

THE FESTIVAL HYMNS OF PETER ABELARD

A Translation and Commentary of the *Hymnarius Paraclitensis Libellus II*

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SUMMARY

This thesis examines the hymns contained in Peter Abelard's *Hymnarius Paraclitensis Libellus II* and those for the Sacred Triduum. Together these hymns describe and celebrate the major events of the history of redemption from Nativity to Pentecost, finishing with Church Dedication.

The forty-seven hymns fall into groups, each of which is assigned to one of the Feasts. In this examination, each group is preceded by a Foreword which discusses the techniques Abelard employs to make a coherent whole out of the individual hymns. There follows the text, translation and commentaries.

The text is based on that of Chrysogonus Waddell (*Hymn Collections from the Paraclete Cistercian Liturgy Series 9, Gethsemani Abbey 1987*). Although a translation of the hymns exists (Sister Jane Patricia *The Hymns of Peter Abelard in English Verse* University Press of America 1986), it suffers from the poetic licence involved in translating the poetry of one language into that of another. I give a more literal and more accurate translation.

The hymns have been discussed in varying degrees of depth by different commentators, the most notable being Guido Dreves (*Petri Abaelardi Peripatetici Palatini Hymnarius Paraclitensis* Paris 1891), Joseph Szövérfy (*Peter Abelard's Hymnarius Paraclitensis* Albany-Brookline 1975) and Chrysogonus Waddell. Dreves and Szövérfy concentrate on literary and theological aspects, Waddell on versification, music and the history of the hymns within the Paraclete liturgy.

Building on these commentaries, I have attempted to set Abelard's hymns within a theological and historical framework and to elucidate further the theology of the hymns by reference to his own prose works, especially the sermons, and to a wide range of patristic and contemporary writing. I offer a number of new interpretations based on different Scriptural and theological texts.

Whereas Szövérfy generally discusses the literary aspect of the hymns as a body, I have systematically examined them as individual pieces of literature, assessing the literary techniques employed and their merit as poems. Because they are hymns, I have tried to set them in their liturgical context, showing how he incorporates in them references to the services for which they were composed.

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INTRODUCTION

3.1. ABELARD'S LIFE AND WORKS

Still climbing after knowledge infinite
And ever moving as the restless spheres

(Marlowe *Tamburlaine the Great* I
II vii.24-25)

Thus Helen Waddell captures the spirit of Paris in the first half of the twelfth century.¹ This, too, is the spirit of Peter Abelard, for it was Abelard who gained for Paris much of that prestige which attracted to her students from every country of Europe.

A masterly précis of the different facets of the man who caught the imagination of his own time and has continued to exercise his fascination through the centuries, is given by Vitz:

Dialecticien, philosophe; séducteur, amant, époux, castrat; moine que ses compagnons détestèrent, chef d'école que ses disciples adulèrent; théologien dont le livre fut brûlé; abbé que ses moines essayèrent d'empoisonner et de poignarder.²

Vitz, however, like many, omits from his summary Abelard the composer of hymns. It is on this aspect and the events relevant to his hymnography that this introduction will focus.³

Much of our knowledge of Abelard's life is derived from the autobiographical letter known as the *Historia Calamitatum*, written in 1132-3 ostensibly as a *consolatio* for a friend.⁴ It is a survey, necessarily prejudiced, of the most important events in his career

1 Helen Waddell *The Wandering Scholars* (London 1938) p.106.

2 E.B.Vitz "Type et individu dans l'autobiographie médiévale. Étude d'*Historia Calamitatum*." *Poétique* 24 (1975) p.427.

3 General works on Abelard's career abound: see **Bibliography**.

4 The authenticity of the letters of Abelard and Heloise, including the *Historia Calamitatum*, has been debated since the eighteenth century: see **Bibliography**. For the most recent assessment see D.Luscombe "From Paris to the Paraclete: The Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise", *Proc.Brit.Acad.*74 (1988) pp.247-283. For a discussion of the intention of the *Historia* see M.M.McLaughlin "Abelard as Autobiographer: the motives and meaning of his 'Story of Calamities'" *Speculum* 42 (1967) pp.413-488.

from his early years to the time of his abbacy of St.Gildas in Brittany, "a work of the highest value for its historical, psychological and human interest".⁵

At the behest of his father, Abelard was given a grounding in letters and later abandoned his inheritance as the eldest son for an academic career.⁶ He joined the students who wandered from school to school searching out the best teachers, especially of dialectic, in emulation of the *peripatetici*.⁷ Nothing is said in the *Historia* about his studies in *grammatica*, the basis of the *trivium*, but an anonymous Life has *Petrus...primum grammaticae et dialecticae, hinc divinitati operam dedit*.⁸ Following the normal curriculum he is likely to have come into contact with a large number of *auctores*, the Latin texts ranging from the first century B.C. to the fifth or sixth A.D.. He shows an acquaintance with, among others, Cicero (especially the *de amicitia*), Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal, Horace (*Epistolae*), Lucan, Statius, Seneca, Quintilian and Macrobius.

