.

<sup>96</sup> See Giovanni Mongelli, 'Il monastero verginiano dei SS. Filippo e Giacomo in Benevento', *Samnium*, 45 (1972), 9-49.

<sup>97</sup> Books and cloth in *Regesto* 1398, June 1216. Also *Regesto* 1405 — where the bishop pays penance.

<sup>98</sup> CDV 22.

control of Philip, *custos et rector*.<sup>99</sup> By the end of the century, the Verginians were planning to extend the church of San Giacomo, which had obviously grown in prestige and popularity. In June 1197 Provost Robert exchanged a piece of Montevergine's land for some land in Benevento offered by Roger Malalma, which was needed to extend the church.<sup>100</sup> There is a shift to much tighter control from Montevergine towards the end of the century, with the provost or abbot of Montevergine acting directly on behalf of San Giacomo from the late 1190s, indicating that only at this stage did the church become a priory of Montevergine.<sup>101</sup>

The church was certainly well-endowed by the second decade of the thirteenth century. It was at the centre of a major dispute in 1215-16, in which the monastery complained about harassment from a local judge, Pietro Malanima.<sup>102</sup> The latter had exacted various pledges in movable and immovable goods from the church. He had subsequently verbally abused the rector of Santi Filippo e Giacomo, pronouncing 'slandorous words with evil implications against [the rector]'.<sup>103</sup> The case had reached the papal court, and the archbishop of Benevento, Roger, also cardinal of Sant'Eusebio, had suspended the judge from office. Peter was forced to apologise and return all goods to the church.<sup>104</sup>

### **8.5. The Hospital of Montevergine**

The hospital of Montevergine, also sometimes referred to as *xenodochium*, was founded c. 1164 at the foot of the mountain of Montevergine. In a document issued in August 1164, the hospital is described as 'a novo fundamine constructum', and comprising of at least one chapel, where the transaction in question was stipulated.<sup>105</sup> The hospital's location proved fundamental in determining its functions. It was probably set up with the double purpose of acting as a medical hospital and also a pilgrims' hospital: in 1170 it is referred to as the hospital of Jerusalem, and when in August 1164 the knight Eleazar of Amando made a

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<sup>99</sup> CDV 596.

<sup>100</sup> CDV 1031.

<sup>101</sup> CDV 596, 1031, 1063

<sup>102</sup> *Regesto*, 1398, 1405.

<sup>103</sup> The Latin reads: 'Infamosa verba que mala suggestione dixerat contra nos, que Apostolica sanctitas in se reduerat et sue magis quam nostre iniurie opposite fuerant'. *Regesto*, 1405.

<sup>104</sup> See also S. Borgia, *Memorie istoriche della pontificia città di Benevento*, 3 vols (Rome, 1763-69), iii, 180-83, 185-87.

<sup>105</sup> CDV 444.



pilgrimage to Montevergine it is likely that he stayed at the hospital; that same month, a charter was issued for the first time from the hospital itself.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, on the document reporting the donation made by Eleazar on the occasion of his pilgrimage (which may have constituted part of a penance for the accusations he had put forth against the monastery regarding the church of San Marco which he claimed as his own), the monastery's good will and aid towards the sick was emphasised as one of the motivations for Eleazar's change of heart, as noted in Chapter 6.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, the harsh temperatures at the top of the mountain where the monastery of Montevergine was located, in conjunction with the minimalist diets followed by the monks in accordance with the Verginian tradition (or even the milder regime laid out in the Rule of Benedict for that matter) would have no doubt been a constant hazard to the monks' health.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the foundation of the hospital would also have helped to keep the laity away from the monastery itself, minimising the disruption caused by pilgrims' visits to the monastery.

The hospital originally functioned under the close supervision of Montevergine, and even in conjunction with it, a situation made possible by the close proximity of the two institutions. The hospital was staffed by monks, who lived at the hospital rather than at Montevergine itself, and are referred to as monks of the hospital.<sup>109</sup> The cellarer and infirmarer composed the administrative nucleus of the hospital until the turn of the century. The cellarer had similar duties to the prior of any other dependency, issuing land to tenants and representing the hospital in legal transactions involving Montevergine and its dependencies. The infirmarer did not have a supervisory role, but aside from his main duties of curing the sick, he also represented the hospital and acted as witness at courts held at Montevergine or its dependencies.<sup>110</sup> In the first half of the 1180s the cellarer of Montevergine, Vivo, also acted as the first cellarer of the hospital.<sup>111</sup> It is unclear,

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<sup>106</sup> CDV 444 and 520.

<sup>107</sup> CDV 443. See Chapter 6, p. 175.

<sup>108</sup> On monastic diets see Massimo Montanari, *Gusti del Medioevo: I prodotti, la cucina, la tavola* (Bari: Laterza, 2013), pp. 194-210; Andrew Jotischky, *A Hermit's Cookbooks: Food and Fasting in the Middle Ages* (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 141-54; cf. Harvey, 'Living and Dying in England', pp. 38-41, pertaining to English monks.

<sup>109</sup> See for example CDV 520 and 678.

<sup>110</sup> See CDV 914, 1051, 1098, 1233, 1287.

<sup>111</sup> See CDV 678, 747, 754.

though, whether he maintained his duties at Montevergine, since in the five months that he is attested as cellarer of the hospital, there is no evidence of his presence at Montevergine. The hospital evidently needed its own kitchens and its own storage, since the dietary requirements and concessions of the sick were different to those of the healthy monks, and, as previously discussed, it is likely that at this stage the monks were following the Rule of Benedict. Benedict instructed that he who attended the sick should be 'God-fearing, diligent, and careful', and conceded that 'fleshmeat should be granted to the sick who are very weak, for the restoration of their strength'. Finally, the Rule warned that the sick should not be neglected 'by the cellarer or his attendants' — it was the cellarer's duty to ensure that adequate supplies were kept for the sick monks. Benedict had deep consideration for the sick, and stressed the importance of caring for them again and again in his Rule.<sup>112</sup> Practically, of course, it was simply much easier to have a separate kitchen and cellar at the hospital, which was several hundred metres below Montevergine. Montevergine eventually gained a reputation for its care of the sick, founding hospitals attached to a number of its dependencies, such as the example of Maddaloni above, and later also in Troia, attested from 1225, in Apice (from 1232), in Sarno (from 1239), in Eboli (from 1243), and in Marigliano in 1292.<sup>113</sup> We have seen already that at Santa Maria del Plesco the infirmarer performed the common practice of blood-letting with leeches, and such practices were most probably carried out at Montevergine and at its other dependencies as well.<sup>114</sup>

Only in 1200 do we find a provost at the head of the hospital overseeing a court case involving a dispute between locals over a *morgengab*.<sup>115</sup> Acting on an order from Abbot William, the provost summoned judge Magnus of Summonte to the hospital, where a number of other Verginian monks from Montevergine, Summonte and elsewhere convened to hear the case. The hospital was in fact ideally located between the monastery and the township of Mercogliano and Summonte. When the *castellum* of Mercogliano was granted to Montevergine by

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<sup>112</sup> Again, for a comparison of the interpretation of Benedict's instructions on hospitality and care for the sick in England, see Harvey, *Living and Dying in England*, pp. 91-94.

<sup>113</sup> *Regesto* 1559, 1756, 1888, 1925, and 2532.

<sup>114</sup> See above, p. 232.

<sup>115</sup> CDV 1099.

Emperor Henry in 1195, the hospital became an administrative centre for the monks' management of the new fief. Between 1195 and 1210, the Verginian monks also operated administratively from a new structure, the house of Loreto, also located between Montevergine and Mercogliano. The two acted as centres for judicial and monastic courts to be held regarding both the monastery's possessions and the men within their jurisdictional remit.<sup>116</sup> In February 1223, for example, the cellarer of the hospital held court with a number of *boni homines* in the hospital of Montevergine, and retracted the obligation for the men of Fontanelle to perform *operae* for the monastery once a week or once a month in exchange for the land they held from the monastery in Fontanelle, but rather an *opera* per month 'pro recognitione'.<sup>117</sup> The following year, Abbot John held court in Mercogliano to quell a dispute between two families holding land from the monastery. The location of the court was thus more likely to have been a matter of *ad hoc* convenience for the officers overseeing the case.

## 8.6. Loreto and Mercogliano

While the hospital of Montevergine is no longer extant, the house of Loreto survives to this day, albeit in its eighteenth-century incarnation.<sup>118</sup> Urso Fellicola, previously a monk of Montevergine, was appointed prior of Loreto, and held the post in 1195 and 1196.<sup>119</sup> During his time as prior, Urso expanded the house's landholdings, buying three pieces of land in the appurtenances of Mercogliano. The house of Loreto appears to have been the centre for meetings regarding Montevergine's possessions and dependencies at this stage — in 1198 and 1210 meetings were held at Loreto with a number of officials present. The first meeting was probably the Abbatial Council or the *Discretorium*, as it included a number of obedientiaries: the abbot, prior and cellarer of Montevergine, the cellarer and

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<sup>116</sup> See *Regesto* 1455, 1460, 1505

<sup>117</sup> *Regesto* 1223.

<sup>118</sup> The medieval building is recorded in the *platea* (a typical Renaissance document drawn up as a cadastral evaluation) commissioned in 1721 by the abbot of Montevergine and redacted by the royal surveyor Bartolomeo Cocca as a registry of the monastery's estates; the building is also described in Abbot Giordano's chronicle of Montevergine. The hospital was destroyed by a number of successive earthquakes in the first half of the eighteenth century, and rebuilt within a few years of the fatal earthquake of 1732. See Tropeano, *Palazzo Abbaziale di Loreto: Guida storico artistica* (Montevergine: Edizione Padri Benedettini, 2008).

