

BERNARD OF MORLAIX

ABSTRACT

Francis John Balnaves, *Bernard of Morlaix: the literature of complaint, the Latin tradition and the twelfth-century "renaissance."* PhD thesis, Australian National University, March 1997.

Bernard of Morlaix was a Cluniac monk who flourished around 1140. What little is known about him, including his visit to Rome, is examined in relation to the affairs of the Cluniac family in his day. A new conjecture is advanced that he was prior of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou. His poems are discussed as examples of the genre of complaint literature. His treatment of the end of the world, and of death, judgement, heaven and hell, is discussed in relation to twelfth-century monasticism. His castigation of the sins of his time includes some of the earliest estates satire. His anticlericalism and his misogyny are compared with those of his contemporaries, and discussed in the context of twelfth-century monastic culture. Bernard's classical learning is analysed and compared with that of his contemporaries, especially John of Salisbury and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. His use of metre and rhyme is examined in the context of the development of metre based on stress rather than quantity and of systematic and sustained rhyme in the Latin verse of the twelfth century. Bernard's use of interpretive and compositional allegory is explored. Bernard is seen as a man of his time, exemplifying a number of twelfth-century characteristics, religious, educational and cultural. Special attention is paid to the Latin literary tradition, and it is suggested that the culture of the twelfth-century was in many respects a culmination rather than a renaissance.

BERNARD OF MORLAIX

THE LITERATURE OF COMPLAINT, THE LATIN TRADITION AND THE
TWELFTH-CENTURY "RENAISSANCE"

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the
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by

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For Michael, who did the sums

Apart from quotations from other works, all of which are duly acknowledged in the text, this thesis is entirely my own work.

Francis John
Balnaves

Rogo autem et per viscera misericordie dei nostri obsecro ut, si qua corrigenda hic videritis, caritative corrigatis. Qui enim in verbo non offendit, hic perfectus est vir.

Bernard of Morlaix *De castitate servanda*

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INTRODUCTION

Bernard of Morlaix was a monk of the order of Cluny who flourished around 1140. Excerpts from one of his poems appear in some anthologies of medieval Latin verse¹ and he is briefly noticed in some works on the twelfth-century renaissance, but he has received little critical attention and only one of his poems has been translated from the Latin. He does not, like Ordericus Vitalis, write explicitly about the events of his time. His poems are satirical and homiletic. But, unlike his namesake of Clairvaux, who called himself a chimera of his age,² Bernard of Morlaix was a man of his time and a mirror of the society in which he lived.

He was not a man of enormous influence, like Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, but he was sufficiently reliable to be sent on a mission to Pope Eugenius III in Rome. He was not an urbane and wise administrator with a large monastic empire to control, like Peter the Venerable, but he was a conscientious monk and he may have been prior of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou. He could not match the immense classical scholarship of John of Salisbury, but he was far removed from the ignorant clerics that Gerald of Wales complained about. He was not a mystic and a visionary, like Hildegard of Bingen, but he contributed significantly to eschatological and devotional literature. He was not extreme in his devotion to Mary, like Eadmer of

¹For example, *The Oxford book of medieval Latin verse*, ed. F.J.E. Raby, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959; *The Penguin book of Latin verse*, ed. Frederick Brittain, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1962 (The Penguin poets); *A primer of medieval Latin; an anthology of prose and poetry*, by Charles H. Beeson, Folkestone, Bailey Brothers and Swinfen, 1973.

²J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina*, Paris, 1844-1864, 221v, vol. 182, column 451. Subsequent citations of the *Patrologia Latina* use the abbreviation PL, followed by volume and column numbers.

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Canterbury, but he may have written one of the best known poems about her. He was not an active reformer, embroiled in secular affairs, like Arnold of Brescia, but he was forthright in his condemnation of the sins of popes, bishops and clergy. He was not a poet of the calibre of Peter Abelard or Hildebert of Lavardin, but he was a skilled versifier who contributed to the development of verse forms. He was not a satirist as clever as Walter of Chatillon, but he was among the first poets to work in the genre of estates satire. As an allegorist, he was not in the class of Bernardus Silvestris, but he contributed to the development of allegory through his imaginative interpretations of Scripture. People like Bernard, who occupy the middle ground, may, in some respects, be more representative of their times than their better known contemporaries.

This thesis attempts an examination of the reasons why Bernard wrote as he did, in the context especially of the genre of complaint. It looks at features of Bernard's time which shaped his writing, such as the troubles of the Cluniac order, the nature of monastic education and of higher education generally, classical learning in the twelfth century, the social structure of the three estates, and attitudes towards women and homosexuals.

Chapter 1 discusses what is known about Bernard of Morlaix and his works, both those that are certainly his and those attributed to him. It examines his possible Englishness; his association with Nogent-le-Rotrou; and his visit to Pope Eugenius III in Rome at about the time when Arnold of Brescia was there. The dispute between abbot Pons de Melgueil and Peter the Venerable is discussed as part of the background of the Cluniac order in Bernard's time.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 deal with some aspects of the literature of complaint. Bernard's treatment of the end of the world and heaven and hell is considered in relation to earlier treatments

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(especially the *Apocalypse of Peter*) and to the writings of his contemporaries, such as Otto of Freising and Joachim of Fiore. *Contemptus mundi* literature is discussed in relation to what it tells us about twelfth-century attitudes towards the natural and the supernatural, human life, suffering, sin and redemption, and in relation to what it reveals about monasticism and the contemplative life, especially differences between Cluniac and Cistercian perceptions. The absence of a personal Satan in Bernard's writings, as in those of Anselm and Abelard, and in contrast with the doctrines of the Cathars, is noted.

Another aspect of the literature of complaint is estates satire. Bernard's treatment of the three estates (the church, the nobles and the commons); of the interdependence of the three estates; and of the clergy (to whom Bernard pays most attention) is examined. Bernard's anticlericalism, his attitude towards Rome, bishops and priests, is compared with that of his contemporaries. Other subjects of complaint literature which are considered include homosexuals (especially in the context of the suggestion of a "renaissance of gay culture" in the twelfth century); Bernard's misogyny, in the context of monastic culture and in the context of twelfth-century society; and Bernard's treatment of Mary in the same contexts.

Chapter 5 explores Bernard's knowledge of classical Latin literature and his use of classical, patristic and medieval sources, compared with those of his contemporaries, especially John of Salisbury and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. It considers some aspects of twelfth-century monastic education, the essential Latinity of the twelfth-century literary tradition, and the absence of Greek scholarship.

Chapter 6 discusses Bernard's use of a wide variety of metrical forms (including classical prosody) and his use of sophisticated rhyme schemes, in the context of the development, in the Latin verse of the twelfth century, of metre based on stress rather

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than quantity and of systematic and sustained rhyme, and the assimilation of both into vernacular verse forms.

Chapter 7 explores Bernard's use of interpretive and compositional allegory, compared with that of his contemporaries, especially Bernardus Silvestris, Hildegard of Bingen, Nigel Longchamps and Alan de Lille. It considers the blending of interpretive and compositional allegory and the debt of vernacular literatures to the twelfth-century's special achievements in development of allegory.

Except where otherwise indicated in the text or in footnotes, all translations throughout the thesis are those of the author of the thesis. Henry Preble's translation of *De contemptu mundi*, which appears in S. M. Jackson's *The source of "Jerusalem the golden"*,³ is inaccurate and incomplete. Ronald E. Pepin's translation of the poem also has errors and is too literal for the purpose of this thesis.⁴ There are no translations of any of the other works by or attributed to Bernard of Morlaix.

Evagrius of Antioch explains that "word for word translation from one language to another obscures the meaning and chokes it, as grass, growing wild, chokes crops."⁵ I have tried to translate in such a way that "although something may be wanting

³Samuel Macaulay Jackson, *The source of "Jerusalem the golden," together with other pieces attributed to Bernard of Cluny*, in *English translation by Henry Preble*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1910, p. 10-53. Preble's translation had previously been published in three successive issues of the *American journal of theology* for 1906. It was based on the inadequate text published by Thomas Wright in 1872.

⁴Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn of the world; Bernard of Cluny's "De contemptu mundi": the Latin text with English translation ...* East Lansing, Colleagues Press, 1991. See also Jill Mann, "[Review of] Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn of the world: Bernard of Cluny's 'De contemptu mundi' ...*" *Journal of medieval Latin* 4(1994):163-169.

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in the words, nothing is lacking in the sense. Let others go on wild goose chases after letters and syllables. Please look for the meaning."⁶

⁵Evagrius of Antioch, *Vita beati Antonii abbatis*, PL 73, 125-126.

⁶*ibid.*

CHAPTER 1 BERNARDUS MORLANENSIS

Works by Bernard and works attributed to him

All that we know about Bernard of Morlaix is what we can glean from his works. He is not mentioned in the extant writings of any of his contemporaries.¹ His major work is the *De contemptu mundi*, a poem of three thousand lines in dactylic hexameters with internal and tail rhymes, a variation of the Leonine measure. Its popularity in medieval times is attested by the survival of no fewer than fifteen manuscripts. Bernard's stringent criticism of popes, bishops and priests brought the poem renewed popularity during the Reformation;² there were six printed editions between 1557 and 1754.³ For quite different reasons, the first part of Book 1 of the poem gained favour again in the 1860s, following J.M. Neale's translation of a selection of passages, which became a popular hymn.⁴ Thomas

¹Unless a letter of Peter the Venerable to the bishop of Chartres, which mentions the prior of Nogent, may be taken to refer to Bernard of Morlaix (*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, edited by Giles Constable, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967 (Harvard historical studies 78), v.1, p.344.) See below, p.30

²*Histoire littéraire de la France ...*, vol. 12, Paris, Victor Palmé, 1869, p.239. Ernst Robert Curtius comments that many a text escaped destruction for no other reason (*European literature and the Latin middle ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990 (first published 1948) p.124.)

³Samuel Macaulay Jackson, *The source of "Jerusalem the golden," together with other pieces attributed to Bernard of Cluny*, in *English translation by Henry Preble*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1910, p. 10-53.

⁴J. M. Neale, *The rhythm of Bernard of Morlaix, monk of Cluny*, 7th ed., London, Hayes, 1865. The hymn still appears in modern hymnals.

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath your contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed.

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Wright produced an edition of the *De contemptu mundi* in 1872.⁵ A critical edition was published by H.C. Hoskier in 1929,⁶ on which is based Ronald E. Pepin's text and translation of 1991.⁷

By contrast, only one manuscript survives (in the Vatican Library) of four other poems which are certainly Bernard's. The poems are: *De Trinitate et de fide Catholica* (1402 lines); *De castitate servanda* (524 lines); *In libros Regum* (1018 lines); and *De octo vitiis* (1399 lines - Bernard was not given to short poems). They were edited by Katarina Halvarson in 1963.⁸ There can be no doubt that they come from the pen of the author of *De contemptu mundi*. In the preface to *De Trinitate et de fide Catholica*, Bernard writes "emulor enim illos dei emulatione," which echoes the preface to *De contemptu mundi*, "ego horum quos emulor Dei emulatione stilum imitatus." He puts the case for expounding the faith in verse rather than prose in very similar terms, with reference to metrical versions of the psalms and other sacred writings, in both poems.⁹ The phrase "totus ubique

The Australian hymn book with Catholic supplement, Sydney, Collins, 1977, p.437. There were translations of parts of the *De contemptu mundi* also by Samuel W. Duffield (New York, Randolph, 1867) and Charles Lawrence Ford (London, Houlston, 1898). An oratorio derived from part of the poem was composed by Horatio William Parker in 1901 (Library of Congress, *National Union Catalog, pre-1956 imprints*, s.v. *Bernard of Cluny, 12th cent.*)

⁵Thomas Wright (ed.), *The Anglo-Latin satirical poets and epigrammatists of the twelfth century*, v.2, London, Longmans, 1872 (Rolls series, *Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores*, v.59).

⁶H. C. Hoskier (ed.), *De contemptu mundi; a bitter satirical poem of 3000 lines upon the morals of the XIIth century, by Bernard of Morval, monk of Cluny (fl. 1150) ...* London, Quaritch, 1929.

⁷R. E. Pepin (ed.), *Scorn of the world; Bernard of Cluny's "De contemptu mundi": the Latin text with English translation ...*, East Lansing, Colleagues Press, 1991.

⁸Katarina Halvarson (ed.), *Bernardi Cluniacensis Carmina de Trinitate et de fide Catholica, De castitate servanda, In libros Regum, De octo vitiis*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1963 (*Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Latina Stockholmiensia*, 11).

⁹*De contemptu mundi, Prologus and De Trinitate*, 292-296.

deus, subtus, super, intus et extra" in *De Trinitate* parallels "continet arbiter omnia sub, super, intus et extra" in *De contemptu mundi*.¹⁰ The phrase "aurea zona pudoris" occurs in both *De castitate* and *De contemptu mundi*.¹¹ There are many correspondences between *De octo vitiis* and *De contemptu mundi*. Some of them are tabulated below.

<i>De octo vitiis</i>	<i>De contemptu mundi</i>
65 ad lucra feruescit, ad jus tepet, ad mala crescit	1,879 urit et uritur, angit et angitur, ad mala crescit
490 venter dape plenus	3,448 ventris episcopus ... est dape plenus
536 plurima fercula querunt	2,929 fercula plurima quaerimus
595 pudor ire pudenter	2,640 piget et pudet ire pudenter
660 est prope funus	2,570 est prope funus
793 femina nulla bona	2,456 fere bona foemina nulla
798-799 predaque, predo, dulcis putredo cute pulcra	2,459-460 pulchra putredo ... praedaque praedo
900 non [tutus] socer a genero	2,680 a socero gener est male tutus
1019 nulla Sabina valet ... Lucretia sqalet	2,552 rara Lucretia, nulla Sabina
1120-1121 homicidia, tradiciones, scisma	3,823 schismata, praelia, vis, homicidia
1141 via Pitagorei	1,268 via dextera Pythagoraea and 2,761 littera Pythagorea
1216 lac tulit et lanam neque sanat ovem male sanam	3,589 lac sibi tollitur atque resumitur a grege lana
1278 ut rota Roma datur, quoniam rotat atque rotatur	3,603 ut rota labitur, ergo vocabitur hinc rota Roma
1322 turbatis turbis in turba turbinis urbis	1,397 turbaque turbida turbine mortis

These references between the poems, together with a marked similarity of style, show them to be by the same author and indicate some of his favourite themes. They give no clue to the order in which the poems were written, but there appears to be a particularly close connection between *De octo vitiis* and *De contemptu mundi*.

¹⁰*De Trinitate*, 98; *De contemptu mundi*, 1,326.

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Guido Maria Drèves gives several versions of the text of a *Mariale* which he ascribes to "Bernhardus Morlanensis, monachus Cluniacensis," and the attribution is supported by some of the manuscripts.¹² The poem is immensely long. It has a prologue of forty-nine Leonine lines. Its fifteen chapters average thirty-six stanzas each, and its epilogue has sixteen stanzas.

The poem does not echo the *De contemptu mundi* as strongly as do the four poems edited by Katarina Halvarson. It hardly could, because the *De contemptu mundi* does not deal with Mary except in passing. But it shows the same prolixity and the same command of difficult metrical forms. More significantly, it calls to mind a long passage in praise of Mary in *In libros Regum*.¹³ (The Book of Kings may seem an unlikely topic to embrace such a theme; it emerges from an allegorical treatment of the throne of Solomon, which is discussed below, p.297.) Apart from that, the internal evidence for the attribution to Bernard of Morlaix is not strong. In all the poems described above, which can confidently be asserted to be from the same pen, the author makes liberal use of classical Latin allusions and quotations.¹⁴ The *Mariale* is full of allusions to and quotations from the Old and New Testaments, but it has none from classical antiquity. Perhaps one might read an allusion to Horace and to the *In libros Regum* into the following passage:

Pulchra tota, sine nota
 Cuiuscumque maculae
Fac nos mundus et jucundus
 Te laudare sedit

O beata. per quam data
 Nova mundo gaudia,
Et aperta fide certa

¹¹*De castitate*, 416; *De contemptu mundi*, 2,387.

¹²*Analecta hymnica medii aevi*. Leipzig, 1886-1922, 56v., v.50, p.423-483.

¹³Lines 917-1018.

¹⁴See below, Chapter 5.

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Regna sunt caelestia.¹⁵

Horace has "nihil est ab omni parte beatum."¹⁶ In the *In libros Regum*, Bernard, referring to Mary, says:

Falso Flaccus ait: "Nihil omni parte beatum."
Haec omni mentis parte beata stetit.¹⁷

But the relationship is tenuous. And there is another difference between the *Mariale* and the other poems. Throughout the *De contemptu mundi* and the poems edited by Katarina Halvarson, Satan is presented as little more than a metaphor for the temptations of the world and the flesh. In the *Mariale* he is presented in a more concrete and personal form.¹⁸ These are not insuperable objections to authorship by the Bernard of the *De contemptu mundi*, but they leave it less than certain, given that the *Mariale* does not obviously have an intended audience or purpose different from those of the other poems.

The *Mariale* is the source of a Catholic hymn which used to be popular in England fifty years ago:

Daily, daily, sing to Mary,
Sing, my soul, her praises due;
All her feasts her actions worship,
With the heart's devotion true.¹⁹

J.-P. Migne gives the text of a prose work entitled *Instructio sacerdotis seu tractatus de praecipuis mysteriis nostrae religionis*.²⁰ Migne notes that the manuscript ascribes it to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux but opines "non assequitur genium S.

¹⁵*Mariale*, 3,14-15.

¹⁶Horace, *Odes*, 2,16,27-28.

¹⁷*In libros Regum*, 989-990.

¹⁸See, for example, *Mariale*, 7,15; 9,20-22; 12,10 and 13,29. See also below, p.103 ff.

¹⁹*The Westminster hymnal*, London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1912, p.125. The hymn is translated by Father F. W. Faber from only a few stanzas of the original. It is attributed to Saint Casimir, which is certainly wrong.

Bernardi." He gives an alternative title *Gemma Crucifixi*. Buchwald ascribes the work to Bernard de Morlaix.²¹ We do not have much prose of Bernard's for purposes of comparison, but *Instructio sacerdotis* would seem to be consistent in style with the prose prefaces to *De contemptu mundi*, *De Trinitate et de fide Catholica* and *De castitate servanda*. It has three parts, *Quod filius Dei se dedit nobis moriens pro nobis*, *Quod Jesus filius Dei dat se nobis in Eucharistia* and *Quod Christus dat se nobis in praemium in caelo*. The third part has a similarity in content, as well as in mode of expression, to the first book of *De contemptu mundi*, but it is obviously incomplete, in that it does not get beyond describing the pains of hell.²²

In a paper about a German "Contemptus mundi" poem from the lower Rhine, Edward Schröder describes and gives the text of a Latin poem which he takes to be its source.²³ In the version given by Schröder, the Latin poem is 373 lines in length. There is strong external evidence that it comes from the same pen as the *De contemptu mundi* of Bernard of Morlaix. It appeared together with the *De contemptu mundi* in several manuscripts and was ascribed to Bernard. One of them, for example, is described as containing "Bernardi Morlanensis monachi ordinis Cluniacensis De vanitate mundi et gloria caelesti liber aureus; item alii eiusdem libri tres eiusdem ferme argumenti ..."²⁴ The poem has no agreed title. The titles *Libellus aureolus* and *Carmen*

²⁰PL 184,771-792.

²¹*Dictionnaire des auteurs grecs et latins de l'antiquité et du moyen age*, [n.p.] Brepols, 1991, p.121. (First published as *Tusculum-lexikon griechischer und lateinischer autoren*, ed. Buchwald, 1982.)

²²See below, p.94 ff.

²³Edward Schröder, "Ein niederrheinischer Contemptus mundi und seine Quelle," *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse aus dem Jahre 1910*, Berlin, Weidmannsche, 1910, p.335-374. The Latin poem occupies pages 346-354.

²⁴*ibid.*, p.341-342. Schröder gives several other examples of attribution to Bernard of Morlaix in the manuscripts.

paraeneticum appear in some manuscripts.²⁵ It is occasionally called *De vanitate mundi*, and is so described by Buchwald,²⁶ but in order to distinguish it more clearly from the *De contemptu mundi* it seems better here to refer to it by its opening words, *Chartula nostra*.

At a first reading of the poem, the internal evidence for Bernard's authorship may appear weak.²⁷ It is a relatively short poem. It shows the same ingenuity in metre and rhyme as Bernard's other poems, but its vocabulary is limited. It is totally lacking in the tropes and word plays which are prominent in all the other poems. It displays none of Bernard's classical learning, and there are no echoes of the *De contemptu mundi*, despite the similarity of theme. But it is a very different kind of poem from any others of Bernard. It is expressly written for and addressed to a young boy who has just entered the Cluniac Order. He could well have been as young as ten years.²⁸ On the evidence of some of the manuscripts, his name was Rainaldus.²⁹ The whole tone of the poem is designed to be suitable for such a young reader, and what may appear at first to be evidence against Bernard's authorship may rather be an indication of his skill in writing for a particular readership, an art greatly prized in the middle ages.³⁰

Chartula nostra tibi mandat, dilecte, salutes.
Plura videbis ibi, si non mea data refutes.³¹

Fortassis puero tibi frustra mittere quero

²⁵Jackson, *The source of Jerusalem the golden*, p.40.

²⁶*Dictionnaire des auteurs grecs et latins*, p.120-121.

²⁷Kimón Giocarínis opines that it "almost certainly does not" belong to Bernard of Morlaix. "Bernard of Cluny and the antique," *Classica et mediaevalia*, 27(1966):320.

²⁸See discussion of the experience of Ordericus Vitalis, below, p.26.

²⁹Schröder, "Ein niederrheinischer Contemptus mundi" p.342.

³⁰Harry Caplan, "Rhetorical invention in some mediaeval tractates on preaching," *Speculum; a journal of mediaeval studies* 2(1927):284-295.

³¹*Chartula nostra*, 1-2.

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Istum sermonem, quia non capis hanc rationem.
Sed pater immensus det tibi sensus,
Roboret etatem, tribuatque tibi probitatem.³²

There is a sermon on the parable of the unjust steward which is attributed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Migne comments: "Indignus Bernardo nostro. Est Bernardi alterius monachi Cluniacensis."³³ It has a brief preface, addressed to Bishop Matthew, which has stylistic similarities to the preface of Bernard of Morlaix's *De contemptu mundi*, but not beyond what might be expected from the conventions of the twelfth century. It has some classical allusions and quotations (for example, "Scire tuum nihil est, nisi scire tuum hoc sciat alter"³⁴), which is consistent with Bernard of Morlaix's style. It is attributed to Bernard of Morlaix in the *Histoire littéraire de la France*.³⁵ But an entry for the work in the catalogue of the library of the Benedictine abbey at Burton-on-Trent, dated about 1175, attributes the sermon to Ernardus. The modern editors of the catalogue consider that this attribution "may be more authoritative than Wilmar's attribution of the sermon to Bernard of Cluny."³⁶

S. M. Jackson gives translations of four very short pieces which he supposes may be by Bernard of Morlaix. They are, *Lines on the divine essence* and *Lines on the dread judgement of God*, from Additional MS 16, 895, and *Lines on Simeon, Abbot of York* and *Lines on Count Wulnoth*, from Cott. Cleopatra A. viii. 2, in the British Museum (now the British Library). The first two have themes similar to those of the *De Trinitate* and the *De contemptu mundi*, but the only reason to suppose that any of

³²ibid., 358-361.

³³*In parabolam de vilico iniquitatis sermo*, PL 184, 1021-1052.

³⁴PL 184, 1028. Persius, 1, 26-27.

³⁵*Histoire littéraire de la France*, tome 12, Paris, Palmé, 1869, p. 242-243.

³⁶*English Benedictine libraries; the shorter catalogue*, edited by R. Sharpe [and others], London, British Library and British Academy, 1996 (Corpus of British medieval library catalogues, 4), p. 41.

these four works comes from Bernard's pen is that they appear in manuscripts which contain also the *De contemptu mundi*.

Bernard's monastic audience

The poems of Bernard of Morlaix were written for a monastic audience. In the *De octo vitiis*, for example, his homilies on the deadly sins are explicitly addressed to monks.³⁷ In the *De castitate servanda* he makes a distinction which seems to suggest that he is taking a wider view.

Nec tamen ex hoc nos in turbis esse negamus
Non paucos homines qui bene contineant.
Sed celebs aliud, aliud qui continet exstat:
Dignior ille deo est, dignus et iste satis.³⁸

It is tempting to read this as a reference to that chastity which is proper within Christian marriage, as defined, for example, by Pope Pius XII in *Casti conubii*.³⁹ It is a theme which Bernard might have developed. In *De contemptu mundi* he says of the people of the Golden Age:

Nulla libidinis, unica germinis insita cura;
Tunc sacra vincula, tunc dabat oscula crimine pura.⁴⁰

The inspiration for Bernard's Golden Age was classical rather than Christian, but he clearly had a basis for development of a theory of chastity which included marital relations. The fact that he does not explore marital chastity is an indication that he is addressing a celibate audience.

³⁷See especially his homilies on avarice (465-474) and gluttony (588-589).

³⁸*De castitate servanda*, 57-60.

³⁹Henricus Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum fidei et morum*, 13th ed, Barcelona, Herder, 1960, p.644-654.

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Bernard's inspiration for *De castitate servanda* was, as he says in his dedication, John Cassian.⁴¹ Saint Benedict regarded his own Rule as a framework to be filled out by the teachings of other writers, among whom Cassian came to have pride of place. He was required reading in Benedictine monasteries.⁴² The passage in Cassian's *De coenobiorum institutis* which Bernard is paraphrasing reads as follows:

Nemo tamen ex hoc negare nos putet, etiam in congregatione fratrum positos inveniri continentes, quod perfacile fieri posse confitemur. Aliud enim est, continentem esse, id est, ἡγκρατῆ; aliud castum, et, ut ita dicam, in affectum integritatis vel incorruptionis transire, quod dicitur ἡγνῶν ...⁴³

Bernard's "in turbis" does not, in this case, mean "in the world in general". It corresponds to Cassian's "in the community of the brethren". And the distinction which Bernard makes between "chastity" and "continence" does not refer to the difference between celibate and married chastity, but to the difference between those (like Saint John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, and Daniel⁴⁴) who have achieved perfect chastity ("Vero castos, incorruptos," "qui virgines, vel mente, vel carne perdurant"⁴⁵) and those (like most monks) who are still struggling hard to be chaste, and who, either from fear of hell or desire for heaven, manage, from day to day, to win the battle against the flesh.⁴⁶

To the extent that Bernard's poems are florilegia, the fact that they are addressed to a monastic audience requires no explanation. There is in all the poems an element of extraction and re-presentation of passages from past literature in order to provide an anthology of the wisdom of the past. Such material

⁴⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 2,49-50.

⁴¹*De castitate servanda*, Preface, 14-15.

⁴²Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p.154.

⁴³John Cassian, *De coenobiorum institutis*, PL 49,53-474.

⁴⁴Cassian, *Inst.* 6,4, PL 49,271; *De castitate servanda*, 68-69.

⁴⁵Cassian, loc. cit.

was important for the instruction of novices. But the poems range in genre from satire through complaint to homily.⁴⁷

John Peter takes the view that Bernard is not very much aware of his audience, and that what matters to him is "simply the principle of world-forgetfulness, now by the world unhappily forgot."⁴⁸ It may be that Bernard does not have that special kind of awareness of and sensitivity to the readership he is addressing which we find in writers whose genre is satire proper rather than complaint and homily, but, if the *Chartula nostra* is his, he is not without skill in writing for a particular readership. A careful reading of his poems suggests that, throughout, the audience he has in mind is a monastic one. That becomes especially clear in *De octo vitiis*. In dealing with lust, he has a description of the wiles of women which appears, on the face of it, to be addressed to young laymen. "Young man, young man", he says, "gallop away from her with a loose rein."⁴⁹ But a little later in the same passage, he says, "Not in your monastic habit, not in your years, as advanced as Nestor's, not in the copious tears you have shed on account of lofty Sion, and especially not in yourself should you trust. You must run away from this fight."⁵⁰ Bernard, in fact, is a monk writing for monks. When he writes about women⁵¹ and homosexuals,⁵² it is the temptations they present to monks that he is concerned with. When he condemns gluttony and drunkenness,⁵³ it is in the context of monastic mortification of the flesh.

The fifteen extant manuscripts of *De contemptu mundi* and the inclusion of it, or of parts of it, in many twelfth-century

⁴⁶Cassian, loc. cit.; *De castitate servanda*, 78-81.

⁴⁷See below, Chapters 2-4.

⁴⁸John Peter, *Complaint and satire in early English literature*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956, p.37.

⁴⁹*De octo vitiis*, 641.

⁵⁰ibid., 654-656.

⁵¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 429-562; *De octo vitiis*, 599-811.

⁵²*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 177-200; *De octo vitiis*, 930-984.

⁵³*De octo vitiis*, 482-598.

anthologies⁵⁴ suggest that the poem was popular in its day, but that popularity may have been limited to cloistered audiences. It may be that, throughout the middle ages, Bernard's manuscripts had little circulation outside the monasteries. He seems not to have been a monk like Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who was deeply involved in affairs outside his monastery. It is only from *De octo vitiis* that we know of his visit to Rome. No mention of him is made by any of his contemporaries,⁵⁵ or by anybody else, for that matter, until the sixteenth century, when the *De contemptu mundi* caught the interest of the Protestant reformers. He seems to have led, in the spirit of Saint Benedict, the monastic life which he recommends to his brethren.

Good man, hide yourself from the corrupting temptations of lust. Escape from the fiery weapons of the flesh in the security of the cloister. You will be safe if you take on the burden of monastic obedience. If you chase after Dinah, your giddy behaviour will bring you to ruin.⁵⁶ If you stick to the seclusion of the cloister and spurn the fickle whirl of the mob, you will stand firm. You are people who wish to live in tranquillity, and you should not let yourselves be tempted to follow the devil ... Oh monk! What are you doing among the crowds? The monk has only one vocation, only one way of life rewards him.⁵⁷

He remains an Englishman?

In the manuscripts of the *De contemptu mundi*, Bernard is variously styled Morlanensis, Morvalensis and Morlacensis. Attempts have been made to associate him with towns called

⁵⁴A.G. Rigg, *A history of Anglo-Latin literature 1066-1422*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.149.

⁵⁵Except, possibly, by Peter the Venerable; see below, p.30.

⁵⁶The reference is to Genesis 34, where Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah, is raped by Shechem, who is subsequently killed (together with his father and all his tribe) by Dinah's brothers.

⁵⁷*De octo vitiis*, 801-811.

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Morval, Morlas and Morlaix. H. C. Hoskier favours Morval, on the grounds that it is supported by the earliest manuscript of the *De contemptu mundi*.⁵⁸ C. D'Evelyn points out that Hoskier has overlooked British Museum manuscript Harley 4092, which distinctly names Bernard "Bernardus Morlanensis."⁵⁹ The *Histoire littéraire de la France* says that Morvalensis ("que Fabricius explique de la vallée de Maurienne") is the rarest appellation and that Morlanensis ("que Pitseus rapporte à une ville d'Angleterre sans la désigner") and Morlacensis are used indifferently in old maps to designate citizens of Morlas in the county of Bigorre. It therefore leans towards Morlas, a conclusion which the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* confirms.⁶⁰ The *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* calls him Bernard de Morlaix. It mentions Morlaix (Finistère), Murlas (near Puy-en-Béarn) and Murles as possible birth places.⁶¹ James Westfall Thompson was the first (and only) scholar to make the case for Murles. He speculates that Bernard was the third son of William V of Montpellier, the brother of Guillemette who married Bernard IV of Melgueil, and that he was therefore related to Pons de Melgueil, who was abbot of Cluny from 1108-1122. "He became a monk first in the monastery of St Sauveur d'Aniane, whence he passed to the abbey of Cluny, probably during the rule of the abbot Pons."⁶²

Since he was quite certainly a Cluniac monk, Bernard has frequently been called Bernard of Cluny (Bernardus Cluniacensis). He is so styled by Katarina Halvarson and Ronald E. Pepin, for example. That avoids the problem of association

⁵⁸ Hoskier, *De contemptu mundi*, p.xv.

⁵⁹C.D'Evelyn, "A lost manuscript of the *De contemptu mundi*," *Speculum* 6(1931):132-133.

⁶⁰*Histoire littéraire de la France*, v.12, p.236-237; *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique ...* vol.1, Paris, Beauchesne, 1937, col.1506.

⁶¹*Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, vol.8, Paris, Letouzey, 1912, col. 699.

⁶²James Westfall Thompson, "On the identity of Bernard of Cluny," *The journal of theological studies*, 8(1907):394-400.

with uncertain towns, but it raises problems of its own. In the first place, the text of the prologue of the *De contemptu mundi* suggests that Bernard, at the time he wrote the *De contemptu mundi*, was not a monk at Cluny itself, but at Nogent.⁶³

There is another reason why the appellation "Bernard of Cluny" is not helpful. At least two other Cluniac monks who lived at about the same time are styled Bernard of Cluny. One was prior of Cluny while Peter the Venerable was abbot.⁶⁴ Another was the author of *Consuetudines Cluniacenses*, which the *New Catholic encyclopedia* attributes to the author of *De contemptu mundi*, though the date of compilation of the *Consuetudines* makes that attribution unlikely.⁶⁵ The problem of names is evident from entries in *Medioevo latino*, where there is some confusion between various Bernards, but where the style "Bernardus Morlanensis, Cluniacensis monachus" seems now to be established

⁶³*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus. "Ante hos enim dies cum essetis Nogenti et aliquam opusculorum nostrorum acceptione vestra dignatus fuissetis ..." This was not Nogent-sous-Coucy (Guibert's abbey) which was not a Cluniac foundation. Nor was it Nogent-sur-Oise, which, though Cluniac, was not established until 1368 (Philippe Racinet, *Les maisons de l'ordre de Cluny au moyen âge*, Brussels, Nauwelaerts, 1990 (Bibliothèque de la revue de l'histoire ecclésiastique, fascicule 86), p.126). It was Nogent-le-Rotrou, which is near Chartres. (M. Pacaut, *L'Ordre de Cluny (909-1789)*, Paris, Fayard, 1986, p.414. See also *The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.1, p.344, v.2., p.190, 269.)

⁶⁴Bernard Gros, who was prior in 1114. An article about him (G. M. Cantarella, "Due note Cluniacensi", *Studi medievali* 16(1975):763-780) is indexed under "Bernardus Cluniacensis" in *Medioevo Latino*.

⁶⁵*New Catholic encyclopedia*, v.2., New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, p.338-339. Migne says of Bernard of Cluny's *Consuetudines Cluniacenses* that it was written at the same time as Ulrich's *Consuetudines*. He gives the text of Bernard of Cluny's introduction, and it is addressed to Abbot Hugh (PL 149, 633). St. Hugh died in 1109. The pontificate of Eugene III began in 1145, which is the earliest possible date for Bernard's visit to Rome. The identification of the Bernards is therefore just possible, but it seems unlikely that so young a monk would be commissioned to compile *Consuetudines*. See also *Histoire littéraire de la France*, v.12, p.237.

for the author of *De contemptu mundi*.⁶⁶ The latest edition of Buchwald lists him as Bernard de Morlaix.⁶⁷

There is a persistent tradition that Bernard was an Englishman. In John Bale's *Index Britanniae scriptorum* (compiled between 1548 and 1552), Bernardus Morlanensis is listed as the author of *De contemptu mundi* and other works.⁶⁸ Bale gives John Boston of Bury's catalogue as his source, perhaps under the mistaken impression that Boston listed only British authors.⁶⁹ The *De contemptu mundi* is included in the Rolls series.⁷⁰ Digby S. Wrangham roundly asserts that Bernard "was an Englishman by extraction, both his parents being natives of this country", but he offers no sources.⁷¹ Of the fifteen extant manuscripts of *De contemptu mundi*, only ten are complete. It is perhaps significant that, of those ten, six are in libraries in England (five in the British Library, one in the Bodleian Library).⁷²

Bernard mentions, as a sign that the end is nigh, the Siamese twins known as the Biddenden maids of Kent.

⁶⁶*Medioevo Latino*, Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, v.1, 1980 -. Even in a recent issue, the author of the *Consuetudines* is confused with the author of the *De contemptu mundi* (16(1995):637-638).

⁶⁷*Dictionnaire des auteurs grecs et latins*, p.120-121.

⁶⁸John Bale, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, ed. Reginald Lane Poole and Mary Bateson, Cambridge, Brewer, 1990 (First published Oxford, 1902) p.47. See also Bale's *Scriptorum illustrium Majoris Brytanniae ... catalogus*, Basel, 1557-1559, 2v. (Facsimile reprint Gregg International, 1971), v.2., p.38: "a Bostono Buriensi in magno suo catalogo, inter Anglicos scriptores numeravit." Richard H. Rouse has established that Boston of Bury is in fact Henry of Kirkestede, monk and prior of Bury St.Edmunds, and librarian during the third quarter of the fourteenth century ("Bostonus Buriensis and the author of the *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiae*," *Speculum* 4(1966):471-499).

⁶⁹Jackson, *The source of "Jerusalem the golden,"* p.91-92.

⁷⁰Wright, *The Anglo-Latin satirical poets*, v.2.

⁷¹A *dictionary of hymnology*, edited by John Julian, 2nd. ed., London, Murray, 1907, p.137.

⁷²Pepin, *Scorn of the world*, p.xxvi.

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In the English countryside a woman was born with two heads and two legs, and with four arms. Her two chests and four breasts made her a marvel. Please believe me. I am quite certain about this. What I write is true. The women did everything together, walking together and sitting together. The wonder of it! One of the women (they were, of course, sisters) died, and the other was left disconsolate. A little later, she followed her sister in death, as though they were both parts of one person, released by death.⁷³

The maids, Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst, were born in 1100 and died in 1134,⁷⁴ which helps to establish the date of the poem. Bernard's description of them does not constitute proof of his Englishness. He mentions in the same context other prodigies (a winged dragon, a Spanish magician and a man "in regionibus orientis" who claimed to be the Antichrist) who have no connection with England. But we may consider also his affectionate reference to Saint Gregory, the Apostle of the English, as "Gregorius meus."⁷⁵ There are a few other scattered references in his poems which might be taken to give some support to the tradition that Bernard was an Englishman,⁷⁶ but the internal evidence is not strong.

There would be nothing strange about an English monk at a Cluniac monastery in France in the twelfth century. Ordericus Vitalis (who frequently called himself "Angligena") was born near Shrewsbury in 1075. When he was ten years old, his father sent him to the monastery of Saint-Évroul in Normandy.

⁷³*De contemptu mundi*, 1,1049ff.

⁷⁴William Hone, *The every-day book and table book, or everlasting calendar of popular amusements, sports, pastimes, ceremonies, manners, customs and events incident to each of the three hundred and sixty-five days ...*, London, Tegg, 1835-1837, 3v., v.2, columns 442-450. According to the account reprinted by Hone, the maids were joined at shoulders and hips, in such a way that they had two arms and four legs. Bernard gives them two legs and four arms (*De contemptu mundi*, 1,1051).

⁷⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 3,309.

⁷⁶For example, "dabit Anglia lac," *De contemptu mundi*, 2,907.

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So, weeping, he gave me, a weeping child, into the care of the monk Reginald, and sent me away into exile for love of thee [God] and never saw me again. And I, a mere boy, did not presume to oppose my father's wishes, but obeyed him willingly in all things ... And so, a boy of ten, I crossed the English Channel and came into Normandy as an exile, unknown to all, knowing no one. Like Joseph in Egypt, I heard a language which I did not understand. But thou didst suffer me through thy grace to find nothing but kindness and friendship among strangers. I was received as an oblate monk in the abbey of Saint-Évroul by the venerable Abbot Mainer in the eleventh year of my age and was tonsured as a clerk on Sunday, 21 September. In place of my English name, the name Vitalis was given me ... On 15th March, when I was sixteen years old ... Gilbert, bishop of Lisieux, ordained me subdeacon. Then, two years later, on 26th March, Serlo, bishop of Séez, laid the stole of the diaconate on my shoulders ... At length in my thirty-third year, William, archbishop of Rouen, laid the burden of priesthood on me on 21 December ... and I have now loyally performed the sacred offices for thee with a joyful heart for thirty-four years.⁷⁷

Another example of an Englishman of Bernard's time who went to a monastery in France is Serlo of Wilton. Unlike Orderic, he did not go as a child. He was born in 1105 and entered the Cluniac house at Charité-sur-Loire in 1155. He left the Cluniacs for the Cistercians, joining the community at L'Aumône in the 1160's and becoming abbot in 1173.⁷⁸

It is quite possible that Bernard's experience may have been somewhat similar. It is worth remarking that the only contemporary of Bernard's who is known to have carried the appellation "Morlanensis" was Danielus Morlanensis, who was certainly an Englishman. Daniel of Morley came from Norfolk, in which county he held the rectory of Flitcham until 1205. He

⁷⁷Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, PL 188,982-983. The translation is that of Marjorie Chibnall, *The ecclesiastical history of Orderic Vitalis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972-1980, 6v. (Oxford medieval texts). Vol 6, p.555-557.

⁷⁸A.G. Rigg, "Serlo of Wilton, biographical notes," *Medium aevum* 65(1996):96-101.

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seems to have had distant connections with a family from Morlaix in Calvados, Normandy, though the place name Morley in Norfolk is Anglo-Saxon. It is spelled Morlea in the Domesday Book.⁷⁹ The modern villages of Morley St. Peter and Morley St. Botolph in Norfolk indicate where his family had its main possessions.⁸⁰ At the risk of making confusion worse confounded, one is tempted to suggest that Bernardus Morlanensis came from the same family as Danielus Morlanensis, and that we should call him Bernard of Morley. The speculation is, perhaps, less wild than that of James Westfall Thompson.

Bernard of Morlaix was certainly the author of the poems *De contemptu mundi*, *Carmina de Trinitate et de fide Catholica*, *De castitate servanda*, *In libros Regum* and *De octo vitiis*. He may also have written the poem *Mariale* and the prose work *Instructio sacerdotis* and the poem *Chartula nostra*. He probably did not write the prose works *Sermo in parabolam de vilico iniquitatis* or *Consuetudines Cluniacenses*, which are sometimes ascribed to him, or any of the short pieces which Jackson found in manuscripts which also contain the *De contemptu mundi*. He may have been an Englishman from Morley in Norfolk. He was certainly a Cluniac monk who spent some time at the priory of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou during the period when Peter the Venerable was abbot of Cluny. He may, indeed, have been prior of Nogent.

⁷⁹LDB Norfolk 166b, 227b.

⁸⁰*Dictionary of national biography*, edited by Sidney Lee, vol. 13, London, Smith, Elder, 1909, p.971. See also R. W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste; the growth of an English mind in medieval Europe*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p.88-90; Gregor Maurac, "Daniel von Morley, 'Philosophia'," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 14(1979):204-255; Theodore Silverstein, "Daniel of Morley; English cosmographer and student of Arabic science," *Mediaeval studies* 10(1948):179-196; Brian Stock, *Myth and science in the twelfth century; a study of Bernard Silvester*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1972, p.262-273; Lynn Thorndike, "Daniel of Morley," *The English historical review* 37(1922):540-544.

The priory of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou

Geoffrey, lord of Nogent and viscount of Châteaudun, founded the monastery of Saint-Denis (Sanctus Dionysius) de Nogent-le-Rotrou (Novigentum Rotroci) on the banks of the river Huine in the diocese of Chartres (Department of Eure-et-Loir). The first foundations were laid in 1028 or 1029 and the first charter of the abbey is dated 1031.⁸¹ In the early years of the abbey, there was strife among the monks because they had come from various different monasteries and could not agree about monastic customs. In 1078, Rotrou, count of la Perche, brought in a new abbot and a group of monks from Saint-Père de Chartres, in an attempt to introduce stronger rule. But the new abbot offended Rotrou's successor, Geoffrey IV.⁸² In 1081, the abbot and the monks from Saint-Père were expelled, and Saint Hugh, abbot of Cluny, was asked to send monks from Cluny to reform Saint-Denis. What followed was, in effect, a new foundation, for the abbey was demoted to a priory under the full control of Cluny. Saint Hugh sent two monks, Robert and Hubert, and it was Hubert who became the first prior of the new priory.⁸³ Cluny was confirmed in possession of Saint-Denis in 1095 by pope Urban II.⁸⁴

Priorities immediately and entirely dependent on Cluny formed the most important group of monasteries in the Cluniac family.

⁸¹There is no account of the abbey/priory in *Gallia Christiana*, though it is shown in the map of the diocese of Chartres in that publication (*Gallia Christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa* ... Paris, Coignard, 1715-1865, 16v., reprinted Gregg 1970). But the charters relating to it which are held in the archives of the diocese have been edited and published, and that is the source of most of our information about it (*Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1031-1789, histoire et cartulaire*, édition revue et augmentée par le vicomte de Souancé et l'abbé Ch. Métais, Vannes, Lafolye, 1899.) But see also Guy de Valous, *Le monachisme clusien des origines au XVe siècle*, Paris, Picard, 1979, v.2, p.201 and H.E. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian reform*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, p.105-106, 109.

⁸²*Cartulaire*, p.xxii-xxiii.

⁸³*ibid.*, p.xxiv and Charter 117, p.238-240.

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Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou was among the larger of those priories, which varied considerably in size, some of the smaller ones being little more than granges.⁸⁵ In 1350, there were 19 monks at Nogent-le-Rotrou, and it had 19 dependent houses in Chartres and one in Poitou.⁸⁶

In the course of the history of the priory, two priors called Bernard are recorded. The first was Bernard of Narbonne, who, in 1109, made a hasty journey to Cluny, in response to instructions from Saint Dionysius, who had appeared to him in a dream, telling him that his abbot, Hugh, was on the point of death. When he arrived, Hugh was already dead. Bernard reported to Hugh's successor, Pons de Melgeuil, that he had had another vision, this time of Hugh being received in heaven by Saint Benedict and others. Hugh, in the vision, instructed Bernard to tell Pons to be always humble, to do works of mercy, to overlook injuries, to console the afflicted and to obey zealously the Benedictine Rule. Three days later, Bernard died⁸⁷.

Bernard of Narbonne was succeeded as prior of Saint-Denis by Guicher, who was, in turn, succeeded in about 1120 by another Bernard, called only "Bernardus Secundus," who, in that year, was engaged in litigation with the monks of Tiron about certain properties. He was prior in 1124, when the rivalry between Saint-Père and Cluny was finally brought to an end, and in 1125, when there was a dispute about the churches at Brou and Unverre and about vineyards at Brou and Montmirail. On 24 January 1130, Bernard, at the request of Rotrou, count of Perche, handed over to the monks of Tiron the tithe of Vieux-Tiron, and that of a

⁸⁴PL 151, 435-436. "Confirmatio S. Dionysii de Nogento, per domnum Urbanum II papam facta."

⁸⁵Noreen Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh, 1049-1109*, London, Arnold, 1967, p.159.

⁸⁶De Valous, *Le monachisme clunisien*, p.201.

⁸⁷*Cartulaire*, p.li-liii and documents annexes 136 and 137, p. 279-282.

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field at Blainville.⁸⁸ After that, there is no record of the priors of Saint-Denis until prior Yves in 1160. Nor is there very much information about the priory.

In 1130, Peter the Venerable wrote a letter to Geoffrey, bishop of Chartres, about the priory at Châteaudun, in which he mentions the prior of Nogent-le-Rotrou, but does not name him.⁸⁹ About 1135, Gervais de Malmouche gave to the priory some property near Pin. On 20 January 1144, Rotrou was killed before Rouen. His body was buried in the vault of the church of the priory.⁹⁰

The question arises whether Bernardus Secundus, prior of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, is the same person as Bernard of Morlaix. With regard to dates, it is perfectly possible. The internal evidence of the *De contemptu mundi* gives us a terminus a quo of 1134, when the Biddenden maids died,⁹¹ and the internal evidence of the *De octo vitiis* puts the author's visit to Rome in 1145-1146, 1149-1150 or 1152-1153.⁹²

It is reasonably certain that Bernard of Morlaix was at Nogent-le-Rotrou. In the dedicatory prologue of the *De contemptu mundi* he writes to Peter the Venerable:

Some time ago, when you were at Nogent, you were kind enough to accept another of my little works. So now I offer you this work, since I mentioned it to you at

⁸⁸*Cartulaire*, p.lv11-lx and Charters 63 (1120), 119 (1124), 39 (1125), 40 (1125) and 120 (1130).

⁸⁹"Quid enim dignum referre possim his, quae per priorem de Nogento cognovi? Qui mihi scripsit, quantum amoris affectum erga Cluniacensem ecclesiam seque specialiter ac suos agnoverit quantumque hoc non affectu tantum, sed effectu probaverit?" *Cartulaire*, p. 282-285. See also *The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.2, p.341-343, letter 137 and v.2, p.190. Constable gives the date as 1135/48.

⁹⁰*Cartulaire*, p.lix-lx.

⁹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,1049ff.; Hone, *The everyday book*, v.2, columns 442-450.

⁹²*De octo vitiis*, 1365-1381. See also below, p.61.

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that time and you are expecting it. I could not give it to you then because I did not have it to hand ... If we do not meet, I will send you the work, which was written with the help of God. If we do meet, I will hand it to you.⁹³

It is true that the vow of stability did not prevent a certain amount of travel by ordinary Benedictine monks in the twelfth century, but the passage quoted above would seem to be better interpreted as meaning that Bernard was a monk at Nogent, and that he met Peter in the course of the usual abbatial visitations, than that they both happened to meet at Nogent when Bernard was normally located at Cluny. And, if Bernard were located at Cluny, there would be no need for him to send his work to Peter.

It is true that Bernard was a common name in twelfth-century France, but a priory such as Nogent-le-Rotrou would not have hundreds of monks, as Cluny had at that time. Among the score or so of monks it probably had between 1120 and 1160, it is not as likely as was the case at Cluny that several would be called Bernard. And perhaps it is not unlikely that the man who wrote the poems and was sent on a mission to Rome would hold the office of prior.

Kimón Giocarínis attaches considerable significance to the supposition that Bernard was at Cluny itself, and maintains that Bernard's latinity and classical learning throw light on "the nature of twelfth century *monastic* humanism, in general, and the culture of our poet's immediate environment, the monastery of Cluny under the abbacy of Peter the Venerable, in particular ... That a writer like Bernard should have lived and worked at Cluny and that he should have found it possible while wearing the habit of a Cluniac to delve into the *auctores* and to give vent

⁹³*De contemptu mundi, Prologus.*

to his strong urge to versify, is not at all surprising."⁹⁴ That argument loses something of its force if Bernard were, in fact Bernardus Secundus, prior of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, for, in that case, the poems would actually have been written at Nogent, even if Bernard were a monk of Cluny who was sent to Nogent from the mother house, like prior Hubert before him. Nogent, of course, did not have the important library resources of Cluny, to which Giocarinis draws attention. But its proximity to the great centre of learning at Chartres is worth noting. And Giocarinis' general points about Cluniac learning and spirituality remain unaffected.

Of Bernard's contemporaries, the writer who had most influence upon him was Hildebert of Lavardin. Hildebert is mentioned in the prologue of the *De contemptu mundi*, and his influence can be seen in Bernard's description of Rome, in his *Carmina de Trinitate* and in his satirical misogyny, as well as in his styles of verse and rhyme. They were not exact contemporaries. Hildebert was born in 1056 and died in 1133. He has been described as "one of the finest hymnologists of the Middle Ages" and "the outstanding classical scholar of his day."⁹⁵ In 1112, when he was bishop of Le Mans (he later became archbishop of Tours), he was imprisoned unlawfully at Nogent-le-Rotrou.⁹⁶ If Bernard was a young monk at Nogent at that time, it is possible that the two could have met.

James Westfall Thompson speculates unconvincingly that Bernard first entered the monastic life at Saint Sauveur d'Aniane while Pons de Melgueil was abbot of Cluny (that is, between 1109 and

⁹⁴Kimon Giocarinis, "Bernard of Cluny and the antique," p.311-312.

⁹⁵Dame Felicitas Corrigan (ed.), *More Latin lyrics, from Vergil to Milton*, translated by Helen Waddell, New York, Norton, 1976, p.260.

⁹⁶*Vita*, PL 171, 71-73; *Epistolae* 2,17, PL 171, 225-226; see also F.J.E. Raby, *A history of Christian-Latin poetry from the beginning to the close of the middle ages*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.265.

1122). He supposes that Bernard belonged to the house of Montpellier, to which Pons also belonged.⁹⁷ The story of Bernard of Narbonne's relations with Pons is related above. Whether Pons heeded the admonitions of Saint Hugh which were passed on to him by Bernard of Narbonne is not clear, but it is certain that the abbacy of Pons had an extraordinary effect on the family of Cluny.

The enigmatic Pons de Melgueil

The internal evidence of Bernard's poems makes it clear that they were written for a monastic audience.⁹⁸ That being so, it is worth enquiring whether there was anything in the affairs of Cluny in Bernard's time which prompted him to choose the themes of his poems and the admonitory and homiletic tones which he adopts.

An obvious candidate for consideration is the dramatic fall of Abbot Pons de Melgueil. The story is told, incidentally as it were, by Peter the Venerable, in the course of his encomium on Matthew of Albano in his *De miraculis*.⁹⁹ Peter describes how, when he was elected abbot of Cluny in 1122, he summoned Matthew, who was prior of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, to take in hand reforms at Cluny, where there had grown up recently certain faults which had to be eradicated. Matthew sought out and rectified various abuses of food, drink and customs ("noxia vel superflua quaeque in cibis, in potibus, in moribus") and, after a little while, Peter sent him back to Saint Martin's. Then, less than two years later, there arose a "horrenda tempestas" which was like a civil war in the Cluniac order.

⁹⁷Thompson, "On the identity of Bernard of Cluny," p.394-400.

⁹⁸See above, p.18.

⁹⁹PL 189, 920-926.

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At this point, Peter gives us a flashback to the election of abbot Pons. While the saintly abbot Hugh lay dying, in 1109, Pons was elected as his successor. Pons came from the Cluniac monastery of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières. During his first years in office, he behaved well, but as time went on his behaviour deteriorated, until nearly all of his monks became dissatisfied, complaining of his inconstancy and levity and his wasting of the monastery's goods. The dispute reached the ears of Pope Calixtus II. Pons rushed off to Rome as fast as he could, and begged the pope to release him from his duties. Calixtus reluctantly agreed, and Pons went off to Jerusalem, where he proposed to stay. The pope told the Cluniacs to elect a new abbot, and they chose a venerable man, Hugh, who was prior of the nuns at Marcigny, but Hugh died scarcely five months later,¹⁰⁰ whereupon a date was set for a new election. Peter the Venerable (Pierre Maurice de Montboissier) was elected. As described above, Peter called in prior Matthew to put the house in order, and Cluniac affairs proceeded peacefully.

But meanwhile, says Peter, Pons grew weary of living overseas. He came back to Italy and settled near Vicenza, where he built a small community ("monasteriolum"). Then he made his way back to France. Knowing that Peter was away in Aquitaine, Pons approached Cluny by stages, gathering supporters (fugitive monks and common soldiers) as he went. When he reached Cluny, he overcame the resistance of prior Bernard and burst into the cloisters with his rabble of followers, including even women. He forced the monks, by threats and torture, to swear allegiance to him. He melted down the treasures and sacred vessels of Cluny to pay his followers. With those followers, he waged a campaign to subdue the villas and granges of the monastery in the surrounding countryside. "Abstinet a nulla bellorum specie, rapinis rerum, caedibus hominum." This went on for the whole Summer, from the beginning of Lent to the kalends of October.

¹⁰⁰Actually, it was only three months. Marcel Pacaut, *L'ordre de*

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Prior Bernard and a few faithful monks managed to escape and took refuge where they could.

Summoned by Pope Honorius II (Calixtus had died in 1124), Peter and his party, including Matthew, and Pons and his party, went to Rome. Pons had been excommunicated, and could not be heard until the excommunication was lifted, but he obstinately refused to make any kind of satisfaction for his sins, claiming to be answerable only to Saint Peter in heaven. At this point, Pons' followers deserted him, because he was not only excommunicate but schismatic. They repented and were absolved. Pons was deposed from all ecclesiastical honours and privileges, and died soon afterwards in an epidemic of Roman fever ("Romanus ille pestifer morbus"), which struck down many on both sides of the dispute, including Peter himself, who took more than six months to recover. The Pope wrote to Peter to say that, although Pons had died impenitent, he had been given an honourable burial out of respect for the monastery of Cluny.

That, in brief summary, is the account Peter the Venerable gives in *De miraculis*. Bernard's poems fit very well into the context described by Peter. The monastic communities throughout the Cluniac order were weakened by the laxity introduced under Pons, which was no sooner corrected by Matthew, under Peter's direction, than further great disruption was caused by the return of Pons and his outrageous activities. Bernard could have begun composition of *De contemptu mundi* as early as 1126, the date of Pons' death.¹⁰¹ It might have been written as part of Peter's campaign of reform, which gave rise to his circular letter to all Cluniac priors and sub-priors ("Loquar an sileam? Aperiam labia an claudam?")¹⁰² and led to the *Statuta* of 1147.¹⁰³

Cluny (909-1789), Paris, Fayard, 1986, p.195.

¹⁰¹Bernard implies in the dedication of the poem that he had been working on it for at least eight years (*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus).

¹⁰²*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.1, p.388-394.

¹⁰³PL 189,1025-1048.

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Bernard's castigation of sin and his apocalyptic call for repentance and return to the monastic life would fit very well into such a scenario.

But Peter's account is not without certain internal difficulties of interpretation. For example, when dealing with Matthew's reform of abuses introduced by Pons, Peter gives the impression that they were to do with food and drink and monastic customs. But later, he gives a quite different reason for the monks' dissatisfaction with Pons' administration. Pons was wasting the monastery's assets.

Dissentientes illi ab eo, et quod multa mobilitate vel levitate animi, nullis bonorum consiliis acquiescendo, ut dicebant, res monasterii pessundaret.¹⁰⁴

Again, it is difficult to understand why Pons was allowed to inflict the violence which Peter reports upon Cluny and its neighbouring villas and granges from February to October 1125, why Peter was so slow to react, why he went directly to Rome rather than back to Cluny, and why the Pope took so long to summon the two parties to Rome.

No doubt these and similar difficulties can be explained by the admittedly selective nature of Peter's account¹⁰⁵ and the apparent inconsistencies can be removed by careful interpretation. But we have another account of the affair. It comes from Ordericus Vitalis, and might be said to have rather more authority than Peter's account. It is true that Orderic was not at Cluny at the time (neither was Peter) but Orderic's account is earlier than Peter's by a decade,¹⁰⁶ and Orderic had not the direct involvement as a principal actor which Peter had.

¹⁰⁴PL 189, 922.

¹⁰⁵"Quantum ad praesentem materiam pertinet, succinte describo." PL 189, 922.

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In his account of the death of abbot Hugh I, Orderic adds the detail that Hugh himself, on his deathbed, confirmed the election of Pons as his successor, and Orderic comments that Pons, son of the count of Melgueil, succeeded to the abbacy of Cluny, but that after some time he resigned it "pro diversis occasionibus," set out on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and, on his return, died in the prison of Pope Calixtus. "His sanctity," says Orderic, "is gloriously demonstrated by the evidence of miracles at his tomb."¹⁰⁷ Later, in his account of the Council of Rheims in 1119, Orderic deals with abbot Pons' dignified response to the accusations levelled against Cluny by the archbishop of Lyons and the bishop of Mâcon. He describes Pons in terms of glowing praise as a man of learning and piety, distinguished in behaviour and lineage, and of very attractive personality. He was the son of a count, godson of pope Paschal II, closely related to kings and emperors. "Tot charismatum prerogativus redimitus, fortis in adversantes aemulos stabat et rigidus."¹⁰⁸

According to Orderic, the hostility of the bishops was part of the reason for Pons' resignation. They took from the Cluniacs many of their possessions, and encouraged the rebellion of the secular clergy, "qui semper invident monachis." Subjected to oppression and insults, the monks fled from various priories and granges to the mother house at Cluny, "quasi oves de faucibus luporum." There arose a disagreement among the monks in Cluny itself. Some of them made accusations against Pons to pope Calixtus, claiming that he was wasting the wealth of the monastery in unnecessary lawsuits ("quod in actibus suis vehemens esset et prodigus, ac monasticos sumptus immoderate distraheret in causis inutilibus"). Orderic says nothing about

¹⁰⁶H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Abbot Pontius of Cluny (1109-1122/6)," *Studi Gregoriani*, 1978: 177-277.p.215.

¹⁰⁷Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, PL 188,843-844. *The ecclesiastical history of Ordericus Vitalis*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972-1978, v.6, p.170.

¹⁰⁸PL 188,879. Chibnall, v.6, p.268..

any abuses of food and drink and monastic customs, but he does throw some light on Peter's other accusation, namely that Pons wasted the goods of the monastery. It seems that he spent the money on legal suits in defence of the monastery against the depredations of the bishops.

Orderic says that Pons was infuriated when he heard about the action of some of his monks, and that he unwisely ("inconsulte") resigned his office in the presence of the Pope and set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. That is significantly different from Peter's account. The point of a pilgrimage is not only to go, but to come back. Orderic implies doubt about the finality of Pons' resignation ("officio relicto") and says nothing about Pons' intention to remain in Jerusalem for good.¹⁰⁹ Adriaan Bredero sees Pons' pilgrimage as a kind of displacement activity.

Pons had first made a journey to Jerusalem, a customary reaction in that period on the occasion of a social impasse, and could be seen as an act of eschatologically determined resignation in the face of problems with which he could no longer cope.¹¹⁰

Peter says that Pons went to Jerusalem with the approval of Pope Calixtus, but Orderic says he went without permission. Orderic proceeds with an account of the election and death of Hugh II and the election of Peter. Then he goes on to describe Pons' return to Cluny, for the purpose, says Orderic, of seeing his brothers and friends. At this point, Orderic's narrative is radically different from Peter's. Orderic makes Bernard Grossus (Bernard of Uxelles, who in his youth had been a soldier¹¹¹), who was prior of Cluny, the instigator of the plot of violence

¹⁰⁹PL 188,894. Chibnall, v.6, p.311.

¹¹⁰Adriaan H. Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity in the middle ages*, translated by Reinder Bruinsma, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994, p.140. But he gives only one other example of such a pilgrimage, that of Arnold of Cologne in 1124 (p.79-80).

¹¹¹Joan Evans, *Monastic life at Cluny 910-1157*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1931, p.39.

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("fomes et incensor seditionis"), by forcibly opposing those monks who wished to welcome Pons. But the knights and people of the region, and the people of the town of Cluny, were very pleased to see Pons, and when they found he was being excluded from the monastery, they forced their way in. Orderic says this was against Pons' will ("licet ipse hoc noluisset"). The mob, not only decent men and women, but even rogues and prostitutes ("scurris ac meretricibus") burst in and began to plunder the abbey. But they were not there long, because the newly-built nave of the abbey church collapsed, and this sign of God's displeasure frightened them away.¹¹² The monks who sided with Peter in this dispute hastened off to find him, and he promptly set out for Rome. The Pope immediately summoned Pons, who went to Rome but refused to present himself to face charges. The Pope confirmed Peter in his office, and threw Pons into prison, where he fell ill and died a little later.¹¹³

This is such a radically different account from Peter's that we would be at a loss to choose between them without further evidence. In 1932, André Wilmart found such evidence in the form of a letter from Pons to the monks of Cluny.¹¹⁴ It was written while Pons was on his way to Cluny, after his return from the Holy Land. The manuscript is in poor condition. In 1978, with the aid of ultra-violet light, Piero Zerbi produced the following improvement on Wilmart's reconstruction:

Dilectis fratribus in Domino Fr(ater) Po(ntius) crucis
Christi et eius piissime genit[ricis serv]us et abbas
indignus, salutem et fideles orationes. Quoniam
placuit vos propter indignitatem et inutilitatem
nostram repudium nobis mittere, gratum habemus. Nos
quoque per manum apostolici alterius vobis abbatis
regimen concessimus. Iccirco monemus atque rogamus
[univer]sitatem [vestr]am ne propter nos inter vos
s[ci]s[ma]ta ver[sentur] set in vinculo pacis

¹¹²PL 188,894-895. Chibnall, v.6, p.312-314.

¹¹³PL 188,895. Chibnall, v.6, p.314-316.

¹¹⁴André Wilmart, "Deux Pièces relatives à l'abdication de Pons abbé de Cluny en 122", *Revue bénédictine* 44(1932):351-353.

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unita[.....]u]xta [magn]um precep[tum] Christi
 [...]t[.....] [...]e eis.
 F[.....] [...]ne fratres qui ad
 nos venirent ca[.....] [.....]ut fugitivos eos
 habeatis [...]ra[...] [.....]ser[van]tes dilectione
 nostra commenda [.....] pati voluerint [.....]
 [.....]. Si quos autem nuncios pro nec[essitate]
 [.....] ne eos capiat[is] set [...ad ut]ilitatem
 vestram sustentetis. Nos enim in unitate corporis
 cuius caput Christus est vobis conectimur, orantes
 Dominum nostrum ut nos pariter gratia et misericordia
 sua perducatur ad vitam eternam. Commendamus nos
 humiliter vestris orationibus.¹¹⁵

The letter makes it clear that Pons had relinquished his office, but that he understood the relinquishment to be temporary. He is still abbot, even though "indignus". It is possible that the Cluniacs took the same view at the time of the election of Hugh II. They may have thought they were electing a stop-gap abbot, until Pons should return. But it is also abundantly clear that Pons was not, at the time that he wrote the letter, intending to return to Cluny to resume his office. He has yielded his rule to Peter, and he begs his brothers not to fight among themselves for his sake, but to live in the peace of Christ. He makes some request about the monks who have joined him, perhaps that they should not be treated as monks who have broken their vow of stability under the Benedictine Rule. He says he is joined to his brethren in the unity of the mystical body of which Christ is the head.

The tone of the letter is "one of humility and penitence, and of anxiety to promote the unity of the Cluniac family."¹¹⁶ It is not the letter of a man planning to take Cluny by storm, and it lends credibility to Orderic's account of the invasion of the abbey, especially that it happened against Pons' will, and that it lasted only one day. It would be worth while questioning,

¹¹⁵Piero Zerbi, *Tra Milano e Cluny; momenti di vita e cultura ecclesiastica nel secolo XII*, Rome, Herder, 1979 (Italia sacra; studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica, 28), p.355. There is a photographic copy of the manuscript on p.368.

¹¹⁶Cowdrey, "Abbot Pontius of Cluny," p.235.

therefore, Peter's account of a reign of terror at Cluny lasting from February to October 1125. H.E.J. Cowdrey makes a strong case for 1126 as the date of the period of violence. The brief, one-day violence at the abbey was followed by immediate action on the part of Peter (who went straight to Rome) and Honorius (who at once summoned Pons and Peter to a hearing to be held in September). Pons was dead by 28 or 29 December 1126.¹¹⁷ Peter's colourful picture of troubles in and around Cluny may be an exaggerated account of the actions of some of Pons' supporters, trying, in Pons' absence and without his approval, to secure his position in the abbey's villas and granges. Orderic, as we have seen, does not mention the reign of terror.

It seems that Pons was a more complex character than appears from Peter's account of him.¹¹⁸ He was also, in his heyday, a more highly regarded person than Peter shows him to be. In the *Historia Compostellana* there is a description of the death of Pope Gelasius II in 1119. He died in the monastery of Cluny, in which he had taken refuge, having been driven out of Rome by the supporters of the emperor's anti-pope, Gregory VIII. Before he died, Gelasius had said that either Guy, archbishop of Vienne, or Pons of Cluny should succeed him as pope.¹¹⁹ Guy was elected, and chose the name Calixtus II. But Pons would neither support nor condemn his election. With the support of several French bishops, he proposed that the election be subject to confirmation by the clergy and people of Rome. "Quod si clerus et populus Romanus illius electionem atque consecrationem laudaverint, post illos nostra interest laudare, et eorum ditioni obedire."¹²⁰ Pons was probably doing no more than insist that proper procedures for a papal election were followed, and

¹¹⁷ibid., p.238-241.

¹¹⁸Though Peter at one point seems to imply that Pons blamed himself for the complaints which some of his monks made to Calixtus in 1122. "Indignationis impetum, quem in alios fortassis derivare debuerat, in seipsum retorsit." PL 189,923

¹¹⁹PL 170,1043.

¹²⁰PL 170,1051.

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Calixtus' election was duly confirmed by the cardinals who were in Rome. But there followed a period of strained relations between Calixtus and Pons.¹²¹ Pons found that he no longer enjoyed the degree of papal protection from the bishops' inroads upon Cluny's privileges to which the monastery had been accustomed. But Calixtus was back in Cluny for the canonisation of abbot Hugh in December and January 1120, and he took the opportunity to heal the breach with Pons and to declare his continuing support for Cluny.¹²² He also conferred upon Pons the dignity of cardinal priest of Santa Cecilia.¹²³

But the bishops had taken advantage of their opportunity, and there followed the dissatisfaction within the Cluniac community, and Pons' appeal to Calixtus, which Orderic describes. It seems probable that, despite his renewal of friendship with Pons and avowals of support for the Cluniacs, Calixtus (who had never been a monk) was not prepared, in 1122, to give the degree of support which Pons expected.¹²⁴

Pons may appear to have been unwilling to compromise, and to have responded insensitively to the reasonable demands of the bishops. In his response at the Council of Rheims, he claimed that Cluny was subject only to papal control. From the time of its first foundation, it had held special privileges. "Notum autem sit vobis beati Patres, qui adestis, omnibus, quod ego et fratres nostri monasticas res, quas jure servandas suscepimus ... servare contendimus."¹²⁵ But this was no more than the official Cluniac line. Peter the Venerable, defending the same Cluniac privileges in a letter to Saint Bernard, argued that monks are more worthy than secular clergy to receive tithes and first fruits. How are the secular clergy, who do not look after their own souls, going to work hard for the salvation of the

¹²¹ibid.

¹²²PL 170,1052-1053.

¹²³Evans, *Monastic life at Cluny*, p.38.

¹²⁴Cowdrey, "Abbot Pontius of Cluny", p.223-228.

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souls of others? "Qui namque iustius fidelium oblata suscipiunt, monachi qui assidue pro peccatis offerentium intercedunt, an clerici qui nunc ut videmus summo studio temporalia appetentes spiritualia et quae ad animarum salutem pertinent omnino postponunt?"¹²⁶ It is not difficult to understand why Cluny had problems in its relations with the bishops and the secular clergy.

But it was not only the secular clergy who were unhappy about Cluniac claims. The Cluniac family consisted mainly of subject priories, like Saint-Denis de Nogent-le Rotrou, which by the terms of their charters were governed by priors who were directly subject to the authority of the abbot of Cluny. But there were also abbeys, some of them more ancient foundations than Cluny itself, which, though belonging to the Cluniac order, retained their abbatial status. During the reign of Pons, there were eighteen such abbeys, more than ever before or subsequently.¹²⁷ The status of their abbots in relation to the abbot of Cluny was somewhat ambiguous. The monks, frequently encouraged by the bishops and secular clergy and supported by the local gentry (who had sometimes lost control of the abbey to Cluny) strove to minimise the authority of the abbot of Cluny.

The abbey of Saint-Bertin in Flanders is a case in point. Abbot Lambert, after protracted dissension, managed to introduce Cluniac customs in 1101 only by calling in the military.¹²⁸ Abbot Hugh of Cluny helped him by sending to Saint-Bertin monks from various Cluniac monasteries. In consequence, the community was divided into Flemish and Cluniac monks.¹²⁹ The chronicler of Saint-Bertin, Simon, belonged to the Flemish faction. He tells us that when Pons was a young monk in a monastery of another

¹²⁵PL 188,879. Chibnall, v.6, p.270.

¹²⁶*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.1, p.81-82.

¹²⁷Cowdrey, "Abbot Pontius of Cluny" p.206-207.

¹²⁸*Simonis gesta abbatum S.Bertini Sithiensium*, in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptorum*, v.12, p.648.

¹²⁹*ibid.*, 12,649.

order, he was offered a bishopric. But Pope Paschal II (his godfather) disapproved, on the grounds that he was too young, and sent him to Cluny (where he became prior of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières and subsequently abbot of Cluny).¹³⁰ Simon describes in detail the problems which Pons encountered when he attempted to impose his authority as "abbas abbatum".¹³¹ The affair ended in uneasy compromise, but Saint-Bertin was nearly lost to Cluny.

Given this context, Orderic's account of the fall of Pons is credible. Beset with external problems from the bishops and the secular clergy, and from the abbeys belonging to the Cluniac family, and with internal problems from his own monks, some of whom thought he should be protecting them more effectively from outside pressures, and others of whom thought he was wasting the substance of the abbey on unnecessary litigation in protection of the Cluniac empire, Pons did not know what to do. He went to the Pope for help, but got little reassurance. So, in effect, he put the problems, temporarily, in the lap of Calixtus, and went off on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Orderic's account is credible. But perhaps Peter's version is not altogether inconsistent with it. His colourful description of the long reign of terror which accompanied Pons' return may be an exaggeration, but he may yet have been right about a decline in observance of the Benedictine Rule at Cluny under Pons. It would surely be surprising if the Pons affair were not in some way related to the great quarrel between Cluniacs and Cistercians. Just such a relation is suggested by Joan Evans. The quarrel with the Cistercians began when Pons sent the prior of Cluny to talk to Robert of Châtillon, who had been dedicated from youth to Cluny, but who had in fact entered Clairvaux.

¹³⁰ibid., 12,652-653.

¹³¹ibid., 12, 653-654. The term "abbas abbatum", in this context, simply means that the abbot of Cluny has authority over abbots of monasteries in the Cluniac family, not that Cluny's abbot has any seniority over abbots of other orders. But Simon manages to suggest Cluniac pride.

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Robert was persuaded to transfer to Cluny. But Robert was the nephew of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who reacted strongly. He wrote an open letter to Robert and, at the request of William of Saint-Thierry, an extended *Apologia*, in both of which he attacked the laxity of Cluny. "All Bernard's strictures were addressed against Pons and the lax usages he had introduced into the order; but it was Peter who had to face them and to make such answer as he could."¹³² Pons left a legacy of degenerate monasticism, but Peter fought hard for reform and "almost succeeded in bringing the Order back into the state in which Hugh had left it." In 1132 he decided that the time had come to draw up new statutes for the Order.¹³³

If that interpretation can be sustained, the poems of Bernard of Morlaix might still have the significance, in a context of monastic reform, which was mooted above. But there are difficulties. It turns out that Saint Bernard's letter to Robert was written as late as the end of 1124, only a short time before the *Apologia*, which was written in 1125.¹³⁴ Saint Bernard, that is to say, was attacking the way of life established at Cluny by Peter the Venerable, with the help of Matthew. That interpretation is confirmed by Peter's letter to Saint Bernard in defence of Cluny.¹³⁵ If Saint Bernard had indeed been attacking the laxity at Cluny under Pons, Peter's obvious and totally effective response would have been to explain that Pons had been responsible for all the evils, and they had now been put right. But in fact, he defends all the abuses of which Cluny is accused, giving no indication that he intends to change any of them.

Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that Matthew, the prior of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, could have been responsible for a

¹³²Evans, *Monastic life at Cluny*, 1931, p.44-46.

¹³³ibid., p.42-43.

¹³⁴Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity in the middle ages*, p.140.

reform movement at Cluny designed to bring it into line with the new monasticism. This same Matthew, at a later date when he was a cardinal and bishop of Albano, objected very strongly to the attempts at reform of the Chapter of Benedictine (but not Cluniac) abbots at Rheims in 1131.¹³⁶ He was "a Cluniac die-hard."¹³⁷ Peter the Venerable says of him, approvingly, that even when he became bishop of Albano, he continued to recite the full divine office according to the customs of Cluny. The elaborateness and length of the Cluniac office was one of the major bones of contention with the Cistercians, who thought Cluniacs should give time to manual work and less time to the "prolixa Cluniacensi[s] psalmodia."¹³⁸

Even in the *Statuta*, which were finally put together in 1144, Peter hardly appears as a zealous reformer. Rather, it was an attempt to strike a compromise between traditional Cluniac monasticism and the new monasticism propounded and practised by William of Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux. He was, of course, confronted with powerful resistance from many of his monks. Orderic says, in the context of the meeting of 1132, that Peter forgot Solomon's precept that we should not transgress the ancient bounds which our fathers have set and, "Cistercienses aliosque novorum sectatores aemulatus", stood firm on his half-baked plan ("rudibus ausis"); but that later, he relented and agreed to the demands of his monks, "memor discretionis quae virtutum mater est."¹³⁹

¹³⁵*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.1, p.52-101.

¹³⁶The text of his letter is in *William, abbot of St. Thierry; a colloquium at the Abbey of St. Thierry*, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1987 (Cistercian studies series, 94), p.65-86.

¹³⁷Knowles, David, *The historian and character*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p.52

¹³⁸*De miraculis*, PL 189,926.

¹³⁹*Historia ecclesiastica*, PL 188, 935-936. Chibnall, v.6, p.426. Orderic's abbey of Saint-Evroult was not a member of the order of Cluny but was subject to Cluniac influences. (Marjorie Chibnall, *The world of Ordericus Vitalis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984, p.85, p.165n.)

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In fact, it is possible to cast Pons and Peter in reverse roles. Adriaan Bredero regards Pons as the reformer and Peter as the defender of traditional Cluniac customs. He discusses the new interpretations of the Rule of Saint Benedict, which people wished to observe once more in an authentic way, stripped of the customs which had overtaken it.

