LATIN HYMNOLOGY.

Der Cursus s. Benedicti Nursini und die liturgischen Hymnen des 6.-9. Jahrhunderts in ihrer Beziehung zu den Sonntags- und Ferialhymnen unseres Breviers. Eine hymnologisch-liturgische Studie auf Grund handschriftlichen Quellenmaterials, herausgegeben von CLEMENS BLUME, S.J. (O. R. Reisland, Leipzig, 1908.)

Gregor der Grosse als Hymnendichter (Sonder-Abdruck aus den 'Stimmen aus Maria-Laach', Jahrgang 1908, Band 74, Heft 3). Freiburg im Breisgau. Herdersche Verlagshandlung.

THESE treatises of Fr Blume, who has done so much in co-operation with Dr G. M. Dreves to extend our knowledge of Latin hymnology, are full of interesting material and most valuable. No future student of the subject will be able or willing to ignore their facts or the conclusions gathered from them.

Benedict in his Rule, the cursus of which, taken from ch. viii-xix, Blume prints out of two ninth-century MSS, prescribed the singing of certain hymns.¹ Only unfortunately, as he does not give their first lines, merely saying *inde sequatur ambrosianum* or *hymnus eiusdem horae* or *hymni earundem horarum*, it is difficult to say for certain which these hymns are.

Hitherto liturgists have agreed to think that they are to be found in the body of those hymns that are contained in practically all MSS later than the tenth century and still survive, most of them in an altered form, in the Roman breviary. This opinion is maintained by Batiffol, Chevalier, and Bäumer in particular.² Blume thinks, and gives good reasons for thinking, that this opinion is wrong.

Caesarius, who was Bishop of Arles 503-543, compiled two Rules, one for Monks about the year 503, another for Nuns in 534. In the former of these he mentions no hymns by name, probably, like Benedict, presupposing a knowledge as to which the regular hymns were. But in his *Regula ad uirgines* he constantly, although not invariably, gives the first line. Thus, e.g. *Ad sextam: psalmi sex cum antiphona, hymnus* Ter hora trina uoluitur, *lectio & capitellum*. And about A.D. 550 Aurelian, the successor of Caesarius in the see of Arles, compiled similar Rules, one for Monks, the other for Nuns. In both these he also usually, but not invariably, gives the first line of the several hymns. It is important to remember that both these men were contemporaries of Benedict, who, in 529, wrote the Rule for his community at Monte Cassino, where he died in 543.

We now come to the witness of MSS. There are four, and only four, MSS containing a body of hymns written in or before the ninth century

¹ St Gallen 914, Munich clm 28118.

² *Cursus* p. 94 f.

not in an Irish or English hand. The oldest of these is Cod. Vaticanus Regin. 11 written at the end of the eighth century. The other three, written in the ninth century, are Junius 25 in the Bodleian, Cod. Parisinus lat. 14088, and Rheinau 34 now at Zurich.

A comparison of the Rules of Caesarius and Aurelian and of these four MSS gives us a body of thirty-five hymns.

C = Caesarius, A = Aurelian; v = Vat. reg. 11, j = Oxford Junius 25,
p = Paris bn lat. 14088, r = Rheinau 34.

A. Hymni Communes de Tempore.

(a) *ad nocturnas horas.*

1. Mediae noctis tempus est C v j r
2. Rex aeternae Domine C A j
3. Magna et mirabilia C A v
4. Aeternae rerum conditor C j
5. Tempus noctis surgentibus j p

(b) *ad matutinas laudes.*

6. {Te Deum laudamus [Dominica] C A v j
7. {Deus qui caeli lumen es [Dominica] j p r
8. Splendor paternae gloriae [Feria II] A v j r
9. Aeternae lucis conditor [Feria III] A v j p r
10. Fulgentis auctor aetheris [Feria IV] C A v j p
11. Deus aeterni luminis [Feria V] v j p
12. Christe caeli Domine [Feria VI] v j p
13. Diei luce reddita [Feria VII] v j p r

(c) *ad paruas horas.*

14. Post matutinis laudibus [ad primam] j p r
15. Certum tenentes ordinem [ad tertiam] v j p r
16. Dicamus laudes Domino [ad sextam] v j p r
17. Perfectum trinum numerum [ad nonam] v j p

(d) *ad uesperas.*

18. Deus creator omnium C A v
19. Deus qui certis legibus C A v j p
20. Deus qui claro lumine j p
21. Sator princepsque temporum v

(e) *ad completorium.*¹

22. Christe qui lux es et dies C j
23. Christe precamur adnue C

B. Hymni proprii de tempore.

24. Intende qui regis Israel [in nat. Domini] v
25. Inluminans altissimus [in epiphan.] v
26. Dei fide qua uiuimus [in quadrag. ad tertiam] j p
27. Meridie orandum est [in quadrag. ad sextam] j p

¹ Caesarius and Aurelian call this *duodecima*.