<sup>119</sup> Urso appears as monk of Montevergine in CDV 890, and as prior of Loreto in CDV 964, 978, 987 and 1010.

infirmarer of the hospital, the prior of Loreto, and a number of other monks.<sup>120</sup> The scribe noted that the donation to the house of Loreto being discussed was one of ‘a number of issues’ which Abbot Gabriel wanted to cover, so that the affairs of Loreto in particular were not necessarily the focus of the gathering. In 1210, the abbot and priors of twelve dependencies, together with other Verginian officers, were gathered on the occasion of Donato’s ‘statute’ being drawn up.

The enfeoffment of the *castellum* of Mercogliano to Montevergine by Henry VI in 1195 spurred a number of developments within the Verginian congregation in the next few decades. Mercogliano was singled out in Frederick II’s confirmation of the monastery’s possessions in 1224.<sup>121</sup> In the early thirteenth century, the prior of Loreto was placed in charge of overseeing the transition of the *castellum* of Mercogliano into the Verginian community, and in 1205 we find that the prior of Loreto was also ‘procurator mercuriani’.<sup>122</sup> The role had previously been given to a monk of Montevergine: after his term as prior of Loreto, Urso Fellicola was procurator of Mercogliano between 1200 and 1202, with the additional role of *preceptus*. The procurator saw to the economic provisions of the new fief, and to its integration into the economic and financial affairs of Montevergine.<sup>123</sup> The Montevergine charters show him performing the same role as a prior or cellarer, overseeing land transactions between Montevergine and the people of Mercogliano.<sup>124</sup>

A monk of Montevergine was appointed *castellanus* of Mercogliano in 1207. In August, a monk Peter, *castellanus* of Mercogliano, was a member of the *curia* deciding on the ownership of a portion of land contested between the monastery and a family from Serra di Montoro.<sup>125</sup> Peter then assumed the role of cellarer of Mercogliano, while another monk, Bartholomew, became *castellanus*, appearing at court in another dispute between two priests over who should be in office at the

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<sup>120</sup> CDV 1051.

<sup>121</sup> A copy of this document is held in the Archivio dell’Annunziata di Napoli, vol. 8 of the charters, fol. 48.

<sup>122</sup> CDV 1229.

<sup>123</sup> In 1224 Abbot John nominated the prior of Montevergine’s dependency in Sarno to be procurator of the monastery’s goods in San Marzano, where the monks had acquired a number of estates. For land acquisitions in the *casale* of San Marzano see *Regesto* 1166 and 1649. For the appointment of a priest, Martino see *Regesto* 1530. Montevergine was eventually given permission by the bishop of Sarno to build a church there in 1242. See *Regesto* 1919.

<sup>124</sup> CDV 1136, 1146 and 1168.

<sup>125</sup> CDV 1253. Unsurprisingly, the land was adjudicated to Montevergine.

churches of Sant'Angelo on Montevergine and San Basile in Summonte.<sup>126</sup>

D'Arcangelo suggests that the *castellanus* was specifically assigned to dealing with the fort in Mercogliano, given that the d'Aigle and Castelvetero lords of Mercogliano had presumably been expelled by Henry, and had vacated the castle.<sup>127</sup> This branch of the d'Aigle family died out in 1183 in the male line, however, although the other branch, the Counts of Fondi, continued into the thirteenth century.<sup>128</sup> It is thus just as likely that the castle fell into disuse under the monks' management, and that the *castellanus* was appointed as an aid to the *procurator* in the affairs of the *castellum* (the fortified settlement) of Mercogliano as a whole, leaving the *procurator* to focus on managing external estates.

A new Verginian house was also founded in the *castellum* of Mercogliano around 1207, when the first prior of Mercogliano appears in the documents.<sup>129</sup> Having completed his two-year term, Prior John, who was present at this previous land dispute, was succeeded in his office by Prior Roger, who attended the dispute between the local priests, and later dedicated himself to expanding Mercogliano's landholdings by acquiring land on the outskirts of the *castellum* in September 1209, and settling disputes which arose from the monastery's new terms of lordship over the people of Mercogliano.<sup>130</sup> Two brothers acting as *mundualds* of a local woman were made to swear that if they should find any contracts which proved their ownership of land in Mercogliano, they would agree to make the contract void.<sup>131</sup> In 1213, the dependency of Mercogliano had come under more direct control of Montevergine — in a land exchange between the monastery and a local farmer, the cellarer of Montevergine acted as rector of Mercogliano, on Donato's orders.<sup>132</sup> However, under the abbacy of John III, certainly by 1229, the priorship of Mercogliano was restored to an independent office.<sup>133</sup> Indeed, by 1216 the roles of *procurator* and *castellanus* had become redundant, and Mercogliano was

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<sup>126</sup> CDV 1287.

<sup>127</sup> D'Arcangelo, 'Ecclesia Sancte Marie Montis Virginis', p. 95.

<sup>128</sup> See Loud, 'Continuity and Change', p. 335.

<sup>129</sup> CDV 1252 and 1253.

<sup>130</sup> CDV 1292 and 1293.

<sup>131</sup> CDV 1293.

<sup>132</sup> *Regesto* 1359.

<sup>133</sup> *Regesto* 1635.

administered by the prior of the house of Mercogliano or other Montevergine officials.<sup>134</sup>

The number of dependencies which Montevergine acquired, founded and developed in such close proximity to the mother house reinforces Montevergine's symbiotic relationship with the community — particularly the local community that helped the founder, William, when he first arrived in the Irpinia region. This was the community which helped him to set up his first hermitage, and then the first rudimentary coenobitic structure, and which continued to contribute to the monastery's growth and expansion, while at the same time relying on it for the community's very livelihood. In this sense, the ties of lordship over the *castellum* of Mercogliano, perhaps surprisingly, appear contradictory to the social bonds of pastoral care and mutual benefit which Montevergine had fostered with its surrounding patrons, workers, benefactors, and worshippers. For this reason the monastery perhaps foresaw that its acquisition of Mercogliano would generate some discontent. Indeed, in July 1209, Abbot Donato summoned a court to 'bring to an end the quarrels and issues which raged among [his] faithful', the two local priests mentioned earlier.<sup>135</sup> In October of the same year, Donato had another dispute on his hands involving inhabitants of Mercogliano.<sup>136</sup> Another dispute was resolved involving local tenants in December of the following year.<sup>137</sup> The appointment of the procurator and *castellanus* of Mercogliano was no doubt an attempt to curtail the negative effects of the new institutional arrangements, and to maintain the relationship Montevergine had with the surrounding lay communities. There is no doubt also that Mercogliano grew in size, wealth and prestige under its new overlords. In 1220, the community of Mercogliano was sufficiently rich to

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<sup>134</sup> See *Regesto* 1396 and 1404: in the first, dated May 1216, the priest Landulf was monk of Montevergine and procurator of Mercogliano, whereas in the second, dated October 1216, Landulf was prior of Mercogliano.

<sup>135</sup> CDV 1287 — the wording of this introduction is also interesting with regards to Montevergine's attitude to its newly acquired fief: 'Coram nos fratre Donato Sancte Marie Montis Virginis abbas, in curi sollempniter congregata in castello nostro Merculiani ressideremus, adstante Blasio et Roberto iudicibus Merculiani et quampluribus aliis hominibus dicti Merculiani, ad difinendas lites et questionis quas inter fideles nostros ventilebatur' — p. 283.

<sup>136</sup> CDV 1293.

<sup>137</sup> *Regesto* 1300.

attract thieves and brigands — according to a document from May 1220, they stole livestock, killed many people, and captured others for ransom.<sup>138</sup>

### 8.7. San Salvatore al Goleto

Although Verginian historiography frequently includes William's other major foundations in Montevergine's patrimony, this was not the case in the twelfth century, nor was it ever the case for the majority of them.<sup>139</sup> Goleto and Monte Cognato were totally independent of Montevergine, though the former came under attack by Montevergine in the thirteenth century. To these one must add Santa Maria dell'Incoronata in Foggia, not a foundation of William of Vercelli, but one which the Verginian monks aspired to include in their network; and San Giovanni degli Eremiti in Palermo, the royal foundation of Roger II, which the *vita* of William of Vercelli claims was placed under the supervision of Montevergine and populated by Verginian monks. There is however no other evidence of relations between the two until the fourteenth century.<sup>140</sup> Tropeano divides William's foundations into those houses which obtained autonomous status and were united with the others simply by an ideal of common traditions and principles, and those which never developed into autonomous houses but remained subjected to the houses which had founded them. Thus there was no interdependence between Montevergine, Goleto, San Giovanni degli Eremiti, and the Incoronata di Foggia. They all went their separate ways after the death of William, except Foggia which was partly absorbed by Montevergine and partly by Goleto.<sup>141</sup>

The documentation surviving for Goleto, relatively scant when compared to the extant sources for Montevergine, points to the abbey's rapid and successful growth in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, followed by a slow decline,

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<sup>138</sup> *Regesto* 1449. Mongelli identifies the 'universitas' mentioned in the document as a University of Mecogliano, although no other evidence corroborates this interpretation. Both Emperor Frederick and King Henry are saluted in the document.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Giuseppe Chiusano, 'Documenti sul Goleto', *Samnium*, 48 (1974), 185-207 (p. 185): 'Nell'antica valle conzana, presso le sorgenti dell'Ofanto, da S. Guglielmo da Vercelli (1085-1142) venne fondato un Cenobio per le Verginiane, chiamato subito del "Goleto". [...] Del Goleto, ovvero della più celebre Abbazia benedettina verginiana dei secoli XII-XV, molto è stato scritto, e tanto ancora forse si scriverà'.