It is just unthinkable that in Cluny, where these customs had developed to such a degree, no discussion should have concerned this problem ... The aforementioned crisis at Cluny was a result of this discussion, and the manner in which it was conducted between champions and opponents of change in the monastic way of life resulted in the two camps ending up diametrically and implacably opposed to each other. Abbot Pons also took sides in this discussion, favouring those who advocated change. His choice was probably partly determined by the fact that the current way of life at Cluny [that is, life under Saint Hugh] had resulted in economic problems, but he did not allow himself to be led exclusively by economic considerations. Indeed, even though during the latter years of his tenure his community lived in poverty, no cuts were made in the daily distribution of food to the poor, a situation later denounced by Peter the Venerable as mismanagement.¹⁴⁰

The presentation of Pons as the good guy with, in a metaphorical sense, the white cowl and Peter the Venerable as the bad guy with the black cowl is an interesting piece of revisionist history, but it leaves several questions unanswered. If Pons were a reforming abbot, his reforms must have been carried out by his grand prior. In the situation of implacably opposed camps outlined by Bredero, it would seem to be impossible that a prior who carried through Pons' reforms would be retained by Peter the Venerable when, with the help of Matthew, he endeavoured to undo the work of his predecessor. But Bernard of

¹⁴⁰Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity in the middle ages*, p.143-144. See also Adriaan Bredero's "Cluny et Cîteaux au XIIème siècle; les origines de la controverse", *Studi medievali* 12(1971):135-175 and "Le Dialogus duorum monachorum; un rebondissement de la polémique entre Cisterciens et Clusiens," *Studi medievali* 22(1981):501-585.

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Uxelles was prior during Pons' abbacy, and continued as prior throughout the abbacy of Peter the Venerable.¹⁴¹ He was, moreover, the same grand prior who persuaded Robert of Chatillon to leave Clairvaux for Cluny, which would hardly be consistent with a dedication to the new monasticism. He was also the same prior Bernard who led the resistance to Pons' return to Cluny, which he would scarcely have done if Pons had been the kind of reforming leader sketched by Bredero. Then there is the case of Orderic. As we have seen, he was clearly sympathetic to Pons, but he nowhere suggests that Pons was one of those "Cistercians and other chasers after novelties" whom he detested. It is rather Peter the Venerable whom he sees in that role.

The background to the Pons affair is complex. It includes relations between Cluny and the emperor; relations between Cluny and the popes; relations between Cluny and the bishops and secular clergy; relations between the abbey and the town of Cluny; relations between Cluny and its abbatiae; relations between Citeaux and Cluny; and financial difficulties in Cluny itself. All of these aspects are dealt with in the literature.¹⁴² But, although all these are part of the environment in which Pons acted, none of them clearly presents itself as a necessary or sufficient cause of Pons' behaviour. H.E.J. Cowdrey draws the conclusion that the basic cause was a flaw in the otherwise noble character of Pons.

¹⁴¹*The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.2. p.345.

¹⁴²In addition to works cited above, the following are relevant: Robert G. Heath, *Crux imperatorum philosophia; imperial horizons of the Cluniac confraternitas, 964-1109*, Pittsburgh, Pickwick Press, 1976 (Pittsburgh theological monograph series), p.31, 34-35; Gerd Tellenbach, "La chute de l'abbé Pons et sa signification historique," *Annales du Midi* 76(1964):356-362; Giles Constable, "The monastic policy of Peter the Venerable," *Pierre Abélard, Pierre le Vénérable; les courants philosophiques, littéraires et artistiques en occident au milieu du XIIe siècle*, Paris, Editions du Centre e la Recherche Scientifiques, 1975 (Colloques Internationaux du Centre, 546), p.119-138.

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So long as Pontius trod familiar paths and could count upon the prestige and support which his predecessor had enjoyed from his own monks and from the papacy, his rule was a prosperous one. There is, indeed, clear evidence of faults of personality and character which were especially apparent on the rare occasions when this prestige and support were lacking: in such circumstances, Pontius was liable to lose direction and act precipitately.¹⁴³

Like the tragic flaw of a Shakespearian hero, it led to his downfall. This estimate is similar to that of Orderic: "Principium fini solet impar saepe videri."¹⁴⁴

It is true that Peter the Venerable had continuing difficulties in all the areas listed above.¹⁴⁵ But it is not at all clear that any of these troubles were due to Pons. Nor is it clear that the camps within Cluny were as bitterly and implacably opposed as Bredero suggests. The murder of prior William of Roanne by his own monks was a very exceptional event, and Peter describes it as such, making it clear also that William was a firm adherent of "morem et modum Cluniacensis."¹⁴⁶

The accusations of laxity levelled at Cluny by the Cistercians were concerned with strict observance of what the Cistercians took to be the Benedictine Rule. When Peter berated his own monks in his circular letter, the thing that he regarded as most serious was the eating of meat. Changes of the Rule in regard to receiving novices, manual work, clothing and so forth, were made by previous abbots for good reason, and that, says Peter, is how he argued in his two letters to Saint Bernard. But there can be no excuse for eating meat. "At huius capituli praevaricatio qua ratione excusabitur?"¹⁴⁷ Next to eating meat,

¹⁴³Cowdrey, "Abbot Pontius of Cluny," p.212-213.

¹⁴⁴PL 188,895.

¹⁴⁵Cowdrey, "Abbot Pontius of Cluny", p.254-256; Evans, *Monastic life at Cluny*,p.40-46.

¹⁴⁶*De miraculis*, PL 189,937-940. Peter is chiefly interested in reporting the appearance of William's ghost.

¹⁴⁷*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.1, p.390.

the greatest area of dispute was the length and complexity of the divine office. How burdensome the Cluniac office was may be judged from Noreen Hunt's detailed analysis of it. Even though "it was never hard for those whose work made it difficult to attend the full community round [of the liturgy] to get exemption," Cluny had, long before the time of Saint Hugh, departed from the requirement of the Rule that the monastic day be fairly equally divided between liturgical prayer, spiritual reading and manual work, and by Peter's time the horarium left little time for manual work or spiritual reading.¹⁴⁸ In Peter's *Statuta*, the divine office receives a good deal of attention, and the reforms made constitute an admission of the justice of Cistercian criticism. He remarks bitterly that rules for manual work were needed because monks were spending the day propping up the cloister walls, fast asleep ("adhaerentes claustris parietibus dormitarent").¹⁴⁹

Dom David Knowles, commenting on the *Statuta*, wonders "whether Cluny did not regard the religious life as a routine, a profession, a task of work for which one signed on, and then performed *tant bien que mal*, rather than as a vocation, a way of life, a spiritual discipline and ascent."¹⁵⁰ And, in relation to the controversy between Cistercians and Cluniacs, he says:

It is certainly true that customs and circumstances change and demand new legislation, and it may be that regulations of extreme severity are not essential for religious perfection, but it is not true that a fervent religious life can exist without a constant invitation to a spiritual, supernatural ideal. No talk of charity can make the mediocre holy.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸Noreen Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh 1049-1109*, London, Arnold, 1967, p.99-109.

¹⁴⁹PL 189,1037

¹⁵⁰Knowles, *The historian and character*, p.72.

¹⁵¹*ibid.*, p.61.

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During the lifetime of Bernard of Morlaix, Cluny reached the peak of its development. Peter the Venerable says that, at Cluny itself, there were between three hundred and four hundred monks, while in former times there had been seventy or eighty.¹⁵² Joan Evans says that "in spite of a dreadful epidemic in the winter of 1144 Peter succeeded in bringing up the number of monks at Cluny to four hundred and sixty."¹⁵³ According to Noreen Hunt, "the number of Cluniac monasteries has been variously estimated at totals ranging from 200 to 2,000. The former figure is an underestimation; the latter is certainly exaggerated."¹⁵⁴ Marcel Pacaut lists 303, but does not indicate that his list is complete.¹⁵⁵ It would seem that both the number of monks at the abbey of Cluny itself and the number of dependent priories and abbatiae presented problems which proved to be insuperable, and that Cluny entered a period of decline from which it never recovered. Saint Benedict had in mind communities of twelve monks with an abbot. The usual number of monks in an abbey in the twelfth century seems to have been about seventy. Certainly, from the evidence of Peter's *Statuta*, as well as those of Ulrich and Bernard of Cluny,¹⁵⁶ three or four hundred monks cannot be formed into a workable monastic family. As for the Cluniac empire, it was too loosely knit, and the powers of the "abbas abbatum" too ambiguously defined, for it to survive when it became large, not only in number of monasteries but, more importantly, in geographical spread.¹⁵⁷ These, rather than any actions of Pons, seem to be the reasons for Cluny's decline.

¹⁵²PL 189,1040.

¹⁵³Evans, *Monastic life at Cluny*, p.42.

¹⁵⁴Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh*, p.5.

¹⁵⁵Pacaut, *L'ordre de Cluny*, p.400-418.

¹⁵⁶PL 149, 633ff.

¹⁵⁷Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh*, has a detailed treatment of Cluniac expansion and the structure of the order (p.124-185). Cowdrey comments that the Cluniac penetration of Flanders "represented Abbot Hugh's first major departure from his prudent reluctance to assume responsibility on a wide scale for monasteries north of the Loire" ("Abbot Pontius of Cluny," p.207).

An investigation of the confusing affair of the enigmatic Pons does not strongly support the conclusion that Bernard of Morlaix wrote his poems with the specific intention of assisting a campaign of reform launched by Peter the Venerable to correct abuses introduced by Pons, or even a more general conclusion that he wrote in the context of the new monasticism, in order to further reforms along the lines proposed by Cîteaux. In fact, his satirical attacks on the Cistercians, and upon Saint Bernard himself, show that he was as die-hard a Cluniac as Matthew or Orderic¹⁵⁸.

In none of his poems does Bernard of Morlaix discuss the specific issues which divided the Cluniacs and Cistercians, or the related, but not identical issues which seem to have divided the two camps within Cluny. His castigation of sin is much more general in character and his attack on the Cistercians is simple invective. His apocalyptic call for repentance is in no way related to particular elements of observance of the Rule. His appeal to his brothers to turn away from the world and devote themselves fully to the monastic life has little direct relation to particular events or controversies of his time, though, as Jill Mann points out, it reveals the preoccupations and anxieties of his age. The ritual misogyny is intended to reinforce celibacy; the diatribes against money reflect an inability to redefine social and moral duties in response to the emergence of an economy based on money; the complaints about the worldliness of the clergy spring from problems of relations between church and state; the protests about the Curia illustrate the problems of a growing papal bureaucracy.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸See below, p.140ff.

¹⁵⁹Jill Mann, "La poesia satirica e goliardica," *Lo spazio letterario del medioevo. 1, Il medioevo latino, v.1, tomo 2*, Rome, Salerno, 1992, p.75-76.

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It would seem that that Bernard's poems were written in an environment of monastic mediocrity, in which the majority of Cluniac monks were not fired with a dedication to spiritual perfection, but were pursuing the religious life simply as a routine job. They did not shirk the *opus Dei*. On the contrary, they delighted in the elaboration and lengthening of the liturgy. But, as Peter the Venerable saw, what mattered was not the length of the liturgy, but how meaningful it was to the monks.¹⁶⁰ Bernard's work could well have been prompted by the absence of dedication to the monastic ideal which he saw about him. "Arce monasticus excidit ordo."¹⁶¹

Despite the efforts of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, it seems that the twelfth century saw the beginning of the long decline of monasticism, rather than a renaissance. As Christopher Brooke points out, "for the most part, so far as we can tell, from 1300 on until the Reformation and Counter Reformation, the religious were not climbing Jacob's ladder, as St. Bernard had insisted that they must."¹⁶² Quite apart from the family squabble between Cluniacs and Cistercians, there was a great deal of anti-monastic literature in the twelfth century, as is indicated below in Chapter 3, which deals with estates satire. There may, indeed, have been as much in the twelfth century as there was in the fourteenth and fifteenth. And modern historians like Dom David Knowles, who criticises from within, and George Gordon Coulton, who criticises from without, say nothing that was not recognised and commented upon by contemporaries of Bernard of Morlaix. Coulton "for all his Protestantism wrote about

¹⁶⁰See, for example, the *Statuta*, where he regulates the pauses in the chanting of the psalms. "Mediocram vocavi, ad distinctionem illius quam quidam facere solent, in cuius intervallo orationem Dominicam, hoc est *Pater noster* saepe bis, quandoque ter, olim ipse consummavit." (PL 189,1026.) See also Constable, "The monastic policy of Peter the Venerable," p.129-130.

¹⁶¹*De contemptu mundi* 2,369.

¹⁶²Christopher Brooke, *The monastic world 1000-1300*, New York, Random House, 1974, p.245.

medieval monks as if he was himself a medieval reformer trouncing contemporary vices."¹⁶³

Bernard's visit to Rome

The one hard piece of biographical information which Bernard gives us about himself in the course of his poems is that he had an audience with Pope Eugenius III in Rome. He tells us about it at the end of *De octo vitiis*, which is dedicated to Pope Eugenius III.

Eugenio patre¹⁶⁴ patris iras flectere matre
Christi peccator Bernardus pacis amator.
De viciis octo librum te iudice docto
Scribens limandum, te, papa, precor michi blandum,
In quo succincte pro te tibi, non loquar in te.

Bernard, a sinner and a lover of peace, greets his father Eugenius, and prays that our heavenly Father's anger may be turned aside by the mother of Christ. This book which I have written about the eight deadly sins is in need of amendment. Please, Holy Father, be my learned critic, but please be kind to me. In it, I have written briefly for you and to you, but not in any way against you.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ibid. p.247.

¹⁶⁴Halvarson's reading is "patre." The manuscript has "pape," which scans better. (Halvarson, p.97)

¹⁶⁵*De octo vitiis*, 1-5. This translation is perhaps excessively free. It is impossible to convey the sense with a literal rendering. Bernard follows the conventions of twelfth-century letter writing (briefly described in Haskins, *Renaissance of the twelfth century*, p.143-144) and we have here the salutation and the *captatio benevolentie*. It is clear from the letters of Peter the Venerable that the salutation commonly consisted of three parts: the name and title of the person addressed, in the dative; the name and title of the writer, in the nominative; and a prayer or wish, in the accusative or in the infinitive. For example, "Venerando et karissimo patri domino Petro, frater Gilbertus, salutem" (letter 127); "Venerabile domino, et karissimo patri, Atoni Trecensium pontifici, frater Petrus humilis Cluniacensium abbas, sanctorum pontificum gloria et honore coronari" (letter 6). (*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.2, p.11, p.323). The formula varied if the sender were of very high rank. For example, "Eugenius episcopus,

Bernard proceeds to a detailed treatment of the cardinal sins (pride, envy, anger, vainglory, sloth, avarice, gluttony, lust) for more than a thousand lines. Then he devotes nearly four hundred lines to a diatribe against Rome. But he goes on to say:

I am not talking about the Pope who is presently in office.¹⁶⁶ I have nothing but praise for the occupant of the chair of Peter, a patron of the just and pious. Nor am I talking about those members of the clergy who are holy and who follow strict moral principles, who love truth rather than money or goods. There are citizens of Rome, too, who are both wealthy and pious. I am not talking about them. All these holy people give Rome the aroma of incense and perfume. But wicked men have put an end to good things in Rome. In the past, Rome recognised the responsibilities that a just man carries. The new Rome regards a just man as nothing more than a pocket to be picked. Only when Rome serves can it stand firm. When it is intent on piling up wealth, it withers away.¹⁶⁷

What follows is not Bernard's customary recourse to commonplace. He is clearly writing about the turbulent Rome of Eugenius III. He writes of disorder and confusion in the City, and of citizens fighting one another.

Blind greed for gold drives men into hasty conflict. Blind hunger for gold makes them fight like bulls. Heavy batons are often wielded in the City. They fight shield to shield. Banner strikes banner, sword threatens sword. They fight foot to foot. Wealth is pitted against assessed wealth. To their own undoing, they fight one another for money. They rush to death, each side terrifying the other, stirred up to criminal behaviour by the power of gold. He who is after gold

servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae monasterii Sancti Spiritus eiusque sororibus, tam praesentibus quam futuris, regularem vitam professis." (PL 180, 1291).

¹⁶⁶Literally, "I do not refer to the raincoat". *Cappa pluvialis* indicates the Pope's robes of office.

¹⁶⁷*De octo vitiis*, 1313-1320.

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very soon resorts to the sword ... So the slaves of gold kill each other in violent conflict.¹⁶⁸

It does not in fact seem to have been the case that the Roman citizens were motivated primarily by greed. The basic motivation appears to have been a desire to achieve a measure of civic independence comparable with that which the Lombard cities were beginning to achieve. But for Rome there were peculiar problems. It had special relations both with the Teutonic Emperor and with the Pope. It was not only an Italian city but also the capital of the Holy Roman Empire and at the same time the centre of Christendom. "Her natural development was crushed between the upper and nether millstones of Papacy and Empire. Even when she was not torn by the divergent policies of the twain, she was not free like the Lombard cities to develop along lines of her own choosing; her civic destiny was sacrificed to the dominant idealism of mediaeval political theory".¹⁶⁹

But, despite these difficulties, the Romans did attempt to assert their independence in 1142, when they renounced papal authority and set up a government with an order of Senators. In 1144, they appointed a *patricius* and the Roman Republic was inaugurated. Pope Lucius II launched a military attack against it in 1145, but was decisively defeated.¹⁷⁰

Lucius was succeeded by Eugenius III in 1145. Unable to stay in Rome, he was crowned in Farfa. He moved from there to Viterbo, where he excommunicated the Roman *patricius* and negotiated an alliance with Tivoli against the Romans. It was at that point that the disturbances described by Bernard began. Greenaway calls them "a veritable reign of terror."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ibid., 1329-1340.

¹⁶⁹George William Greenaway, *Arnold of Brescia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1931, p.100.

¹⁷⁰John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, London, Nelson, 1956 (Medieval texts), p.60.

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Under the *patricius* Jordan Pierleone, the prefectship was abolished and the nobility were called upon to submit to the new régime. "The fortified dwellings of such of them as refused submission were sacked and levelled to the ground, as were the splendid palaces of her cardinals and the houses of the clergy. Not content with this, 'the Roman people' fortified St. Peter's, maltreated and plundered the pilgrims, and in some cases even put to death those who would not surrender their property to them."¹⁷²

The plundering and murder of pilgrims, which both Mann and Greenaway mention, seems to derive only from Otto of Freising, who says, in *The two cities*, "In their eagerness for gain, they exacted, by stripes and blows, offerings from pilgrims who came to pray", and, "Indeed, in their sinful daring, they did not shrink from killing, in the very portico and vestibule of the temple, certain of those who were unwilling to make offerings".¹⁷³ These latter may not have been pilgrims, and in any case Otto may have exaggerated. He says nothing about abuse or murder of pilgrims when dealing with the same episode in the *Gesta Frederici*.¹⁷⁴ Nor does John of Salisbury make any mention of ill-treatment of pilgrims in *Historia pontificalis*.¹⁷⁵ Bernard's account of the treatment of pilgrims may therefore be close to the truth.

The path of a pilgrim to Rome is through brambles.
But no wicked person dares to give him trouble. In
the midst of frenzy in Rome, pilgrims to Rome enjoy
the protection of Christ and the aid of Peter. They
make their way, and the battle does not harm them.
They do whatever they have to do. They seek the holy

¹⁷¹Greenaway, *Arnold of Brescia*, p.111.

¹⁷²Horace K. Mann, *Lives of the popes in the middle ages ... Vol. 9, 1130-1159*, London, Kegan Paul, 1925, p.147.

¹⁷³Otto of Freising, *The two cities; a chronicle of universal history to the year 1146 AD*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1928 (Records of civilization 9) p.441.

¹⁷⁴Otto of Freising, *Gesta Frederici seu rectius Cronica*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974, p.341-342.

¹⁷⁵John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, p.64-65.

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places in safety. Pilgrims to Rome suffer hardly any ill effects from the fighting. The wickedly blind rabble fight among themselves. The insane citizens of Rome fight among themselves, emptying their quivers and throwing stones at one another. For what? For money the bloody war is fought.

People of Etruria on pilgrimage to Rome and people of Bari on pilgrimage to Jerusalem make for the sacred portals of Rome, weeping for their sins. As they weep, they wash the dirt from their bodies and the sin from their souls, and they promptly go to the successor of the Apostles to be blessed by his hand. They seek him at the Lateran,¹⁷⁶ because they know that he is usually there, the pastor of the Lateran¹⁷⁷ with the fathers of Rome.¹⁷⁸

The pilgrims converge in a crowd. They offer to the Pope the gifts they have brought. The pilgrims seek and receive the Pope's blessing, and they depart. But the lord Pope does not hang on to any of the gifts. If that is not the case, it ought to be, lest the Pope rot with gifts. What the Roman pilgrims give is straightway given to the poor. If a pilgrim does not give gifts, he ought to, because his gifts are given to heaven.¹⁷⁹

Bernard makes it clear that he is not speaking generally. He himself travelled to Rome, went to the Lateran and had an audience with Pope Eugenius.¹⁸⁰ The political condition of Rome prevented Eugenius from residing in the City through most of his papacy, so the range of possible dates for Bernard's visit is not great. John of Salisbury mentions that he read the register of Eugenius III,¹⁸¹ but it is not extant. Migne, however, has gathered together his letters,¹⁸² and from them it is clear that,

¹⁷⁶The Lateran basilica and its adjoining palace. The Lateran basilica, not St. Peter's, was (and still is) the cathedral church of the Bishop of Rome. In the twelfth century, the palace was the residence of the Popes and the centre of government of the church.

¹⁷⁷According to Halvarson, "Lateranis" is genitive (*De octo vitiis*, ed. Halvarson, p.137).

¹⁷⁸*De octo vitiis*, 1342-1358.

¹⁷⁹*ibid.*, 1359-1364.

¹⁸⁰*ibid.*, 1365-1366.

¹⁸¹John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, p.25.

¹⁸²PL 180, 1011-1642.

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apart from his ceremonial entry into Rome upon his election in February 1145, Eugenius was in Rome only from Christmas Eve 1145 to about the middle of January 1146; from 28 November 1149 to about the middle of June 1150; and from 19 December 1152 to the end of June 1153.¹⁸³

After his first ceremonial entry into Rome, the senators told Eugenius they would dispute his election unless he confirmed their usurped authority. He was forced to leave Rome and was consecrated in the monastery at Farfa on 17 February 1146.¹⁸⁴ By April, he was in Viterbo, where he stayed for eight months, and thereafter his travels were extensive, including visits to both Cluny¹⁸⁵ and Clairvaux.¹⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the disturbances described above were taking place in Rome. Eugenius, having excommunicated the *patricius*, sought the aid of the people of Tivoli and put pressure on the Roman senators. He agreed to recognise the senate, provided that the senators acknowledged that their powers derived from him, and on condition that they got rid of the *patricius* and restored the prefect. So it was that he made his second ceremonial entry into Rome, in December 1145. But the revolution soon reasserted itself, and Eugenius had again to leave the City. By 28 January, he had moved to Trastevere (which was not included in the commune of Rome).¹⁸⁷

In 1149, Eugenius resorted to arms. According to John of Salisbury, "The pope, meanwhile, had betaken himself to Tusculum, where, mustering his forces, he ordered an attack on

¹⁸³*ibid.*, 1077-1100; 1402-1420; 1550-1606. Letter CCXXXVI of October 26 1147 says "datum Latalaum", for which Migne conjectures "Lateranum", but letters of October 25 and November 1 give "datum Catalauni", which suggests that may be the correct reading for the letter of October 26 (1287-1294).

¹⁸⁴Mann, *Lives of the popes*, v.9, p.138.

¹⁸⁵PL 180, 1196-1198.

¹⁸⁶*ibid.*, 1343-1344.

¹⁸⁷*ibid.*, 1099 ff.

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Rome, and gave cardinal Guy, nicknamed the Maiden, command over the army. Auxiliaries were received from the lands of the king of Sicily, but the fighting was unsuccessful. The church merely incurred the heaviest expenses to little or no purpose".¹⁸⁸ The Romans took the extraordinary step of writing to the emperor Conrad, telling him that his authority derived from the Roman senate. "We desire to exalt and to increase the Roman kingdom and empire, vouchsafed by God to your governance, and to restore it to that state in which it was at the time of Constantine and of Justinian, who held the whole world in their hands by the might of the Roman people." They ordered him to come to Rome and rescue them from the pope.¹⁸⁹ Not surprisingly, Conrad ignored this and other similar letters. The Romans, short of money, came to terms with the pope. "The pope went on to Rome and received a splendid reception from the nobles, whose noses had sensed the gold and silver of Gaul."¹⁹⁰ So, in November 1149, Eugenius made his third triumphal entry into Rome.

But the republican troubles persisted, and Eugenius had to leave Rome again in June 1150. In September 1151, Conrad at last wrote his only letter to the Romans, telling them that, at their invitation, he was about to come to Italy in order to reward the loyal and punish the rebellious.¹⁹¹ But in February 1152, Conrad died, to be succeeded by Frederick Barbarossa, who, like his predecessor, took no heed of the words or deeds of the Roman republic, and concluded a concordat with the pope. Whereupon, the Romans also entered into yet another agreement with the pope, who made his final ceremonial entry into Rome in December 1152.¹⁹² He died on 8 July 1153, at Tivoli.

¹⁸⁸John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, p.60.

¹⁸⁹Otto of Freising, *Gesta Frederici*, p.182-188.

¹⁹⁰John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, p.51.

¹⁹¹P. Jaffé (ed.), *Monumenta Corbeiensia*, Aalen, Scientia Verlag, 1964 (first published Berlin, 1864) (*Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum* 1) p.478-479.

¹⁹²Mann, *Lives of the popes*, v.9, p.172-173.

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That, very briefly, is the background of Roman affairs at the time of Bernard's visit. Bernard went to Rome with a particular purpose, namely to present a petition to the Pope.

So much for that. And now, since my comic Muse¹⁹³ has made her way to Rome and bent her footsteps towards the halls of the Lateran, I present these poems¹⁹⁴ to the Pope, in accordance with customary usage. And this, Holy Father, is the message that I bring peacefully to you: Greetings, Your Holiness. You opened your doors to me, now please open your ears to my request. My Muse sang about the deadly sins in the first part of this poem, but she ascribes to you, Holy Father, only a very small part in any of the things I have written about.

I will lay before you a matter which ought not to be concealed, so that you may resolve the problem and put an end to the dispute. Holy Father, let me briefly bring to your attention troubles which have for a long time afflicted the Cluniac Order and disputes which are increasing. Why do you allow the meek to be tormented without reproach [to their tormentors]? You know what the New Testament says. The raging waters were stilled when Christ walked on them. The heavenly ship is now tossed about by heavy seas. Powerful storms batter the House of Cluny.¹⁹⁵

What the dispute was, and with whom, we do not know. The conflict between Peter the Venerable and Pons de Melgueil took place in 1125 or 1126, and Pons was dead by December 1126. Bernard's petition, two decades later, could not have had to do with that affair. The controversy between Cluniacs and Cistercians was still going on, and that dispute may have been in some way connected with Bernard's submission.

¹⁹³Thalia, the Muse of comedy, because the poem is satirical. Pepin, referring to *De contemptu mundi*, points out that critics "note the satiric genre ... They have allowed for hyperbole, but not for humour" (Ronald E. Pepin, *Literature of satire in the twelfth century; a neglected medieval genre*, New York, Mellen, 1988 (Studies in medieval literature 2), p.46).

¹⁹⁴"Has [litteras] tibi presento." Bernard may be referring only to *De octo vitiis*, or he may refer to all four poems in the codex Vaticanus Reginensis Latinus 134, namely *Carmina de Trinitate*, *De castitate*, *In libros Regum* and *De octo vitiis*.

¹⁹⁵*De octo vitiis*, 1365-1381.

If we look at the first possible period for Bernard's visit, December 1145 to January 1146, we find a letter, dated 16 January 1146, from Eugenius to Lambert, Bishop of Angoulême and Gerald, Bishop of Limoges.

We have carefully heard and considered at length, together with our brothers, the dispute which has for a long time taken place between our dear sons the monks of Cluny and the clergy of La Rochebeaucourt about the church of that place. We have heard the arguments of both parties and carefully enquired into the matter. We find, by the admission of both parties, that the monks were in possession of the church. Our judgement is that, if the monks can produce two or three suitable witnesses to prove, in our presence, that the clergy who were then occupying the church, or others on their behalf, expelled the monks with violence from their possession of the church, then the monks should be reinstated in possession of it ... ¹⁹⁶

There is a follow-up letter, dated September 9, 1146, from Eugenius at Viterbo to Raymond, Bishop of Périgueux, telling him that the Cluniac monks had fulfilled his conditions, but the clergy of La Rochebeaucourt had not complied, and ordering him to put the matter right.¹⁹⁷ Given the hyperbole in which Bernard usually (like most of his contemporaries) engages, that incident is not unlikely to be the dispute to which he refers in his submission to the pope. If we suppose Bernard to be prior of Nogent, he could well have been commissioned by Peter the Venerable to present a petition.

There are many other letters which, directly or indirectly, concern the Cluniac order. For example, a letter of 15 February, 1152, concerns privileges for Cluny;¹⁹⁸ a letter of 14 March 1152 (which Migne says is "redolent of the pen of Saint Bernard"), and a number of related letters, accuse Peter the

¹⁹⁶PL 180, 1095-1096.

¹⁹⁷ibid., 1153.

¹⁹⁸ibid., 1105.

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Venerable of ingratitude and negligence, because of his failure to control the recalcitrant monks of Gigny.¹⁹⁹ But none of them, in terms of the date or the place at which they were written, seems as likely as the letter quoted above to represent the subject of Bernard's submission.

Although there is no mention of it in Migne's collection of the letters of Pope Eugenius, it is possible that the dispute between Saint-Père and Cluny about the priory of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou was the subject of Bernard's petition. It was certainly while Bernardus Secundus was prior at Nogent that the long-standing rivalry between the two was brought to an end.²⁰⁰ There were other disputes while Bernardus Secundus was prior, although there is no evidence of papal intervention in relation to them. There was, for example, a controversy with the monks of Tiron which was the source of litigation between the two monasteries.²⁰¹ There was also a dispute with Guillaume Gouet about the church at Unverre, which was resolved in Bernardus Secundus' time as prior.²⁰²

As Bernard continues his address to Pope Eugenius, his image of the ship continues to signify the House of Cluny, but it also suggests the whole Church, almost as if the two were the same thing.

The sorely troubled heart will awaken Jesus who is sleeping ... "Saviour arise! We perish!" Jesus will arise, and the enemy who now grows strong and who harries the holy in order to strip them of their wealth will be ruined. A man who tries to sink this ship would be a fool. I mean, the ship which has God as its captain and Peter²⁰³ as its navigator, steering

¹⁹⁹ibid., 1517-1520.

²⁰⁰See above, p.30. See also Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian reform*, p.105-106.

²⁰¹*Cartulaire*, p.lvii-lx.

²⁰²ibid.

²⁰³Peter the Apostle, as regards the Church. Peter the Venerable, as regards the House of Cluny. Bernard makes a

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it toward good. The ship's management is justice, its timber is the Cross, its course is set by hope, it is driven by the wind of love, its leader is faith, its stern is the brotherly virtue of the community, its prow is the fatherly virtue [of pope and abbot], its anchor is the final end,²⁰⁴ its oars are encouragement. Holy Father, please be a sailor with a skilful oar to this ship ...²⁰⁵

We have no dates for any of Peter the Venerable's visits to Nogent.²⁰⁶ The date of death of the Biddenden Maids gives a *terminus a quo* of 1134 for completion of the *De contemptu mundi*. Bernard makes it clear in his prologue addressed to Peter the Venerable that the poem was written over a period of time. He quotes with approval Horace's advice that a poem should be checked over many days and with many corrections and polished to a perfect finish ten times, and that it should be held back for eight years before publication.²⁰⁷ This, like his statement that he is submitting the poem for Peter's correction not yet quite finished ("nondum omnino absolutum") may be little more than a literary convention, but parts of the poem were no doubt written some time before 1134. The *terminus ad quem* is the death of Peter the Venerable in 1156.

The date of the salutation and of lines 1313 to 1399 of *De octo vitiis* is, as indicated above, probably 1145. The same date provides a *terminus ad quem* for the remainder of the poem, and for the other three poems in the Vatican codex, if "has tibi presento" in line 1367 of *De octo vitiis* refers to all four poems. There is nothing in the poems to suggest a *terminus a quo*. *De Trinitate* is addressed to "every reader."²⁰⁸ *De castitate servanda* is addressed to "all scholars throughout the

similar play on the name Peter in the dedication of *De contemptu mundi*.

²⁰⁴That is, death, judgement, heaven and hell.

²⁰⁵*De octo vitiis*, 1385-1395.

²⁰⁶*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.2, p.269.

²⁰⁷*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus, quoting *Ars poetica* 291-294 and 388.

²⁰⁸*De Trinitate*, 1.

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world who worship God."²⁰⁹ *In libros regum* has no salutation. For the *Mariale* and the *Instructio sacerdotis*, we have no dates, either from internal evidence or from other sources.

The story of Pons de Melgeuil illustrates something of the monastic background of the poems of Bernard of Morlaix. The upheavals in Rome at the time of his visit show some features of the political situation in which he wrote. Exciting and momentous things were going on and, although they impinged only marginally on the subject matter of Bernard's poems, they are worth taking into account in relation to the literature of complaint, his predominant genre. The literature of complaint is discussed in the next three chapters.

²⁰⁹*De castitate*, 1.

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The literature of complaint

An important element in the understanding of any communication is a recognition of the kind of communication it is. Take, for example, the sentence: "Peter the Hermit neglected to apply for a permit when raising his mixed brigade for the First Crusade." If we seek to discover what kinds of permit Urban II may have issued and what form of application Peter should have completed, we have failed to recognise that the sentence expresses not a historical statement but a clerihehew. This element in understanding is sometimes called "literary competence" or "genre recognition."¹ But the competence is not necessarily "literary" in a narrow sense, nor does the term "genre" necessarily refer to a "literary" type. Alastair Fowler says of genre:

Rightly understood, it is so far from being a mere curb upon expression that it makes the expressiveness of literary works possible. Their relation to the genres they embody is not one of passive membership but of active modulation. Such modulation communicates. And it probably has a communicative value far greater than we can ever be directly aware of.²

Bernard of Morlaix himself regarded his *De contemptu mundi* as satire, and he makes frequent reference to Horace and Juvenal. Through the middle ages, and indeed into Renaissance times, the term "satura" appears to have comprised three elements. In the first place, there was the concept of a dish composed of various

¹John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament; method in Biblical study*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, p.8-19, 30-44.

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ingredients, a medley, and hence a miscellany of humorous topics. The classical authority for that meaning derives only from the grammarians.³ The term does not seem to have been used in that sense by the classical satirists themselves, but much of Bernard's work fits that meaning quite well. Secondly, there was a mistaken confusion of "satura" with "satyra" and a consequent association of satire with obscenity and scurrility. That feature is not absent from Bernard's work. It appears in his anticlerical verses. It is even more striking in his diatribes against women.⁴ It is a feature, too, of Goliardic and other verse. It has no classical authority. Thirdly, there was the concept of sanative castigation. Bernard says, of *De contemptu mundi*, "Quia et materia est mihi viciorum reprehensio, et a viciis revocare intentio."⁵ That is a meaning of the term which would be recognised by Horace, Persius, Juvenal and Ennius. It is what Vergil had in mind.

Non, mihi si linguae centum sint oraque centum,
ferrea vox, omnis scelerum comprehendere formas,
omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possim.⁶

It is also the sense foremost in Saint Jerome's mind when he speaks of his satire in terms of cautery and the surgeon's knife.⁷

But satire seems an inadequate genre categorisation of the poems of Bernard of Morlaix or, indeed, of twelfth-century satirical

²Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of literature; an introduction to the theory of genres and modes*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982, p.20.

³Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1900, p.1635.

⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 445-598. There is a somewhat different treatment of women in *De octo vitiis*, 641-699.

⁵*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus, ad fin.

⁶*Aeneid* 6, 625-627.

⁷"Chirurgici spirituales, secantes vitia peccatorum, ad poenitentiam cohortantur." Letter 40, PL 22, 473-474. See also letter 117, PL 22, 953-954.

work generally. Kimon Giocarinis observes that the influence of the Latin classics on Bernard "reduces his worth and relevance as a satirist."⁸ Some of the qualities which we associate with satire are lacking. There is very little of the urbanity of Horace. With notable exceptions, like Bernard's Bishop of Belly⁹ and Walter of Chatillon's cardinal,¹⁰ the twelfth century offers none of the sharply observed detail of Juvenal. Nor is there very much of the tolerant mockery we find later in Chaucer.¹¹ The essential difference appears to be that in satire we expect the expression of a personal viewpoint, with the wide range of idiosyncratic variations which that entails. Twelfth-century satire, by contrast, is for the most part the expression of an institutional viewpoint. There is variation in forms of expression and in degrees of literary skill, but little deviation from the viewpoint of orthodox Catholicism.

John Peter, speaking of satire, notes that "the whole field of literature under discussion consists, like the rainbow, of a series of gradations."¹² At one extreme, we have simple personal attacks, or libel. Those shade off into satire. But satire shades off into complaint, and complaint into homily. In Bernard's poems there is some writing which is satirical and some which is homiletic, but most of it is complaint. It is significant that John Peter, seeking an exemplification of the emergence of complaint, finds it in Bernard's *De contemptu*

⁸Kimon Giocarinis, "Bernard of Cluny and the antique," *Classica et mediaevalia*, 27(1966):345.

⁹*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 404, 415-470.

¹⁰*The Oxford book of medieval Latin verse*, edited by F.J.E. Raby, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959, p.284-285.

¹¹It is not entirely lacking. The tale of Heriger, Bishop of Mainz, is an example. (Helen Waddell, *Medieval Latin lyrics*, 4th ed., London, Constable, 1933, p 148-155. *The Cambridge songs; a Goliard's song book of the XIth century*, ed. Karl Breul, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1915, p.59-60. *Die Cambridge Lieder*, ed. Karl Strecker, Berlin. Weidmannsche, 1955, p.65-66.)

¹²John Peter, *Complaint and satire in early English literature*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956, p.11.

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mundi.¹³ Although he speaks of the "emergence" of complaint, it has a certain persistence, a stable and unchanging character, as Peter himself admits.¹⁴ It existed in the classical world. There are elements of it, for example, in Hesiod, as well as in Vergil, Horace and Ovid.¹⁵ It forms a significant part of biblical literature. "Popule meus, quid feci tibi? Aut in quo constrictavi te? Responde mihi."¹⁶ It plays an important part in Islamic tradition.¹⁷

We may distinguish four classes of complaint:¹⁸

1. Complaints of corruption of classes of men (kings, soldiers, lawyers and so forth, including, of course, the clergy). This class of complaint is closely related to estates satire.
2. Complaints of particular vices and types, that is to say, groups which are not estates or trades or professions, but which are associated with some particular vice (backbiters, misers, atheists, women and so forth).
3. Complaints of specific abuses (dress, swearing, use of cosmetics). This sort of complaint is sometimes indistinguishable from the second class.
4. Complaints on general themes, such as providence, virtue and vice, the contrast between present misery and the past, and the

¹³ibid., p.39. "For here we have, as it were, a cross-section of the whole tradition, a conflation of the innumerable works in Latin that had gone before and a prelude to the English poems that are to come. It is here, in the hammering rhymes of these tireless couplets, that Complaint achieves a final independence from Satire and a status of its own."

¹⁴ibid., p.59.

¹⁵All of whom also offer an account of the Golden Age, which is frequently associated with complaint.

¹⁶Micah 6,3. The version given is from the Good Friday ceremonies. It is more plangent than the Vulgate, or even than the Authorised Version.

¹⁷Franz Rosenthal, *"Sweeter than hope"; complaint and hope in medieval Islam*. Leyden, Brill, 1983, passim. The Golden Age looms large in Islamic complaint also (p.18-31.)

¹⁸Peter, *Complaint and satire*, p.60; See also W.A. Davenport, *Chaucer, complaint and narrative*, Cambridge, Brewer, 1988, p.4.

idea of man's inner condition as the microcosmic expression of the state of the world.

Peter argues that complaint is much closer to homily than to satire and that medieval complaint literature was strongly influenced by sermons, while at the same time sermons made use of complaint literature.¹⁹ Bernard of Morlaix's criticism of the church, which he refers to as satire, is for the most part squarely in the complaint genre, though often tending towards homily. Some passages in Bernard's poems which are clearly castigation of sin directed specially towards his monastic audience are pure homily, with no element of satire.

The end of the world

Apocalyptic and eschatological literature may be subsumed under the fourth category of complaint. The end of the world and heaven and hell feature largely in Bernard's works, especially in the *De contemptu mundi*. Several manuscripts of the *De contemptu mundi* carry a gloss which constitutes an effective indicative abstract of the poem.

The author's subject is the coming of Christ to judgement, the joy of the saints, the punishment of the wicked, and so forth. The author's purpose is to persuade people to scorn the world. The poem will be beneficial if it leads people to scorn the things of this world and to seek the things of God. It has a moral application, because it deals with the formation of virtuous behaviour. The author adds weight to the beginning of his poem by calling on the authority of the Apostle John, who said, "Little children, it is the last hour." By using the words of the Apostle rather than his own, the author captures the good will of his readers. In the beginning of his poem, he frightens his readers with his account of the coming of the Judge. They are the more ready to learn from

¹⁹Peter, *Complaint and satire*, p.52-56.

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him when he describes the joys of heaven, and when he teaches other things.²⁰

The gloss is an elaboration of Bernard's own statement about the subject of the poem in his dedication to Peter the Venerable. "In primo namque de contemptu mundi disputatum est. In duobus subjectis tam materiei quam intentionis una facies respondet; quia et materia est mihi viciorum reprehensio et a viciis revocare intentio."²¹ The analysis of the poem in terms of "materia" and "intentio" derives from medieval theory of rhetoric, which in turn derives from classical authority.

From one point of view, the *De contemptu mundi* can be regarded as an apocalyptic poem, and comparisons with the apocalyptic vision of Bernard's contemporary, Joachim of Fiore, are inevitable. But, as the gloss suggests, the *De contemptu mundi* is an extended meditation, not on Saint John's *Apocalypse*, but rather on a passage from his first letter.

Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, which is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever. Little children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that the Antichrist cometh, even now there are become many Antichrists, whereby we may know that it is the last hour.²²

A study of the poem in the light of that text might lead one to suppose that the structure of the *De contemptu mundi* was carefully planned. Such a supposition would be supported by Bernard's own statement of the "materia" and "intentio" of his

²⁰H.C. Hoskier (ed.), *De contemptu mundi; a bitter satirical poem of 300 lines upon the morals of the XIIth century, by Bernard of Morval, monk of Cluny (fl.1150)*, London, Quaritch, 1929, p.xxxix. Not given by Wright or Preble or Pepin.

²¹*De contemptu mundi, Prologus, ad fin.*

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poem, and by the gloss quoted above. Bernard does not follow the conventional order of *contemptus mundi* literature. That order is perhaps best exemplified in the *De contemptu mundi sive de miseria conditionis humanae* which Innocent III wrote some fifty years after Bernard's poem.²³ Innocent's prose study of the theme was influential throughout the middle ages. It was well known to Chaucer, who included an abridged translation of part of it in the prologue to the *Man of law's tale*²⁴ and referred to it also in *The tale of Melibee*²⁵ and *The legend of good women*.²⁶ Innocent intended to follow it with a complementary study of the dignity of human nature, but, if he wrote it, it seems not to have survived.²⁷

Innocent's work, like Bernard's, is in three books. He covers much the same ground as Bernard but his arrangement of the material is quite different. The first book deals with the evils which attend human life: the discomforts of life; the brevity of life; the troubles of old age; the burden of work; the transience of human learning and achievement; poverty; servitude; the troubles of married life; the enemies of mankind; the brevity of human happiness; the nearness of death. The second book deals with sin: greed; avarice; gluttony; drunkenness; sexual sins, especially sodomy; ostentation ("ambitio"); pride; excess in dress and ornament; uncleanness of heart; the ways in which the wicked suffer when they die; individual judgement of each of us at the time of death. The third book deals with the decomposition of corpses; the bitter memories of the damned, but their inability to repent; the

²²1 John 2,15-18. Douai version.

²³PL 217, 701-736. *De miseria condicionis humanae*, ed. Robert E. Lewis, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1978 (Chaucer Library).

²⁴*Canterbury tales*, II, 99-130.

²⁵*ibid.*, VII, 1568.

²⁶G text, 415.

²⁷"Si vero paternitas vestra suggesserit, dignitatem humanae naturae, Christo favente, describam." Migne comments "Liber de dignitate naturae humanae nondum inventus." PL 217, 701.

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various pains of hell; the tortures of the damned; the fires and darkness of hell; everlasting punishment; the last judgement; the end of the world, the troubles which precede it and the signs of its coming; the power, wisdom and justice of God's judgement; and the fact that nothing can help the wicked once they are in hell.

The first book of Bernard's *De contemptu mundi* opens with a brief sketch of Christ coming in judgement, and proceeds immediately to a description of the joys of the blessed in heaven. It is a lengthy description, some three hundred and ninety lines, more than a third of the book, and it is a topic which Innocent does not touch upon, perhaps because he envisaged it as being appropriate for his *De dignitate naturae humanae*. Bernard goes on to a more detailed description of the coming of Christ in judgement, the end of the world, the selection of the good and the rejection of the wicked. There follows a description of the pains of hell (about half the length of his description of the joys of heaven); an account of the transience of human life, wealth, glory, beauty, power and pleasure; and a brief, almost perfunctory description of certain portents of the end of the world.

The second book opens with a description of the Golden Age, which is contrasted with the wickedness of latter days. That wickedness is described in general terms. Then we have an account of the sins of types of people: the clergy, the temporal rulers, soldiers, judges, merchants, farmers. Bernard devotes more than a hundred lines to the wickedness of women. He deplores early marriage and the begetting of many children. He attacks drunkenness, lust and hypocrisy. He deplores the misuse of wealth.

The third book commences with a continuation of the description of the wickedness of mankind, with castigations in general terms of various sins, including sodomy. Then it moves into a

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protracted and detailed attack upon the wickedness of the clergy: pope, bishops and lesser clergy, including parish priests.

George J. Engelhardt makes a distinction between the peribolic order of Innocent and the syntomic order of Bernard, which he expresses schematically thus:

Peribolic:

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misery-iniquity(reasons)>doom(thesis)
                                doom(reason)>conversion(thesis)
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Syntomic:

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conversion(thesis)>doom(reason)
                                doom(thesis)>misery-iniquity(reasons).28
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The choice of this order may be seen as further evidence of Bernard's classical heritage.

In this way the form tends toward an effect most aptly described with a Greek phrase used in a similar context by an ancient critic whose work was unknown to Bernard but whose technical apparatus belongs to the general tradition passed on through Latin intermediaries to medieval poets. This phrase, ¹ *ἄτακτοί* or "order without order," may be used, furthermore, to describe not merely the form of Bernard's poem but a motif that pervades the fabric of its thought.²⁹

The first line of the poem, which is also the last line of Book 1, is "Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus." That line summarises the content of the poem. Engelhardt points out that the line can be rendered "Tempora pessima sunt; ergo hora novissima est; ergo vigilemus."³⁰ That is true, and it helps us to understand the organisation of the poem and its relation to *contemptus mundi* literature. But it is not clear that such a

²⁸George J. Engelhardt, "The De contemptu mundi of Bernardus Morvalensis. Part one: a study in commonplace," *Mediaeval studies* 22(1960):108-135. See especially p.111-113. The schema is on p.112.

²⁹*ibid.*, p.110. The ancient critic is Longinus, *Peri Ũyouj*, 19-20.

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reading was at the forefront of Bernard's mind. His source for "hora novissima," as he tells us himself, is Saint John. His source for "tempora pessima" may be a passage from Micah, which, in the Vulgate, reads:

Idcirco haec dicit Dominus, Ecce ego cogito super
familiam istam malum unde non auferetis colla vestra
et non ambulabitis superbi, quoniam tempus pessimum
est.³¹

"Tempus pessimum" in that passage appears to refer to the evil which the Lord will inflict, rather than to the evil men do; to the "mala poenae" rather than the "mala culpae". That may not matter, since Bernard clearly had both in mind, and Micah deals with both. But there is another reason for looking more closely at Engelhardt's interpretation.

The Vulgate phrase "hora novissima" translates the Greek *ἡ σφοδρὴ ἔρα*.³² It is a perfectly accurate translation, but *œscatoj* can mean "worst" as well as "last" and frequently does in appropriate contexts. Plato, for example, has *pōnoj te ka' ēgēn œscatoj*, "the worst toil and struggle"³³ and *ἡ σφοδρὴ κίνδυνος*, "from the worst perils."³⁴ He also has *ἡ σφοδρὴ ἀδικία*, "the worst injustice."³⁵ The last example is especially interesting, because it occurs in that part of the *Republic* in which Glaucon defines the perfectly just man as one who, without committing a single unjust act, must live his whole life under the imputation of being utterly unjust, and must finish up being tortured and crucified. Plato's words, like Vergil's in his *Fourth Eclogue*, were taken by Christians from Clement of Alexandria and

³⁰ibid., p.112.

³¹Micah 2,3.

³²1 John 2,18. This is the only occurrence of the phrase in the New Testament, but *ἡ σφοδρὴ ἡ μῆρα* and similar expressions occur frequently.

³³*Phaedrus* 247b.

³⁴*Gorgias* 511d.

³⁵*Republic* 361a.

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Augustine onwards to prefigure Christ.³⁶ Bernard may not have known the passage directly, but it is probable that he knew it indirectly through a Latin medium.

However that may be, it is clear that "scēth éra could be rendered equally well by "tempora pessima" or by "hora novissima." Either would be an accurate translation. Bernard's "Hora novissima, tempora pessima" need not be read as referring to two different things. The second phrase can be taken as an elaboration, or even a Hebrew-style repetition of the first, rather than introducing a new topic. In fact, it may be that, in Bernard's mind there is no great difference between saying "This is the end of the world" and saying "These are very sinful times." This is not to suggest that Saint John did not expect that the world would shortly come to an end. "The Johannine teaching, whatever its origin may be, has taught us to spiritualize the New Testament expression of the doctrine of the last things. But the writer [Saint John] held firmly to the expectation of a final manifestation of the Christ at "the last day ..."³⁷ Similarly, it is not suggested that Bernard did not expect the imminent coming of Christ. But Engelhardt's interpretation of the structure of his poem, while illuminating, may do insufficient justice to the complexity of Bernard's thinking. The literal meaning of "hora novissima" is certainly there, and is not superseded by the moral, analogical and anagogical significances. His treatment of the theme makes it

³⁶And even in modern times, Charles Kingsley used it in the mouth of Raphael Aben-Ezra to convince the neoplatonist Hypatia. "If as we both - and old Bishop Clemens too - as good a Platonist as we, remember - and Augustine himself, would agree, Plato, in speaking those strange words, spoke not of himself, but by the Spirit of God, why should not others have spoken by the same Spirit when they spoke the same words?" *Hypatia; or, New foes with an old face*, London, Ward, Lock, [n.d.], p.370. See also the discussion of C.S. Lewis in the discussion of interpretive allegory (below, p.302).

³⁷A.E. Brooke, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Johannine epistles*, Edinburgh, Clark, 1912 (International

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clear that, analogically, he is referring to the individual judgement of each one of us, while anagogically he points to Christ as the lord and saviour, not only of us, but of all creation.³⁸

But most important, as Bernard's own words and the gloss quoted above make clear, is the moral significance. Bernard wants to say that we must live every day as if the world were about to end and Christ about to come in judgement. From that point of view, it is unimportant whether the imminence of the end of the world is taken literally or not, and Engelhardt's schema is to that extent misleading, because it suggests that it is crucial to an understanding of the poem to see the imminence of the end of the world as a reason for repentance. In a similar way, one can misread the apocalyptic elements in Dante's *Commedia*. Ronald B. Herzman, referring to Dante's cryptic references to the last world emperor, the "veltro" and the imminence of judgement, points out that:

There is a danger in seeing the poem primarily from the perspective of its ideas - that of turning it into a kind of rhymed *Summa*, wherein the poetry exists for the sake of presenting ideas in a memorable form - for then one fails to take into account what is most distinctive about this poem as a poem. One of the most fruitful ways of looking at the poetics of the *Commedia*, as much recent scholarship has shown, is to see how it focuses on the continuing conversion of Dante the pilgrim ... The "ideas" in the poem, according to this approach, are no less important, but they must be understood as they are incorporated into the pilgrim's - and the reader's - continuing journey of discovery.³⁹

critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures), p.51, commenting on 1 John 2,18.

³⁸That is the significance of the cosmological elements of this part of the poem, for example lines 427ff. The concept is found in Saint John's *Apocalypse*, but also in Saint Paul, for example Romans 8,19-22, where the whole of creation is seen to be in need of redemption.

³⁹Ronald B. Herzman, "Dante and the Apocalypse," in *The Apocalypse in the middle ages*, edited by Richard K. Emmerson and

Engelhardt draws attention to what he calls "dilatation" in *De contemptu mundi*. This is the characteristic which Archbishop Trench noted: "The poet, instead of advancing, eddies round and round his subject, recurring again and again to that which he seemed to have thoroughly treated and dismissed."⁴⁰ Engelhardt relates it to the theory of syntomia and peribole.

The elaboration does not progress in syntomic fashion by discrete grades ... : rather the dilatation of any one topic may, after the peribolic method, be interrupted for the anticipation or resumption of any other.⁴¹

He explores the concept of dilatation in greater detail elsewhere, in a study of *Beowulf*,⁴² where he puts it squarely in the context of "Greco-Latin theory."⁴³ Again, Engelhardt's analysis of the *De contemptu mundi* in those terms is illuminating and suggestive. It may be seen as providing some evidence for Bernard's classical heritage. On the other hand, the same kind of repetition is characteristic of Saint John's writing. Rudolf Schnackenburg, writing about Saint John's Gospel, comments:

The technique of the discourses uses a number of effects which have already been noted in the epistles: antithesis, verbal links through key words, concatenation of ideas by means of recourse to earlier ones, *inclusio*, whereby the thought is brought back to its starting point, parallelism and variation - on the whole, the instruments of Semitic rather than Greek

Bernard McGinn, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992, p.402-403.

⁴⁰Quoted in John Julian (ed.), *A dictionary of hymnology*, 2nd. ed., London, Murray, 1907, p.534.

⁴¹Engelhardt, "The *De contemptu mundi*, part 1", p.116.

⁴²George J. Engelhardt, "Beowulf; a study in dilatation," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America [PMLA]*, 70 (September 1955):825-852. Pages 825-830 deal with the concept of dilatation. The remainder is an analysis of *Beowulf*. The connection is interesting in relation to Bernard's possible Englishness.

⁴³*ibid.*, p.826.

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rhetoric. We are reminded most strongly of the technique of 1 Jn in Jn 3:13-31, 31-36, but we can also see the same means being used in the revelation discourses of chs. 5,6,8 and 12, and in the farewell discourses. [He illustrates his point with examples, and continues:] Here too we can see clearly how the thought "circles", repeating and insisting, and at the same time moving forward, explaining and going on to a higher level.⁴⁴

The technique is common in the literature of the twelfth century.⁴⁵ While there is, no doubt, some influence from classical rhetoric, it seems likely that the predominant influence is Hebrew, through the medium of the Vulgate.

The *De contemptu mundi* of Innocent III relies heavily on quotations from Scripture throughout. The passages dealing with the end of the world consist entirely of quotations from Isaiah, Wisdom, Luke, Matthew, Paul, Malachi, John (Gospel and Apocalypse), Proverbs, Daniel and Psalms.⁴⁶ Bernard's treatment is also firmly rooted in Scripture, but has no direct quotations. In some respects, his picture of the end of the world is quite similar to Innocent's.

The constellation of heaven and the highest mountains will be shaken. Thunderous sounds will be experienced from the heavens, the earth and the seas. The high mountains and the constellations of the heavens will be thrown down. The highest and the lowest, sun, sea and stars, all will be convulsed.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, New York, Seabury Press, 1980 (Crossroads books), v.1, p.115-117.

⁴⁵A striking example occurs in a letter from Peter the Venerable to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Peter takes Cistercian objections to Cluniac practices and deals with them one by one; then he picks up various themes, especially charity, and develops them further, recurring again and again to points already dealt with. *The letters of Peter the Venerable*, edited, with an introduction and notes, by Giles Constable, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967, 2v.(Harvard historical studies 78), v.1., p.52-101.

⁴⁶PL 217, 742-744.

⁴⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1,427-430.

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But when he deals with the salvation of the blessed, Bernard has a quite different approach to the end of the world, stressing renewal rather than destruction. Christ appears not only as the avenger of sin, but as the lord and redeemer of the universe.

Then the fires of those last days will leap up higher than all the mountains. Those who have not been active in doing good will go down to the depths; those who have been merciful will go up to the heights. The unbridled flames will leap up to the sky, to the very stars. They will destroy courts, kingdoms, estates, cities and castles. They will thoroughly dry up all those elements which are now drenched in filth. Now, when all the rottenness has been burnt away, they will restore everything to shining brightness. The world will be the same, but it will be renewed. It will be the same, yet different; different in form, not in essence. There will be no poverty, no sickness, no sorrow, no madness, no strife, no food, no cooking, no lust, no ribaldry, no pride, no violence. The earth will be made new. The beauty of the world, which the abyss of sin now defiles, clutches and overwhelms, will be restored.⁴⁸

When Bernard, reciting the Creed, said, "Exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi," he did not mean it in a purely spiritual sense. Like all Christendom, he believed that the resurrection of Christ is a guarantee of the physical resurrection of each of us. His heaven is the earth made new, and it is inhabited by corporeal human beings, whose bodies have been made new.

The earth now bears the bones of our fathers. Then, it will become paradise. It will no longer be cultivated by the farmer, labouring with his ox, as he does now. The weather will not be as it is now. There will be no snow, no lightning clouds, no thunder, no storms. The sun will cease circling, the swift moon will stay in place, the Pole star and the other stars will no longer speed in their orbits and the tides of the sea will cease. God's right hand will make all the stars shine brightly. The stars will be twice as bright, and the sun will shine for

⁴⁸ibid., 1,33-44.

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you⁴⁹ with seven times its present brightness. Good people suffer now, but then they will shine like the sun. They will have learned minds and beautiful bodies, beautiful, swift, strong, free, delightful, healthy, flourishing, and free from baneful death. We will have such bodies that the beauty of Absalom and his hair⁵⁰ would seem ugly; the feet of Asahel would seem slow;⁵¹ the hands of Israel⁵² or Samson would seem weak. Prowess such as that of Caesar, which knows no equal, will not exist, nor will power or luxury such as that of Solomon. Moses, famous for his healthy eyes and teeth,⁵³ would seem blind and toothless, and Methuselah would seem short lived.⁵⁴

The theme of brightness derives from Matthew 13,43: "Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Much of the rest of the imagery comes from the apocalyptic passages of the synoptic gospels, especially Matthew 24, and from the Apocalypse itself. The other major source for the ideas in this passage is Pope Gregory I, whom Bernard calls "Gregorius meus" and of whom he says, "He must be read again and again, with careful attention to detail."⁵⁵

Yet in one important and significant way, Bernard's thinking is quite different from Saint Gregory's. Bernard's view of spiritual life is that it can be achieved only in the context of monastic seclusion. Indeed, he might almost be said to regard the two as synonymous, and to see the monastic life as the only road to salvation.

Run away from the fiery onslaught of worldly temptations. You will be secure if you submit to

⁴⁹"tibi." Perhaps "ibi" was intended, but no variant reading is recorded by Hoskier.

⁵⁰2 Samuel 14,25-26.

⁵¹"porro Asahel cursor velocissimus fuit." 2 Samuel 2,18.

⁵²Psalms 67,36 (Vulgate); Zechariah 8,13; but mostly, no doubt, the fight with the angel, Genesis 22-30.

⁵³This will puzzle readers of the King James version. The Vulgate has "Moses centum et viginti annorum erat quando mortuus est. Non caligavit oculus eius nec dentes illius moti sunt." Deuteronomy 34,7.

⁵⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 1,45-62.

⁵⁵*ibid.*, 3,317.

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monastic discipline and wholeheartedly pull the wagon of the cloister.⁵⁶ If you follow Dina, your deviance will lead you to ruin.⁵⁷ Hold fast to monastic seclusion and reject the hurly-burly of the world, and you will be safe.⁵⁸

This view of the contemplative life underlay the elaboration of the Divine Office in the Cluniac family during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to the extent that the "opus Dei" took up most of the working hours of the monks and excluded any other work. In the twelfth century *Dialogus duorum monachorum*, the Cluniac maintains that the Cistercians spend most of their time working in the fields, while the Cluniacs lead the contemplative life.⁵⁹ A similar point is made by Peter the Venerable in his long letter to Saint Bernard about the Cluniac-Cistercian controversy.

If work other than agricultural labour were not acceptable to God, our Lord could not have said to the Jews, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting." If physical work were better than spiritual work, Mary

⁵⁶"Tutus eris claustrum claustrique ferens bene plastrum" There may be some reference here that I do not recognise; but perhaps the odd imagery was suggested by the rhyme of "plastrum" with "claustrum."

⁵⁷Genesis 34 passim. Dina, the daughter of Jacob, was raped by Sicheu (son of Hemor the Hevite) who subsequently sought to marry her. The sons of Jacob deceitfully agreed, on the condition that all the Hevites undergo circumcision. When the pain of the wound of circumcision was greatest, the sons of Jacob slaughtered all the Hevites and took captive their wives and children.

⁵⁸*De octo vitiis*, 802-805.

⁵⁹Idung of Prüfening, *Dialogus duorum monachorum*. The only edited edition is in R.B.C. Huygens, "Le moine Idung et ses deux ouvrages: Argumentum super quatuor questionibus et Dialogus duorum monachorum," *Studi medievali*, 13,1 (1972):291-470. The text of the dialogue is on pp.375-470. There is an English translation: Idung of Prüfening, *Cistercians and Cluniacs, the case for Cîteaux; a dialogue between two monks and An argument on four questions*, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1977 (Cistercian fathers, 33). See also Adriaan H. Bredero, "Le Dialogus duorum monachorum; un rebondissement de la polémique entre Cisterciens et Clunisiens," *Studi medievali* 22,2(1981):501-585.

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would not have chosen to sit at the feet of our Lord and listen ceaselessly to his words, neglecting other tasks. Nor would our Lord have allowed her sister Martha to do the chores all by herself, or have said that Mary had "chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."⁶⁰

Saint Gregory, on the other hand, regarded preaching as the highest activity; monastic seclusion as the second; and married life as the third. Yet, in eschatological terms, they are all equal, for they will all enjoy the same life of happiness in heaven.⁶¹ Dom Cuthbert Butler points out that "what is now called a purely contemplative life, in which the works of the active life are sought to be reduced almost to a vanishing point, lay quite outside St Gregory's mental horizon: he seems to take for granted that such a life is not livable in this world."⁶²

Saint Gregory had experience in the world as a governor of Rome, as well as experience in the monastic life. In a number of passages he makes it clear that we cannot maintain the activity of contemplation for very long, and that we need to seek relief in active work.

Please note that there are some good works in which we persevere without tiring, and there are others which wear us out, so that we continually fall away from them, and we return to them with great effort after a lapse of time. In the active life, the mind is stable, without weakness. But in the contemplative life, the mind is overcome by the burden of its frailty and it is worn out.⁶³

When we ascend from the active life to the contemplative life, our minds are not strong enough to remain long in contemplation ... They have to return

⁶⁰Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, ed. Constable, v.1, p.70-71.

⁶¹"una tamen erit omnibus beatitudinis." *Homiliarum in Ezechielem prophetam libri duo*, PL 76, 976-977.

⁶²Cuthbert Butler, *Western mysticism; the teaching of Augustine, Gregory and Bernard [of Clairvaux] on contemplation and the contemplative life*, 3rd ed., London, Constable, 1967, p.207.

⁶³*Moralium libri sive expositio in librum B. Job*, PL 75, 938.

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to the active life and undertake extensive activity in good works, so that when our minds are not capable of rising to the contemplation of heavenly things, we do not neglect the good works we are capable of.⁶⁴

The Cluniac family reached its peak in the twelfth century and began its long, slow decline. The Cistercians to some extent better represented Saint Gregory's kind of monasticism. But his policy would seem to be best practised by the friars, especially the Dominicans. In the longer term, it was the Gregorian "mixed life"⁶⁵ rather than the purely contemplative life which gained most support. Richard Rolle of Hampole, for example, was strongly influenced by Gregory.⁶⁶

Bernard of Morlaix, when he deals with signs which indicate the imminent end of the world, is surprisingly brief and topical. He does not emphasise the major portents familiar from Scripture, which Innocent itemises. He mentions the Antichrist, the dragon's tail, the seventh trumpet and the fall of realms, especially Rome, but his "patentia signa" are a black, bristling, winged, fire-breathing dragon, reportedly seen by many; Siamese twins who lived in Kent;⁶⁷ a Spanish magician who claimed to be born of a virgin and to be Christ; and a madman "in regionibus orientis" who claimed to be Elias.⁶⁸ Bernard's portents are not apocalyptic in the traditional sense. He is, albeit in a somewhat perfunctory fashion, offering empirically verifiable evidence for the imminence of the end of the world. The fact that he sees a need to do so may be taken to illustrate a development of ways of thinking in the twelfth century which has been regarded as specially significant, both in relation to the genre of apocalypse and in relation to the concept of

⁶⁴*Hom. in Ezech.*, PL 76, 826.

⁶⁵Butler, *Western mysticism*, p.207

⁶⁶Nicole Marzac, *Richard Rolle de Hampole (1300-1349); vie et oeuvres, suivies du Tractatus super Apocalypsim, texte critique avec traduction et commentaire*, Paris, Vrin, 1968, p.95-96.

⁶⁷The Biddenden maids. See p.25ff. above.

⁶⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 1,1019-1068.

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renaissance. E. Randolph Daniel, for example, puts it as follows:

The ancient, classical world's acceptance of oracles and auspices are [sic] indications that the early medieval mentality was a continuation of the ancient one. The Neoplatonists distinguished between the world of sense experience and the intelligible order, between the realm of matter and the realm of pure being, but not between nature and supernature as the twelfth century came to distinguish them ... The apocalyptic authors believed that they were granted the privilege of being allowed to see into the invisible world, that is, to see into the heavenly sphere itself ... The new awareness of nature as a self-contained entity fundamentally challenged these assumptions. People still believed that God had created the "natural" world, that God still operated in it, but that such operations were usually by natural means and only exceptionally by supernatural ones. So long as the ancient and early medieval mentality prevailed, the assumptions of a glimpse into heaven required no examination. In the twelfth century, such a glimpse necessitated an inquiry into how a human observer could attain such knowledge or how such a claim could be substantiated.⁶⁹

That characteristic may be illustrated also by the *In Apocalypsim Joannis libri septem* of the Scotsman Richard, prior of the abbey of Saint Victor, and a contemporary of Bernard's. His first chapter is devoted to an analysis of kinds of perception.⁷⁰ The first kind is the perception through the senses of things outside ourselves.⁷¹ The second kind is the

⁶⁹E. Randolph Daniel, "Joachim of Fiore: patterns of history in the apocalypse", in *The apocalypse in the middle ages*, edited by Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992, p.75-76. See also Charles M. Radding, *A world made by men; cognition and society 400-1200*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1985, especially pp.3-33 and 153-199.

⁷⁰PL 196, 686-689.

⁷¹"Visio namque prima corporalis est, quando oculos ad exteriora et visibilia aperimus, et coelum et terram, figuras et solos rerum visibilium videmus." *ibid.*, 686b.

perception of the inner significance of external things.⁷² The third kind is the perception of truths through images of things that are not really there.⁷³ The fourth kind is the direct perception, without any mediation of the senses, of spiritual truths.⁷⁴ Saint John's Apocalypse, he says, represents perception of the third kind. That is to say, we are not to suppose that the apocalyptic images are to be taken literally. They are meant to lead us to the spiritual truth.⁷⁵ The Apocalypse cannot represent the fourth kind of perception, because such perception is in principle ineffable, it cannot be communicated. Richard's view of the nature of human knowledge appears to be very similar to that of Aristotle,⁷⁶ later to be expounded by Saint Thomas Aquinas.⁷⁷ There is hardly any element of the first or second kinds of perception in the Apocalypse.⁷⁸ The distinction between the second and third kinds of perception is clarified by Richard's example of the second kind. It is the burning bush which Moses saw, which was really there, but which had a spiritual significance.⁷⁹ The visions which Saint John saw were different. They were not really there, but they convey a

⁷²"... quando species, vel actio sensui visus foris ostenditur, et intus magna mysticae significationis virtus continetur." loc.cit., b-c.

⁷³"Tertius modus visionis non fit oculis carnis sed oculis cordis: quando videlicet animus per Spiritum sanctum illuminatus formalibus rerum visibilium similitudinibus, et imaginibus praesentatis quasi quibusdam figuris et signis ad invisibilium ducitur cognitionem." loc. cit., d.

⁷⁴Quartus visionis modus est, cum spiritus humanus per internam aspirationem subtiliter ac suaviter tactus nullis mediantibus rerum visibilium figuris sive qualitatibus spiritualiter erigitur ad coelestium contemplationem." ibid., 686d - 687a.

⁷⁵ibid., 687c - 688a.

⁷⁶*De anima*, 3,7,431a16.

⁷⁷*Summa theologiae*, 1a,84,6-8. Saint Thomas says, "sensitiva cognitio non est tota causa intellectualis cognitionis. Et ideo non est mirum si intellectualis cognitio ultra sensitivam se extendit." But he also quotes Aristotle, "nihil sine phantasmate intelligit anima", 1a, 84,7.

⁷⁸"Sed constat quod duobus primis videndi modis ... eam minime viderit." PL 196, 687c.

⁷⁹ibid., 686c-d. The spiritual significance is not, perhaps, exactly what we (or Moses) might expect. The burning bush represents the Incarnation and the perpetual virginity of Mary.

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spiritual meaning. A somewhat similar way of looking at the natural and the supernatural can be seen in the works of Joachim of Fiore and Otto of Freising.⁸⁰

Apocalyptic writers before the twelfth century typically claimed divine inspiration, while those of the twelfth and later centuries tended to feel constrained to advance reasons. It is true that Bernard claims some degree of divine inspiration, but it should be noted that his claim relates to his metrical style rather than his message.

The Lord said to me, "Open your mouth and I will fill it." So I opened my mouth and the Lord filled it with the spirit of wisdom, so that I might speak the truth and understanding, so that I might speak clearly. I say this not arrogantly, but in all humility, because if I had not been aided and speeded by the spirit of wisdom and understanding, I would not have been able to persevere with such a long work in such a difficult metre. For this kind of metre, which uses only dactyls except for the trochee or spondee at the end of every line, and which maintains the melodiousness of the Leonine measure, is almost, not to say completely obsolete because of its difficulty. Hildebert of Lavardin, who, because of his evident wisdom, was promoted first bishop then archbishop, and Wilchard the canon of Lyon, are both distinguished poets. But it is well known that they produced very little in this metre. Hildebert, when he wrote his life of Saint Mary of Egypt in hexameters, enhanced only four verses with this metre;⁸¹ and Wilchard ran to thirty verses, more or less, in his satirical poem. I say this to make it clear that I could not have written the three books of this poem in a metre in which those men have written so very few verses, unless God had been working with me and helping me in my choice of words.⁸²

⁸⁰Radding, *A world made by men*, p.201.

⁸¹"hoc metro quattuor tantum coloravit versus." Hildebert's poem, which is in the same metre as Bernard's *De contemptu mundi* but with a rhyme scheme like the *De octo vitiis*, runs, in fact, to nearly one thousand lines, in eleven cantus. There are, however, ten lines (five couplets) in cantus 8 which have end rhymes, though without internal rhymes. Possibly Bernard is referring to those. PL 171, 1321-1340.

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Bernard's *De contemptu mundi* could not be said to present an intellectually coherent vision of the kind exemplified by Joachim and Otto. That is not surprising, for his work, despite its apocalyptic elements, is not an apocalypse, and it is certainly not an attempt at history in Otto's sense. His genre is *contemptus mundi* and his purpose is moral persuasion in a way that Joachim's and Otto's are not; nor, indeed, can Richard of Saint Victor, or even Saint John himself, be said to have such a direct and immediate purpose of moral persuasion as Bernard has. Saint John, in his *Apocalypse*, is primarily concerned to encourage the faithful in times of persecution, rather than to convert sinners, and Richard of Saint Victor is concerned to expound Saint John's teaching.

Neither Bernard's poem nor Innocent's prose represents one particular feature of the *contemptus mundi* genre. An example, practically contemporary with Bernard's *De contemptu mundi*, is the anonymous *Poema morale* or *Moral ode*, a Middle English poem which, in its earliest form, was written in about 1150. But probably the best example of this feature of the genre is the *Dies irae*. What both these poems have, which is completely lacking in Innocent's work and almost completely in Bernard's, is a deeply personal involvement of the writer because of his awareness of his own sin. Bernard says, "It is not on account of my deserts that I seek you [the heavenly Jerusalem], for if I got my deserts I would reap death, nor do I attempt to hide the fact that, according to my deserts I am a child of wrath"⁸³ and, "Oh heavenly homeland, where there is no sin or strife, I, guilty as I am, long for you ardently."⁸⁴ But these are mild and conventional expressions of personal sinfulness, and it is significant that they occur in the course of the description of the joys of heaven, rather than of the pains of hell. The poet of the *Poema morale* is more convincing.

⁸²*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus, ad fin.

⁸³*De contemptu mundi*, 1,339-340.

⁸⁴*ibid.*, 1,365-366.

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I am older than I was, both in age and in learning. I have more experience than I had before. I ought to be a lot wiser. Too long have I been a child in word and deed. Though I am old in years, I am young in wisdom. I have led a useless life and I realise that I still do. When I think about it I am sore afraid. Nearly all I have done is idleness and childishness. Very late, I have come to realise that my only real help comes from God. Since I learned to speak, I have spoken many an idle word. Ever since I was very young, I have done things I am now ashamed of. All too often I have been guilty in word and deed.⁸⁵

The *Dies ire*, which was adopted as a sequence for requiem masses, is among the finest of Latin hymns.⁸⁶ The following verses illustrate the personal tone of the poem.

Quis sum miser tunc dicturus
Quem patronum rogaturus
Dum vix justus sit securus?

Rex tremendae majestatis
Qui salvandos salvas gratis
Salva me fons pietatis.

Recordare Jesu pie
Quod sum causa tuae viae.
Ne me perdas illa die.

Quaerens me, sedisti lassus

⁸⁵Richard Morris (ed.), *Specimens of early English, with introductions, notes and glossarial index; Part 1, from "Old English homilies" to "King Horn, AD 1150 - AD 1300*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1898, p.194-197. Morris presents the texts of the Jesus ms. and the Trinity ms. in parallel. (The text of the Jesus ms., also edited by Morris, appears in EETS 49, p.58-71.) The poem is in septenary rhymed couplets.

Ich am nu elder than ich was a wintre and a lore.

Ich wealde more than idude mi wit oh to be more.

See also below, page 269.

⁸⁶John Julian (ed.), *A dictionary of hymnology*, 2nd. ed., London, Murray, 1907, 2v. v.1, p.296. Julian ascribes the hymn to Thomas of Celano, an early follower of Saint Francis and his first biographer. But Joseph A. Jungmann says that it "put in an appearance at the end of the twelfth century." (*The Mass of the Roman rite; its origins and development*, Blackrock, Four Courts Press, 1986, (first published Vienna, Herder, 1949), v.1, p.439 and note 112).

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Redemisti crucem passus
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Juste judex ultionis
Donum fac remissionis
Ante diem rationis.

Ingemisco tamquam reus
Culpa rubet vultus meus
Supplici parce, Deus.⁸⁷

This is the same deeply personal tone which is found in the *Poema morale*. The *Dies irae* is not, perhaps, typical of *contemptus mundi* literature, but it does express in a striking way the moral purpose of the genre and it brings out the difference between the *contemptus mundi* and the apocalyptic genres. The only work of Bernard's (if, indeed it is his) in which we find a similarly personal repentance is the *Mariale*.⁸⁸ At the beginning of the poem, he exhorts those who are driven by the temptations of the devil that they should call upon the Star of the Sea, for she will most certainly help.⁸⁹ Later in the poem, he introduces the *contemptus mundi* theme, and relates it to devotion to Mary.

Oh, how wicked and lazy are those who love the world,
those who neglect God and do not care to whom they
sell themselves! The foolish person who is led astray
by what he sees in this valley of sorrow is truly
blind and like a beast. For what fruit except misery

⁸⁷The *Penguin book of Latin verse*, introduced and edited by Frederick Brittain, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1962 (Penguin poets), p. 240-241. "What shall I, wretch that I am, say then? Whom shall I ask to be my advocate, when the righteous will barely be saved? King of dreadful majesty, who freely savest those who are to be saved, save me, thou source of compassion. Remember, merciful Jesus, that I am the cause of thine incarnation. Cast me not away on that day. When seeking me, thou didst sit down weary. Thou didst redeem me when thou hadst endured the cross. Let not such labour be in vain. Righteous judge of vengeance, grant me the gift of pardon before the day of reckoning. I groan like a guilty man. My face blushes with shame. Spare thy suppliant, O God." (Brittain's translation).

⁸⁸Guido Maria Drèves (ed.), *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, Leipzig, Reisland, 1886-1922, 56v., v.50, p.423-483.

⁸⁹*Mariale*, 1,21-31.