28. Sic ter quaternis trahitur [in quadrag. ad non.] j p
29. Hic est dies uerus Dei [in pascha] C A v j
30. Iam surgit hora tertia [ad tertiam in pascha] C A v j
31. Iam sexta sensim uoluitur [ad sextam in pascha] C A v
32. Ter hora trina uoluitur [ad nonam in pascha] C A v
33. Ad cenam agni prouidi [in pascha] j p
34. Aurora lucis rutilat [in pascha] j p

C. Hymnus de communi ss martyrum.

35. Aeterna Christi munera j.

In these hymns (amongst which we find eight hymns by St Ambrose, viz. 4, 8, 18, 25, 29, 30, 35) according to Blume *we have the old Benedictine hymnal*.

But now we notice a most extraordinary phenomenon. For excepting some of those by Ambrose, and one or two others which have survived in their integrity or in part, *these Benedictine hymns* (which may be denoted as A) *entirely vanish from sight*, are, as it were, swept at once away. The Mozarabic and Ambrosian liturgies retained some few of them, it is true. But in all ninth-century MSS written in an Irish or English hand and in all MSS of the tenth century onwards an entirely different set of hymns takes their place. These may for convenience sake be denoted as B.

That the A hymns are older as a whole than those which superseded them is capable of proof. For it is clearly to be seen that all the A hymns *ad matutinas laudes*, with the exception of the *Te Deum* and of Ambrose's *Splendor paternae gloriæ*—the model on which the rest are formed—were the work of one man, whoever that man may have been. Aurelian mentions two of them (9 and 10 in the above list); therefore they must all have been written before his time.

And, again, the vesper-hymns of A are evidently part of a *night-office*, all dwell upon *nox horrida, noctis caligo, somnus, fessa curis corpora*. The corresponding hymns of B, describing the several six days of the Creation, make no mention of night or nightly rest. They were written at a time when Vespers was a *day-office*, that is to say after the time of St Benedict, who gave it this new character.

How are we to account for the remarkable circumstance that the older hymns disappear thus suddenly and completely—that they are superseded in all parts of Europe by a body of hymns connected up till then merely with the far-off British Isles? Now, if the new hymns were known to be written by a great Roman bishop who was also connected with those far-off parts, the phenomenon becomes at the least less difficult of comprehension.

And so Blume at once thought of Gregory the Great as the writer of the vesper and nocturn hymns of B 'were it not for the fact that up

to the present time nothing pointed to Gregory as a writer of hymns', as Dr Dreves had recently urged. Scarcely, however, had Blume written these words, when he came across an interesting statement in the Irish *Liber Hymnorum*, in the preface to *Altus prosator*, which runs thus:

'*Locus huius hymni* Hi [i.e. Iona] *Tempus* of Aedan mac Gabrain, King of Scotland & of Aed mac Ainmerech, King of Ireland; *Mauritius autem uel Phocas* was King of the Romans *tunc*. The person was Colum Cille *de nobili genere Scotorum* 'Columba' dicitur . . . , Well, this hymn was taken eastward to Gregory as a return for the gifts that had been sent by him, viz. the cross, whose name was the Great Gem, and *the Hymns of the Week*.¹

In the so-called Leabhar Breac (or 'Speckled Book', a MS collection of the fourteenth century) we read:—

'When Colum Cille was in Hi . . . it was then revealed to Colum Cille that guests were coming to him, viz. seven of Gregory's people came to him from Rome having presents for him, namely the Great Gem of Colum Cille—and that is a cross extant to-day—and *the Hymn of the Week*, a hymn for every night in the week.'¹

Is this statement worthy of belief?

The indications of date given are fairly consistent. Aedan mac Gabrain was King of Scotland from 574 to 606; Aed mac Ainmerech was King of Ireland from 572 to 599; Mauritius was emperor at Byzantium from 582 to 602, and was succeeded by Phocas; Gregory was pope from 590 to 604; Columba died on June 9, 597.

Then, if the statement is a statement of fact, what are 'the Hymns of the Week' or 'the Hymn of the Week'? Bernard and Atkinson say: 'Of the Hymnary we know nothing; Todd suggests that it may have been a copy of the *Liber Antiphonarius* of Gregory.' This it could scarcely be. What then? Blume suggests the ferial hymns of B. These, as appointed for Vespers, are:

1. Lucis creator optime.
2. Immense caeli conditor.
3. Telluris ingens conditor.
4. Caeli Deus sanctissime.
5. Magnae Deus potentiae.
6. Plasmator hominis Deus.
7. { *a.* Deus creator omnium.
- { *b.* O lux beata Trinitas.

The first six of these do, in fact, compose one hymn on the works of the Creation.

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¹ *Irish Liber Hymnorum* H. B. S. II 23, 141.