<sup>140</sup> See Panarelli, 'S. Maria di Montevergine e S. Giovanni degli Eremiti a Palermo', pp. 83-94; also Fodale, 'San Giovanni degli Eremiti', pp. 91-100.

<sup>141</sup> Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 40.

until the monks of Montevergine were finally allowed to take over the monastery in the sixteenth century. It was at this stage that the Verginian monks transcribed many of the documents extant today, which were later published by Giovanni Mongelli.<sup>142</sup> Most scholars from the sixteenth century onwards have concentrated more on Montevergine than any other of William's foundations, for obvious reasons: the abundance of sources, and its longevity — it is the only monastery still inhabited by a monastic community. Goleto has thus been treated fairly summarily in historiography, even in the *Legenda* itself, despite being the more successful of the two institutions in the twelfth century, and it has usually been uncritically described as a double monastery.<sup>143</sup> More recently, both Martin and Panarelli have argued that rather than being strictly a double monastery, Goleto was a female monastery with a male component, whose role it was to carry out the tasks that women could not, and to protect the women.<sup>144</sup>

San Salvatore al Goleto was founded by William of Vercelli in 1133, allegedly in response to demand from the faithful. According to the *Legenda*, having been forced to leave Montevergine, William travelled east through the Apennines with a few followers, and founded a new monastic settlement between Nusco and Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi. Here 'not a small crowd of virgins gathered, and so that the lord could obtain both sexes, he gave them the holy religious habit'.<sup>145</sup> The foundation was thus clearly geared towards a female community, and the *Legenda* gives some detail of the rules for dieting in particular set by William for the congregation. These are typically prohibitive and harsh, but with a modicum of consideration for the particular constitutions of the women who made up the religious community. They abstained from wine, meat, cheese and eggs, and would alternate between three days of eating only bread, apples and uncooked vegetables, and three days on which they were allowed a little oil with their bread. On certain feast days, some would eat just bread and water, and some would abstain from bread altogether.<sup>146</sup> The issue of authorship is particularly relevant

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<sup>142</sup> See Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 801.

<sup>143</sup> See Panarelli, 'Pulsanesi e verginiani', in *Dove va la storiografia monastica in Europa?*, ed. by G. Andenna (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2001), pp. 403-18.

<sup>144</sup> See Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', pp. 801-02, and Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 802.

<sup>145</sup> *Legenda*, p. 25: 'in quo (monasterio), ut utriusque sexus domino fieret acquisitor, non parvam virginum multitudinem congregavit, quibus etiam sancte religionis habitum tradidit'.

<sup>146</sup> *Legenda*, p. 25.



here. As discussed in Chapter 1, the *Legenda* was probably commissioned by the abbot of Goletto in the decade following William's death, and written in Goletto by one of its monks. This harshness might therefore be reflective of the authors' own attitudes to the involvement of women within the Verginian network, presenting them as more pious and thus better representatives of the community of Goletto.

William was the first abbot of Goletto, and by 1140 he had also appointed a prior, Obediente, 'prior monasterii sancti Salvatoris que situs est in territorio Munticolo'. After his death in 1143, William was buried in Goletto, and immediately succeeded by another male abbot, James, 'monasterii puellarum s. Salvatoris de Monticlo'.<sup>147</sup> James was the second and last male abbot of Goletto: from 1151 there were only abbesses at the head of the monastery, albeit still aided by a male prior — in 1151, Abbess Febronia was accompanied by Provost John.<sup>148</sup> The transfer of 72 monks from the monastery of Santa Maria dell'Incoronata di Puglia to Goletto in 1149, while not conclusive evidence for a mixed community at Goletto, certainly casts doubt on Martin's theory that it was primarily a female monastery from the start.<sup>149</sup> Was the female community so large within sixteen years of its existence, that near 100 monks were needed to support it? Was this perhaps the date of Goletto's formal institutionalization, and did the abbess invoke the help of a larger male contingent? Or was this an attempt to redirect the community towards a more balanced 'double' community? Panarelli's publication in 2004 of three previously unedited documents relating to Goletto suggests that more may emerge to point to an answer to these questions.<sup>150</sup>

The first signs of friction between Montevergine and Goletto appeared in November 1237, when Pope Gregory IX sent the abbot of San Lorenzo of Aversa and two canons of Benevento to settle the dispute between the abbot of Montevergine and the abbess of Goletto over possession of the church of Santa Maria di Paterno and other churches.<sup>151</sup> The dispute was settled the following month in favour of Montevergine.<sup>152</sup> The dispute casts doubt over the authenticity

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<sup>147</sup> Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 802.

<sup>148</sup> Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 807. Panarelli hypothesises that this may be the same John who authored the *Legenda* under the commission of Abbot James.

<sup>149</sup> CDV 290.

<sup>150</sup> Panarelli, 'Tre documenti'.

<sup>151</sup> *Regesto* 1847.

<sup>152</sup> *Regesto*, 1851.

of the charter dated February 1228, in which Pope Gregory IX delegated Bishop Roger of Avellino to transfer the churches of Santa Maria di Paterno, SAN Pietro di Chiusano and San Leonardo di Montemarano into the full possession of Montevergine.<sup>153</sup> To complicate matters, these churches were also claimed by Santa Maria dell'Incoronata di Puglia. The charter specifies that the churches were claimed by Montevergine as payment for a loan given to Santa Maria dell'Incoronata, which the latter had been unable to pay back. Tropeano cites Abbess Marina's contumacy and absence at the final sentence as evidence of her renunciation of the churches, albeit through powerlessness rather than as an admission of guilt.<sup>154</sup>

With its social and economic strength (which fell perfectly in line with Montevergine's own institutional ideology) in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, San Salvatore al Goleto would certainly have represented an enticing acquisition for Montevergine. In the years between the abbacies of James and Febronia, Goleto had already acquired several properties in Bari, a city that, as we have seen, was of particular significance to William of Vercelli, who had been back there on a number of occasions. The documents point to Goleto making specific efforts to increase its presence in and around the important city of Bari, buying properties and land there.<sup>155</sup> In a document dated 1144, which has survived only through a much later copy, the notary specified that an olive grove and garden had been bought by Abbot James from John, an inhabitant of Bari who needed funds to move to Palermo after King Roger had exiled a number of citizens of Bari following the capture of the city in 1139.<sup>156</sup> Goleto's already strong bond with Bari prompted its people to rely on the monastery in times of hardship, while at the same time the alleged admiration that Roger had for William of Vercelli would have aided Goleto in consolidating its presence in the new Norman region. Conversely, Montevergine only reached the Apulia region in the 1170s. Martin suggests that Goleto was more successful here for three reasons. Firstly, because it appealed to a larger proportion of the population, given that it took in both women and men, and

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<sup>153</sup> *Regesto*, 1617.

<sup>154</sup> Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>155</sup> Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 114.

<sup>156</sup> Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 804. See also Falco of Benevento, *Chronicon Beventanum*, pp. 228-30.

particularly the daughters and wives of noblemen, and thus received strong support from the Balvano family from the 1170s and the d'Aigle family from the 1190s.<sup>157</sup> Count Diepold of Acerra, so hostile towards Montevergine, donated a *startia* to Goletto in September 1197.<sup>158</sup> The coats of arms of the abbesses Febronia, Marina, Agnes, Febronia II, Scolastica, Guglielma, and Sibilina are painted on the ceiling of the main church as a reminder of their noble origins; according to these frescos, the abbesses represented the houses of Orsino, Gesualdo, Caracciolo, Balvano, Carafa, Francipane and Monforte.<sup>159</sup> Secondly, Goletto was in an area that was poor in monastic foundations, when compared to the rich monastic environment in the Capitanata region closer to Montevergine. Lastly, William's burial in Goletto no doubt helped raise the prestige of the monastery, and attract more pious donations from his devotees.<sup>160</sup>

By 1182, the date of the only papal privilege issued for Goletto, the latter also had its own dependencies, including three churches in Campania, five in Apulia and Basilicata, and three of unsure location, but, according to Martin, probably also in Apulia.<sup>161</sup> Its economic success can be measured not only by its land acquisitions in the olive- and vine-rich area of Bari, but also the evidence of Goletto's livestock acquisitions: in 1162, John Scannamamma of Bari asked that a flock of 300 goats and sheep he had given to William of Vercelli two decades earlier be returned to him. Panarelli points out that the value of the flock and the gravity of the situation are clear from the number of monks and nuns from San Salvatore and other dependencies and houses who were involved in concluding that John's claims were unfounded.<sup>162</sup> According to the charter, John eventually retracted his accusations, unwilling to cause further trouble or damage to the

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<sup>157</sup> Martin, 'Le Goletto et Montevergine', p. 115; Chiusano, 'Documenti sul Goletto', pp. 185-207.

<sup>158</sup> Chiusano, 'Documenti sul Goletto', p. 191.

<sup>159</sup> See Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 62. For the house of Balvano see Errico Cuozzo, 'Prosopografia di una famiglia feudale normanna: I Balvano', *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, 3rd series, 19 (1980), 61-87. Matthias Thumser traces the first four generations of the Orsino family in Rome in 'Zwei Testamente aus den Anfängen der Stadtrömischen Familie Orsini (1232-1234, 1246)', *Quellen und Forschungen*, 68 (1988), 74-122. For the Gesualdo family see Mario del Treppo, 'La biblioteca dei Gesualdo, feudatari nel Regno di Napoli', *Italia et Germania: Liber Amicorum Arnold Esch*, ed. by Hagen Keller, Werner Paravicini, and Wolfgang Schieder (Walter de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 583-602.