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do the pleasures of this world offer? Enjoyment of them brings dire punishment to wretched sinners. Greatest judge of all things, spare me as I weep and wail, for I have gravely sinned against your commandments. When I think about the great heap of my sins, I blush and wither with shame, afraid of your face. Great anxiety and sorrow trouble my soul. I quake with dread as I think apprehensively about the end of the world. Who will be unscathed in that trial, when all that now lies hidden will be revealed to the accusing eye of the judge?⁹⁰ ... Where shall I go to avoid the terrible judgement? Who is there that I can call upon to escape the anger of the judge? Oh Mary, from whom comes forth the wisdom of the most high, so that mankind, believing and obeying, might be redeemed, make the dreadful judge kind to your suppliants lest, enraged on account of our guilt, he consign us to the flames! ... Compassionate mother, rescue by your intercession this wretch whom a great burden of sins weighs down and crushes.⁹¹

Similar expressions of personal contrition appear elsewhere in the poem.⁹² Bernard appears to associate this tone of piety with devotion to Mary rather than with eschatological reflections. Other aspects of the *Mariale* are discussed in Chapter 4, p.191 ff.

This study of some aspects of Bernard's treatment of the end of the world in his *De contemptu mundi* suggests that the structure and style of the poem owe more to Hebrew than to classical sources. To that extent it does not exhibit characteristics which are thought to belong to the twelfth-century renaissance. On the other hand, his treatment of the theme exhibits a distinction between the natural and the supernatural which has been argued by some scholars to be an important part of that renaissance.

⁹⁰Quis futururus est securus

In illo examine

Quando patent quae nunc latent

Arguente lumine? *Mariale*, 7,11.

There are echoes of the *Mariale* in the *Dies irae*, (as here and elsewhere), but none of the *De contemptu mundi*.

⁹¹*Mariale*, 7,8-24.

⁹²*Mariale*, 9,119-20; 12,27-29; 13,20-21.

Closely related to apocalyptic literature is eschatological literature. Bernard's treatment of heaven and hell, death and judgement, are considered next.

Heaven and hell

Dante's visit to hell began on Good Friday, 1300. He left the earthly paradise at the top of the mountain of purgatory and began his visit to heaven five days later, on the Wednesday of Easter week. He saw heaven and hell as they were at that time, before the last judgement and the resurrection of the body. The people he saw and met and talked with were all disembodied souls.⁹³ The great majority of visions and tours of heaven and hell are of that kind. One would perhaps expect nothing else in classical literature, where there was no clear concept of a bodily resurrection. It is, however, surprising that classical models, especially those of Homer, Cicero and Vergil, should have such a strong influence on Christian visions that nearly all medieval representations of heaven and hell are contemporaneous with the visionary's experience. They happen, as we say nowadays, in real time. It is surprising because the prime Christian model, from which a great deal of imagery is borrowed, is the Apocalypse of John, which shows heaven and hell after the last judgement.

All the visions of heaven and hell in Eileen Gardiner's sourcebook are real time visions.⁹⁴ So are by far the greater

⁹³Strictly speaking, there are a few exceptions, notably Jesus and Mary.

⁹⁴Eileen Gardiner, *Medieval visions of heaven and hell, a sourcebook*, New York, Garland, 1993. Bibliographic details, with informative abstracts, are given for sixty-four visions.

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number of visions discussed in the literature.⁹⁵ The description of heaven and hell given by Bernard of Morlaix is of quite a different kind. Saint Augustine, commenting on Saint John's Apocalypse, says that "after the judgement has been accomplished this heaven and this earth will, of course, cease to be, when a new heaven and a new earth will come into being. For it is by a transformation of the physical universe, not by its annihilation, that the world will pass away."⁹⁶ That is the situation envisaged by Bernard. "The earth will be made new. The beauty of the world, which the abyss of sin now defiles, clutches and overwhelms, will be restored."⁹⁷

Some aspects of Bernard's treatment of the end of the world theme were discussed above. Here, the concentration is upon Bernard's description of heaven and hell. He begins with an account of the last judgement, after which Christ will have the ranks of temperate people (*agmina sobria*) on his right and the sinners on his left.⁹⁸ The blessed, in their resurrected, glorified bodies, will proceed to heaven, where they will possess "pure joys, lasting joys, not passing nor perishing ones." In the joy of the beatific vision, nothing will be hidden. We will look upon each other's faces and penetrate each other's secrets and "there will be no shame" (*nilque pudebit*). We will also see the blackness of hell below us, but we will not be distressed by it. "Just as it delights you now to see fishes playing in the water, so you will not be unhappy at the sight of

⁹⁵For example, Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of heaven and hell before Dante*, New York, Italica Press, 1989; Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of hell; an apocalyptic form in Jewish and Christian literature*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983; Kaufmann Kohler, *Heaven and hell in comparative religion, with special reference to Dante's Divine comedy*, New York, Macmillan, 1923; D.D.R. Owen, *The vision of hell; infernal journeys in medieval French literature*, New York, Barnes and Noble, 1970; Howard Rollin Patch, *The other world according to descriptions in medieval literature*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1950.

⁹⁶*City of God*, Book 20, chapter 14.

⁹⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1,43-44.

⁹⁸*ibid.*, 1,17 ff.

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your own children, should you see them in hell." In the perfectly peaceful commonwealth of heaven, there will be halls filled with joyful voices and melodies, gardens abounding with fragrance, joys, songs and laughter. Here on earth we are exiles, but in heaven we will be citizens in our true native land. In the everlasting springtime of the new Jerusalem, under the guidance of the crucified king, who removed all offences by the cross, we will stroll and dance and sing among the flowers. The greater the sins we committed and repented, the greater will be our songs of praise for the king who redeemed us.⁹⁹

Bernard proceeds to the long, lyrical description of the new Jerusalem, the heavenly country, which the translations of J.M. Neale and others introduced into English hymnaries, and which represent the best known part of Bernard's work except, perhaps, the *Mariale*. F.J.E. Raby considered Bernard's celebration of the golden city of Sion to be verses of much beauty, full of the elaborate mysticism so dear to the monastic mind. "Of Bernard of Morlas it can be said that no one before him, even the unknown author of the *Urbs beata Hierusalem*, or Hildebert in his *Me receptet Syon illa*, had risen to such heights in describing the longing of the pilgrim for his home."¹⁰⁰

Your God himself is there and your unbreakable, unclimbable, solid wall of safety is golden stone. You are the beautiful bride of Christ, and you have a dowry of laurel and of gold. You receive the first kisses of your prince. You look upon his face. White lilies make a living necklace for you, his bride. The Lamb, your bridegroom, is there and you stand before him, beautiful.¹⁰¹

Your king is the only son of Mary, the holy son of the virgin, the author of creation and the mouth of wisdom ... [In heaven] we will look upon him, we will be

⁹⁹ibid., 1,64-170.

¹⁰⁰F.J.E. Raby, *A history of Christian-Latin poetry from the beginnings to the close of the middle ages*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.317.

¹⁰¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,253-258.

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content in him, we will thirst for him. To see, continually and without end, the face of God, is what gives to the blessed in heaven constant and everlasting riches.¹⁰²

Bernard proceeds to an account of the judgement of the wicked and the pains of hell.

The tortures of the wicked are proportionate with their sins. There are many punishments, but the worst two are cold and fire, neither of which is milder or easier to bear than the other. The torture punishes both bodies and minds. Christ is the punisher of both. The fire here on earth is a joke, a mere shadow, compared with the fire of hell. Earthly fire is mild and like a mere picture, compared with those everlasting flames. The fires of hell are so thick and so huge that all the waves of the sea could not put them out. The cold is so intense that the fiery bulk of a volcano would turn to ice. The conviction of a sinner brings these penalties. Eyes, temples, foreheads, lips, torso, intestines, breasts, mouth, throat, genitals and legs, all are food for the flames. Those in hell weep for the sins they committed long ago. The stench is appalling, and the stinking terror is a burden. The sight of the devil is enough to turn to stone the face of the Gorgon herself. Everybody knows the vile and sinful deeds of everybody else. Sinners are prodded by worms which do not die and tortured by dragons which blaze with flames ... In hell there are torments, whips, hammers, fire and rivers of fire ... Fiery chains bind individual limbs. Chains restrict the movement of lascivious bodies and ostentatious limbs. Sinners suffer a threefold punishment. Their heads are plunged downwards, their faces are turned back to front on their bodies, and their legs and feet, all filthy with mud, are sticking up, while their head are thrust down.¹⁰³

Bernard's description of hell in *De contemptu mundi* is similar to that in the prose treatise *Instructio sacerdotis*, which is ascribed to him. The *Instructio sacerdotis* is incomplete. Bernard says in the *Proemium* that it deals with the three ways

¹⁰²ibid., 1,323-334.

¹⁰³ibid., 1,519-548. In Dante's hell, it is the Simoniacs who are upside-down in pits, with only their feet and calves sticking out. *Inferno*, 19, 22-30.

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in which the Son of God gives himself to us: firstly, he gave himself to us by dying for us; secondly, he gives himself to us in the Eucharist; and thirdly, he gives himself to us in the rewards of eternal life.¹⁰⁴ The first and second ways are dealt with in six chapters each, but the third way, which is headed "Quod Christus dat se nobis in coelo," has only two brief chapters and does not deal at all with heaven, but contains a short account of the punishments of hell. It comes to an abrupt halt without any kind of peroration and without dealing with its main topic.¹⁰⁵

The treatise is addressed to an unnamed priest who is newly ordained,¹⁰⁶ and it is clear from the context that Bernard was himself at the time of writing a priest of some experience. If the ordination of Ordericus Vitalis represents the normal twelfth century Cluniac custom, Bernard might have been about thirty years old when he was ordained priest.¹⁰⁷ Since he could hardly have been either a very young or a very old monk at the time of his visit to Rome, which took place about 1146, we may suppose that *Instructio sacerdotis* was written no earlier than the middle of the twelfth century. There is no way of knowing whether it was written before or after the *De contemptu mundi*.

Bernard's description of hell in the *Instructio sacerdotis*, like that in *De contemptu mundi*, is not in the form of a vision. It is simply a catalogue of punishments, with some attempt to provide support from Scriptural authorities ("ut ex auctoribus comprobari potest.")

There will be fire there that cannot be put out, and cold that cannot be borne. There will be immortal worms, intolerable stench, hammers which strike repeatedly, darkness which is so thick it can be felt.

¹⁰⁴PL 184, 774.

¹⁰⁵ibid, 789-792.

¹⁰⁶"Reverendo sacerdoti, frater Bernardus, ille servus antiquus et novus, in novitate vitae ambulare." ibid, 771.

¹⁰⁷Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, PL 188,983.

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There will be no law except unremitting terror. All the sins of everybody will be made plain to everybody. There will be the sight of the devils, constantly lit by the gleam of flames and more horrible and terrifying than anything in the world. Everybody's limbs will be bound with fiery chains. I tell you, the heat there is so great that even if all the rivers¹⁰⁸ were gathered together in to one, they would not be able to put out the fire. As Matthew says, "There, shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,"¹⁰⁹ because the smoke from the fire makes the eyes water and the cold makes the teeth gnash. A volcano, if it were plunged into hell, would immediately turn to ice. The wretched sinners wander about, condemned to these wretched conditions, passing from heat to cold and from cold to heat. They seek relief from different sorts of suffering in different sorts of conditions, but their suffering grows no less. As the blessed Job says, "Let him pass from the snow waters to excessive heat."¹¹⁰ Immortal worms are there, snakes and dragons. The sight of them is horrible, so is their hissing. They live in the flames like fishes in water. They torment the wretched sinners, penetrating and chewing especially on those members which served the needs of sin, for example the genitals of the lascivious, the palates and bellies of the gluttonous, and likewise with each of the other members. As the book of Wisdom says, "By what things a man sinneth, by that same also he is tormented."¹¹¹ So also Isaias: "Their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched."¹¹² The fire gives off a strong stench that inflicts just as much pain as the heat itself. So Isaias: "Instead of a sweet smell, there shall be a stench"¹¹³ and Psalms: "Fire and brimstone and storms of winds shall be the portion of their cup."¹¹⁴ The psalmist calls "storms of winds" the exhalation of smoke and stench which belches from the fire with a force like a hurricane. The damned are constantly beaten with whips like hammers by demons who compel them to confess their sins. The same devils who in this life tempted sinners to sin become punishers of those same sins in hell. So Solomon: "Judgments are prepared for scorers."¹¹⁵ The devils laugh loudly at

¹⁰⁸Reading "flumina" for "flamina."

¹⁰⁹Matthew 8,12.

¹¹⁰Job 24,19.

¹¹¹Wisdom 11,17.

¹¹²Isaias 66,24.

¹¹³Isaias 3,24.

¹¹⁴Psalms (Vulgate) 10,7.

¹¹⁵Proverbs 19,29. The verse continues: "and striking hammers for the bodies of fools."

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the wretched sinners. Because the devils failed to join the new order of angels, they cry, "Well done, well done, our eyes have seen it."¹¹⁶

Bernard's hell, unlike Dante's, clearly owes very little to classical sources. In the *De contemptu mundi*, in fact, he explicitly rejects the topography, furniture and characters of Vergil's hell, which feature so largely in Dante's *Inferno*.

There is no Aeacus or Rhadamanthus to judge people. There is no Cerberus, no raging, no revenge, no lamentation down there in hell. There is no ferryman with his boat, such as Vergil spoke of. What is there? Burning, darkness, torment, the death of Babylon. The constitution of hell has no place for Orpheus or for Typhoeus, bound by strong chains or for [such punishments as rolling] heavy stones or birds tearing at intestines.¹¹⁷

Vergil, you are mistaken when you put the fields of the blessed in hell. Despite what you say, the Elysian Fields are not there. You are the muse of poetry, the voice of learning and of the theatre, but when you speak of these things you are yourself badly deceived, and you deceive others.¹¹⁸

Most medieval visions of heaven and hell were influenced by the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Paul*.¹¹⁹ Dante clearly knew it and used it in the *Commedia*. He even refers to it explicitly when, as the pilgrim Dante, he is making excuses to Vergil, his guide, in order to avoid visiting hell.

Andovvi poi lo Vas d'elezione,
per recarne conforto a quella fede

¹¹⁶Psalms (Vulgate) 24,21. The passage quoted from *Instructio sacerdotis* is found in PL 184, 791-792.

¹¹⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1, 587-592.

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, 643-646.

¹¹⁹Montague Rhodes James, *The apocryphal New Testament, being the apocryphal gospels, acts, epistles and apocalypses ...*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, p.525-555. Schneemelcher, Wilhelm (ed.), *New Testament apocrypha, v.2., Writings relating to the Apostles, apocalypses and related subjects*, Cambridge, James Clarke, 1992, p.712-747.

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ch'è principio a la via di salvazione.¹²⁰

The *Apocalypse of Paul* dates from the last years of the fourth century, though it makes use of earlier material.¹²¹ It is linked to a passage in Saint Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians (12,2-4). "I know a man in Christ: above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven ... he was caught up into paradise and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter." The *Apocalypse of Paul* utters, at considerable length, these unutterable things. Like most visions of heaven and hell, it happens in real time. It purports to be Saint Paul's report of his experience, as revealed in a manuscript discovered in a house at Tarsus. It had an immense vogue, especially in the West, and exists in many manuscripts, in full and abridged forms.

Yet its influence on Bernard is minimal. Nor does Bernard appear to be much influenced by his beloved Gregory the Great. In his dialogues, Saint Gregory tells the stories of a monk called Peter, a man called Stephen and a soldier, all of whom had what we would nowadays call near death experiences, in the course of which they visited hell.¹²² The descriptions are brief but graphic, and the story of Stephen contains the curious incident that his death was a mistake. "When he was brought before the judge who sat there he would not allow Stephen in his presence, saying: I did not command this man, but Stephen the smith to be brought."¹²³ Similar mistaken summonings are found

¹²⁰*Inferno* 2,28. The Vessel of election is Saint Paul. Corinthinans, 12,2-4 says he was caught up into heaven. Only the *Apocalypse of Paul* has him visiting hell.

¹²¹Rhodes, *The apocryphal New Testament*, p.525. Himmelfarb, *Tours of hell*, p.16-17. Schneemelcher, *New Testament apocrypha*, v.2, p.712-715.

¹²²PL 77, 381-388.

¹²³PL 77, 384.

in Chinese lore,¹²⁴ but the suggestion of a mistaken trip to hell is hardly Christian. "Gregory here had gone too far; and despite the reverence in which he was held by the later writers [of visions of hell], they fought shy of using this awkward motif of divine error, whereas others they seized upon with alacrity."¹²⁵

But Bernard appears to have used no motifs from Saint Gregory's reports of visions of hell, and his account is significantly different from other medieval accounts. His description of heaven and hell is especially different in that it is not in the form of a vision. He does not claim personal experience of himself or an acquaintance, as do most accounts. But, as his chiding of Vergil shows, he writes as though with authority. "Believe me, I am not making this up. I am giving some details and leaving out many others; I do not know them all. But what I say is certainly true."¹²⁶ He writes, in fact, in somewhat the same tone as those who claim the authority of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, though that is clearly not his source.

Unlike the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Peter* appears to have been little known through the middle ages. Before the discovery in 1887 of a Greek manuscript of the eighth or ninth century in the grave of a monk at Akhmim in Upper Egypt, it had been known only from allusions in the works of the Fathers. In the first decade of the twentieth century a longer Ethiopic version came to light in the d'Abbadie manuscript collection.¹²⁷ It is the earliest Christian description of

¹²⁴Several cases occur, for example, in the stories of *The journey to the west*, attributed to Wu Ch'eng-en (translated and edited by Anthony C. Yu, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980-1983, 4 v.) Indeed, divine fallibility is such that Sun Wu-k'ung was able to erase not only his own name but the names of all the monkeys from the files of the ten kings of the Underworld (v.1, p.111).

¹²⁵Owen, *The vision of hell*, p.13.

¹²⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 1,549-551.

¹²⁷Himmelfarb, *Tours of hell*, p.9.

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heaven and hell that we have, if we except the Apocalypse of John. Citations by Clement of Alexandria (*Eclogues* 41 and 48) place it no later than the middle of the second century.¹²⁸

Like the *Apocalypse of Paul*, it has a Scriptural link.

This is the story of Christ's second coming and of the resurrection of the dead, revealed to Saint Peter by Christ, who died for their sins because they did not keep the commandment of God their Creator. Peter pondered this revelation so that he might understand the mystery of the Son of God, the merciful and the lover of mercy.¹²⁹

When Jesus was seated on the Mount of Olives, his disciples asked him to tell them about the end of the world. This opening scene derives from Matthew 24,3. Jesus warns the disciples against the deceiving Christs who will arise (Matthew 24,5).

"And you should learn a parable from the fig-tree. As soon as the shoot comes forth from it and the twigs are grown, the end of the world will come." [Matthew 24,32]. I, Peter, answered and said to him: "Interpret the fig-tree for me ... What then does the parable of the fig-tree mean?"¹³⁰

Jesus shows to Peter "on the palm of his right hand ... the image of what will happen on the last day." Hell will open up and a general resurrection will take place. The earth will be consumed by fire and covered with darkness. Jesus will come "upon an eternal cloud of brightness."

As for the elect who have done good, they will come to me and not see death by the devouring fire. But the unrighteous, the sinners, and the hypocrites will

¹²⁸ibid, p.8. See also James, *The apocryphal New Testament*, p.506, and Schneemelcher, *New Testament apocrypha*, p.621-624.

¹²⁹Gardiner, *Visions of heaven and hell before Dante*, p.1. Quotations from the *Apocalypse of Peter* are taken from Gardiner rather than from the more scholarly but less readable texts of James or Schneemelcher.

¹³⁰ibid., p.2.

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stand in the depths of darkness that will not pass away; and their punishment is fire.¹³¹

The description of the punishments of hell follows. Some sinners hang by the limbs that sinned. Others are immersed in fiery pits and are tortured by cruel beasts. Others again have fire applied to the sinful limb. It is clear that the punishments are envisaged as taking place after the last judgement. In this respect, the *Apocalypse of Peter* is unlike the great majority of medieval accounts of hell, which are in real time. They describe what is actually happening at the time of the revelation.

Then Peter is given a vision of heaven.

Afterward the angels will bring my elect and righteous, who are perfect in all uprightness, and bear them in their hands and clothe them with the garment of heavenly life. They will see justice carried out on those who hated them, when Ezrael punishes them, and the torment of every one will be forever, according to his or her deeds ... Then I will give my elect and righteous the baptism and the salvation that they sought from me in the field of Acherousia that is called Elysium. They will adorn the group of the righteous with flowers, and I will go and rejoice with them. I will cause these people to enter into my everlasting kingdom and show them that eternal life on which I have made them set their hope, I myself and my Father who is in heaven.¹³²

The scene shifts to the Transfiguration (Matthew 17; Mark 9), after which Peter is given a further glimpse of heaven.

And he showed me a great garden, open, full of fair trees and blessed fruits, and of the odor of perfumes. The fragrance of it was pleasant and came upon us. And I saw much fruit from this tree. And my Lord and God Jesus Christ said to me, "Have you seen the companies of the fathers? As is their rest, such also

¹³¹ibid., p.4.

¹³²ibid., p.10.

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is the honor and the glory of those who are persecuted for the sake of my righteousness."¹³³

The similarities between Bernard's account of heaven and hell and that of the *Apocalypse of Peter* are striking. Both entail the end of the world. Both deal with the world made new, not destroyed. Both envisage the resurrection of the body, and heaven and hell populated by beings who are fully human, not disembodied spirits. Both dwell upon the joys of the glorified bodies of the blessed in heaven. Both deal with the last judgement. Neither says anything about a particular judgement at the time of death. Neither says anything about Purgatory. The characteristics of heaven are similar in both accounts, although the *Apocalypse of Peter* is briefer and lacks Bernard's poetic account of the beatific vision.

The general imagery of the two descriptions of hell is also similar. But when it comes to details of punishments, there is considerable discrepancy. *The Apocalypse of Peter* goes to great lengths to itemise punishments which fit the crime, a theme which Bernard merely touches on. In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, blasphemers are hung up by their tongues; vain women are hung up by their hair; fornicators are hung up by their loins; murderers are cast into a pit full of venomous beasts, tormented by the souls of those they slew; women who committed abortion are plunged up to their necks in a pit, tormented by the souls of the children they aborted; slanderers gnaw their own tongues; those who bore false witness have their lips cut off; rich men and women who despised the poor are flung upon a pillar of fire, dressed in filthy rags; usurers are thrown into mire up to their knees. There are appropriate punishments also for idolaters, sodomites, lesbians, those who failed to honour their fathers and mothers, women who did not keep their virginity until marriage, slaves who did not obey their masters, those who were self-righteous, and sorcerers. Bernard's account of hell is

¹³³ibid., p.11.

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much more restrained. He describes the punishments with less relish and he makes no attempt to match punishment to sinner, although he says that it happens.

That is an important difference between the two works. But if we consider the nature of the *De contemptu mundi* and the way Bernard tackled his overall theme, it becomes clear that he could not have handled the description of the punishments of hell in the way they are handled in the *Apocalypse of Peter*. The greater part of the *De contemptu mundi* is taken up with the castigation of sin. In the well-established pattern of the genre of complaint literature, Bernard deals at length with corruption of classes of men (kings, soldiers, lawyers, merchants, farmers, clergy and so forth - in effect, estates satire); with particular vices and types (rich men, misers, women, and so forth); with specific sins (adultery, sodomy, pride and so forth); and with general themes (providence, virtue and vice, the contrast between the wicked state of the present world and the Golden Age, and so forth). It would have been impossible for him to deal with individual sins in his description of the pains of hell. The plan of his work required the extensive treatment of that theme elsewhere.

Another difference is that Bernard deals with heaven first. Such a difference is not in any case very significant, given that Bernard was making imaginative use of material rather than transcribing it. But it is interesting that in the Akhmim text of the *Apocalypse of Peter* the description of heaven precedes that of hell.¹³⁴

If we discount those particular elements of difference, the similarity between the two works would seem to be enough to suggest the influence of one on the other. Not only are they remarkably similar to each other, but they are also

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significantly different from most other medieval treatments of heaven and hell. It seems probable that Bernard knew the *Apocalypse of Peter* in some form or another. If he did, his confident air of authority ("What I say is certainly true") could be explained. His authority was no less than Saint Peter himself.

A further piece of evidence is offered by Bernard's curious accusation that Vergil put Elysium in the wrong place ("Despite what you say, the Elysian fields are not there"). Dante seems to equate Elysium with Limbo, which he puts in the first circle of hell.¹³⁵ But the *Apocalypse of Peter* puts Elysium in some part of heaven ("Then I will give my elect and righteous the baptism and salvation that they sought from me in the field of Acherousia that is called Elysium"). Bernard's vehemence may have sprung from his conviction that Vergil was flouting the *auctoritas*.

A feature of Bernard's treatment of hell is the absence of Satan. There are demons and devils, but there is no colourful and concrete Devil like the Satan of the desert fathers, Gregory and Aelfric. When Bernard says "The devil [or "a devil"] binds our stony hearts and our bronze bowels,"¹³⁶ the devil is little more than a metaphor for the temptations of the flesh. "The devouring serpent ... is implanted in your loins and the enemy thrives on the fires deep inside you."¹³⁷ For Bernard, the sinner is wholly responsible for his or her sin, and the Devil is not needed to explain the fact of sin. Saint Thomas Aquinas took a similar view. "Manifestum est quod diabolus nullo modo potest necessitatem inducere homini ad peccandum." He argued

¹³⁴James, *The apocryphal New Testament*, p.518; Schneemelcher, *New Testament apocrypha*, p.623.

¹³⁵*Inferno* 4, passim. See also *Paradiso* 15, 25-27, where Dante agrees with Vergil's location of Elysium.

¹³⁶"Pectora saxea stringit et aerea viscera daemon." *De contemptu mundi*, 2, 926.

¹³⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 615-616.

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that the only things that can cause sin directly are things that can influence the will. Three things are involved in any object influencing the will: the object, appealing to man's will through his external senses, the one who presents the object, and the one who persuades us of the object's goodness (and that could be the devil or some other man). However, none of these can cause sin directly: for the only object that can compel the will is our ultimate goal, and the devil can cause sin only by persuasion and the presentation of desirable objects.¹³⁸

This somewhat abstract and negative devil was also that of Anselm and Abelard, and was in sharp contrast to that of the Cathars, for whom the Devil was the prince, even the creator, of the material world.¹³⁹ Jeffrey Burton Russell argues that the fading of Lucifer in the theology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was matched by the growth of a literature based on secular concerns such as feudalism and courtly love, and later by the growth of humanism, which attributed evil to human motivations more than to demons. Thus many of the greatest writers and works - Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Hartmann von Aue, and Chaucer; the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Nibelungenlied*, and *El Cid* - usually treated the Devil in a perfunctory manner or as a metaphor for the vices or evil in general.¹⁴⁰

The metaphorical character of Bernard's Satan and Bernard's insistence that the sinner cannot shuffle off responsibility for his sin can be seen as part of the twelfth century's interest in the idea of man and nature.¹⁴¹ And, as was discussed above (pages 89ff), Bernard's treatment of the end of the world and of

¹³⁸*Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae, 80,1.

¹³⁹Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer; the devil in the middle ages*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1984, p.188.

¹⁴⁰*ibid.*, p.208.

¹⁴¹Marie Dominique Chenu, *Nature, man and society in the twelfth century; essays on new theological perspectives in the Latin*

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death, judgement, heaven and hell can be seen as illustrating some elements which have been associated with the humanism of the quattrocento, especially an interest in empirical enquiry, in ways of knowing and in the importance of human reason. These were, indeed, features of the twelfth century, and they were inherited and developed by the Schoolmen in the following century.

But the association with Renaissance humanism of such concepts as secularisation, and an interest in empirical enquiry, in ways of knowing and in the importance of human reason, is not without difficulty. Renaissance humanism was essentially a revival of classical learning and an imitation of the Latin and Greek classics. For the Renaissance humanists themselves, that is what humanism meant. Paul Oskar Kristellar describes it in the following terms:

The term *humanista*, coined at the height of the Renaissance period, was in turn derived from an older term, that is from the "humanities" or *studia humanitatis*. This term was apparently used in the general sense of a liberal or literary education by such ancient Roman authors as Cicero and Gellius, and this use was resumed by the Italian scholars of the late fourteenth century. By the first half of the fifteenth century, the *studia humanitatis* came to stand for a clearly defined cycle of scholarly disciplines, namely grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy, and the study of each of these subjects was understood to include the reading and interpretation of its standard ancient writers in Latin and, to a lesser extent, in Greek. This meaning of the *studia humanitatis* remained in general use through the sixteenth century and later, and we may still find an echo of it in our use of the term "humanities." Thus Renaissance humanism was not as such a philosophical tendency or system, but rather a cultural and educational program which emphasized and developed an important but limited area of studies.¹⁴²

west, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968 (First published 1957) p.1-48.

¹⁴²Paul Oskar Kristellar, *Renaissance thought and its sources*, edited by Michael Mooney, New York, Columbia University Press, 1979, p.22.

That definition of Renaissance humanism has the advantages of being precise and of representing what the humanists themselves thought. A different treatment is found in Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.¹⁴³ Wallace K. Ferguson says of Burckhardt's vision of the Renaissance that it was "in its integrated entirety, an original creation, the masterpiece of a great historical artist."¹⁴⁴ But, despite the poetic achievement of Burckhardt's work, the term "humanism" is incoherent. It is rather like the Magic Pudding, which consists of

Onions, bunions, corns and crabs,
Whiskers, wheels and hansom cabs,
Beef and bottles, beer and bones.

It is "a Christmas steak and apple-dumpling Puddin' ... a cut-an-come-again Puddin'."¹⁴⁵ The terms "renaissance" and "humanism" represent clusters of concepts which are often poorly defined and sometimes mutually contradictory, but are presented as if they formed an integrated whole. And the pudding is not consumed by being eaten. "The more you eats the more you gets."¹⁴⁶ The literature of Renaissance humanism is vast, and its problems do not diminish, no matter how often they are tackled.

¹⁴³Jacob Burckhardt, *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, an essay*, [translated by S.G.C. Middlemore, 1878], Oxford, Phaidon, 1981 (first published 1860), passim. See especially p.82-103, "The development of the individual;" p.120-124, "The humanists;" and p.171-215, "The discovery of the world and man."

¹⁴⁴Wallace K. Ferguson, *The renaissance in historical thought; five centuries of interpretation*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1948, p.178.

¹⁴⁵Norman Lindsay, *The magic pudding, being the adventures of Bunyip Bluegum and his friends Bill Barnacle and Sam Sawnoff*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1918, p.20-21.

¹⁴⁶*ibid.*, p.23.

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The characteristics of concern with man and nature, of distinction between the natural and supernatural, of interest in ways of knowing and in empirical enquiry, which were features of the twelfth century, and which are to some extent exhibited in Bernard's work, were characteristics of emerging scholasticism. They have been perceived to be antithetical to the concepts of humanism and renaissance. Erwin Panofsky, for example, maintains that "It was, in fact, the very ascendancy of scholasticism, pervading and molding all phases of cultural life, which more than any other single factor contributed to the extinction of "proto-humanistic" aspirations."¹⁴⁷ In that view, he follows Ernst Robert Curtius.¹⁴⁸ And Dom David Knowles makes a similar point about scholasticism. "The intellectual atmosphere of the thirteenth century which followed [the twelfth-century renaissance], though it was in some ways more rare, more bracing and more subtle, lacked much of the kindly warmth and fragrant geniality of the past."¹⁴⁹

Apocalyptic literature and eschatological literature are related to the fourth category of complaint, that is to say, complaints on general themes, on man's plight and on his present and future condition. Estates satire is a better known category of complaint, because of its skilful exploitation by later writers, notably Chaucer. It belongs in the first category of complaint. It is well represented in the works of Bernard of Morlaix. It is considered in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁷Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and renaissances in western art*, New York, Harper & Row, 1972 (Icon editions) (First published Almqvist & Wiskells, 1957) p.103.

¹⁴⁸Ernst Robert Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990 (Bollingen series 36) (First published 1948) p.480-484.

¹⁴⁹David Knowles, *The historian and character and other essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p.17.

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The three estates

Bernard tells us that his subject in the *De contemptu mundi* is the condemnation of sin and his purpose is to call sinners back from sin.¹ The poem has an additional purpose, namely, to reinforce his cloistered audience in their choice of a monastic vocation. In the course of the poem, he deals with all classes of society.

All kinds of people, those of every rank and every estate, work hard to be wicked ... Here is a bishop. Wealthy with his own goods and those of his people, he leads the way. Because of him, there is a heavy burden of sin and his high throne brings him severe punishment. Here is a king. Ranting, tyrannical, he favours some men while oppressing others and, what is worse, he is a lion to the meek, but a lamb to the extortionate. Here is a parish priest. A priest ought to be a helpful path towards goodness, but the path he offers is not helpful but tearful, even for himself. Here is a cleric. He makes the wrong moral choices, he does not control himself, his mind dwells on sinful things. He knows what he ought to do, but he does not do it. He exchanges good for evil. Here is a knight. He bears arms, he rages, he strikes, he brandishes his lance. He walks through the camp, suffocating everything. He is like the horned people of Cyprus. Here is a nobleman. He is puffed up. Since he is fearless himself, he is feared by others. Confident of his power, which is like huge, curved horns, he respects nothing. Here is a judge. His judgements are for sale. He loves money. His decrees are unjust. He helps the rich but he grimly obstructs the poor. Here is a merchant. He travels around the markets at home and overseas. He praises the goods he has to sell. He approves of his own goods, but he rejects yours and so he cheats you. Here is a farmer. He sows and gathers crops. He hides the first fruits and avoids paying his tithes, saving himself money.²

¹*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus.

²*De contemptu mundi*, 2,237-258.

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After that brief introduction, Bernard says he will proceed to deal with each of the characters in greater detail,³ and he continues with descriptions of the bishop, the king, the parish priest, the cleric, the knight, the judge, the merchant and the farmer.

Money has darkened the hearts of our bishops. Their use of money shows that their hearts are lacking in compassion. We used to be able to count on our bishops. They used to have integrity. The bishop's office gave him status. But nowadays, order is collapsing, and the bishop's status is collapsing too. His title "Pontiff" means that he ought to make himself a bridge across the sea from this world into heaven, but he has made himself instead a road to hell for all people. If I did not realise that we ought to treat the giving and receiving of information as a serious matter, I could tell you a thing or two about bishops. But I will keep silent. Bishops have glory, pomp, pride of wealth, but none of them nowadays takes care to be a bridge for souls. In the exercise of his office, the bishop does not bind and loose according to his instructions [Matthew 16.19], but he does it for money. For money he tears down or builds up.⁴

The man who has attained kingship, the highest level of government, becomes a hostile robber and his behaviour becomes tyrannical. He is a king only in name, a ruler only in appearance. He has the mind of a tyrant. He treats the citizens badly, but criminals well, and himself best of all. Under his government, no encouragement is given to honest rule; it becomes a road to riches. He does not avenge the crimes of the vultures who feed on the poor.⁵ He disdains to take up arms, as he should do, to protect his poor people against their exploiters and to shield them from the enemies they fear. The strength of both ecclesiastical and civil authority has been undermined by the prevalence of deceitful behaviour. There is discord between Church and State, their two swords fear nothing, and so the rights of both kings and bishops are trampled on. God's law is not heard, yet the king's sword lies still. Sin, the death of the soul, flourishes, yet the Church's sword trembles.

³*De contemptu mundi*, 2,259-260.

⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,261-272.

⁵"Hoc male vindice, non volat a cruce pasta volucris."

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With nobody to defend them, the people are oppressed by a tyrant, torn to pieces, destroyed by crime, attacked by the enemy, burned by fire. The ecclesiastical power does not rescue them from the deadly sins within them, nor does the civil power rescue them from their external enemies.⁶

The man who, as a parish priest, stands in the front line of the battle is ill-prepared to combat sin. He completes his priestly duties as quickly as possible. Lust has debilitated him. The priest's housekeeper⁷ is as closely intimate with him as a sister. She calls him "Father." She it is who puts him to bed and looks after him. She provides the customary services. When he has a headache, she is sorry for him. She buys his food, looks after him and is responsive to his moods. She cherishes her master. She supports him, listens to him, loves him and fears him. She is late going to bed, and she frequently sends the servant outside. He is called a priest, but he is not an ornament to his profession. Alas! He takes the sins of his people and incorporates them in himself. He has an inadequate appreciation of the way he should be holding sacred what is holy and useful for salvation. He does not know what holiness is. He is a mere cardboard cut-out of a priest. His lips are not innocent of lust; they are not worthy to receive the body and blood of Christ. His people, bereft of spiritual guidance, imitate the behaviour of their teacher.⁸

The cleric, who is a cleric only in name, pursues his life in the select ranks of the clergy.⁹ He is conspicuous for seeming to be important. Publicly, he is full of enthusiasm, but he is indolent in pursuit of the vocation to which he has been called. He is a cleric in name, but his actions show him to be a courtier. You can see him, in a manner not at all according to the rules of his estate, hastening to attend the palace, involving himself in turbulent affairs of state and public business and civic matters. Not only that, but he even takes up arms and fights, sword against sword. The cleric chooses to lead troops, to join battle, to be considered a

⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 273-290.

⁷"presbyterissa."

⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 291-304.

⁹"in agmine sorteque cleri." The word *clerus* derives from *klÁroj*, meaning an allotment, an inherited property.

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knight. He disobeys the rule that the clergy ought to be free from worldly concerns.¹⁰

The brutal knight plunders the poor. He robs them, torments them, makes captives of them, makes them work hard. He dominates them and oppresses them, and sinks his teeth into all of them everywhere. Not only does he fail to govern properly the peasants in his care and protect them with his sword, but he also drives them away with blows. He burns the fields and grinds down the workers. He makes his living by plunder, and he wickedly enriches some at the expense of others. He fights in the service of evil, he pursues evil ends, he sweats at evil work. The knight is more devastating than fire, more rapacious than any bird of prey, more ferocious than a tiger and more injurious than a destructive conflagration. Distinguished by his noble lineage, he adopts a fierce demeanour among his fellow soldiers, although the respect he enjoys derives rather from his family than from himself. He is given command, he leads his troops. As far as facial characteristics are concerned, he looks like his ancestors, but he is not a bit like them as far as his deeds are concerned. His lineage is noble. His guilt is reprehensible.¹¹

The judge worships money. For the sake of money, he makes corrupt judgements. If your crimes get you into trouble, money gets you free and buys the silence of the law. Money controls everything. Wealth atones for wickedness. Money buys the silence of the law. If you behave rapaciously like a wolf, you have only to pay enough and you will be regarded as a lamb. Through bribery you can attain the highest office, even though by law you should be burned at the stake. If you are wealthy, you do not need to run away from the law. The magistrate will be kind to you. By bribery you will enable him to forget the duties of his office. He demands money. He sells his oratory for money. He degrades himself, and so the law becomes subject to him, not man to the law. Look at the amount of harm that bribery does, how many good deeds it scuttles. What folly! See how quickly evil wins and justice loses, as soon as the judge gets his payment. He chooses evil and rejects justice for a fistful of dollars. See how he makes his judgements without regard for the evidence or for the law.

¹⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 2,305-314.

¹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,315-326.

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Money, not the Theodosian code, is what he is interested in.¹²

Nearly all the merchant's business transactions are fraudulent. He buys and sells money. Sometimes he raises his prices, sometimes he lowers them. He barter goods. He travels through the dark and the cold, over mountains, from market place to market place. He travels overseas. He is captured by bandits. His enemies attack him. Winter wears him out; summer scorches him. After he has been captured, he goes away destitute and whistles his way empty handed past robbers. When he has built up his wealth again, he hastens off to Babylon. He returns home, bringing the latest news and new wares. He cheats you when he buys your goods. He uses his own scales rather than yours.¹³

The plodding farmer is dishonest and envious. He ploughs his fields, and is always claiming that his neighbour's unploughed land belongs to him. In order to steal that land, he is quick with his barefaced lies, so he is involved in many quarrels and law suits. The farmer stores barley and wheat in his barns. He builds huge barns and stores large quantities of grain. God provides for him liberally, but he is unwilling to pay tithes either of his cattle or of his crops. He does not pay his proper share of tithes to the Church.¹⁴

The purpose of these thumbnail sketches of persons pursuing various callings is, as Bernard says, to lament over their shortcomings. "Every class, every rank, every estate strives for every kind of wickedness."¹⁵ Each social or occupational class, in failing to fulfil its proper functions, fails in its duty to the other classes. Implicit in Bernard's treatment of the estates is the concept of their interdependence, and of the dependence of the state and social order upon the proper performance of their functions by the members of the estates.

¹²*De contemptu mundi*, 2,331-344.

¹³*De contemptu mundi*, 2,345-352.

¹⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,353-360.

¹⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 2,237. "Omnis ad omnia nititur impia gens, gradus, ordo."

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That is why "The face of the whole world is so contaminated by sin that not even a child can escape corruption."¹⁶

Estates satire has generally been associated with the later middle ages and the Renaissance rather than with the twelfth century, and with the vernacular literatures rather than with Latin. Ruth Mohl, for example, pays little attention to the Latin literature of the estates of the world. In her study of the three estates in medieval and Renaissance literature, she devotes a scant thirteen pages to the Latin origins of estates literature.¹⁷ The earliest Latin example she gives is the anonymous poem *De diversis ordinibus hominum*, which, since it mentions the friars, must be later than 1210.¹⁸ The examples from Bernard of Morlaix were quoted at length above, in order to show that estates satire was fully developed by the middle of the twelfth century, and that it was developed in Latin.

Bernard's gallery includes examples of all three of the principal estates. The clergy, whose function is to pray and to minister to the spiritual needs of society, are represented by the bishop, the parish priest and the cleric. The noble warriors, whose function is to uphold justice, protect the weak and defend the church, are represented by the king, the knight, the nobleman and the judge. The workers, whose labour provides for the physical needs of themselves and of the other two estates, are represented by the merchant and the farmer. But estates literature is not limited to classes of persons who clearly belong to one of the three estates. One of the earliest examples of the genre is the *Praeloquia* of Bishop Rather of Verona, written about the middle of the tenth century. In the

¹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,379-380.

¹⁷Ruth Mohl, *The three estates in medieval and Renaissance literature*, New York, Ungar, 1962 (first published Columbia University Press, 1933), p.21-34.

¹⁸Thomas Wright, *The Latin poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes*, Hildesheim, Olms, 1968 (first published EETS, 1841), 229-236.

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first of the six books of the *Praeloquia*, Rather deals with Christians, knights, craftsmen, doctors, merchants, advocates, judges, witnesses, public ministers, noblemen, hired employees and vassals, counsellors, lords, serfs, teachers, pupils, rich people, people of moderate income, and beggars. In the second book, he deals with men, women, husbands, wives, celibates, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, widows, virgins, little children, boys, adolescents and old people. In the third book, he deals with kings.¹⁹ Many of these (for example, Christians, witnesses, men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, children and old people) have no relation to the estates categories, but they all have responsibilities toward the body politic and they are commonly included in estates literature.

The clergy are absent from Rather's catalogue, although they feature very largely in later estates literature. The *De diversis ordinibus hominum*, for example, deals with popes, cardinals, kings, abbots, monks, friars, knights, rich men, clerics, priests, burghers, merchants, farmers and poor men. Much of the anticlerical literature of the twelfth century (which is dealt with below) may be said to belong to the genre of estates satire. Jill Mann points out that estates satire can play a more or less dominant role in a wide variety of literary forms. "The justification for making no discrimination ... between works differing in literary form, is the empirical observation that the estates material they draw on is of the same type and very often identical."²⁰ Bernard has a great deal more to say about the clergy than is indicated in the explicitly estates related passages quoted above. His complaints about popes, bishops and priests are discussed below. Here, it may be

¹⁹PL 136, 146-248.

²⁰Jill Mann, *Chaucer and medieval estates satire; the literature of social classes and the general prologue to the Canterbury tales*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973, p.3-4.

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worth while to draw attention to Bernard's description of the papal nuncio.

You [the Pope] send abroad men who tarnish the honour of the Church. The only thing they are enthusiastic about is taking bribes. The man you send demands perquisites. It is not the salvation of the world but good food and a soft bed that he is after. From his childhood, he was accustomed to travel on foot. Here in France, he goes about in a carriage, like a knight. He used to be quite happy to walk unattended. Now he rides high like a knight and he has a mounted escort. He is a counsellor, a nuncio, a legate *a latere*. As your papal representative, he has precedence over everybody. He brings here the decrees of the book of the synod. The bishop's palace, filled with his guests and his retinue, groans. The clergy can scarcely feed his retinue's horses with oats. In Rome he wore a goatskin. Here in France, he wears a silken cloak. In Rome, he went in foot. Here in France, he rides lazily on horseback. The people flock to meet him. To them he is a glorious sight. The city hums, the trumpet sounds, the choir of the clergy sings for him. He is conducted into the bishop's chambers and reclines at his ease. He orders wine. He receives crowds of people, exchanges greetings, calls the council and takes his place on his seat on the dais. He wheels and deals to increase his power and position. He listens benevolently to wickedness but turns a deaf ear to justice, because there is money to be made out of a guilty cause, but no profit from innocence.²¹

Like Bishop Rather, Bernard also describes women, and much of his comment on them is within the scope of estates satire.²² He deals extensively with rich men and poor men, especially in his lengthy disquisition on the theme of Dives and Lazarus.²³ And there are elements of estates satire throughout the *De octo vitiis*, where Bernard's account of each sin is illustrated by a description of the typical sinner. But not all castigation of sin can be called estates satire. Bernard's treatment of prostitutes, for example, does not properly fall into the category of estates satire, because prostitutes do not, in

²¹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,699-720.

²²See below, p.161 ff.

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Bernard's view, form a class with duties which contribute to the well being of the community, and which are associated with temptations and failings which affect the three estates.²⁴ Similarly, his descriptions of homosexuals, though they show some of the characteristics of estates satire, do not really fit in the genre. Bernard does not regard homosexuals as a class of people in any sense relevant to the three estates.²⁵

Bernard's treatment of his characters is different from Rather's. Bernard is concerned to show how wicked the world has become and to illustrate that wickedness by pointing up the failures of the three estates. There are a few exceptions. He tells us not only what bad bishops do, but also what a good bishop ought to do. He should protect the weak, the young and the poor. He should build barricades (claustra) to protect his flock. He should punish sin. He should rebuke, censure, entreat, instruct and help people. He should be holy.²⁶ Similarly, he describes the duties of a rich man. He should assist the injured, the sick and the meek. He should give generously, giving himself to God and his wealth to the poor.²⁷ But positive treatment of the estates is rare in Bernard's poems. By contrast, it is the whole point of Rather's *Praeloquia*.

Are you a doctor? Listen to what Our Lord told you: "Physician, heal thyself." (Luke 4,23). That is, while you are curing the bodily sickness of others, make sure that you minister to any sickness in your own spiritual life ... You must be fully aware of the difference between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, the works of the devil and the blessings of God. Think about what pertains to medicine and what pertains to the tricks of sorcerers. It is the proper work of the doctor to make use, in God's name, of potions and herbs and the various kinds of things

²³*De contemptu mundi*, 2,827-930.

²⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,435-444.

²⁵See below p.147 ff.

²⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 3,471-498.

²⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1,695ff.

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found in God's creation, which the expertise of the most skilled physicians, inspired by God, have discovered. But divination, incantations and other superstitious and profane observances belong to astrologers and wizards ...²⁸

Are you a teacher? Remember that you owe it to your students to discipline them with love, following the example of him who is the teacher of us all, who chastises and corrects those whom he loves (Proverbs 3,12) and who used to call his disciples not his servants but his friends (John 15,15). You owe it to your students to correct their mistakes by word and by the cane, but you should do it in such a way that you honour your obligation to foster the development of those who make mistakes by loving them. Are you a pupil? You ought to realise that you should obey your teachers ... Are you a teacher? Teach what you know with humility. Are you a pupil? Learn eagerly what you do not yet know ...²⁹

Rather presents a series of homilies, addressed explicitly to the various classes of people upon whom he wished to impress the importance of their duties. Bernard presents a series of descriptions of various classes of people, in which he sets out the extent to which they are failing to fulfil their responsibilities. Rather's homilies, written from the point of view of the clerical estate, are addressed to the other two estates, and none of them is addressed to the clergy. Bernard's descriptions, addressed to a monastic audience, comprise all three estates.

The element of description or portraiture is lacking from Rather's homilies. By contrast, it is important in Bernard's satire and is essential to his purpose, because he wishes to illustrate the wickedness of the world through the wickedness of all classes of people. Bernard inherited a classical tradition of literary description or portraiture. According to Cicero, the characteristics by which we might describe a person are: name, nature (that is, sex, race, nationality, lineage, age;

²⁸PL 136,151-152.

²⁹PL 135,176.

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physical characteristics such as strength, height, comeliness; mental characteristics such as quickness of intelligence, ability to remember and so forth), manner of life (that is education, friends and associates, business and professional affairs, family affairs and so forth), fortune (that is, free or slave, rich or poor, powerful or humble, number of children and so forth), acquired character and talents, sensibility, interests, purposes and conduct (which includes what a person does, what is done to him and what he says).³⁰ Horace advises would-be playwrights that they should take trouble to get the attributes of their characters right. "If the character's words are not consonant with his station in life, the Roman knights and the common people will raise a laugh at his expense."³¹ He goes on to give examples of types of character (slaves,³² heroes, old men, young men, upper class ladies, busy nurses, much-travelled merchants, farmers, Cholchians, Assyrians, Thebans, Argives). A playwright, he says, can take existing characters, in which case their attributes must accord with literary tradition. Achilles, for example, must be indefatigable, wrathful, inexorable and impetuous. Or he can invent new characters, in which case their attributes must be internally consistent and dramatically relevant.³³ He must give particular attention to those attributes which are characteristic and proper for each stage of life.³⁴

Both Cicero and Horace were thinking of description of characters for a particular literary purpose, in Cicero's case, oratory, in Horace's case, drama. But their advice seems appropriate also to the purposes of estates satire, and was so interpreted in the twelfth century, when both Cicero's work and Horace's work were well known, along with Quintilian's

³⁰Cicero, *De inventione* 1,34-36.

³¹Horace, *Ars poetica*, 112-113.

³²Or "gods," if one prefers the reading "divus" rather than "Davus."

³³Horace, *Ars poetica*, 114-127.

³⁴*ibid.*, 176-178.

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Institutio oratoria.³⁵ Matthew of Vendome, in his *Ars versificatoria*, written about 1175, devotes the whole of the first of his three books to the art of writing descriptions. He says that "one should describe not only the qualities which a person has but also those qualities which differentiate that person from others." He goes on to refer to both Horace and Cicero, and to take the characters which Horace gives as examples, and to put them into Cicero's categories.³⁶

Ruth Mohl identifies four characteristics of estates literature. The first is that of enumerating or cataloguing the estates of the world. The second is lament over the shortcomings of the various estates; not doctrinaire generalising about vices and virtues, but an outspoken account of specific faults. Each estate fails in its duty to the rest. Along with the enumeration of the shortcomings of the estates goes the third characteristic of estates satire, namely a philosophy of the divine ordination of the three estates and of the dependence of the state upon all three. The last characteristic is an attempt to find remedies for the defections of the three estates.³⁷

All these characteristics, as is illustrated above, are present in the work of Bernard of Morlaix. The element of portraiture, which became a major characteristic of later estates literature, is not included in Ruth Mohl's list of characteristics. It is, however, significantly present in Bernard's work, even if it lacks the particularity, especially in regard to description of physical traits, which is found in Langland or Chaucer.

³⁵Alice M. Colby, *The portrait in twelfth-century French literature; an example of the stylistic originality of Chrétien de Troyes*, Geneva, Droz, 1965, p.89-91. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990 (Bollingen series 36) (First published 1948), p.436-445. Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XIIe et XIIIe siècle, recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du moyen age*, Paris, Champion, 1958, p.78-79.

³⁶Matthew of Vendome, *Ars versificatoria* 41-45. (Text in Faral, *Les arts poétiques*, p.106-193.)

Estates satire was, in fact, fully developed in the Latin literature of the twelfth century and handed over to the vernacular literatures as a going concern. The passages from Bernard's poems, quoted above, show his mastery of the genre and bear comparison with the estates satire of Chaucer, Langland or Lindsay. But Bernard's most extensive and most stringent criticism is directed particularly to the clergy.

The first estate

Bernard's complaint about the first estate is a kind of anticlericalism. The term "anticlerical" is relatively new.³⁸ In its original usage, "anticlericalism" meant a particular form of opposition to the church which, in the nineteenth century, developed into a definite movement with a distinctive program. That movement was seen as originating in the period of the Enlightenment, and its major characteristics included rationalism, secularism and liberalism.³⁹

In its predominant usage, "anticlericalism" denotes both an ideology and a program. It had a religious aspect, to the extent

³⁷Mohl, *The three estates*, p.6-7. See also Mann, *Chaucer*, p.3.

³⁸No Latin equivalent (such as "anticlericalis") is found in any glossary of medieval Latin, though "clericalis" occurs in the fourth century. The term does not feature in the ninth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The *Grand Larousse*, Paul Robert's *Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française* and the second edition of the *Oxford English dictionary* give varying dates for first usage of "anticlerical" and "anticlericalism," but none is before 1845.

³⁹J.S. Schapiro, *Anticlericalism; conflict between church and state in France, Italy and Spain*, Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1967, p.32-37. Both the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *New Catholic encyclopedia* devote almost all their allotted space to anticlericalism in that sense, with reference mostly to France, Spain and Italy and (in the twentieth century) Russia, with no more than a passing reference to medieval or renaissance anticlericalism. See also José Sánchez, *Anticlericalism, a brief history*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1972.

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that it supported "natural religion" as opposed to established or formal structures. It had a political aspect, as an element of European republicanism. In this sense, it was not necessarily anti-religious. Rather, it was strongly opposed to involvement of the Catholic clergy in politics and in secular affairs generally. It had an ideological aspect, as part of a rationalist, secularist, freethinking, humanist tradition, emerging from the Enlightenment. In this last sense, it was clearly anti-religious. In all senses, it had connotations of anti-Catholicism, with which it sometimes appears to be almost synonymous.⁴⁰ Alec Mellor distinguishes that kind of anticlericalism from what he calls "l'anticléricalisme intérieur." By that he means the hostility of a Christian who is not in holy orders towards clerics, whether secular or regular.⁴¹

That is essentially the kind of anticlericalism which existed in the middle ages, although medieval anticlericalism had the distinctive feature that paradoxically, on surviving evidence, it was expressed predominantly by clerics. It has little in common with the anticlericalism of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which is secular and anti-religious. It is true that Félicité Robert de Lamennais propounded some views which were expressed also by the anticlericals who followed him, notably separation of Church and State. But Lamennais was anticlerical in the medieval rather than the modern sense, though that was, understandably, not appreciated in his day. He was never excommunicated, but his views were condemned by Gregory XVI in the encyclicals *Mirari vos* and

⁴⁰Alec Mellor, *Histoire de l'anticléricalisme français*, Tours, Mame, 1966, p.11.

⁴¹*ibid.*, p.9. See also Georges de Lagarde, *La naissance de l'esprit laïque au déclin du moyen âge. Vol 1, Bilan du XIIIème siècle*, 3rd ed., Louvain, Nauwelaerts, 1956, p.viii-xi.

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*Singulari nos.*⁴² Closely related to anticlericalism throughout the middle ages were the issues of relations between church and state and of relations between the papacy and local churches.⁴³

The distinction outlined above, between modern or secular anticlericalism and medieval or Christian anticlericalism, should not be allowed to hide differences between anticlerical attitudes, behaviour and literature at different periods. Wendy Scase, for example, has explored the special features of anticlericalism in *Piers plowman*, and such detailed studies, relating anticlericalism to contemporary events and debate rather than to historical antecedents and perspectives, are indispensable.⁴⁴ Each age has its own realisation and expression of anticlericalism, and particular studies of those differences are important. But it is especially important to distinguish between the anticlericalism of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries on the one hand, and that of the middle ages on the other.⁴⁵

In the twelfth century, anticlericalism was not a program with precisely defined objectives. For the most part, that is true also of the later middle ages, though Dante's criticism of the papacy was related to a theoretical position which might be called a political program. Even more strikingly, Marsilius of Padua developed a theory of the state in which the

⁴²H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 31st ed., Rome, Herder, 1960, p.447-449.

⁴³Joseph Turmel, "Gallicanism", in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of religion and ethics*, Edinburgh, Clark, 1908-1926, 13v., v.6, p.156-163. See also Victor Martin, *Les origines du Gallicanisme*, Geneva, Mégariotis Reprints, 1978 (First published Paris, 1939), p.29-30.

⁴⁴Wendy Scase, *"Piers plowman" and the new anticlericalism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989 (Cambridge studies in medieval literature).

⁴⁵H. A. Oberman, "Anticlericalism as an agent of change," in *Anticlericalism in late medieval and early modern Europe*, edited by Peter A. Dykema and Heiko Oberman, Leiden, Brill, 1993 (Studies in medieval and Reformation thought 51), p. 10.

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ecclesiastical power is totally subordinate to the civil power. C.W. Previt -Orton points out that "the modern, secular character of this creation has often been stressed."⁴⁶ But the "universitas civium fidelium," of Marsilius is not the secular state. It is much more like the church. Marsilius is talking about a Christian state, which is in his view the community of the faithful. If the state is not Christian, the ecclesiastical power is not, according to Marsilius, subject to it. When Christians, both clerical and lay ("tam sacerdotes quam non-sacerdotes"), live in a secular state ("sub infidelibus legislatoribus"), they must manage ecclesiastical affairs independently of the state.⁴⁷ The anticlericalism of Marsilius, like that of Dante, is "anticl ricalisme int rieur." His political program, and his theory of relations between church and state, bear little resemblance to those of the anticlericals of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

Gerald Strauss points out that what, for our purposes, we may want to call "anticlericalism" in the middle ages was, at the time, a bundle of unorganised perceptions on the part of ordinary people, perceptions expressed in attitudes and externalized as a certain kind of behaviour, but never asserted as principled opposition to a sacerdotal presence in the

⁴⁶Marsilius of Padua, *The "Defensor pacis" of Marsilius of Padua*, edited by C. W. Previt -Orton, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1928, p.xviii.

⁴⁷ibid. p.350-351. See also p.300, where Marsilius says that his system can be applied only to communities of Christians. ("Quod sane intelligendum est in communitatibus fidelium jam perfectis.") And he points out that in the primitive Christian church, which existed in a secular state, the authority to approve ecclesiastical appointments and to regulate the affairs of the church belonged to priests and bishops, together with the sounder part of the faithful ("cum saniore parte fidelis"), and that this was done "absque consensu vel scientia principantis."

⁴⁸Stephen F. Torracco, *Priests as physicians of souls in Marsilius of Padua's "Defensor pacis"*, San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press, 1992, p.459.

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community. "Whether a particular word or deed is 'anticlerical' or not is therefore a function of our judgment, not of theirs."⁴⁹

The ecclesiastical evil which Bernard of Morlaix castigates most severely is Simony, and he directs his satire mostly at Rome.

Nowadays anybody can acquire the gifts of heaven for money. They are wicked fools, both those who sell and those who buy. The grace of God bids us to give these gifts freely, without secular intervention, in order to prevent trafficking in holy things. Alas! The Devil attacks everywhere through the highest levels of the Church. First he captures the pastors, then he takes the flock, attacking from both sides ... Simon Magus is still alive⁵⁰ and he wanders and strays about in the world he has made his own. He lives and he threatens to sow evil seeds and weed out good growth, to lead people astray, to encourage unholiness, to drive out holiness ... God's grace cannot be its proper self, because the disciples of Giezi⁵¹ demand payment when they bestow it. Simon Magus dies with his money,⁵² Giezi takes money. Both are unspeakable. Simon is repulsed and Giezi is stricken with leprosy. The death of the one and the [corrupt] complexion of the other survive to cling to all those who have guilty souls because they seek advancement through worldly wealth.⁵³

Simony originally meant only the sale of ordination by a bishop, but by the middle of the ninth century it had already come to mean the sale of benefices generally, whether by clerics or laymen. Well before Bernard's time, it had become one of the greatest abuses of the Church. The social, intellectual and economic decline which accompanied the collapse of the

⁴⁹G. Strauss, "Local anticlericalism in Reformation Germany", in *Anticlericalism in late medieval and early modern Europe* edited by Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman, Leiden, Brill, 1993 (Studies in medieval and Reformation thought 51), p. 627.

⁵⁰Acts 8,9-24.

⁵¹4 Kings 5,20-27. Just as Simon Magus tried to buy the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so Giezi tried to sell them. The names regularly stand for those concepts throughout medieval literature.

⁵²Saint Peter said to him, "Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem" (Acts 8,20), but it is not recorded that it happened.

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Carolingian Empire was accompanied by a broadening feudalism. There was very little in common between feudal concepts and Christianity, and the two made ill bed-fellows. Nevertheless, feudal concepts infiltrated the hierarchical structure of the Church. "Benefices and episcopal sees fell under lay control and were frequently treated as purely feudal holdings."⁵⁴ Problems of lay investiture and of Simony were tackled, with some success, by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085)⁵⁵ but they remained a lively subject of complaint literature throughout the middle ages.⁵⁶

After a denunciation of the clergy generally because they neglect their flocks, Bernard accuses "Rome, the prince of pastors" of wickedly encouraging those delinquent pastors.

Rome, the Forum of our ancestors, awards honours for a price. Rome, which ought to lead the world, deservedly falls back to the last place. Rome is no longer a role model, because it has let money defeat it.⁵⁷

The satirical derivation of "Roma" from "rodo manus" occurs "with tiresome frequency"⁵⁸ in medieval anticlerical satire. Bernard's version of the cliché is:

Roma manus rodit sicut dupla silliba prodit.⁵⁹

Rome bites the hand that feeds it, the two syllables of the name "Roma" being derived from "rodo" [I eat] and "manus" [hand]. Rome bites and digs out money and

⁵³*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 517-554.

⁵⁴J.A. Yunck, *The lineage of Lady Meed; the development of medieval venality satire*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1963 (Publications in medieval studies 17), p.48.

⁵⁵B. Tierney (ed.), *The crisis of church and state, 1050-1300, with selected documents*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988 (Medieval Academy reprints for teaching), p.33-95.

⁵⁶Yunck, *The lineage of Lady Meed*, passim.

⁵⁷*De octo vitiis*, 1256-1258.

⁵⁸Yunck, *The lineage of Lady Meed*, p.94.

⁵⁹*De octo vitiis*, 1259.

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is very unhappy if it cannot ... Rome ignores anybody who appeals to it without offering bribes, whatever he does. The halls of Rome are forbidden to sheep who have no wool ... Rome drinks the treasure of Croesus and dines on gold sterling. It never says, "That's enough." It is always, "The case is still *sub judice*." Rome thirsts for wealth, gobbles it down, loves it. "If you pay, I will give you the best," it cries. Rome is said to be like a wheel, because it turns and is turned."⁶⁰

This is one of several occasions on which Bernard relates the terms "Roma" and "rota".

Ut rota Roma datur, quoniam rotat atque rotatur.⁶¹

Ut rota labitur, ergo vocabitur hinc rota Roma.⁶²

Uncia te rotat, uncia te notat, haud fore Romam.⁶³

Roma ruens rota, foeda satis nota cauteriat te.⁶⁴

These lines look very much like punning references to the Rota Romana, but cannot be if the historians of the Rota are right about the date of its establishment.⁶⁵

Bernard has much more of the same kind, rehearsing the commonplaces of anticlerical complaint directed toward the Papacy.

"Est radix omnis meroris avaricie vis" [The power of avarice is the root of all grief]. Significantly, if you take the first letter of the four middle words, you get the name "Roma". If you invert the letters,

⁶⁰ibid., 1259-1278.

⁶¹ibid., 1278.

⁶²*De contemptu mundi*, 3,603.

⁶³ibid., 3,722.

⁶⁴ibid., 3,624.

⁶⁵*New Catholic encyclopedia*, v.12, p.683-685. Perhaps the Rota Romana was in fact established in Bernard's day, rather than at Avignon. But a consideration of that would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

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"Roma" becomes "amor." Would that Rome's love were not the love of money but the love of goodness!⁶⁶

Bernard's satirical verses about the power of money at the Papal court and the abuses of Papal power are lengthy and repetitive. In large part, they represent no kind of original inspiration but rather an anthology of standard themes, images and clichés which were very common in the literature of his time.

If you give money, you are likely to receive papal favour. If you don't, you won't. That is the law at Rome; that is what they teach.⁶⁷
If Croesus were to give you all his wealth, it would not fill your belly. Nowadays your god is not Jesus, but gold and silver.⁶⁸

If I were to say that Rome has dropsy [is swollen with Simoniacal gain] would I be wrong? The more wealth Rome gobbles up, the more it wants. As Jugurtha said, wealth is the ruin of Rome.⁶⁹

Some of Bernard's contemporaries did this kind of thing much better. An outstanding example is Walter of Chatillon (who secures twenty-two pages of the *Oxford book of medieval Latin verse*, compared with Bernard's five.⁷⁰) His *Propter Sion non tacebo*⁷¹ says nothing that is not also said in Bernard's verses, but Walter's polemic against the Roman Curia makes more effective use of the same clichés and the same classical and other imagery. It would be presumptuous to offer here a translation of verses which Helen Waddell "tried to translate and could not."⁷² The following sketch of a smooth, worldly, unctuous cardinal may serve to illustrate Walter's brilliance:

⁶⁶*De octo vitiis*, 1300-1304.

⁶⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 3,614-615

⁶⁸*ibid.*, 3,629-630.

⁶⁹*De octo vitiis*, 1288-1290.

⁷⁰F.J.E. Raby (ed.), *The Oxford book of medieval Latin verse*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959, p.223-228; 275-297.

⁷¹*ibid.*, p.282-288.

⁷²Helen Waddell, *Mediaeval Latin lyrics*, 4th ed., London, Constable, 1933, p.vi.

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Dulci cantu blandiuntur
ut Sirenes et loquunter
primo quaedam dulcia:
"frare, ben je te cognosco,
certe nichil a te posco,
nam tu es de francia.

Terra vestra bene cepit
in portu concilii.
et benigne nos recepit
nostri estis, nostri - cuius?
sacrosancte sedis huius
speciales filii.

Nos peccata relaxamus
et laxatos collocamus
sedibus ethereis.
nos habemus Petri leges
ad ligandos omnes reges
in manicis ferreis."⁷³

It was not only in verse that the twelfth century expressed its disapproval of the Papacy. Walter Map has the following:

Hoc enim nomen Roma ex avaricie sueque diffinicionis
formatur principiis, fit enim ex R, et O, et M, et A,
et diffinicio cum ipsa, "radix omnium malorum
avaritia".⁷⁴

John of Salisbury reports the popular estimation of the Pope and the Roman Curia as follows:

For it was said by many that the Roman Church, which is the mother of all churches, presented itself not so much like a mother as like a stepmother of the others. Scribes and Pharisees sit within Rome, placing upon the shoulders of men insupportable burdens with which they themselves do not dirty their own fingers. They are lords over the clergy, and they do not become the models who lead the flock down the correct path of life; they accumulate valuable furnishings, they pile up gold and silver at the bank, even economising too

⁷³Oxford book of medieval Latin verse, p.284-285.

⁷⁴Walter Map, *De nugis curialium, courtiers trifles*, edited and translated by M.R. James, revised by C.N.L. Brooke and R.A.B. Mynors, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983 (Oxford medieval texts), p.168.

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much in their own expenses out of avarice. For the pauper is either never or rarely allowed in ... They deliver justice not for the sake of truth but for a price. For indeed, everything done immediately comes at a price; but you will not obtain anything at some future date without a price either ... But even the Roman pontiff himself is burdensome and almost intolerable to everyone, since all assert that, despite the ruins and rubble of churches (which were constructed by the devotion of others) and also the neglect of altars, he erects palaces and parades himself about not only in purple vestments but in gilded clothes. The palaces of priests glitter and in their hands the Church of Christ is demeaned. They pick clean the spoils of the provinces as if they wanted to recover the treasures of Croesus.⁷⁵

Gerald of Wales reports similar opinions. He offers the same clichés as Bernard (Sallust's quotation of Jugurtha on Roman venality, and puns like "Roma manus rodit", and so forth).⁷⁶ He has a few that Bernard does not, like "ablativo Latini utuntur quo Graeci carent."⁷⁷ He reports such opinions at great length and with obvious relish, and argues, with Welsh irony, that the successors of the Apostles are unjustly insulted and calumniated, as great men have been before them.⁷⁸

Anti-papal prose often takes the form of parody. For example, the following *Gospel according to the silver mark*:

At that time, the Pope said to the Romans, "When the son of man comes to the seat of our majesty, first say, 'Friend, why have you come?' But if he continues knocking without giving you anything, throw him out into the outer darkness." And it came to pass that a certain poor cleric came to the Curia of the Lord Pope and cried out, saying, "Do you, at least, have mercy

⁷⁵John of Salisbury, *Policraticus; of the frivolities of courtiers and the footprints of philosophers*, edited and translated by Cary J. Nederman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.133. The translation is Nederman's.

⁷⁶Gerald of Wales, *Speculum ecclesiae*, 4,14-16, in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, edited by J. S. Brewer, London, HMSO, 1861-1891 (Rolls series) (Kraus reprint 1964), v.4, p.289-296.

⁷⁷ibid., p.290.

⁷⁸ibid., p.291.

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on me, you doorkeepers of the Pope, for the hand of poverty has touched me. I am indeed needy and poor. Therefore, I beg you to come to my aid." But when they heard him they were exceeding angry, and they said, "Friend, you and your poverty can go to hell. Get thou behind me, Satan, because you do not smell of money. Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall not enter into the joy of your lord [the Pope] until you pay your last farthing." So the poor man went away and sold his coat and his shirt and everything he owned and gave it to the cardinals and doorkeepers and chamberlains. But they said, "What is this among so many?" They threw him out, and he went off weeping bitterly and inconsolably. Later on, a certain rich cleric came to the Curia. He was gross and fat and swollen, and had committed treacherous murder. He bribed first the doorkeeper, then the chamberlain, then the cardinals. But they put their heads together and demanded more. However, the Lord Pope heard that his cardinals and ministers had been lavishly bribed by the cleric, and he was sick even to death. So the rich man sent him medicine in the form of gold and silver, and straightway he was healed. The Lord pope summoned his cardinals and ministers and said to them, "Brethren, be vigilant lest anyone deceive you with empty words. My example I give unto you, that you might grab just as I grab."⁷⁹

Lest anyone suppose that linking the Pope with Satan and Antichrist was peculiar to Reformation and Protestant anticlericalism, it may be worth mentioning parodies of the Old and New Testament genealogies.

Cacalogion pape secundum Satanam.
Liber generationis pape, filii diaboli,
novi et veteris testamenti.
Diabolus autem genuit papam.
Papa autem genuit bullam ...
Deceptio autem rustici genuit invidiam, ex qua nata
est conspiratio rusticorum, que genuit tumultum, in
quo revelatus est filius perditionis, qui vocatur
Antichristus. Amen.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Paul Lehmann (ed.), *Die Parodie im Mittelalter*, 2nd. ed., Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1963, p.183. There is a version also in *Carmina Burana*, ed. Alfons Hilka and Otto Schumann, Heidelberg, Winter, 1930-1941, 4v., 44 (1,1,86).

⁸⁰Lehmann, *Die Parodie*, p.257.

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Epigrams, like the following conversation with a Roman janitor, are common:

Intus quis? Tu Quis? Ego sum. Quid quaeris? Ut
intrem.
Fers aliquid? Non. Esto foras. Fero. Quid? Satis.
Intra.⁸¹

There is a body of prose writing in which this kind of anticlericalism is expressed, and there are poems good enough to find a place in the literary anthologies. Among the latter, in addition to the work of Walter of Chatillon, mentioned above, may be reckoned the *Dic Christi veritas*, which Helen Waddell suggests may be attributed to Philip the Chancellor,⁸² whom Raby calls "the last great lyrical poet to write in Latin."⁸³ But the poem is in *Carmina Burana*,⁸⁴ and could well belong to the twelfth century. Even if the attribution is correct, Philip the Chancellor died in 1236 and it may not be stretching credibility too far to regard his work as evidence in relation to the twelfth century.

O truth of Christ
O most dear rarity,
O most rare Charity,
Where dwell'st thou now?
In the valley of Vision?
On Pharoah's throne?
On high with Nero?
With Timon alone?
In the bulrush ark

⁸¹H. Hagen (ed.), *Carmina medii aevi maximam partem inedita*, Berne, Frobenium, 1877, p.213.

⁸²Waddell, *Mediaeval Latin lyrics*, p.192-195 (the poem), p.343 (the attribution). Helen Waddell actually says "Philippe de Grève". Raby distinguishes him from Philip the Chancellor (F.J.E. Raby, *A history of Christian Latin poetry from the beginning to the close of the middle ages*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.395) but, according to the *Tusculum lexicon*, they are the same person (*Dictionnaire des auteurs grecs et latins*, p.666).

⁸³F.J.E. Raby, *A history of secular Latin poetry in the middle ages*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957, 2v., v.2. p.343.

⁸⁴*Carmina Burana* 131 (1,2,216).

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Where Moses wept?
Or in Rome's high places
With lightning swept?

With the lightning of Bulls,
And a thundering judge,
Summoned, accused,
Truth stands oppressed,
Torn asunder and sold,
While Justice sells her body in the street.
Come and go and come again
To the Curia, and when
Stripped to the last farthing, then
Leave the judgment seat.

Then Love replied,
"Man, wherefore didst thou doubt?
Not where thou wast wont to find
My dwelling in the southern wind;
Not in court and not in cloister,
Not in casque nor yet in cowl,
Not in battle nor in Bull,
But on the road to Jericho
I come with a wounded man."⁸⁵

In addition to the large body of antipapal writing which has some claim to literary merit, there is a vast corpus of material which is pedestrian, conventional and repetitive.

Roma capit marcas, bursas exhaurit et arcas;
Ut tibi tu parcas, fuge papas et patriarchas! ...
Roma manus rodit; quas rodere non valet, odit.⁸⁶

The themes and the images constantly recur, and many of them were well established before the twelfth century. M. Edélestand du Méril, for example, prints a satire against the Court of Rome, in which Queen Pecunia, along with Simony and Leprous Giesia, holds court in Rome.

Hic erit mea requies; hic stabat mea facies;

⁸⁵Waddell, *Medieval Latin lyrics*, p.192-195. Waddell's translation.

⁸⁶Jakob Werner, *Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sinnsprüche des Mittelalters, aus Handschriften gesammelt*, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, Winter, 1966, p.108.

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Hic figam sedem stabilem inter plebem amabilem.⁸⁷

Bernard's antipapal satire may not rank with that of the best of his contemporaries, though it is by no means as bad as that of the worst. But, without question, it is typical of his age. Alistair Fowler points out that "works of literature come to us from literary communities, with which we in our turn have to form a relation."⁸⁸ Comparison of Bernard's criticism of the papacy with similar criticism by his contemporaries reveals a literary community in which that kind of criticism was commonplace.

Bernard's anticlerical satire is by no means confined to the papacy and the Curia. All the clergy are subjected to his lampoon. His attacks on the bishops and the lesser clergy, just as much as his attacks on the papacy, are thoroughly representative of the anticlericalism of his age. In fact, satire directed at bishops and priests was well established in the eleventh century, before the emergence of anti-Roman satire, which became so widespread in the twelfth century. As Yunk points out, there is a paradox here. "This anti-Roman satire grows to an immense volume in the twelfth century. But early in the eleventh century, when the Papacy was most corrupt and degraded, it had virtually no attacks. Only a reformed Papacy became the object of satire."⁸⁹ But the reformed papacy of the twelfth century was, of course, a papacy at the height of its secular power and influence.

But the expansion of antipapal satire did not bring a diminution in volume or virulence of satire directed at the ecclesiastical

⁸⁷M. Edélestand du Ménil, *Poésies populaires latines antérieures au douzième siècle*, Bologna, Forni, 1969 (reprint of first ed., Paris, 1843), p.231-234.

⁸⁸Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of literature; an introduction to the theory of genres and modes*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982, p.278.

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hierarchy generally. Bernard, for example, has this to say about the bishops:

The bishops have lost their strength and firmness of purpose. Their hands are guilty, their thoughts turn to evil, their words encourage sin of both word and deed. The bishops have failed and the house of God is dishonoured ... They do not castigate the wickedness of the aristocracy. They are lenient towards those who are proud of their lineage and rolling in money. They bend the rules for the gentry and the aristocracy ... They are afraid to preach justice, to condemn wickedness, to purge iniquities, to denounce corruption. They are afraid to search out and give help to the sick and the disadvantaged. Intimidated by threats and aggressive actions, they are afraid to excommunicate those who clearly deserve it ... They do not teach God's truth to their hungry flock.⁹⁰

Bernard writes of mutual hostility between clergy and laity: "cleris laici, cleri laicis inimici."⁹¹ His chief complaint against the clergy is that they are unscrupulously greedy for wealth and that they neglect the souls put in their care.

The fathers of the Church pay no attention to doctrine. They do not heed the lessons of Rachel and Leah, or of Martha and Mary, but they pay great heed to avarice and worldly honours and Simony. There are numberless Simons in many places. Like robbers, they steal your goods if you do not hand them over quickly. Giezi is dead, but his followers flourish. The priests of the temple ... are quite happy to be ministers of the belly, not of Christ ... The abbot and the bishop speak soothing words, but both of them are unscrupulous in their deeds.⁹²

General accusations of this kind repeat without much change the charges of venality and failure in pastoral duty which were levelled at Rome, and they were equally common. For example, the following, one of many such, from the *Carmina Burana*:

⁸⁹Yunck, *The lineage of Lady Meed*, p.82.

⁹⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 345-387.

⁹¹*De octo vitiis*, 1131.

⁹²*ibid.*, 1154-1170.