<sup>160</sup> Martin, 'Le Goletto et Montevergine', p. 108.

<sup>161</sup> For the privilege of Lucius III, which survives in a fifteenth-century copy, see Kehr, *Papsturkunden in Italien*, V, pp. 587-88. It is addressed to Abbess Marina 'euiusque sororibus'. See also Martin, 'Le Goletto et Montevergine', p. 113.

<sup>162</sup> Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', pp. 807-08.

monastery which had taken two of his sisters into its congregation.<sup>163</sup> The number of disputes that the abbesses of Goletto were faced with is further testimony to the monastery's wealth. In 1163 Goletto came under attack by the inhabitants of Nusco, and in 1174 by the bishop of Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi.<sup>164</sup> Tropeano argues that Goletto's considerable network of autonomous daughter houses allowed the monastery to experience great economic growth, and led to its emergence in the thirteenth century as a lending agency — in 1260 King Manfred took Goletto under his wing, apparently to prevent barons from taking advantage of the nuns' generosity. Thereafter, however, lending requests had to be sent through Manfred's uncle, the royal chamberlain Manfred Maletta, who himself had a reputation for exploiting Church property.<sup>165</sup>

The abbey of San Salvatore al Goletto was eventually engulfed by Montevergine, though this should by no means be seen as an inevitable conclusion. Of the few documents relative to Goletto inherited by the archives of Montevergine, the majority attest to the nuns' constant struggle against claimants to their possessions, and time and time again, the nuns proved their mettle in defending their rights and possessions.<sup>166</sup> Ultimately, the nuns' economic success was the main lure for the monks of Montevergine. Perhaps the most telling sign of this is a charter dating to May 1576, half a century after Montevergine's acquisition of Goletto. It was issued by the general vicar of the entire Verginian congregation to document the lease of the monastery of Goletto, with its church, monastic complex, lands, forests, houses, vineyards, etc. to the nobles Troiano de Paulo, Giovanni Donato Bruno, and Antonio Pascale of Montella for six years, for 400 *ducati* a year.<sup>167</sup> Evidently, by this stage Goletto's worth lay more in its economic than its spiritual assets, as far as the monks of Montevergine were concerned.

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<sup>163</sup> See Panarelli, 'Tre documenti', p. 814: 'quia due sorores mee in eodem monasterio sanctimonialis fuerant'.

<sup>164</sup> See Chiusano, 'Documenti sul Goletto', p. 190.

<sup>165</sup> Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 65. See also Chiusano, 'Documenti sul Goletto', pp. 193-94. On King Manfred's uncle, see Pier Fausto Palumbo, 'Manfredi Maletta, gran camerario del Regno di Sicilia', *Rivista storica del Mezzogiorno*, 13 (1978), 5-170; also Enrico Pispisa, *Il regno di Manfredi: Proposte di interpretazione*, *Historica*, 4 (Messina: Sicania, 1991).

<sup>166</sup> See for example *Regesto* 2893, 2934, 3687, 3957, 4314, 4532.

<sup>167</sup> *Regesto*, 5213.

### 8.8. Montevergine in Apulia and Santa Maria dell'Incoronata di Foggia

Montevergine's representation in Apulia was relatively meagre in the twelfth century, both spiritually and economically. A few acquisitions were made in 1170 in the Capitanata region. In October the monks received a piece of land in Ascoli Satriano in the 'Valle di Cupo' which bordered with land owned by the hospital of Montevergine, previously acquired through an oblate of the monastery.<sup>168</sup> In 1185, Montevergine received a donation of a few allotments of lands with olive trees in Palo del Colle, in the Bari province, together with the use of an olive press.<sup>169</sup> A more considerable donation in Palo del Colle was received in May 1188 from a couple who offered themselves with all their possessions to Montevergine, including

cottages, gardens, vineyards, lands and olive groves and all other trees on the lands [...], except for a little castle found in Palo and nineteen olive trees which had already been promised to their nephew James to hold during his lifetime on the condition that he become a priest, and which [would] anyway return to Montevergine after James [died].<sup>170</sup>

According to a charter dated August 1195, Montevergine also had possessions in Troia, which in 1195 were disputed by the donor's heir.<sup>171</sup> In 1197, Seclina, wife of Peter of Osberno made a donation to Montevergine of a *palazum* in Troia with an annexed grain mill.<sup>172</sup> By this time Montevergine had probably established a grange, if not a cell, in Troia, as there was a procurator appointed for the monastery's goods there.<sup>173</sup> This appears to be confirmed by the fact that in August 1199, Abbot Gabriel went to Troia himself to settle arrangements for the sheep and cattle the monastery had there.<sup>174</sup> Aside from these few isolated instances, however, there is little in the way of Verginian presence in Apulia in the twelfth century. The papal privilege of 1197 includes about a dozen churches in Capitanata and central Apulia. The Verginians were nonetheless eager to expand their estates and influence to the eastern side of the peninsula: in April 1189, Provost Alferius of

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<sup>168</sup> CDV 520.

<sup>169</sup> CDV 760.

<sup>170</sup> CDV 799.

<sup>171</sup> CDV 983.

<sup>172</sup> CDV 1022.

<sup>173</sup> CDV 1022.

<sup>174</sup> CDV 1061.

Montevergine bought a vineyard in Casalnovi Monterota, in the province of Foggia, for 600 *denari*. Further evidence of the monks' attempts to develop and consolidate their territorial gains in Apulia is Montevergine's obstinate efforts to gain control of the monastery of Santa Maria dell'Incoronata in Foggia. The royal charter of 1140 issued by Roger II giving Santa Maria dell'Incoronata (also referred to as Santa Maria *Buffiniana*, whence some confusion in the interpretation) to Montevergine is a clear forgery.<sup>175</sup> Maria Aurora Tallarico argued that nevertheless Verginian presence at the Incoronata is confirmed by a document from May 1141, in which James lord of Minervino Murge gave William, 'eremite ecclesie Sancte Marie Incoronate', the church of San Martino di Lumbaro di Villabato, with its possessions, the income of which was used to restore the monastery and adapt it to the eremitical style.<sup>176</sup> This too must be a forgery, as William was the Abbot of Goleto at that stage. As Goleto and Montevergine were totally independent one from the other, any donations to William would thus have been received by Goleto, where William was abbot, not Montevergine.<sup>177</sup> According to Montevergine's own archives, the abbey of the Incoronata appears to have resisted Montevergine's attempts at incorporation until 1224. It was in June of this year that the abbot of Montevergine grew tired of Abbot Leonard of the Incoronata's refusal to submit to Montevergine, and invoked the help of the bishop of Ascoli. The latter summoned representatives of both monasteries and decreed that the religious men of the Incoronata should submit to the abbot of Montevergine and live according to the rules of William of Vercelli.<sup>178</sup> In a colourful passage, Tropeano likens the Incoronata's struggles with Montevergine to a mouse and a cat fighting towards an inevitable conclusion.<sup>179</sup> Indeed, Montevergine's presence in Ascoli may have

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<sup>175</sup> See *Roger II. Regis Diplomata Latina* (Köln: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 145-7, n. 52. Brühl concludes that the forgery can be no earlier 1225. See also Erzensberger, 'I privilegi normanno-svevi', especially pp. 73-4, 80. Also reported in CDV 264. For further discussion of this charter see Chapter 2 above. See Martin, 'Le Goleto et Montevergine', p. 110, as well as Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 39, and Tallarico, 'Montevergine e la Puglia', p. 73.

<sup>176</sup> Tallarico, 'Montevergine e la Puglia', p. 73.

<sup>177</sup> Tallarico also claims that the transfer of monks from the Incoronata to Goleto is further proof of the Incoronata's association with Montevergine, although, as she herself argues in the same article, Goleto was totally independent from Montevergine, and shared only a founder who had, according to the *Legenda*, dramatically disenfranchised himself from Montevergine. See Tallarico, 'Montevergine e la Puglia', pp. 70-73.

<sup>178</sup> *Regesto* 1533.

<sup>179</sup> See Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte*, p. 45: 'La scomparsa della libertà e indipendenza del monastero di S. M. dell'I. è paragonabile solo alla lotta ingaggiata dal topolino ingenuo contro il gatto sornione, il quale si diverte a lungo prima di ingoiarlo'.

strengthened the monastery's relationship with the bishop, so that his decision might not have been completely impartial. On the same occasion, he added three churches to Montevergine's dependencies. The bishop's instructions to follow the precepts of Saint William of Vercelli, decades after Montevergine had formally adopted the Rule of Benedict, however, as well as the lack of any further documents demonstrating the Incoronata's incorporation into the Verginian family, cast doubt on this document as well, which, moreover, survives only in a seventeenth-century copy.<sup>180</sup>

It remains certain that Montevergine's dependencies in Apulia until the very end of the twelfth-century were limited to a few churches, and perhaps a larger dependency in Troia in the last years of the century. The absence of a prior, and Abbot Gabriel's personal journey to Troia to settle its economic affairs suggest that this was more likely to be a grange than a monastic cell, strategically stationed to manage Montevergine's possessions in the area. Santa Maria dell'Incoronata's dealings with Goleto in the first half of the twelfth century may have given the Verginians a sense of entitlement to the abbey, just as the abbot of Montevergine felt entitled to Goleto's possessions in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. The evidence for the Incoronata's inclusion in the Verginian family is far from conclusive, however, and is in need of review. Montevergine's desire to expand its eastern reaches, on the other hand, is apparent and in line with the monastery's spiritual and economic strategies.

### **8.9. Conclusions**

By the end of the twelfth century, Montevergine had founded and acquired enough dependencies to have developed a structure, which, although not as sophisticated as the Cistercian one, was effective in consolidating Montevergine's hold on its dependencies and the estates they managed. Indeed the apparent lack of internal disputes among Montevergine and its dependencies is evidence of the tightly-bound network Montevergine had achieved. While Montevergine adopted a similar structure for the majority of its daughter houses, with a prior at the head of the community, this model was not necessarily implemented in all of Montevergine's

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<sup>180</sup> Following the charter dated June 1224, there is only one donation made to Montevergine from inhabitants of Foggia, that is part of an olive grove given by Bella, the widow of Simone Comestabile of Foggia, in November 1230. See *Regesto* 1679.

dependencies, particularly not in the case of granges or parish churches. In larger communities, such as the hospital of Montevergine, a number of obedientiaries working alongside the prior were necessary for the running of the house. The sources' focus on this type of dependency reflects Montevergine's concern with establishing a secure and homogenous network of dependencies which conformed to the Benedictine need for obedience: all daughter houses were subject to the mother house, and all actions had to be approved by the abbot, a title which was entirely reserved by the head of the mother house in Montevergine.

There are a number of common denominators among the dependencies outlined in this chapter. These suggest that at the core of Montevergine's wider institutional identity lay interaction with the local communities, either in the management of its economic assets, or the care of its sick. Indeed, dependencies such as Troia or Baiano clearly emerged from the need for the monks to oversee the estates acquired through donations from a closer base. Others, such as Santa Maria Reale in Maddaloni or the hospital in Eboli were founded in response to a demand for care of the congregation, both religious and lay, as well as in keeping with a sound tradition of hospital care started at Montevergine itself in the third quarter of the twelfth century.

<b>Table 5: Dependencies and landholdings of Montevergine listed in Celestine III's Bull, 9 November 1197</b>
The place where the monastery of Montevergine itself is found and all its possessions
Church of San Giuliano in Avellino territory
Hospital of San Giuliano in Avellino territory
Houses, vineyards, lands, chestnut groves etc. in Avellino territory
Lands, vineyards and chestnut groves in Summonte territory
Castrum of Mercogliano with all its appurtenances
Church of San Nicola in Summonte territory
Church of San Basilio in Summonte territory
Church of Santa Margherita with oblations and possessions
Church of San Marco in Avellino territory



Church of San Damiano in Avellino territory
Church of San Nicola with its rights, men and possessions in Avellino territory
Possessions in Monteforte
Church of Santa Maria Aiello in Atripalda territory
Other possessions in Atripalda territory
Men and other possessions in Candida
Possessions in Crypta
Church of Santa Maria del Plesco in Cicala territory with men and possessions
Casale of Baiano with its men and possessions
Church of Santa Croce in Palma territory with men, mills etc.
Church of Sant'Andrea in San Severino territory with men, mills etc.
Men and possessions in Montorio
Houses and possessions in Salerno
Possessions in Aversa
Possessions in Casale Casacimiano
Possessions in Teano
Possessions in Capua
Possessions in Montefusco
Church of San Giovanni in Montefusco
Church of Santa Maria in Montefusco
Church of San Bartolomeo in Montefusco
Men, mill etc. in Tufo
Possessions in Argentio
Possessions in Limatula
Men and possessions in Parolisio
Men, houses and possessions in Castrum of Cervinara
Church of Santi Filippo e Giacomo in Benevento with houses, vineyards and other tenements
Church of Santa Maria of Pietra Pollicina (Petralcina?) with men etc.
Church of San Pietro in Palmaria

Church of Santa Marta in Lapisio (Lapio?)
Mill and other possessions in Tautasi (Taurasi?)
Church of San Nicola in Frigento territory with men etc.
Church of San Giovanni in Vico territory with men, mill, <i>balcatoria</i> etc.
Church of San Pietro in Bisaccia territory
Church of San Pietro in Ascoli territory
Church of Santa Maria in Amando territory
Church of San Marco in Amando territory with houses, vineyards etc
Church of Santa Maria in Maula Denterici (?)
Church of San Cristoforo in Castelmagno
Men, mills etc. in Montella territory
Men, mills etc. in Troia territory
House, vineyards etc. in Sclavi
Church of San Mauro in Sclavi territory
Church of Santo Spirito in Celentiae territory
Church of Sant'Onofrio in Massa territory
Church of Sant'Helia in Corneto territory with houses, lands etc.
Possessions in Diana territory
Church of Santa Margherita in Turbia territory (?)
Church of Santa Maria de Olivis in Turbia territory
Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Santi Clerico territory
Church of Santa Maria de Fontibus in Santo Clerico territory
Church of San Leone in Albano and Tricarico territory
Church of San Cristoforo in Albano and Tricarico territory
Church of Santa Icona in Albano and Tricarico territory
Church of Sant'Elena in Albano and Tricarico territory
Church of San Martin in Albano and Tricarico territory
Houses and possessions in <i>castrum</i> of Sant'Agata di Puglia
Houses and possessions in <i>castrum</i> of Crypta

Houses, vineyards etc. in city of Ariano
Church of San Silvestro in Frigento territory
Church of San Cesario in Rocca San Felice territory
Church of San Nicola in Rocca San Felice territory

## CONCLUSION

In spite of its extensive source materials, Montevergine's history is not widely known, and it has been overshadowed in historical research by the more famous foundations of Montecassino and Cava. However, its role in developing infrastructure, economy, and spiritual networks in the inland part of the peninsula deserves to be better known. Nor was its impact purely local: by the end of the twelfth century, Montevergine was playing a significant part on the political stage of the Kingdom of Sicily.

In this thesis, I have examined the foundation of the southern-Italian hermitage in c. 1118 by William of Vercelli, and its development into a fairly conventional Benedictine institution by the first decade of the thirteenth century. I have focussed on the socio-economic interactions between Montevergine and the world outside the monastery. This has been achieved primarily through analysis of the hagiography of the founder, and of the charters issued for and by the monastery of Montevergine. Similarities with other institutions of its times are just as important in this study as Montevergine's peculiarities. As part of the eremitical movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Montevergine was not the only institution of this type in southern Italy, and more in-depth studies of these institutions are necessary to understand why this movement took foot in this region of medieval Europe, and how it contributed to the life of twelfth-century southern Italians. This thesis has gone some way in explaining how the relative isolation of the society of Irpinia contributed to the enthusiastic acceptance of William of Vercelli's new monastic lifestyle. Montevergine found a niche for both its spiritual and economic activities in the mountainous area of the Campania, and, as the institution consolidated its presence in the region, it also brought new economic and spiritual vigour to the society of Irpinia. Where Montevergine can claim to be unusual is in its continuous operation since its foundation, and the wealth of documentation surviving from the time of its inception. This in itself is an indication of the pivotal role Montevergine assumed within the society of its region. These documents show the institutional development of the monastery, which, I argue, followed — rather than dictated — its social and economic progress.

The religious men of Montevergine were mindful of the original intentions of their founder, but they adapted their way of life to the need for more structured and sophisticated management of the monastery's growing resources, and to the changing nature of the monastery's interaction with the lay community. Montevergine established itself as a prime economic force in the area, as its wealth was built almost entirely on landed property. Detailed examination of the monastery's environmental setting, and its inextricable connection to the economic, social, and institutional growth of the monastery is an analysis that had not been carried out for Montevergine, and has been a key feature of this thesis. In this respect I was influenced by Jean-Marie Martin's *Annaliste* approach to the study of medieval Apulia and its monasteries.<sup>1</sup> The character of the terrain and Montevergine's rural setting gave way to a distinctly agrarian economy, based primarily on chestnut, grape, olive, and cereal cultivation, alongside other fruit trees and vegetables, with evidence of livestock farming and other activities such as milling and fishing. I have argued in this thesis that these activities brought the monastery closer to members of the lower classes of society, as the monks turned to them for labour, and they, in turn, relied on the monastery for both their physical and spiritual livelihood.

This is not to say that Montevergine did not also attract much wealthier and well-established donors, although it had to wait almost a century to receive any royal attention. But the importance of the local people of the lower and middle echelons of society, who were often — though not always — of simpler means, cannot be over-emphasised. While the monastery's donors, patrons, and labourers have been discussed at length in other studies, such as Martin's and d'Arcangelo's work on Montevergine, this thesis has had recourse to social network theories which have been applied to the Cistercians in England by Jamroziak, and to Cluny by Rosenwein, for example. These have demonstrated the way in which bonds were forged and maintained between Montevergine and the surrounding community in Irpinia, and how its social network was formed and expanded.

The interrelation between the monastery and the local lay community was key to its evolution and to its unquestionable success as a religious institution. The monastery's original impetus, as William's hagiographer took care to point out,

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, *La Pouille*.

came from the inhabitants of the small settlements which surrounded the mountain of Montevergine. They were the ones who directed William to a suitable place for the hermitage, and William's hagiographer stressed that the local laity came to William's aid in the physical construction of the cells and church for the first community. Much of the charter evidence also points to interactions with farmers and landowners of low or middle social standing. Whereas donors of higher social status, such as Count Henry of Sarno, Count Roger d'Aigle, or Emperor Henry VI were important in effecting the redistribution of lands and property from lay into ecclesiastical hands — the example of Mercogliano being the most prominent — Montevergine's collaboration with the lower echelons of society drove forward the institution economically, in turn shaping the Verginian identity. Conversely, for all these people, Montevergine acted not only as a powerful intercessor between this life and the next, but also between neighbours, people from different social backgrounds, institutions, and between the people and the land itself.