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Nowadays, the bishops are under the sway of death. They are unwilling to administer the sacraments without payment, as they promised they would when they were appointed. Their good intentions have vanished. Now that they hold their appointments securely, they break their sacred oaths ... They are law breakers, not law givers.⁹³ They are destroyers of God's law. Simony is rife among them and makes great men out of sinners.⁹⁴

And the following, from *Analecta hymnica*:

Jam praelati sunt Pilati,
Judae successores,
Pium rati, Christum pati,
Caiphae fautores.⁹⁵

Bernard of Morlaix also castigates particular clerical abuses, like the consecration as bishops of men who are below the canonical age or morally unfit.

It is often the case that episcopal ceremonies are conducted by a man newly ordained, a mere boy, who carries a load of guilt ... He scarcely yet is able to grow a beard on his cheeks. He does not know himself and cannot govern himself. Can he possibly give you spiritual guidance? A host of newly ordained priests secure ecclesiastical appointments because they have purchased them. This kind of venality is now the accepted practice in royal households today, and soon it will have the approval of our bishops. Just look! A man who was just a courtier this morning is now a tonsured cleric.⁹⁶

Priests as well as bishops are the object of Bernard's satire.

⁹³"Sunt latrones, non latores". Literally, "They are robbers, not proposers." Anticlerical literature throughout the middle ages abounds in such untranslatable puns.

⁹⁴*Carmina Burana*, 1,1,14.

⁹⁵G.M. Dreves (ed.), *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, Leipzig, 1895, v.21, p.128.

⁹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 3,391-403.

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"Good morning, Father" is always a sweet sound to the ears [of parish priests]. They do not urge their congregation to repent sincerely, but rather to pretend to do so. They do not seek the salvation of souls, but rather to be seen as having prestigious positions in the church. They want to sit at the high table, to wear the most sumptuous vestments.⁹⁷

Parish priests who are not chaste, who have milked their parishioners for every penny they can get, and who have not fed and cared for the hungry, will be food for the fire, because they never showed any sign of repentance. They did not take care to preserve their own chastity or that of others, but made others as sinful and wicked as themselves. They carry a double load of guilt, so they will suffer a double punishment.⁹⁸

Among the wittiest as well as the bitterest of the attacks on the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the twelfth century is the *Apocalypse of Golias*, which is discussed below, in the context of allegory, on p.320 ff. The *Apocalypse of Golias* is an extended, sophisticated poem, in which the anticlerical theme is worked out through a coherent story. Somewhat similar in those respects, and a great deal longer, is the *Speculum stultorum* of Nigel Longchamps, which is an elaborate story, incorporating a number of fables for change of pace, about a donkey called Brunellus who is unhappy about the length of his tail. Nigel's anticlerical satire, woven into the narrative, is the usual stuff:

Praesul amat marcum plus quam distinguere Marcum,
plus et amat lucrum quam sapuisse Lucam.⁹⁹

If you ask what keeps the bishop busy in the city, it is his preparations to go hunting in the woods with his hounds, or to go hawking, or to go fishing ... If [our bishops] were to suffer for Our Lord what they suffer for the sake of these worldly matters and these

⁹⁷*De octo vitiis*, 1182-1185.

⁹⁸*ibid.*, 1245-1250.

⁹⁹Wright, *Anglo-Latin satirical poets*, v.1, p.106. Nigel de Longchamps, *Speculum stultorum*, ed. John H. Mozley and Robert R. Raymo, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960, p.92.

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fleeting pleasures, there would be no doubt that, while still alive and in the flesh, they would be equal to God's saints and martyrs.¹⁰⁰

In a more serious mode, Gerald of Wales, in *Gemma ecclesiastica*, collects texts of Scripture, sayings of the Fathers of the Church and other evidence, including classical authorities, to prove that there should be "absolutely no material rewards for spiritual duties".¹⁰¹ He argues against any kind of temporal gain from spiritual offices and deplores Simony in any form. He offers a great deal of anecdotal evidence about the vices of the higher clergy and how episcopal officials tyrannise parochial clergy for the sake of gain. He gives many examples of the ignorance of the clergy,¹⁰² which he claims is made worse by unintelligent study of law and logic.¹⁰³

Clerical unchastity was a common object of satire. There are several poems couched as complaints about requirements for celibacy of priests.

The clerics and priests met together recently, very upset. They said, "The bishop wants to take away our housekeepers."¹⁰⁴ What argument should we produce against it?" ... [They present, in burlesque fashion, Scriptural and other arguments, leading to a conclusion based on the supposed three orders of mankind.] "We clerics will have two concubines; monks and canons the same, or perhaps three; deans and bishops four or five. And so, at last, we will fulfil the divine laws."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰Wright, p.108. Mozley ad Raymo, p.93.

¹⁰¹Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis opera*, ed. Brewer, v.2, p.286.

¹⁰²Mostly accusations of poor Latin. For example, "Item exemplum de presbytero, qui sermonem faciens de hoc evangelio, 'Occidit Herodes omnes pueros a bimatu et infra,' sic exposuit, 'ab una provincia in aliam provinciam,' *bimatum* unam provinciam construens et *infra* aliam." *ibid.*, v.2, p.342.

¹⁰³*ibid.*, v.2, p.286-364.

¹⁰⁴"ancillulas".

¹⁰⁵Wright, *Latin poems*, p.174-179.

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Satirical verses form a large part of the *Carmina Burana*, and it is not surprising that many of the songs are anticlerical.

The clerical order is despised by the laity. The bride of Christ has become a salable commodity, readily available to everybody. The altars are sold, the eucharist is sold ...¹⁰⁶

Many people who nowadays condemn Simon Magus as being worse than the Devil nevertheless encourage Simon's descendants with their flattery. Simon is not dead yet, if he lives on in his descendants.¹⁰⁷

Even Dreves' collection of medieval hymns has plenty of twelfth century examples of anticlerical verses.

I do not know where to turn when I try to discuss the prelates with strict objectivity. When I think about the virtues of the present day fathers of the Church, so few virtues come to mind that hardly one of the clergy turns out to have merit.¹⁰⁸

Look! The sellers of supernatural grace are flourishing. The pastors of the Church are precursors of Antichrist. They are thieves of the Eucharist. Modern successors of Judas, they sell Christ today.¹⁰⁹

[From a dialogue between Aristippus and Diogenes.] What do you want, Diogenes? Are you looking for honours and preferment? You must explain that first of all. Those who govern the Church will not look favourably on you unless you involve yourself in their wickedness. The prelates will be pleased with you if you commend their sinful way of life. Our holy bishops like above all those who are accomplices in their crimes and ministers to their iniquity.¹¹⁰

Bernard's criticism of bishops and priests, like his criticism of the papacy, is thoroughly representative of twelfth century anticlericalism. Satire was aimed not only at the pope and the

¹⁰⁶*Carmina Burana*, 1,1,10.

¹⁰⁷*ibid.*, 1,1,13.

¹⁰⁸*Analecta hymnica*, 21, p.143.

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, 21, p.151.

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Curia, with which relatively few people came into contact. Equally bitter attacks were directed toward the local churches, at the episcopal level and at the level of the parish priest. This criticism, like criticism of the papacy, was commonplace and accepted.

It can be argued that monks, as such, are not members of the clergy. They are not necessarily even in minor orders, let alone ordained.¹¹¹ We speak of the regular clergy (that is to say, clergy who are subject to a rule, who are members of a religious order) and secular clergy, but that does not necessarily entail the clerical status of all monks. And we speak of "lay brothers," but the distinction is between a lay brother and a choir monk (who performs the *opus Dei*, the singing of the divine office), not between a monk who is not a cleric and one who is. Brewer insists that "all these religious societies were societies of laymen, and not of ecclesiastics." He upbraids those who jumble together clergy, monks, and friars. "This is as unpardonable as if they should imagine that the House of Convocation, the Wesleyan Conference, and the University of Oxford were all parts of the same body, and together constituted the Church of England."¹¹²

But, despite Brewer's strictures, there is a perfectly respectable usage which admits monks (and even nuns) into the fold of the clergy. The *Catholic dictionary* of 1897, for example, states that, in a general sense, "the name of cleric or clerk is applicable to the whole body of the secular clergy ... also to monks and nuns, to lay institutes following a religious rule, to hermits leading their life under authority, to the

¹¹⁰ibid., 21, p.152.

¹¹¹"Qui divinis ministeriis per primam saltem tonsuram mancipati sunt, clerici dicuntur." *Codex juris canonici*, Rome, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1923, p.26.

¹¹²Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis opera*, ed. Brewer, v.4, p.xxxi.

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Knights of Malta, &c."¹¹³ In the twelfth century, it was already becoming more and more common for choir monks to be priests, and in 1311 the Council of Vienne directed every monk to take priestly orders if bidden by his abbot.¹¹⁴ Monks were often appointed to senior ecclesiastical posts, including bishoprics.¹¹⁵

Criticism of the church in the twelfth century tended to cover the whole spectrum of clergy in the broader sense, including monks. In *Analecta hymnica*, for instance, we find the following:

Vae vobis, quid agitis,
O metropolitani,
Abbates, praepositi,
Canonici, decani?
Vos introistis atria
Sion sub idolatria ...¹¹⁶

In addition to that general criticism of the clergy, there was also a great deal of specifically antimonastic writing. The matter is complicated by the controversy between Cluniacs and Cistercians which raged at that time and which, like all family squabbles, was bitter. Early examples are found in the letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux,¹¹⁷ and the letters of Peter the

¹¹³W.E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, *A Catholic dictionary, containing some account of the doctrine, discipline, rites, ceremonies, councils, and religious orders of the Catholic Church*, 5th ed., London, Kegan Paul, 1897, p.210-211.

¹¹⁴G.G. Coulton, *Medieval panorama; the English scene from Conquest to Reformation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1938, p. 264.

¹¹⁵And, of course, the papacy. Eugenius III was a Cistercian who, even after his election as pope, "never discarded the habit and life-style of a simple monk." (J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford dictionary of popes*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986, p.172)

¹¹⁶*Analecta hymnica*, 21, 142.

¹¹⁷For example, his letter to his nephew Robert in 1119 (PL 182, 67-79.)

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Venerable.¹¹⁸ The dispute itself was the subject of satirical comment.

The song of the birds and the beauty of the scenery delighted two monks who sat under a lime tree. Drunk with wine, they deregulated the Rule. They paid no heed to any law or to any Lord Abbot. One was a Cistercian, the other a Cluniac. They discussed the insoluble question of which Order was better, which more strictly followed the Rule [of Saint Benedict. There follows a lengthy parody of the controversy between the two Orders. The disputants get more and more heated, until they fall to blows]. I threw myself between them, trying to calm them down and to restrain them with mild words. "Gentlemen! Let Saint Benedict be your consolation. It is on him that you must rely for atonement on the day of judgement. He will calibrate the scales more accurately than you can."¹¹⁹

Bernard of Morlaix has some general complaint about monks. He makes occasional mention of the inadequacies of abbots, for example, "Quis pater ordinis est similaginis hostia frissae?"¹²⁰ And in the *De octo vitiis* we find:

Qui promiserunt animas animalia querunt.
Est in tranquilis abbas vel episcopus illis
Verbis sed gestis uterque deest in honestis.¹²¹

But there is no extended treatment of monks, comparable with his treatment of other estates of society, except the following:

Please believe what I say. No age has been more fruitful than this one in the production of an abundance of false prophets. These Pharisees, in their inner filthiness, are a slippery way, a common doorway to perdition. The mob of hypocrites springs up like a plague and attacks us. They are people of the shadows, with hairy bodies and slippery souls. They have holy names and holy apparel, but their hearts are proud. They look like lambs in monks'

¹¹⁸Especially his letter to Saint Bernard, letter 28 in Constable, *The letters of Peter the Venerable*, v.1, p.52-101.

¹¹⁹Wright, *The Latin poems*, p.238-239.

¹²⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 2,230.

¹²¹*De octo vitiis*, 1168-1170.

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habits, but they are snakes in the grass. Their hearts are wanton, even though they present the stern appearance of a Cato. They show a strict face, but their morals are flexible and they are prone to wickedness. In their Order, sheep's clothing covers and disguises their threatening, greedy, wolfish hearts. Their proud hearts, lacking integrity, have an appearance of holiness, but they are unholy in their fruits, they are chambers of squalor. Their heads are tonsured in order to deceive. The wolf pretends to be a lamb; the bramble imitates the rose. For them, the whole of the Rule amounts to unwatered wine and extra meals. For them, unity is a matter for discussion; justice is a pretence; the law is whatever they want to do. Among them there are scandals and disunion; there are no opportunities for refreshment of the soul. The Rule, for them, applies only to their tonsures, not to their deeds. They belong to the Order of scissors and comb and the Rule of the hair!¹²²

Jill Mann draws attention to the fact that, for those familiar with the controversy between the Cluniacs and the Cistercians, "il termine *pseudo-prophetae* è sufficiente a identificare tali ipocrite nei Cistercensi." She points out that the charges made against the false prophets by Bernard - that they are wolves in sheep's clothing, arrogant, hypocritical and greedy - are the familiar accusations made by the Cluniacs against the Cistercians. She gives examples from the *Ysengrimus*, from the *Metamorphosis Goliae* and from the *De nugis curialium* of Walter Map.¹²³

Bernard has further things to say about monks in the *De octo vitiis*, some of which have quite general application.

A monk who is heavy with money is like a heavily laden ship. The heavy weight pulls the monk down to the bottom, just as it does the ship. A poor monk is

¹²²*De contemptu mundi*, 2,713-733.

¹²³Jill Mann, "La poesia satirica e goliardica," *Lo spazio letterario del medioevo*. 1, *Il medioevo latino*, v.1, tomo 2, Rome, Salerno, 1992, p.76-77, 89-90. See also Jill Mann, *Ysengrimus; text with translation, commentary and introduction*, Leiden, Brill, 1987 (*Mittellateinische studien und texte*, 12), p.141-142.

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safe. Free from the concerns of the flesh, he seeks heaven. Having nothing, he has everything. He seeks not his own goods but his own good ...¹²⁴

He who is moderate at table is also chaste in the night. Just as uncultivated ground produces thorns, so an untamed body brings destruction. An overfull belly brings the danger of sin during sleep. He is a false monk (*pseudomonachus*) whose law is his belly, whose glory is Bacchus.¹²⁵

Those are admonitions to all monks. But, in the middle of a long catalogue of a wide range of sins, which runs for twenty-nine lines without taking a breath, we find mention of "the commotion of the Pharisees ... a new, blameworthy breed of hypocrites, who have white habits but not white souls."¹²⁶

The reference to the Cistercians is unmistakable. In a letter to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux in about 1127, Peter the Venerable wrote of the Cistercians, "Oh you Pharisees! You are a new breed of Pharisees who have come back to the world. You set yourselves apart from others ... So you wear a habit of unusual colour. To distinguish yourselves from all other monks, you show off in a white habit, while all the others wear black."¹²⁷ This letter evidently set the scene for Cluniac complaints against the Cistercians, for the same accusations recur constantly throughout the controversy.

Bernard of Morlaix does not confine his invective to the Cistercians in general. He directs it also to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux himself:

One of them, older in appearance and seeming to be more virtuous, is a role model for the lesser brothers in the Order. His heart broods on evil things, while his mouth begets and utters good things. Oh shame! Oh wickedness! He is a devil, though he is thought to be

¹²⁴*De octo vitiis*, 465-468.

¹²⁵*De octo vitiis*, 585-588.

¹²⁶*De octo vitiis*, 1132-1135.

¹²⁷Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, ed. Constable, v.1, p.57.

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an angel ... He looks like a man, but inside there is no longer a man. He is a wolf.¹²⁸

The Cistercians feature more frequently in twelfth-century antimonastic writing than do the other religious orders. Walter Map, in *De nugis curialium*, offers a long digression on the wickedness of monks in general:

Monks both white and black recognize their prey, as the hawk spies the frightened lark, in the shape of knights whom they can pluck - men who have wasted their patrimony or are shackled with debts. These they entice, and at their firesides, remote from noise and apart from those guests of charity, the fleas, entertain them sumptuously, most amiably press them to repeat their visits frequently, promise them similar cheer for every day and faces always smiling ... They undertake to supply their needs, then hurry them to the various altars and tell them who is the patron of each, and how many masses are said there every day; they enrol them in the brotherhood in full chapter, and make them sharers of their prayers.¹²⁹

But Walter reserves his fiercest criticisms for the Cistercians:

As to their clothing, their food and their long hours of work, the people to whom they are kind (because they cannot do them any harm) say that their clothing is insufficient to keep off cold, their food to keep off hunger, and the work they do is enormous, and from this they argue to me that they cannot be covetous because their acquisitions are not spent on luxuries. But oh how simple is the answer! Do not usurers and other slaves of avarice clothe and feed themselves most poorly and cheaply? ... If you make a point of toil, cold and food, why, the Welsh lead a harder life in all respects. The Cistercians have numbers of coats, the Welsh none ...¹³⁰

Walter Map is one of many writers to comment on the Cistercians' refusal (supposedly in obedience to the Rule) to wear trousers. He does not accept as a satisfactory reason that it is designed

¹²⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 2,735-757.

¹²⁹Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, ed. James, p.85. James' translation.

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"to preserve coolness in that part of the body, lest sudden heats provoke unchastity."¹³¹ Only the Carthusians meet with Walter's guarded approval.¹³²

It may also have been Walter Map who wrote the scurrilous verses by "a disciple of Golias about the Grey Monks" (that is, the Cistercians), which conclude with the sentiment that there are two things which cause devastation everywhere, and which cannot be avoided. One is the pox. The other is the Cistercians, who "do not wear trousers to cover their private parts, so that they can always be ready to practise the arts of love."¹³³

Gerald of Wales quotes several stories against the religious orders, which he attributes to his friend Walter Map, and adds many more of his own, in *Speculum ecclesiae*. Like Walter, he is particularly hard on the Cistercians, but speaks well of the Carthusians.¹³⁴

De malis monachorum was a common theme of twelfth century lyrical verse. A long poem from Wright's collection, for example, expresses and develops the sentiment:

Oh, what wonderful lives, leading to the salvation of
their souls, were led by the monks of old. But
nowadays they turn the noble virtue of obedience into
the vice of empty pride.¹³⁵

In *Analecta hymnica*, we find the following:

Fearing to be shipwrecked in the flood of worldly
affairs, I fled at last to a monastery, as a way to
salvation open to everybody. Alas! I escaped from

¹³⁰ibid., p.101. James' translation.

¹³¹ibid., p.101-102. James' translation.

¹³²As it turned out, the Carthusians were the only religious order to refuse to submit to Henry VIII. They died for it.

¹³³Wright, *The Latin poems*, p.54-56.

¹³⁴Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis opera*, V.4, p.3-354.

¹³⁵Wright, *The Latin poems*, p.188.

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the jaws of Charybdis and avoided the perils of the Gulf of Syrtis, but now I fear a greater disaster, for I am overwhelmed by the dogs of Scylla. When I put on the monastic habit, I thought I was escaping from wickedness. But deceit and malice, which I thought I had escaped from, were still there. Unless God helps me with his grace, I will become a broken vessel, a dog returning to its vomit. But there is no going back.¹³⁶

The major criticism of the religious orders, to which all the particular complaints may be reduced, is that they no longer serve the important and admirable purposes for which they were established.

Once, the great glory of the religious orders was poverty and the rejection of worldly concerns. Nowadays, they think they are hard done by if they do not own goods and great wealth, pastures, meadows, flocks of sheep - all things which imperil their immortal souls. They believe nowadays that it is a wicked thing to be regarded as poor in the eyes of the world. Christ was poor. They follow him only to the extent that they can give the appearance of poverty without the reality.¹³⁷

The emphasis of antimonastic criticism is different from that of criticism of the Curia and of the secular clergy. The monks are castigated chiefly for their failure to live up to their vows of stability, obedience and conversion of life, and for their imperfect realisation of the ideals of poverty and chastity. The main accusation against the papacy, the bishops and the lesser clergy, by contrast, is that of Simony in its various forms, and of failure to take care of the spiritual needs of their flocks.

Bernard, in his various poems, and especially in the *De contemptu mundi*, is concerned to convince his monastic audience

¹³⁶*Analecta hymnica*, 21, p.132.

¹³⁷*ibid.*, p.110.

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that, like Mary, they have chosen the best part.¹³⁸ He wishes to reprehend the shortcomings of his brothers and to call them back from their sins¹³⁹ but, except for his attacks against the Cistercians, his complaint is not aimed directly at the wickedness of monks. Rather, he achieves his purpose by drawing attention to the evils of the other members of the estates of society, and urging his brothers to avoid those evils and to shun the world.

Estates satire, which belongs to the genre of complaint literature, was very well established in the Latin tradition, before it was taken up by the vernacular literatures, and it was as lively and varied in the Latin as it became in the vernaculars. The second and third categories of complaint literature, namely complaints of particular vices and types, and complaints of specific abuses and sins, are liberally exemplified throughout Bernard's poems, especially the *De contemptu mundi* and the *De octo vitiis*. In the next chapter, consideration is given to two examples, namely Bernard's treatment of homosexuals and his misogyny. The former deserves special attention, not so much because Bernard stresses it (he does not), as because twelfth-century homosexuality has received attention in current scholarly literature. The latter poses special problems of interpretation in the context of complaint literature.

¹³⁸Luke, 10,42.

¹³⁹*De contemptu mundi, Prologus*: "et materia est mihi viciorum reprehensio et a viciis revocare intentio."

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Homosexuality

In *De contemptu mundi* Bernard of Morlaix castigates homosexual sins in the course of a general diatribe about wickedness which precedes his lengthy satirical treatment of the sins of the clergy in Book 3, not, as one might have expected, in the course of his fulminations against sexual sins in Book 2. In *De octo vitiis*, he returns to the subject, but he does not deal with it under the heading of lust. It forms part of a general disquisition about sin which follows his systematic treatment of the eight deadly sins.

Bernard's treatment of homosexuality presents a number of problems. In the first place, there is the problem of what exactly he means. He does not, of course, talk about "homosexuality", but about "sodomy". The word "homosexual" is a late nineteenth century coinage. It means "having a sexual propensity for persons of one's own sex." There is no Latin word equivalent to "homosexual." It is a Greek and Latin hybrid (like "television"), to which no concept of classical or medieval times corresponds. Discussion of various aspects of homosexuality in the middle ages is therefore difficult. The problem is not peculiar to the high middle ages. It persists into much later times, as may be exemplified by controversy about the dissolution of the monasteries in Henrician England.

G.G. Coulton, dealing with the *Comperta* collected from the Cromwellian visitations of 1535-1536, mentions specifically only one case of sodomy, but manages to convey the impression that the *Comperta* provide evidence that the practice was common in

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monasteries.¹ Dom David Knowles, finding it necessary to follow Coulton into "the dismal swamp of the *Comperta*,"² notes that

Casual readers of the *Comperta* receive their principal shock, which cannot but affect their attitude to all that comes after, from the very numerous entries of sodomy in the northern houses, which come first in order. These amount, for the north only, to the massive total of 181. Regarded with a little care, however, these entries become somewhat less overwhelming. In the first place, the East Anglian houses, where homosexual practices are explicitly distinguished from solitary vice, provide only four instances of the former offence. If we then return to the northern lists we note that on the very first occurrence of "sodomy" it is explained as solitary sin, and it is so defined in eighty-four instances out of the total given above ... The inference seems therefore permissible that in many, perhaps all, of the cases where the word is left undefined it denotes solitary vice only. If so, this leaves us with a total of only twelve clear instances of homosexuality in the whole of the *Comperta*, four of them in East Anglia and eight in the North. This total is indeed so low as almost to be surprising, but since the East Anglia figure is a firm one, there would seem to be no *a priori* reason for distrusting the northern.³

The more general meaning of sodomy, in which it includes solitary vice and is scarcely distinguishable from "sins against nature", is found throughout the middle ages, and it causes confusion. "Not only was there ambiguity [in the middle ages] about what constituted the sin against nature, there was also confusion about what constituted sodomy."⁴ The term "sodomy" derives from the story of Lot and the people of Sodom in Genesis 19,4-11. It is not entirely clear from the text of Genesis

¹G.G.Coulton, *Five centuries of religion, volume 4, The last days of medieval monachism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1950 (Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought), p.691.

²David Knowles, *The religious orders in England, Volume 3, The Tudor age*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1959, p.295.

³*ibid.*, p.296-297.

⁴Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage, *Sexual practices and the medieval church*, Buffalo, Prometheus Books, 1982, p.66.

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whether the sin of Sodom was of a sexual nature or not,⁵ but it is quite clear from Leviticus 18,22 and 20,13 that ancient Israel strongly disapproved of sodomy.

The problem is one of inconsistent use of the term, not a failure of precise definition. Several writers discussed the subject in almost clinical detail. For example, Saint Peter Damien, in the eleventh century, in his *Liber Gomorrhianus*, distinguishes degrees of sins against nature.⁶ And Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century, in his *Summa theologiae*, has the following:

Uno quidem modo, si absque omni concubitu causa delectationis venereae pollutio procuretur, quod pertinet ad peccatum immunditiae, quam quidem "mollitiem" vocant. Alio modo, si fiat per concubitum ad rem non eiusdem speciei, quod vocatur bestialitas. Tertio, si fiat per concubitum ad non debitum sexum, puta masculi ad masculum, vel foeminae ad foeminam, ut Apostolus dicit ad Rom., quod dicitur sodomiticum vitium. Quarto, si non servetur naturalis modus concumbendi aut quantum ad instrumentum non debitum, aut quantum ad alios monstruosos et bestiales concumbendi modos.⁷

The meaning of "sodomy" expressed in Saint Thomas' third category was probably the most common meaning throughout the middle ages. It seems to be the sense in which Bernard of Morlaix uses the word. It is perhaps the most common usage today also. It needs to be distinguished from anal intercourse, which falls into Saint Thomas' fourth category, though the categories are not mutually exclusive.

⁵Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian tradition*, Hamden, Archon, 1975 (first published Longmans, 1955), p.1-28.

⁶PL 145,161. Alii siquidem secum, alii aliorum manibus, alii inter femora, alii denique consummato actu contra naturam delinquent; et in his ita per gradus ascenduntur, ut quaeque posteriora praecedentibus graviora judicentur ..."

⁷2a2ae,154,11.

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Catholics who went to school before the second Vatican Council will remember that there are four sins crying to heaven for vengeance. They are wilful murder, the sin of Sodom, oppression of the poor and defrauding labourers of their wages.⁸ The collocation suggests that the reason why these sins cry to heaven for vengeance is that they all entail wilful and immoral exploitation of others. That sodomy was regarded as specially wicked for that reason is indicated also by the old *Codex juris canonici*, in which sodomy, along with other sins against the sixth commandment, if committed "cum minoribus infra sexdecim annorum," attracts specially heavy penalties.⁹ There was no suggestion that sodomy was a sin belonging to a special class of people. It was simply a very serious sin which anybody might commit. A quite different approach is taken in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominantly sexual attraction towards persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained ... The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided ...¹⁰

In the ancient world, cultural attitudes toward sodomy (in Saint Thomas' sense) were diverse and complex.¹¹ Approval and disapproval varied from time to time and from place to place,

⁸A *catechism of Christian doctrine*, approved by the archbishops and bishops of England and Wales and directed to be used in all their dioceses, revised edition, London, Catholic Truth Society, 1953, p.57.

⁹Canon 2357-2359.

¹⁰*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, official edition for Australia and New Zealand, Homebush, St. Pauls, 1994, p.566.

¹¹Several aspects and cultures are explored in *Homosexuality in the ancient world*, edited by Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen

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but at no time or place does there seem to have been a concept of homosexuals as a special class of people. Sodomy was something that men and women did, but those who did it were not seen as a class apart from the rest of humanity. The concept of homosexuals as a special class of people seems to be peculiar to the twentieth century. It was certainly quite unknown in classical times, both in Greece and in Rome. Homosexual activity was sometimes disapproved of, though for the most part tolerated,¹² but persons engaging in it were not regarded as forming a class or a kind of people in the way that people engaging in prostitution, whether male or female, were. Throughout the middle ages, homosexual activity was consistently disapproved of, and persons engaging in it were still not regarded, by themselves or anybody else, as forming a special class of people.

In *De contemptu mundi*, Bernard of Morlaix complains that sodomy is practised openly, and nobody attempts to hide it.

Against all reason and nature, he becomes she. Juno and Petronilla are abandoned¹³ ... The man forgets his manliness and becomes like a hyena. Look at all these men buried in unnatural filth! What kind of sin is this? What do I call it? ... The shame of it! This foul plague sweeps through castle and town, even through the church ... The disease attacks both the lowly and the powerful. The rule of natural sexual appetite disappears. Normal intercourse declines

Donaldson, New York, Garland, 1992 (Studies in homosexuality, 1).

¹²Horace is the obvious example. "Molibus in pueris aut in puellis urere" (*Epodes*, 11,4), "Mille puellarum, puerorum mille furores" (*Satires*, 2,3,325). Jasper Griffin discusses the issue in *Latin poets and Roman life*, London, Duckworth, 1985, p.25. "The evidence collected by Kroll, and indeed by Nisbet and Hubbard, strongly suggests that relations with boys, provided they were not *ingenui*, were both very common and very lightly viewed."

¹³The relevance of Juno is clear; she was the wife of Jupiter, displaced by Ganymede. Petronilla was an early Roman virgin and martyr. Legend has it that she was a daughter of Saint Peter. Perhaps Bernard was looking simply for an example of goodness and purity, and Petronilla met his need for a rhyme with "illa."

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because of this plague. Cattle and dogs and horses know nothing of it, nor does a man who is whole. Half-male is what I call them, half-men is what I declare them, those who defile one another, giving to one another what they owe to the weaker sex. Myrrha, Jocasta, Phaedra and Lycisca can now be proud of themselves¹⁴ ... Beasts do not have reason, yet in this matter they behave reasonably. Men have reason, yet in this matter they behave unreasonably ...¹⁵

A passage in *De octo vitiis* repeats some of these points, but has a somewhat different tone.

The fire of Sodom burns in rotten wood ... Any vessel that has been tainted by it takes on the flavour.¹⁶ Once a man has been seduced by it, it is very difficult for him to get the infection out of his system. Even in honourable old age, a man can relapse and be excited by it again. The more pleasant it is, the greater the sin; the less the pleasure, the less the guilt. This one sin of Gomorrah ... brings a hellish kind of peace, but that peace is paid for with tears. This one sin of Gomorrah ... burns boys and youths and stern old men ... The vice of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah flourishes. Women are regarded as worthless, but the love of boys is valued highly. The wife grieves for her broken life, while her young husband philanders. Juno yields her place to Ganymede. The embraces and sexual intercourse of marriage are spurned; there are plenty of catamites to provide substitutes. The male prostitutes¹⁷ are seductive with their practised expressions. They were born to take the active, masculine sexual role, but they take pleasure in foully playing the passive, feminine part.¹⁸ They sell their lubricious loins to anyone who will pay; sin after the fashion of Sodom makes no distinctions ... This kind of copulation was never practised by animals. The smart stallion copulates with a mare, the wicked man with his fellow man. The bull copulates with a cow, but the male human demands the loins of a male human ... Man alone is aroused by his fellow man and commits this sin ...¹⁹

¹⁴The first three are clearly intended as examples of unnatural female lust. For Lycisca, see Juvenal, 6,122-124. It is interesting that Bernard does not offer an example of a lesbian.

¹⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 3,181-216.

¹⁶Horace, *Epistles*, 1,2,69-70.

¹⁷"Patrici Sodomite."

¹⁸"Gaudent feda pati qui sunt ut agant generati."

¹⁹*De octo vitiis*, 930-979.

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Bernard is not talking about homosexuals as a social group, or as people who have "a sexual propensity for persons of their own sex." He is talking about men who deliberately and from choice, knowing that it is wrong, engage in sexual intercourse with other men or with boys. He says nothing about heterosexual sodomy, and he says nothing about lesbianism. He regards sodomy as unnatural, both because it is contrary to reason and because the animals do not do it.²⁰ It is especially wicked because it leads to disruption of families and child prostitution. Bernard does not appear to think that homosexuality is in any way innate, or that sodomites do not choose their condition.²¹

Bernard says that sodomites are extremely common, "as many as the fields have ears of barley, the sea oysters, the beach grains of sand, the ocean islands, India grains of incense, the Tiber reeds."²² John Boswell, of Yale University, uses this statement, and similar utterances by many of Bernard's contemporaries, as evidence that there was "an efflorescence of gay culture" in the twelfth century.²³ Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of references to sodomy in the twelfth century express profound disapproval of it, Boswell speaks of a "positive attitude towards homosexuality"²⁴ and an "indifference to homosexual behaviour of the institutional church during this

²⁰Yet he compares sodomites to hyenas, which were supposed, in medieval bestiary lore, to practise sodomy. Vern L. Bullough's "The sin against nature and homosexuality" is a useful study of the medieval concept that certain sexual activities were against nature (Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage, *Sexual practices and the medieval church*, Buffalo, Prometheus books, 1982, p.55-71.)

²¹Presumably, if male prostitutes are conditioned to their trade by early training, their responsibility is somewhat diminished; but Bernard does not consider that.

²²*De contemptu mundi*, 3,196-197.

²³John Boswell, *Christianity, social tolerance, and homosexuality; gay people in western Europe from the beginning of the Christian era to the fourteenth century*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980, p.232-233.

²⁴*ibid.*, p.235.

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century."²⁵ He produces a handful of writers whose work might reasonably be interpreted as expressing approval or tolerance of sodomy (Baudri of Bourgueil, Marbod of Rennes, Hilary the Englishman and the author of the "Debate between Ganymede and Helen").²⁶ He discusses Aelred of Rievaulx, expressing the view that "there can be little question that Aelred was gay."²⁷ He says that Saint Anselm of Canterbury "brought the tradition of passionate friendship among monks into the limelight of medieval society (as he also prevented the promulgation of the first antigay legislation in England)."²⁸

On the basis of such examples, he concludes that there was "an extraordinary flowering of gay love" in the twelfth century.²⁹ He makes a distinction between "homosexual" and "gay."

"Homosexuality" refers to the general phenomenon of same-sex eroticism and is therefore the broadest of the categories employed; it comprises all sexual phenomena between persons of the same gender, whether the result of conscious preference, subliminal desire, or circumstantial exigency. "Gay," in contrast, refers to persons who are conscious of erotic inclination towards their own gender as a distinguishing characteristic ..."³⁰

On such a definition, it is possible that men like Aelred and Saint Anselm might be described as "homosexual." If "subliminal desire" is enough to characterise a homosexual, perhaps they were homosexual, but it is unlikely that they engaged in sodomy. Even if Aelred's confession to his sister ("meam pudicitiam perdidit") refers to some physical expression of homosexual love when he was a boy, rather than to solitary vice, it is quite

²⁵ibid., p.216.

²⁶ibid., p.243-266.

²⁷ibid., p.222. He quotes Aelred's *De institutione inclusarum*: "Quam miser ego tunc qui meam pudicitiam perdidit, tam beata tu [his sister] cuius virginitatem gratia divina protexit."

²⁸ibid., p.218.

²⁹ibid., p.218.

³⁰ibid., p.44.

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certain that he did not practise sodomy after he entered the monastic life.³¹

One problem with Boswell's definition is that all friendships between persons of the same sex might be characterised as homosexual, on the grounds that they are manifestations of subliminal desire. So, the relationship between Ausonius and Saint Paulinus of Nola (who "passionately loved him") is seen by Boswell as representing "a trend in early Christian sexual morality which was both significant and influential."³² Even Abelard's lament of David for Jonathan is seen as evidence of "increased familiarity with and tolerance of gay people and their feelings by persons who were not themselves gay."³³ On that basis, Roland and Oliver would have to be reckoned homosexual.³⁴ In fact, nearly everybody would be in some degree homosexual.

In the *Carmina de Trinitate*, Bernard of Morlaix discusses the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity. "Sic tria sunt unum, sed et unum sic tria vere."³⁵ He says that, if we dare to compare what is trifling with what is supreme,³⁶ we can get some faint notion of the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity even from the writings of the pagans.

Ergo poeta, duos dum commendaret amicos,
"Hi duo corporibus" ait "ibant mentibus unus."³⁷
Sic David Jonathe, sic Tideus et Polinici,
Eurialus Niso, Phoceus adhesit Horesto,
Piritoo Teseus, Coridon est nexus Alexi,
Dimidium mentis animeque sue profitetur³⁸

³¹ibid., p.222-223.

³²ibid., p.133.

³³ibid., p.238.

³⁴And, in modern times, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, Big Ears and Noddy.

³⁵*Carmina de Trinitate*, 405.

³⁶"Si tamen audemus de parvis et prope nullis/ Conjectare, quod est summum summeque colendum." *Carmina de Trinitate*, 407-408.

³⁷Ovid, *Tristia*, 4,4,72. Ovid is referring to Orestes and Pylades.

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Virgilium Flaccus, quem carnis amabat amore.
Quod si tanta fuit gentilibus huius amoris
Unio, quanta putas deitatis inest deitati?³⁹

Even pagan writers can understand the possibilities of unity in the relationships between human persons. How much greater the unity in the relationships within the Trinity? Bernard's examples are interesting. One is biblical, not pagan; the story of David and Jonathan is told in the Book of Samuel (or 1 Kings in the Vulgate). Three derive from classical mythology, namely Polynices and Tydeus, Pylades and Orestes, Theseus and Pirithous. Two are pairs of what might be called fictional characters from Vergil: Euryalus and Nisus from the *Aeneid* and Corydon and Alexis from the second *Eclogue*. The final example is historical, namely Horace and Vergil. Boswell, one supposes, would regard all of these relationships, except perhaps the last, as homosexual, even as "gay." Vergil's text suggests that we are meant to think of his pairs of friends as being "gay." But it is quite certain, from the context in which they are discussed, that Bernard had no such concept. Close friendships between men were, for him, good and noble. There was no suggestion that they might be homosexual.

Boswell recognises the problem of regarding all same-sex friendships as homosexual. He refers to Alfred Kinsey's suggestion that "homosexual and heterosexual persons are representatives not of distinct types but simply of the end points of a sliding scale ranging from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality ... If this view is correct, then "gay" people are those far enough toward the homosexual end of the Kinsey scale to think of themselves as chiefly homosexual." But in that case, arguments based on examples of people who are well towards the heterosexual end of the scale do not strongly

³⁸Horace, *Odes*, 1,3,8.

³⁹*Carmina de Trinitate*, 412-420.

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support the thesis of an "extraordinary efflorescence of gay subculture" in the twelfth century.⁴⁰

Another problem is that writers in the twelfth century frequently used language which seems to us to be highly emotional, not to say erotic, to express experiences which were essentially spiritual. Bernard of Morlaix offers an example in his preface to the *De contemptu mundi*.

Quippe ego sepe ab sponso audieram, sed non exaudieram, "Sonet vox tua in auribus meis." Et mihi iterum a dilecto clamabatur, "Aperi mihi soror mea." Quid igitur? Surrexi ut aperirem dilecto meo, et dixi, "Domine ut cor meum cogitet ut stilus scribat ut os annuntiet laudem tuam, infunde et cordi et stilo et ori meo gratiam tuam." Et dixit mihi Dominus, "Aperi os tuum et ego adimplebo illud." Aperui igitur os meum, quod inplevit Dominus spiritu sapientiae et intellectus ...⁴¹

The *Canticum canticorum* was a powerful influence on medieval spiritual writing, where its sexual imagery was interpreted allegorically. But that does not mean that the "original" or "literal" meaning of the canticles was not known or was ignored. There was seen to be a very real connection between divine love and human love. As C.S. Lewis points out,

It is a mischievous error to suppose that in an allegory the author is "really" talking about the thing symbolized, and not at all about the thing that symbolizes; the very essence of the art is to talk about both. And for this particular conjunction, of divine and sexual love, [Thomas] Usk has precedent in the two gardens of Jean de Meun, in the Beatrice of the *Divine Comedy*, and in the *Song of Songs*.⁴²

⁴⁰Similar problems of interpretation of friendships between persons of the same sex present themselves in Boswell's *Same-sex unions in premodern Europe*, New York, Villard Books, 1994.

⁴¹*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus.

⁴²C.S. Lewis, *The allegory of love; a study in medieval tradition*, London, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.225.

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Boswell appears to give insufficient weight to this factor in interpreting his twelfth century sources. "Many twelfth-century clerics, monastic and secular, were involved in and wrote about passionate friendships like Anselm's. Some of these - e.g., Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, doubtless the most influential religious leader of the day - were certainly not aware of any erotic elements in their feelings. Others, however, were clearly consciously romantic."⁴³ But "passionate friendship" was not required for the kind of expression of feeling which is at issue here. It is not a matter of being unaware of erotic elements, but rather of enhancing and intensifying meanings by the allegorical use of erotic elements. To some extent, it had become almost conventional. Peter the Venerable writes to saint Bernard as follows:

Diu est frater karissime ex quo bonae conversationis
tuae aromata spirituali suavitate fragrantia intimo
cordis odoratu hauriens, teque ante diligere quam
nosse, ante venerari quam contemplari incipiens, te
videre, te amplecti, tecum de animae profectibus loqui
desideravi.⁴⁴

Not even Boswell suggests a homosexual relationship between Peter the Venerable and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. There are other ways, too, in which interpretation can present difficulties. Boswell claims that Hildebert of Lavardin "states outright that calling male homosexuality a sin is a mistake and the 'the council of heaven' has erred in doing so."⁴⁵ But that is to put altogether too much weight on a poem which is little more than a scholarly joke.⁴⁶

⁴³Boswell, *Christianity*, p.220.

⁴⁴Peter the Venerable, *The letters of Peter the Venerable*, edited, with an introduction and notes by Giles Constable, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967, 2v. (Harvard historical studies, 78), v.1., p.52.

⁴⁵Boswell, *Christianity*, p.237.

⁴⁶Cum peteret puerum Saturninus, Iphis Iantha,
Coetus ait superum: "Scelus est." Illud voco culpam.
Quo prohibente nefas, ludum ridente virorum.
Altera fit juvenis, fit femina neuter eorum.

There are difficulties too with Boswell's definition of "gay". "'Gay' ... refers to persons who are conscious of erotic inclination toward their own gender as a distinguishing characteristic."⁴⁷ There was evidently a lot of sodomy in the twelfth century (though whether more or less than in other centuries is not clear). But nobody regarded the practise of sodomy as "a distinguishing characteristic." Neither the very few who wrote approvingly nor the very many who wrote disapprovingly of it suggested that it constituted a characteristic which set people apart. Boswell argues that the term "Ganymede" was a twelfth century equivalent of the term "gay".

The similarity of this word to "gay" in its cultural setting is striking. In an age addicted to classical literature, the invocation of Greek mythology to describe homosexual relationships not only tacitly removed the stigma conveyed by the biblical "sodomitiae," the only word in common use before or after this period, but also evoked connotations of mythological sanctions, cultural superiority, and personal refinement which considerably diminished negative associations in regard to homosexuality. Although "Ganymede" was also used derisively, it was basically devoid of moral context and could be used by gay people themselves without misgivings."⁴⁸

Boswell's account of the connotations of "Ganymede" is certainly not supported by a study of the use of the word by Bernard of Morlaix, for whom it was a term of strong moral disapproval. Nor would it seem to be supported by a study of twelfth century literature generally. Further, it is misleading to speak of "gay people" in the context of the twelfth century. To do so begs the question of the existence of a "gay subculture." The existence of a gay community seems to be a peculiarly modern construct. Boswell's definition of "gay" suggests that people

Si scelus esset idem, sententia coelicolarum
Alterutrum transformaret, neutramve duarum.

⁴⁷Boswell, *Christianity*, p.44.

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belong to the gay community because they see themselves as different.

Similar doubts about the existence of a gay subculture are expressed by Jo Ann McNamara, who has an alternative explanation for some of the phenomena discussed by Boswell.

The affectionate clerical rhetoric that has been identified as a "gay subculture" may easily have reflected the insecurity of men separated from women in expressing the affectionate relationships of "people" outside the old gender system. Anselm of Bec saw both Jesus and himself as mothers. Having driven women out of his vision of communal life, Bernard [of Clairvaux] advised abbots to treat their monks with a mother's nourishing love rather than fear. Bernard's own vision of himself as a woman was equated with his humility and weakness. He said that he was not equal to the tasks imposed on man in the world.⁴⁹

The gender system in the twelfth century will need to be considered again when we come to consider Bernard of Morlaix's treatment of the subject of women, especially since "Europe in the early twelfth century provides an exceptionally well documented restructuring of the gender system."⁵⁰ The point at present is that the evidence for an "extraordinary flowering of gay love"⁵¹ in the century is not very strong.⁵²

Perhaps the homosexual of the high middle ages that we know most about is Arnold of Verniolle. He is discussed by Emmanuel le

⁴⁸ibid., p.253.

⁴⁹Jo Ann McNamara, "The Herrenfrage; the restructuring of the gender system, 1050-1150", in *Medieval masculinities; regarding men in the middle ages*, Clare A. Lees, editor, with the assistance of Thelma Fenster and Jo Ann McNamara, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, 1994 (Medieval cultures 7) p.19-20.

⁵⁰ibid., p.3.

⁵¹Boswell, *Christianity*, p.218.

⁵²Henrietta Leyser points out that it is in the twelfth century that homophobia first appears in vernacular literature. (*Medieval women, a social history of women in England, 450-1500*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995, p.256.

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Roy Ladurie in his study of Montaillou.⁵³ A translation of a large part of the text of his heresy trial is given in Michael Goodrich's *The unmentionable vice*.⁵⁴ Boswell deals with Arnold briefly.⁵⁵ Arnold does not fit Boswell's thesis very well. His trial occurred well after the date by which, according to Boswell, the period of tolerance had come to an end and the church began to be hostile toward homosexuals.⁵⁶ As Ladurie points out, Arnold was tried for heresy, not homosexuality.

In the end it was his illegal exercise of the priesthood which brought about Arnaud's downfall, for it was on those grounds that he was first denounced to the Bishop. One thing led to another, and Jacques Fournier finally detected, behind the crime of performing Mass illegally, the crime of homosexuality.⁵⁷

Goodrich confirms that "the inquisitor was more concerned with the defendants' supposed theological (i.e. heretical) transgressions than with their private behaviour." Arnold was punished because he was a Franciscan apostate and because he pretended to be a priest when he was a mere sub-deacon.⁵⁸ Boswell points out that Arnold's heresies included "his belief that homosexual acts were no more serious than fornication." That is true, but there is nothing in the record of the trial which suggests any less (or greater) tolerance in the thirteenth century than in the eleventh or twelfth.

Nor does the trial of Arnold produce any evidence for the existence of a gay community in Pamiers. Certainly, there seems to have been a lot of sodomy going on in the town, but neither

⁵³Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou; Cathars and Catholics in a French village 1294-1324*, translated by Barbara Bray, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980, p.144-149.

⁵⁴Michael Goodrich, *The unmentionable vice; homosexuality in the later medieval period*, Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 1979, p.89-123.

⁵⁵Boswell, *Christianity*, p.285-286, 401-402.

⁵⁶ibid., p.269-270.

⁵⁷Ladurie, *Montaillou*, p.148.

⁵⁸Goodrich, *The unmentionable vice*, p.91.

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Arnold nor any of the witnesses who testified about him regarded their sodomy as a distinguishing characteristic. They appear to have recognised that they were wilfully committing a serious sin, though there was apparently some difference of opinion about the exact degree of seriousness. They do not seem to have regarded themselves as different from others, or as belonging to a gay minority or a gay community.

Bernard's treatment of sodomy belongs to the genre of complaint literature. The subject does not loom large in his poems, and what he says about it is directed towards his celibate monastic audience. He shows no sign of approval of it, nor do his contemporaries. Bernard gives considerably more attention to complaint about women, a different and more familiar kind of complaint literature.

Women

Misogyny is as old as European literature. In *Works and days*, Hesiod advises, "Do not let a flaunting woman coax and cozen you. She is after your barn. The man who trusts women trusts deceivers."⁵⁹ And in the *Theogony*, he tells how Prometheus stole fire from Zeus, who, in retaliation, "made an evil thing for men as the price of fire." He had Hephaestus make out of clay "the likeness of a shy maiden ... and when he had made the beautiful evil to be the price of blessing, he brought her out ... and wonder took hold of the deathless gods and mortal men when they saw that which was sheer guile, not to be withstood by men. For from her is the race of women and female kind; of her is the deadly race and tribe of women who live among mortal men to their great trouble ... Zeus who thunders on high made women to be an evil to mortal men, with a nature to do evil."⁶⁰

Complaint against women is not only a medieval commonplace, it is a universal commonplace. R. Howard Bloch argues that misogyny is an integral part of Western literature; that "the phenomenon of misogyny is that of literature itself."⁶¹ The Genesis creation story, and interpretations of it by Saint Paul, Philo of Alexandria, Tertullian, John Chrysostom and Jerome, as well as by Augustine, lend weight to that theory. The creation of Eve is inextricably linked with naming and verbal expression. "And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."⁶²

Bernard of Morlaix has plenty of complaint against women, both of the kind exemplified by Hesiod and of the kind identified by

⁵⁹*Works and days*, 373-375.

⁶⁰*Theogony*, 561-612.

⁶¹R. Howard Bloch, "Medieval misogyny," in *Misogyny, misandry and misanthropy*, edited by R. Howard Bloch and Frances Ferguson, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989, p.20.

⁶²Genesis 2,23.

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Bloch, which links misogyny with seduction by words.⁶³ In *De octo vitiis*, Bernard writes:

A man is very foolish if he is often alone with a woman. He loses his peace of mind. When you first visit a woman, she sighs deeply. She stands behind you with meek face and lowered eyes. She speaks softly and listens gravely when you speak to her. She encourages you to speak with her. Pretending to be devout and virtuous, she listens to you as though you were a prophet. She likes to hear your admonitions about chastity, but she is not really contrite or sorry for her sins. The second time you visit her, she welcomes you as if she had a clear conscience. She looks up at you, her small face serious and modest. The third time you visit her she looks at you boldly and laughs. She poses playfully. The holy woman has turned into a seductress ... She laughs a lot, as if to say, "I love you, brother ..."⁶⁴

In a similar vein, he writes in the *Chartula nostra*:

Bitter death, with no respect for mankind, will make an end of worldly things which are deceitful and unhealthy. The love of women, which is an occasion of serious sin, will come to an end. The conversation of women is nothing but a vitriolic poison, offering a baneful cup under the guise of the sweetness of honey. For the beauty of women is an insidious snare for souls. It traps foolish men with flattering words which are deceitful and impious and it leads many men to hell.⁶⁵

The complaint of Andreas Capellanus, in a lengthy treatise devoted to instruction in the art of courtly love, is essentially similar. "Furthermore, not only is every woman by nature a miser, but she is also envious and a slanderer of other women, greedy, a slave to her belly, fickle, devious in her speech, disobedient and impatient of restraint, stained with the sin of pride and desirous of vainglory, a liar, a drunkard, a babbler, no keeper of secrets, too much given to wantonness,

⁶³See also below, p.164.

⁶⁴*De octo vitiis*, 674-693.

⁶⁵*Chartula nostra*, 81-88.

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prone to every evil, and never loving any man in her heart."⁶⁶ He develops those points at inordinate length, and at the beginning of the last chapter of the *De amore*, he advises his friend Walter:

Read this little book, then, not with the intention of taking up the life of a lover, but rather to be entertained by the learning in it. Then, when you have learned how to excite the minds of women to love, you may, by refraining from so doing, win an eternal recompense and thereby deserve a greater reward from God. For God is more pleased with a man who is able to sin and does not, than with a man who has no opportunity to sin.⁶⁷

R. Howard Bloch points to the internal contradiction of the *De amore*. Andreas complains, "We know that everything a woman says is said with the intention of deceiving, because she always has one thing in her heart and another on her lips."⁶⁸ Andreas' book is all that it claims to reject. "If you want a woman to do anything," he says, "you can get her to do it by ordering her to do the opposite."⁶⁹ Bloch comments:

There is no way of determining with certainty Andreas' intent - whether to urge to convince or desist - and ultimately whether he wants us to take literally the warning against love or ourselves to be seduced by the letter. He, and any other author for that matter, performs that which he denounces Eve for having done - seduces, in the words of Tertullian "by mere words," disobeys his own injunctions. The danger of women, according to this reading of misogyny, is that of literature itself.⁷⁰

In addition to those universal aspects of misogyny, Andreas Capellanus illustrates aspects peculiar to the middle ages. His book is the first and most comprehensive treatise on the

⁶⁶Andreas Capellanus, *De amore libri tres*, recensuit E. Trojel, 2nd ed., Munich, Eidos, 1964, p.340-341.

⁶⁷*De amore*, p.314.

⁶⁸*ibid.*, p.346.

⁶⁹*ibid.*, p.349.

⁷⁰Bloch, "Medieval misogyny," p.20.

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elaborate code of conduct of courtly love. "All men agree," says Andreas, "that no one does a good or courteous deed in the world unless it is derived from the fount of love. Love will therefore be the origin and cause of all good."⁷¹ Some historians agree to the extent of seeing courtly love as an ennobling and civilising influence on the tough warrior class of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. "Thus in courtly love female approbation offered a new, secular and psychologically very powerful sanction to the secular conventions of the code of courtly virtue and martial honour."⁷²

But it is important to notice the social stratification inherent in the code of courtly love. Andreas carefully distinguishes between the techniques to be used by a commoner⁷³ speaking with a common woman; a commoner speaking with a woman of the nobility; a commoner speaking with a woman of the higher nobility; a nobleman speaking with a common woman; a nobleman speaking with a noblewoman; a man of the higher nobility speaking with a common woman; a man of the higher nobility speaking with a woman of the simple nobility; and a man of the higher nobility speaking with a woman of the higher nobility.⁷⁴ Whatever that may have meant in terms of gentler and more civilised relations between men and women of the aristocracy, it clearly had no beneficial effect upon relations between the gentry and peasant women. Andreas' advice is brutally clear: "If you happen to be attracted by the love of peasant women, be careful to praise them lavishly and then, when you find a convenient place, do not hesitate to take what you seek and to embrace them by force (et violenter potiri amplexu)."⁷⁵ One must, of course, make due

⁷¹*De amore*, p.28-29.

⁷²Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984, p.30. See also discussion by C.S. Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.41-42.

⁷³"Plebeius ad plebeiam." It is clear from the dialogue between the commoner and the noblewoman that the commoner is a city businessman. Peasants are not included among commoners.

⁷⁴*De amore*, p.19-219.

⁷⁵*ibid.*, p.236.

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allowance for literary fantasy and convention, but it would seem that for most women of the twelfth century courtly love was little more than socially approved rape.

Nor should courtly love, even among the gentry, be confused with modern notions of romantic love. Courtly love of its nature entails adultery. The love between a husband and wife is not courtly love. Indeed, love cannot properly be said to exist between husband and wife. "It is therefore plain enough that jealousy cannot have its natural place between husband and wife and that therefore love between them must necessarily cease, because these two things always go together."⁷⁶

It would be wrong to reduce the literature of courtly love either to pure eroticism or to a kind of mysticism.

One should agree with the chaplain. Both eroticism and spirituality are overwhelming in troubadour love poetry, so that [it] is impossible to think of this love as pure *amicitia spiritualis* or as pure *libido*. It is fruitless, therefore, to create a model of courtly love without considering these two components, and seeing how they relate to each other and assessing the nature of the paradox they create. Andreas' perception of both elements was rather insightful, and his lesson should not be forgotten.⁷⁷

Courtly love is a special aspect of relations between men and women in the twelfth century, but it did not give rise to a special kind of complaint against women. In the poems of Bernard of Morlaix, however, there is a particular element which is not present in universal misogyny. His admonitions are explicitly addressed to his monastic brethren. He is not, like Hesiod or Andreas Capellanus, giving advice to men generally, but to celibate monks in particular. He is warning them to avoid occasions of sin.

⁷⁶ibid., p.146.

⁷⁷Paolo Cherchi, *Andreas and the ambiguity of courtly love*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994, p.40.

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So be careful about thoughtlessly looking at feminine beauty. Curb your unruly gaze with the reins of holy restraint ... Control your body with reins, rule it with whips, tie it up with chains.⁷⁸

Bede Jarrett warns that we must judge medieval writing in the context of its genre and the public it was meant to serve.

For example, monastic writers, who were writing for a monastic audience, quite naturally were concerned chiefly with the relation of monks to women, so that, since chastity and virginity were essential to religious life, it was woman as a danger to their vocations who was most frequently described. It would be grossly unscientific to take these monastic writers in their monastic treatises as representative of mediaeval thought on womanhood, for they are not intending to write primarily on women as women, their greatness or littleness, but solely on women as dangers to monastic observance.⁷⁹

Bernard's misogyny was monastic. Jo Ann McNamara suggests that monastic seclusion brought about a denial of the need for women.

Perhaps the creation of a woman-free environment was a necessity before the schoolmen could construct a cosmos and a terrestrial order that firmly supported the natural law of masculine superiority. Men fearful of women frightened women away from them ... Even womanly functions were claimed by men ... Among monks safely segregated from women, perhaps the safest way to restore the gender system was to play both roles and, by implication, deny the need for women in any capacity.⁸⁰

But the misogyny of Bernard of Morlaix goes beyond what might reasonably be expected of advice about avoiding occasions of sin. Even in the *Mariale*, we find a hint of a more extreme expression of complaint against women. The *Mariale* is a long

⁷⁸*De octo vitiis*, 728-731.

⁷⁹Bede Jarrett, *Social theories of the middle ages*, London, Cass, 1926, p.69.

⁸⁰Jo Ann McNamara, "The Herrenfrage," p.19-20.

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poem in honour of the Virgin Mary.⁸¹ It contains the curious statement that Mary spurns the pleasures of this world and urges the control of the flesh, "contrary to the custom of [her] kind."⁸² That hint is developed into a full-blown attack on women in the *De contemptu mundi*. The following abridgement may give some idea of its content.

My subject now is wicked woman. She herself I regard as good, but I condemn and censure the things she does. She incites men to wicked deeds by her feminine wiles. She delights in encouraging sinful behaviour and in being totally female. No woman is good. It is a contradiction in terms to say that a woman is good. Woman is guilty, lascivious, quick to betray, born and bred to deceive. She is the deepest ditch, the most poisonous viper, beautiful corruption, a slippery path. She is disgracefully common. She is both hunter and prey. She is a dreadful night owl, a public doorway, sweet poison ... No sin is too bad for her. She commits incest with her father, with her grandson. She has always been, she is and she always will be a cesspool of lust ... The wiles of women are craftier than all other wiles. A she-wolf is better than a woman, because its attack is not so fierce. Similarly, dragons and lions are better than women. Nothing is worse than a woman. John the Baptist condemned their wickedness, and he died by the sword. Hippolytus was ruined by a woman, so was Amnon. Because of a woman, Joseph was locked up and Samson had his hair cut off. Reuben got into trouble because of a woman, so did David and Solomon, and so, for the matter of that, did Adam ... Woman is foul. She longs to deceive, she is a flame of frenzy, the chief cause of our destruction, the worst thing that could happen to us. She destroys all decency. Such is her cruel sinfulness, that she expels her own child from her womb, and most wickedly kills her own offspring. Woman is a viper. She is not a human being but a wild beast ... The sins of men are more pious and more pleasing to God than the good deeds of women ...⁸³

⁸¹See below, p.181 ff.

⁸²*Mariale*, 8,12. Mundi florem contra morem
Tui spernens generis
Carnis curam et naturam
Cohibendam suggeris.

⁸³*De contemptu mundi*, 2,451-520, with many omissions. The diatribe against women continues to line 562.

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Bernard's immediate sources are Juvenal and Catullus and a range of medieval writers, especially Hildebert of Lavardin.⁸⁴ The statement that the sins of men are more pious than the good deeds of women comes from Ecclesiasticus.⁸⁵ His vitriolic attack upon women is more than a hundred lines long. The presentation in one place of so much concentrated venom, with no relief except for the disclaimer in the opening lines, which is immediately contradicted, is remarkable. Nor can translation do it justice. English cannot render the spleen of

Foemina foetida fallere fervida flamma furoris
Prima peremptio, pessima portio, praedo pudoris.⁸⁶

Bede Jarrett's suggestion that such writing is intended to warn monks of the danger which women present to monastic observance does not seem to be an adequate explanation for this extreme vilification of women. An important feature of it is that it presents women as different from men, not only in the relatively trivial biological characteristics which distinguish them, but intellectually, morally and spiritually. "Dragons and lions are better than women. Nothing is worse than a woman ... Woman is a viper. She is not a human being but a wild beast ... The sins of men are more pious and more pleasing to God than the good deeds of women".

It is perhaps possible that this sort of thing was meant to be funny. After one of his quotations from Juvenal's 6th satire,⁸⁷ Bernard says, "Talia mordeo, talia rideo."⁸⁸ Ronald E. Pepin suspects that "in view of the violent diction and strained ornamentations ... and the conscious imitation of satirical conventions, ... the misogynistic poems which flourished in the

⁸⁴PL 171, 1428-1430.

⁸⁵Ecclus. 42,14: "melior est iniquitas viri quam benefaciens mulier."

⁸⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,509-510.

⁸⁷"Rara, rarior haec avis." *De contemptu mundi*, 2,537-538. "Rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cygno." Juvenal 6,165.

⁸⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 2,539.

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twelfth century were comic in effect, if not in purpose."⁸⁹ But Ray Petry finds Bernard's attacks on womankind distinctly unfunny and comments that they are "as unwarranted as they are unchristian."⁹⁰ When Bernard says "I satirise and laugh at these things," he does not seem to mean that he is satirising the genre of complaint against women. His references to incest and abortion, for example, make that unlikely; nor is it likely in the context of the *De contemptu mundi* as a whole. The verses are not funny in that sense. They are funny (if that is the right word) in the sense that Juvenal's sixth satire is funny. Yet there is an important difference. Juvenal says vitriolic things about individual women, real or fictitious, but he does not claim that women are, of their nature, different from men in terms of the things of the mind, as Bernard does.⁹¹

Bede Jarrett maintained that, during the middle ages, "there was no possibility or desire of assigning to woman an inferior place because of her lesser capacity for goodness or divine love, for no one would have admitted this to be true or even possible."⁹² The excerpts from *De contemptu mundi* quoted above indicate that that is a rash assertion. Nevertheless, it seems probable that Bernard's attitude towards women, though widespread in the twelfth century, was not universal. As Mary Martin McLaughlin points out, "Although Abelard plainly shared certain attitudes towards women of his sex and time and used on occasion the traditional rhetoric of condescension, of the "stronger" sex towards the "weaker," he never spoke the language of contempt and defamation that seems to have come so naturally to many of

⁸⁹Ronald E. Pepin, "The dire diction of medieval misogyny," *Speculum* 52(1993):663.

⁹⁰R.C. Petry, "Medieval eschatology and social responsibility in Bernard of Morval's *De contemptu mundi*," *Speculum* 24(1949):209.

⁹¹"The poem [the sixth satire of Juvenal] is sometimes called a satire on the female sex ... It is not. It is a satire on marriage: it is a denunciation of wives, and in particular of rich wives ... " (Gilbert Highet, *Juvenal the satirist; a study*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954, p.91.)

⁹²Jarrett, *Social theories in the middle ages*, p.73

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his clerical and monastic contemporaries."⁹³ Heloise and Hildegard of Bingen,⁹⁴ as well as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, and, at least implicitly, Marie de France, expressed acceptance of the view that women were subordinate to men, but for none of them did it entail inferiority in intelligence, morality or spirituality.

The Dominicans played a large part in bringing about a change in attitudes towards women in the thirteenth century, and the most influential of them were Saint Thomas Aquinas and Humbert de Romans. Saint Thomas Aquinas did not regard the subordination of women as entailing intellectual, moral or spiritual inferiority. In his view, the subordination is strictly limited. He maintained that the help God makes for man is not for any sort of work. If it were, other men would be as good as women. It is, he says, "for producing children."⁹⁵ He goes on to explain that "the principal constituent of God's image in man, mind, is found in both male and female human beings, which is why Genesis says, *To God's image he created him (namely, mankind); male and female he created them.*"⁹⁶

Humbert de Romans expressed the relationship between men and women as follows:

Note that God gave women many prerogatives, not only over other living things but even over man himself,

⁹³Mary Martin MacLaughlin, "Peter Abelard and the dignity of women", *Pierre Abélard, Pierre le Vénérable; les courants philosophiques, littéraires et artistiques en occident au milieu du XIIe siècle*, Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975 (Colloques internationaux du Centre 546), p.310.

⁹⁴Hildegard writes, "Oh woman, what a splendid being you are! For you have set your foundation in the sun and have conquered the world" (Letter 116, PL 197, 336-338). Yet she castigates her own time by calling it "a womanish time" (*tempus muliebre* - Letter 13, PL 197, 167) and she regularly refers to herself as only a poor little woman.

⁹⁵*Summa theologiae*, 1a,92,1.

⁹⁶*ibid.*, 1a,93,1.

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and this by nature, by grace and by glory. In the world of nature she excelled man by her origin, for man he made of the vile earth, but woman he made in paradise. Man he formed of the slime, but woman he made of man's rib. She was not made of a lower limb of man - as for example of his foot - lest man should esteem her his servant, but from his midmost part, that he should hold her to be his fellow, as Adam said: "The woman whom thou gavest as my helpmate." In the world of grace she excelled man, for God, who could have taken flesh of a man, did not do so, but took flesh of a woman. Again, we do not read of any man trying to prevent the passion of Our Lord, but we do read of a woman who tried - namely Pilate's wife, who tried to dissuade her husband from so great a crime ... Again, at his resurrection, it was to a woman he first appeared - namely to Mary Magdalen. In the world of glory, for the king in that country is no mere man, but a mere woman is its queen ... nor is anyone who is merely a man as powerful there as is a mere woman. Thus is woman's nature in Our Lady raised above man's in worth and dignity and power."⁹⁷

Dom David Knowles speaks of "the wide and sympathetic humanism which between 1050 and 1150 made its appearance for the first time in Western Europe."⁹⁸ He goes on to discuss Abelard, Heloise and Ailred of Rievaulx as examples of persons of "intense sensibility to emotions," "vivid powers of self-expression," and "reverence and devotion [to] certain great figures of antiquity." They attached great importance to their personal emotions. "So the humanists, but never the schoolmen, found strength in a community of feeling with those who, centuries before, had trodden the same path, and it is this consciousness of the unchanging mind of man that divides the culture of the first Renaissance from the more familiar culture of the later Middle Ages."⁹⁹ The problems of associating general characteristics with the concept of humanism were discussed above, p.112. There are difficulties, too, in Knowles' account of the humanists' "consciousness of the unchanging mind of man."

⁹⁷Sermon 94, *Ad omnes mulieres*, Quoted in Jarrett, *Social theories in the middle ages*, p.71-72.

⁹⁸David Knowles, *The historian and character and other essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p.17.

⁹⁹*ibid.*, p.30.

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It has been argued that it was precisely their sense of history and of historical difference that enabled fifteenth-century humanists to realise the need to resurrect antiquity. Erwin Panofsky, for example, maintains that the fifteenth century, unlike the ninth and the twelfth, perceived the discontinuity of history. They saw a gap between classical times and their own, while the scholars of the middle ages did not. "The classical world was not [in the middle ages] approached historically but pragmatically, as something far-off yet, in a sense, still alive and, therefore, at once potentially useful and potentially dangerous."¹⁰⁰

But the immediate point is that David Knowles saw such characters as Ailred of Rievaulx and Saint Anselm of Canterbury as representatives of a dawning of humanism in the twelfth century, expressing a "kindly warmth and fragrant geniality" which were lacking in the more intellectually brilliant thirteenth century.¹⁰¹ John Boswell took the same phenomena to indicate an efflorescence of gay culture in the twelfth century.¹⁰² Jo Ann McNamara's analysis of twelfth-century misogyny suggests a different interpretation again. The passionately emotional friendships of so many twelfth century clerics, especially monks, was due neither to the special kind of humanism described by David Knowles, nor to the homosexual attachments envisaged by John Boswell, but to a need to compensate for the exclusion of women; an exclusion which, in the twelfth century, amounted almost to an exclusion from the human race. It was that extreme misogyny which the coming of the friars, and Saint Thomas Aquinas and Humbert de Romans in particular, did so much to undo in the thirteenth century.

¹⁰⁰Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and renaissances in Western art*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972 (first published 1969), p.110-111.

¹⁰¹Knowles, *The historian and character*, p.16-30.

¹⁰²John Boswell, *Christianity*, passim.

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Jo Ann McNamara suggests that the twelfth-century monastic reconstruction of the gender system led to the defining of men as human beings and the blotting out of the humanity of women.¹⁰³ It led to precisely the kind of misogyny which regarded women as different from men intellectually, morally and spiritually, the kind of misogyny which Bernard of Morlaix expresses at such length and with such vehemence. It is not simply because they are wicked that Bernard of Morlaix regards women as different from men. In his view, homosexual men are at least as wicked as women, but he does not regard homosexuals as different from other men or as being less than human. Sodomites are simply men who commit serious sin.¹⁰⁴ That is consistent with Jo Ann McNamara's analysis. Women are presented as different because they are to be excluded.

It seems clear that what Bernard of Morlaix is doing is to gather together everything he can find which presents women as evil, in much the same way as he gathers together everything he can find to denigrate the Cistercians.¹⁰⁵ The production of florilegia was, of course, a common pursuit throughout the middle ages, and the study of rhetoric as part of the trivium may have encouraged the presentation of all the points on one side of an argument, to the exclusion of those on the other side. Such a collection of adages pays little attention to consistency. "I am not going to complain about good women, whom I ought to bless,"¹⁰⁶ says Bernard (though he nowhere finds time to bless them). "Her [woman] I regard as good, but her acts I condemn."¹⁰⁷ Yet only a few lines later, he says, "Indeed, no woman is good"¹⁰⁸ and, "You may condemn all her actions, not only the sinful ones, but the good ones."¹⁰⁹ In the *Chartula nostra*,

¹⁰³McNamara, "The Herenfrage", p.22.

¹⁰⁴See above, p.147ff.

¹⁰⁵See above, p.140ff.

¹⁰⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,449.

¹⁰⁷*ibid.*, 2,452.

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, 2,455.

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, 2,485.

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if it is his, Bernard states that, if they have obeyed God's commandments, "neither men nor women, nor their offspring, will perish," without any suggestion of difference between them.¹¹⁰ Similar contradictions appear in Bernard's complaint about sodomites. He says that they behave like hyenas;¹¹¹ but he also brands their behaviour as unnatural, because animals do not engage in it.¹¹²

William Craven, discussing Coluccio Salutati's late fourteenth century defence of poetry, suggests that he was writing in a genre where it mattered more to have a range of arguments than it did to develop a coherent position, and where many of the arguments would be familiar to readers and expected by them. Salutati's work is riddled with inconsistencies; it is a collection of incompatible arguments from disparate sources, juxtaposed with very little concern for coherence. In the context of that genre, to ascribe to the writer beliefs, values or intellectual allegiances would "be hardly less hazardous than inferring attitudes to monarchy, feudalism or the Church from the way chess-players moved their pieces."¹¹³

Likewise, it would be hazardous to conclude, on the basis of his diatribes against women, that Bernard of Morlaix really believed that the good deeds of women are worse than the sins of men, or that all women are intrinsically evil, or that women are radically different from men intellectually and spiritually. Bernard was writing in a rhetorical genre similar to that of Salutati. His homiletic words were addressed to a monastic audience, at a time when homilies were deliberately and carefully designed to be persuasive to the particular audience

¹¹⁰*Chartula nostra*, 213-214.

¹¹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,184.

¹¹²*ibid.*, 3,208; 3,215ff.

¹¹³William G. Craven, "Coluccio Salutati's defence of poetry," *Renaissance studies* 10(1996):29-30.

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to which they were directed.¹¹⁴ What mattered was not consistency or coherence, but the collation of as many of the familiar arguments as possible. In this regard, it is important to note that the sermon of Humbert de Romans, quoted above, was explicitly designed to be delivered to an audience of women.

Half a century ago, it was more difficult than it is now to understand the genre of complaint against women. Ernst Curtius, for example, writing in 1948, maintained that Bernard of Morlaix "curses love and womankind ... [he] would extirpate not only vice but also love."¹¹⁵ Even as late as 1964, R. Bultot commented of Bernard:

De quelques désordres que se soient rendues coupables bien des femmes à l'époque de Bernard le Clusien, il exagère. Sa violence traduit la haine née de la peur et d'un réflexe de défense courants dans les milieux monastiques du moyen âge. De telles attaques, dirons-nous avec un critique, ne sont pas d'un chrétien.¹¹⁶

In those days, we believed, however ineffectively, in the equality of the sexes. Dorothy Sayers, for example, complained that she was occasionally desired by congenital imbeciles and the editors of magazines to say something about the writing of detective fiction from the woman's point of view. "To such demands," she said, "one can only say, 'Go away and don't be silly. You might as well ask what is the female angle on an equilateral triangle.'"¹¹⁷ She wanted women to be treated "not as an inferior class and not, I beg and pray all feminists, as a superior class - not, in fact as a class at all, except in a useful context."

¹¹⁴Harry Caplan, "Rhetorical invention in some medieval tractates on preaching," *Speculum* 2(1927):284-295. His comments on Humbert de Romans (p.289-290) are especially relevant.

¹¹⁵Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, p.122.

¹¹⁶R. Bultot, "La doctrine du mépris du monde chez Bernard le Clusien (suite et fin)," *Moyen age* 70(1964):358-359. The critic is R.C. Petry.

¹¹⁷Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unpopular opinions*, London, Gollancz, 1946, p.113.

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"What," men have asked distractedly from the beginning of time, "what on earth do women want?" I do not know that women, as women, want anything in particular, but as human beings they want, my good men, exactly what you want yourselves: interesting occupation, reasonable freedom for their pleasures, and a sufficient emotional outlet."¹¹⁸

Bernard's treatment of women certainly does not constitute a "useful context" in the sense intended by Dorothy Sayers. Women are not, except in respect of relatively trivial biological characteristics, different from men. Bernard treats them as fundamentally different because women are excluded from the male monastic life; because women constitute a threat to celibacy and chastity; and because monks, having excluded women, find themselves compelled to play both gender roles.

But Dorothy Sayers wrote the words quoted above more than half a century ago. Modern scholars speak with a different voice. The thrust of much modern scholarship is that women are different from men in relation to things of the mind. It is not true that ideas have no sex. In the disciplines of history, the physical sciences, music and logic, for example, masculine models of reality are challenged. There is a feminine angle on an equilateral triangle. Judith Allen claims that in history there are fundamental gender differences.:

In this brief survey I have contended that the professional discipline of history is axiomatically phallocentric. Despite differences between Right and Left-wing historians over their tolerance of "theory," especially marxism, and their empiricist approaches to evidence, both exhibit a commitment to phallocentric assumptions and masculinist approaches to interpretations of the past. This is not a contingent or provisional feature of the discipline, amenable to some simple reform of content or approach.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ibid., p.114.

¹¹⁹Judith Allen, "Evidence and silence; feminism and the limits of history," in *Feminist challenge; social and political theory*,

Similarly, E. Fox-Genovese maintains that "women's history challenges mainstream history not to substitute the chronicle of the female subject for that of the male, but rather to restore conflict, ambiguity and tragedy to the centre of historical process."¹²⁰ And Marilyn Lake speaks of transforming the disciplinary paradigm of history "by challenging the masculine model of social reality which underpins it."¹²¹ Jill Matthews proclaims that, "If there is a traditional history, and if it proclaims the ideals of certainty, objectivity and universality, then it is under severe threat of not simply challenge but supersession. Against certainty, feminist history proclaims the relativity of continuous social construction; against objectivity, it proclaims disciplined gendered subjectivity; and against universality it insistently asks, whose universe?"¹²²

Sandra Harding surveys feminist criticisms of science. She points out that "the radical feminist position holds that the epistemologies, metaphysics, ethics, and politics of the dominant forms of science are androcentric and mutually supportive."¹²³ She examines important trends in the feminist critiques of science with the aim of identifying tensions and conflicts between them, in the belief that these feminist science critiques can be shown to have implications at least as revolutionary for modern Western cultural self-images as feminist critiques in the humanities and social sciences have had. She concludes,

edited by Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986, p.187.

¹²⁰E. Fox-Genovese, "Placing women's history in history," *New Left review* 133(May-June 1982):29.

¹²¹Marilyn Lake, "Women, gender and history," *Australian feminist studies* 7-8(1988):9.

¹²²Jill Matthews, "Feminist history," *Labour history* 50(1986):153.

¹²³Sandra Harding, *The science question in feminism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986, p.9.

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When we began theorizing our experiences during the second women's movement a mere decade and a half ago [she is writing in 1986], we knew our task would be a difficult though exciting one. But I doubt that in our wildest dreams we ever imagined we would have to reinvent both science and theorizing itself in order to make sense of women's social experience.¹²⁴

Susan McClary, in her study of music, gender and sexuality, argues that "the theoretical work of feminists in literary and art criticism has cleared a space where women can choose to write music that foregrounds their sexual identities without falling prey to essentialist traps and that departs self-consciously from the assumptions of standard musical procedures."¹²⁵

Even logic is different for women. Andrea Nye, in her feminist reading of the history of logic, says,

Perhaps *only* a woman would undertake such a project, would do such a thing as try to read logic, a woman uncomfortable in a world of men, ... a woman too intent on emotional commitments to be capable of purely abstract thought. Perhaps only a woman would not make even the pretense of disinterested scholarship, but would admit to believing that involvement and commitment can lead to an understanding that logical analysis bound to consistency and univocality cannot.¹²⁶

Is logic masculine? ... One thing is clear enough: those who have made the history of logic have in fact been men ... The arena of logic was made by men for men; it was expressly founded on the exclusion of what is not male ...¹²⁷

Those writers lack Bernard's vitriolic spleen. More importantly, they have inverted his evaluation of the difference between the sexes. But essentially they are saying, as he did,

¹²⁴ibid., p.251.

¹²⁵Susan McClary, *Feminine endings; music, gender and sexuality*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p.33.

¹²⁶Andrea Nye, *Words of power; a feminist reading of the history of thought*, New York, Routledge, 1990, p.5.

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that women are, in relation to things of the mind, different from men. Bernard's distinction no longer looks as irrational as it did fifty years ago, precisely because of feminist reflection and theorising. We can even find hints of the exclusion of men from a feminine world. Denise Thompson, for example, writes:

I would not argue without qualification that every feminist ought to be a lesbian. What is necessary, however, is that feminism give far more support to and validation of radical lesbianism than it has done so far. The attitude of liberal tolerance which defines lesbianism as "just another sexual orientation" is a comfortable evasion of the issue, comfortable because it threatens nothing. It is a form of depoliticisation, in that it denies the lesbian potential to undermine the male hegemony.¹²⁸

Whether or not there are male and female models of reality, the passages quoted above throw light on the misogyny of Bernard of Morlaix, because they offer examples of a kind of rhetoric not dissimilar to his. They appear to maintain that women are, in intellectual, moral and spiritual terms, different from men, but it would be hazardous to draw any conclusions about the actual beliefs of the writers. Their words are clearly directed towards a particular audience, and they are intended to persuade, not necessarily to be consistent and coherent. Like the celibate monks of the twelfth century, they adopt a policy of separatism.

Separatism has been a dominant theme since the inception of Women's Studies. The biblical injunction to "set yourself apart and be a separate people" describes a time-honoured method for building group

¹²⁷ibid., p.176-177.

¹²⁸Denise Thompson, *Reading between the lines; a lesbian feminist critique of feminist accounts of sexuality*. Sydney, Gorgon's Head Press, 1991, p.25.

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solidarity and is undoubtedly an effective way for a minority community to resist assimilation."¹²⁹

But there are other aspects of twelfth-century attitudes toward women. Henrietta Leyser concludes her study of medieval women with the suggestion that medieval attempts to wrestle with problems of gender did not always follow the path of misogyny. "Its literature offered a space for the exploration of sexual differences quite as much as it provided a platform for the airing of prejudice."¹³⁰ Georges Duby, after wrestling for fifteen years with the problem of women in the twelfth century, concluded that their strength was the cause of male denigration of them, and that men's attitudes began to change only towards the end of the century.

... Je les devine, dis-je, fortes, bien plus fortes que je n'imaginai, et pourquoi pas, heureuses, si fortes que les mâles s'emploient à les affaiblir par les angoisses du péché. D'autre part, il m'a semblé pouvoir situer vers 1180, alors que le violent élan de croissance qui emportait l'Europe se trouvait au plus vif de sa vigueur, le moment où la situation de ces femmes fut quelque peu exhaussée, où les hommes s'accoutumèrent à les traiter comme des personnes ...

¹³¹

An aspect of attitudes towards women in the twelfth century which needs to be examined is the veneration of Mary, the mother of God. Marina Warner, who maintains that "in the very celebration of the perfect human woman, both humanity and women were subtly denigrated,"¹³² nevertheless well expresses the significance of that devotion: "A myth of such dimension is not a story, or a collection of stories, but a magic mirror like the

¹²⁹Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge, *Professing feminism; cautionary tales from the strange world of women's studies*, New York, Basic books, 1994, p.5.

¹³⁰Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval women, a social history of women in England, 450-1500*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995, p.256.

¹³¹Georges Duby, *Dames du XIIe siècle*, [Paris] Gallimard, 1995-1996, 3v., v. 3, p.218.

¹³²Marina Warner, *Alone of all her sex; the myth and cult of the Virgin Mary*. London, Pan books, 1985 (Picador), p.xxi.

Lady of Shalott's, reflecting a people and the beliefs they produce, recount, and hold. It presents their history in a certain light and in a way that singles them out."¹³³ It is not certain that the *Mariale* was the work of Bernard of Morlaix, but it will be convenient to use it as a basis for discussion.

Mariale

The *Mariale* opens with a prologue addressed to divine wisdom, "True light, brightest light, by which the light of days was created, Wisdom, which gives rest and comfort to the weary and which graciously forgives erring souls." The poet asks for grace to preserve him from sin. The prologue concludes with a prayer to Christ, asking for true enlightenment ("veram sophiam"). All except three of the fifteen rhythmi of the poem, and the epilogue, conclude with a doxology. The doxologies vary in form to suit the varying needs of the context in each rhythmus. The final one reads: "Everlasting light, guide us kindly, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, equal in Godhead, one God and three before all time." Most of the rhythmi are addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but some are addressed to the Father and some to the Son, and several which are addressed to Mary conclude with a prayer addressed to the Father or to the Son. Throughout the whole of this very long poem¹³⁴ in praise of Mary, there is constant reference to and emphasis on the Trinity.

The predominant theme of the poem is that we should pray to Mary to ask her to intercede for us, because her intercession is most valuable and important. "Our mediator, from whom the Son of the Supreme father deigned to be born ... ask Christ to lend an ear

¹³³ibid., p.xxiii.

¹³⁴The prologue consists of forty-nine leonine lines. The fifteen rhythmi average thirty-six stanzas of four lines each and the epilogue has sixteen stanzas of four lines each.

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to those who worship you."¹³⁵ Constantly stressed throughout the poem are the characteristics of Mary as the Mother of God, as both virgin and mother, as the greatest of all creatures and as the Queen of Heaven. She unlocked the gates of heaven, which Eve had closed to us. She is the Star of the Sea, the mediatrix of all grace.¹³⁶

Mediator and saviour of weak souls, favour us through your prayers. Give to the sick the remedy they hope for. Restore sight to the blind and sharpness to the dull. Raise up the oppressed. Help the weary. Give joy to the sad. Comfort the sighs of the poor and the imprisoned. Pray for the welcome homecoming of wanderers and captives. Calm the rough seas and control the violent storms so that joyful sailors may reach the shore. Turn enemies into friends who will wish each other well, so that we may be judged leniently, not severely. Pray to your son for the Jews, despite their guilt, that they may acknowledge him and seek his help.¹³⁷

I carry a great burden, sinking under a great heap of guilt, which is the punishment of a guilty conscience. In hearing and in seeing, in word and in deed, I have destroyed myself and gone astray in many ways. Kind Virgin, I tearfully beseech you to seek forgiveness of all my sins for me.¹³⁸

Awe-inspiring king, defend us from all evils. Restore to their place those who worship blessed Mary. May she assault your ears (*aures tuas pulset*) with her prayers ...¹³⁹

¹³⁵*Mariale*, 14,2-3.

¹³⁶The concept of Mary as the channel of all grace and the gateway to heaven occurs throughout the *Mariale* (for example, 6,20: "Ex qua manat, qui nos sanat, fons caelestis gratiae.") Mary is nowhere explicitly said to be co-redemptrix with Christ, but Bernard's language suggests that the concept would not be repugnant to him (for example, 13,13: "Per Mariam, dum Messiam, eius natum, sequimur, immortales et aequales angelis efficimur.") For the definition of these doctrines, see Henricus Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 31st ed., Barcelona, Herder, 1960, p. 541-2 and 558.

¹³⁷*Mariale*, 12,13-18.

¹³⁸*Mariale*, 13,20-22.

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Approaching Mary as intercessor does not, for the poet, exclude direct prayer to the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. Nor does it exclude prayer to other saints and to the angels. The Communion of Saints was clearly a familiar doctrine to the author of the *Mariale*.

You choirs of angels, you who are perpetually singing joyful praises to the Highest Lord, be mindful of the flock [of the Church Militant], which is so far away from you, and help us. You are citizens of the happy land of heaven and you do not experience the evils which beset us on all sides and make our lives miserable. We beg and beseech you, therefore, to cherish and protect your fellow subjects of the King who, with the Father, reigns over us all. May the powerful Senate of the Patriarchs and Prophets, enthroned and bright with crowns and white garments, wash away our sins. May the fellowship of the Holy Apostles govern us with their teaching, cherish us by their governing, listen to our prayers, defend us, their suppliants, and loose our bonds. May the white company of the Holy Innocents, those innocents whom the wrathful king [Herod] ordered to be slain, fearing the loss of his great kingdom, pray for peace. May the Church Triumphant, those who have hoped for glory and conquered the rulers of this world, bring us to share the joy of their triumph with them. May the choir of priests [in heaven], the fellowship of Confessors and all those who have rendered acceptable service to God secure a favourable answer to our prayers. May the company of virgins pray that we may be delivered from present and future ills and that we may be granted what we seek. May the ranks of all the saints who rule in heaven hear our prayers and help us so that we may deserve¹⁴⁰ to enjoy everlasting light. All you chosen ones, who share in the life of happiness, pray to the Lord to give us a happy and peaceful life.¹⁴¹

The poet several times stresses that Mary was descended from Jesse and David. He frequently dwells on her holiness, her wisdom and her beauty. "What woman is as charming, elegant and beautiful as you? What woman is endowed with so many gifts, so many crowns of virtue? You have turtle-dove cheeks, dove-like

¹³⁹*Mariale*, 10,38-39.

¹⁴⁰Reading "mereamur" for Drèves' "mereantur."

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eyes. You are as beautiful as a dove by a stream of water."¹⁴²
The poet saw Mary as the greatest of all creatures, but nevertheless as truly human, a real woman, not a goddess.

You adored and gave suck to God made man, to him who washes us and saves us, pouring out his blood. You comforted him as he cried and sucked at your breast. He was our servant, you were his handmaiden. You were with him as he taught and ate. You watched and knew all about the miracles he performed. You were present and advised him when he blessed the wedding at which he changed six jars of water into wine. You watched what he did and heard what he said, and you were fed with the grace of divine wisdom. What anguish, what torments, your soul experienced when a most wicked people raised their supreme Lord up on the cross ... How happy you were when, on the third day, the powerful king gave proof of the conquest of death ... After all the things he did, which you worthily and deservedly witnessed, you watched your son ascend to his Father's throne.¹⁴³

All these are familiar elements in the Catholic Church's veneration of the Virgin Mary today. The author of the *Mariale* lays strong emphasis upon two elements which are not prominent in present-day devotions, but which featured in twelfth century devotions. The first is the belief that Mary's physical virginity remained intact before, during and after the birth of Jesus. The belief was held by the Church from very early times¹⁴⁴ but is not adverted to today. The second is the very special devotion to Mary as a nursing mother. "Oh breasts which fed him who caused the earth to bear its fruits and who feeds the whole world."¹⁴⁵ "Nobody who loves him whom you fed at your breast when he was a little baby doubts the effectiveness of your prayers."¹⁴⁶ "How holy and blessed are the mother's breasts which gave milk to her son, her son who rules the stars."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹*Mariale*, Epilogue, 4-14.

¹⁴²*Mariale*, 8,30-31.

¹⁴³*Mariale*, 5,14-32.

¹⁴⁴Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, p.45.

¹⁴⁵*Mariale*, 8,38.

¹⁴⁶*Mariale*, 12,9.

¹⁴⁷*Mariale*, 13,10.

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This devotion, though neglected in recent times, has excellent Scriptural warrant.¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, there are aspects of present-day devotion to Mary which do not feature in the *Mariale*. The doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven was not defined until 1950,¹⁴⁹ though it was a popular devotion in the twelfth century.¹⁵⁰ The *Mariale* makes no mention of it.¹⁵¹

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a matter of controversy among theologians throughout the twelfth century. The *Mariale* has many references to the sinlessness of Mary. "Loving mother, lacking all stain of corruption."¹⁵² "Wise virgin who, being exempt from the sin of the first woman, bore fruit not begotten by the seed of a man."¹⁵³ "Happy mother, whose womb, free from all stain, sheltered and carried the King who rules the world."¹⁵⁴ "From your first years filled with a great treasury of wisdom, dear to God and innocent of all evil, conquering sex and despising the toils of the flesh ..."¹⁵⁵ But he does not address the precise issue of whether Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin. Although he very frequently refers to Mary's freedom from sin, he does not take a position in relation to her immaculate conception. In this, as in other matters, he occupies the middle ground, neither radical nor conservative, as the following discussion hopes to show.

¹⁴⁸"Beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisti." Luke, 11,27.

¹⁴⁹Denzinger *Enchiridion symbolorum*, p.714-716.

¹⁵⁰See discussion of Eadmer, below, p.191.

¹⁵¹It might be thought to be implied, perhaps, in 5,33-35: "Now, raised to the greatest height, you live with your son ... " But that falls short of a clear reference to a belief in the Assumption.

¹⁵²*Mariale*, 6,3.

¹⁵³*Mariale*, 8,3.

¹⁵⁴*Mariale*, 9,5.

¹⁵⁵*Mariale*, 11,19-20.

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All of Bernard's poems show a deep conviction of sin. In the *Mariale*, that conviction has a personal tone which is lacking in the poems which are certainly Bernard's, in which he is more concerned to castigate the vices of others. A conviction of sin is part of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and Bernard seems to have been especially influenced by Saint Paul.¹⁵⁶ It is not, perhaps, entirely clear what Saint Paul means,¹⁵⁷ but it is easy to see how the doctrine of original sin developed from his teaching.

The Greek Fathers had little to say about original sin, and what they said was not very clear. Among the Latin Fathers, Saint Augustine was the first to treat the subject fully.¹⁵⁸ He interpreted Saint Paul to mean that the Fall resulted in a corruption of our human nature.¹⁵⁹ Concupiscence was a consequence of the Fall. It affects all areas of life, but especially sexual intercourse, which cannot be undertaken without lust. The involuntary impulse of lust, which cannot be controlled by the will, was the penalty of Adam's sin.¹⁶⁰

That interpretation has been extraordinarily persistent. In our own times, many non-Catholics, and even some Catholics, suppose that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception refers to the

¹⁵⁶In the first two chapters of Romans, Paul argues that everything in the world, even sin, follows from God's will. All human beings are trapped in sin in order to lead to salvation of all mankind and all creation through Christ. In the fifth chapter of Romans and elsewhere he states a connection between the sin of Adam and the bondage of mankind to sin.

¹⁵⁷C.K. Barrett translates the crucial passage: "as through one man sin entered the world (and through sin came that man's death), so also death came to all men, because they all sinned." (*A commentary on the epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed., London, Black, 1991, p.103.)

¹⁵⁸*A Catholic dictionary*, by William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, 5th ed., London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1897, p.686.

¹⁵⁹*City of God*, XIII,3.

¹⁶⁰*ibid.*, XIII,17 and 18.

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conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary.¹⁶¹ Such a misunderstanding would be possible only if it is further supposed that ordinary conception, entailing sexual intercourse, is in some way maculate or sinful. That was indeed the position taken by Saint Augustine, but it is surprising to find it lurking beneath present-day thinking.

Saint Gregory the Great held a somewhat less stern view, as did Saint Anselm of Canterbury, but an alternative to Saint Augustine's doctrine was first worked out in detail by Saint Thomas Aquinas. He maintained that the consequence of the Fall was not a corruption of our human nature, but the loss of sanctifying grace. Since grace is a gift from God, freely given, its deprivation does not entail a diminution of our human nature. As for concupiscence, it is "a habitual state in which our sense-appetites are not subject to reason as they were in the original integrated state of man."¹⁶² Sexual intercourse is not inherently sinful.

The Council of Trent carefully avoided getting involved in the disputes of the theologians, but its definition of original sin followed the Thomist rather than the Augustinian line. It explicitly stated that concupiscence is not to be identified with original sin.¹⁶³

Bernard of Morlaix follows Augustine in regard to sexual intercourse before the Fall. Speaking of the Golden Age, which,

¹⁶¹When Arnold Bennett said he did not believe in the Immaculate Conception, Ronald Knox commented that his "statement lacks, perhaps, scientific precision. Does Mr Bennett believe in original sin? I imagine not; and if he does not believe in original sin, then he believes in the Immaculate Conception; not merely in the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady but in the immaculate conception of everybody else." (Evelyn Waugh, *The life of Ronald Knox*, London, Collins, 1962 (Fontana books), p.202.)

¹⁶²*Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae, 82, 3-4.

¹⁶³*Decretum super peccato originali*, Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, p.281-283.

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in its allegorical sense, refers to mankind before the Fall, he says:

People then were fit, steadfast, noble and austere.
They used to marry late in life, and they married not
from lust but only from a desire to beget children.
The marriage bond was sacred in those days, and kisses
were free from any guilt.¹⁶⁴

But, although he urges chastity upon his celibate audience, and although he nowhere develops the theme of marital chastity, it is clear that he does not regard sexual intercourse in marriage as in any way sinful. He laments the decline of "normal intercourse" because of the prevalence of sodomy.¹⁶⁵ He speaks with approval of "the embraces and sexual intercourse of marriage."¹⁶⁶

Although there is no explicit mention of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in the *Mariale* or in the *In libros Regum*, it had long been a popular devotion. Saint Augustine, responding to Pelagius, insisted that all men are born in sin. But he went on to say,

The Blessed Virgin Mary is an exception. When the matter of sins is discussed, out of respect for the Lord, I would not want any question to be raised. For how do we know what extra grace may have been given to her so that she could overcome sin totally ...?¹⁶⁷

That, of course, dodges the issue of immaculate conception, because the extra grace need be no more than that accorded to Saint John the Baptist. Similarly, Saint Anselm, in a dialogue with Boso, makes a case for the sinlessness of Mary, but cannot accept the Immaculate Conception:

¹⁶⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,47-50.

¹⁶⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 3,207.

¹⁶⁶*De octo vitiis*, 948.

¹⁶⁷*De natura et gratia*, PL 44,267.

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Boso: ... For although the very conception of this individual human nature [of Christ] is free from the sin of bodily pleasure, the Virgin herself from whom it was taken was nevertheless conceived in iniquities and her mother had conceived her in sins and she was born with original sin, since even she sinned in Adam in whom all have sinned.¹⁶⁸

Anselm: ... But that virgin from whom this man [Christ] of whom we are speaking was born, was among those who before his birth were cleansed from sin through Him and He was taken from the virgin in this state of purity.¹⁶⁹

Nevertheless, popular devotion to the Immaculate Conception in the twelfth century was such that Saint Bernard of Clairvaux felt obliged to write a long letter to the canons of Lyons, protesting because they were proposing to introduce the feast of the Conception of Mary on 8 December in their diocese. He makes it perfectly clear that, in his view, the doctrine is false because the conception of Mary entailed ordinary sexual intercourse between Joachim and Anne. Since sexual intercourse necessarily entails sin, and is the means by which original sin is transmitted, Mary cannot have been exempt from original sin from the time of her conception.

How could it be the case, either that the holiness [of the Immaculate Conception] was achieved without the sanctifying Spirit, or that the Holy Spirit aided and abetted a sinful act? How could there not be sin, where there was lust?¹⁷⁰

Even saint Thomas Aquinas, whose theory of original sin would have rebutted Saint Bernard's objection, did not believe that Mary was sanctified from the moment of her conception. "If Mary's soul was never infected with inherited sin that would prejudice the dignity of Christ as the saviour of all

¹⁶⁸Marina Warner wrongly takes this to be a statement of Anselm's belief. (*Alone of all her sex; the myth and cult of the Virgin Mary*. London, Pan books, 1985 (Picador), p.241.)

¹⁶⁹*Cur Deus homo*, 2,16. PL 158,416-419.

¹⁷⁰PL 182, 335.

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mankind."¹⁷¹ In Saint Thomas' day, the general opinion of theologians was opposed to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Franciscan Duns Scotus gives his opinion in favour of the doctrine with a timidity which clearly betrays his consciousness that he is in a minority. He maintains that God might, had he so chosen, have exempted Mary from original sin, and might on the other hand have allowed her to remain under it for a time, and then purified her. He adds that "God knows" which of these possible ways was actually taken. "But if it is not contrary to the authority of the Church or of the saints, it seems commendable to attribute that which is more excellent to Mary."¹⁷² Scotus died in 1308 and it was not until after his death that his views became generally accepted, to the extent that when the Dominican John Montesono denied the Immaculate Conception in 1387, he was condemned by the University of Paris and the Bishop of Paris.¹⁷³

But in an unsophisticated form, the doctrine seems to have been popular with the generality of the faithful in the twelfth century. The belief was not founded in subtleties or scholastic arguments, but simply in a conviction that the Mother of God must have been totally free of any stain of sin, original or actual.¹⁷⁴ The naivety and depth of the devotion is well expressed by Eadmer of Canterbury, a disciple of Anselm's, but holding different views about this doctrine. In his *Liber de excellentia Beatae Mariae*, he writes:

¹⁷¹*Summa theologiae*, 3a, 27, 1-2.

¹⁷²*Catholic dictionary*, p.470-471. See also *New Catholic encyclopedia*, v.7, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, p.380-381.

¹⁷³*Catholic dictionary*, p.471.

¹⁷⁴Marina Warner recounts a joke that W. H. Auden was fond of: "When the woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus, he said, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.' All was silence and the Pharisees began drifting away in shame, when suddenly a stone whizzed past Jesus' ear. Without turning, and in a tone of deep irritation, Jesus cried out: 'Mother!'" (*Alone of all her sex*, p.383)

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The Blessed Virgin Mary pleased God excellently in every possible way. We hold that doctrine, after all (ab omni), as a matter of faith. I am quite unable to believe, for any reason whatsoever, that she could be so pleasing to him if there was in her any slightest stain either of original or of actual sin ...¹⁷⁵

Anybody who says that you [Mary] could not possibly have evaded the law of original sin, to which everybody else is subject, even though before the birth of your blessed son you were exempted from the death of the body, is quite wrong, and not worth answering. How could God have pre-ordained you to be the Mother of God, if he had not led you also to this [exemption from original sin]? ... Therefore the children of Holy Church ought to venerate the very beginning of your creation [your conception], if they believe that you are holy and chaste and free from that stain of corruption and sin. Let those who feel otherwise believe what they think best. I, for my part, most holy Lady, I am your servant in all ways, and I know, I believe and I proclaim ...¹⁷⁶

Eadmer's enthusiastic defence both of the feast of the Conception of Mary and of belief in her Immaculate Conception ignores completely the arguments of the theologians, and he makes no attempt to reply to their objections. It is the earliest written defence of the doctrine that we have, but it probably represents both the emotional strength and the unsophisticated character of a popular devotion which had existed for many years. The author of the *Mariale* avoids both the enthusiasm of Eadmer's extreme on the one hand, and the almost Manichean extreme of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux on the other.

Eadmer takes for granted a belief that Mary was exempt from the death of the body. Strictly speaking, the Assumption does not necessarily entail a belief that Mary did not die. That matter

¹⁷⁵PL 159, 561.

¹⁷⁶*Tractatus de conceptione B. Mariae Virginis*, PL 159, 309. Migne prints this in his appendix of spurious works of Saint Anselm, but it is attributed to Eadmer, with a date of 1123 or 1139 (*New Catholic encyclopaedia*, v.7., p.380).

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is left open in Pius XII's definition of the doctrine.¹⁷⁷ The early legends of the last days of Mary never mention her death. In medieval tradition, she seems, in this respect, to have been regarded as comparable to Enoch,¹⁷⁸ Moses,¹⁷⁹ Elijah¹⁸⁰ and Saint John.¹⁸¹ In that form, belief in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary has great antiquity. As in the case of the Immaculate Conception, so in the case of Mary's exemption from bodily death and her assumption into heaven, the *Mariale* takes no extreme position.

Various scholars have argued that, in the twelfth century, the theocentric traditions of Christendom were weakened by devotion to Mary. Henry Adams, for example, maintained that "In the Western Church the Virgin had always been highly honoured, but it was not until the crusades that she began to overshadow the Trinity itself."¹⁸² D. Schaff argued that she was given a "dignity equal to or superior to that of Christ"¹⁸³ and G.G. Coulton that she was exalted "practically into a fourth person of the Trinity."¹⁸⁴ The *Mariale* does not support these views of twelfth century devotion to Our Lady. The major theme of the *Mariale* is that we should pray to Mary to help us to resist temptation and to ask her to intercede for us for mercy from her son. But there is no suggestion that she is "a semi-divine intercessor."¹⁸⁵ Christ is also seen as a person to whom prayers should be addressed and as an intercessor for us with

¹⁷⁷"Expleto terrestris vitae cursu." Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, p.716.

¹⁷⁸Genesis, 5,24; Hebrews 11,5.

¹⁷⁹Deuteronomy, 34,6.

¹⁸⁰2 Kings, 2,11 (Vulgate 4 Kings 2,11)

¹⁸¹John, 21,23.

¹⁸²Henry Adams, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, with an introduction by Ralph Adams Cram, London, Constable, 1950, p.90.

¹⁸³D. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, New York, 1907, vol 5, part 1, p.833.

¹⁸⁴G.G. Coulton, *Five centuries of religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1923-1958, vol.1, p.139.

¹⁸⁵G.G.Coulton, *Medieval panorama; the English scene from Conquest to Reformation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1949, p.623.

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the Father. But Christ is the second Person of the Trinity and, even more to the point, it is Christ who will come again to judge the living and the dead. Mary is our most valuable intercessor precisely because she is not divine. Mary Vincentine Gripkey, in a study of Latin and Old French *miracula* prior to the fourteenth century, concluded that "the miracles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do not differ in the matter of theocentrism from those of the preceding centuries; no collection has been found which does not present the Blessed Virgin in the secondary role as suppliant, dependent upon the will of God for the favor she wishes to bestow upon a client."¹⁸⁶ That is true also of the *Mariale* and of Bernard's reflections on Mary in the *In libros Regum*..

The *Mariale* is devotional rather than homiletic, and its deeply personal consciousness of sin complements the satirical and admonitory emphasis of the *De contemptu mundi* and the *De octo vitiis*. It also puts Bernard's misogyny in a somewhat different light, as also does the hymn of praise to Mary which is found in the *In libros Regum*.¹⁸⁷ Bernard appears to have been representative of his time in relation to reverence for Mary, the mother of God, siding neither with the conservatives, like his namesake of Clairvaux, nor with the radicals like Eadmer. That is consistent with his belief in *mediocritas aurea*, an important part of his inheritance from the Latin literary tradition, which is examined in the next chapter.

¹⁸⁶Mary Vincente Gripkey, *The Blessed Virgin Mary as mediatrix in the Latin and Old French legend prior to the fourteenth century*, Washington, Catholic University of America, 1938, p.219.

¹⁸⁷*In libros Regum*, 918 ff. See also below, p.282.

CHAPTER 5 THE LATIN LITERARY TRADITION

The classical learning of Bernard of Morlaix

Some of Bernard's classical allusions are commonplaces. Take, for example, his treatment of envy in the *De octo vitiis*.

Invidus arescit, cum fratri gloria crescit,
Alteriusque nimis rebus macrescit opimis,
Undeque letatur mens huic, illi cruciatur.
Invidia magni non invenere tyranni
Tormentum peius. Furit in sese furor eius.
Justius invidia nichil est testante Talia.¹

The envious man seethes when his brother's fame increases. He pines away when he sees somebody else enjoying great success. It hurts him to see other people happy. No worse torment than envy has been invented even by great tyrants. The madness of envy drives itself mad. Envy is nowhere more aptly described than in the words of Thalia.

In part, this is a quotation from Horace, who has the following:

Invidus alterius macrescit rebus opimis:
invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni
maius tormentum. Qui non moderabitur irae
infectum volet esse dolor quod suaserit et mens,
dum poenas odio per vim festinat inulto.²

It is quite possible that Bernard was quoting directly from Horace, for, as we shall see, there is clear evidence that he knew the works of Horace well. But this particular instance could just as well have come from a collection of aphorisms about envy. There is just such a collection in the *Carmina Burana*:

¹*De octo vitiis*, 224-229.

²*Epistles*, 1,2,57-61.

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- I. Invidus invidia comburitur intus et extra.
- II. Invidus alterius rebus macrescit opimis.
Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni
Maius tormentum. qui non moderabitur ire,
Infectum volet esse, dolor quod suaserit aut mens.
- III Invidiosus ego, non invidus esse laboro.
- IV. Iustius invidia nichil est, que protinus ipsos
Corripit auctores excruciatque suos.
- V. Invidiam nimio cultu vitare memento.³

The second of these aphorisms derives from the passage in Horace's *Epistles* set out above, the same passage from which Bernard quotes. The fourth, which Bernard also makes use of, derives from Saint Jerome: "Pulchre quidam de neotericis Graecum versum transferens elegiaco metro de invidia lusit dicens: Justius invidia nihil est, quae protinus ipsum auctorem rodit excruciatque animum."⁴ That explains Bernard's somewhat cryptic reference to Thalia, the Muse of comedy. Bernard goes on to a description of the envious man which is not dependent upon classical quotation or allusion:

He envies those who are superior to him, those who are equal to him and those who are inferior to him. He envies his superiors because he does not hold a position equal to theirs; his equals because they compete with him for the same reward; his inferiors because they might be promoted to a position equal to his ... Oh great God in heaven for whom I pant in longing, protect me and mine from jealousy, the weapon of Satan.⁵

The quotations with which Bernard prefaces his account of envy are not enough to demonstrate a direct familiarity with classical authors. Such quotations, used in such a way, could easily have been derived from florilegia. In like manner, Bernard's use of the phrase "casta cubilia" does not necessarily

³*Carmina Burana* 13. (*Carmina Burana*, ed. Alfons Hilka and Otto Schumann, Heidelberg, Carl Winter, 1930, vol.1, part 1., p.30.)

⁴*Commentary on Galatians*, PL 26, 417.

imply a knowledge of the satires of Catullus, who was in fact not well known in the twelfth century.⁶ It may do so, because both Bernard⁷ and Catullus⁸ are referring to marriage laws and customs, but it might equally well be derived from florilegia. It is perhaps significant that, when Bernard wants particularly to talk about satirists, he names Horace, Cato, Persius, Juvenal and Lucilius, but makes no mention of Catullus.⁹

There are many other similar cases in which Bernard does not acknowledge the source of a phrase which may be a quotation, or which may rather be derived from florilegia or be simply a commonplace. Consider, for example, "facilis descensus Averni."¹⁰ Bernard, who does not attribute this phrase of Vergil's, means that many people go to hell. Vergil appears simply to mean that it is easy going down, but very hard to get back up again. After all, for Vergil, Elysium is down there, too. Bernard does not agree: "Elysios ibi non reperis tibi."¹¹ When Bernard speaks of Liburnian slaves carrying a rich man's litter, he is not necessarily referring to Juvenal.¹² Nor is he, perhaps, referring to Juvenal when he uses the expression "diva Philippica" in relation to Cicero.¹³ And the adage "gloria calcar habet" no doubt appeared in every schoolbook. It need not be quoted from Ovid.¹⁴ Again, "Aequor arantibus" may be a quotation from Ovid,¹⁵ but "ploughing the sea" is surely a

⁵*De octo vitiis*, 233-236, 254-255.

⁶Only one manuscript is recorded (Birger Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, Paris, Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982-1989, 4v., v.1, p.88).

⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 2,525.

⁸Catullus, 66,83.

⁹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,805-807. Cato is probably M. Porcius Cato, who is lauded by Lucan, rather than his great-grandfather.

¹⁰*De octo vitiis*, 1142; Vergil, *Aeneid*, 5,126.

¹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,644.

¹²*De contemptu mundi*, 2,835; Juvenal, 3,239-240.

¹³*De contemptu mundi*, 1,949; Juvenal, 10,125 ("divina Philippica").

¹⁴*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus; Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 4,2,36.

¹⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 2,803; Ovid, *Tristia*, 3,12,36.

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commonplace. Furthermore, Ovid refers simply to sailing. Bernard's imagery is more complex. His point is that honesty is so rare that it is a marvel, like ploughing the sea with carts, or the desert with sails, or the fields with fish, or the air with ships, or outer space with camels. Likewise, the metaphor of dropping the anchor for coming to an end may be regarded as a commonplace. Bernard's uses of it and similar metaphors¹⁶ are not necessarily quotations from Ovid¹⁷ or from Horace¹⁸ or from any classical author. Nor need a mention of Lethe's waters of forgetfulness be a reference to or quotation from Ovid¹⁹ or Vergil;²⁰ nor need "lyncea lumina" or "sub vulpe latentes" be quotations from Horace;²¹ nor need "Gorgonis ora" be an allusion to Ovid.²² And Bernard's use of the phrase "noctis opacae"²³ is probably not intended to call to mind Vergil's use of it.²⁴

Such classical references and allusions are not evidence for familiarity with the works of any classical author, but they do suggest something of the classical background of the ordinary, educated twelfth-century monk. These are the kinds of thing that, as Macaulay might say, a schoolboy of fourteen would know.²⁵ Bernard himself suggests that this is the case. He warns us of the transience of human glory, and asks:

¹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,973; *De octo vitiis*, 1398-1399; *De Trinitate*, 1391.

¹⁷Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 1,772.

¹⁸Horace, *Odes*, 1,7,32.

¹⁹Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 2,4,23.

²⁰Vergil, *Aeneid*, 6, 714 and elsewhere.

²¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,805; Horace, *Satires*, 1,2,90-91. *Carmina de Trinitate* 1273; Horace, *Ars poetica*, 437.

²²*De contemptu mundi* 1,533; Ovid, *Tristia*, 4,7,12.

²³*De contemptu mundi*, 3,822.

²⁴Vergil, *Aeneid*, 4,123. "Diffugient comites et nocte tegentur opaca." Vergil refers to the attendants of Dido and Aeneas, scattered in the storm.

²⁵But, as Robert K. Merton remarks, "If we were to assemble in one place all the knowledge and understanding with which Lord Macaulay variously endows his fourteen-year-old schoolboy, we would find this astonishing youth a veritable sage ... " (*On the shoulders of giants; a Shandean postscript*, New York, Free Press, 1965, p.147.)

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Where is Varro now? Where are Cato, Socrates, Plato, Ovid, Vergil, Cicero, Lucan, Seneca, Nero, Caesar, Alexander? After such a short time, they are gone. Nothing now remains of the splendour of these men, so rapidly snatched away ... The river Styx holds their souls while the grave holds their bones in an embrace of soil. All that is left of them is their names, which schoolboys recite, the names that crown them with honour. Schoolboys apply themselves to the study of them, piling words on words.²⁶

Bernard may have benefited from just such an education as he describes here. In the prologue to the *De contemptu mundi*, he says:

Si vero superbum spirans ferule manum submittere
dedignatur non minus fatuitatis quam superbie
arguitur, ac propterea nec a rudibus quidem nec ipse
nec eius sermo accipitur.

If an arrogant man is too proud to hold out his hand for the cane, he is guilty of folly as well as pride, because neither he nor his work will be found acceptable, even by the uneducated.²⁷

Bernard is alluding to the first satire of Juvenal, in which Juvenal complains of the derivative nature of contemporary writing and the excessive use of mythological references. He goes on to say that he, too, when he was a schoolboy, put his hand out for the cane and composed standard declamations:

Et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus, et nos
Consilium dedimus Sullae, privatus ut altum
Dormiret.²⁸

Bernard's education seems to have been similar. Of all his poems, only the *Mariale* and the *Chartula nostra* (if they are his) are free from classical references or quotations. The

²⁶*De octo vitiis*, 147-154.

²⁷*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus.

²⁸Juvenal, 1, 15-17.

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Chartula nostra is a special case, because it is addressed to a child. Rainaldus, for whom it was written,²⁹ was just such a schoolboy as Bernard had in mind in the passage quoted above, but Bernard was not concerned to reinforce Rainaldus' classical lore, but rather to instruct him in sacred matters. He uses a style which is simple and easy to read.

But the rest of Bernard's poems are highly sophisticated in style and liberally peppered with classical allusions and quotations, nearly always appropriately used and designed to enhance his meaning. Kimon Giocarinis provides a range of examples (different from those offered here, and studied from a different point of view). He concludes with the following tribute:

The classical references, borrowings, echoes, with which his work is so thickly set, the classical locutions, commonplaces, metaphors, illustrations and anecdotes with which his verse abounds, all attest to his ample latinity and a knowledge of classical literature which is not inert, but living and fully operant. The antique exists in his consciousness. The ancient authors amplify and, in cases, help shape his vision. They certainly do much to mould the art and manner in which he voices what he has to say, lending force to his utterances.³⁰

Most frequent of Bernard's classical allusions are his references to mythological and legendary characters. Among them are, for example, Achilles, Aeacus, Agenor, the Amazons, Apollo, Argus, Astraea, Bacchus, Bellona, Capaneus, Charon, the Eumenides, Gorgon, Hector, Hercules, Iarbus, Jocasta, Juno, Jupiter, Lucretia, Mars, Myrrha, Nestor, Orestes, Orpheus, Phaedra, Philoctetes, Phoeus, Pirithous, Polynices, Polyphemus, Romulus and Remus, Rhadamanthus, Sisyphus, Tantalus, Thalia,

²⁹Edward Schröder, "Ein niederrheinischer Contemptus mundi und seine Quelle," *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen: Philologische-historische Klasse aus dem Jahr 1910*, Berlin, Weidmannsche, 1910, p.342.

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Theseus, Tisiphone, and Tydeus. Bernard's mythological allusions are not limited to persons. He frequently mentions mythological topics such as Scylla and Charybdis, the Hydra, the Golden Age and so forth, and the classical Underworld provides him with such terms as Avernus, Cerberus, Elysium, Lethe, Phlegethon, Styx, Tartarus and Typhoeus. In addition, he uses classical terms in a way which hardly constitutes classical allusion, because the words had become absorbed into his Latin vocabulary so that their reference to the mythological characters from which they derive is not at the forefront of his mind. Venus, for example, almost always means simply "lust," with no reference to any other characteristics of Aphrodite.³¹ Similarly, Hermaphroditus and Ganymede often have little reference to the mythological characters. They simply refer to homosexuality. And "Mars rigidus" is simply warfare, though there may be an allusion to Ovid, who also sometimes uses the name metaphorically.³²

Bernard's references to characters from classical history (or what he took to be history) are also frequent. For example, he illustrates his homilies with appropriate allusions to Aemilius Paulus, Alexander, Augustus, Brutus, Cato, the Cornelii, Crassus, Croesus, Cyrus, Darius, the Fabii, Fabricius, Jugurtha, Lucretia, Marius, Nero, Regulus, the Sabine women, Sardanapalus, the Scauri, Scipio, Socrates and Solon. Mention of classical writers is almost equally common. For example, we find allusions to Aristotle, Caesar, Cicero, Democritus, Demosthenes, Diogenes, Epicurus, Homer, Lucilius, Persius, Plato, Pythagoras, Seneca and Varro. Characters from classical literature also appear. For example, Bernard makes use of Locusta and Lycisca

³⁰Kimón Giocarínis, "Bernard of Cluny and the antique," *Classica et mediaevalia*, 27(1966):345-346.

³¹But Bernard is fond of the expression "Venus ebria," which he borrows from Juvenal. (*De contemptu mundi*, 2,52 and 55 and 647; 3,831; Juvenal, 6,300.) And he probably took "Venus in venis" (*De castitate*, 4; *De octo vitiis*, 497) from Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 1,244, where "venis" is a variant reading for "vinis."

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from Juvenal and of Nisus and Euryalus from Vergil. And he may have got his "nequid nimis" from Terence, because he uses the name Dromo (from the slave in Terence's *Adelphi*) in a specially telling way.³³ Bernard has other kinds of classical allusion. For example, he mentions the Codex Theodosius, the Lex Julia and the Lex Scatinia,³⁴ and, as is discussed below in Chapter 6, he was familiar with classical metres.

Classical references and allusions tell us something about the scope and breadth of Bernard's classical background, but they tell us little about its depth. For that purpose, we need to look at Bernard's use of those classical authors with whose works he can be shown to be familiar from a reading of their works, not merely through anthologies and commonplaces. Authors, that is to say, from whose works he quotes extensively, rather than simple referring to or mentioning. Those authors are Horace, Vergil, Juvenal and Ovid.

Horace is the poet from whose works Bernard most frequently quotes, and his quotations range over all of Horace's works, showing some preference for the *Ars poetica* and the *Epistles*. Bernard quotes extensively from the *Aeneid* and the *Eclogues* of Vergil, but not from the *Georgics*. He quotes from most of Juvenal's satires, several of them more than once. Notably absent from his use of Ovid are the *Fasti* and the *Heroides*. He quotes from all the other major works of Ovid, especially from the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*. Quotations from classical writers occur in all the poems which are quite certainly Bernard's. They are most frequent in the *De contemptu mundi* and the *De octo vitiis*. Juvenal, as one might expect from

³²*De contemptu mundi*, 2,656; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 8,20.

³³Vivis iners homo, nomen habes Dromo, si bene vivis./ Si male, rex eris, aequiparaberis ordine divis. *De contemptu mundi*, 3,134. On "nequid nimis," see below, p.216ff.

³⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,549. There may be an allusion here to Juvenal, 2,37.

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the subject matter of the *De contemptu mundi*, features specially strongly in that poem.

Sometimes Bernard knows his author so well that he can quote him in such a way as to illuminate and extend the point he is making. For example:

Vivitur omnibus et sine legibus et sine normis.
Parca perit manus, esurit orphanus, hostis abundat.³⁵

"The sparing hand perishes" conveys, in itself, very little meaning. Indeed, taken literally, it suggests something quite different from what Bernard intends. It seems to mean that the man who is careful to preserve his resources is, in this wicked age, looked on with disfavour. It suggests that Bernard is praising the middle-class virtue of thrift. But thrift was not highly regarded in the middle ages. What Keen says of the late middle ages is equally true of the twelfth century: "... we move in a social world to which any ideal of saving, let alone of capital accumulation, was alien. Riches were for redistribution, not for re-investment: *largesse* was a quality to be expected of every nobleman."³⁶ That was clearly Bernard's view. In the *De octo vitiis*, he castigates the miserly, who "find it hard to give"³⁷:

Semper avarus eget neque degit ovens neque deget
Aut constans unquam dum dextram tollet aduncam.
Quis domino carus? Dans cuncta. Quis hostis? Avarus.³⁸

The miser always wants more. He does not spend his time in happiness, nor will he ever be securely happy until he takes away his grasping hand. Who is dear to the Lord? The man who gives everything he has. Who is his enemy? The miser.

³⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 282-283.

³⁶Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984, p.155.

³⁷*De octo vitiis*, 389. "Ad dare ducescit."

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("Semper avarus eget", incidentally, is quoted from Horace,³⁹ as is "fervet avaricia" a few lines earlier.⁴⁰) Bernard's dislike of meanness appears also in his lengthy treatment of the theme of Dives and Lazarus in the *De contemptu mundi*.⁴¹ "Parca perit manus, esurit orphanus" cannot mean "the thrifty man suffers, the orphan goes hungry [in this degenerate age]." Bernard expects his readers to recognise the allusion to an ode of Horace:

multa petentibus
desunt multa: bene est, cui deus obtulit
parca quod satis est manu.⁴²

The man who strives for riches is poor. Happy the man
to whom God, with sparing hand, gives enough to live
on.

Bernard uses "parca manus" as a portmanteau phrase for "he to whom God gives with a sparing hand." Bernard, that is to say, means that the poor man (not the thrifty man) suffers in these wicked times. It is significant of the level of twelfth-century classical education that he expects his readers to recognise the allusion and to understand.

Similarly, in two of his poems, Bernard speaks of singing in the presence of robbers. In the *De contemptu mundi*, he describes a merchant who, in the course of his travels, is robbed of all his goods, whereafter "vacuus canit ante latronem."⁴³ In the *De octo vitiis*, in his discussion of avarice, he speaks of the traveller who "changes his skies but not his soul."⁴⁴ He says, "The traveller who carries wealth does not sing in the presence of a

³⁸*De octo vitiis*, 410-412.

³⁹*Epistles*, 1,2,56.

⁴⁰*De octo vitiis*, 406; Horace, *Epistles*, 1,1,33.

⁴¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,873-930.

⁴²Horace, *Odes*, 3,16,42-44.

⁴³*De contemptu mundi* 2,349.

⁴⁴"Celum non animum mutans mare transsecat imum," *De octo vitiis*, 380. The quotation is from Horace: "Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt." (*Epistles*, 1,11,27.)

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robber."⁴⁵ The significance of the expression is hardly clear, unless we realise that it derives from Juvenal's tenth satire:

Pauca licet portes argenti vascula puri,
Nocte iter ingressus gladium contumque timebis,
Et motae ad lunam trepidabis arundinis umbram:
Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.⁴⁶

When you go on a journey at night, even though you have only a few silver coins in your purse, you will be fearful of swords and cudgels, and you will be startled by every movement of the reeds in the moonlight. But the man who has nothing at all can stroll past robbers, whistling.

When Bernard complains of the pseudoprophetae⁴⁷ who abound more than ever before, he has in mind the Cistercians.⁴⁸ He says of them, "latet anguis in herba." The snake in the grass is a common enough image, but there is a particular resonance here. Bernard no doubt wants us to recognise the allusion to Vergil:

Qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga,
frigidus, o pueri (fugite hinc!), latet anguis in
herba.⁴⁹

There is a double level of artificiality in Vergil's poem. In the first place, it has all the conventionality of a pastoral poem. In the second place, it is a particular kind of poem called amoebaeic, in which the characters in a poetic dialogue exchange verses. Vergil's snake in the grass is, so to speak, a fiction within a fiction, and Bernard's allusion to it adds colour to the hypocrisy of his false prophets. This same mob of unworthy monks is called "hispidia corpore, lubrica pectore." The allusion is to Juvenal's diatribe against the hypocrites of his own day, who affect ancestral peasant virtues as a front for their lechery:

⁴⁵*De octo vitiis*, 383. "Non cantat lator coram latrone viator."

⁴⁶Juvenal, 10,19-22.

⁴⁷Matthew, 24,11. "Et multi pseudoprophetae surgent et seducent multos."

⁴⁸See above, p.140ff.

⁴⁹Vergil, *Eclogues*, 3,92-93.

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Hispidam membra quidem et duram per brachia setae
Promittunt atrocem animum: sed podice laevi
Caeduntur tumidae, medico ridente, mariscae.⁵⁰

Bernard, through his quotation from Juvenal, is giving us a broad hint that his false prophets may be sodomites, and the adjective "slippery" ("lubricus," one of Bernard's favourite pejorative adjectives) gains additional meaning in the context of Juvenal's remarks. In the same way, Bernard's taunt, "en Cato tertius aethere missus,"⁵¹ which refers to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux,⁵² can be fully understood only by reference to its source in the same satire of Juvenal, in which a prostitute says mockingly to the hypocrite:

Felicia tempora, quae te
Moribus opponunt! Habeat jam Roma pudorem!
Tertius a coelo cecidit Cato.⁵³

In the *De contemptu mundi* Bernard complains that people spend more time in taverns than they do in churches, and comments:

Gens bibit impia, vina furentia plus satis aequo,
Fert oleum focus inde subit jocus ordine caeco.⁵⁴

The allusion, which he expects us to recognise, is to a satire of Horace which illuminates Bernard's meaning. The satire is in the form of a dialogue, and in the course of it, Damasippus says to Horace, "Adde poemata nunc, hoc est, oleum adde camino ..."⁵⁵ Bernard's cryptic "fert oleum focus" means that wine adds fuel to the fire of madness. (Damasippus means that Horace is mad already. If he goes on writing poetry he will get madder.)

⁵⁰Juvenal, 2,11-13.

⁵¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,753.

⁵²See above, p.142.

⁵³Juvenal 2,38-40.

⁵⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,605-606.

⁵⁵Horace, *Satires*, 2,3,321.

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In the *De octo vitiis*, Bernard says, "If you bring nothing to Rome, Plato, you will be thought stupid. Go away, Homer, unless you are generous in honouring Rome."⁵⁶ The meaning is not immediately obvious. He expects his readers to recognise the allusion to Ovid's comments which, although written in a different context, throw light on Bernard's meaning:

Ipse licet venias Musis comitatus, Homere,
Si nihil attuleris, ibis, Homere, foras.⁵⁷

In the *De contemptu mundi*, speaking of women who are not satisfied with one husband, Bernard says:

Tam sine lumine quam sine crimine vult fore quaeque,
Ter fore clinica quam semel unica diligit aequae.⁵⁸

He wants his readers to recognise the allusion to Juvenal:

Unus Iberinae vir sufficit? Ocius illud
Extorquebis, ut haec oculo contenta fit uno.⁵⁹

An even more fruitful allusion to Juvenal is contained in Bernard's "Tot nego sobria corda quot ostia reflua Nili."⁶⁰ Juvenal has:

Rara quippe boni: numerus vix est totidem, quot
Thebarum portae, vel divitis ostia Nili.⁶¹

The Nile had seven mouths, and Boeotian Thebes had seven gates. There is probably an allusion also to the Seven Sages, who were connected with the aphorism "nequid nimis," which is discussed below.

⁵⁶*De octo vitiis*, 1298-1299. "Si nichil attuleris, Plato, Rome Brutus haberis./ Ibis, Omere, foras nisi Romam largus honoras." Katarina Halvarson notes "Brutus = brutus."

⁵⁷Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 2,279-280.

⁵⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 2,555.

⁵⁹Juvenal, 6,53-54.

⁶⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 2,799.

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Another expression of Bernard's which is clarified by recognition of its source is "mors patet ultima linea rerum,"⁶² which derives from Horace's "mors ultima linea rerum est."⁶³ It does not mean that death is the final limit of all things. For Bernard, of course, it is not. The "linea" was a white rope drawn across the circus in chariot races. What Horace and Bernard mean is that death is the end of the race. Similarly, Bernard's "recta cape scire"⁶⁴ takes on added significance when it is seen in the context of Horace's dialogue with one of his slaves, the point of which is that only the wise man is free.⁶⁵ So also, when Bernard says that the doctrine of the Trinity is worth explaining ten times ("decies repetita placebunt")⁶⁶ his meaning is enhanced when we recognise his reference to Horace's advice that some parts of a poem are designed to please only once, while others are intended to be read again and again ("decies repetita placebit.")⁶⁷ Again, Bernard's "foemina vipera" in his diatribe against women⁶⁸ calls to mind Juvenal's "duos una saevissima vipera coena," which refers to the story that Pontia, the daughter of Petronius, poisoned her own children.⁶⁹ And when Bernard says that there are many who resist the blandishments of the flesh, either because of their desire for heaven or from their fear of punishment ("formidine pene"), his verse resonates with Horace's sentiment that the good man acts from love of virtue rather than from fear of punishment ("formidine poenae").⁷⁰

⁶¹Juvenal, 13,26-27.

⁶²*De contemptu mundi*, 1,899. See also *De octo vitiis*, 26, "mors ultima linea rerum."

⁶³Horace, *Epistles*, 1,16,79.

⁶⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,813.

⁶⁵Horace, *Satires*, 2,7,7.

⁶⁶*Carmina de Trinitate*, 496.

⁶⁷Horace, *Ars poetica*, 365.

⁶⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 2,513.

⁶⁹Juvenal, 6,641.

⁷⁰*De castitate*, 80; Horace, *Epistles*, 1,16,53.

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In dealing with the theme of the corruption of the flesh,⁷¹ Bernard borrows to good effect the phrase "eburnea colla" from Ovid;⁷² the phrase "colla lactea" from Vergil;⁷³ and the phrase "cerea brachia" from Horace.⁷⁴ Similarly, a resonance of Horace can be heard in Bernard's line "sperne voluptates, nocet empta dolore voluptas,"⁷⁵ and again in:

Ira furor brevis est, animum rege. Qui nisi paret,
Imperat. Hunc frenis, hunc ratione tene.⁷⁶

But sometimes there is an element of tension as well as resonance. Thus, Horace has verses in favour of wine:

Quid non ebrietas dissignat? operta recludit,
spes jubet esse ratas, ad proelia trudit inertem;
sollicitis animis onus eximit, addocet artis.
fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum?
contracta quem non in paupertate solutum?⁷⁷

Bernard, while clearly calling attention to Horace's lines, puts drinking wine in the context of gluttony, and offers as disadvantages what Horace saw as advantages:

Ebrietas ludit, sua fundit, operta recludit,
Sollicitis animis onus aufert, gaudet opimis.
Tunc veniunt risus, tunc vox vaga, sermo relisus.
Tunc nova presumit, tunc pauper cornua sumit.
Fecundi calices fialeque ioci genitrices
Quem non exertum, quem non fecere disertum?⁷⁸

⁷¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,799-806.

⁷²Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3,422 (where it is applied to Narcissus) and 4,335 (where it is applied to Hermaphroditus).

⁷³Vergil, *Aeneid*, 8,660 (where it is applied to the Gauls attacking the Capitol).

⁷⁴Horace, *Odes*, 1,13,2-3 (where it is applied to Lydia).

⁷⁵*De castitate*, 258 and *De octo vitiis*, 166-167; Horace, *Epistles*, 1,2,55

⁷⁶*De castitate*, 510-511 (see also *De octo vitiis*, 258-259.); Horace, *Epistles*, 1,2,62-63. Bernard has adapted only to suit his metre. Horace has, "Ira furor brevis est: animum rege, qui nisi paret,/ imperat; hunc frenis, hunc tu compesce catena."

⁷⁷Horace, *Epistles*, 1,5,16-20.

⁷⁸*De octo vitiis*, 548-553.

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There is a reference here also to Ovid's *Ars amatoria*: "Tunc veniunt risus, tum pauper cornua sumit."⁷⁹ Neither Horace nor Ovid was castigating drunkenness, but Bernard presses their words into service. A similar example of tension is offered by Bernard's use, in two of his poems, of Horace's metaphor of the jug. "A new jug will keep for a long time the smell of anything with which it has been once filled."⁸⁰ Horace is advising Lollius to learn good things while he is young. Bernard is advising us to avoid, in the one case, relations with prostitutes and, in the other, sodomy. Bernard, that is to say, applies the metaphor in a totally different way.

Horace, in his second epistle, says that he has been re-reading the *Iliad*. He comments on Homer's skill in depicting good behaviour and bad, what is beneficial and what is harmful.

Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid
non,
planus ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.⁸¹

His point is that Homer's work presents an admirable moral lesson. Bernard uses this passage to good effect in the *De castitate*. He explains, following Cassian,⁸² that, in order to avoid being troubled by unchaste dreams at night, we need to take great care to control our thoughts and words and deeds during the day.

Si quid mens pulchrum vel turpe vel utile vel non
Cogitat ante tronus, nocte aliquando videt.
Qualia luce gerit vel mente vel ore vel actu,
Talia respondent nocte relata sibi.⁸³

Bernard uses the expression "me vate" in the *De octo vitiis*.⁸⁴ He intends to call to mind Horace's use of the same phrase in a

⁷⁹Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 1,239.

⁸⁰*De octo vitiis*, 625-626 and 934; Horace, *Epistles*, 1,2,69-70.

⁸¹Horace, *Epistles*, 1,2,3-4.

⁸²Cassian, *Institutiones*, 6-11 (PL 49,281-282.)

⁸³*De castitate*, 200-203.

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prominent position at the end of his sixteenth epode. Horace says, "from this age of iron an auspicious escape is granted to men who do their duty (piis), according to the oracle which I pronounce."⁸⁵ The reference is to the establishment of a new colony, under the leadership of a prophet who has consulted the oracles. Bernard, in phrases reminiscent of the *panta ·e* of Heraclitus, stresses the fluidity of things. He says, "The only thing about the world that does not change is its transience, according to the oracle which I pronounce (Orbis, me vate, sola constat levitate)." The resonance with Horace's "me vate" is in tension with the apparent pessimism of Bernard's message, yet the very use of the term "me vate" calls to mind Horace's assurance that there is, after all, a way of escape from the mutability of things. In a similar way, Bernard's "Cassaque lumine pleneque crimine corda gelantur"⁸⁶ seems to be in conflict with Vergil's "nunc cassum lumine lugent,"⁸⁷ which refers to the death of Palamedes, who is represented as good rather than selfish ("now he is dead they mourn him"). But Vergil puts the speech into the mouth of the deceitful and lying Solon, and it is that echo which we hear.

Bernard's classical allusions are for the most part apt, but there is the very occasional lapse. One may, for example, question the appropriateness of Bernard's reference to an eclogue of Vergil's, in the expression "levis igni cera liquescit" in *De octo vitiis*.⁸⁸ Bernard's point is that you cannot escape lust by resisting it. You must run away from it. The allusion to Vergil's description of a love charm⁸⁹ seems singularly inappropriate, unless a subtle irony is intended.

⁸⁴*De octo vitiis*, 30.

⁸⁵Horace, *Epodes*, 16,66.

⁸⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,687.

⁸⁷Vergil, *Aeneid*, 2,85.

⁸⁸*De octo vitiis*, 173.

⁸⁹Vergil, *Eclogues*, 8,81.

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The *In libros Regum* offers another example. The Vulgate account of the three-storeyed annexes around the outside of Solomon's temple makes it clear that the roof beams of each floor did not pierce the walls of the temple. The walls of the temple were indented or stepped, and the beams rested on the steps. In consequence, the second storey of each annexe was larger in floor area than the first, and the third larger than the second.⁹⁰ Bernard gets this wrong.

Iam quinis latum cubitis summum tabulatum,
Sex medium, septem constitit inferius.
Sed primo medium, medio quoque discrepat imum.⁹¹

The allusion to Horace's *Ars poetica* adds to the confusion. Horace is talking about the poetic skill of Homer, and he makes the point that the *Iliad* starts "in medias res," and mixes truth with fiction, yet Homer gives the whole an air of probability and makes the beginning, middle and end exactly correspond.

atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.⁹²

Horace is talking about three things that correspond, while Bernard is talking about three things that do not. Nor do Horace's words in any way illuminate the point Bernard is making. And he adds further confusion by quoting from Juvenal:

Omne etenim viciū tanto conspectius in se
crimen habet quanto grandior arce reus.⁹³

Juvenal appears to be saying no more than that the higher a criminal's social position is, the greater the public obloquy he suffers. Bernard is perhaps demonstrating his knowledge of

⁹⁰3 Kings, 6,5-6.

⁹¹*In libros Regum*, 749-751.

⁹²Horace, *Ars poetica*, 151-152.

⁹³*In libros Regum*, 755-756; Juvenal, 8,140-141. "Omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se/ crimen habet, quanto major, qui peccat, habetur."

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Horace and Juvenal, but neither Horace's words nor Juvenal's elucidate his meaning. Rather, they hide it. Bernard appears, in this instance of unhelpful quotation, to be simply showing off his classical learning. One is tempted perhaps to think that allegorical interpretation of the Book of Kings does not lend itself to classical allusion. Yet, in the same poem, when he is dealing with Solomon's throne, Bernard has a very apt and explicit quotation from Horace:

Fortis et in se ipso totus teres atque rotundus
A Flacco sapiens scribitur egregie.
Multo magis sapiens de qua sapientia nata est.
Fortis et in se ipsa tota rotunda fuit.⁹⁴

Horace, in the passage which Bernard quotes, is putting the Stoic view that virtue is alone sufficient for happiness and that external things contribute nothing. The wise man relies solely on himself. He is like a polished globe, to which external substances cannot adhere.

Quisnam igitur liber? Sapiens sibi qui imperiosus,
quem neque pauperies neque mors neque vincula terrent,
respondere cupidinibus, contemnere honores
fortis, et in se ipso totus, teres, atque rotundus,
externi ne quid valeat per leve morari,
in quem manca ruit semper fortuna.⁹⁵

The term "rotundus" in the Vulgate applies to the top of the throne of Solomon.⁹⁶ Bernard very neatly uses the quotation from Horace to elaborate and deepen his allegorical interpretation. Then he takes his allegory an inspired step further. If that is the characteristic of a wise person, how much wiser, then, was she from whom Wisdom itself was born? Mary, the mother of God, was indeed strong and self-reliant and polished.

⁹⁴*In libros Regum*, 971-974.

⁹⁵Horace, *Satires*, 2,7,83-88.

⁹⁶3 Kings 10,19.

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There are, throughout Bernard's poems, a few occurrences of phrases which, if they are intended to refer to a classical source, are not apt. For example, Bernard speaks of the spells and the "tacta limina" of fortune-tellers.⁹⁷ That calls to mind Ovid's account of Cinyras' incest with his daughter Myrrha, "thalami jam limina tangit."⁹⁸ And Bernard uses the phrase "oscula jungit" of the papal legate's official kisses,⁹⁹ which echoes Ovid's "oscula jungat," referring to Clymene kissing her daughters as they turn into trees.¹⁰⁰ Again, "sportula parva," which Bernard uses to mean funerary urns, echoes Juvenal's use of the phrase, meaning food baskets.¹⁰¹ But it is quite possible that Bernard intended no allusion in those cases.

With very few exceptions, Bernard's classical allusions are appropriate to the context in which he uses them, and they show that he understands the context from which they come. For example, the strong, wealthy, respected man dies and lies still, an inert corpse ("truncus iners jacet.")¹⁰² The reference is to Vergil's account of the death of Priam. "Jacet ingens litore truncus,/ avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus."¹⁰³ The change from "ingens" to "iners" would seem to be deliberate (it is certainly meaningful); and Bernard's reflections on death and decay are enhanced by the allusion to the fall of Troy, as they are also in another place, where his "unica mortis imago"¹⁰⁴ echoes Vergil's "ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago."¹⁰⁵

Likewise, Bernard's use of the expression "cana Fides"¹⁰⁶ is clearly intended to call to mind Vergil's "Cana Fides et Vesta,

⁹⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 3,81.

⁹⁸Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 10,456.

⁹⁹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,716.

¹⁰⁰Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2,357.

¹⁰¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,932; Juvenal, 1,95-96.

¹⁰²*De contemptu mundi*, 1,895.

¹⁰³Vergil, *Aeneid*, 2,557-558.

¹⁰⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 3,387.

¹⁰⁵Vergil, *Aeneid*, 2,369.

¹⁰⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,207.

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Remo cum fratre Quirinus/ jura dabunt."¹⁰⁷ Bernard's lesson that venerable Faith is now dead and these are lawless times is reinforced by the reference to Jupiter's prophecy of the establishment of Roman law. And Bernard's adaptation of Ovid's leaden and golden arrows of Cupid is similarly helpful in conveying his meaning.¹⁰⁸ He twice quotes Ovid's "fera regnat Erinyes" to great effect.¹⁰⁹ He quotes very effectively from Ovid in order to make the point that idleness aids concupiscence:

"Ocia si tollas, tollis stimulos" ait ille.
Cedit amor rebus, res age, tutus eris.¹¹⁰

Again, when Bernard uses the phrase "ignis edacibus uritur" to describe a wicked woman eaten by the fires of lust¹¹¹ he wants us to advert to the fire that destroyed Aeneas' house.¹¹² And when he uses the metaphor "stilla cavat lapidem"¹¹³ to refer to lust, he reminds us of Ovid's "gutta cavat lapidem," referring to time.¹¹⁴ And in his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, he explicitly cites Vergil: "Maro quidem dixit: 'Numero deus inpare gaudet.'"¹¹⁵ This is from the same eclogue that gave us the strange allusion to the love charm, but this time it is especially apt, because Vergil's odd number is also the number three and it also has a mystical significance.

Terna tibi haec primum triplici diversa colore
licia circumdo, terque haec altaria circum
effigiem duco; numero deus inpare gaudet.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁷Vergil, *Aeneid* 1,292-293.

¹⁰⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 3,325; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1,468-471.

¹⁰⁹Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1,241; *De octo vitiis*, 817 and 1341. See also line 293.

¹¹⁰*De castitate*, 17-18. Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, 139 and 144.

¹¹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,496.

¹¹²Vergil, *Aeneid*, 2,758. "Ilicet ignis edax summa ad fastigia vento/ volvitur."

¹¹³*De octo vitiis*, 670.

¹¹⁴Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 4,10,5.

¹¹⁵*Carmina de Trinitate*, 362.

¹¹⁶Vergil, *Eclogues*, 8,73-75.

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Sometimes Bernard's classical allusions are thematic. His extensive use of the Golden Age and associated myths is explored in relation to allegory below, pages 303ff. Those myths play a specially important part in the second book of the *De contemptu mundi* and in the *De octo vitiis*, but allusions to them occur throughout the *De contemptu mundi* and there are oblique references in other poems. In the first book of the *De contemptu mundi*, for example, Bernard says:

Justitiae via nulla manet quia virgo recessit,
Cumque sororibus introeuntibus aethera cessit.¹¹⁷

The allusion is to the fall of the Golden Age, succeeded by the ages of bronze and iron, whereafter "the maiden Astraea, last of the immortals, abandoned the blood-soaked earth."

victa jacet pietas, et virgo caede madentis
ultima celestum terras Astraea reliquit.¹¹⁸

Bernard quotes the phrase "victa jacet pietas" in his *De octo vitiis*,¹¹⁹ where he also alludes to Astraea:

Ultima celestum non cernens virgo modestum
In terris aliquid terras Astrea reliquit.¹²⁰

In the third book of the *De contemptu mundi*, Bernard laments:

Sermo dei tacet, ordo perit ...
Per caput illius iste per istius ille licenter
Jurat et abnuit omne quod eruit irreverenter.¹²¹

Bernard expects us to recognise the allusion to the sixth satire of Juvenal. Chastity was a feature of the Golden Age. Some vestiges of it remained under Jove, but only while he was very

¹¹⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1,1011-1012.

¹¹⁸Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1,149-150.

¹¹⁹*De octo vitiis*, 896.

¹²⁰*De octo vitiis*, 1049-1050.

¹²¹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,57-60.

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young, before the Greeks had learned to swear by the other man's head.

... sed Jove nondum
Barbato, nondum Graecis jurare paratis
Per caput alterius ...¹²²

Juvenal continues with a reference to Astraea:

Paulatim deinde ad superos Astraea recessit
Haec [Pudicitia] comite, atque duae pariter fugere
sorores.¹²³

Some allusions to the Golden Age myths are oblique. For example, towards the end of *De octo vitiis*, Bernard describes the riots in Rome at the time of his visit:

Aurum presumit, mox ferrum dextera sumit.
Auro ferroque bellum quod pugnat utroque
Durum succedit.¹²⁴

The reference is to Ovid's story of the myths, in the course of which he says:

Jamque nocens ferrum, ferroque nocentius aurum
prodierat, prodit bellum, quod pugnat utroque,
sanguineaque manu crepitantia concutit arma.¹²⁵

Similarly, Bernard is alluding obliquely to the same group of myths when he laments, "Quando malorum copia latior?"¹²⁶ When Juvenal laments in similar terms, he does so in the context of the myth of the Flood. Not since the time of Deucalion has there been such wickedness.

Et quando uberior vitiorum copia? Quando
Major avaritiae patuit sinus?¹²⁷

¹²²Juvenal, 6,15-17.

¹²³Juvenal, 6,19-20.

¹²⁴*De octo vitiis*, 1337-1339.

¹²⁵Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1,141-143.

¹²⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,947-948.

¹²⁷Juvenal, 1,87-88. See also Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1,318ff.

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Another oblique reference to the same group of myths can be seen in Bernard's complaint about the depravity of his age:

Fraudat versutus, non hospes ab hospite tutus,
Non socer a genero, pax nec laicis neque clero.
Gratia rara patris genito, fratri quoque fratris,
Subjecto domini, nato de fronte patrini.¹²⁸

The allusion is to Ovid's account of the Age of Bronze.

Vivitur ex rapto; non hospes ab hospite tutus,
non socer a genero, fratrum quoque gratia rara est;
imminet exitio vir conjugis, illa mariti ...¹²⁹

Another theme of Bernard's is the golden mean. He uses the expression "ne quid nimis" when he advises his Cluniac brethren in *De octo vitiis* not to overdo fasting: "Esto gule tortor, sed et hic ne quid nimis ortor."¹³⁰ That does not necessarily imply any knowledge of Terence. It is true that, in the *Andria*, a slave says to his master, "Nam id arbitror adprime in vita esse utile, ut nequid nimis."¹³¹ But the aphorism of the golden mean, *mhd n ʒgan*, was no doubt as common in Bernard's day as it was in Aristotle's or, indeed, today. Bernard was certainly interested in the concept of moderation. In *De castitate* he again, and at greater length, advises moderation in fasting. He quotes from Lucan:

Nos servare modum finemque modi retinere
His ipsis verbis pene poeta monet.¹³²

It is not clear how well Bernard knew Lucan's *Pharsalia*. He mentions Lucan in *De octo vitiis*,¹³³ and in the same poem there is another quotation:

¹²⁸*De octo vitiis*, 899-902.

¹²⁹Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1,144-146.

¹³⁰*De octo vitiis*, 763.

¹³¹Terence, *Andria*, 61.

¹³²*De castitate*, 478-479. Lucan, 2,381. Lucan is talking about Cato.

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Juge parat bellum quaciens Bellona flagellum.¹³⁴

Bernard is simply complaining about the scourge of war. Lucan is talking about Caesar, who is "like Bellona brandishing her bloody scourge" as he encourages his troops.¹³⁵ Caesar, for Lucan, is a bloodthirsty ogre, which is not Bernard's picture of him. But these few allusions do not amount to evidence of a good knowledge of Lucan. They are all the kinds of thing that readily find their way into anthologies or school books.

In pursuing the theme of moderation in *De castitate*, Bernard quotes also from Horace:

Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines,
Ultra vel citra quod nequit esse bonum.
Insani sapiens nomen feret, equus iniqui,
Ultra quam satis est si velit esse bonus.¹³⁶

There is a mean in all things. There are, in fact, certain fixed limits, on either side of which there cannot be goodness. If he tries to be excessively good [beyond proper bounds] the wise man will be called foolish, the just man unjust.

This is a neat combination of two passages, one from the *Satires*, the other from the *Epistles*.¹³⁷ A few lines later, Bernard has:

Plusve minusve cavens medio tutissimus ibis,
Inter utrumque vola semper habendo modum.¹³⁸

¹³³*De octo vitiis*, 148.

¹³⁴*De octo vitiis*, 1030.

¹³⁵Lucan, 7,568.

¹³⁶*De castitate*, 480-483.

¹³⁷Horace, *Satires*, 1,1,106-107. (Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines,/ quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum.) *Epistles*, 1,6,15-16. (Insani sapiens nomen ferat, aequus iniqui,/ ultra quam satis est virtutem si petat ipsam.) Bernard makes minimal change to meet metrical requirements. The mood changes may reflect Bernard's text, or his faulty memory.

¹³⁸*De castitate*, 490-491.

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This again is a neat combination of quotations from two different poems, this time by Ovid. "Medio tutissimus ibis" is Sol's advice to his son Phaethon, about the best way to drive the chariot.¹³⁹ "Inter utrumque vola" is Daedalus' advice to his son Icarus about flying with his artificial wings.¹⁴⁰ Bernard alludes to those images in the course of his advice on preserving chastity. In a different context, he adverts again to "mediocritas aurea" in a passage in *De octo vitiis* in which he deals with the inevitability of death and decay. "All the earthly things we see are mutable. The good things we see are here today and snatched away tomorrow."¹⁴¹ He has interesting allusions to Vergil ("alba ligustra cadunt" and "nimium ne crede colori"¹⁴²) and the elder Pliny ("Lilia marcescunt. Cito cedunt que cito crescunt"¹⁴³). He continues:

Mors summum culmen, suprema ferit juga fulmen.
Pape papatum mors tolit, hero dominatum,
Longum quippe statum summis est ferre negatum.
Quo pede mors minimos calcat magnos et opimos.¹⁴⁴

Death strikes the highest height. The lightning strikes the tallest mountain. Death robs the Pope of his papacy; it robs the head of the household of his authority. Even the highest in the land cannot expect a lengthy term of office. The mighty and the wealthy are trampled by death's feet, just as are the least of us.

That looks like conventional "memento mori" preaching. But the reference to Horace gives it another dimension. Horace has:

... celsae graviore casu
decidunt turrets feriuntque summos
fulgura montis.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2,137.

¹⁴⁰Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 2,63.

¹⁴¹*De octo vitiis*, 6-7.

¹⁴²Vergil, *Eclogues*, 2,17-18. *De octo vitiis*, 11 and 83

¹⁴³Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis*, 21,1,1,2.

¹⁴⁴*De octo vitiis*, 17-20.

¹⁴⁵Horace, *Odes*, 2,10, 10-12.

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Horace's point is that we should avoid both the ills of poverty and the excesses of wealth. Bernard's allusion calls to mind the lines in the previous stanza of the ode:

Auream quisquis mediocritatem
diligat, tutus caret obsoleto
sordibus tecti, caret invidenda
sobrius aula.¹⁴⁶

The same theme recurs in Bernard's *De octo vitiis*. Speaking of the miser, he says:

Quantum pondus opum quantumque pecunia crescit,
Crescit amor nummi ...¹⁴⁷

The more his cash and the weight of his wealth grow,
the more his love of money grows.

This looks like the conventional complaint about avarice, but it, too, contains a reference to "mediocritas aurea." What Bernard means to convey is that we should follow the golden mean between poverty and wealth. His source here is Juvenal:

Interea pleno quum turget sacculus ore,
Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crevit;
Et minus hanc optat, qui non habet.¹⁴⁸

When your purse is crammed full with gold, your love of money grows in proportion with your increased wealth. But the man who is not rich has no desire for more.

The point that Juvenal is making, and the point which Bernard's quotation draws attention to, is that the golden mean ordains that sufficiency consists in enough to meet the demands of cold and thirst and hunger,

In quantum sitis atque fames et frigora poscunt,
Quantum, Epicure, tibi parvis suffecit in hortis,
Quantum Socratici ceperunt ante penates.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶Horace, *Odes*, 2,10,5-8.

¹⁴⁷*De octo vitiis*, 408-409.

The examples above show something of the scope and depth of Bernard's classical scholarship. They indicate the authors with whose works he demonstrates a degree of first-hand familiarity. They show some of the authors to whom he refers and topics which he addresses, without necessarily having direct knowledge of any classical text. That evidence of classical learning needs to be put in the context of his use of other sources. Bernard's chief sources, apart from the classics, were the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Fathers and various medieval writers, some of them his contemporaries. An attempt is made in the Appendix to quantify his use of those sources in comparison with his use of classical sources, and to compare his use of sources with that of John of Salisbury, using figures for John's work compiled by Jan van Laarhoven.¹⁵⁰

The easiest to quantify are quotations, whether acknowledged or not, as distinct from references or allusions. Classical quotations predominate in the *De contemptu mundi* and the *De octo vitiis*. Quotations from the Old Testament predominate in the *In libros Regum*, as one might expect from a commentary on the Book of Kings. The *De Trinitate* has the greatest number of quotations from the New Testament, from the Fathers and from medieval writers. The *In libros Regum* has nearly as many quotations from medieval writers as does the *De Trinitate*, because of Bernard's debt to Hrabanus Maurus in his commentary on the Book of Kings.¹⁵¹ Overall, quotations from the classics constitute less than twenty percent of quotations from all sources. They are significantly exceeded by quotations from the Old and New Testaments, and are exceeded even by quotations from medieval writers. Only the Fathers fare worse.

¹⁴⁸Juvenal, 14, 138-140.

¹⁴⁹Juvenal, 14, 319-320.

¹⁵⁰*Entheticus major and minor*, Leyden, Brill, 1987. 3v. (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 17), v.1, p.62-63

¹⁵¹See below, p.278 ff.

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When all allusions and references are taken into account as well as quotations, classical sources and Old Testament sources loom larger, while other sources have somewhat less importance. The number of classical quotations and allusions varies, as one might expect, according to the subject of the poem. The *De contemptu mundi* is a satirical poem about scorn of worldly things; the *De Trinitate* is a doctrinal poem about the Trinity; the *De castitate* is about the virtue of chastity; the *In libros Regum* is a commentary on the Book of Kings; and the *De octo vitiis* is about the eight deadly sins, and is in some ways similar to the *De contemptu mundi*. The textual relationship between the two poems is discussed in Chapter 1, page 17. They contain by far the largest proportion of classical quotations and allusions. If the figures for *De contemptu mundi* and *De octo vitiis* were omitted, Bernard's classical lore would not seem so impressive, and would compare poorly with that of John of Salisbury.

Taking all of John's works and all of Bernard's poems,¹⁵² the proportion of classical quotations and allusions in John's works is about thirty-two percent, while that in Bernard's is about twenty-six percent. On that basis, Bernard bears comparison with one of the foremost classical scholars of his time. But John's work is predominantly prose, a factor which may affect the issue. John of Salisbury's one poem is *Entheticus de dogmate philosophorum*. It has an average of 0.11 classical quotations or references per line. In Bernard's poems, the figures range from 0.08 in the *De octo vitiis* to 0.01 in the *In libros Regum*.

Bernard's classical learning was not merely superficial. Some of his allusions are commonplaces, but many of them show a knowledge of texts and an understanding of the works of several

¹⁵²That is to say, all the works which are quite certainly his.

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classical writers. The classical authors with whom he was most familiar (Horace, Vergil, Ovid and Juvenal) appear to have been steady favourites up to Bernard's time. They are, for example, the authors most frequently cited by the writers included in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.¹⁵³ Bernard not only knew these authors well himself, he also expected his readers to be sufficiently familiar with them to recognise his quotations and allusions, even to the extent that his meaning is sometimes far from clear unless they are recognised. But, although classical lore was important to him, it accounted, overall, for only about a quarter of his total resource, whereas the Vulgate accounted for more than a half.

The extent and depth of Bernard's classical learning are impressive. But it is perhaps worth while to consider classical writers who, on the evidence of manuscripts of their work copied in the eleventh or twelfth century, were well known in Bernard's time, but who are not mentioned by him, nor are their works quoted or alluded to. Birger Munk Olsen's catalogue reveals many such writers, of whom the following are a selection for the sake of example: Apuleius, Celsus, Columella, Florus, Frontinus, Aulus Gellius, Livy, Lucretius, Manilius, Martial, Cornelius Nepos, Petronius, Phaedrus, Plautus, Pliny the younger, Propertius, Publius Syrus, Quintilian, Sallust, Statius, Suetonius, Tacitus, Tibullus, Valerius Flaccus, Valerius Maximus, Vitruvius.¹⁵⁴ Several of these are quoted or alluded to in John of Salisbury's *Entheticus major*, namely: Apuleius, Florus, Frontinus, Aulus Gellius, Lucretius, Martial, Petronius, Publius Syrus, Quintilian, Sallust, Suetonius and Valerius Maximus. On the other hand, Bernard, in the course of his poems, mentions a number of writers whom John fails to mention, quote or allude to in the *Entheticus*, for example

¹⁵³PL 218, 1275-1279. The entries in Migne's index suggest that Lucan, Persius and Terence were next in popularity.