Bearing in mind this picture of Montevergine in the twelfth century, however, it may come as a surprise to note that in the papal tax lists of 1308/10, Montevergine appears as the third-wealthiest monastery in the *Regno*, after Montecassino and Cava, and ahead of such well-established abbies as Santa Sofia of Benevento, the Holy Trinity of Venosa, or San Lorenzo of Aversa.<sup>2</sup> Clearly its wealth grew significantly in the hundred years after 1210. There are a few indications towards the end of the thirteenth century that the environment in which Montevergine grew had changed, and that its relationship with the laity had also evolved to include a closer relationship with the nobility. In 1299, for example, the *castellum* of Mercogliano was attacked by soldiers, and the abbot of Montevergine, concerned for the monastery's treasure and for the nobles' clothing held in Mercogliano, made a deal with the royal justiciar to seek out the culprits.<sup>3</sup> We find a growing number of references to the mendicant orders in the area, and further evidence of the abbots' strategising to yield the maximum profit from the monastery's lands and properties.<sup>4</sup> In-depth examination of the charters of the

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<sup>2</sup> See Loud, *Latin Church*, p. 531.

<sup>3</sup> *Regesto*, 2653

<sup>4</sup> For references to the mendicant orders, see *Regesto*, 2634, 2638; for the abbot's preoccupation with the monastery's finances see, for example, *Regesto*, 2657, in which Abbot William of

thirteenth century will yield important information about the shifting and growing nature of the monastery's presence in the Irpinia region and in the Kingdom of Sicily.

With regards to the much-debated question of Montevergine's institutional identity, in this thesis I have shown that a more holistic approach, taking into consideration the changing attitude to property, and the progressive change in the administrative organisation of the monastery and its network of dependencies, reveals that the transition from eremitical to Benedictine institution was gradual, and not a sudden imposition, as other scholars have argued. It grew out of necessity and adaptation to changing circumstances, rather than being imposed on Montevergine by internal or external political or religious ideological agendas. In particular, the role of the founder in the formation of an institutional identity of Montevergine in later centuries can be better understood by a study of the early historiography produced by the monastery's monks from the sixteenth century onwards. Archaeological surveys of the monastic structures, particularly of the medieval church, would also go a long way in improving our understanding of Montevergine's institutional structure and identity.

Another fruitful area of study is the relationship between Montevergine and other existing and new religious institutions of the twelfth century. The present study found some significant differences and similarities between Montevergine and Pulsano, for example. The two institutions were almost completely contemporaneous, and the founders had a very close relationship. A close look at both monasteries has shown just how influential the character and individual purpose of a monastic founder could be on the institution's identity as it evolved even after the founder's death. Unfortunately, the scarce documentary evidence for Pulsano after the initial phase of its foundation does not permit the analogy to go much further, but it is possible to look at Montevergine in conjunction with Cava or other contemporary northern-Italian eremitical foundations.

A study of the society and economy of the Irpinia region will be the next step in understanding the impact of religious institutions (with Montevergine

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Montevergine exchanges a large number of portions of land and vassals located quite far from the monastery for a few chestnut and nut groves in the vicinities of the monastery; it is explained that the exchange was made because the collection of the revenue from the distant lands was actually causing Montevergine to make a significant financial loss.

being only one example) on the economy and culture of the local community. The social structures of Norman southern Italy are still poorly understood, notwithstanding the excellent scholarship that has been devoted to its study during the past century. This thesis has brought this work forward within the context of monastic economies; yet, much more can be done, for example, by looking at the role of the knightly class in monastic culture, a task for which the *Catalogus Baronum* has much to reveal.

If the reader can now be asked to recall as far back as the beginning of this work, let me return to the anecdote with which I started. The monk's theatrical parading of the monastery's tangible history serves well as an allegory for this thesis as a whole. Just as the librarian monk engaged the young lay scholars in the lived history of the monastery, so Montevergine saw the need to interact more with the laity during its early development. Montevergine is not, and was not, even at its eremitical inception, a secluded place that functioned independently of any other institution or social group. Even a cursory perusal of the copious twelfth- and thirteenth-century documents reveals a desire to share Montevergine's own understanding of itself, and to build a strong, and large, community, encompassing other places of worship, men and women of all social backgrounds and with various needs and aspirations in relation to the monastery. Montevergine was an inclusive, rather than an exclusive institution, even when it offered, for example, through burial on monastic grounds, the opportunity for social prestige to those who would otherwise have little chance of gaining any. The monk in the library did not show me the manuscript of the *Legenda* (treading even here a fine line between inclusivity and exclusivity), and I do not deny that I remain jealous of those who did see it; but perhaps before long, having shown them the first, he will be showing the same scholars the latest addition to the monastery's historiography.





**APPENDIX A**

<b>Montevergine Obedientiaries 1119 - 1210</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Period in office</b>	<b>Alternative officer</b>	<b>Date in office</b>
<b>Abbots</b>			
William of Vercelli (rector)	Sep 1125 - May 1127		
Albert (rector) (P)	Aug 1129 - Mar 1139; Aug 1149		
Albert (abbot)	Aug 1135 - May 1142		
Alfred	Feb 1145 - Feb 1160	Alphanus	Jun 1156
Robert	Apr 1161 - Feb 1172	John	Sep 1170; Sep 1171
John (de Murcone)	Aug 1172 - Jan 1191	Alfred; Robert; Albert	Nov 1181; Mar 1185; Dec 1185
Daniel	Apr 1191 - Aug 1196		
Eustasius	Sep 1196 - May/Jul 1197	Gabriel	May 1197
Gabriel	May/Oct 1197 - Oct/Dec 1199	Eustasius; William	Oct 1199; Nov-Dec 1199
William II	Nov-Dec 1199 - Aug 1200	Gabriel	Nov-Dec 1199
Robert II	Nov 1200 - Oct 1206		
Donato	Dec 1206 - Feb 1224		
<b>Priors</b>			
Albert	May 1133		
Lando	Feb 1136 - Feb 1145		
John Pantasya	Jun 1145 - Mar 1162	William (P); Desiderius (P)	Jul 1151; Jan 1158
Rossemanno	Jan 1163 - Feb 1172	Stabile	Dec 1166
William	Mar 1188		
Robert	Jan 1191 - May 1200	Gabriel	Jul 1197

Paul	Aug 1204		
Fortunato	Apr 1205		
John de Sergio	Apr 1206		
Thomas	May 1206		
Fortunato	May 1207		
Thomas	Jul 1209		
Paul	Mar 1210		
<b>Provosts</b>			
John (P)	Apr 1155 - Jan 1162		
Rossemanno (P)	Jul 1164 - Oct 1179	John Pantasya	Nov 1168
Hugh	Feb 1181 - Apr 1182	John Pantasya	Nov 1181
Matthew	Feb 1184 - Apr 1185		
Alfred (P)	Nov 1185 - Nov 1190		
John de Gualdo	Aug 1191 - Jul 1192		
Mark	Aug 1192 - Jan 1193		
Vivo (P)	Oct 1193 - May 1194		
John	Mar 1195		
Robert (P)	Aug 1195 - Dec 1197		
Matthew	Mar 1198		
Alfred	Aug 1199		
Roger	Dec 1199 - Aug 1200	Robert	Dec 1199
Maraldus	Jul 1201 - Jul 1202	Robert	Sep 1201
Robert	Jan 1204 - Apr 1204		
Maraldus	Jan 1206 - Nov 1206		

Mark	Dec 1206 - Aug 1207		
Bartholomew	Oct 1208		
<b>Cellarers</b>			
Gratian	Mar 1177		
John (P)	Jan 1178 - Jul 1179		
Vivo (P)	Sep 1180		
Stabile	Aug 1181		
John	Jan 1184		
Vivo	Nov 1185 - Jan 1190		
Mark	Mar 1190 - Jun 1192		
Roger	Sep 1192		
Elias	May 1193 - May 1194		
Vivo	May 1194		
John of Nusco	Feb 1195		
Andrew	Sep 1196 - Apr 1206		
Peter	Apr 1206		
Boniface	Dec 1206		
Peter	Jul 1209		
<b>Cellarers of the hospital</b>			
?	Dec 1166		
Vivo	Nov 1184 - Mar 1185		
Andrew	Mar 1202 - Jan 1206		
<b>Vicars</b>			
Hugh	Aug 1185		

<b>Infirmerarii</b>			
Rayno	Dec 1193		
Roger	Oct 1198		
John	Jul 1200		
Roger	Apr 1206		
James	Jul 1209		
<b>Baiuli</b>			
Peter	Dec 1192		
Leonard	May 1195		
<b>Besterarii</b>			
Peter	May 1197		
John (P)	Sep 1202		
Martin	May 1209		
<b>Chapter</b>			
	Dec 1203		
<b>Castellanus of Mercogliano</b>			
Bartholomew	Jul 1209		
Peter	Jul 1207 - Aug 1207		
<b>Familiar and procurator of the goods of Montevergine</b>			
John Grasso	Nov 1209		
<b>Advocatus and prelati</b>			
John Gerard	May 1130 - Nov 1136		
John	May 1188		
<b>Cleric, notary and advocatus</b>			