Caesar, Democritus, Demosthenes, Epicurus, Homer and Lucilius.

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In respect of his classical learning, Bernard was evidently not untypical of the regular clergy of his time. Gerald of Wales offers a great deal of anecdotal evidence of ignorance of Latin on the part of the secular clergy,¹⁵⁶ but there are few such complaints about monks or nuns in the twelfth century. Bernard expects his monastic audience to recognise his classical allusions, which suggests that most Cluniac choir monks would, in fact, be able to appreciate them. The comparison with John of Salisbury suggests that Bernard, though not perhaps among the foremost classical scholars of his time, was not among the worst either. Since one of his favourite themes was *mediocritas aurea*, that seems entirely appropriate.

The classical learning of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

Peter the Venerable, writing to Bernard of Clairvaux, praised the saint for his secular learning.

I know that you are as learned and well equipped in secular studies as in the far more useful study of the Scriptures. Since you left Egypt, you are so rich with the spoils of the Egyptians and the wealth of the Hebrews that your richness continues to replenish the poverty of others and you can provide the right solutions to problems.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴Birger Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux X^e et XII^e siècles*, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982-1989, 4v. (Documents, Etudes et Répertoires).

¹⁵⁵Jan van Laarhoven, *John of Salisbury's Entheticus major and minor*, v.3, p.535-541.

¹⁵⁶*Giraldi Cambrensis opera*, edited by J.S. Brewer, volume 2, London, HMSO, 1861, (Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores, Rolls series), p.342. See above, p.136.

¹⁵⁷Peter the Venerable, *The letters of Peter the Venerable*, edited with introduction and notes by Giles Constable, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967, vol.1, p.53.

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Saint Bernard shows in his writings a knowledge of classical Latin literature, but it expresses itself in ways different from those we find in Bernard of Morlaix or John of Salisbury. Saint Bernard makes sparing use of direct quotation or allusion. In all of his works, Bernard Jacqueline has found only fifty quotations from classical authors. Thirteen are from Vergil (12 from *Aeneid*, 1 from *Eclogues*); ten are from Ovid (4 from *Metamorphoses*, the remainder from *Remedia amoris*, *Epistolae ex Ponto*, *Fasti*, and *Amores*); eight are from Horace (7 from *Epistles*, 1 from *Odes*); four are from Terence; three are from Juvenal; three from Persius; two from Cicero (both from *Tusculae disputationes*); two from Seneca; one from Tacitus; and one from Statius. Three of the quotations which Bernard Jacqueline counts as classical are from Boethius.¹⁵⁸

Compared with the classical scholarship of John of Salisbury, or even of Bernard of Morlaix, that may seem a meagre total. Certainly, Saint Bernard can be said to have had some knowledge of those authors, and it is probable that he had the same kind of classical education as had John of Salisbury and Bernard of Morlaix. But none of his quotations and allusions is used in a way that makes it clear that he was familiar with the context in which his author wrote, or with the whole of the work from which he quotes. Most of them are commonplaces. Jean Leclercq has analysed the literary aspects of Saint Bernard's works.¹⁵⁹ He points out that classical references in those works do not suffice to reveal a personal acquaintance with classical literature. It is not simply a matter of failing to give references for his quotations. "Le fait de ne pas donner de référence aux textes cités ou utilisés ne prouve pas l'absence

¹⁵⁸Bernard Jacqueline, "Répertoire des citations d'auteurs profanes dans les oeuvres de saint Bernard," in Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux, *Bernard de Clairvaux*, Paris, Alsatia, 1952, p.549-554.

¹⁵⁹Jean Leclercq, , "Aspects littéraire de l'oeuvre de S. Bernard," in *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits*,

de culture, mais peut-être seulement l'absence de pédanterie, d'autant que le "style noble" n'admettait guère de références précises."¹⁶⁰ But, with the possible exception of his use of a text of Cicero (of which Jean Leclercq remarks "Il reste que ce fut exceptionnel"), Saint Bernard's classical learning seems to be filtered through the writings of the Fathers, especially Jerome and Hrabanus Maurus, or through those of Boethius, or to have come from florilegia.¹⁶¹ Bernard calls himself "the chimera of his age," because he does not behave either like a cleric or like a layman.¹⁶² It is possible that he has in mind passages of Lucretius or Ovid, but the expression was also used by Jerome and others.¹⁶³

And yet Saint Bernard's Latin style is as strongly marked by the Latin classics as it is by the Vulgate and the Fathers, who are also rarely directly cited or quoted.

[Son style], dans son ensemble, leur est certainement redevable, dans une mesure qu'il est difficile de préciser ... Plutôt que telles ou telles expressions, il semble qu'il faille tenir compte des caractères généraux de l'oeuvre écrite de saint Bernard: la qualité de sa latinité, son respect des genres littéraires, la précision du vocabulaire dont il use en ses prologues, son souci de la composition, ses modèles, tels qu'ils apparaîtront bientôt, portent à croire que des auteurs profanes ont exercé sur son esprit une influence réelle. Mais il l'a subie, il l'a reçue à la manière d'un génie, dont la très vigoureuse personnalité n'éprouve même plus le besoin de se référer à ses prédécesseurs: il les a dépassés.¹⁶⁴

3, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1969, p.14-104. See especially "Les auteurs profanes," p. 68-72.

¹⁶⁰ibid., p.69.

¹⁶¹ibid., p.69.

¹⁶²PL 182, 451. "Ego enim quaedam chimaera sum mei saeculi, nec clericum gero nec laicum."

¹⁶³Jean Leclercq, *Recueil*, p.69-70.

¹⁶⁴ibid., p.72 See also Jean Leclercq, "L'écrivain," in *Bernard de Clairvaux; histoire, mentalités, spiritulalité*, Paris, Cerf, 1992 (Sources chrétiennes 380) p.547-548.

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Brian Patrick McGuire makes a similar point, without making such a large claim for Saint Bernard's genius in kicking the empty pail:

Bernard, like many other twelfth-century writers, is difficult to catch making direct quotations from the Fathers or from classical literature. His language is always his own, with faint echoes of a thorough and intense training in Latin grammar but without the mark of individual authors.¹⁶⁵

Thomas Renna has examined Saint Bernard's attitude to classical learning. He concludes that Saint Bernard distinguished between monastic learning, on the one hand, as personal and experiential, and clerical learning, on the other hand, as related to service. He disapproved of the study of the *artes liberales* by cloistered monks, because such studies do not increase a monk's love, self-knowledge or humility, and because they are incompatible with the monk's peculiar way of knowing God. But he approved of the study of classical authors by clerics, because such studies can be used in the refutation of error and the instruction of Christians, and because they increase a prelate's effectiveness as an administrator and defender of the church's customs and rights. Only for monks did Saint Bernard oppose the study of pagan writings. He took it for granted that clerics must pursue classical studies in their preparation for pastoral work.¹⁶⁶

It was, as we saw, precisely because of its advantages in administration and pastoral work that Peter the Venerable praised Saint Bernard's secular learning. Saint Bernard was certainly a monk, but he was hardly cloistered. However much he

¹⁶⁵Brian Patrick McGuire, *The difficult saint; Bernard of Clairvaux and his tradition*, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1991, p.47-48.

¹⁶⁶Thomas Renna, "St Bernard and the pagan classics: an historical view," in *The chimaera of his age: studies on Bernard of Clairvaux*, edited by E. Rozanne Elder and John R.

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may have preferred otherwise, he was very actively engaged in the world of politics and ecclesiastical administration. He exercised an extraordinary authority, perhaps greater than that of any ecclesiastic before or since.¹⁶⁷ He was a prime mover, for example, in such matters as healing the papal schism, opposing Abelard, resisting the Albigenses and preaching the crusade, and he exerted considerable influence also through his old pupil Pope Eugenius III. It may well be, as Peter the Venerable implied and as his own view of the value of classical learning suggested, that Saint Bernard's Latin culture was of value to him in these unmonastic affairs. But at the same time, his attitude towards secular learning may have had as much influence as the requirements of the noble style of the "doctor melifluus" in suppressing explicit allusions to and quotations from classical authors in his writings.

The classical scholarship of John of Salisbury is regarded as typical of twelfth-century humanism. The difficulties of the term "humanism," and especially of the loose and confusing way in which it is used in relation to the twelfth century, were discussed above, page 112ff. One aspect of that difficulty is illustrated by the fact that the scholarship of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, quite different from that of John of Salisbury, is also taken to be an expression of humanism. It is true that Charles Homer Haskins, though he discusses several aspects of Saint Bernard, does not appear to regard him as in any sense a humanist. He was "first and foremost a preacher, and a fundamentalist preacher at that ... Between a mystic like Bernard and a rationalist like Abaelard there was no common

Sommerfeldt, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1980 (Cistercian Publications 63), p.122-131.

¹⁶⁷F.J.E. Raby says that "he ruled the fortunes of Christendom." (*A history of Christian-Latin poetry from the beginnings to the close of the middle ages*, 2nd edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.327.)

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ground ..."¹⁶⁸ Haskins regards Peter Abelard as "the bright particular star" of the twelfth-century renaissance.¹⁶⁹ But later writers have seen Saint Bernard in a different light.¹⁷⁰

In the case of Saint Bernard, it cannot be any revival of classical learning or use of classical authors as "auctores," or even to embellish his prose, which makes him a humanist. It seems, rather, to be certain philosophical preconceptions that are attributed to Saint Bernard that make him a humanist. Emero Stiegman, for example, in a study of humanism in Bernard of Clairvaux, comes to the following conclusion:

If St. Bernard is, through a set of philosophical assumptions, a platonic spiritualist, he is, through the experiential depth of the saint and the unruly objectivity of the artist, a Christian humanist.¹⁷¹

Jean Leclercq, discussing monastic theology, comments that, despite the diversity of that theology, "the greatest figure, ... the one that dominated all others, was that of a Cistercian: St Bernard."¹⁷² He finds elements of humanism in that theology.

In short, the humanism of the monks consisted less in borrowing its means of expression from the writers of Antiquity than in preserving, developing, and analyzing Christian convictions about the dignity of man - a concept increasingly formulated during the middle ages in terms of "nobility." To these basically optimistic intuitions writers gave

¹⁶⁸Charles Homer Haskins, *The renaissance of the twelfth century*, New York, World Publishing, 1957 (first published Harvard University Press, 1927), p.257-258.

¹⁶⁹ibid., p.260.

¹⁷⁰See, for example, Irénée Valléry-Radot, "L'écrivain, l'humaniste," in *Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux, Bernard de Clairvaux*, Paris, Alsatia, 1953, p.447-485.

¹⁷¹Emero Stiegman, "Humanism in Bernard of Clairvaux: beyond literary culture," in, *The chimaera of his age; studies on Bernard of Clairvaux*, edited by E. Rozanne Elder and John R. Sommerfeldt, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1980, p. 31.

¹⁷²Jean Leclercq, "The renewal of theology," in *Renaissance and renewal in the twelfth century*, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982, p.72.

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expression suffused with beauty and poetry. This confidence in man, this refinement of sensibility, this quality of language: are these not so many tokens of a true humanism?¹⁷³

But Saint Bernard's "humanism" is summed up somewhat differently by Irénée Valéry-Radot:

A ses yeux, le seul humanisme digne de l'homme est celui que l'Épître aux Ephésiens appelle "L'âge de la plénitude du Christ" (Eph.IV,13), où ayant enfin recouvré l'intégrité de sa ressemblance divine, devenu un seul esprit et un seul corps avec le Fils, l'homme parfait, *vir perfectus*, récapitule en lui toute la Création visible que sa chair résume et l'entraîne, transfigurée, dans la Gloire éternelle du Père qui lui a été promise avant la constitution du monde.¹⁷⁴

The attempts to depict Saint Bernard as a humanist illustrate the difficulties of applying that term to the twelfth century. Saint Bernard, the chimera of his age, was exceptional in every respect. Bernard of Morlaix, by contrast, emerges as representative of his time in relation to his classical scholarship.

Actores and auctores

Twelfth century attitudes toward classical texts were not uniform. A.J. Minnis discusses a difference of opinion between Bernard of Chartres and his pupil William of Conches, which is recorded in an anonymous twelfth-century commentary on Juvenal. The commentator raises the question of the part of philosophy to which Juvenal's satires belong. He quotes Bernard of Chartres as stating that poetry does not treat of philosophy, but he says that William of Conches responded with a distinction between

¹⁷³ibid., p.85.

¹⁷⁴Irénée Valléry-Radot, "L'écrivain," p.485.

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mere writers (*actores*) and writers who are authorities (*auctores*).¹⁷⁵

John of Salisbury regards classical writers as *auctores*. In the *Entheticus major*, he satirises those who have no respect for the classics.

So, unless you speak with words pleasing to children, the chattering crowd will spit in your face. If you savour the authors [*auctores*], if you refer to the writings of the ancients, in order to establish anything, if you wish perhaps to prove it, from all around they will shout: "What's this old ass aiming at?"¹⁷⁶

In the *Metalogicon* he says that we should show respect for the words of these authorities [*auctores*]; anyone who is ignorant of them is handicapped because they are very effective when used for proof or refutation.¹⁷⁷ He continues:

Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants in order to be able to see more and further than they can, not because of the sharpness of our own sight or the height of our own bodies, but because we are lifted up and carried high on their huge elevation.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵A.J. Minnis, *Medieval theory of authorship; scholastic literary attitudes in the later middle ages*, 2nd ed., Aldershot, Wildwood House, 1988, p.25-26.

¹⁷⁶John of Salisbury, *Entheticus major*, 39-43. The translation is that of Jan van Laarhoven, p.106.

¹⁷⁷John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* 3,4. "Preterea reverentia exhibenda est verbis auctorum, cum cultu et assiduitate utendi; tum quia quandam a magnis nominibus antiquitatis preferunt majestatem, tum quia dispendiosius ignorantur, cum ad urgendum aut resistendum potentissima sint."

¹⁷⁸*ibid.* "Dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos gigantium humeris insidentes, ut possimus plura eis et remotiora videre, non utique proprii visus acumine aut eminentia corporis, sed quia in altum subvehimur et extollimur magnitudine gigantea." It seems preferable to read "ut possimus videre" as purposive, because that better expresses John's point that we deliberately make use of classical *auctores*. Compare, for example, Daniel D. McGarry's translation: "Bernard of Chartres used to compare us to [puny] dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants. He pointed out that we see more and farther than our

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This view of classical writers appears to have special associations with the School of Chartres.¹⁷⁹ Caesarius of Heisterbach reports more extreme views at Paris. In a dialogue between a monk and a novice, he has the novice ask what are the major errors of these men of Paris, so advanced in both knowledge and years. The monk replies:

They say that the body of Christ is no different in the bread of the altar than in other bread and in anything you like. And they say that God has spoken through Ovid just as he has through Augustine.¹⁸⁰

Bernard of Morlaix does not agree with the School of Chartres, let alone with the scholars of Paris. For the most part, classical authors are, for him, *actores* rather than *auctores*. In the *De contemptu mundi*, he addresses the issue of the teaching of the classics as compared with the teaching of the works of the fathers of the Church.

Who, nowadays, takes the trouble to ensure that Christian literature is taught as well as pagan literature, and to teach Christian verses which proclaim the truth and to commit them to memory? It is the man who is clever at disputation and who has quick, scholarly wits who seeks to be made abbot, not by good deeds, but by verbal dexterity. The mouth of such a man prates of Socrates and is twisted with sophisms. He boasts of his cleverness, and he aims at ecclesiastical preferment well beyond his deserving.

predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature." (*The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury; a twelfth-century defence of the verbal and logical arts of the Trivium*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1962, p.167.) The implication is that we just happen to be on the giants' shoulders, while John is concerned to stress that we ought to take pains to climb up there.

¹⁷⁹A. Clerval, *Les écoles de Chartres au moyen âge (du Ve au XVIe siècle)*, Paris, 1895 (reprinted Minerva 1965), p.311.

¹⁸⁰Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Caesarii Heisterbacensis monachi ordinis Cisterciensis Dialogus miraculorum*, [edited by] Joseph Strange, vol 1., Cologne, Heberle, 1851 (reprinted Gregg, 1966), p.304.

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He is made a bishop because of his knowledge of classical grammar and sophistry. He is not a bridge to heaven but rather a gateway to hell. He dabbles briefly in the lessons of the trivium and quadrivium, and then seeks high positions, walking proud and prowling like a lion. His ambition is unbridled. He knows about Agenor and Melibaeus [Philoctetes], he is familiar with the Sapphic metre, he has read Caesar's *Civil war*,¹⁸¹ he knows the story of Capaneus. Classical grammar, classical verse, classical comedy are nowadays very highly regarded. They are supposed to teach important moral lessons. By contrast, my Gregory [Saint Gregory the Great] is studied last of all and is quickly put aside, not meeting with approval. Yet his glory will have no end through all the ages. The world will sing his everlasting praise. His golden and fiery style will never die. He will always have followers who will make sure his pages are read. While Platos and Ciceros have been carried off to hell, Gregory has been taken up into heaven, where he lives in the bosom of the Godhead. He must be read again and again, in detail and faithfully, but pagan poetic styles must be rejected. It is disgraceful to mingle the teachings of Christ with pagan learning. Jupiter's fame will not last, but the fame and honour of Christ are pre-eminent.¹⁸²

To some extent, this is conventional denigration of classical learning, of the kind satirised by John of Salisbury. Robert Bultot finds it full of contradictions.

Bannir le style poétique des Gentils, n'est-ce pas pour Bernard se condamner lui-même? Sans aucune doute, il vise la mythologie, les "fables", les sujets profanes, la recherche des beautés de la forme pour elles-mêmes. Echappe-t-il cependant, sur ce point, à toute contradiction? Sa conception d'une littérature chrétienne est sincère et il a "christianisé" Thalie, mais il est non moins manifeste qu'il se complait dans l'étude de l'Antiquité païenne et aime faire étalage de son érudition.¹⁸³

But the contradiction is not, perhaps, as great as it seems. In the context of the distinction between *actores* and *auctores*, it

¹⁸¹"mala civica," line 306. The reference may be to Lucan rather than to Caesar.

¹⁸²*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 295-320.

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is clear that Bernard is not talking about a knowledge of classical writers. He takes that for granted, as part of the equipment of any educated person. Rather, he is saying that we should not regard classical writers as authorities. Only the Scriptures and the Fathers are *auctores*. The giants on whose shoulders we stand are the Prophets, the Apostles and the Fathers, rather than the classical writers of antiquity.¹⁸⁴ Nor, perhaps, is it altogether fair to suggest that Bernard takes pleasure in his classical learning and likes to display it. In very few of the instances quoted above was such motivation evident. In most cases, it was clear that Bernard was using his erudition to enhance his meaning. He used classical allusions and quotations from classical authors as an aid to communication, because that was the custom of his day. He was not parading an extraordinary erudition.

Bernard uses classical allusions in much the same way as we, today, might use allusions to *Hamlet* or *The pilgrim's progress* or *The four quartets*, not to display our learning, but to clarify and enhance the meaning we wish to convey, because everybody (that is to say, all of our intended audience) has read Shakespeare and Bunyan and Eliot. That is quite unlike the use of classical allusions recommended by John of Salisbury. We do not suppose that we are engaging in either proof or refutation, but we recognise that clarity of communication depends upon modes of presentation, and that we need to be aware of what our audience expects.

¹⁸³Robert Bultot, "La doctrine du mépris du monde chez Bernard le Clusien," *Moyen âge* 70 (1964):203-204.

¹⁸⁴In Chartres Cathedral (which is in the same diocese as Nogent-le-Rotrou) there are stained glass windows depicting Saint Matthew seated on Isaiah's shoulders, Saint John on Ezekiel's, Saint Mark on Daniel's, and Saint Luke on Jeremiah's. There are similar depictions elsewhere. The pygmy is not necessarily inferior to the giant. (Robert K. Merton, *On the shoulders of giants*, p.183-192).

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Bernard does not quote his classical sources in order to prove or refute. He does not regard them as authoritative. The point he wishes to make is sometimes conveyed through a disagreement with the writer he quotes. For example, he reinforces his description of hell by an explicit rejection of the picture presented in the *Aeneid*. The regimen of hell, he says, does not include Aeacus or Rhadamanthus or Cerberus or Charon or Orpheus or Typhoeus or Sisyphus or Prometheus.¹⁸⁵ Nor are the Elysian Fields in hell.¹⁸⁶ Vergil does not, in fact, mention Aeacus or Sisyphus. He does mention Typhoeus and Prometheus, but not in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. Bernard is using Vergil in order to criticise a version of classical mythology.¹⁸⁷ It is clear that he does not regard Vergil (whom he quotes extensively throughout his poems) or classical lore as having any kind of authority.

Similarly, Bernard is at pains to contradict Horace. "Falso Flaccus ait 'Nihil omni parte beatum.'" ¹⁸⁸ Just as he uses his rejection of Vergil's account of hell to reinforce his own account, so he denies Horace's dictum that nothing is good in all respects in order to give greater force to his praise of Mary, who is altogether good. Again, in relation to the prophets and apostles, he says that they "stand foursquare, good in all respects."¹⁸⁹

But even when he is not concerned to disagree with his source, Bernard does not, as is clear from the examples above, use them to prove or refute, but to illuminate or clarify his point. There is one exception. Bernard does regard Horace as an

¹⁸⁵*De contemptu mundi* 1,587-592.

¹⁸⁶*ibid.*, 643-646.

¹⁸⁷Not all versions of the myth put Elysium in the underworld. Homer, for example, puts it "at the world's end ... where no snow falls, no strong winds blow and there is never rain, but day after day the West Wind's tuneful breeze comes from Ocean ..." (*Odyssey*, 4,561-569). See also Hesiod, *Works and days*, 167-173.

¹⁸⁸*In libros Regum*, 989; Horace, *Odes* 2,16,27.

¹⁸⁹*In libros Regum*, 697.

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authority in the area of literary composition. In the prologue to the *De contemptu mundi*, he writes:

I must admit that Horace, too, in order to instruct his students, the Pisos, and also in order to restrain those of us who, as he puts it, "write poems all over the place, whether we are educated or not"¹⁹⁰ - I must admit, I say, that Horace, in his *Ars poetica*, expressed the same opinion as myself. He taught that a work should be subjected to correction for a long time, with many erasures and amendments to bring it to a perfect finish ten times,¹⁹¹ and that publication of it should be suppressed for eight years.¹⁹² Yet there are those who are so imprudent, indeed impudent, as to produce and publish the brain-children they have indiscriminately written. Such people are "ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth."¹⁹³ They disdain the judgement of others, quite satisfied with their own judgement, and they think they know something.¹⁹⁴

There is no doubt that this passage, in some sort, presents Horace as an authority, and uses what he says to prove a point. But it is significant that it is put forward with considerable hesitation. The repetition of "Mentior si non etiam Flaccus Oratius" and "mentior, inquam, si non et Flaccus" is equivalent to, "Well, he's not really an authority, but perhaps it's worth mentioning that Horace says ..." And, to drive home his point securely, Bernard feels obliged to bring up the heavy guns of Scripture. Another context in which Bernard uses Horace as an authority is that of the value of saying things in verse. Again in the prologue of the *De contemptu mundi*, he writes:

It is not surprising that I write in verse. "Poets want either to instruct or to entertain, or both, and to say things honourable and suitable to life."¹⁹⁵ The

¹⁹⁰Horace, *Epistles*, 2,1,117. "Scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim."

¹⁹¹Horace, *Ars poetica*, 293-294.

¹⁹²*ibid*, 388.

¹⁹³2 Timothy 3,7.

¹⁹⁴*De contemptu mundi*, Prologue.

¹⁹⁵Horace, *Ars poetica* 333-334. Horace has "Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae/ aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere

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fact is that what is written and published in poetic form is more gladly listened to and more avidly read, and for that reason is more readily committed to deep memory.¹⁹⁶

Bernard uses the same allusion to Horace in the *Carmina de Trinitate*,¹⁹⁷ where he follows it with a further Horatian quotation, "The poet who mixes the useful with the sweet gains unqualified applause."¹⁹⁸ But in both cases he is careful not to rely upon Horace alone to justify his use of verse. He points out that parts of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are presented in verse form.¹⁹⁹

But Horace is the only exception. He is the only classical writer whom Bernard regards as an *auctor*, and then only in relation to literary composition. The examples above indicate that Bernard's classical quotations are meant to illuminate and decorate, not to prove or refute. Of course, many of his quotations from the Scriptures and the Fathers serve exactly the same purpose. For example, when he writes, "Est radix omnis meroris avaricie vis,"²⁰⁰ the allusion to Saint Paul's letter²⁰¹ is intended to adorn his argument about Rome's avarice, rather than to demonstrate it. And when he writes "A contrite heart will awaken Jesus when he is asleep,"²⁰² the allusion to

vitae." Bernard, with no constraints of metre or rhyme in his prose prologue, misquotes, "Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae/ aut utrumque, et honesta et idonea dicere vitae." He misses the point of the contrast between "jucunda" and "idonea." Since exactly the same misquotation occurs in the *Carmina de Trinitate* (297-298), it is possible that metrical considerations influenced Bernard in that poem and that he copied his misquotation into the *De contemptu mundi*. If that is the case, the *Carmina de Trinitate* may have been written before the *De contemptu mundi*.

¹⁹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus.

¹⁹⁷*Carmina de Trinitate*, 297-298.

¹⁹⁸Horace, *Ars poetica*, 343; *Carmina de Trinitate*, 300.

¹⁹⁹*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus; *Carmina de Trinitate* 294-296.

²⁰⁰*De octo vitiis*, 1300.

²⁰¹I Timothy 6,10. "Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas."

²⁰²*De octo vitiis*, 1385.

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Matthew's gospel²⁰³ and to Psalm 50²⁰⁴ is meant to get Pope Eugenius in the right frame of mind rather than to prove anything. We are expected to recognise the allusion, and the very fact of recognition establishes that we have a shared heritage. We belong, as it were, to the same club, and recognition of our fellowship assists communication. In that respect, Bernard's Scriptural and patristic allusions are not different from his classical allusions.

But there is another dimension to Bernard's quotations from and allusions to the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers. Some of the manuscripts of the *De contemptu mundi* carry a gloss which conveniently illustrates the way in which Scriptural and patristic allusions and quotations have a function additional to that performed by classical allusions and quotations.

The author reinforces his opening lines with the authority of the Apostle John, who said, "Little children, it is the latest hour."²⁰⁵ By preferring the Apostle's words to his own, he captures the reader's good will.²⁰⁶

That neatly encapsulates the double function of many of Bernard's Scriptural and patristic quotations and allusions. On the one hand, they are designed to capture the reader's goodwill; on the other hand, they are endowed with authority, which buttresses the point Bernard is making. They are often quite explicitly designed to prove a point. When he wants to convince us of the reality of the fires of hell, Bernard says:

²⁰³Matthew 8,24-25. "And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves but he was asleep. And they came to him and awaked him saying: Lord save us, we perish."

²⁰⁴Psalm 50,19. "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

²⁰⁵1 John 2,18.

²⁰⁶*De contemptu mundi*, ed. Hoskier, p.xxxix. For the full text of the gloss, see above, p.69.

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I am not making all this up ... What I say is proven. God will make the wicked "as an oven of fire,"²⁰⁷ as David said, referring to those who are friends of this world ... Both [Jesus, who is] God made man, and Job, who was so sorely tested, tell us that sinners are punished for their offences. A person who is exceedingly sinful and who willingly maintains his inner darkness will be "cast into the exterior darkness,"²⁰⁸ as God has assured us. If you do not weep in this world, you will have "weeping and gnashing of teeth"²⁰⁹ in the next ... There is positive proof that there will be punishment by cold and fire for sinners who perish and pay for their deeds. Mark well the Book of Job, for Job also says in his sacred verses that a swift transition drives them from snow to fire.²¹⁰ This evidence is impregnable, so my pen's flank is covered, as if it were well protected by king, attendant, prince and soldier.²¹¹

The works of the Fathers as well as the words of Scripture are quoted as authorities. In his introduction to the *De Trinitate*, Bernard writes:

As far as I could I have "raised my voice amid the rocks"²¹² and have expressed in verse form not only the meaning but the very words of the Fathers.²¹³

Bernard uses Scriptural texts to support his teaching on the Trinity. "Per David et Paulum vel plures dicta probemus."²¹⁴ But the Fathers, especially Augustine, are also paraphrased extensively throughout the poem, and Boethius features largely. Throughout Bernard's poems, the Old and New Testaments, the writings of the fathers and even of others such as Boethius and Hrabanus Maurus, are treated as authoritative in a way that the writings of classical authors are not.

²⁰⁷Psalms 20, 10.

²⁰⁸Matthew 8,12. See also Matthew 22,13.

²⁰⁹ibid.

²¹⁰Job 24,19. "Let him pass from the snow waters to excessive heat: and his sin even to hell."

²¹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1,549-576.

²¹²Psalms 103,12.

²¹³*De Trinitate*, 21-23.

²¹⁴*De Trinitate*, 550. "David," here, means the Psalms.

In the context of the total range of literary sources which he uses, Bernard's classical learning may be roughly quantified as constituting about a quarter of his resource, while the Vulgate provides about a half and the balance is made up of the Fathers and medieval writers. Qualitatively, the Latin classics are important as an element in communication, but classical writers do not have, for Bernard, the same authority as Scripture or the Fathers or even some medieval writers.

Greek scholarship

Bernard's classical learning is essentially Latin. H.C. Hoskier's opinion that Bernard "is not unacquainted with Greek" is based on the fact that he "sometimes uses Greek words."²¹⁵ It is certainly true that Bernard makes extensive use of Greek words. Some of them are classical Latin borrowings, which one might expect to have been part of Bernard's Latin vocabulary. For example, in his description of a soldier, he writes, "castra perambulat, omnia strangulat, estque cerasta."²¹⁶ "Cerasta" undoubtedly derives from *kerast*»j, but the word is used by Pliny to mean a horned worm. Bernard is more likely to have got it from Ovid (for whom the Cerastae were a horned people of Cyprus) or from Lucan.²¹⁷ Again, he uses the word "cymba" (from *kÚmbh*) for Charon's boat, but he no doubt got that from Vergil.²¹⁸ Similarly, Bernard uses *crocodilus* (from *krokòdeiloj*),²¹⁹ *cumbalum* (for *cymbalum*, from *kÚmbalon*),²²⁰ *dragma* (for *drachma*, from *dracm*»),²²¹ *hylaris* (for *hilaris*, from *flaròj*),²²² *phiala* (from

²¹⁵Hoskier, *De contemptu mundi*, p. ix.

²¹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,250.

²¹⁷Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 10,222ff. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 9,716.

²¹⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 1,589; Vergil, *Aeneid*, 6, 303.

²¹⁹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,588.

²²⁰*In libros Regum*, 887.

²²¹*De Trinitate*, 336, 337, 339, 341.

²²²*De Trinitate*, 1014 and *In libros Regum*, 878.

fiēlh),²²³ phreneticus (from frenhtikōj),²²⁴ rumbus (for rhombus, here meaning "turbot," from ·ōmboj),²²⁵ scyphus (from skúfoj),²²⁶ and zona (from zēnh).²²⁷ All these, and many other Greek words which enrich Bernard's vocabulary were already absorbed into Latin usage in classical times.

Some of Bernard's Greek words derive from the Vulgate. Gazofylacium (from gazofulēkion),²²⁸ for instance, which Hoskier gives as an example of Bernard's knowledge of Greek, is found in 4 Kings 12,9. Likewise, dechachordum (from dekēcordon)²²⁹ is found in Psalms 91,4; mechia (for moechia, from moice...a)²³⁰ is found in Matthew 5, 27-28 and elsewhere; pseudopropheta (from yeudoprofēthj)²³¹ is found in Matthew 24,11; allegoria (derived from ἄλληγορίαν)²³² is found in Galatians 4,24; zelus (from zēloj)²³³ is found in Numbers 25,11; helemosina (for eleemosyna, from ἑλεμωσύνη)²³⁴ is found in Matthew 6,2; and thinus (for thyinus, from thinoj)²³⁵ is found in 3 Kings 10,11 and in Apocalypse 18,12.

The Latin Fathers provide another source for Bernard's Greek words. An example which Hoskier advances to demonstrate Bernard's knowledge of Greek is monomachia (from monomac...a).²³⁶ It is found in Cassiodorus. And castrimargus (for gastrimargus, from gastr...margoj)²³⁷ is found in Ambrose, though "gaster" is a classical borrowing. Similarly found in the Latin Fathers are

²²³*De contemptu mundi*, 1,676; 2,625.

²²⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 1,812.

²²⁵*De octo vitiis*, 563.

²²⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 3,396; *In libros Regum*, 191.

²²⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 2,387.

²²⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 1,462

²²⁹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,238.

²³⁰*De octo vitiis*, 1015

²³¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,713.

²³²*In libros Regum*, 847.

²³³*De contemptu mundi*, 2,424.

²³⁴*In libros Regum*, 158.

²³⁵*In libros Regum*, 886.

²³⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 3,73.

²³⁷*De octo vitiis*, 482, 589.

anagoge (from *anagoge*);²³⁸ antiphona (from *antiphona*);²³⁹ necromantii (derived from *nekromante...a*);²⁴⁰ paranympus (from *paranympus*);²⁴¹ flemma (for phlegma, from *flegma*);²⁴² usia (from *usia*);²⁴³ idolatres (for idololatres, from *idololatres*);²⁴⁴ and theoricus (from *theoricus*).²⁴⁵ Presbyter (from *presbyter*) is common in the Latin Fathers. The variation "presbyterissa" may be Bernard's coinage.²⁴⁶

Bernard uses the word atomus (from *atomus*).²⁴⁷ In its primary sense, it is a classical borrowing. In the sense in which Bernard uses it, "a moment of time," it is found in Tertullian. In the *De castitate servanda*, Bernard puns on the word *agnus*: "Agnos agnus amat."²⁴⁸ The word play entails the Greek word *ignōj*, meaning "pure." The same pun appears in the *De Trinitate*: "Misterio magno datur agnis agnus in agno."²⁴⁹ This is strongly reminiscent of a passage from Hildebert of Lavardin's penitential prayer before celebration of the Eucharist: "Mysterio magno proprians sis agnus in agno."²⁵⁰ Bernard twice uses the image of the "littera Pythagorea," that is to say, the letter gamma, which represents the divergent paths of good and evil.²⁵¹ The same image appears in both Persius and Ausonius. Likewise, tetragonalis (derived from *tetragwnon*)²⁵² is found in Ausonius and Boethius.

²³⁸*In libros Regum*, 848.

²³⁹*De castitate*, 521.

²⁴⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 82.

²⁴¹*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 395.

²⁴²*De octo vitiis*, 135.

²⁴³*De Trinitate*, 55, 62 and elsewhere.

²⁴⁴*De Trinitate*, 250; *In libros Regum*, 23.

²⁴⁵*In libros Regum*, 996, 1003.

²⁴⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2, 293.

²⁴⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1, 725.

²⁴⁸*De castitate*, 143.

²⁴⁹*De Trinitate*, 1199.

²⁵⁰PL 171, 1426.

²⁵¹*De contemptu mundi*, 1, 268; 1, 761.

²⁵²*De castitate*, 366.

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Those examples may suffice to show that Bernard's Greek was filtered through a Latin literary tradition. His vocabulary included many words which derive from the Greek, but there is no evidence that he had any knowledge of the Greek language. Nor is there evidence that he had any intimate knowledge of classical Greek literature, even in translation. The examples of his classical allusions and quotations which were analysed above show that he had no direct acquaintance with the works of any Greek classical writer. Such knowledge as he shows comes occasionally, perhaps, through translation or epitome,²⁵³ but more frequently through references in his Latin sources. Even his quotations from the Septuagint are taken from John Cassian's Latin translation from the Greek.²⁵⁴

Birger Munk Olsen says that the two most frequently mentioned characteristics of John of Salisbury's humanism are his excellent Latin, in an exquisite style, and his vast erudition.²⁵⁵ John was not primarily a poet. Helen Waddell, though she has a lot to say about him, does not mention the *Entheticus* in her *Wandering scholars*, nor is it represented in F.J.E. Raby's *Oxford book of medieval Latin verse*. His poetry is of a different kind from that written by Bernard of Morlaix. The *Entheticus* is written entirely in regular elegiac couplets. John does not draw upon the range of verse forms available to him, and so skilfully exploited by Bernard of Morlaix or by others such as Hildebert of Lavardin or Peter Abelard. He makes no use of rhyme. His style, as regards prosody and grammar, is more classical than Bernard's. It is also more classical as regards vocabulary. But Bernard's vocabulary is extraordinarily rich. It is true that an inflected language like Latin lends

²⁵³The availability of translations and epitomes of Homer, for example, is indicated by Munk Olsen (*L'étude des auteurs classique*, v.1, p.413-420).

²⁵⁴*De castitate*, 148-152.

²⁵⁵Birger Munk Olsen, "L'humanisme de Jean de Salisbury; un ciceronien au 12e siècle," *Entretiens sur la renaissance du 12e*

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itself to rhyme, but the demands of the rhyme forms chosen by Bernard²⁵⁶ would put a severe strain on a strictly classical vocabulary. It is that factor, rather than any knowledge of the Greek language or interest in Greek learning, that accounts for the large number of Greek words in Bernard's poems.

John of Salisbury was "in all the Latin literature that was accessible to him ... obviously the best-read scholar of his age."²⁵⁷ In respect of his attitude toward the authority of classical writers, Bernard was in some ways like, and in other ways unlike John. In a similar manner, in respect of his knowledge of Greek, Bernard was in some ways like, and in other ways unlike John. Like Bernard, John of Salisbury knew no Greek.²⁵⁸ But, while there is no evidence that Bernard ever tried to learn Greek, or thought it important to do so, John made an attempt to learn the language, though "he never professes to have read any Greek without such assistance [as that provided by John Saracenus]."²⁵⁹ Unlike Bernard, John was familiar with classical Greek literature, even if only in Latin translation.

Only the Latin book produces that type of educated man whom John thinks fit to master political tasks by moral and intellectual strength; Greek literature therefore, in spite of the overwhelming importance of its philosophers, seemed to belong to a strange and antagonistic world. What John knew and read of Plato

siècle, sous la direction de Maurice de Gandillac et Edouard Jeuneau, Paris, Mouton, 1968, p.53.

²⁵⁶See Chapter 6.

²⁵⁷John Edwin Sandys, *A history of classical scholarship*, vol.1, *From the sixth century BC to the end of the middle ages*, New York, Hafner, 1958, p.542.

²⁵⁸Walter Berschin, *Greek letters and the Latin middle ages from Jerome to Nicholas of Cusa*, Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 1988, p.239-240. See also Van Laarhoven, *John of Salisbury's Entheticus major*, v.1, p.16 and v.2, p.268, and Sandys, *A history of classical scholarship*, v.1, p.540;

²⁵⁹Sandys, loc. cit. See also Berschin, *Greek letters*, p.240-242 and 268.

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and Aristotle was derived from Latin reports and Latin translation.²⁶⁰

John devotes more than 300 lines of the *Entheticus* to notes on the Greek philosophers. He discusses Arcesilas, Zeno, Pythagoras, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Aristotle and Plato.²⁶¹ He is interested in questions of the certainty of human knowledge, cosmology, natural philosophy, the origin of the human soul and ethics, the last two being the most important for him. He gives most space to Plato (or rather to Neoplatonism). Of Aristotle, he says, "If anyone is not of the opinion that Aristotle is to be considered as the first, he does not render the tribute worthy to his merits."²⁶² But John owes more to Cicero than to the Greek philosophers. "The Latin world held nothing greater than Cicero; compared to his eloquence Greece was dumb. Rome pits him against all the Greeks or shows him off."²⁶³ As Birger Munk Olsen comments, "Bien qu'il soit héritier de la tradition platonicienne de l'école de Chartres, et propagateur et commentateur enthousiaste de la logique aristotélicienne, Jean de Salisbury se range résolument dans la tradition latine."²⁶⁴

Likewise, Walter of Chatillon was no doubt well aware of the interest in Greek philosophy developing in the schools of Paris and Chartres. But his *Alexandreis* shows no direct knowledge of Greek language or literature. All his sources are Latin. "Walter knew very little about the Greece whose world empire he conjured up to challenge that of Rome and its heirs."²⁶⁵

²⁶⁰Hans Liebeschütz, *Mediaeval humanism in the life and writings of John of Salisbury*, London, Warburg institute, University of London, 1950, p.64.

²⁶¹John of Salisbury, *Entheticus major*, 727-862 and 937-1118.

²⁶²*ibid.*, 851-852.

²⁶³*ibid.*, 1215-1217.

²⁶⁴Munk Olsen, "L'humanisme de Jean de Salisbury," p.55.

²⁶⁵A.C. Dionisotti, "Walter of Chatillon and the Greeks," *Latin poetry and the classical tradition; essays in medieval and Renaissance literature*, edited by Peter Godman and Oswyn Murray, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, p.89.

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Like John of Salisbury, Peter Abelard, who also knew no Greek,²⁶⁶ thought himself to be in the tradition of Isidore of Seville, who maintained that Latin, Greek and Hebrew held a special position among languages:

There are three sacred languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and they are supreme through all the world. For it was in these three languages that the charge against the Lord was written above the cross by Pilate. Wherefore, because of the obscurity of the Holy Scriptures, a knowledge of these three languages is necessary, in order that there may be recourse to a second if the expression in one of them leads to doubt of a word or its meaning.²⁶⁷

Peter Abelard recommended the study of the three sacred languages to the nuns at the Paraclete, urging them to follow the example of their abbess, Heloise:

You have in your abbess a role-model who can satisfy all your needs, both as an example of virtue and as a teacher of scholarship. She is familiar not only with Latin but also with Hebrew and Greek literature, and she is the only woman in this age who has attained that skill in the three languages.²⁶⁸

Peter wrote a letter to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, saying that Heloise had told him "with great joy" about Saint Bernard's visit to the Paraclete. He had, she said, encouraged her and her sisters "like an angel rather than a man," but had been somewhat disturbed by the form of the Lord's prayer which the nuns recited in their office, for which Peter was responsible. Peter proceeds to a lengthy justification of his choice of the Matthew version against the Luke, the point at issue being the discrepancy between "panem nostrum supersubstantialem" (Matthew 6,11) and "panem nostrum quotidianum" (Luke 11,3). Luke, says Peter, had his version from Saint Paul, but neither Luke nor

²⁶⁶Sandys, *A history of classical scholarship*, v.1, p.556.

²⁶⁷Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 9,1,3-4. Quoted in Bernice M. Kaczynski, *Greek in the Carolingian age; the St. Gall manuscripts*, Cambridge, Medieval Academy of America, 1988, p.2.

Paul was present when Jesus gave the prayer to the apostles. What Luke records is the version Jesus gave to "the crowd in the plains." "I do not argue that Luke lied," Peter writes. "Let him not be angry with me for preferring Matthew to him." Matthew, he says, wrote in Aramaic.²⁶⁹ The Greek translation of Matthew's Aramaic says *tōn ʔrton ʾmīn, tōn ʾpioàsion* (which Peter says means "our supersubstantial bread") and his version is to be preferred to Luke's, which was written in Greek.²⁷⁰

But *ʾpioàsioj* does not mean "supersubstantial." It means "for the coming day," and derives from *œpeimi*: *ʾpioàsia ʾmšra* means "the coming day." There is no connection with *oūs...a*. Furthermore, Luke's version uses exactly the same phrase, *tōn ʔrton ʾmīn ton ʾpioàsion*. If *ʾpioàsioj* means "supersubstantial" in Matthew, then it should in Luke also. The difference occurs only in the Vulgate, where Matthew's Greek is translated "supersubstantialem" while Luke's identical Greek is translated "quotidianum." Peter, that is to say, not only mistranslated the Greek. He clearly was not familiar with the text of the Greek New Testament, not even the Gospels, and it does not appear to have occurred to him to check it. His elaborate and ingenious justification of his preference for Matthew is based on a variation in the Vulgate which has no relation to the Greek (or to any supposed Aramaic) text. All of this throws doubt also upon Heloise's knowledge of Greek. If Heloise were the Greek scholar that Peter made her out to be, she would have known the Greek Gospels. She would not meekly have passed on

²⁶⁸PL 178, 333.

²⁶⁹Peter offers no evidence, but Eusebius says that Papias says that presbyter John says, "Matthew compiled the *Sayings* in the Aramaic language, and everyone translated them as well as he could." (Eusebius, *The history of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, translated with an introduction by G.A. Williamson, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, p.152.)

²⁷⁰PL 178, 335-338.

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Bernard's complaint, nor would she have accepted Peter's explanation.²⁷¹

Gaufridus, sub-prior of Ste-Barbe-en-Auge, maintained that a monastery without a library is like a castle without an armoury.²⁷² But the catalogues of twelfth century libraries do not show any strength in collections of Greek materials. The catalogue of the library at Cluny, for example, shows no Greek books,²⁷³ nor does the catalogue of the library at Bec.²⁷⁴ Neither the Cluniacs nor the Cistercians made any great effort to foster Greek studies. There was nothing comparable, for example, with Peter the Venerable's commission of a translation of the Koran from Arabic.

In the cathedral schools of the high Middle Ages, out of which the universities then grew, Greek played a remarkably unimportant role. The new translations from Greek executed during the high Middle Ages were, to be sure, of great and often decisive importance in the intellectual history of the West: not only Aristotle's *Logica nova* but also John of Damascus' *De fide orthodoxa*, for instance, circulated with unprecedented speed and range. But this intellectual material was taken ready-made from the translators, in most cases Italians: it evoked no interest in the Greek original. North of the Alps, no one but Dionysius the Areopagite could entice one to study a Greek text. In the twelfth century, the West found its own great model: Rome became the ancestor of the new culture, and Greece receded into the distance of antiquity.²⁷⁵

It was Hugh of Saint Victor who translated Dionysius the Areopagite.²⁷⁶ But his pupil Richard of Saint Victor denigrated

²⁷¹Unless, of course, she was mischievously watching Peter make a fool of himself.

²⁷²"Claustrum sine armario quasi castrum sine armentario." PL 201,845.

²⁷³Léopold Victor Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale*, v.2, Paris, Imprimerie Impériale, 1874 (reprinted Hildesheim, Olms, 1978), p.458-485

²⁷⁴PL 150, 769-782.

²⁷⁵Berschlin, *Greek letters*, p.207.

²⁷⁶Sandys, *A history of classical scholarship*, v.1., p.556,

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Greek studies, arguing the superior merits of spiritual contemplation over philosophy. "Quid tale Aristoteles, quid tale Plato invenit, quid tanta philosophorum turba, tale invenire potuit?"²⁷⁷ Philip de Harveng admitted that knowledge of Greek and Hebrew writings came to his contemporaries not by use of the languages but indirectly through the Fathers.²⁷⁸ The sorry list of Greek references that have been culled from the whole seventy volumes of the *Patrologia Latina* for the twelfth century bears further witness to the paucity of Greek learning and the essential Latinity of the period.²⁷⁹

But if, as N.G. Wilson comments, "In western Europe during the middle ages Greek was not generally known,"²⁸⁰ it would appear to be equally true that in Byzantium during the twelfth century Latin was not generally known. For Byzantium, too, renaissances are claimed. Sir John Edwin Sandys, in an analysis of Byzantine scholarship, asserts:

For it must be remembered that, for the revival of Greek learning, we are indebted not only to the Greek refugees who in the middle of the fifteenth century were driven from Constantinople to the hospitable shores of Italy, or even to the wandering Greeks of the previous century. The spirit of the Renaissance was at work in Constantinople at a still earlier time.²⁸¹

He gives various examples, from Photius in the ninth century onwards, noting that "under the Comneni (1057-1185) and the Palaeologi (1261-1453), the humanistic spirit is unmistakably prominent" and argues that historians of the Renaissance must in

²⁷⁷PL 196, 54.

²⁷⁸PL 203, 154.

²⁷⁹Charles Homer Haskins, "The Greek element in the renaissance of the twelfth century," *American historical review* 25(1920):611.

²⁸⁰N.G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy; Greek studies in the Italian Renaissance*, London, Duckworth, 1992, p.1.

²⁸¹Sandys, *A history of classical scholarship*, vol.1, p.435.

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the future go back as far as Moschopulus and Planudes.²⁸² But his own study of Byzantine scholarship shows that there was scant attention to Latin learning. In the twelfth century, he discusses Tzetzes, Anna Comnena, Theodorus Prodromus, Eustanthius and Michael Acominatus, and it is clear that their extensive classical scholarship included no Latin writers.²⁸³ It is not until we come to Maximus Planudes, in the thirteenth century, that we find a Latin scholar. He translated Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Donatus and Boethius.²⁸⁴ N.G. Wilson remarks upon this "very unusual accomplishment."²⁸⁵

In the twelfth century, the literary tradition of Byzantium was Greek in the same way that the literary tradition of Europe was Latin. Indeed, the scholars of Constantinople, who called themselves "Romans," would seem to have had less familiarity with classical Latin literature than the scholars of Europe had with classical Greek literature. In neither case was the literary culture seen as a revival or renewal. The difficulties of the concept of "renaissance" when applied to the twelfth century, which were touched upon above, pages 112 ff., are evident in this context.

The poems of Bernard of Morlaix illustrate the essential Latinity of twelfth-century European learning. He was well versed in classical Latin lore, but had no Greek. In that respect, he was a man of his time, for very few of his contemporaries were Greek scholars. Nor was the depth and breadth of his Latin learning exceptional. A knowledge of classical Latin authors was regarded as part of the mental equipment of an educated person. Bernard's poems also illustrate the perception that twelfth-century scholars had of the continuity of the Latin literary tradition.

²⁸²ibid., loc.cit.

²⁸³ibid., p.418-423.

²⁸⁴ibid., p.427-428.

A genuine tradition

Eric Hobsbawm distinguishes between genuine traditions and invented traditions. He argues that the very appearance of movements for the defence or revival of a tradition indicates a break in tradition. "Such movements ... can never develop or even preserve a living past ... but must become "invented tradition." Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented."²⁸⁶ The self-conscious Renaissance of the fifteenth century may be seen as a matter of invented tradition - a rediscovery of a classical tradition no longer felt to be living.²⁸⁷ In the twelfth century, in important respects, "the old ways" were perceived as being still alive. Bernard did not regard his classical scholarship as any kind of revival or renewal. A classical Latin education is something he took for granted, and one of his allusions to Juvenal suggests that he regards it as forming part of a continuous tradition of education from classical times.²⁸⁸

His familiarity with classical Latin authors does not spring from any effort to rediscover them. He does not even reinterpret them. His readings of his classical sources are invariably literal, in contrast to some of John of Salisbury's interpretations. John reads meanings into the *Aeneid* which Vergil would not have comprehended. He even goes so far as to find a Christian significance in the golden bough. "John

²⁸⁵N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983, p.230.

²⁸⁶*The invention of tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (Canto editions) 1992, p.7-8.

²⁸⁷It is interesting that Prys Morgan entitles his work about the invention of Welsh traditions *The eighteenth century renaissance* (Llandybie, Davies, 1981).

²⁸⁸*De contemptu mundi, Prologus*; Juvenal, 1,15-17.

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concludes by affirming the role of that grace unknown to Vergil: the tree of knowledge is to be identified ultimately as Christ and the Cross. At these moments at the end of the *Policraticus* we see an essential dimension of John as classical scholar, seeking profound Christian truths hidden in the literature of pagan antiquity, particularly in its poetry."²⁸⁹ Bernard sees no such profound truths hidden in his classical sources. Even his complex allegory involving the Golden Age²⁹⁰ entails no reinterpretation of the classical myths. Although he makes use of it in his allegory, he accepts the Golden Age as being literally and historically true, as others, like Otto of Freising, did also.

Bernard took for granted a continuity between the classical Latin world and his own world of the twelfth century. It was not that he did not recognise the fact that great social and political changes had occurred. He did not, for example, have any belief in the continuity of the Roman Empire. Lamenting the wickedness of Rome, he says that it was made great and famous by the Catos, the Scauri and the Scipios, and when its secular power was broken, it became even stronger under the rule of Christ. It flourished and was wealthy in pagan times, but in Christian times it lost its secular power and became, in material terms, weak and poor.

Although you are poor, you are wealthier than a rich city; although you are weak, you are stronger than a powerful city; although you have been demolished, you stand taller than an intact city, through the gift of the cross of Christ. Under Jupiter, you conquered foreign nations; under Christ, you conquered hell ... City without equal under the rule of Caesar and the Senate, you do not follow the eagles now, but rather the light of the cross ... Peter is greater than the Caesars and God is greater than the pagan gods ... Rome was given to Peter. Peter's preaching sowed the

²⁸⁹Janet Martin, "John of Salisbury as classical scholar," p.201.

²⁹⁰See below, p.287 ff.

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seeds of its development and made it subject to Christ.²⁹¹

The sense of history, of continuity and change, which Bernard displays in his treatment of Rome is similar to that shown by Hildebert of Lavardin, whose well known poems about Rome clearly influenced Bernard.²⁹² He goes on to berate the Rome of his own day for its greed and Simony. He sees change rather than continuity in the progression from the secular glories of pagan Rome, through the spiritual glories of apostolic times, to the degeneration of his own time. But at the same time he expresses a literary tradition which he sees as continuous.

"Rome, you have perished," he complains. "You have fallen, your walls overthrown (*obruta moenibus*), your way of life overthrown (*obruta moribus*)."²⁹³ The allusion to the *Aeneid* reminds us of Jupiter's prophecy that Aeneas will establish for his warriors "a way of life and walls for their defence."²⁹⁴ Vergil's narration of Jupiter's prophecy continues, outlining the history of Rome up to the time of Julius Caesar, when a period of peace will commence. "The Gates of War shall shut, and safe within them shall stay the godless and ghastly Frenzy..."²⁹⁵ Bernard uses this imagery when he contrasts the evils of his day with the innocence of the Golden Age. "Wherever I go, I meet godless frenzy, both inside and outside."²⁹⁶ Again, when Bernard is dealing with the transience of the flesh, he writes, "Your feet run quickly toward wickedness and you have your eye upon a woman, but your milky neck (*colla lactea*) and your waxen arms (*brachia cerea*) have become completely putrid."²⁹⁷ The milky

²⁹¹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,631-651.

²⁹²Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.267-268. See also Waddell, *More Latin lyrics*, 262-263, and Kimon Giocarinis, "Bernard of Cluny and the antique," p.340.

²⁹³*De contemptu mundi*, 3,738.

²⁹⁴Vergil, *Aeneid* 1,264. "*moresque viris et moenia ponet.*"

²⁹⁵Vergil, *Aeneid*, 1,293-294. "*claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus/ saeva sedens*"

²⁹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,252. "*furor impius, intus et extra.*"

²⁹⁷*De contemptu mundi*, 1,803-804.

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neck recalls Vergil's account of the depiction of the Gauls upon the shield of Aeneas, with their milky necks and golden hair.²⁹⁸ The waxen arms recall Horace's account of Lydia's praise of Telephus, with his waxen arms (although he had a rosy neck).²⁹⁹ In all these cases, Bernard alludes to the historical traditions of Rome, but it is not any continuity of history or society which interests him. He exemplifies the continuity of a literary tradition.

Another aspect of Bernard's involvement in the Latin literary tradition is his prosody. He was familiar with classical metrical forms, but was by no means restricted to them. The twelfth century saw remarkable new developments in metre and rhyme. That topic is explored in the next chapter.

²⁹⁸Vergil, *Aeneid*, 8,660.

²⁹⁹Horace, *Odes* 1,13,1-3. "Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi/ cervicem roseam, cerea Telephi/ laudas bracchia ..."

CHAPTER 6 METRE AND RHYME

Metre

Bernard of Morlaix was familiar with classical prosody, though his quantities were not always those of the ancients. Two of his poems, *De castitate servanda* and *In libros Regum*, are classical in metrical form. The first consists of 523 lines¹ and the second of 1018 lines in elegiac couplets and they are for the most part perfectly regular in metre. They have no rhymes.

— / — / — / — / — / —
Spiritus est immundicie plerosque fatigans
— / — / — / — / — / —
Victaque perpaucis longaue bella gerens.
— / — / — / — / — / —
Una venus multos venatur vel prope cunctos,
— / — / — / — / — / —
Nam venus in venis, ignis in igne latet.²

— / — / — / — / — / —
Olim vir fuit unus et huic fuit Helcana nomen,
— / — / — / — / — / —
Vir de monte Effraim de Ramataque Sophin.
— / — / — / — / — / —
Anna sibi sterilis uxor, fecunda Fenenna.
— / — / — / — / — / —
Lector, ab his et in his mistica sumpta tene.
— / — / — / — / — / —
Elcana nempe "dei possessio" voce Latina
— / — / — / — / — / —
Nec minus est "altum" Rama Sophim "specula."³

¹Elegiacs ought to have an even number of lines, but lines are wanting after 62, 296 and 398.

²*De castitate servanda*, 1-4.

³*In libros Regum*, 1-6.

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Bernard is well aware that his quantities are not always classical, and that his metre is sometimes faulty. In the *De castitate servanda*, in the middle of a discussion of Saint Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, and again in the *In libros Regum*, in the middle of a commentary on a passage about Solomon's wealth (3 Kings 4,1-34), he apologises. He explains that it is not due to carelessness or ignorance ("prudens atque sciens") but to problems of using non-classical words ("nescia nomina") in a classical metre and to his attempts to express his meaning concisely ("forsan et obscurus fio brevis esse laborans").⁴

The *Carmina de Trinitate et de fide Catholica* commences with reasonably regular hexameters.

```

— / — / — / — / — / —
Trine sed une deus, qui sic es trinus et unus,
— / — / — / — / — / —
Ut neque divisus sis credendus neque solus,
— / — / — / — / — / —
Unus es in trino, qui vere trinus in uno,
— / — / — / — / — / —
Tu, sublime decus, trino quod nomine polles,
— / — / — / — / — / —
Qui personarum numero, deus, inpare gaudes
— / — / — / — / — / —
Cui sunt persone discrete, gloria simplex ...5

```

"Numero, deus, inpare gaudes" is adapted from Vergil's eighth Eclogue (line 75), "numero deus inpare gaudet." The regular metre of the hexameter continues until line 817. That is, more than half the length of the poem, which has 1402 lines. At line 817 an internal rhyme is introduced. Thereafter, internal rhymes appear sporadically until the end of the poem.

```

— / — / — / — / — / —
Querentem queri, ve, qui nec querere querunt,

```

⁴*De castitate servanda*, 337-344; *In libros Regum*, 526-533. There is a quotation from Horace, *Ars poetica*, 25-26 (brevis esse laboro/ obscurus fio).

⁵*Carmina de Trinitate*, 1-6,

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— — — / — — — / — — — / — — / — — — / — —
 Pabula mortis erunt, quia vitam nec pecierunt.⁶
 — — / — — — / — — / — — — / — — — / — —
 Felix est et erit qui prava fugit, bona querit.
 — — / — — — / — — / — — / — — — / — —
 "Querentum dominum cor letetur" David inquit.
 — — / — — / — — — / — — / — — — / — —
 Si felix querens, quid et acquirens bona vera?
 — — / — — — / — — / — — / — — — / — —
 Cesset scrutari, non cesset homo venerari
 — — — / — — / — — / — — — / — — — / — —
 Quod nequit os fari, lux cernere, mens meditari.⁷

The first pair and the last pair of lines of the passage quoted above (816-817 and 821-822) have end rhymes. Such end rhymes appear sporadically and less frequently than internal rhymes, from this point on.

At line 1006, after a discussion of the second person of the Trinity, Bernard has this comment on his metre:

Ipsi personam quasi fantem nunc tibi ponam.
 Metra carens zelo mea maiorumque revelo.
 Non mea sunt tantum sed patrum metrificantum.
 In cruce pendentem tibi nunc induco loquentem.
 Accipe dicentem, dicenti porrige mentem.⁸

Now I present the person of Christ, just as if he were speaking to you yourself. I am not jealous of my forebears. The metre I am using is theirs. It is not mine only, but also the metre of the Fathers. I now present Christ hanging on the cross and speaking to you. Listen to what he says. Open your mind to his words.

There follows a poetic rendering of imaginary words of Christ from the cross. "I die that you might live. There is no greater love. Think about who it is that is suffering for you, and how much I am suffering, and why ..." ⁹ The words of Christ

⁶Pecierunt = petierunt (petiverunt).

⁷*Carmina de Trinitate*, 816-822.

⁸*Carmina de Trinitate*, 1006-1010.

⁹*Carmina de Trinitate*, 1012-1013.

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continue for forty-eight lines, all in the same metre, with internal rhymes but no end rhymes. Then Bernard says:

Haec ita. Cetera iam planis tibi versibus edam,
 Danda Leonino quamvis restent pede quaedam.
 Ne stupeas, lector, quia sepe Leonica sector.
 Gratis grata sonis admisceo metra Leonis.
 Nunc versus planos aro scilicet Ovidianos,
 Nam querunt illos quidam, quidam magis istos.
 Est aliud, quare metro parco Leonis arare:
 Versus enervat qui verba Leonica servat,
 Nec succintus erit qui dicta Leonica querit.
 Ergo conmixtos nunc illos, nunc sequor istos.¹⁰

So much for that. The rest I will write for you in plain verses, although certain parts will still be rendered in the Leonine metre. Do not be surprised, reader, that, although I often follow the Leonine style, and add to a pleasant metre the pleasant sounds of Leonine rhymes, I am now ploughing straight furrows,¹¹ like Ovid's verses. The reason is that some people like the one kind of verse, while others prefer the other. There is another reason why I do not always use the Leonine metre. A poet who keeps to the Leonine style weakens his verses, and a poet who uses Leonines will not express his meaning concisely. That is why I sometimes use one metre and sometimes the other.

De octo vitiis also employs hexameters. Internal rhymes are consistently used throughout all of its 1399 lines, and stress begins to become as important as quantity in reading the poem.

— — — / — — / — — / — — — / — — — / — —
 Eugenio patre patris iras flectere matre¹²
 — — / — — / — — / — — / — — — / — —
 Christi peccator Bernardus pacis amator.
 — — — / — — / — — / — — / — — — / — —
 De viciis octo librum te iudice docto
 — — / — — / — — — / — — / — — — / — —

¹⁰*Carmina de Trinitate*, 1061-1070.

¹¹The literal meaning of "versus" is "furrow."

¹²The false quantity in "iras" cannot be excused for Bernard's reasons, given above. Rhyme and stress seem to be over-riding quantity. But "patre" is Halvarson's emendation. The manuscript reads "pape," which would allow the line to scan correctly (Halvarson, p.97).

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Scribens limandum, te, papa, precor michi blandum,
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 In quo succinte pro te tibi, non loquar in te.¹³

The prologue to the *Mariale* is in the same metre with the same rhyme scheme.

— / — / — / — / — / —
 O lumen verum, quo lux est facta dierum,
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 Lumen praeclarum, sapientia, fons animarum,
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 Quae requiem fessis tribuis, solacia fessis,
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 Et quae justificas animas clementer iniquas,
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 Ad te suspiro, tibi supplico teque requiro,
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 Pane salutari cupiens te dante cibari;
 — / — / — / — / — / —
 Verus enim panis tua verba cibusque perennis.¹⁴

The *De contemptu mundi*, which, at about 3000 lines, is the longest of the poems, is also in hexameters. There are both internal rhymes and end rhymes consistently throughout. The verse form is called "dactylICI tripertiti."¹⁵ It is possible to read the metre quantitatively, ignoring the rhymes, but the effect is monotonous, because every foot except the last of each line is a dactyl and there is no caesura. The rhyme scheme demands that the metre be read according to stress rather than quantity.

.
 Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt - vigilemus.

 Ecce minaciter imminet arbiter ille supremus.

 Imminet imminet ut mala terminet, aequa coronet,

¹³*De octo vitiis*, 1-4.

¹⁴*Mariale*, Prologus, 1-7.

¹⁵A.G. Rigg, *A history of Anglo-Latin literature 1066-1422*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.320. See also Dag Norberg, *Introduction a l'étude de la versification latine médiévale*, Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell, 1958, p.67.

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Recta remuneret, anxia liberet, aethera donet.
Auferat aspera duraque pondera mentis onustae,
Sobria muniat, improba puniat, utraque juste.¹⁶

The effect is similar to that of the *Rhythmus in laude Salvatoris* of Peter the Venerable, which could not possibly be read quantitatively. Nor, since each "line" ends with a dactyl, does it give any impression of hexameters.

Gaude, mortalitas,
Redit aeternitas,
 Qua reparaberis!
Quidquid de funere
Soles metuere,
 Iam ne timueris.

Dat certitudinem
Vita per hominem
 Et Deum reddita,
Quam in se praetulit
Ac tibi contulit
 Morte deposita.¹⁷

The metre and rhyme of the *De contemptu mundi* go well in Latin. Ernst Robert Curtius writes of the "heights of impassioned greatness in hexameters rhymed in couplets with double internal rhymes, as in Bernard of Morlaix's poem on the Last Judgement and Paradise."¹⁸ They are very difficult to render in English. There were several attempts at Englishing the metre and rhyme of small parts of the first book of the poem in the wake of its popularisation as an English hymn by J.M. Neale in the 1860's.¹⁹

¹⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 1,1-6.

¹⁷*Analecta hymnica*, 48, 246.

¹⁸Ernst Robert Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, translated from the German by Willard R. Trask, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990 (Bollingen series, 36), p.152.

¹⁹J.M. Neale, *The rhythm of Bernard of Morlaix, monk of Cluny*, 7th ed., London, Hayes, 1865. Neale did not attempt to imitate the metre and rhyme of the original.

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None of them is successful. The following, for example, is Charles Lawrence Ford's translation of the opening lines:

Late is earth's history; ripe is sin's mystery;
slumber no more!
Vengeance is looming, the Arbiter dooming, the Judge
at the door;
Nigher and nigher, to evil a fire, of right the
reward,
Paradise bringing, and crowning with singing the
saints of the Lord.²⁰

Even Swinburne, with his facility for rhyme, did not manage much better. Part of his translation goes as follows:

O land without guilt, strong safe city built in a
marvellous place,
I cling to thee, ache for thee, sing to thee, wake for
thee, watch for thy face:
Full of cursing and strife are the days of my life,
with their sins they are fed,
Out of sin is the root, unto sin is the fruit, in
their sins they are dead.²¹

The *rhythmi* and the epilogue of the *Mariale* are similar to the *De contemptu mundi* only in that their metrical systems are based on stress rather than quantity, and that they use a consistent and complex rhyme scheme. But the metre and rhyme scheme of the *rhythmi* are different from those of the epilogue, and both are different from those of the *De contemptu mundi*.

²⁰Charles Lawrence Ford, *Hora novissima, a metrical version of some portion of the first book of the Latin poem by Bernard of Morlaix entitled "De contemptu mundi"*, London, Houlston, 1898, p.24. There are worse renderings. John Julian quotes, for example, a translation by S.A.W. Duffield, which goes "These are the latter times, these are not better times: let us stand waiting." (*Dictionary of hymnology*, 2nd ed., London, Murray, 1907, p.534.)

²¹Quoted in Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p. 316, note 3. It is not, as Raby seems to suggest, a rendering of the passage beginning "Urbs Sion aurea" (Book 1, lines 269ff.), from which Neale took his hymn "Jerusalem the golden". It is, in fact, a translation of the passage beginning "Urbs Sion inclita" (Book 1, lines 337 ff.)

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The *rhythmi* contain stanzas of four lines, with internal rhymes in the first and third lines, and end rhymes in the second and fourth.

 .
Ut iucundas cervus undas
 .
 Aestuans desiderat,
 .
Sic ad deum fontem vivum
 .
 Mens fidelis properat.

Sicut rivi fontis vivi
 Praebent refrigerium,
 Ita menti sitiēti
 Deus est remedium.²²

Omni die dic Mariae
 Mea, laudes anima,
 Eius festa eius gesta
 Cole splendidissima.

Contemplare et mirare
 Eius celsitudinem,
 Dic felicem genitricem,
 Dic beatam virginem.²³

That metrical form was popular for hymns to Mary. It was used, for example, by Peter the Venerable in one of his Marian hymns²⁴ and by an anonymous Cistercian monk in his *Speculum Reginae Caelorum*.²⁵

The epilogue of the *Mariale* also contains four-line stanzas. There are internal rhymes in the first three lines. The fourth line is shorter than the first three, and does not rhyme.

O salutaris, virgo, stella maris,
 Generans prolem, aequitatis solem,
 Lucis auctorem, retinens pudorem,

²²*Mariale, Rhythmus 1, 1-2.*

²³*Mariale, Rhythmus 2, 1-2.*

²⁴*Analecta hymnica, 48, 237-238.*

²⁵*ibid., 278-279.* On the metre of the rhythms of the *Mariale*, see also Norberg, p.44-45.

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Suscipe laudem.

Caeli regina, per quam medicina
Datur aegrotis, gratia devotis,
Gaudium maestis, mundo lux caelestis
Spesque salutis.²⁶

Bernard's poetry could perhaps be thought of as showing a progression²⁷ from classical, quantitative forms, through various intermediary forms, to verse forms which are fully accentual and which involve regular rhyme. Bernard himself says that the metre of the *De contemptu mundi* consists entirely of dactyls, except for the final trochee or spondee and that it has the resonance of the Leonine measure. He regarded the metre as particularly difficult. He clearly regarded his work in this poem as being something very special and thought that his achievement was due to divine inspiration.²⁸ That attitude is difficult to reconcile with the qualified approval of Leonines which he expressed in the *Carmina de Trinitate* and the concern he expressed about the difficulty of being succinct in the Leonine metre.

One may perhaps conjecture that the order in which the poems were written may have been something like the order in which they are discussed above. If that were so, it might have implications for the dating of the poems, but see above, pp.69ff. and footnote on p.246. However that may be, Bernard's range of verse forms shows something of the wealth of metrical opportunities which were available to and exploited by twelfth-century Latin poets. It also gives some pointers to the development of accentual verse.

²⁶*Mariale, Epilogus*, 1-2.

²⁷Or perhaps, in the context of a revival of classical learning, it is a regression!

²⁸*De contemptu mundi, Prologus*.

The emergence of rhyming, accentual verse can be traced in the development of the liturgy of the Mass. The chants which intervene between the epistle and the gospel had become, by the sixth century, "jewels of the Roman Mass."²⁹ In the singing of one of these chants, the alleluia, it became customary to prolong the final vowel "a" in a melody called a jubilus or a sequence.³⁰ But singing long and intricate melodies without words is difficult, and early in the ninth century texts emerged to support the melodies, and the text itself came to be called a sequence. A similar development occurred later in the form of tropes, where an existing text was expanded to accommodate an elaborate melody.

It is clear that sequences were well established by the time of Notker Balbulus, who entered the monastery of Saint Gall as a boy in 840 and died in 912.³¹ His *Liber sequentiarum* contains 38 sequences.³² Their metre is irregular and, except in the first, in which most lines end in "a," there is very little rhyme. Notker tells us how he came to write them. In his boyhood, he had found it hard to commit to memory the long melodies of the final vowel of the alleluia. In 851,³³ a monk from Jumièges brought to him an antiphonary in which verses were set to the various melodies, and Notker wrote sequences in imitation. Notker does not claim that he invented sequences. He was encouraged to write them because he was given a book of them. Both Notker and his master Iso ("magistro meo Ysoni") knew all about them, and indeed Iso knew that the sequences in the book were defective, because they did not obey the rule that each

²⁹Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman rite; its origins and development*, Blackrock, Four Courts Press, 1986, v.1., p.425.

³⁰Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman rite*, v.1, p.435-436. See also Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.210.

³¹PL 131, 984, 989.

³²PL 131, 1005-1026.

³³Notker says "Gemidia nuper a Nordmannis vastata." The devastation of the monastery occurred in 851.

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syllable ought to correspond to a single note in the melody ("Singulae motus cantilenae singulas syllabas debent habere.")³⁴

Sequences were sung antiphonally, the second choir repeating the melody of the first, so the verse form of the sequence developed in pairs of passages which had an equal number of syllables. By the beginning of the eleventh century, sequences were founded on rhythmical principles, composed of even verses and strophes, and they also made use of rhymes.³⁵ An enormous number of sequences was produced. G.M. Dreves gives the texts of some 5000.³⁶ But the reform of the liturgy under Pope Pius V reduced the number to the handful that survived in the liturgy until modern times.

Both the early and the intermediate forms of the sequence can be illustrated by the Easter sequence *Victimae paschale laudes*. It is ascribed to Wipo, who died at some time after 1048. Part of it has no rhymes but only assonance, and was probably in existence before Wipo. That part is typical of earlier sequences.³⁷ In its modern version, it seems clumsy. Joseph Jungmann prints it in its original form, restoring some lines omitted in the reform under Pope Pius V and showing the regularity of the poem's structure.³⁸ The Pentecost sequence, which is the work of Stephen Langton, who died in 1228, is completely regular, both in metre and rhyme.

· · ·
Veni, sancte Spiritus
· · ·
et emitte caelitus
· · ·
lucis tuae radium.

³⁴PL 131, 1003-1004.

³⁵Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman rite*, v.1, p. 436-437.

³⁶*Analecta hymnica*, v. 8,9,10,34,37,39,40,42 and 44.

³⁷Raby gives many examples of early sequences (*Christian-Latin poetry*, p. 212-219.)

³⁸Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman rite*, v.1, p.438.

. . .
 Veni, pater pauperum,
 . . .
 veni dator munerum,
 . . .
 veni lumen cordium.³⁹

The sequence *Dies irae*, which is sometimes ascribed to Thomas of Celano, belongs, in fact, on the basis of manuscript evidence, firmly in the twelfth century.⁴⁰ Both of the other sequences which survived in the modern liturgy belong to the thirteenth century, the *Lauda Sion* being the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas and the *Stabat mater* probably of Saint Bonaventure.⁴¹ Both of them are similar in metre and in rhyme to the *Veni sancte Spiritus*.

But Latin verse using stress rather than quantity did not make its first appearance with sequences in the liturgy. From the earliest times, Christians recited or sang the Psalms which they inherited from Judaism and when the Psalms were incorporated into the Roman liturgy they were in the Latin of the Vulgate. They lack any regular metrical stress, but they are certainly in no way quantitative. Yet the structure and antiphonal manner of reciting or singing the Psalms seems to have suggested to Saint Augustine of Hippo the rhythm of his *Psalmus contra partem Donati*. The poem commences with an antiphon, "Omnes qui gaudetis de pace, modo verum iudicate." It consists of twenty strophes, each of twelve lines, and each followed by the antiphon. Each of the strophes begins with a letter of the alphabet (A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L,M,N,O,P,Q,R,S,T,V) which is a feature of some of the Hebrew Psalms.⁴² The poem concludes with a thirty-line epilogue. Throughout, all lines end with the vowel "e" or "ae."

³⁹*The Penguin book of Latin verse*, introduced and edited by Frederick Brittain, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1962, p.230.

⁴⁰Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman rite*, v.1, p.439, note 112.

⁴¹Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman rite*, v.1, p.438-439.

What is important for our present purposes is that each line of the poem (making allowance for obvious elisions) consists of sixteen syllables, with a caesura in the middle of the line. This seems to be the first example of post-classical Latin verse which not only breaks completely away from quantitative metre but also adopts systematically and consistently a metre based on number of syllables. But it is noticeable that the metric stress bears little relation to the natural stress of the spoken words.

Abundantia peccatorum / solet fratres conturbare:
 Propter hoc Dominus noster / voluit nos praemonere,
 Comparans regnum coelorum / reticulo misso in mare,
 Congreganti multos pisces, / omne genus, hinc et inde
 ...

Vae, qui pro cathedris vestris, / sic contenditis
 injuste!
 Clamatis vos solos sanctos, / aliud dicitis in corde:
 Quia videtis et vos multos / malos abundare ubique:
 Numquid dicere potestis, / Mixti sumus intra rete?⁴³

Bernard's accentual metrical forms had their origins in part in patristic and liturgical Latin verse forms. But not entirely so. The earliest, pre-classical Latin verse was not quantitative but accentual. It is interesting to compare Saint Augustine's *Psalmus contra partem Donati* with the Saturnian metre, of which it is somewhat reminiscent. The Saturnian metre was also in origin hieratic and designed to be recited or sung on religious occasions. There has been a great deal of

⁴²Psalm 118, in the Vulgate, for example.

controversy about the exact nature of the Saturnian metre, but it is seems clear that it was accentual, not quantitative; that it was based on number of syllables; and that each line consisted of two parts, which may indeed have been sung antiphonally, or which perhaps corresponded to "the forward swing and recoil of the dance."⁴⁴ Exactly how it should be scanned is a matter of controversy, made more difficult by the fact that we do not know if the rule of the penultimate syllable for Latin accent applied in the early days of the language. H. W. Garrod argues that in the very earliest times, all Latin words were accented on the first syllable, and that this persisted in the Saturnian metre.⁴⁵ But if, for the sake of comparison with Saint Augustine's *Psalmus contra partem Donati*, we set out a basic metrical stress, ignoring the stress of natural language (whatever it may have been), we get something like the following:

.
 Cornelius Lucius / Scipio Barbatus,

 Gnaiuod patre prognatus / fortis vir sapiensque,

 quois forma virtutei / parisuma fuit,

 consol, censor, aidilis / quei fuit apud nos ... ⁴⁶

Read in that unorthodox manner, the Saturnian metre has an extraordinarily familiar rhythm.

.
 Little Bo-Peep has lost her shep / and doesn't know

 where to find them.

 Leave them alone and they'll come home / dragging

⁴³PL 43, 24-25, 31. See also Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.20-22.

⁴⁴H.W. Garrod, "Note on the Saturnian metre", in *The Oxford book of Latin verse from the earliest fragments to the end of the Vth century A.D.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1912, p.505-512.

⁴⁵ibid., p.508-510.

⁴⁶*Oxford book of Latin verse*, p.3.

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their tails behind them.

Jack and Jill went up the hill / to fetch a pail of
water.

Jack fell down and broke his crown / and Jill came
tumbling after.

The syllable count in nursery rhymes is not as exact as in Saint Augustine's *Psalmus* or in the later sequences. It is perhaps as exact as in the remnants of Saturnian metre that we have. "Taurasia, Cisauna, Samno cepit," for example, does not fit the pattern.⁴⁷ Scholars who accommodate the Saturnian metre to the rhythm of "The queen was in the parlour eating bread and honey," attempt to apply it thus:

Dabunt malum Metelli / Naevio poetae.⁴⁸

But the rhythm of the nursery rhyme is not quite like that.

Sing a song of sixpence / a pocket full of rye.
Four and twenty blackbirds / baked in a pie ...

The corresponding Saturnian line would be:

Dabunt malum Metelli / Naevio poetae.

It may seem that we have wandered a long way from the Latin verse of the twelfth century. But the rhythm of the Saturnian metre and the rhythm of English nursery rhymes are in fact very similar to one of the most popular verse forms of the twelfth century, the Goliardic stanza.

⁴⁷ibid.

⁴⁸Garrod, "Note on the Saturnian metre," p.506.

· · · · ·
 Estuans intrinsecus / ira vehementi
 · · · · ·
 in amaritudine / loquar mee menti:
 · · · · ·
 factus de materia / levis elementi
 · · · · ·
 similis sum folio / de quo ludunt venti.⁴⁹

Bernard did not use the Goliardic measure, though the verse form of the epilogue to the *Mariale* is somewhat similar to it. Nor was it used in any liturgical verse, but it is found in some non-liturgical hymns. John Pecham, for example, used it in his *Philomena*, "one of the loveliest of all the poems of the Passion."⁵⁰ *Philomena*, the nightingale, represents the Christian soul.

Philomena, praevia
 temporis amoeni
 Quae recessum nuntias
 imbris atque caeni,
 Dum demulces animos
 tuo cantu leni,
 Avis prudentissima,
 ad me, quaeso, veni ...

Oci, oci, anima
 clamat in hoc statu,
 Crebro fundans lacrimas
 sub hoc incolatu,
 Laudans et glorificans
 magno cum conatu
 Christum, qui tot pertulit
 suo pro reatu.⁵¹

Old English and Middle English verse used a combination of stress and quantity. A stressed syllable is usually also a long syllable, though stress may occur when there is a short accented

⁴⁹Waddell, *Medieval Latin lyrics*, p.170. *Die Gedichte des Archipoeta*, ed. Heinrich Watenphul and Heinrich Krafeld, Heidelberg, Winter, 1958, p.73.

⁵⁰Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.425.

⁵¹*Analecta hymnica*, 50, 602-603. See also the devotional poems *Multi sunt presbyteri* and *Christiani nominis* in *Penguin book of Latin Verse*, p. 270-274 and 278-281.

syllable followed by a short unaccented syllable in the same word. Every half line must have two and only two stresses, but there is no strict count of the number of syllables. In every line, both stresses of the first half-line may, and one must, alliterate with the first stress of the second half line. Alliteration of all four stresses is not permissible in Old English, but may occur in Middle English, as *Piers plowman* shows:

In a somer seson, whan softe was the sonne,
 I shoop me into shroudes as I a sheep were,
 In habite as an heremite unholy of werkes,
 Went wide in this world wondres to here.
 Ac on a May morwenynge on Malverne hilles
 Me bifel a ferly, of Fairye me thoghte.⁵²

But, beginning in the twelfth century, there emerged a different verse form in Middle English, which was based solely on stress, without any element of quantity. It consisted of lines with seven accents, four in the first half-line and three in the second half-line. The lines rhymed in couplets. The earliest example we have is the *Poema morale*, which dates from about 1150.

.
 Alle theo that beoth icumen. of adam and of eve.

 Alle heo schule thider cumen. and so we owen hit

 ileue.

 Theo that habbeth wel idon. after heore mihte.

 To heoueriche heo schulle vare. forth myd him vre

 dryhte.⁵³

⁵²William Langland, *Piers plowman*, B-text, Prologue 1-6.

⁵³Richard Morris, *Specimens of early English ... Part 1, From "Old English homilies" to "King Horn," AD 1150 - AD 1300*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1848, p.206.

This became the metre of most of the popular ballads in the vernacular and, as we have seen, of many nursery rhymes. It is similar also to the Goliardic metre, with the important difference that, in the Goliardic measure, the syllable count is exact.

Bernard of Morlaix hardly ranks among the foremost Latin poets of the twelfth century. His accomplishments in prosody are by no means exceptional, though the sustained use of the difficult metre and rhyme of the *De contemptu mundi* was, as he himself recognised,⁵⁴ something of a *tour de force*. Bernard was well versed in, and able to use with effect, classical metres. He was also skilled in and added something to the development of metres which had few classical precedents but which had links with the Saturnian metre, with the Psalms (by way of the Vulgate) and with the Roman liturgy. The same metrical forms showed extraordinary vitality in Middle English verse and in later popular ballads, as well as in English nursery rhymes.

Much of Bernard's verse has the four features which, taken together, distinguish the Latin verse forms which emerged in the twelfth century from earlier Latin verse, and indeed from any earlier verse forms whatever. Those features are: a metre which is based upon an exact count of syllables; a metre which is based on stress; a metre in which the stress is close to that of the ordinary spoken language; and a regular and exact use of rhyme.

Rhyme

Bernard was able to write rhymed verse and unrhymed verse with equal facility, and evidently gave careful thought to the occasions on which rhyme was appropriate.⁵⁵ While his use of

⁵⁴*De contemptu mundi*, Prologus.

⁵⁵See above, p.255.

accentual metre had no classical precedents, his use of rhyme had its roots in classical Latin.

The origin of rhyme is a matter of controversy. F.J.E. Raby points out that the use of rhyme was perfectly well known to the writers of antiquity.

Parallelism of form was the most marked feature of both Greek and Latin rhetorical prose. To this parallelism of form is joined the rhetorical device of **ὁμοιοτέλευτον** ("similar ending," assonance or rime) which had the effect of prominently marking the end of the clause ... Hence, it appears reasonable to assume that the use of the rhetorical rime in rhythmical prose, after passing into the popular sermons of the Greek and Latin Church, found its way into Christian poetry at a time when the feeling for quantity was dying out and a new verse-form was being constructed.⁵⁶

While admitting that "rhetorical rime" had appeared in classical poetry, he argues that it was used on rare occasions, was avoided by the best classical poets and was a device consciously borrowed from rhetorical prose.⁵⁷

Ernst Robert Curtius explains the many ways in which the modern terms "poetry" and "prose" do not have the same denotations or connotations as their classical or medieval counterparts. In particular, the *ars dictaminis* did not have a twofold division into poetry and prose, but rather a threefold division, in which both artistic prose ("eloquentiae prosa") and poetry are regulated discourse. Prose is regulated by rhythm, while poetry is regulated by metre or by rhythm and rhyme. The third member of the triad is prose as unregulated discourse. Artistic prose "required a great expenditure of time, talent and erudition" and there was also "a plain prose of factual communication." The boundaries between poetry and prose were therefore somewhat

⁵⁶Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.22-24.

⁵⁷*ibid.*, p.24.

blurred. The matter is further complicated by the application of the term *prosa* to rhythmical poems, especially sequences.⁵⁸

But despite these careful and useful distinctions, Curtius still appears to regard rhymed verse as having developed from the rhythmical cadences of artistic prose rather than from any element in classical poetry. The existence and nature of rhyme in classical and medieval Latin prose is illustrated by Raby, who gives examples from Apuleius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine of Hippo.⁵⁹ The cadences of rhymed prose persisted throughout the middle ages. They are common, for example, in the prayers of Saint Thomas Aquinas, to whom may be credited the first limerick:

Sit vitiorum meorum evacuatio
Concupiscentiae et libidinis exterminatio
Caritatis et patientiae
Humilitatis et obedientiae
Omniumque virtutum augmentatio.⁶⁰

But it may be questioned whether rhymed prose was the only, or even the chief factor in the development of rhymed Latin verse. We are so accustomed to thinking that classical Latin verse does not rhyme that we are perhaps in danger of not seeing rhyme when it is obviously and deliberately there.

Cui dono lepidum novum libellum
arida modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum
omne aevum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Juppiter, et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli
qualecumque; quod, o patrona virgo,
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.⁶¹

⁵⁸Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, p.147-150.

⁵⁹Raby, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.23.

⁶⁰From the prayers after Mass in the Roman rite.

⁶¹Catullus, 1.

Once one adverts to the rhyme scheme of this poem of Catullus, it becomes impossible to dismiss the rhymes as something that necessarily and accidentally happens in an inflected language, or to maintain that it is a chance by-product of rhetoric. It seems clear that Catullus intended the effect and that his use of rhyme was deliberate. Walter Ludwig, discussing the origin and development of the Catullan style in neo-Latin poetry, quotes the following imitation of Catullus by Friedrich Taubmann in 1594:

Cum mollissima sit Venus deorum
 Non versus amet illa mollicellos?
 Cum blandissima diva sit deorum,
 Non versus amet illa blandicellos?
 Aut his est reperire molliores?
 Aut his est reperire blandiores?
 Aut pro conditione belliores?
 Aut ad Cypridis orsa lectiores?
 Hoc, pol, hendecasyllabo Phaleuco
 Nullius mollior esse blandiorve,
 Nullus bellior esse lectiorve
 Docti iudicio potest Catulli.⁶²

One might suppose that Taubmann was modelling his poem not only on the style and verse form of Catullus, but also on the rhyme patterns of his poems. Yet the rhyme is evidently invisible to Walter Ludwig, who nowhere mentions it in his discussion. It may be that Catullus was relatively unknown in the twelfth century.⁶³ But Bernard of Morlaix refers to *Carmen* 66 in the *De contemptu mundi*⁶⁴ and, if only from florilegia, there seems to have been an awareness of some of Catullus' poems among his contemporaries. The possibility of a direct influence on twelfth century verse forms and rhyme cannot be ruled out.

⁶²Walter Ludwig, "The origin and development of the Catullan style in neo-Latin poetry," in *Latin poetry and the classical tradition; essays in medieval and Renaissance literature*, edited by Peter Godman and Oswyn Murray, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, p.183.

⁶³*ibid*, p.186-187. See also C.J. Fordyce, *Catullus, a commentary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961, p. xxv-xxvi.

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It is true, of course, that rhyme is very rarely sustained through a whole poem in that fashion in classical literature. Vergil has a quatrain structure which recurs quite often and which shows an obviously deliberate use of rhyme.

⁶⁴*De contemptu mundi*, 2,525 quotes from Catullus, 66,83.

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ite meae, quondam felix pecus, ite capellae.
non ego vos posthac viridi proiectos in antro
dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo;
carmina nulla canam; non me pascente, capellae.⁶⁵

The quatrains show not only end-rhyme or assonance with the scheme abba but also a rhyme or assonance of the first half of the first line with the first half of the fourth line (quondam, canam). Nevertheless, obvious, regular and sustained rhyme of that sort is relatively rare in classical poetry. But rhyming figures of a less obvious character, involving not only rhyme in the sense of conventional end rhymes, but also assonance, alliteration, rhymes in parallel metrical positions, repetition of entire verse lines, and similar effects are very common indeed. Eva H. Guggenheimer has shown that, except for the general rule that figures of any kind should never be obtrusive or monotonous, ancient literary theorists did not disapprove of the use of rhyme in poetry.⁶⁶ She analyses the kinds of rhyming figures that commonly occur in classical poetry and provides a wealth of examples.⁶⁷

It is not strictly correct, therefore, to say that rhyme was "as foreign to the Romans as to the Germanic peoples."⁶⁸ Nor need we seek the origins of rhyme only in classical prose; classical poetry may have had at least as much influence on the development of rhyme in the verse of the twelfth century as classical prose. But if we think of rhyme as being identity of sound between words or verse-lines extending from the end to the last fully accented vowel and no further⁶⁹ and if, in addition,

⁶⁵*Eclogues*, 1,74-77. See also *Eclogues*, 7,65-68; *Eclogues*, 8,76-79; *Georgics*, 1,406-409.

⁶⁶Eva H. Guggenheimer, *Rhyme effects and rhyming figures; a comparative study of sound repetitions in the classics with emphasis on Latin poetry*, The Hague, Mouton, 1972, p.61-72.

⁶⁷*ibid.*, p.143-224.

⁶⁸Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, p.390.

⁶⁹On this definition, "greet" rhymes with "deceit" and "quality" with "frivolity", but "seat" does not rhyme with "deceit" nor "station" with "crustacean." Bernard, along with other twelfth-century (and modern) poets does not always strictly follow that

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we insist upon a regular scheme of rhyme in that sense throughout a whole poem, then it can properly be said that rhyme is an invention of the twelfth century.

It is an exaggeration to claim that the large number of medieval Latin poems which employ classical metres are mostly "without merit, being little more than exercises in versification."⁷⁰ Bernard's poems in classical metres are in no way exceptional; many of his contemporaries wrote unrhymed hexameters and elegiac couplets, and some wrote unrhymed lyric metres. In Anglo-Latin verse, unrhymed classical metres were less common from the middle of the thirteenth century until their artificial revival in the Renaissance.⁷¹ As Bernard's poems illustrate, the Latin poems of the twelfth century which used classical metres were by no means without merit.

But it is certainly true that the great achievement of twelfth century poets was the development of verse with the characteristics of syllable-count, stress and rhyme. A metre based solely on syllable count is not, as we have seen, very interesting. But when that is combined with a system in which the stress of the metre coincides with the stress and rhythm of the ordinary spoken language, a very powerful poetic instrument emerges. Not only is the system itself effective, but it makes possible a kind of counterpoint, when a poet deliberately introduces a conflict between the metric stress and the natural language stress.

Vicem amicitiae
vel unam me reddere
oportebat tempore
summae tunc angustiae,

rule. He rhymes "lucris" with "volucris," for example (*De contemptu mundi*, 2,277-278).

⁷⁰Charles H. Beeson, *A primer of medieval Latin; an anthology of prose and poetry*, Folkestone, Bailey Brothers and Swinfen, 1973, p.26.

⁷¹A.G. Rigg, *A history of Anglo-Latin literature*, p.313.

triumphi participem
vel ruinae comitem ...⁷²

The word "unam" in the second line of the part of Peter Abelard's poem quoted above, and the word "triumphi" in the fifth line, are examples of just such a conflict, in a context in which (as is clear if the passage is read aloud) it is intended for poetic effect. Gerard Manley Hopkins observes that this kind of counterpoint is "a thing so natural that our poets have generally done it, from Chaucer down, without remark and it commonly passes unnoticed ..."⁷³ It can, of course, be found in poets before Chaucer. It was an invention of the twelfth century Latin poets.

When to that powerful instrument was added, in the twelfth century, the equally powerful instrument of rhyme, there occurred a significant revolution in Latin verse, which during the subsequent centuries greatly influenced the development of vernacular verse. The revolution can hardly be called a renaissance, because it was the emergence of something really new. It had, in its disparate parts, various predecessors, as we have seen, but it was a new development. It was in no sense the revival of something which had died.

The classical learning of the twelfth century was part of a continuing Latin tradition. Within that tradition, there were new developments in metre and rhyme which quickly found a place in vernacular poetry. New developments also took place in allegory, which is explored in the next chapter.

⁷²Peter Abelard, *Planctus*, in *Medieval Latin lyrics*, edited by Helen Waddell, 4th ed., London Constable, 1935, p.168.

⁷³Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems*, edited by Robert Bridges, 2nd. ed., London, Oxford University Press, 1937 (Oxford bookshelf), p.2-3.

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Interpretive allegory

When C.S. Lewis referred to the allegory of the twelfth century as "a genuinely new creation" he had in mind chiefly the developments which led to the *Romance of the rose* in the thirteenth century.¹ As he is at pains to make clear, allegory did not develop first in the vernacular literatures. "Allegory, in some sense, belongs not to medieval man but to man, or even to mind, in general."² The allegory of the twelfth century had roots in classical antiquity and in the Scriptures. This chapter attempts to indicate those roots, to explore something of the complexity of allegory and to identify what "genuinely new" contribution twelfth-century poets, especially Latin poets, made to the development of allegory. Bernard of Morlaix was not principally an allegorist. He wrote no work which could be called "an allegory." But he made extensive use of allegorical techniques and played a part in the new creation to which Lewis refers.

Bernard's poem *In libros Regum* is in the form of a commentary on the first three of the four books of Kings.³ As such, one would expect it to be difficult to understand without a knowledge of the passages of Scripture upon which it comments. Bernard expects that knowledge from his readers, either from a first-hand acquaintance with the Vulgate or from reading of a summary or popular version, like the *Carmen in libros Regum* of his contemporary Hildebert of Lavardin, which is a rendering in

¹C.S.Lewis, *The allegory of love; a study in medieval tradition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.84.

²ibid., p.44.

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elegiac couplets of an abridged form of the four books of Kings.⁴ But even a reader with a good knowledge of the Vulgate version of the books of Kings could be excused for finding much of Bernard's commentary difficult. Take, for example, the lines:

Ultima vero prior dat prolem prima suprema.
Dat conversio opus, gratia dona operis.

Even in the context of the story of the two wives of Elcana (Phenenna, who had children, and Anna, who had no children) the lines are not easy to interpret. The clue to their significance is found in the *Commentaria in libros IV Regum* of Hrabanus Maurus.

Phenenna interpretatur *conversio*; Anna *gratia* interpretatur. Qui vult effici possessio Dei,⁵ ducat has duas uxores, et jungat sibi primum eam quae nobilior est, hoc est, gratiam. Haec enim prima per fidem conjungitur homini, ut Apostolus ait: "Gratia enim Dei salvati estis per fidem (*Ephes.2,8*)."
Secundo conjungatur Phenennae, id est conversioni, quia post gratiam credulitatis, morum emendatio sequi debet. Prima filios nobis generat Phenenna, quia primos nobis fructus proferimus per conversionem.⁶

The commentary of Hrabanus Maurus, written in 834, was well known and influential throughout the middle ages. It provided a basis for much of the subsequent commentary on Kings. His interpretations are repeated, with variations, in most subsequent works. Angelom of Luxeuil, in his *Enarrationes in libros Regum*, though he adds much material of his own, copies extensively from Hrabanus. In relation to Phenenna and Anna, for example, he has the following:

³According to the Vulgate. That is to say, the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings according to the Authorised Version.

⁴PL 171, 1239-1264.

⁵The name Elcana means *possessio Dei*.

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Et ideo qui vult effici possessio Dei, has duas ducat uxores: activam scilicet primum, et deinceps transeat ad contemplativam. Seu, ut aliter dicamus, conjugat sibi eam quae nobilior est, Annam, hoc est gratiam. Haec enim prima jungitur homini per fidem, ubi Apostulus ait "Gratia enim Dei salvi facti estis per fidem (*Ephe.* 2,8)." Secundo jungatur Phenennae, id est conversioni, quia post gratiam credulitatis, sequi debet emendatio morum. Prima filios generat Phenenna, quia primi fructus proferentur per conversionem.⁷

Much of Angelom's borrowing is even more blatant, and there is a great deal of simple word-for-word transcription from Hrabanus' commentary. He concludes with an appeal to the reader.

This laborious task is at last finished. I have been assisted by the help of the Almighty, and now that it is done, I humbly beg the reader to give joyful thanks to the Lord, if he considers it worth reading or copying ...⁸

Hrabanus' commentary was used by many commentators after Angelom, and when the *Glossa ordinaria* came to be compiled, it relied heavily on Hrabanus, both in general and as far as Kings is concerned.⁹ The *Glossa* has been variously ascribed to Walafrid Strabo and Anselm of Laon. Migne took the view that Walafrid was responsible for the marginal glosses and Anselm for the interlinear, but Beryl Smalley regards that attribution as "a bibliographical legend." The fifteenth-century editors regarded the *Glossa* as a work of composite and uncertain authorship, but still a work of the greatest authority. The *Glossa* has "a twelfth- rather than a ninth-century origin" and the responsibility for the major part of the compilation probably lies with Anselm of Laon and his brother Ralph.¹⁰

⁶PL 109, 14.

⁷PL 115, 259.

⁸PL 115, 550.

⁹PL 113, 539-630. Whatever the deficiencies of Migne's version of the *Glossa*, it has the advantage of being readily available, and it was thought to be sufficient for the purposes of this thesis.

¹⁰Beryl Smalley, *The study of the Bible in the middle ages*, 3rd ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 1983, p.x-xi, 56-66. See also the same

In view of the persisting popularity of Hrabanus' commentary, it was quite reasonable for Bernard to expect a degree of familiarity with it from his monastic readers. The *In libros Regum* seems, in part, to be intended as a useful summary of Hrabanus' commentary on the first three books of Kings, with an emphasis on its doctrinal and moral elements. Bernard thought it important to produce popular and readable versions of doctrinal and devotional works. In the prologue to the *De contemptu mundi*, he writes with approval of those who, in this time of revealed grace, when the crucified Jesus is ruling nations everywhere, have not been afraid to render even the Gospels themselves in metrical form. He believed that poets wrote in metre because they could thereby express the truths they wished to convey more pleasingly and persuasively than in prose.¹¹ In that sense, his *In libros Regum* may perhaps be regarded as a companion to Hildebert's *Carmen in libros Regum*.

Bernard follows Hrabanus quite closely until he comes, towards the end of his poem, to the throne of Solomon.¹² That, of course, is not the end of the third book of Kings. Bernard does not deal with the death of Solomon or any of the exciting events which follow it in the second half of the third book, and he does not deal at all with the fourth book. And yet the *In libros Regum* does not appear, like the *Instructio sacerdotis*,¹³ to be incomplete. As a commentary on Kings, the *In libros Regum* is less than complete. But it is a good deal more than a commentary.

author's *The gospels in the schools c.1100-c1280*, London, Hambledon Press, 1985, p.3-7.

¹¹Ut quae minus poterant plano sermone digesta, metrico depicta grata redderent. *De contemptu mundi*, Prologus.

¹²3 Kings 10,18-20.

¹³The incompleteness of the *Instructio sacerdotis* is discussed above, p.94ff.

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The opening of Bernard's commentary on the throne of Solomon is a greatly abbreviated summary of Hrabanus' commentary on the same passage and, like all that precedes it, is hard to follow without some knowledge of Hrabanus' interpretation. Much of Hrabanus' detail is missing, but Bernard stresses the general theme that the throne is a figure of the Church.

Then Solomon made for himself a great throne of ivory, just as Christ made himself a church from chaste souls. And he overlaid the throne he made with a great deal of tawny gold, just as Christ adorns his church with portents and with his love. The top of the throne was round behind, just as the supreme crown rewards the good when their life is ended. Six steps led to the throne, denoting its completeness.¹⁴ Good works, in the perfect number of six, provide us with the means of climbing to heaven. There were two hands on either side holding up the seat. Divine grace holds up the throne [of the church] for both Jews and Gentiles.¹⁵ Two lions stood, one at each hand. They represent the holy men of the Old and New Testaments, crying out, "We are nothing without God." And twelve little lions stood upon the six steps, on the one side and on the other. The little lions stand for the company who follow the teaching of the Apostles. Their tongues give strength by their words; their hands create justice in their dealings; their holiness increases the flock of Christ by their prayers.¹⁶ There was no such work made in any kingdom. When God is the craftsman, the work is the flower of masterpieces. The Catholic Church is both the worker

¹⁴Hrabanus gives reasons why six denotes completeness or perfection, for example that God made the world in six days. Also, half six is three, one third of six is two and the sixth part of six is one, while one, two and three add up to six. But the number six also represents good works. PL 109, 196.

¹⁵"Dona superna tenent gente in utraque thronum." Hrabanus interprets "bina" in relation to the Old and New Testaments. In *libros Regum*, 906; PL 109, 197.

¹⁶"Quorum lingua, manus, devocio dat, facit, auget/ Verbis, re, precibus robora, jura, gregem." (lines 911-912). The rhetorical device ("versus rapportati" or "singula singulis") goes back to late Greek antiquity and is found also in English. Shakespeare, for example, has "The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword" (*Hamlet*, 3,1). It is described in Curtius, *European literature in the Latin middle ages*, p.286-287. It is a favourite device of Bernard's. In this case, it serves a further purpose than the purely rhetorical, because it clearly indicates twelve items.

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and the work of God. Man cannot work unless God, the craftsman, is in charge.¹⁷

Up to this point, Bernard has been adapting the work of Hrabanus Maurus to his purpose. Now, he takes a surprising new direction. "Now", he says, "I move from the general to the specific, and I apply to Mary the Mother of God what previously I applied to the Church."¹⁸ The remaining hundred lines of the poem constitute a hymn of praise of Mary. This interpretation of the throne of Solomon is not found in Hrabanus or in any other Western commentator.¹⁹ It is Bernard's own, and it is clearly the purpose and point of his poem. All that has gone before was designed to lead up to this culmination. From this point of view, *In libros Regum* is not so much a commentary on Kings as a poem about Mary. The *In libros Regum* has a different metre from the *Mariale* and it has no rhyme, but similarities of content, vocabulary and style of these concluding lines suggest that the attribution of the *Mariale* to Bernard of Morlaix may be correct.

King Solomon made a great throne out of ivory. Christ the King made his mother so that he could be made by her. He made the woman whom he chose to be his mother. He did not violate her intact virginity. His mother's virginity was preserved [when he was born], just as his godhead was preserved. The elephant is chaste, and the ivory of his tusks signifies chastity. This mother is more chaste than the elephant; her Son is more powerful. Mary is the throne of the Word, the heavenly home of God, the dwelling place of the Lamb, the milk of the flock, the house of David, the mountain of Sion, the citadel of God.²⁰

Bernard goes on to interpret the throne of Solomon in relation to Mary. The gold with which Solomon covered the throne is the love of Christ for his mother. And Mary's love for her son was

¹⁷*In libros Regum*, 897-916.

¹⁸*In libros Regum*, 917-918.

¹⁹Hrabanus is the only commentator mentioned in the *Glossa* in relation to the throne of Solomon. PL 113, 602.

²⁰*In libros Regum*, 919-926.

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so great that his crucifixion was a sword through her heart. She was crucified with Christ, a bundle of myrrh between her breasts.²¹ The throne of Solomon, clad with gold, is Mary, the shining star of the sea, clad with gold. The geometric perfection of the roundness of the throne signifies Mary, who is totally pure and without sin. Horace was wrong to say that nothing is perfect in all respects.²² Mary's soul is perfect in all respects. Bernard uses all the characteristics of the throne to develop his theme of the praises of Mary and her place in the scheme of salvation. Apostles, patriarchs and prophets, martyrs, virgins and fathers of the Church, all have their place in heaven, but Mary's place is above them all.²³

Bernard is so little interested in the literal meaning of Kings that he does not even present it, let alone explicate it. And from Hrabanus' commentary, he selects only those elements which serve the homiletic and devotional purposes of his poem. The *Glossa ordinaria*, by contrast, gives considerable attention to clarification and explanation of the literal meanings of Scripture, as well as to other kinds of interpretation. In relation to the throne of Solomon, for example, it quotes Hrabanus as follows:

The throne or chair of state is an imperial seat, which in the *Canticle of canticles* is called a litter, because the person sitting in it can be carried or moved about from place to place. Six steps lead up to it. Beneath the chair is a golden footstool. The top of the throne is rounded, extending outwards into two arms or handles, alongside which there are two lions which help to hold up the seat.²⁴

Hugh of St. Victor, while recognising the importance of the "mystical and allegorical meanings" of Scripture, berates those who superstitiously ("superstitiose") find them and elaborate

²¹Canticle of canticles 1,12.

²²Horace, *Odes* 2,16,27.

²³*In libros Regum*, 929-1018.

²⁴PL 113, 602.

them when they are not there. Of the author of Ecclesiastes, he says that he was concerned with the reasons why the human heart should scorn the things of this world, rather than with mysterious spiritual meanings.²⁵

The importance of the literal sense of Scripture is stressed even more strongly by Saint Thomas Aquinas. Saint Augustine said: "If I were called upon to write a book which was to be vested with the highest authority, I should prefer to write it in such a way that a reader could find re-echoed in my words whatever truths he was able to apprehend."²⁶ Saint Thomas explains that Saint Augustine was referring to literal meanings, but the sense of "literal" is not simple. Literal meanings may be divided into historical ("cum simpliciter aliquid proponitur"); aetiological ("cum causa dicti assignatur"); and analogical. The analogical sense includes parables, in which the literal meaning is not the parable, but what the parable is meant to convey. Similarly with metaphors, the literal sense does not stop with the imagery, but includes also what the imagery signifies. "He sat down with his disciples" has a literal meaning, directly expressed. But "He sits at the right hand of the Father" is a metaphor, in which the literal meaning is indirectly expressed.

Saint Thomas distinguishes the literal sense of Scripture from the spiritual sense, which again may be divided into three: the allegorical (when the things of the old law signify the things of the new); the moral (when Scripture provides us with models of behaviour); and the anagogical (when the state of eternal life is foreshadowed). All spiritual meanings are based on literal meanings, and arguments can be drawn only from literal meanings. "Nothing necessary for faith is contained under the

²⁵*In Salomonis Ecclesiasten homiliae XIX*, PL 175, 115.

²⁶*Confessions*, 12,31. See also *De utilitate credendi*, caput 3, PL 42, 68-72.

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spiritual sense that is not openly conveyed through the literal sense elsewhere [in Scripture]."²⁷

The various senses of Scripture discussed by Saint Thomas can be found in the New Testament itself. For example, the story of Jonah and the whale is interpreted as a figure of Christ's death and resurrection (Matthew 12, 39-41); Abraham's domestic life is interpreted as referring to the Jewish and Christian dispensations (Galatians 4, 22-31); the rituals and sacrifices of the Mosaic law are taken as symbols of the divine nature and of Christ's redeeming sacrifice (Hebrews, especially chapters 9 and 10). Furthermore, Saint Thomas' definition of allegory has Scriptural warrant. "For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman and the other by a free woman ... Which things are said by an allegory (¶tin£ ¶stin ¶llhgoroÚmena). For these are the two testaments ..."²⁸ Saint Paul is not suggesting that Abraham's sons are fictional. The allegorical relation here is a relation between real things. That is the only meaning of allegory which Saint Thomas (unlike Bede) allows.

The formulation of the four senses of Scripture (though not necessarily in precisely Saint Thomas' terms) came very early in biblical exegesis, going back at least as far as Bede.²⁹ Bede treats allegory more generally than Saint Thomas. "Allegory is a trope which means something other than what it says". It includes irony, antiphrasis, enigma, charientismus, paroemia, sarcasm and asteismus. "It is important to observe that

²⁷*Summa theologiae*, 1a, 1, 10.

²⁸Galatians 4,24

²⁹Thomas Gilbey, "The senses of scripture", appendix 12 in vol. 1 of St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964, p.140. For the patristic origins of the definition and formulation of the quadripartite method, see Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale; les quatre sens de l'écriture*, book 1, part 1, Paris, Aubier, 1959, p.171-219. He discusses Clement of Alexandria, Saint Augustine, Gregory, Cassien, Eucher, and Origen.

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allegory is sometimes historical and sometimes purely verbal ... Whether allegory is verbal or historical, sometimes it prefigures an event literally, sometimes it prefigures typologically an event in the life of Christ or of the Church, sometimes it figuratively expresses a tropological or moral principle, and sometimes it figuratively expresses an analogical sense, that is, a sense leading the mind to higher things." Bede includes as allegory some tropes which Saint Thomas regards as literal, but neither of them regards parables as allegory. For Bede, they are an example of Homoesis, "the designation of a thing which is less familiar by a comparison with something which is better known."³⁰

The four senses are set out in the *Prothemata Glossae ordinariae* in terms very similar to those of Saint Thomas. From the beginning, they presented problems. Angelom of Luxeuil attempted to overcome some of the problems by subtle distinctions, so that the three spiritual senses are extended to seven.³¹ Beryl Smalley comments that St. Thomas' teaching "that the literal sense was all that the sacred writer intended, sharpened the problem by the very fact of clarifying its nature."³² Certainly, his insistence on the importance of the literal sense (in his sense of "literal") carried the day as far as Scriptural exegesis is concerned. In the *Postilla super totam Bibliam* of Nicholas of Lyra, the emphasis is very strongly on the literal interpretation of Scripture. Commenting on the throne of Solomon, for example, he has the following:

The king also made a great ivory throne. It was another very beautiful and ornate work. Six steps led to its seat. The top of the throne was rounded, as is often the case with wooden chairs. There were two handles, one on each side, at the rear of it, and two lions were carved there, adding to the beauty and

³⁰Bede the Venerable, *De schematibus et tropis*, PL 90, 184-186.

³¹*Enarrationes in libros Regum, Praefatio*, PL 115, 245-246. See also his *Commentarius in Genesis*, PL 115, 110.

³²Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, p.xv.

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ornament of the work. The meaning of everything else in these verses is obvious.³³

Nicholas of Lyra represents the culmination of a movement for the study of Hebrew and rabbinics. The scholars (especially the friars) of the thirteenth century carried on and enlarged the method of their twelfth-century predecessors, especially the compilers of the *Glossa*.³⁴

In the context of the fourfold exegetical method (literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical), the gloss which explains the story of Elcana, Phenenna and Anna in terms of faith, grace and conversion would seem to be moral, while the relationship which Bernard, following Hrabanus, establishes between the throne of Solomon and the Church could be argued to be allegorical (the things of the old law signifying the things of the new). But Bernard's explanation of the throne in terms of Mary, the mother of God, does not fit very comfortably into the fourfold scheme as defined by Saint Thomas. The concepts of faith, grace and conversion are abundantly conveyed in a literal sense by other passages of Scripture, in a way that Mary's attributes and her place in the economy of salvation are not. This kind of interpretation has been called the "accommodated" sense, that is to say, a meaning given by artifice to a biblical text not warranted by its context in Scripture or in tradition. It is useful for private meditation or for a homily, but it has no place in Scriptural exegesis, according to Saint Thomas. Bernard's use of allegory may be called poetic rather than exegetic. It added very little to the study of the Scriptures, but it contributed significantly to the development of allegory in the Latin verse of the twelfth century.

³³Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam Bibliam*, vol.1, Strasbourg, 1492 (facsimile reprint, Frankfurt, Minerva, 1971), unpagged, at 3 Kings 18-20.

³⁴Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, p.355.

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Bernard's use of allegory is not limited to Scripture. His treatment of the Golden Age, for example, has allegorical elements. It even lends itself to quadripartite analysis, although not strictly in Saint Thomas' sense, and although it is not in any sense Scriptural. His descriptions of the Golden Age are pagan rather than Christian.³⁵

That was the best race, the soundest race, sober in heart. They did not know how to gather marketable goods, but they were rich in virtue. They did not know how to cheat or how to exalt themselves, but they were zealous for justice. They knew no crime and did not allow themselves to be consumed with greed. They were never prosecuted because they were never guilty. Dutifully, they cultivated the fields entrusted to them and their ancestral homes. They always kept agreements. The only battles they fought were with natural misfortunes. They thought it was wrong to seek power or to know anything about crime.³⁶

The people of Bernard's Golden Age married late in life, engaged in sexual intercourse only in order to beget children, drank no wine and ate frugally.

Peace brought them holy leisure, agriculture kept them busy. The earth gave them vegetables to eat, the rivers gave them water to drink. Their belts were made of rope. Cattle served them. They lived in caves. They ate barley. Grass was their beds, rocks were their seats, hides were their clothes ...³⁷

That is the Golden Age of Hesiod,³⁸ Vergil,³⁹ Ovid,⁴⁰ and Boethius⁴¹ rather than of Saint Augustine.⁴² At the literal

³⁵*De contemptu mundi*, 2,1-98 and *De octo vitiis*, 1070-1095.

³⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 2,19-26.

³⁷*ibid.*, 2,83-86.

³⁸*Works and days*, 109 ff.

³⁹*Aeneid*, 8,314-327.

⁴⁰*Metamorphoses*, 1,1,89-112.

⁴¹*De consolacione philosophiae*, 2,5.

⁴²*De civitate Dei contra paganos*, 22,30 ad fin. Augustine's Golden Age is in the future, the seventh of seven ages. "Post hanc tamquam in die septimo requiescat Deus, cum eundem diem septimum, quod nos erimus, in se ipso Deo faciet requiescere."

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level, it means the Classical Golden Age, which Bernard of Morlaix, like Otto of Freising,⁴³ had no difficulty in accepting as historical. At the allegorical level, as Engelhardt points out, it refers to the early Church.⁴⁴ At the anagogical level, it has to do with the nature of mankind before the Fall and after Redemption. At the moral level, for Bernard the most important level, it is all about holy poverty, *nudus nudum Christum sequi*.

Bernard returns to the theme of the Golden Age in *De octo vitiis*. He takes some verses from *De consolatione philosophiae*⁴⁵ and interweaves his own verses with them - "Nexa tuis feci metris mea."⁴⁶ Given the requirements of metre and rhyme, the result is interesting, though it does not lend itself to translation. In the following example, Bernard is in italics, Boethius in Romans:

*Iam cepit metas felix nimium prior etas
Congaudens parvis, contenta fidelibus arvis,
Nec carnis fluxu nec inherti perdita luxu.
Numquam prandebat facili que sera solebat
Vite servande jejunia solve re glande
Sobria rite docens nec Bacchia munera noscens,
Parcior ut ventri, confundere melle liquenti*

At the anagogical level, Bernard's Golden Age converges with Augustine's.

⁴³Otto of Freising, *The two cities; a chronicle of universal history to the year 1146 AD*, translated ... by Charles Christopher Mierow, New York, Columbia University Press, 1928, p.145. "These beginnings of the Roman kingdom had their inception in the Golden Age, that is, the period that was free from idle luxury and the tumult of wars, at Laurentum, under Saturn."

⁴⁴George J. Engelhardt, "The *De contemptu mundi* of Bernardus Morvalensis, Book 2," *Mediaeval studies*, 26(1964):110. "The first age of man in the pagan myth becomes an allegory of which the historical sense is the first age of the Christian Church and the tropological sense the first or spiritual resurrection ... The golden age is envisioned as a state of justice to which at any time the individual man can return by that conversion to God of which the primitive Church gave witness in the epoch of persecution."

⁴⁵*De consolatione philosophiae*, 2,5.

⁴⁶*De octo vitiis*, 1096.

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*Nec vesti procerum prelucida vellera serum
Fucato ceno Tirio miscere veneno ...*⁴⁷

The mingling of the verses gets more complex, and Bernard does more violence to Boethius, as the passage proceeds, but it recovers at the end:

*... Unde labant mentes, gemmasque latere volentes'
Que vermis rodit, preciosa pericula fodit?*⁴⁸

In *De contemptu mundi* and in *De octo vitiis*, the description of the Golden Age introduces complaint about the moral decline of all classes of society. In addition to the literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical meanings, the Golden Age is also used to convey a complex image of Rome. It represents the stern values of Republican Rome, compared with the decadence of the Rome of later ages (a classical commonplace). But it also represents the Rome of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, when it was nourished by the blood of the martyrs, as compared with the decadence of the Rome of Bernard's day.

Rome, you are the chief of cities, made great by the Catos and famous by the Scauri. You are a very greedy city. Why are you always gobbling up huge wealth? The crucified King took pains to bestow upon you more than Caesar ever did. Caesar gives you foreign territory, but only Christ gives you heavenly realms. You grew strong, made great by the Catos and the Scipios. Now your strength is broken, and yet, in the dispensation of Christ, you are stronger than before. You flourished under Jupiter. Under Jupiter you were bright and rich. You will be weak under the cross [of Christ]. Under the cross, you will be ruined and feeble. But, poor as you are, you are a richer city; weak as you are, you are a stronger city; ruined as you are, you stand taller than ancient Rome. The cross makes you so ... Peter stands higher than the Caesars. God stands higher than the pagan gods ... Rome, you were given to Peter, you were developed by Peter's preaching, you were made subject to Christ. Why do you waste in sin all the blessings which I

⁴⁷ibid., 1070-1078.

⁴⁸*De octo vitiis*, 1094-1095.

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describe in these verses? ... You were made great enough by the Cornelii and by the three hundred Fabii, but you are made even greater by the teaching of that one man, Peter. And another man died that you might live, for Paul also was yours ...⁴⁹

The Donation of Constantine was already being given unfavourable critical attention in Bernard's day,⁵⁰ sometimes because it was thought to be a forgery, but mostly because, whether genuine or not, it was thought to have had a disastrous effect on the development of the Church. Bernard does not explicitly mention the Donation, but he expresses very clearly the view that there is an important distinction between the roles of *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, and his major complaint about the Church is that it is too deeply involved in secular affairs and given to Simony and avarice.⁵¹

Bernard has no *veltro*,⁵² but his ideas and his rhetoric about relations between church and state are in some ways similar to those of Dante.⁵³ But Bernard was not ahead of his time. His views are also similar to those of Arnold of Brescia.⁵⁴ And of Arnold himself it has been said, "The most fervent of Arnold's admirers could scarcely claim for his teaching the merit of

⁴⁹*De contemptu mundi*, 3,631-677.

⁵⁰For example, Wetzel: "Mendacium vero illud et fabula heretica, in qua refertur, Constantinum Silvestro imperialia symoniace concessisse, in Urbe ita detecta est, ut etiam mercennarii et mulierculae quoslibet etiam doctissimos super hoc concludant, et dictus apostolicus [Eugenius III] cum suis cardinalibus in civitate pre pudore apparere non audeat." (P. Jaffé (ed.), *Monumenta Corbeiensia*, Berlin, 1864, reprinted Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1964 (*Bibliotheca rerum Germanicorum*, 1), p.542.) Compare Dante:

Ahi, Constantin, di quanto mal fu madre,
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
Che da te prese il primo ricco padre! (*Inferno*, 19, 115-117).

⁵¹*De contemptu mundi*, 2,261-272.

⁵²Dante, *Inferno*, 1,101; *Purgatorio*, 7,971; *Paradiso*, 17,82-83; 30,133-138.

⁵³For example, *Purgatorio*, 16,98-129; *Paradiso*, 18,94-136; 27,40-66.

originality."⁵⁵ But Bernard is not interested in political theory. He does not enter into such questions as whether both the spiritual and temporal swords are entrusted to the Church's keeping, with a delegation to the secular power, as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux argued,⁵⁶ or whether, as Arnold and Dante argued, secular authority is given directly by God to the civil power.⁵⁷

The complex inter-relationships of ideas and images which Bernard connects with the Golden age go well beyond the restraints which are associated with biblical exegesis. The same may be said of Bernard's treatment of the end of the world and of the city of Sion. But, like allegory in Scriptural exegesis, all of them are examples of interpretive, rather than compositional allegory, even though the Golden Age, the end of the world and the city of Sion are certainly not regarded by Bernard as fictions. In its simplest sense, interpretive allegory moves from a fiction, often a personification, to a deeper meaning, for example from the fictional character of Athene to the deeper meaning of Wisdom. Compositional allegory, on the other hand, personifies abstract concepts and fashions a narrative around them.⁵⁸ Compositional allegory is discussed later in this chapter.

⁵⁴G. W. Greenaway, *Arnold of Brescia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1931, p.164-189.

⁵⁵*ibid.*, p.164.

⁵⁶Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione*, 4,3 (PL 182,776). "Uterque ergo Ecclesiae et spiritualis scilicet gladius, et materialis; sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero et ab Ecclesia exserendus: ille sacerdotis, is militis manu, sed sane ad nutum sacerdotis, et jussum imperatoris".

⁵⁷loc. cit. supra. See also Dante's *De monarchia*, 3,16: "Solus eligit Deus, solus ipse confirmat".

⁵⁸Jon Whitman, *Allegory; the dynamics of an ancient and medieval technique*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987, p. 3-5. See also Jean Pépin, *La tradition de l'allégorie de Philon d'Alexandre à Dante; études historiques*, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1987, p.252-253. The same distinction is made by Robert Hollander, who uses the terms critical (for interpretive) and creative (for compositional) allegory (*Allegory in Dante's Commedia*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969, p.3-4).

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Some of the problems of interpretive allegory may be illustrated from the *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii* of Bernardus Silvestris. According to Bernardus, Vergil's poem describes allegorically by means of an "integument" what the human spirit does and endures while temporarily placed in the human body. "The integument is a type of exposition which wraps the apprehension of truth in a fictional narrative, and thus it is also called an envelope (*involulcrum*)."⁵⁹ That is to say, the story of the *Aeneid* is fiction and its true meaning is its allegorical meaning.

Bernardus, following Macrobius, maintains that Vergil designed the *Aeneid* to contain two kinds of instruction, and that a reader who wishes to understand the poem must recognise them. The first kind of instruction is given through the poetic fiction of the narrative, which gives pleasure because of verbal ornament, the figures of speech and the various adventures and works of men which it describes. In his preface to his commentary (like Bernard of Morlaix in his preface to the *De contemptu mundi*) Bernardus quotes Horace:

Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae,
aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitae.⁶⁰

There is, says Bernardus, a twofold advantage for the reader. The first is skill in composition, which comes from imitation, and the second is the guide to good behaviour which the examples of the story provide. For example, the labours of Aeneas give us an example of patience, his care for Anchises and Ascanius gives an example of *pietas*, his veneration of the gods, sacrifices, and prayers give an example of religious devotion.

⁵⁹Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*, edited by Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1977, p.3.

⁶⁰*Ars poetica*, 333-334.

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Likewise, we are warned about the dangers of lust by his immoderate love for Dido.⁶¹

The second kind of instruction is given through the allegorical meaning of the poem, and it is instruction in philosophical truth. Vergil is a philosopher writing about the nature of human life (*humane vite naturam*).⁶²

It is unlikely that Vergil intended the story and the characters of the *Aeneid*, including the gods, to be regarded as fictions. But the *Aeneid* invites interpretations beyond the literal. Vergil was a poet of great learning and his work is deeply imbued with the literary traditions of his time. For "the subtlest mind in literary history"⁶³ there are always "different layers of meaning".⁶⁴ In order to evaluate Bernardus' approach to those layers of meaning, it may be useful to consider, in some detail, one element of the *Aeneid*, namely the character of Anchises. Bernardus interprets Anchises as follows:

Aeneas is said to be the son of Anchises and Venus. Anchises means "celsa inhabitans", inhabiting the heavens; we understand him to be the father of all who presides over all. We read that there are two Venuses, one lawful and the other the goddess of lust ... Therefore, whenever you find Venus as the wife of Vulcan, the mother of Jocus and Cupid, interpret her as the pleasure of the flesh ... But whenever you read that Venus and Anchises have a son, interpret that Venus as the harmony of the world and Aeneas as the human spirit ... Therefore Aeneas is the son of Venus and Anchises, since the human spirit comes from God through concord to live in the human body. We have said these things about Anchises, Aeneas and Venus because in many places in this work we will find these interpretations necessary.⁶⁵

⁶¹*Commentum*, p.2-3.

⁶²*ibid.*, p.3.

⁶³W.F. Jackson Knight, "Virgil's Elysium", in *Virgil*, ed. D.R. Dudley, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p.171.

⁶⁴*ibid.* p.172.

⁶⁵*ibid.*, p.9-10.

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Bernardus' interpretation of Anchises as "the father of all who presides over all" has some basis in the text as well as in the meaning of "celsa inhabitans" which Bernardus gives to his name. Anchises is not merely the recipient of Aeneas' *pietas*. He is a major character in the narrative.⁶⁶ He is a hero in his own right⁶⁷ who commands the respect of all who know him.⁶⁸ Anchises, despite his disability and age, is still a great chieftain.⁶⁹ Those aspects of Anchises find some reflection in

⁶⁶He is mentioned in every book except Book 11. He plays a large role in the second half of Book 2 and has a significant part of the action of Book 3. Even in Book 4 he appears every night in Aeneas' dreams. (4,351-353). He is brought to our attention throughout Book 5, which deals with his apotheosis and funeral games, and he is the central character of the second part of book VI. Even after that, though he never appears, as it were, on stage, we are constantly reminded of him by what other characters say about him and there is a particularly important description of him before disaster struck him (8,155ff). Right at the end of the poem he is poignantly brought to attention again (12,933-934).

⁶⁷He is not simply the father of his famous son. On the contrary, Aeneas is frequently recognised as the son of his famous father (1,617-618; 6,125-126; 6,322; 3,82; 8,152-171). And throughout the poem Aeneas is referred to as "Anchisa generatus", "Anchisa satus" or "Anchisiades".

⁶⁸Helenus has special gifts for Anchises (3,469) and addresses him "multo honore" (3,474). Gifts given to Acestes (5,535) and Latinus (7,245) are regarded as specially valuable because they are associated with Anchises. The Trojans who decide to settle in Sicily appoint a priest for Anchises' tomb (5,760-761). It is in the name of Anchises that Magus asks for mercy (10,524) and Turnus for his body to be restored to his father, Daunus (12,931-938).

⁶⁹Aeneas, with his family, lives in his father's palace (2,299-300). Anchises is the chieftain who commands the Trojans to commence their journey (3, 9). It is he who appoints religious rites and calls upon the gods (3,263-264; 3,525-526). It is he who manages to reassure the terrified Achaemenides (3,610-611). When Helenus has finished his prophetic utterance to Aeneas, he gives to Anchises, who is still the chieftain, not to Aeneas, the commission to make for Italy, although he knows that Anchises will never get there (3, 377-477). Aeneas prays to him, "salve sancte parens" (5,80). During the ceremonies at his tomb his apotheosis is indicated by the omens of the snake (5,84-93) and the flaming arrow (5,525-528). And after that, when Anchises appears to his son, he says that he is in Elysium (5,733-735). When the Trojans have reached their destination, Aeneas instructs them to pray to Anchises (7,133-134).

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Bernardus' interpretation. But Vergil's Anchises is much more complex. In some Greek legend Anchises was blind.⁷⁰ In most Roman legend he was lame, largely because of the transformation of Aeneas from Homeric hero to exemplar of *pietas*.⁷¹ Servius sometimes writes as if he believes the Anchises of the Aeneid to be blind⁷² and Vergil nowhere specifies his disability.⁷³ Aeneas has to carry his father from defeated Troy (2,707-717). A blind Anchises would not need to be carried. Pictorial representations of Anchises as a blind man show him being led by the hand by Aeneas. It is the lame Anchises who is depicted as being carried, clutching the *penates*.⁷⁴

Vergil must have been aware of the legend of Anchises' blindness. Although it is not found in the poem at the literal

⁷⁰Theocritus 1, 106-7. See also Gow's explanation of this cryptic passage (A.S.T. Gow (ed), *Theocritus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952, v.1, p.12, v.2, p.23-24). Also relevant is Servius, ad Aen. I, 617, 2,35 and 2,687. Hesiod mentions Anchises (*Theogony*, 1008-1010) but not his punishment. The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* V deals with Anchises' seduction by Aphrodite but not with his punishment, although the goddess threatens him with a thunderbolt. The *Little Iliad* (14,9) mentions him, but not his punishment.

⁷¹G. K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome*, Princeton University Press, 1969, *passim*.

⁷²For example, Anchises was not present during the argument about the wooden horse "propter caecitatem, ut docet Theocritus" (Servius, ad Aen. 2,35).

⁷³Vergil's only account of Anchises' disability is not, perhaps, inconsistent with blindness (2,648-649) and there are other hints in the text. Anchises, after the miracle of Ascanius' halo, asks Jupiter for a sign, as though he had not seen the sign already given. It is the sound of the thunderbolt that convinces him (2,678-694). It is Aeneas, not Anchises, who sees the white horses (3,537). Anchises' apparent observation of Charybdis might mean no more than that he heard the noise and therefore gave warning (3,555-558). He is certainly not blind in the Elysian Fields. There he is explicitly said to see something ("vidit Aenean", 6,684-685) and he is described as reviewing the troops of his progeny (6,752-892). But it is clear that, as a "felix anima" (6,669), he is neither blind nor lame in Elysium.

⁷⁴See Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome*, where there are numerous illustrations of coins, vases and other representations, including a comic mural from Pompeii.

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level, it influenced Vergil in his treatment of the character of Anchises at other levels of interpretation. Vergil is at pains to establish Anchises as the chieftain, enjoying the loyal support of his son (3,480), and few commentators have drawn attention to his negative aspects.⁷⁵ Bernardus certainly does not. But Vergil also shows Anchises as a hindrance rather than a help in the quest for a new home in Italy. It cannot be due to accident or to what Gibbon called "the haste or irreligion of Virgil"⁷⁶ that, on every occasion when Anchises has anything to do with that quest, he is blind to the significance of events and portents.⁷⁷

Neither at the level of poetic fiction nor at the level of philosophical truth does Bernardus find any place for this aspect of Anchises' character, prominent though it is in the text. He has such difficulty in perceiving it, that he sees Anchises as the driving force, "regally adding threats to his pleas" when Aeneas hesitates.⁷⁸ Perhaps even more surprising is

⁷⁵Perhaps only one. Cristoforo Landino sees him as representing sensuality (*Disputationes Camaldulenses*, Sansoni, 1980, p.130 ff.)

⁷⁶Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of my life*, ed. B. Radice, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984, p.14.

⁷⁷When Aeneas, on his divine mother's instructions (2,595-598), seeks to rescue his father, the old man at first refuses to go (2,638-649). At the cost of valuable time, it takes a double miracle to persuade him (2,679-698). When Aeneas' prayers to Apollo are answered (3,96), Anchises misinterprets the message and sends the Trojans to Crete (3,103-117). When that proves disastrous, he tells Aeneas to go to Apollo's oracle at Ortygia (3,143), having no insight that Apollo will take the initiative and send to Aeneas a vision of the Trojan *penates* (3,148-171). After that, much too late, he remembers that Cassandra had prophesied the Trojans' Italian destiny (3,182-188). While Helenus is engaged in giving copious good advice to Aeneas, Anchises, instead of listening, is fussing about organising the preparation of the fleet (3,472-473). When they see four white horses, Anchises says confidently, "bellum, o terra hospita, portas" (3,539). But then, unhelpfully, he reconsiders. They might portend peace (3,543).

⁷⁸*Commentum*, p.53. From the context, one might suppose that "precibusque minas regaliter addit" is a quotation from the

the fact that he does not make much of the re-appearance of Anchises after his apotheosis. Bernardus devotes less than a quarter of his commentary to books one to five of the *Aeneid*. He devotes more than three-quarters to Book 6, which he takes to be a fictional description of a descent into the underworld.⁷⁹ Bernard of Morlaix, by contrast, took Vergil's description quite literally, and scolded him for getting it wrong.⁸⁰

According to Bernardus Silvestris, the descent to the underworld is fourfold: the first is natural, the second is virtuous, the third is sinful, the fourth is artificial. Vergil, he says, is concerned with the fourth, because in the narrative Aeneas makes his descent through necromancy and artifice. But he is especially concerned with the second, which occurs when any wise person descends to mundane things through meditation, not so that he may put his desire in them, but so that, having recognised their frailty, he may turn from them and acknowledge God the creator of all.⁸¹ Bernardus makes very little of the significance of Aeneas' meeting with Anchises in the underworld, though Vergil seems to want to give it special significance. The *Aeneid* is, for Bernardus, the story of Aeneas' progress from infancy to maturity, from ignorance to understanding, from wilfully oblivious involvement with Dido to reunion with Anchises and a revelation of the source and end of life. Yet his allegory does not develop the significance of the reunion with Anchises.

Especially interesting is Bernardus' treatment of the problem of the gates of Sleep. Anchises' final act is to send his son and the Sibyl out of Hades through what appears to be the wrong gate (6,893-898). The horn and ivory gates are mentioned in the *Odyssey*, in connection with Penelope's dream of the killing of

Aeneid. It is, in fact, from Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2,397, where it is Jupiter who does the threatening.

⁷⁹*Commentum*, p.30.

⁸⁰*De contemptu mundi*, 1,643-646

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the suitors. Penelope tells Odysseus that she cannot guarantee the dream's truth because it did not come through the horn gate.⁸² Servius' comment on *Aeneid* 6,893 is "vult autem intellegi falsa esse omnia quae dixit." Poetically, he says, the meaning is clear. Vergil means that "everything he has said is false." In physical terms, the horn gates signify the eyes, which are of the colour of horn and are more robust than other members of the body, for they do not feel the cold. The ivory gates signify the teeth. What we say can be false, but what we see is without doubt true. Bernardus repeats those comments, and adds to them the comments of Macrobius, which relate the horn and ivory to two parts of the soul. Bernardus is unhappy about Servius' interpretation "sed falsa esse omnia quae dixit." First, he waters it down. They are "fabulosa et falsa ex parte." Then he says that Aeneas went out through the ivory gate because he really did see all those things, but he thought perhaps he had seen them in a dream.⁸³

The problem of the gates of Sleep is complex, and has generated much commentary. D.A. West, for example, relates it to the Golden Bough.⁸⁴ Brooks Otis thinks it relates to "a realm of experience beyond experience."⁸⁵ Whatever may be the explanation, it is clear that it is Anchises, not the Sibyl, who directs the course of his son through the ivory gate (6,898). The Sibyl, in fact, does not know her way around. She has to ask directions from Musaeus, and she does not know that the souls in Elysium have no fixed abodes (6,666-674). Bernardus

⁸¹*Commentum*, p.30.

⁸²*Odyssey*, 19,562-569.

⁸³*Commentum*, p.127-128. Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones (*Commentum*, Introduction p.xviii) argue that the last part of the *Commentum* is by a different hand and is the work of a continuator who brought the commentary down to the end of Book 6. That might in part explain the failure of the allegory to handle the reunion with Anchises and the gates of Sleep.

⁸⁴D.A. West, "The bough and the gate," in S.J. Harrison (ed), *Oxford readings in Vergil's Aeneid*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.224-238).

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cannot fit either the gates of Sleep or Anchises' responsibility for sending Aeneas through the ivory gate into his scheme, either in terms of poetic fiction or of allegorical truth.

The *Aeneid* is a poem of tensions, of "contrasts between opposing attitudes, exploration of divergent points of view".⁸⁶ The glory of Rome's achievement is contrasted with the suffering it caused; the Homeric hero is contrasted with the Roman hero; heroic valour is contrasted with *pietas*; the mundane world is contrasted with the world of the gods; the individual's ability to choose is contrasted with his control by external forces. At another level, similar contrasts are evident in the character of Anchises. He is a hero who is lame; a leader who misleads; a seer who fails to see. He is "the conscience of Aeneas,"⁸⁷ yet it is not he, but Aeneas' vision of him which guides Aeneas.⁸⁸ Polonius-like, he is given some of the best lines ("quisque suos patimur manis" 6,743). He represents Troy, which Aeneas must leave behind and rise above, yet in Book 6 he presents the spectacle of the Rome of the future.⁸⁹ But he is also responsible for casting doubt upon the significance of all this

⁸⁵Brooks Otis, *Virgil: a study in civilized poetry*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963, p.304-305.

⁸⁶R.D. Williams, *An introduction to Virgil's Aeneid*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1977, p.11.

⁸⁷Otis, *Virgil*, p.267.

⁸⁸Aeneas confuses the sources of revelations granted to him (1,382; 2,596ff). It is his wife Creusa who gives him the earliest and one of the most precise prophecies he ever receives (2,780-784). Of all gods and men, nobody except Helenus gives Aeneas so clear an indication of his destiny as this. Similarly, it is the Harpies who give what appears to be a frightening prognostication about hunger which will drive the Trojans to eat their tables (3,257) and it is Helenus who reassures Aeneas that he should not worry about it (3,394). Yet when it happens (7,116), Aeneas wrongly attributes the prophecy to his father (8,122-127).

⁸⁹There is, of course, much more than this to the profundity and significance of Book 6. Vergil is clearly referring to Homer (*Odyssey*, 11, passim, the halls of Hades) and to Plato (*Republic*, 10,613E-end, the myth of Er) and to Cicero (*Republic*, 6,9-end, the dream of Scipio).

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by his use of the ivory gate.⁹⁰ All of these are features of the *Aeneid* which Bernardus' interpretive allegory fails to elucidate.

That brief analysis of Vergil's treatment of one character in the *Aeneid* is perhaps sufficiently detailed to show, on the one hand, that the poem contains some elements of allegory, and that in many respects it invites allegorical interpretation; but that, on the other hand, neither the *Aeneid* as a whole nor any major part of it was written as compositional allegory. The analysis may also serve to point up some of the differences between the interpretive allegory of Bernardus Silvestris, which attempts to interpret a whole book, and that of Bernard of Morlaix, which is concerned rather to use a relatively brief text as a starting point for imaginative and creative discourse.

The allegory of the Bible is allegory "in facto." The notion that there can be allegorical correspondence not only between fictitious things and real things, but also between one set of real things and another is established in the Bible itself. In addition to the passage from Galatians, quoted above, we find, in the Apocalypse "The heaven departed as a book folded up (6,14)," which is itself a reference to Isaias 34,4: "The heavens shall be folded together as a book." In the context of the Bible, the notion makes sense, if one regards God as the author of the Bible as well as the author of the whole of creation.

But the people who actually wrote the Scriptures, at least as far as the Old Testament is concerned, did not necessarily

⁹⁰It is unlikely that Wu Ch'eng en ever read Vergil, but he employs a device not dissimilar to Vergil's Gates of Sleep. When the pilgrims, having been cheated with blank scriptures, return to Buddha to change them, he says: "But these blank texts are actually true, wordless scriptures and they are just as good as those with words" (*Journey to the West*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980-1983, v.4, p.393).

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intend anything except the literal meaning of what they wrote.⁹¹ It was, of course, supposed that biblical inspiration is a special and exceptional charisma. Nevertheless, there is a "divine inspiration which prompts the writing of any good work, for to St Thomas, as to St Ambrose, 'every truth and by whomsoever uttered is of the Holy Ghost.'" ⁹² Interpretive allegory in Scriptural exegesis is not specifically Christian. We find it, for example, in Philo of Alexandria. And interpretive allegory is older than biblical exegesis. We find it, for example, in the sixth century BC, with the philosophic interpretation of Homer.

There is a certain vagueness (evident, for example, in Bede) about the distinction between allegory "in verbis" and allegory "in facto". That vagueness makes possible the kind of imaginative allegory in which Bernard of Morlaix engages. It encourages the allegorist to give his poetry a Scriptural dimension, a kind of borrowed authority, which can be seen in Bernard's allegory, and even more strikingly in the apocalyptic work of Joachim of Flora. John Whitman points out the dangers. "Figures of speech may be as 'significant' as facts, but by the same token, facts are thereby liable to be reduced to mere figures of speech."⁹³ Does the throne of Solomon have any real existence? Is the Golden Age merely fiction?

Medieval allegorists would not, perhaps, be perturbed by the suggestion that Vergil did not intend the allegorical interpretations which they put upon the *Aeneid*, or upon the fourth *Eclogue*. Even for a modern commentator, it is not obvious that an allegorical interpretation has to be intended by the author in order to be valid. C.S. Lewis, referring to *Republic*, 361-362, says:

⁹¹*Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae 171, 1-6; 172,4; 173, 2-4.

⁹²Thomas Gilbey, "Biblical inspiration in St. Thomas Aquinas," appendix 3 in volume 1 of *Summa theologiae*, London, Blackfriars and Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964, p.143.

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Plato in his *Republic* is arguing that righteousness is often praised for the rewards it brings - honour, popularity, and the like - but that to see it in its true nature we must separate it from all these, strip it naked. He asks us therefore to imagine a perfectly righteous man treated by all around him as a monster of wickedness. We must picture him, still perfect, while he is bound, scourged, and finally impaled (the Persian equivalent of crucifixion). At this point the Christian reader starts and rubs his eyes. What is happening? Yet another of those lucky coincidences? But presently he sees that there is something here that cannot be luck at all.⁹⁴

As regards the fourth *Eclogue*, he is uncertain.

If I think (as I cannot help thinking) about the birth of Christ while I read that poem of Virgil's, or even if I make it a regular part of my Christmas reading, this may be a sensible and edifying thing to do. But the resemblance which makes such a reading possible may after all be a mere coincidence (though I am not sure that it is). I may be reading into Virgil what is wholly irrelevant to all he was, and did, and intended ... But when I meditate on the Passion while reading Plato's picture of the Righteous One, or on the resurrection while reading about Adonis or Balder, the case is altered. There is a real connection between what Plato and the myth-makers most deeply were and meant and what I believe to be the truth. I know that connection and they do not. But it is really there. It is not an arbitrary fancy of my own thrust upon the old words. One can, without any absurdity, imagine Plato or the myth-makers if they learned the truth, saying, "I see ... so that is what I was really talking about. Of course. That is what I really meant, and I never knew it."⁹⁵

We may wonder if Vergil would exclaim, "That is what I really meant" if he were to read Bernardus' interpretive allegory of the *Aeneid*. But we can at least see that it was not entirely irrational for the interpretive allegorists of both the ancient and the medieval worlds to read meanings into works which their

⁹³Whitman, *Allegory*, p.129.

⁹⁴C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, London, Collins, 1977 (Fount Paperbacks), p.87-88.

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authors did not intend, and that it was especially easy for Christians to do so, in the light of their experience with biblical exegesis.

But allegorical interpretation of the Bible was not applied, according to a uniform scheme, to the whole Bible, or even to the whole of the Old Testament, or even to a whole book, and very rarely even to a whole chapter. It was, as the examples cited above show, applied to relatively short passages of Scripture, according to particular exegetical needs. Saint Gregory puts it clearly.

... He that treats of sacred writ should follow the way of a river, for if a river, as it flows along its channel, meets with open valleys on its side, into these it immediately turns the course of its current, and when they are copiously supplied, presently it pours itself back into its bed. Thus unquestionably, thus should it be with everyone that treats of the Divine Word, that if, in discussing any subject, he chance to find at hand any occasion of seasonable edification, he should, as it were, force the streams of discourse towards the adjacent valley, and when he has poured forth enough upon its level of instruction, fall back into the channel of discourse which he had prepared for himself.⁹⁶

The analysis of the *Commentum* of Bernardus Silvestris suggests that interpretive allegory cannot be made to work very well when it is used in an extended fashion to propound a hidden meaning which the author of a lengthy and complex text did not intend. That is not to denigrate Bernardus' commentary, which has been reckoned "the most important and extensive commentary on the *Aeneid* produced in the later Middle Ages."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ibid., p.90-91.

⁹⁶Quoted in Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, p.33. See also De Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, 1,1, p.119-138; Whitman, *Allegory*, p.82-83.

⁹⁷Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca, *Commentary on the first six books of Virgil's Aeneid, by Bernardus Silvestris*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1979, p.xix.

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The weaknesses of interpretive allegory were recognised and exploited by twelfth-century satirists. The *Apocalypse of Golias* offers an example. Like Saint John's *Apocalypse*, to which it constantly alludes, and like *Piers plowman*, it uses the literary device of a dream or vision. Like the *Canterbury tales*, it starts in May. "When the hot lamp of Cynthus was casting its arrows of burning rays at the Bull", the poet, in the shadows of a wood, saw a vision of Pythagoras, who transported him to a place where he saw Aristotle, Boethius, Ovid and other such sages, and where an angel said to him, "Stand still, and you will see what Saint John saw." The vision he is granted is not of the seven Asian churches, but of "the seven English churches". The poem is full of the usual puns (liber, libra; marca, Marcus and so forth) and the interminable commonplaces of medieval anticlerical satire, but his treatment of them is cleverer than most. He presents the clerical hierarchy under the symbols from Saint John's *Apocalypse*, conventionally assigned to the four Evangelists⁹⁸:

The lion represents His Holiness the Pope. He is ravenous. He is hungry for money, so he pawns the things of God. He cares a great deal for the silver mark, but not at all for Saint Mark. He sails the ship of the Church through spiritual waters, but his anchor is firmly stuck in money. The bull represents the bishop, who runs fast in front of the herd through the pasture. He grazes and chews the cud. That is what he knows best. He is full fed with wealth that belongs to others. The eagle, which soars on its wings, represents the archdeacon. He is a predator. He sees his prey from afar and follows it. He flies around and lives by pillage. The creature in human form represents the dean. He is full of secret tricks. He carries out fraudulent operations under the guise of justice and he deceives good people with his appearance of honesty.⁹⁹

⁹⁸*Apocalypse* 4,7.

⁹⁹Thomas Wright (ed.), *The Latin poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes*, Hildesheim, Olms, 1968 (First published London, 1841), p.7.

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When it goes beyond the bounds set out by Saint Thomas, interpretive allegory becomes a very unreliable tool for exegesis. The *Apocalypse of Golias* is meant to be funny, but its allegory is no more far fetched than many attempts at allegorical exegesis which are meant to be perfectly serious. Interpretive allegory is at its best in meditation and homily, rather than in exegesis and commentary. In that regard, C.S. Lewis' reference to meditating on the Passion is illuminating.

It may be useful to compare the interpretive allegory of Bernard of Morlaix with a certain kind of midrash. Jacob Neusner distinguishes between midrash as paraphrase, midrash as prophecy and midrash as parable.¹⁰⁰ The last of these is very similar to the kinds of interpretive allegory discussed above. It is homiletic rather than exegetic in its purpose. Addison G. Wright describes it as follows:

The purpose of the midrash was the instruction and edification of the masses, and consequently the midrashist by reason of this religious rather than purely scholarly aim endeavoured not so much to seek the original meaning of the text as to find religious edification, moral instruction, and sustenance for the thoughts and feelings of his audience. The text of Scripture was the point of departure for it was God's word, valid for all time. The interpreter would begin with the plain sense. If it was useful religiously, it would be thus expounded. But if in the course of his reflection the biblical text suggested some idea other than that immediately apparent, then this idea would be set forth in connection with the text ... If the plain sense was obvious or if it was not useful religiously, then a hidden meaning would be sought.¹⁰¹

Thus, for example, the four rivers of Eden (Genesis 2,10-14) are taken to represent the four kingdoms which oppressed Israel, namely Babylonia, Media, Greece and Rome, and in *Leviticus Rabbah*, which came to redaction about 450 AD, the interpretation

¹⁰⁰Jacob Neusner, *What is midrash?* Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987 (Guides to biblical scholarship), p.7-12.

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is worked out in detail.¹⁰² Irving Jacobs argues that midrash, in its original, pre-literary form, was a living process involving both live preachers and live audiences in the ancient synagogues of the Holy Land. The audiences, he suggests, were not simply passive listeners. They influenced the development of midrash.

Relying on his congregation's familiarity with well-known traditions, the preacher could challenge their perceptiveness by selecting a text, not for its obvious verbal or thematic link with the pericope, but because of its more subtle allusion to a popular tradition associated with the principal character, or main event in the morning's lection.¹⁰³

Bernard's interpretation of the throne of Solomon as representing Mary and her place in the economy of salvation is very similar to that kind of midrash.

Midrash, properly speaking, is always concerned with interpretation of Scripture in the rabbinic tradition. But, like interpretive allegory, its vitality is such that its techniques have been borrowed in other fields.¹⁰⁴

Interpretive allegory owed much, by way of the Scriptures, to a more ancient Hebrew tradition. In relation to biblical exegesis, it reached its peak in the twelfth century, after which exegesis became increasingly more concerned with the plain meaning of the text. But it fostered art and skills which were developed in Latin poetry and which passed into vernacular

¹⁰¹Addison G. Wright, *The literary genre midrash*, New York, Alba House, 1967, p.64.

¹⁰²Neusner, *What is midrash?* p.60-67

¹⁰³Irving Jacobs, *The midrashic process; tradition and interpretation in rabbinic Judaism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.80.

¹⁰⁴See, for example, *Midrash and literature*, edited by Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986, where midrash is discussed in relation to Milton, Defoe, Borges, Kafka, Agnon, Derrida and Jabès.

literature and were important in the flowering of allegory in the later middle ages.

The development of interpretive allegory was only part of the story. Equally important was the development of compositional allegory. Bernard of Morlaix made a significant contribution to the imaginative use of interpretive allegory. His contribution to compositional allegory was less significant; in that area the most important work was the *Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris, who contrived a fusion of compositional with interpretive allegory. His work, and that of other poets, are considered below. But the poems of Bernard of Morlaix show him to be part of the genuinely new creation of allegory in the twelfth century, and they show also how that new creation was not seen as a revival or renewal, but rather as emerging from the living and continuing Latin literary tradition.

Compositional allegory

Compositional allegory starts with an abstract concept and represents it as a concrete person or situation. It frequently entails personification. Peter the Venerable, in a letter to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, offers an example:

Consider the mistress of a household. Concerned for the welfare of the whole of her household, she tells some of her servants to plough the earth with oxen, others to dig the vineyard. She sends some to the forest to cut firewood. She tells some to light the fire and others to fetch water and others again to go to the market for shopping. One she berates because he is slack, another she praises for his hard work and urges him to do better. But, although she tells different people to do different things, she herself does not change. And the diversity of the orders she gives does not result in a conflict of benefits. All the various tasks work together for a single, straightforward purpose, the welfare of the household. That is the one end of all the many different tasks. The mistress of the household is not at fault because

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she tells one to do this, another to do that, because all the orders she gives are for that single purpose. She is not contradicting herself when she gives different orders. So it is with charity. Charity manages all things for the sole purpose of the welfare of the household of the Lord, so she cannot be said to contradict herself. Whatever orders Charity gives, through whatever messengers and at whatever times, must be obeyed without hesitation. If Charity issues different orders at different times through different messengers, those orders are not wrong. There are different orders and different messengers and different circumstances, but they all serve the will of God for the purpose of human salvation. There is no conflict between them. Charity manages everything for a single purpose, quite sure that she is doing the right thing.¹⁰⁵

Peter's allegory is part of an argument about adherence to the Benedictine Rule, in the context of the family quarrel between Cluniacs and Cistercians. He presents the concrete figure of the lady of a household in order to elucidate the characteristics of the abstract concept of charity.

There is little of that kind of allegory in the works of Bernard of Morlaix. His one significant essay in compositional allegory involves personification. It is not urbane and polished like Peter's. It involves a fictitious character called "the Bishop of Belly,"¹⁰⁶ who represents the laxity and worldliness of the clergy.

In the morning, he fills the worthless tomb of his belly with a fat capon. Then the worthy bishop goes hawking or hunting for hares. The dogs are loosed. They seek out and chase after their wild prey. A sleek horse, better than those of Greece or Thrace, adds splendour and dignity to the bishop. A soldier walks beside him, adding to his prestige, but he is not accompanied by a single cleric. The hunting horn blares and the woods resound with its echoes. They start a doe and she runs into the nets, betrayed by her flight. They return late, the dogs barking and

¹⁰⁵*The letters of Peter the Venerable*, edited by Giles Constable, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967, v.1., p. 96-97.

¹⁰⁶*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 404, 448.

leaping, as cool night begins to fall, and at night a lavish banquet is prepared. The wine steward pours Falernian or Egyptian wine. It is a rich banquet. The bishop reclines on his majestic couch. Food is everywhere ... The cook produces roast game, the wine steward prepares strong wine, the baker does the rest. The cook in his apron is busy, the fire glows in the hearth, it is all very jolly. The halls are cheerful, full of light and crowded with people ... The door is firmly bolted against the unfortunate poor people outside. The Bishop of Belly, a traitor to his calling, is stuffed with food. Full though he is, he gets up and arranges for more wine to be served. There is another round of drinking, to which the bishop again gives his blessing. He breathes hard, having taken good care of his gullet, and the great sack of his belly sticks out. He talks about the energetic deeds he has done and how brave he is. He is a veritable Epicurus, full of wine and fat with feasting. As he is about to offer prayers on behalf of his flock and his prince, he finds himself quite worn out by his troubles, so he makes his way, very late, to his bedroom and the soft sheets of his bed. A lamp and candles in golden candlesticks have been already placed there. A maid turns down the silken covers of his soft bed, and the great fleshy dumpling, the worthy sinner, snores shamelessly.

Next morning, the bishop's household bustles about. The Church's suitor¹⁰⁷ makes his way to his cathedral and enters the sanctuary. When he has stood for as short a time as possible, there is a seat ready for him. He finishes his episcopal sermon with a resounding peroration ... He does not take the trouble to say any prayers for the pope and the bishops, or for his prince and the magistrates, not even for his flock and himself. He does not try, through repentance, to rescue his flock and himself from damnation. He knows very little about canon law and practises it even less. In his words, he is God-fearing, but his actions belie his words. He is a sinner".¹⁰⁸

This style of allegory is similar to that of Langland. Gloton, for example, is a fictional character representing the abstract concept of Gluttony.

¹⁰⁷There is a reference to line 404: "Ventrīs episcopus, Ecclesiae proculus est, neque sponsus". "The Bishop of Belly is a suitor, not a bridegroom of the Church".

¹⁰⁸*De contemptu mundi*, 3, 422-468.

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There was laughynge and lourynge and "Lat go the cuppe!"
Til Gloton had yglubbed a galon and a gille.
His guttes bigonne to gothelen as two gredy sowes;
He pissed a potel in a Paternoster-while,
And blew his rounde ruwet at his ruggebones ende,
That alle that herde that horn helde his nose after
And wisshed it hadde ben wexed with a wispe of
firses!¹⁰⁹

But Bernard's Bishop of Belly is not part of a larger allegory, as Langland's Gloton is. Like Peter the Venerable's lady of the household, Bernard's fictional character exists to make a single point, not to take part in a complex allegorical narrative.