William	Feb 1145 - Jul 1159		
Urso (P)	Nov 1152		
<b>Oblates</b>			
James de Sculdasio	Sep 1199		
Robert	Sep 1202		
John Ganguno	Dec 1203		
<b>Monks</b>			
Lando	May 1130 - Sep 1137		
Sergius	Dec 1139		
Dumnellus	May 1144		
John	May 1151		
Lord John Panatsye	Jul 1157		
Daniel	Jan 1178		
William de Argencio	Feb 1178		
Robert de Avellino	Nov 1178		
John Franco	Apr 1181 - May 1185		
Angelo	Aug 1190		
John of Capua	Mar 1192		
Donatus	Mar 1192		
Urso Fellicola	Nov 1192		
John	Jan 1193		
Roger	Jan 1194		
Ezechiel	Jan 1194		
James	Mar 1195		

Matthew	Mar 1195 - Feb 1198
Joachim	Jun 1195
Maraldo	Aug 1196
Robert	Jan 1197
Peter	Feb 1198
Benedict	Oct 1198
Urso Fellicola	Oct 1198
Rayno	Aug 1200
John Pantasye	Sep 1200
John de Palermo	Apr 1201 - Apr 1206
James	Jul 1202
Peter of Bari	Oct 1202
Maraldo	Apr 1206
Augustin	Apr 1206
Martin	Apr 1206
James	May 1206
Martino de Aqua Putida	Dec 1206
Bernard	May 1207
Martinus	Dec 1208
David	Mar 1209
Constantinus	Mar 1209
Mark	Jul 1209
Mark	Aug 1209
Martin	Aug 1209

## APPENDIX B: AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE *LEGENDA*, CHAPTERS 2-7

### Chapter 2: The blind man cured in Melfi

Meanwhile the venerable man, relentless in his holy resolve, was ever so eager and longing to reach Jerusalem, where he might deserve to behold the most holy places in which the redemption of mankind was accomplished. And since one who desires ardently — if there be no impediment — cannot stand any hesitation, he made speedily for Melfi in Apulia for the benefit of many, where, staying for some time at the home of a certain Roger, he learnt from the man only Psalm 109, having been unaware of any literature up to that time. From then on, by wondrous disposition of divine providence and goodness, he acquired such great expertise in the Holy Scriptures that one could easily see that through his mouth spoke the Spirit of the Lord, to whom he had given himself wholeheartedly. Indeed it is written: *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*<sup>1</sup> Were any mysteries of the Scriptures unknown to him? Was any depth of sentence hidden to him? Surely all things had been made quite manifest to him by the Lord who ordered everything in accordance with the ineffable grace of his dispensation. From Melfi he moved on to another fortified village, Mount Serico, where he stayed about two years at the home of a soldier named Peter. Now let no one believe that the holy man who had come to Apulia with such great desire to press on, was wavering in his purpose to carry out the holy journey; on the contrary, the desire was burning in his heart, and the fire of love was burning in that very thought. Yet he who guides man in his journey on earth had established from the beginning that the itinerary was not to be completed, so that he could stay on [in Italy] for the benefit of many, and that through his examples of holiness many would be fired with love for eternal life. At that time the venerable man sustained himself with bread and water, enough to survive, not to satiate himself. If, on occasion, he wished to partake of tastier foods, these were legumes garnished not with oil, but vinegar, which he used to drink frequently to weaken the flesh. About the same time there was a man in that very place who had become blind. One day he happened to be returning from his field led by his daughter, who gazing from afar was diligent in announcing to her father that the hermit William was kneeling in prayer on a rock. In fact the holy man was wont to go out to a rock at the peak of the sun's heat where he would implore the true Sun of justice with undivided fervour. The blind man, in the hope of being healed, at once begs his daughter to take him to the venerable man of God. Having been taken to William, prostrated to his knees, he began to pray, pitifully denouncing his family's poverty and his children's needs; that he might have mercy on him and restore his sight. As soon as the man

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<sup>1</sup> I. Corinthians, 6:17.



of God heard this he warned him that it was not in his power, he sympathised with his misfortune, and began warning him not to cease serving God on account of his tribulations. 'Mighty is He — he said — who hits, and heals'. While the holy man spoke these and similar admonishments, the blind man fell asleep. Having woken up, he received the saint's blessing and, no sooner had he returned to his house, than he regained his lost sight and could see better than ever before. After this miracle, word of William's holiness gained momentum, and his penitent life was discussed publicly. As soon as William became aware of this, being a most vigilant keeper of his own humbleness, he was extremely saddened. Thus, fearing that news about him would spread even more publicly, he determined to resume immediately his journey to Jerusalem, and, without further delay, he was on the road to carry out the mission he had planned. There lived at the time a man devoted to God, of great merit and renown, named John, the abbot of a monastery which he himself had founded near Ginosa. As William set out to resume his predetermined journey he heard about this holy man, and deemed it not futile to deviate from his itinerary in order to speak with the said man of God. Therefore they met and embraced very warmly, then they spoke copiously in turn, and there was no discourse between them other than contempt of worldly things, longing for things celestial, and how all service must be to God (what else would such people rather discuss?). The following day, on his way out, William asked for leave suggesting that he could no longer defer the attainment of his desire to go to Jerusalem for devotion. But John said: 'Do not burden yourself in vain, brother; do not commence what you will not be able to complete, for your staying is more useful for the benefit of the faithful than accomplishing your will'. Given his fervour for the journey, William was unwilling to accede to his warnings, so he soon took to the road. As he arrived near Oria, he was caught by brigands, and manhandled viciously. In fact, the most magnificent King Roger had not yet freed Apulia from the jaws of thugs and thieves. Roger was not yet heir to the throne; 'he, whilst happily reigning, was the scourge of all wicked ones, lover of fairness, exterminator of all evils, and greatest patron of peace and tranquillity'. In that incident William perceived manifestly that he could not take his heartfelt plan to completion, in accordance with what the servant of God had said. Therefore he felt compelled by necessity to return in haste to the aforementioned Father. While William was asked many times, every single day he spent with him in brotherly fellowship, to live with him, the Lord appeared to him with his face, predicting to him the foundation of a new congregation through him [William], and therefore he should withdraw from there, in order to serve the Lord elsewhere. After fifteen days, he rejected his host's invitation, and proceeded diligently in the affairs that had been charged upon him by the Lord. Having taken leave, William set out along mountain tracks, assessing the convenience of individual places for solitary life. Having found none that he deemed suitable, he reached Atripalda, which is not far from the Virgilian mount [Montevergine]. In this location he spent

some time at the home of a lady and, after making diligent enquiry among the townfolk, he learned that the said mountain was convenient and suitable to leading a solitary life. Meanwhile the iron rings that he wore to mortify his flesh were breaking frequently and it would have been imprudent to show them to the ironsmiths so that they could be replaced with similar ones for fear of human praise. Therefore he took a more cautious counsel and went to Salerno in the hope of finding someone there who would supply to him an iron armour which he would never take off. And he was right. In fact, once in Salerno, he met a soldier who at his request showed him all the coats of armour he had, and placed them at his disposal so that he might select the one that he liked the most. Thus more heavily clad, having satisfied his wish, he returned happily to Atripalda, where he ordered an iron cap (commonly known as 'cophia' or wif) to be made in the shape of his head so that he could proceed securely to battle. After the soldier of God put it on his head he never removed it and he always wore it hidden so that no one could see it for the rest of his life. Then he started seeking advice of the aforementioned lady about where water could be found on the Virgilian mount. She said: 'Sir, on the top of the same mountain, according to reliable rumour, there lives a hermit. If there is any water there, he will most certainly tell you'. Therefore he chose a companion named Peter, climbed the mountain, and found the hermit. The said father, duly questioned, told him he could find water if he searched at the very top of the mountain. Shortly thereafter he left the hermit and searching diligently everywhere with his companion, he spotted much mud without water, marked by bear tracks. Approaching it, they dug out the mud using their hands as rakes. Finally they saw some water emerge from the mudhole they had dug out. Meantime, as darkness was closing in, they proceeded a little further, and found a place suitable to rest for the night. Here William was considerably worried by the scarcity of water as it seemed little or none at all to him; he decided to search on to see if God would show him more abundant sources elsewhere on the mountain. The following day they started working with undiminished fervour in order to carry out eagerly the purpose set out the previous night. Meanwhile some hunters happened to come by who, questioned about water, kindly led him to a more generous spring. After the hunters left, the servant of God and his companion kept looking at the spring and were spotted by the guards of the *castellum* of Mercogliano, who, deeming them thieves, were quickly upon them, captured them, manhandled them and took William up to the bailiff of the same castle. The bailiff, having heard his sacred speech, recognised his holiness, and let him go in peace. The servant of God returned to Atripalda and without further delay he gathered some relatives and neighbours of the lady whose guest he had been and went up to the place where he had previously found water; there he had them build him a little house, where he remained, as a venerable hermit, alone with God.

### **Chapter 3: The bear that disturbed the water-spring and was put to flight**

One day, William came out of his cell for the purpose of fetching some water, and he found little water in the said spring because a bear that had come along had trampled on it, and had muddied it badly. What could one do? He set it right again and went home. Nonetheless, the bear came back every day, drank the water, and trampled on the spring. As this was repeated daily, one day, having come out to fetch some water, William found the wild beast drinking, and addressed it with these words: 'What is it that you're doing? You are destroying someone else's work, as I see, because you are muddying and drinking water which I dug out with my own hands. Go away now, and beware you don't come back'. At his command, having lowered its head to the ground, the bear quickly withdrew, without displaying any of its ferocity, and never again did it return to the spring.