Similarly, Andreas Capellanus, in the course of his textbook on the art of love, resorts to allegory to illustrate his point. A young squire, lost in the royal forest of France, saw three companies go by. The first consisted of richly dressed ladies, each mounted on a fine horse and accompanied by three knights, one on either side and the third leading her horse. They were ladies who, during their life on earth (for each company is "exercitus mortuorum") served love wisely. The second company consisted of ladies who were surrounded by such a crowd of contending servitors that no effective service was provided and the ladies would have preferred to be left alone. They were those who gave their kindness to all who asked it. The third company consisted of ladies dressed in rags and riding scrawny nags, completely unattended. They were "those most wretched of all women who while they lived closed the palace of love to all who wished to enter it."¹¹⁰

Andreas goes on to describe the destinations of the three companies ("amoenitas", "humiditas" and "siccitas" respectively) in an extraordinary parody of the visions of heaven and hell

¹⁰⁹*Piers plowman*, B-text, Passus 5, 337-345.

¹¹⁰Andreas Capellanus, *De amore libri tres*, edited by E. Trojel, 2nd ed., Munich, Eidos, 1964 (first published 1892), p.91-108.

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that we looked at in another chapter. His allegory is clearly a literary device designed to illustrate a particular point, and is presented as such.

The allegory of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, on the other hand, is presented as something directly perceived, not invented by her. In a letter to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, she writes:

I have from earliest childhood seen great marvels which my tongue has no power to express but which the Spirit of God has taught me that I may believe ... Through this vision which touches my heart and soul like a burning flame, teaching me profundities of meaning, I have an inward understanding of the Psalter, the Gospels, and other volumes. Nevertheless, I do not receive this knowledge in German. Indeed, I have no formal training at all, for I know how to read only at the most elementary level, certainly with no deep analysis.¹¹¹

Hildegard's protestations of ignorance are perhaps partly conventional and partly due to her desire to stress the divine origin of her learning. But it is certainly the case that her allegories are expressions of experiences which came to her directly. "I write whatever I see and hear in the vision, nor do I set down any other words, but tell my message in the rude Latin words which I read in the vision."¹¹² They are not, at least at the conscious level, fabrications designed to illustrate a deeper truth. Like the visions of Julian of Norwich, they are not, in the ordinary sense, compositional allegory, though it would be absurd to regard them as interpretive allegory. In her letters, Hildegard uses allegory in a number of ways.¹¹³ In a letter to Eberhard, Archbishop of

¹¹¹Hildegard of Bingen, *The letters of Hildegard of Bingen, volume 1*, translated by Joseph L. Baird [and] Radd K. Ehrman, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, p.27-28.

¹¹²From Hildegard's letter to Guibert of Gembloux, quoted by Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Medieval women's literature*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986, p.30.

¹¹³Baird and Ehrman, in the introduction to their translation of volume 1 of the letters, discuss Hildegard's allegory in some

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Salzburg, for example, she uses simple personification, rather like that of Peter the Venerable, quoted above.

Therefore, father, steep your labours in the fount of wisdom, from which Divine Love and Obedience drank, those two daughters clad in regal garments. For Wisdom along with Divine love, set all things in order bringing forth many streams, just as she says, "I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven"¹¹⁴

In a letter to Dimo, prior of Bamberg, Divine love and Obedience appear again, this time accompanied by Humility and Pride.

Two men were sitting in a house, one of whom was a knight, the other a serf. And two wise and beautiful girls came to that house, knocked on the door and said to them: You have become notorious even in far distant lands, for many people allege that you have slandered the king, and the king has asked, Who are these miscreants to be saying such things about me? Therefore, you two, hear our advice, for it will bring you victory. I am Humility: I have seen life in the incarnation of the Son of God, and I have crushed Death under my heel. The works of obedience are a mountain, and benevolence is a valley lush with flowers, though frequently choked off by nettles and thorns watered by the storms of sins ... It is the house of your heart that the knight and the serf - that is, Obedience and Pride - are sitting in, and it is at the door of your mind that the two girls - that is, Divine Love and Humility - are knocking ... ¹¹⁵

In the *Scivias*, Hildegard is at pains to interpret the allegories of her visions. In her letters, she for the most part leaves them unexplained. In a letter to Pope Eugenius III, for example, she writes:

A jewel lies on the road, but a bear comes along and seeing that it is very fine stretches out his paw to

detail (p.14-16). See also Peter Dronke, "Platonic-Christian allegories in the homilies of Hildegard of Bingen," in *From Athens to Chartres; neoplatonism and medieval thought, studies in honour of Edouard Jeauneau*, edited by Haijo Jan Westra, Leiden, Brill, 1992, p.381-396.

¹¹⁴Letters, translated by Baird and Ehrman, p.85.

¹¹⁵ibid., p.136.

pick it up and carry it off. But, suddenly, an eagle swoops down and snatches the jewel, wraps it in the covering of its wings and carries it into the palace of the king. And this jewel shines so splendidly before the king that he sets great store by it, and because of his love of this jewel, he gives the eagle golden slippers, and praises it highly for its uprightness.¹¹⁶

Eugenius III is the pope to whom Bernard of Morlaix presented his petition and his poems in about 1146.¹¹⁷ Hildegard's letter, written in 1148, asks Eugenius to look with favour on her writings. Eugenius had already given his approval to the *Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris, and he gave his blessing also to Hildegard's *Scivias*. We do not know how he received the poems of Bernard of Morlaix, with their antipapal and anticlerical tirades, but it seems likely that he did not reject them.¹¹⁸ Just as Arnold of Brescia had reason to be grateful to this pope, who pardoned him when he was expelled from France and allowed him to go on pilgrimage to Rome,¹¹⁹ so, perhaps, did Hildegard and Bernardus Silvestris. Under a different pope their disturbingly original work might have been less well received.

In the context of the political history of the twelfth century, one may suppose that Hildegard's bear represents the emperor and

¹¹⁶ibid., p.34. This letter is also in Migne, PL 197, 147, but the *Patrologia* lacks many of the 400 or so extant letters and "many of the letters ... have been spuriously reassigned to correspondents of higher social status so as to enhance Hildegard's standing in the world, and, moreover, some letters have been conflated with others" (Baird and Ehrman, p.25).

¹¹⁷See above, p.61.

¹¹⁸The manuscript of the four poems edited by Halvarson are currently in the Vatican Library, but the press mark (Vaticanus Reginensis Latinus 134) indicates that it belongs to the great Reginensis collection donated to the Vatican by Queen Christina of Sweden in the seventeenth century.

¹¹⁹Arnold was still alive and at liberty in 1153, when Eugenius died. Eugenius was succeeded by Anastasius IV, who died in 1154. In the same year was elected, as Adrian IV, Nicholas Breakspear, the only English pope, who shares with Frederick

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the eagle stands for the pope. The jewel is ecclesiastical independence from civil power and the golden slippers represent God's approval of papal resistance to civil encroachments upon the rights of the Church. Eugenius no doubt had little difficulty in interpreting the allegory. But the extraordinarily complex allegory of the garden and the progress of winter and summer in Hildegard's letter to Abbot Adam is difficult to unravel, even though she provides a lengthy explanation. At one point, it seems that the garden represents Abbot Adam's community. "You have a garden of people in which as the representative of Christ you seek to plant many wholesome desires and good works." The handsome young man "with bright shining hair and a comely, pleasing face" would seem, then, to be abbot Adam, while the "contorted figure with black hair and horrible face" is, we are told, vices which come from the devil. But as the explication proceeds, we learn that the young man in fact represents virtues, and the allegory turns into a treatment of the problem of evil in the world. "Then the crafty vices bring the cold cloud of ignorance upon this people, so that their wholesome desires and their good works fail, because they have faith in themselves alone. But showing obedience in their praises to God, the virtues permit this thing to be done by the just judgment of God, so that men may understand what they are."¹²⁰

All the foregoing examples of compositional allegory, varied though they are, have in common the fact that they are designed to illustrate and reinforce a particular point which the author wishes to make. Even the *Scivias* is not a structured and continuous whole, but a series of disparate visions on the basis of which Saint Hildegard develops doctrinal or moral themes.¹²¹

Barbarossa and the Roman senate the responsibility for Arnold's execution.

¹²⁰*Letters*, trans. Baird and Ehrman, p.195-196. PL 197, 191-192.

¹²¹PL 197, 383-738.

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Classical compositional allegory was of the same kind. There are allegorical elements in the works of Hesiod, Vergil and Ovid, for example. Plato's simile of the cave has some of the characteristics of allegory, and indeed is called an allegory by Francis M. Cornford.¹²²

Picture men in an underground cave-dwelling, with a long entrance reaching up towards the light along the whole width of the cave; in this they lie from their childhood, their legs and necks in chains, so that they stay where they are and look only in front of them, as the chain prevents their turning their heads around. Some way off, and higher up, a fire is burning behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners is a road on higher ground. Imagine a wall built along this road, like the screen which showmen have in front of the audience, over which they show puppets ... Then picture also men carrying along this wall all kinds of articles which overtop it, statues of men and other creatures in stone and wood and other materials; naturally some of the carriers are speaking, others are silent.¹²³

That is compositional allegory in the sense that it was written precisely to be understood in a meaning other than the literal, like a parable. It has the further interest that it is an allegory "in verbis" which sets out an allegory "in facto," for its point is that that the world of ideas is real, while the world of appearances is not. But neither the *Republic* nor Book 7 of it represents compositional allegory in the sense of a sustained and complete allegorical narrative.

C.S. Lewis sees a "drift towards allegory" in the development of mythological personification, and he finds it well illustrated in the *Thebaid* of Statius, in which Mars appears as nothing more than a personification of war and Bacchus is no more than a personification of drunkenness. That is to say, they display none of the colourful characteristics of the mythological Mars

¹²²Francis Macdonald Cornford, *The Republic of Plato*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1941, p.222.

¹²³Plato, *Republic* 7, 514-515.

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and Bacchus, but are, like Virtus, Clementia, Pietas and Natura, who also feature in the *Thebaid*, "potent abstractions."¹²⁴

There are allegorical aspects of the pagan gods, but the ancients certainly did not regard their gods as simply allegorical figures. For the most part, they were thought of as real supernatural, or at least superhuman, beings. Cicero, in *De natura deorum*, and Plutarch, in *De Iside et Osiride*, for example, express that view.¹²⁵ Nor did the ancients take a reductionist approach to their gods. Euhemerus, who flourished about 300 BC, was very much a lone voice in maintaining that the traditional gods and goddesses were ordinary men and women who, after dying normal deaths, had been worshipped as gods by their descendants. Cicero rejected that notion as impious and absurd.¹²⁶ But, at the same time, it was an orthodox belief that heroes such as Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Aesculapius and Romulus became gods after their death.¹²⁷ The theory of Euhemerus is perhaps no more than an extension of that belief.¹²⁸ A similar view is cogently argued in the *Book of Wisdom*.

For neither were [the pagan gods] from the beginning; neither shall they be for ever. For by the vanity of men they came into the world ... For a father, being afflicted with bitter grief, made to himself the image of his son who was quickly taken away: and him who then had died as a man, he began now to worship as a god, and appointed him rites and sacrifices ... Then in process of time ... this error was kept as law ... And those whom men could not honour in presence because they dwelt afar off, they brought their resemblance from afar and made an express image of the king whom they had a mind to honour ... And the

¹²⁴Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.48-56.

¹²⁵John Daniel Cooke, "Euhemerism; a medieval interpretation of classical paganism," *Speculum, a journal of medieval studies* 2(1927)397.

¹²⁶*De natura deorum*, 1,42.

¹²⁷*ibid*, 2,24.

¹²⁸We do not know precisely what Euhemerus intended. Ennius translated his work from Greek to Latin, but both translation and original are lost, and Euhemerus is known only from references by other writers.

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multitude of men, carried away by the beauty of the work, took him now for a god that a little before was but honoured as a man.¹²⁹

Euhemerism was influential throughout the middle ages.¹³⁰ Yet the pagan gods survived. As Helen Waddell remarked, "The Latin poetry of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century scholars is pagan, as Keats is pagan."¹³¹ Or, as Charles Homer Haskins put it, "The Latin poetry of the twelfth century was far more than a mere revival of ancient modes and subjects; it was a manifold expression of the vigorous and many-sided life of the age, an age of romance as well as an age of religion."¹³² At the same time, as we saw in the discussion above on interpretive allegory, there was a tendency in the twelfth century to treat the classical gods and myths as allegorical.

A distinction needs to be drawn between two kinds of compositional allegory. On the one hand, there are works which are allegorical, in the sense that they incorporate tropes and figures which are allegorical. The *Aeneid* of Vergil, the *Thebaid* of Statius and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid are examples, as also are the passages from Peter the Venerable, Bernard of Morlaix, Andreas Capellanus and Hildegard of Bingham quoted above. On the other hand, there are works which are allegories, that is to say, the whole work is designed to be read in a coherent and consistent allegorical fashion. As Stephen A. Barney puts it, "We distinguish 'an allegory,' which has a plural, from 'allegory' ... I consider the term 'an allegory' to refer, unlike the terms 'symbol' or 'personification,' to a

¹²⁹Wisdom, 14,13-20. Douai version.

¹³⁰Cooke, "Euhemerism," passim. See also Jean Seznec, *The survival of the pagan gods*, New York, Pantheon, 1953 (Bollingen series 38, first published 1940), p.13ff.

¹³¹Helen Waddell, *The wandering scholars*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1954 (Pelican books), p.139.

¹³²Charles Homer Haskins, *The renaissance of the twelfth century*, New York, World Publishing, 1957 (Meridian books), p.154.

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whole fiction."¹³³ Although classical antiquity offers plenty of examples of "allegory", it has no "allegories." The *Metamorphoses* of Lucius Apuleius, for example, is allegorical, but it is not an allegory. William Adlington, who translated the work in the sixteenth century, regarded it as allegorical.

Verily under the wrap of this transformation [of Lucius into an ass] is taxed the life of mortall men, when as we suffer our mindes so to be drowned in the sensuall lusts of the flesh, and the beastly pleasure thereof (which aptly may be called the violent confection of Witches) that wee lose wholly the use of reason and vertue, which properly should be in man, and play the parts of brute and savage beasts.¹³⁴

But he clearly does not regard the work as "an allegory." He goes on to compare it with the stories of Ulysses and Circe, and of the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar. And he finds two different allegorical interpretations.

Againe, may not the meaning of this worke be altered and turned in this sorte: A man desirous to apply his minde to some excellent art, or given to the study of any of the sciences, at the first appeareth to himselfe an asse without wit, without knowledge, and not much unlike a brute beast, till such time as by much paine and travell he hath achieved to the perfectnesse of the same, and tasting the sweet floure and fruit of his studies, doth thinke himselfe well brought to the right and very shape of a man. Finally, the metamorphosie of Lucius may be resembled to a youth, without discretion, and his reduction to age possessed with wisdome and vertue.¹³⁵

This is interpretive allegory on the part of Adlington, rather than compositional allegory on the part of Apuleius. The *Metamorphoses* has many allegorical elements, and lends itself to such interpretations. Not only does the story as a whole

¹³³Stephen A. Barney, *Allegories of history, allegories of love*, Hamden, Archon Books, 1979, p.29.

¹³⁴Apuleius, *The golden asse*, translated out of Latin by William Adlington. London, Richard Lesley, 1946 (first published 1566), p.6.

¹³⁵ibid., p.7.

contain many tropes and figures of an allegorical nature, but it has embedded in it a version of the story of Cupid and Psyche which has some of the characteristics of "an allegory," although it retains its essentially mythical character.¹³⁶ It also has a pageant which, as well as the usual mythical characters (Paris, Minerva, Venus, Juno, Castor and Pollux), has characters that are pure personifications. "Minerva was guarded by two boys, armour-bearing companions of the battle-goddess, Terror and Fear (Terror et Metus) who leaped forward with naked swords."¹³⁷ But, despite those elements, the *Metamorphoses* is not an allegory.

The first example we have of compositional allegory, in the sense of a sustained, complex and complete allegorical narrative, which "everyone would call an allegory,"¹³⁸ is the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, written about 405 AD. The *Psychomachia* produced "a kind of conceptual sequel to that philosophic poetry which we have seen developing from Homer to Vergil and his successors. At the same time, it fulfilled at last the compositional tendency to articulate a personal progress in cosmic terms."¹³⁹ It is "the first example of the genre of allegory as we know it. Although allegorical personification itself was by no means new in Prudentius' time, this is the first work which deploys such personifications as the sole figures in an extended narrative."¹⁴⁰ The whole work is a fiction designed to be read in a coherent and consistent allegorical fashion. Every character, every incident and every scene is intended to be interpreted allegorically. Unlike mythical characters, the virtues and vices of Prudentius have no being outside the allegory. "The Homeric Ares has many

¹³⁶Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 4,28-6,24.

¹³⁷*ibid.*, 10,31.

¹³⁸Barney, *Allegories of history*, p.61.

¹³⁹Whitman, *Allegory*, p.83. See also Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.66-67.

¹⁴⁰S. Georgia Nugent, *Allegory and poetics; the structure and imagery of Prudentius' Psychomachia*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1985 (Studien zur klassischen Philologie 14), p.9. Nugent cites C. Magazzu, Gaston Boissier and Edward Kenneth Rand in support.

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interests besides war. Poseidon has a life and character of his own apart from his quarrel with Odysseus. The esse of Juno is not exhausted in her opposition to the Trojans."¹⁴¹ But the characters in the *Psychomachia* are presented as personifications. The fourteen major protagonists (Fides and Veterum Cultura Deorum; Pudicitia and Sodomita Libido; Patientia and Ira; Mens Humilis and Superbia; Sobrietas and Luxuria; Operatio¹⁴² and Avaritia; Concordia and Discordia), as well as all the supporting cast, have their sole being within the allegory, and all their characteristics and actions are to be read in that context. The characteristics and actions of the virtues are not, perhaps, those which we might associate with virtuous people.¹⁴³ C.S. Lewis, puzzled by the bloodthirstiness of Prudentius' virtues, comments that "fighting is an activity that is not proper to most of the virtues. Courage can fight, and perhaps we can make a shift with Faith. But how is Patience to rage in battle? How is Mercy to strike down her foes or Humility to triumph over them when fallen?"¹⁴⁴ But that, says S. Georgia Nugent, is a failure to take Prudentius' abstractions seriously enough. It is to regard the characters in the *Psychomachia* as still in some sense individuals who are patient or lusty or faithful, rather than the abstract qualities themselves of Patientia, Libido or Fides.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.51-51.

¹⁴²Nugent (*Allegory and poetics*, p.66) suggests that Avaritia's opponent is called Operatio because Caritas is "inadmissible in Latin hexameters."

¹⁴³Fides, for example, squashes the eyeballs of Cultura underfoot and the other virtues exult in this victory (*Psychomachia*, 30-35); Mens Humilis, assisted by Spes, chops off the head of Superbia as she lies helpless and begging for mercy (*Psychomachia* 280-283); Fides drives her spear through Discordia's mouth, whereupon the mob of virtues hasten to tear Discordia into pieces, which they feed to the dogs and crows or throw into the sewer (*Psychomachia* 715-723).

¹⁴⁴Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.69. See also Carolyn van Dyke, *The fiction of truth; structures of meaning in narrative and dramatic allegory*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985, p.32-33.

The point is taken. Nevertheless, the discomfort which C. S. Lewis expresses persists. It may (if in this enlightened age it is proper to make such a suggestion) be connected with the fact that all Prudentius' characters (presumably because the abstract nouns that represent their names are feminine in gender) are ladies. More seriously, it may have to do with a weakness in the allegory itself. Kenneth R. Haworth points out that, despite appearances, Prudentius' virtues and vices are not simply rhetorical figures. "The Romans, from quite early times onwards, worshipped a class of beings, whose names we would today term abstract nouns, which were conceived of as vague spiritual, psychological and social powers."¹⁴⁶ According to Haworth, most of the virtues in the *Psychomachia* figured in pagan cults. The vices, though not objects of worship, were held in awe as superhuman forces which could influence human behaviour. Prudentius was as Roman as Ausonius, but he was also more Christian. His aim might well have been to satirise these strange Roman deities, while at the same time recasting them into a distinctively Christian image. "In this way, he could hope to make his Christianity more acceptable to his readers, that is, more 'Roman.'"¹⁴⁷

The vividness of the visual images which Prudentius' story evokes was a major influence in the representation of the conflict between virtues and vices throughout the middle ages. The Roman character of those images persisted in medieval art.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵Nugent, *Allegory and poetics*, p.19-20.

¹⁴⁶Kenneth R. Haworth, *Deified virtues, demonic vices and descriptive allegory in Prudentius' Psychomachia*, Amsterdam, Hakker, 1980, p.56. Martha A. Malamud (*A poetics of transformation; Prudentius and classical mythology*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1989, p.55) makes the same point and adds "The cult of personified virtues may well have influenced Prudentius' description of the Virtues' appearance and costumes."

¹⁴⁷Haworth, *Deified virtues*, p.58.

¹⁴⁸Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the virtues and vices in medieval art from early Christian times to the thirteenth century*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1989 (Medieval

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But, although the visual imagery persisted, the deified nature of the virtues and the demonic nature of the vices did not. Medieval readers of the *Psychomachia*, like most modern readers, considered the virtues and vices to be personifications of abstract concepts.¹⁴⁹ If Kenneth Haworth's interpretation of the work is correct, to regard Prudentius' virtues and vices as simply personifications would be rather like regarding Bernard of Morlaix's treatment of Satan as nothing more than metaphorical.

S. Georgia Nugent has drawn attention to the complexity of the structure of the *Psychomachia* in the development of its theme, which may be summed up as "non simplex natura hominis."¹⁵⁰ She shows that the ordering of the poem is neither static nor chaotic. It displays an orderly progression, building hierarchically towards a climax in the sixth, and longest, battle between Operatio and Avaritia and coming to a resolution with the construction of a temple to Sapientia.¹⁵¹

Again, the point is taken. But, when all allowances have been made for the complexity of the structure, the plot of the *Psychomachia* remains thin. It is a series of episodes, even if the episodes are to some degree structured and increasingly complex. It has a certain amount of interaction between the characters. Spes, for example comes to the aid of Mens Humilis in her battle with Superbia; Deceit digs a trench as a snare for the virtues, but Superbia falls into it; Concordia, wounded by Discordia, is rescued by Fides; and so forth. But there is no complex system of inter-relationship between the characters. Despite the detailed and colourful descriptions of their

Academy reprints for teaching 24, first published 1939), p.4-6. See also plate 1, which shows similarities between illustrations in a tenth-century manuscript and reliefs on the columns of Marcus Aurelius and Trajan.

¹⁴⁹Haworth, *Deified virtues*, p.7-8.

¹⁵⁰Nugent, *Allegory and poetics*, p.71-85. *Psychomachia*, 904.

¹⁵¹Nugent, *Allegory and poetics*, p.70.

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appearance, they lack affective qualities and merely articulate formal, intellectual properties. To some degree that is an inevitable characteristic of personification. But allegory is fiction, and good fiction needs a satisfactory plot. Despite Nugent's defence, a feeling persists that the plot of the *Psychomachia* does not work very well. C.S. Lewis, maintaining that it "is not a good poem", argues thus:

While it is true that the *bellum intestinum* is the root of all allegory, it is no less true that only the crudest allegory will represent it by a pitched battle. The abstractions owe their life to the inner conflict; but when once they have come to life, the poet must fetch a compass and dispose his fiction more artfully if he is to succeed.¹⁵²

He goes on to suggest that a journey "represents far more truly than any combat in a *champ clos* the perennial strangeness, the adventurousness, and the sinuous forward movement of the inner life."¹⁵³ Carolyn van Dyke disagrees. "The objection that a pitched battle does not accurately represent the inner life is wrongheaded. The *Psychomachia* does not base itself on the inner life, and what it does say about psychological experience is said not in spite of but through the military imagery."¹⁵⁴ But at the same time she finds the allegory of the poem "remarkably frustrating."¹⁵⁵ Whatever the merits of the *Psychomachia*, it was not the immediate precursor of a line of allegories. There were plenty of allegorical works, but there were no "allegories," in the sense of extended fictions designed to be read in a consistent and coherent allegorical fashion, from the time of Prudentius until the twelfth century.

¹⁵²Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.68.

¹⁵³*ibid.*, p.69.

¹⁵⁴Carolynn Van Dyke, *The fiction of truth; structures of meaning in narrative and dramatic allegory*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985, p.63.

¹⁵⁵*ibid.*, p.31.

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The *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* of Martianus Capella (early fifth century) is certainly long and complex, and it certainly has allegorical elements, which even include an allegorical journey. But it is not an allegory. C. S. Lewis calls it "a receptacle into which [Martianus] could work every scrap of erudite lumber and every excruciating quirk of his euphuism which was left over from the seven arts."¹⁵⁶ The greater part of the work is taken up with a treatise on the seven liberal arts, which is not in the least allegorical, though it is put in the mouths of allegorical figures. Most of the allegory is concentrated in the first two books, which deal with the arrangements for the wedding of Mercury and Philology, and the apotheosis of Philology. This section is modelled on the myth of Cupid and Psyche as narrated on the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, and like the work of Apuleius, it involves many mythical rather than strictly allegorical characters and much of the action and description have no allegorical aspects. These first two books, in fact, contain a wealth of religious doctrine which is only loosely related to the allegorical theme.¹⁵⁷

The story purports to be told by Martianus, as an old man, to his son. Martianus says the story was told to him by Satire, which means a dish of mixed ingredients, or a stew, and that is a fair description of the work.¹⁵⁸ At the end of the second book, Martianus says, "now the mythical part is ended; the books which follow set forth the arts. With true intellectual nourishment they put aside all fable and for the most part explain serious studies, without however avoiding entertainment."¹⁵⁹ But the third book opens as follows:

¹⁵⁶Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.79.

¹⁵⁷William Harris Stahl, *Martianus Capella and the seven liberal arts, Volume 1, the Quadrivium of Martianus Capella; Latin traditions in the mathematical sciences 50 BC - AD 1250, with a study of the allegory and the verbal disciplines* by Richard Johnson with E.L. Burge, New York, Columbia University Press, 1971, p.83.

¹⁵⁸*De nuptiis*, 1,2.

¹⁵⁹*ibid.*, 2,220.

Once again in this little book the Muse prepares her ornaments and wants to tell fabricated stories at first, remembering that utility cannot clothe the naked truth; she regards it as a weakness of the poet to make straightforward and undisguised statements, and she brings a light touch to literary style and adds beauty to a page that is already heavily coloured. "But," I cried, "in the previous book notice is given that the myths have been put away and that the precepts in the volumes which follow are a work of those Arts which tell the truth." But with a laugh she joked at this and said: "Let us tell no lies, and let the Arts be clothed."¹⁶⁰

And so the treatise on the liberal arts is delivered in a series of lectures by the hypostatized Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy and Music (Harmonia), who are gifts from Mercury (who stands for eloquence) to his bride Philology (who stands for learning). At the end of the work, Martianus says to his son:

And there, Martianus,¹⁶¹ you have an old man's tale, a *mélange* sportively composed by Satire under lamplight ... Our garrulous Satire has heaped learned doctrines upon unlearned, and crammed sacred matters into secular; she has commingled gods and the Muses, and has uncouth figures prating in a rustic fiction about the encyclopedic arts.¹⁶²

Compositional allegory (from *ἄλλοι ἐγὼ*) necessarily entails an "other." What is said must be intended to carry a meaning different from the literal interpretation of the words. In most of the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, that is to say, in the series of lectures about the liberal arts, there is no "other." What Martianus says is exactly what he means. "Verbs of the second conjugation end the first person of the present indicative with *eo*, as in *video, vides; moneo, mones*."¹⁶³ "For

¹⁶⁰*ibid.*, 3,221-222. Translation by William Harris Stahl, Richard Johnson and E.L. Burge.

¹⁶¹Martianus was also his son's name.

¹⁶²*De nuptiis*, 9,997.

¹⁶³*ibid.*, 3,315.

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those who doubt the sphericity of the earth, additional evidence is found in the fact that eclipses of the sun and the moon occurring in the west are not seen by inhabitants of the east, and, similarly, inhabitants of Britain and of western lands are not aware of eclipses that occur in the east."¹⁶⁴ The allegory in the work is nothing more than a framework for his straightforward exposition of the trivium and quadrivium.¹⁶⁵

Like Boethius, Martianus mingled poetry with prose. Together with Boethius and Prudentius, he was influential throughout the middle ages, the first two books of the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* being specially popular during the twelfth century, which also saw the greatest number of glosses and commentaries, including that attributed to Bernardus Silvestris.¹⁶⁶

Neither interpretive nor compositional allegory was invented in the twelfth century. Both had a long and continuous previous history. But "allegories," in the sense of whole fictions designed to be read in a coherent and consistent allegorical fashion, had few exemplars before the twelfth century. An interesting twelfth-century example of allegory, which may perhaps be regarded as "an allegory," is the *Speculum stultorum* of Nigel Longchamps (or Wireker, born about 1130), which was mentioned in Chapter 3, in connection with anticlerical literature.¹⁶⁷ Like the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, it uses the device of a journey. It does not seem to be discussed in any of the scholarly treatments of allegory, perhaps because it is not serious or "literary." But it is an extended, sophisticated poem in elegiacs, in which an anticlerical theme is worked out allegorically through a coherent, if fantastic story.

¹⁶⁴ibid., 6,594.

¹⁶⁵Whitman, *Allegory*, p.98.

¹⁶⁶Stahl, *Martianus Capella and the seven liberal arts*, v.1, p.55-71.

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It is about a donkey called Brunellus who is unhappy about the length of his tail. He not only wanted to be a bishop (though he could not work out how to get the mitre over his ears), he also thought he would like to be a monk. In the course of narrating Brunellus' adventures, Nigel Longchamps treats us to a searching satirical review of the various orders: Templars, Hospitallers, Black Monks (Cluniacs), White Monks (Cistercians), Carthusians and others, including nuns. We have a detailed recounting of the commonplaces of twelfth century antimonasticism as we follow Brunellus on his travels, in the course of which he loses his tail. In the end, Brunellus concludes that he does not like any of the religious orders, and decides to found his own.¹⁶⁸ Like Bernard of Morlaix's Bishop of Belly, this is allegory in the style of Langland rather than Prudentius. Nevertheless, it is a successful extended fiction designed to be read in a consistent allegorical fashion, even though it is interspersed with fables and anecdotes.

Stephen A. Barney contrasts the *Psychomachia* with *Piers Plowman* in the following terms:

Piers does reduce experience and thought into the kinds of abstractions and patterns which we call allegory, but it does so in a complicated way. Where the *Psychomachia* has a simple, double action - battle and reestablishment of a city - *Piers* has a complex, single series of actions ... Where the *Psychomachia* develops a couple of allegorical techniques of narration - personification and simple typology - *Piers* explores a bewildering panoply of techniques which are intricately overlapping and interwoven.¹⁶⁹

In terms of high seriousness and poetical quality, it would be ridiculous to compare the *Speculum stultorum* with *Piers plowman*. But in allegorical technique, they have much in common. Unlike

¹⁶⁷See above, p.135.

¹⁶⁸Wright, *The Anglo-Latin satirical poets*, p.81-96. Nigel de Longchamps, *Speculum stultorum*, ed. John H. Mozley and Robert R. Raymo, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960.

¹⁶⁹Barney, *Allegories of history*, p.102.

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Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the *Speculum stultorum* does not lend itself to flights of interpretive allegory. Its allegorical meaning is clear, as is the allegorical meaning of the *Psychomachia* (however much one may debate the niceties of its interpretation). The *Psychomachia* is generally regarded as "pure" allegory. That does not mean pure personification. Although, in our discussion above, we concentrated on the personified figures of the virtues and vices, the *Psychomachia* has a significant element of typology. The introduction to the poem, which centres upon Abraham, is completely typological and there are also typological elements throughout, as, for example, when, during the battle with Ira, Patientia is accompanied by Job.¹⁷⁰

Two things militate against acceptance of the *Speculum stultorum* as "an allegory." One is the inclusion of so much matter extraneous to the allegory, in the form of anecdotes and fables. The other is the fact that Nigel frequently slips into direct and straightforward criticism of the monastic orders and the clergy, without any element of "other." He sometimes forgets to be allegorical.

Neither of these criticisms can be levelled at the *Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris, completed about 1147.¹⁷¹ The whole work is a fiction created to be read as an allegory. All the elements of it are designed to fit into Bernardus' allegorical scheme. All the incidents in its plot, though superficially of a mythical character, are intended to represent a deeper meaning. Bernardus' use of the Golden Age is different from that of Bernard of Morlaix, whose Golden Age is the classical Age of Saturn. For Bernardus Silvestris the Golden Age is the Garden of Eden:

¹⁷⁰*Psychomachia*, 160-161.

¹⁷¹Peter Dronke, *Bernardus Silvestris Cosmographia*, Leiden, Brill, 1978, p.2..

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But still nearer to the dawn and the abode of Eurus, in the flowering bosom of the earth, there lies a region upon which the sun, still mild at its first rising, shines lovingly ... Amid the flourishing wilderness strays a winding stream, continually shifting its course; rippling over the roots of trees and agitated by pebbles the swift water is borne murmuring along. In this well watered and richly coloured retreat, I believe, the first man dwelt as a guest - but too brief a time for a guest.¹⁷²

Unlike Martianus and even, to some extent, Prudentius, Bernardus presents his supernatural characters as allegorical figures without any suggestion that they are other than fictions. Although he includes in his allegory a wealth of detail about a wide range of subjects (stars, mountains, animals, birds, plants and so forth), he does not, like Martianus, have "a propensity to collect useless information."¹⁷³ Every element of the *Cosmographia* contributes to the allegorical whole. Bernardus Silvestris brings together the different allegorical techniques of Hildegard of Bingen, Prudentius and Martianus, and combines with them something of the imaginative creativeness which Bernard of Morlaix shows in his interpretive allegory.

The most strictly allegorical of these diverse, composite forms [of allegory developed in the early twelfth century], and yet at the same time, perhaps the most conceptually and artistically versatile work among them, is the *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvestris, composed almost at the midpoint of the twelfth century. Here interpretive and compositional allegory at last converge with full force, and in the process, decisively transform the allegorical tradition as a whole.¹⁷⁴

Bernardus was probably the author of a commentary on the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* of Martianus Capella, as well as of the commentary of Vergil's *Aeneid*, discussed above. In his commentary on the *Aeneid*, Bernardus explains that Vergil uses

¹⁷²*Cosmographia*, 1,3,317-338.

¹⁷³Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.79.

¹⁷⁴Whitman, *Allegory*, p.219. See also Waddell, *Wandering scholars*, p.137-138; Lewis, *Allegory of love*, p.98.

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"integumenta" to express his meaning.¹⁷⁵ In the commentary on Martianus, we find a definition of "integumentum." Referring to the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, he says:

The form of instruction is figurative. Figurative discourse is a mode of discourse which is called "a veil." Figurative discourse is twofold, for we divide it into allegory and *integumentum*. Allegory is a mode of discourse which covers under an historical narrative a true meaning which is different from its surface meaning, as in the case of Jacob wrestling with the angel. An *integumentum*, however, is a mode of discourse which covers a true meaning under a fictitious narrative, as in the case of Orpheus. For in the case of the former history, and in the latter fiction, contains a profound hidden truth, which will be explained elsewhere. Allegory pertains to Holy Scripture, but *integumenta* to philosophical scripture.¹⁷⁶

For Bernardus, Mercury's journey is a metaphor for his education. Mercury stands for the philosopher, and his search for a bride is the philosopher's search for knowledge. Hymen personifies the universal accord permeating the cosmos, and is identified with the Holy Spirit. The gods have no reality. They are either different dispositions of the one God who created everything¹⁷⁷ or they are deified human beings.¹⁷⁸ The central thrust of Bernardus' allegorical interpretation is not inconsistent with Martianus' equation of Philologia with learning and Mercury with eloquence, though he is a good deal more serious about it than Martianus. But it is doubtful if Martianus intended many of Bernardus' interpretations of characters and events. For one thing, like his contemporary

¹⁷⁵Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*, edited by Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1977, p.3.

¹⁷⁶Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentum in Martianum*, 2,70-78 (*The commentary on Martianus Capella's De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii attributed to Bernardus Silvestris*, edited by Haijo Jan Westra, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986 (Studies and texts 80), p.70.)

¹⁷⁷ibid., 3,104-136 (Westra p.52-53).

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Macrobius, he was not a Christian.¹⁷⁹ He could not have intended the Christian interpretations which Bernardus creatively imposes on him.

The *Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris is written in the alternating metres and proses of Boethius and Martianus Capella. Bernardus' own summary of his work is as follows:

In the first book of this work, which is called *Megacosmos* or the greater universe, Nature, as if in tears, makes complaint to Noys, or Divine Providence, about the confused state of the primal matter, or Hyle, and pleads that the universe be more beautifully wrought. Noys, moved by her prayers, assents willingly to her appeal, and straightway separates the four elements from one another. She sets the nine hierarchies of angels in the heavens: fixes the stars in the firmament: arranges the signs of the Zodiac and sets the seven planetary orbs in motion beneath them: sets the four cardinal winds in mutual opposition. There follows the creation of living creatures and an account of the position of the earth at the centre of things ... Thus in the first book is described the ordered disposition of the elements. In the second book, which is called *Microcosmos* or the lesser universe, Noys speaks to Nature, glories in the refinement of the universe and promises to create man as the completion of her work. Accordingly, she orders Nature to search carefully for Urania, who is queen of the stars, and Physis, who is deeply versed in the nature of earthly life. Nature obeys her instructress at once, and after searching for Urania through all the celestial spheres, finds her at last ... Then the two set out and ... discover Physis dwelling in the very bosom of the flourishing earth amid the odours of spices, attended by her two daughters, Theory and Practice ... Suddenly, Noys is present there, and having made her will known to them she assigns to the three powers three kinds of speculative knowledge, and urges them to the creation of man out of the remainder of the four elements and,

¹⁷⁸ibid., 6,287-301; 6,347-352 (Westra p.139, 141). Euhemerism was discussed above, p.315.

¹⁷⁹Raby, *Secular Latin poetry*, vol.1, p.100. C.S. Lewis says that it is uncertain whether he was a Christian or a pagan. "Indeed, the distinction scarcely applies to him; such men do not have beliefs." (*Allegory of love*, p.78.)

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beginning with the head and working limb by limb,
completes her work with the feet.¹⁸⁰

The *Cosmographia* follows the Genesis story of creation. Bernardus uses the techniques of interpretive allegory to elucidate the Genesis story, yet his elucidation is not a clear statement of a deeper meaning which underlies Genesis. Rather, it is itself a compositional allegory. "Here at last the two traditions of allegory radically merge with each other, setting in motion an allegorical world with its own autonomy, evolving as it passes into the later Middle Ages."¹⁸¹ Only at one point does the allegory slip. In the third section of the *Megacosmos* Bernardus presents a panorama of history, balancing art, learning and the achievements of civilisation against the discord and excess which tend to destroy it. The passage culminates with a reference to the Incarnation.

A tender virgin gives birth to Christ, at once the
idea and embodiment of God, and earthly existence
realises true divinity.¹⁸²

In a sense, that steps outside the allegory, introducing the real God into a scheme in which God is allegorised under the guise of a variety of fictions. It is rather as if the real lady were to appear in the *Roman de la rose*, along with the personifications of her moods. But the panorama of human history has a necessary place in the scheme of the *Megacosmos* and it is difficult to see how else it could culminate, for a

¹⁸⁰Bernardus Silvestris, *Cosmographia*, edited with introduction and notes by Peter Dronke, Leiden, Brill, 1978 (Textus minores in usum academicum 53), p.95-96. Translation adapted from that of Winthrop Wetherbee, *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1973, p.65-66).

¹⁸¹Whitman, *Allegory*, p.221.

¹⁸² Exemplar speciemque dei virguncula Christum
Parturit, et verum secula numen habent.
Cosmographia 1,3,53-54.

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Christian poet, than in the Incarnation.¹⁸³ The passage which follows, however, has no such justification.

A bountiful godhead bestows Eugenius upon the world,
and in this one gift grants all things at once.¹⁸⁴

The intrusion of Pope Eugenius III into the allegory, expressed in such extravagantly flattering terms, can be explained only by a supposition that the lines were inserted for the occasion of the public recitation of the *Cosmographia* before the pope in 1147.¹⁸⁵ That small blemish apart, the *Cosmographia* is a completely integrated fiction, successfully designed as a whole to be read in a consistent and coherent allegorical fashion. Characters, situations and plot are all integral to the allegory, and are skilfully devised to be interesting in themselves as well as to serve the purposes of the allegory.

Jon Whitman points out that the convergence of interpretive and compositional allegory in the *Cosmographia* decisively transformed the allegorical tradition as a whole.¹⁸⁶ The twelfth century was "the period in which allegory comes of age."¹⁸⁷ The achievements of the twelfth century, in interpretive allegory, in compositional allegory, and in the blending of the two, led to such Latin allegories as Alan de Lille's *Anticlaudianus*.¹⁸⁸ Alan's work is especially interesting, because of his connection with the School of Chartres, close to the priory of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, and because the *Anticlaudianus* develops the theme of "mediocritas aurea," which was of interest also to

¹⁸³Winthrop Wetherbee discusses this passage in relation to determinism and the influence of the stars. Wetherbee, *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris*, p.47.

¹⁸⁴Munificens deitas Eugenium comodat orbi,/ Donat et in solo munere cuncta semel. *Cosmographia* 1,3,55-56.

¹⁸⁵Wetherbee, *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Sivestris*, p.20.

¹⁸⁶Whitman, *Allegory*, p.219.

¹⁸⁷ibid., p.259.

¹⁸⁸*Anticlaudianus sive de officio viro boni et perfecti, libri IX*, PL 210, 482-576.

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Bernard of Morlaix.¹⁸⁹ It also led to the great vernacular allegories which followed: the *Roman de la rose* of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun; the *Commedia* of Dante; the allegorical elements in the works of Chaucer (who translated the *Roman de la rose*); the *Pilgrim's progress* of John Bunyan.

What the poets of the twelfth century achieved was not a renaissance, for allegory had not died. It was not a revival or renewal of an ancient tradition. Like the revolution in Latin verse, which was discussed in the previous chapter, the new creation in allegory occurred within the continuing Latin literary tradition, and Bernard of Morlaix had a small but significant part in it.

¹⁸⁹See above, p.216 ff. See also John M. Trout, *The voyage of Prudence; the world of Alan of Lille*, Washington, University Press of America, 1979.

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The genre of complaint emerged in part from the Hebrew Scriptures, especially Job, Ecclesiastes and the Psalms.¹ From that source especially derived much of the complaint about man and his perennial frailties. But it emerged in at least equal measure from classical literature, especially Juvenal and Horace. General complaint about the human condition is not lacking in the classical authors, but they added special elements of satire which are not found in the Bible. John Peter argues that "complaint displaced satire, pushed it to one side."² His point is that, with the spread of Christianity through Europe, "the mode of Satire ... became transmuted into the related mode of Complaint," and it was not until the sixteenth century and "the conscious rediscovery of Latin satire" that satire reasserted itself.³

The poetry of Bernard of Morlaix and his contemporaries shows that the satire of the twelfth century is significantly different from that of classical times, and Bernard's poems illustrate John Peter's point that Christianity offers a way of dealing with the subjects of complaint, and a hope of heaven, and that this way and this hope pervade twelfth-century satire. That is not to suggest that all twelfth-century complaint literature is explicitly Christian in tone or content. Some of the examples of the works of Bernard's contemporaries, quoted in Chapter 3, show that that is not the case, and the point has

¹It did not derive directly, but indirectly by way of the Vulgate, which was an important element in the Latin literary tradition in the twelfth century, neither the Hebrew scriptures nor the Septuagint being directly accessible to most European scholars.

²John Peter, *Complaint and satire in early English literature*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956, p.39.

³*ibid.*, p.12.

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been made, especially in relation to the vernacular literature of the period, by Peter Dronke.⁴

The genre of complaint became established by the twelfth century, expressing itself in various forms, such as *planctus*, *contemptus mundi* and estates satire, although, lacking a word to describe it, Bernard and his contemporaries did not distinguish it from satire. How easily the genre can be misread is illustrated by Samuel Macauley Jackson's remark that the *De contemptu mundi* is "richly worth reading as showing that as early as the twelfth century there was a crying need of reformation in the Church of Rome in the estimation of at least one monk whose poem was frequently copied and widely circulated."⁵ H.C. Hoskier entitles his edition of the *De contemptu mundi* "a bitter satirical poem of 300 lines upon the morals of the XIIth century." He dedicates it to "all lovers of mediaeval Latin verse and to the memory of Bernard, one of the bravest men who ever lived." In his preface, he refers to "the full force of Bernard's attack on the evils of his day," adding that "the criticisms are so sincere and the language so unequivocal, that we can readily perceive why the poem was not permitted free circulation, and why the editions have passed out of view."⁶ The *De contemptu mundi* was misread in a similar way in Reformation times.⁷

⁴Peter Dronke, "Profane elements in literature," in *Renaissance and renewal in the twelfth century*, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, with Carol D. Lanham, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991 (Medieval Academy reprints for teaching) (First published Harvard University Press, 1982), p.569-592.

⁵Samuel Macauley Jackson, *The source of "Jerusalem the golden,"* Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1910, p.9.

⁶H.C. Hoskier (ed.), *De contemptu mundi ...*, London, Quaritch, 1929, p.viii.

⁷*Histoire littéraire de la France ... Tome XII*, Paris, Victor Palmé, 1869 (Reprinted Kraus 1974), p.239. "Les protestans, avides à recueillir tout ce qui paroît défavorable à l'Eglise romaine, en ont depuis multiplié les éditions. Matthias Flacius Illyricus l'inséra [in 1557] dans son Recueil de poésies des hommes doctes et pieux sur l'état corrompu de l'Eglise ... "

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In point of fact, there was nothing exceptional about Bernard's criticism of the church. All his criticisms can be paralleled in the writings of his contemporaries. The themes, the topics, the imagery, even the puns and other word play can be found in a wide variety of authors of his time. The anticlericalism of Bernard and his contemporaries was not seen as an attack upon Catholic orthodoxy and was not regarded as reprehensible by the church. It was, indeed, expressed by clerics. Stringent criticism of the church was both widespread and acceptable.

It was perhaps in part a misreading of the complaint genre that gave rise to the description of the twelfth century as a "renaissance." Concepts of humanism, of interest in man and nature, of an emergence of individualism, of an interest in empirical enquiry, of secularism, of anticlericalism, and so forth, can easily be projected back into the twelfth century because of the range of interests conventionally dealt with in complaint literature, without a recognition of the different perceptions of the fifteenth and the twelfth centuries.

Bernard gets brief mention in the works of many writers about the twelfth-century renaissance. Haskins describes the *De contemptu mundi* as the source of "a series of hymns which have acquired a profound place in the worship of the English-speaking world."⁸ He briefly discusses Bernard's work in the context of the development of religious poetry in the twelfth century, which was, he says, "a great age, probably the culminating age, of religious poetry."⁹ He discusses Bernard in the company of Peter Abelard and Adam of St. Victor, rather than of Hildebert of Lavardin or Walter of Chatillon (or even of Walter Map or Nigel Longchamps), with whom Bernard has, in some ways, rather more in common. And, though he recognises the importance of

⁸Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the twelfth century*, New York, World Publishing Company, 1957 (Meridian books) (First published Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927), p.169.

⁹ibid., p.166.

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satirical verse in the twelfth century, he does not refer to that element in Bernard's works. André Wilmart's article on the poems in the Vatican manuscript was published in 1933,¹⁰ so it is understandable that Haskins, writing in 1927, mentions only the *De contemptu mundi* and quotes only from those parts popularised by J. M. Neale, Charles Lawrence Ford and others. His general conclusion about the Latin poetry of the twelfth century is that the various national literatures, then beginning to emerge, all had their roots in the Latin literature of the period. "The twelfth century is the great period of divergence between Latin and vernacular, the culmination of the international poetry of the Middle Ages with its burst of activity in all fields of expression, its new forms of versification which make their fortune later in the vernacular." He sees this development as similar to that of the Italian Renaissance: "a revival of ancient learning and also of ancient art, but still more an age of new life and new knowledge which carry us well beyond the ancients."¹¹

Renaissance and renewal in the twelfth century, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, pays scant attention to Bernard. The index confuses Bernard of Morlaix with Bernard of Cluny, the author of the *Ordo Cluniacensis*.¹² Only one of the contributors mentions Bernard of Morlaix. Janet Martin, dealing with classicism and style in Latin literature, says that "some varieties of rhymed hexameter amount to a new kind of verse, as in the *versus tripertiti dactylici* in which Bernard of Cluny (fl.1140) wrote his long and celebrated poem on the evils of the times."¹³ Apart from a mention of Bernard's use of *Elysios* in

¹⁰André Wilmart, "Grands poèmes inédits de Bernard le Clusien," *Revue Bénédictine* 45(1933):249-253.

¹¹Haskins, *Renaissance*, p.190.

¹²*Renaissance and renewal in the twelfth century*, p.41, note 20. (The authorship of the *Consuetudines* or *Ordo Cluniacensis* is discussed above, p.24.)

¹³*ibid.*, p.558.

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his rebuke of Vergil for his erroneous description of hell,¹⁴ that is the only discussion of Bernard in the whole volume.

Erwin Panofsky is primarily concerned with art rather than literature, but he notices Bernard of Morlaix in relation to twelfth-century opposition to classical learning, "an opposition which, paradoxically and characteristically, tends to speak with the very voice which it endeavours to silence" and which was "expressed by Bernard of Cluny ('Bernardus Morlanensis') in verses whose tripping, purely dactylic rhythm and catchy double rhymes (both internal and terminal) almost conceal the fact that they are, technically speaking, carefully constructed hexameters, each line consisting of exactly seventeen syllables."¹⁵ He quotes a few lines of the passage beginning "Sed stylus ethnicus," which was discussed in Chapter 5, page 243 and which is better interpreted as a complaint about accepting classical writers as authorities rather than, as Panofsky suggests, a complaint about classical learning.¹⁶

Ernst Robert Curtius is concerned with the wider theme of European literature and the Latin middle ages, but he pays considerable attention to the renaissance of the twelfth century. He discusses the "powerful satire *De contemptu mundi*" in the context of Eros and morality. "A fervent piety, which longs ecstatically for the heavenly Jerusalem, fills his [Bernard's] soul. His monkish mind, turned to the other world, is deeply grieved to perceive the corruption of the times. In his poem he not only inveighs against impiety, sodomy and other vices of the age, but curses love and womankind." Curtius compares Bernard of Morlaix with Bernard of Clairvaux, the anonymous author of the *Concilium in Monte Romarici*, and Bernardus Silvestris. "Thus about the middle of the twelfth

¹⁴ibid., p.552, note 65.

¹⁵Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and renaissances in Western art*. New York, Harper and Row, 1972 (Icon editions. First published 1969), p.75-76.

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century we find in four works four different attitudes towards Eros: the ascetic ideal curses him, profligacy debases him, mysticism spiritualizes him, and gnosticism consecrates him."¹⁷ Misogyny is the only characteristic of Bernard of Morlaix noted by Helen Waddell.¹⁸

Bernard gets more detailed attention in works which do not entertain concepts of a twelfth-century renaissance. F.J.E. Raby devotes four pages to him in his *History of Christian-Latin poetry*, where he considers the devotional aspects of the *De contemptu mundi* and the *Mariale* in the context of the poets of Cluny and in the company of Odo and Peter the Venerable.¹⁹ In Raby's *History of secular Latin poetry in the middle ages* Bernard gets more than five pages, devoted mostly to the *De contemptu mundi* as a satirical poem. But Raby mentions also the *Mariale* and he draws attention to, though he does not discuss, "other poems by Bernard discovered by Dom Wilmart."²⁰ But Raby is not a writer who, like Haskins, Martin, Panofsky, Curtius and even Waddell,²¹ was concerned to put Bernard in the context of a twelfth-century renaissance. He describes the developments of the twelfth century without calling them manifestations of a renaissance and without any reference to the fifteenth century.²²

¹⁶*De contemptu mundi* 3,318ff.

¹⁷Ernst Robert Curtius, *European literature and the Latin middle ages*, translated from the German by Willard R. Trask, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990 (Bollingen series 36. First published 1953) p.122.

¹⁸Helen Waddell, *The wandering scholars*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1954 (Pelican books. First published 1927) p.230.

¹⁹F.J.E. Raby, *A history of Christian-Latin poetry from the beginnings to the close of the middle ages*, 2nd edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.315-319

²⁰F.J.E. Raby, *A history of secular Latin poetry in the middle ages*, 2nd edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957, v.2, p.49-54.

²¹See, for example, *Wandering scholars* p.127-144.

²²See, for example, *Christian-Latin poetry*, p.288-296 and *Secular Latin poetry* v.2, p.1-5. But he does speak of "humanists like

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Joseph de Ghellinck, writing in 1955, discusses the *De contemptu mundi* (and mentions other of Bernard's poems) in the context of twelfth-century satirical poetry.²³ Like Raby, de Ghellinck does not find it necessary to refer to a "renaissance." The title of his work is *L'essor de la littérature latine au XIIe siècle*. "Essor" suggests flight or growth rather than renaissance. "Boom," in the sense of sudden activity, might be an appropriate word. The boom was not a renaissance, but a culmination of the Latin literary tradition. It was followed by a decline of Latin literature. "A travers tout le moyen âge du reste, déjà en plein XIIe siècle, ce processus de désagrégation ne cesse pas de menacer le latin."²⁴

Jill Mann, in a somewhat similar way, does not emphasise the concept of renaissance in a paper on the Latin satirical poems of the middle ages. She concentrates on the twelfth century because it saw "una grande fioritura di scritti satirici di tutti i tipi e raggiunse livelli mai superati nel Medioevo."²⁵ She finds it useful to begin with Bernard's *De contemptu mundi*, because it reflects the conventional themes and modes of expression of medieval satire.

"Boom" would seem to be a more useful, if a less dignified term than "renaissance" to apply to the culture of the twelfth century as illustrated by Bernard of Morlaix. There was

John of Salisbury" and "a humanistic movement" in England (*Christian-Latin poetry*, p.289,290).

²³Joseph de Ghellinck, *L'essor de la littérature latine au XIIe siècle*, 2nd ed., Brussels, Brouwer, 1955 (Museum Lessianum - section historique, 4-5), p.449-450.

²⁴ibid., p.537. See also p.18. De Ghellinck finds only two exceptions, the *Lauda Sion* of Saint Thomas Aquinas and the *Dies irae* of Thomas de Celano (*L'essor*, p.539). Joseph A. Jungmann disputes the authorship of the latter, and places it firmly in the twelfth century (*The Mass of the Roman rite*, Blackrock, Four Courts Press, 1986 (first published Vienna, Herder, 1949), p.439).

²⁵Jill Mann, "La poesia satirica e goliardica," *Lo spazio letterario del medioevo*, 1, *Il medioevo latino*, vol. 1, *La produzione del testo*, tom.1, Rome, Salerno, 1992, p.73.

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monastic reform, but the monastic life seems rather to have reached a peak and to have begun its long decline. If there was a rebirth of the spirit of Saint Gregory, it came rather with the friars in the thirteenth century than in the twelfth century, and the same may be said about attitudes towards women. The complaint literature of the twelfth century, the satire and the anticlericalism, all began in the Latin tradition, where they were shaped and whence they were passed on to the vernacular literatures.

The anticlericalism of the twelfth century was in no sense secular. Twelfth-century complaints against the papacy, though they provided fuel for the reformers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were not of the same genre as the complaints of the Reformation. Bernard's treatment of the end of the world and of heaven and hell do not suggest a renaissance but a continuing tradition, some of which, like the *Apocalypse of Peter*, may have been lost in subsequent centuries. Bernard's estates satire is among the first of its kind. Although it had some roots in Horace and Cicero, and some elements are found in the eleventh century,²⁶ it was essentially a new creation rather than a revival. Similarly, in metre and rhyme, and also in allegory, there were genuinely new developments in the twelfth century which it would be misleading to describe as a renaissance. Even in the area of the love lyric, which has not been discussed here because Bernard throws no light on it, the boom of the Latin tradition may have had as much influence as the birth of the vernacular.²⁷

²⁶For example, in some works of Amaricius (Raby, *Secular Latin poetry*, v.1, p.402).

²⁷Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the rise of European love-lyric*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, passim. There was evidently a mutual influence. Speaking of medieval Latin learned verse, Dronke asks, "How can we ever be sure that such things began in Latin and were not borrowed from traditional songs of the people (and then returned)? (vol. 1, p.263).

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Urban T. Holmes, discussing the idea of a twelfth-century renaissance, denies that a renaissance has anything to do with rebirth. "It is a sudden increase of enthusiasm and intensity in a given stream of culture."²⁸ He stresses the importance of the vernacular literatures in the twelfth century's "vigorous awakening of cultural enthusiasm, in which dialectic, theology, legal studies, vernacular literature of a worldly type, decorative art, and Latin poetry rose to new heights."²⁹ The effect of his discussion is not so much to clarify the terms "renaissance" and "humanism" as to show the problems of their application to the twelfth century. By contrast, Beryl Smalley investigates ecclesiastical attitudes to novelty in the twelfth century, but she does not find any self-conscious renewal or rebirth, and she does find it necessary to use the concept of "renaissance."

My provisional dossier on churchmen's attitudes to novelty will have shown that they became more positive in the period c1100-1250. Conservatives and reactionaries are a constant factor in history. Spokesmen in favour of novelty won a verbal victory at least in this century and a half. They won it after a long and painful battle of words, and more than words only. Builders of institutions went about their work and contributed novelties without making a fuss. Lawyers and scholars took novelties in their stride.³⁰

To describe the culture of the twelfth century as a renaissance, especially as a lesser renaissance than the Renaissance proper,³¹ is to do the Latin literary tradition which culminated in the twelfth century less than justice. There was not a revival or renewal of the Latin literary tradition in the twelfth century,

²⁸Urban T. Holmes, "The idea of a twelfth-century renaissance," *Speculum* 26(1951):643.

²⁹*ibid.*, p.650.

³⁰Beryl Smalley, *Studies in medieval thought and learning from Abelard to Wyclif*, London, Hambledon Press, 1981, p.115.

³¹For example, Haskins says, "The Italian Renaissance was preceded by similar, if less wide-reaching movements" (*The renaissance of the twelfth century*, p.vi); and Erwin Panofsky

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so much as a continuation and culmination. It was a "genuine tradition," not an "invented tradition."³² The scholars of the Renaissance of the fifteenth century undoubtedly advanced the cause of learning through the recovery and editing of Greek and Latin texts and philological and textual studies of them. But their contribution in terms of production of literary works in Latin is less certain. C.S. Lewis points out that, if we take for our criterion the judgement of posterity, we find that "The medieval philosophy is still read as philosophy, the history as history, the songs as songs; the hymns are still in use ... It would be hard to think of one single text in humanists' Latin, except the *Utopia*, of which we can say the same."³³ Even Coluccio Salutati, "the undisputed leader of the humanist movement for thirty-two years," but of whom "few have heard" in modern times, might have been as well known as Petrarch and Boccaccio if he had written in the vernacular.³⁴ G.G. Coulton argued that Latin, as a universal scholarly language, became a positive hindrance to effective communication during the later middle ages.³⁵

There was a decline also, after the twelfth century, in the teaching of classical literature in the universities. John Garland's plea, in about 1230, for legislation to re-establish the teaching of the ancient classics at Paris was unsuccessful.³⁶ This was partly because classical studies were crowded out by other intellectual interests, especially philosophy and

writes of "the real, the Italian Renaissance" (*Renaissance and renascences in Western art*, p.107).

³²See above, p.248.

³³C.S. Lewis, *English literature in the sixteenth century, excluding drama*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954 (Oxford history of English literature, 3) (Clark lectures, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1944) p.20.

³⁴Ullman, Berthold, *The humanism of Coluccio Salutati*, Padua, Antenore, 1963 (*Medioevo e umanesimo*, 4), p.39.

³⁵G.G. Coulton, *Europe's apprenticeship; a survey of medieval Latin with examples*, London, Nelson, 1940, p.100-101.

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theology. But an important factor also was the plethora of excellent Latin literature written in the twelfth century. "Just as the pagan poets were often crowded out of the schools by early Christian poets such as Prudentius and Sedulius, so now the works of modern authors frequently displaced the classics or at least were read side by side with them."³⁷

But if it is possible to see the twelfth century as a "boom" followed by a "bust" as far as classical learning is concerned, it is also possible to see it, from other aspects, as the end of the late patristic period, marked traditionally by volume 217 of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, and the beginning, in the thirteenth century, of the great scholastic philosophical and theological developments. The label "twelfth-century renaissance" is not helpful in either regard.

Credit for establishment of the usage of the term "renaissance" (with a lower case R) to signify similar revivals in other historical periods, and especially in the twelfth century, has generally been accorded to Charles Homer Haskins, whose *Renaissance of the twelfth century* was published in 1927. Haskins' is certainly the first scholarly and detailed treatment of the subject, but as early as 1873, in a collection of critical essays aimed at a more popular audience, Walter Pater wrote:

The history of the Renaissance ends in France and carries us away from Italy to the beautiful cities of the country of the Loire. But it was in France also, in a very important sense, that the Renaissance had begun; and French writers ... have often dwelt on this notion of a Renaissance in the end of the twelfth, and the beginning of the thirteenth century - a Renaissance within the limits of the Middle Ages, a brilliant but in part abortive effort to do for human

³⁶Louis John Paetow, *The arts course at medieval universities with special reference to grammar and rhetoric*, Champaign, Illinois, 1910, p.11-32.

³⁷ibid., p.23-24.

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life and the human mind what was afterwards done in the fifteenth."³⁸

Walter Pater's vision of the medieval scholars who did not realise that the fifteenth century had not yet arrived is reminiscent of the monks at the time of the dissolution of monasteries in England, who "thought it was still the middle ages."³⁹ In its extreme form, this contrast between the ignorance of the middle ages and the enlightenment of the Renaissance might be thought to have been discredited. But it flourishes among popular writers. William Manchester, for example, as recently as 1992, thought it worthwhile to explain how the deadened and superstitious medieval mind was dragged into the light of the Renaissance.

Shackled in ignorance, disciplined by fear, and sheathed in superstition [the people of the middle ages] trudged into the sixteenth century in the clumsy, hunched, pigeon-toed gait of rickets victims, their faces, pocked by smallpox, turned blindly towards the future they thought they knew - gullible, pitiful innocents who were about to be swept up in the most powerful, incomprehensible, irresistible vortex since Alaric had led his Visigoths and Huns across the Alps, fallen on Rome, and extinguished the lamps of learning a thousand years before.⁴⁰

William A. Nitze remarks satirically that "the men of the twelfth century had none of that awareness of a Cimmerian night from which - as Rabelais wrote his friend Tiraqueau in 1532 -

³⁸Walter Pater, *The Renaissance; studies in art and poetry*, New York, New American Library, 1959 (Mentor books) (First published 1873) p. 17.

³⁹Walter Carruthers Sellars and Robert Julian Yeatman, *1066 and all that; a memorable history of England*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1960, p.64.

⁴⁰William Manchester, *A world lit only by fire; the medieval mind and the Renaissance*, London, Macmillan, 1994 (Papermac), p.27. Manchester even manages to convey the impression that, until the Renaissance, most Europeans believed the world was flat (p.230-233)

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humanity had emerged."⁴¹ Marie Dominique Chenu, discussing the medieval concepts of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii*, points out:

The modern term "Middle Ages," set up as a foil to the "Renaissance" and lexically suggesting little more than a dead center, stripped such transmissions of their responsiveness to evolving conditions; indeed, it sold short the very concept of "renaissance" for this term now no longer expressed the capacity for continual renovation characteristic of western Christendom, except as comprised within some external imitation of Antiquity."⁴²

Christopher Brooke, addressing the problem of the twelfth-century renaissance, says, "It must be firmly stated at the outset that the phrase "the twelfth-century Renaissance" has no precise meaning ... It is vain to search for a definition. Historians love to use labels of this kind; and in the hands of a master they can assume real meaning ... But most discussions of these terms lapse into arid semantics ..."⁴³ Gerhart B. Ladner offers a lame pretext for retaining a term whose only excuse for survival is that it is conventional and virtually meaningless. He sees "no good reason to reject Haskins's title *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, which in any case seems now well protected by a tacit statute of limitations on changing widely accepted terms."⁴⁴ R.W. Southern similarly defends the term.

For the last twenty-five years, since the appearance of Haskins' book with this title, the phrase has had a wide currency, but recently Professor Nitze has attacked the use of the phrase as misleading and

⁴¹Willaim A. Nitze, "The so-called twelfth century renaissance," *Speculum* 23(1948):466.

⁴²Marie Dominique Chenu, *Nature, man and society in the twelfth century; essays on new theological perspectives in the Latin west*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968 (First published 1957) p.2.

⁴³Christopher Brooke, *The twelfth century renaissance*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1969, p.13.

⁴⁴*Renaissance and renewal in the twelfth century*, p.28-29.

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inexact. I have no wish to enter into this controversy, which in any case seems to attach too much importance to a mere term of convenience which can mean almost anything we choose to make it mean: all I wish to refer to is the large and complex activity in literature, learning and the arts which drew on many sources, yet expressed an outlook which one feels at once to be new and subtly yet unmistakably coherent. As a portmanteau description of this activity I would stand by Haskins in believing that the term "Renaissance" is no more misleading than any other word. It achieves indeed the sort of sublime meaninglessness which is required in words of high but uncertain import.⁴⁵

Utterances which have no meaning, which are not empirically verifiable and therefore cannot be discussed in terms of their truth or falsity, are useful in some contexts. They convey emotions or aspirations or experiences. They may even have a place in historical writing, provided that their use is understood by the reader. Livy, for example, uses them to write the history of his country from the point of view of a patriotic Roman. Their value, that is to say, lies in their ability to convey a set of assumptions or a standpoint. If it is clear that the terms are of that kind, and if the assumptions or the standpoint are clearly seen, the use of these terms of high but uncertain import is not misleading. Unfortunately the portmanteau of "the twelfth-century renaissance" carries articles which are seldom declared.

A study of the works of Bernard of Morlaix certainly confirms Southern's view that the twelfth century saw a large and complex activity in literature, learning and the arts which drew on many sources, yet expressed an outlook which one feels at once to be new and subtly yet unmistakably coherent. But it is far from clear that this phenomenon may be described, without danger of being misleading, as a renaissance. As early as 1910, Louis John Paetow, who sat at the feet of Haskins himself, considered

⁴⁵R.W. Southern, "The place of England in the twelfth-century renaissance," *History; the journal of the Historical*

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the term "twelfth-century renaissance" unfortunate. Unhappily, his view did not prevail.⁴⁶

The term "Renaissance" generated the notion of a renewal of the glories of classical antiquity after the prolonged darkness of the "middle ages." The term "middle ages" carries those connotations with it. Eva Matthews Sanford asks, "If the men of the Renaissance had not put mediaevalists on the defensive by insistence on their rescue of the world and man from mediaeval ignorance and oblivion, should we feel the need of defining the earlier period [the twelfth century] as a renaissance?"⁴⁷ Fred C. Robinson points out that "*medieval* is most often used in Modern English simply as a vague pejorative term meaning 'outmoded,' 'hopelessly antiquated,' or even simply 'bad.' *Renaissance* and *classical*, although they too refer to long-ago periods of history, are never used in this pejorative way."⁴⁸ Even scholars, and even classical scholars, cannot escape from the tyranny of that usage. Gavin Betts, complaining about the decline of classical studies at the Universities of Melbourne and Monash, says, "One wonders what the consequences for Western civilisation would have been if economic rationalism had been fashionable in 15th and 16th century Europe. Perhaps we would have been spared the Renaissance and the Middle Ages would still be with us."⁴⁹

Association, 45(1960):201.

⁴⁶Louis John Paetow, *A guide to the study of medieval history*, 2nd ed., New York, Crofts, 1932 (Kraus reprint 1959), p.411. See also his thesis of 1910, *The arts course at medieval universities*, p.11, note 2.

⁴⁷Eva Matthews Sanford, "The twelfth century - renaissance or proto-renaissance?" *Speculum* 26(1951):641.

⁴⁸Fred C. Robinson, "Medieval, the middle ages," *Speculum* 59(1984):751-752.

⁴⁹Letters to the editor, *Australian* [newspaper], September 24, 1996, p.12.

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E.H. Gombrich points out that, "Whether we know it or not, we always approach the past with some preconceived ideas."⁵⁰ The trouble with the terms "renaissance" and "middle ages" is that they have built into them a particular view of a pattern of history, in which the middle ages constitute "a mere interval of barbarity between two great ages of human achievement and progress."⁵¹ Even if we do not take that view, even if we explicitly reject it, we cannot get away with the use of the terms on the grounds that they are harmless and not misleading. They carry their baggage with them. The notion of a renaissance of the twelfth century seems to arise because we think we need to explain how people in that benighted age could possibly have been as bright as they evidently were. There must have been a renaissance, even if, since it occurred in the middle ages, it had necessarily to be abortive.

Bernard of Morlaix, who may have hailed from Morley in Norfolk, was a monk at the Cluniac priory of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, where he may have been prior from about 1120 to 1160.⁵² He went to Rome with a petition to Pope Eugenius III in about 1146. In a number of poems, he draws upon a range of cultural resources and reflects some of the preoccupations and anxieties of his age.

Those preoccupations and anxieties are religious, moral, institutional and cultural. Some of them are specific to contemporary monastic culture. Bernard is addressing a monastic audience and he is concerned to encourage his brethren to take their monastic vocation not just as a routine job but as a true conversion of life. He has a particular concern with what he

⁵⁰E.H. Gombrich, *In search of cultural history; the Philip Maurice Deneke lecture, 1967*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969, p.42.

⁵¹Toby Burrows, "Unmaking the middle ages," *Journal of medieval history* 7(1981):134.

⁵²If, that is, there was no prior between Bernard and Yves. See p.30 above.

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regards as the aberrations of the Cistercians. The themes which Bernard takes up are all commonly expressed in the Latin literature of complaint, which reached a peak in the twelfth century. Estates satire, in the form of complaint about such things as the Roman Curia, the clergy and women, forms a large part of Bernard's work, as it does of the satirical literature of his time. Apocalyptic themes, the end of the world and heaven and hell, also play an important part in Bernard's poems, as they do in the complaint literature of his contemporaries.

The cultural resources on which Bernard draws include classical Latin literature, the Vulgate (and through the Vulgate some elements of Hebrew literary traditions), the writings of the Fathers and the works of his contemporaries. His classical learning is not superficial. He knows some Latin authors of antiquity well, and some traditional classical themes, especially the golden age and the golden mean, affect him deeply. He took part in the extraordinary developments in metre and rhyme and in allegory which were a feature of the twelfth century.

But Bernard's poems convey no sense of a "renaissance." The concept itself raises an array of problems, theoretical and methodological. More importantly, its application to the twelfth century is seriously misleading. The Latin literary tradition of the twelfth century was a genuine tradition, not a revival.

APPENDIX BERNARD'S SOURCES

It is impossible to quantify Bernard's use of his sources with precision for the purposes of comparison, because it is difficult in some cases to be sure that a particular phrase is in fact a quotation, even though it occurs in the works of a particular author. A less important difficulty is that quotations may be made from florilegia rather than directly from texts of the author's works. In such cases, there is the possibility that Bernard did not have a very good knowledge of his source. But that is not necessarily the case. Janet Martin has shown that John of Salisbury frequently quoted from excerpts or epitomes, even in cases where he is known to have been familiar with the full text. It was clearly a matter of convenience.¹ Twelfth-century use of florilegia may perhaps be compared to present-day use of the *Patrologia Latina*. It is often more convenient to give citations from the *Patrologia*, even when later and better editions of the cited work exist, simply because of the ready availability and accessibility of Migne's great compilation.

In the tables which follow, all quotations have been included, even those whose context suggests they were derived from florilegia. Despite the difficulties, and making allowances for a margin of error, the following attempt at comparison of Bernard's quotations from classical authors with his quotations from other sources may be helpful. In the table below, Pagan means non-Christian works up to 500 AD; O.T. means the Old Testament in the Vulgate (except for very rare indirect quotations from the Septuagint²); N.T. means the New Testament

¹Janet Martin, "John of Salisbury as a classical scholar," in *The world of John of Salisbury*, edited by Michael Wilks, Oxford, Blackwell for Ecclesiastical History Society, 1984 (Studies in church history, subsidia, 3), p.184-185.

²For example, *De octo vitiis*, 289.

APPENDIX BERNARD'S SOURCES

in the Vulgate; Pat. means Christian writers up to 500 AD; and Med. means writers from 500 AD.

Table of quotations.

	Pagan	O.T.	N.T.	Pat.	Med.	Total
De contemptu mu 2966 l.	58	29	30	1	10	128
De Trinitate 1402 l.	13	37	59	32	55	196
De castitate 523 l.	13	18	18	26	2	77
In libros Regum 1018 l.	7	72	16	0	50	145
De octo vitiis 1399 l.	37	26	19	8	19	109
Total	128	182	142	67	136	655

The proportions of the various sources of quotation are better seen if the table is expressed in the form of percentages.

Table of quotations as percentages of all quotations

	Pagan	O.T.	N.T.	Pat.	Med.	Total
De contemptu mu	45.3	22.7	23.4	0.8	7.8	100
De Trinitate	6.6	18.9	30.1	16.3	28.1	100
De Castitate	16.9	23.4	23.4	33.7	2.6	100
In libros Regum	4.8	49.7	11.0	0	34.5	100
De octo vitiis	33.9	23.9	17.4	7.4	17.4	100
Total	19.5	27.8	21.7	10.2	20.8	100

If there are difficulties in quantifying quotations, there are even greater difficulties in quantifying the whole range of Bernard's classical learning, including his use of commonplaces, florilegia and schoolbooks; his mention of mythological and legendary characters and of historical characters; and his mention of writers whom he does not quote. Counting all those allusions and references presents formidable problems, and it is probable that no two people attempting the task would arrive at

APPENDIX BERNARD'S SOURCES

precisely the same totals in every case.³ With that proviso, and on the understanding that the figures cannot claim exactness, such a count may perhaps be regarded as not totally unreliable. In the following table, all kinds of quotation, allusion and reference have been included, except those cases in which terms are so much a part of the language that they can hardly be regarded as allusions. For example, "Venus," which Bernard uses frequently to mean "lust," has not been included. Nor have mentions of Christ or the Apostles, for example, which are, of course, frequent, been taken as references to the New Testament.

Table of all quotations and allusions

	Pagan	O.T.	N.T.	Pat.	Med.	Total
De contemptu mu	185	88	67	5	16	361
De Trinitate	35	82	84	47	59	307
De castitate	16	33	37	27	2	115
In libros Regum	13	257	28	0	50	348
De octo vitiis	110	75	32	12	20	249
Total	359	535	248	91	147	1380

Again, it may be helpful to express the table in the form of percentages of all quotations and allusions.

³The difficulties of such quantification in relation to the works of John of Salisbury have been addressed briefly by Jan van Laarhoven (*John of Salisbury's Entheticus major and minor*, vol. 1, Leiden Brill, 1987, p.62-63) and in detail by Janet Martin ("John of Salisbury as a classical scholar," p.179-201.)

APPENDIX BERNARD'S SOURCES

Table of all quotations and allusions - percentages

	Pagan	O.T.	N.T.	Pat.	Med.	Total
De contemptu mu	51.2	24.4	18.6	1.4	4.4	100
De Trinitate	11.4	26.7	27.4	15.3	19.2	100
De castitate	13.9	28.7	32.2	23.5	1.7	100
In libros Regum	3.7	73.9	8.0	0	14.4	100
De octo vitiis	44.2	30.1	12.9	4.8	8.0	100
Total	26.0	38.8	18.0	6.6	10.6	100

With the provisos mentioned above, the figures for Bernard's quotations and allusions may be compared with Jan van Laarhoven's figures for all quotations and allusions in the *Entheticus major* of John of Salisbury, and in all the works of John of Salisbury.⁴

John of Salisbury

	Pagan	O.T.	N.T.	Pat.	Med.	Total
Entheticus	211	31	40	37	17	336
All works	2110	1561	1358	731	792	6552

If, for purposes of easier comparison, we express those figures as percentages of all quotations and allusions, we derive the following table.

John of Salisbury - percentages

	Pagan	O.T.	N.T.	Pat.	Med.	Total
Entheticus	62.8	9.2	11.9	11	5.1	100
All works	32.2	23.8	20.7	11.2	12.1	100

Since the *Entheticus* is John's only poetical work, the figures for all his works do not bear direct comparison with the figures for all Bernard's poems, but the figures for John's *Entheticus* may be compared with those for Bernard's poems, especially with the *De contemptu mundi*. For that purpose, we need to take into account the length of the poems. John's *Entheticus* has 211 classical quotations and allusions, or 62.8% of all quotations and allusions, in a poem of 1852 lines, against Bernard's *De*

APPENDIX BERNARD'S SOURCES

contemptu mundi, which has 185 or 51.2% in a much longer poem. In other words, John's *Entheticus* has a classical quotation or allusion on average every 8.8 lines, while Bernard's *De contemptu mundi* has a classical quotation or allusion on average every 16 lines. Comparative frequency of classical quotations and allusions may be tabulated as follows.

Classical quotations and allusions per line

	lines	quotations and allusions	quotations and allusions per line
De contemptu mundi	2966	185	0.06
De Trinitate	1402	35	0.02
De castitate	523	16	0.03
In libros Regum	1018	13	0.01
De octo vitiis	1399	110	0.08
Total Bernard	7308	359	0.05
Entheticus	1852	211	0.11

⁴Jan van Laarhoven, *John of Salisbury's Entheticus major*, p.63.

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