His nourishment at that time was only broadbeans and chestnuts which he gathered with his own hands, and barley bread which he baked under hot ashes. Meanwhile, a year having gone by, a certain monk, having learnt of William's holiness, came to him and begged to be allowed to live with him. After William became aware of his constancy, he did not reject his wish, and accepted him in his sacred company. The monk, among the many things that he used to report faithfully about him, recounted one that is rather out of the ordinary, and would prove quite incredible to many. He affirmed that during the night hours, as soon as he thought his companion was asleep, William would rise from his bed (if one could call a bare stone slab a bed), and would pray continually until morning while standing on one foot in front of a cross which he himself had fixed into the ground of his cell. Two years passed and his name gained renown everywhere in the region, as word of the famous holy man gained splendour; men and women would rush to him with the utmost eagerness of spirit. Among them, some priests arrived, who wished to be instructed by him on sacred subjects, and placed themselves under his tutorship in order to serve God. Since they enquired of him as to what religious rule they should observe, he replied: 'My advice, brothers, is that working with our own hands we acquire food and clothing for ourselves, as well as what we offer to the poor, and at set hours we gather for the Divine Office'. The priests adhered to his salutary advice for a short time. Then, overcome by malice of the ancient enemy, they began complaining among themselves, secretly at first, later quite publicly. They argued that they were priests, as such destined to divine service, hence they could not toil and plough the soil like peasants; that it would be fairer to build a church on the mountain, buy books and priestly vestments, so that they might attend exclusively to divine offices. Fearing he might clash with their resolve, lest they were distracted from contemplation on account of their seditions and loss of customary serenity, William decided to comply with their wish, and, riding on a donkey, set out with a companion towards

Bari; here, among friends and acquaintances, he found everything required to satisfy the priests' request; then, having completed the business and on the return journey, his companion took ill in Gravina. After seven days, having realized that he would not heal easily, William made his companion get on the donkey, and asked him to return with him to their monastery. In effect, the sick man realized that it was quite painful for the holy man to proceed on foot, as he was weak on account of the long prayers, fasting and vigils, and his being laden with the iron cassock. Therefore, he beseeched him to leave him behind and return to their brethren by himself. No such thing! He had to continue on donkey back by order of the venerable father, who proceeded barefoot (with great patience and great humility), tending to him constantly until they reached their destination. Having been endowed with books and vestments, the priests promptly asked how the church would be built for them on the mountain. William heard this, but he did not promise to satisfy their wish immediately, as he had done with the previous request; rather, having withdrawn to a secret place, he started praying humbly on his knees to the fount of all goodness, so that, if it pleased Him to have a church built in that place, He might see fit to send there a great number of people who could start building a kiln for the lime that very day. No sooner had he finished his prayer, that a large multitude of people arrived who, at his command, started building the kiln and splitting firewood, and their commitment was so great that the following day, having fired the kiln, rocks were melted into cement. Without delay, with the help of neighbouring towns, the church was built within a few days, as well as the cells for the friars.

Having built the church, and having gathered there a considerable number of people for God's service, it pleased William and his brethren that the church be dedicated to the honour of the Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary. William then went to see the Bishop of Avellino, in whose territory he was, and humbly expressed to him his and his brethren's petition regarding the church. Having heard his request, the bishop promised, with joy in his heart, that he wanted to satisfy their wishes. On the appointed day, the church was dedicated.

#### **Chapter 4: The dumb woman who was freed**

A very large crowd gathered for the dedication of this holy church. There was a woman in the crowd who had been deprived of speech for seven years, bound to silence. Having heard of the man's holiness, and being anxious to restore her body's health, she gestured as she could to her relatives asking them where and who was the servant of God. In short, she was led to William, she bowed down to his knees, and was asked by the servant of God to say what she wanted. And promptly she answered his question (mighty power of God!), with a free voice and without any hindrance. As soon as this miracle resounded in the ears of the multitude, all in unison praised the Lord, and started proclaiming William a saint publicly. The woman also, once healed, and

full of gratitude, went preaching constantly everywhere in that region how much she had been given by the Lord through love of the holy man.

## **Chapter 5: The miracle of the marble**

As word of his holiness spread, the leading citizens of those areas offered him, with full devotion and most gladly, whatever they could afford for the sustenance of his brethren; among them a certain Adam who, with the consent of the bishop of Frigento, offered a church dedicated to St Cesarius the Martyr. The man of God went frequently there to look at it, and one day by chance he saw a marble sarcophagus that had been abandoned there for a very long time, and was mostly covered by dirt. He thought it could be useful for the said church, so he ordered the brethren who were standing by to uncover it, and transfer it to the church without delay. As he walked back to the church, the brothers, eager as they were to obey their father's orders, uncovered the marble, and tied it to five pairs of oxen yoked together in order to pull it. After a while, the brothers saw that they couldn't get the oxen to move at all, in spite of spurs and repeated hard blows, and promptly reported the issue to William. Having heard this, he smiled — hilarity of expression was his habitual disposition, as we said — quipped at their ineptitude, and went himself where the marble was. Then, having removed four pairs of oxen, he hit the two oxen that remained with a stick he had in his hand, and ordered them to go. At the sound of his voice, the sarcophagus was moved with such ease that it seemed dry wood, rather than marble. William followed the oxen's steps and took the sarcophagus to the church door, which was almost a mile away; it is visible in front of the church to this day.

## **Chapter 6: The Virgilian mountain**

The Virgilian mountain, in which he was living before the priests and quite a few other brothers were taken there, was difficult and very laborious to climb because of the excessive cold, except during the three summer months. Therefore in the good season the largest groups came to him, and laid down at his feet<sup>2</sup> gold, silver, and whatever they had. He accepted graciously, and as a good provider, he kept what he considered necessary for the brothers and gave the rest to the poor. Seeing this, the priests, already lured by greed, and doubting God's mercy, first tried to gently persuade the venerable father that he should think of the future and not give away so generously what was offered to them, but rather a chest be devised in which to place the money that would later be found for the needs of the same church. Then they insisted this should be done because in time people would withdraw from the present liberality and they might be left lacking the bare essentials. The priests, after consulting with one another, could see that matters

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 4:35.

proceeded against their interest, and that William would not accede to their requests, since the venerable father deemed that the church would be destroyed with the money rather than being built with it, and that they should not have any earthly possessions. Therefore, they burst out in protest and said in a rage that he acted against the law by giving to the poor the goods that belonged to the church and were held jointly, and the things that he gave to the poor without consulting them were offered more for their own services and prayers than for his merits. William instead responded humbly and softly to their shouts, exhorting them with these words: 'Why is it, my brothers, that you shout so heatedly? Why do you work yourselves up so inconsiderately? I have said to you, and I will not tire of repeating it: you gave up secular things, you chose God as your inheritance, you must love Him only, all you have is Him. Let worldly things be for the laymen, I beg you; prefer with all your heart spiritual to secular things. Yet, if (God forbid) it is fixed in your hearts and it is your irreversible determination to make money, know that you will not be able to do this as long as you are with me'. Consequently, he placed a new leader in charge, as he could see that he could no longer achieve any good among them, and feared that through his acts greater damage might be caused to their souls: he took up five brothers from the illiterate ones, withdrew from there, and, seeking out greater harshness in the region, he reached the Lacenum mount.

## **Chapter 7: Where the Lord appeared to him**

A very dense forest, then, girds this mountain from its root to its summits; here, slightly sloping, lies a plateau stripped of trees, about twelve stages in length [approx. 1200 mt], and through its midst runs a river that pierces the mountain, and rushes to its foot. After reaching this place, William built individual huts for himself and for his companions. Nevertheless, they were unable to endure the excessive harshness of the cold weather, and they left shortly thereafter.

Abandoning human consolation and satisfied with the roots of herbs, he prayed incessantly, and the servant of the Almighty, John, who has been mentioned, came to visit him. Compelled by brotherly love, he began to live with him. Before his arrival, the venerable father had established that while praying during the night he would proceed in the day time to tortuous and harsh places for the punishment of the flesh until exhaustion, which regimen they both observed afterwards, even more devoutly. When one day he was walking about in the usual manner with the Lord Jesus in his mind's eye, and with ever burning love for Him, suddenly the Lord he imagined spiritually appeared to him in body in the countenance of His passion. His clothes were whiter than snow, His face truly more radiant than the sun.<sup>3</sup> The Lord granted William to recognise Him as soon as he saw Him, as fully as if he had been in the blessed company of the

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<sup>3</sup> 4. Matthew 28:3.

apostles from the beginning, and had been strengthened by His holy countenance and instructed by His intimate words. Prostrated promptly at His feet, and shedding copious tears of joy, William began to utter his humble request: 'O God, maker of all things and healer of minds, who deigned to be born of a virgin and was made a victim for us. You confounded the ancient dragon. I humbly beseech Thee, that whilst I remain in this frail little body (as I have no certainty of victory in the struggle between flesh and spirit)<sup>4</sup> You deign to visit me with the grace of Your spirit; so that, strengthened by greater virtue, nothing may separate me from Your love'. And the Lord replied: 'William, William, perceiving your deep-seated love for me, I have decided to appear visibly to you, in the manner that you see, also in order to comfort you personally, since you are bound in the prison of the flesh, and to prevent any delay in abandoning this place, since you are needed by me elsewhere'. At these words William quickly remembered his companion, and prayed that the Lord show Himself to him as well, if possible. And the Lord replied: 'Go call him'. As they came together to behold the Lord, they could not see Him so clearly as William had seen Him before, but they could speak with Him, and John could even hold His feet.<sup>5</sup> Then, they returned happily to their cells, and started thinking together in which manner they should leave that place, in order to obey the Lord's command.

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<sup>4</sup> Galatians 5:17: 'For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh'.

<sup>5</sup> Drawing on Matthew 28:9: 'And they came and held him by the feet'.

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