There is evidence that he studied dialectic for a time with Roscelin (c.1094) and probably ventured, with little success, into the *quadrivium*, studying *arithmetica* under Thierry of Chartres.⁹ He came at length to Paris to William of Champeaux, the most famous dialectician of the time, but his success in criticizing his master's views earned him such suspicion that he was forced to leave Paris to establish his own school (c.1104), first at Melun, later at Corbeil, in both of which he taught dialectic.¹⁰

5 D.Knowles *Evolution of Medieval Thought* (London 1962) pp.116-117.

6 *Historia Calamitatum* ed. J.Monfrin (Paris 1967) 23-28.

7 HC 28-30 *Proinde diversas disputando perambulans provincias, ubicunque hujus artis vigere studium audieram, peripateticorum emulator factus sum.*

8 MS of St.Emmeram's, Ratisbon, printed in R.L.Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning* (London 1932) p.315.

9 *Dialect.V* (ed. L.M.de Rijk, Assen 1956) p.554 and Roscelin *Epist.XV* (PL 178.360). Sikes (*Peter Abailard* p.2) suggests that Abelard neglects to mention his time with Roscelin in his autobiography because he did not wish his name to be associated with a heretic whose views he later attacked. The anonymous Life (see above n.8, p.315) mentions a *magister Tirricus* (probably Thierry): *Qui cum de quadrivio nihil audisset, clam magistro Tirrico in quasdam mathematicas aures dabat, in quibus supra quam aestimaret obtentu difficultatis intellectus resilliebat audientis.* This is corroborated by Abelard's statement in *Dialect.I.2.* (ed. de Rijk p.59) *...etsi multas ab arithmetice solutiones audierim, nullam tamen a me proferendam iudico, quem eius artis ignarum omnino recognosco.* On Thierry see Luscombe *The School of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge 1969) pp.57-58.

10 HC 31-38. For Abelard's relations with his masters see J.Châtillon "Abélard et les Écoles", *Abélard en son temps* (ed. J.Jolivet Paris 1981) pp.133-160.

After a period of some years he again enrolled (c.1108) under William for a course of lectures on rhetoric. It is evident from his later dialectical writings that he knew well works by Porphyry, Boethius, Aristotle, and Scotus Erigena. He defeated William on the question of Universals and was once more driven from Paris. He soon set up his own school just outside the city boundaries on Mont Ste.Geneviève, with dialectic again the main thrust of his teaching.

In 1113, after a short period in Brittany, he turned from secular studies to the study of theology under Anselm of Laon, its foremost master.¹¹ Weary of the traditional methodology of verse by verse exposition of the Scriptures from patristic authorities, Abelard declared that dialectic was relevant for the explanation of theological problems.

Forbidden to teach in Laon, he was welcomed back to Paris (c.1116) from where his old enemy William of Champeaux had now retired. Here he lectured in theology, attempting to finish the commentary on Ezekiel begun at Laon, and in dialectic.¹² He justified his teaching of the lower "science" by claiming to use it as a bait to attract students to theology.¹³

In Paris he met Heloise, an episode which needs no retelling. After the disastrous consequences of the marriage Abelard persuaded Heloise to take the veil at Argenteuil and himself sought refuge in the Abbey of St. Denis.¹⁴ The date was 1119 when he was forty, she about nineteen and, as far as the evidence goes, they were not in communication again for another eight or nine years.

From St.Denis he was sent to teach in Champagne.¹⁵ His use of logic as a tool in theology and the very fact that he debated theological issues brought on his head the

11 HC 155-158. Sikes (pp.7-8) discusses the influence of his mother and the variety of motives which led Abelard to theology.

12 The Commentary on Ezekiel is lost. This is unfortunate *per se* but especially for the hymns since the third hymn for Candlemas (see below pp.126-135) centres on an interpretation of a passage from Ezekiel.

13 HC 672-4.

14 HC 566-641. Heloise later complains that he showed too little trust in her by ensuring that she entered monastic life before he did (Muckle *Epist.I* p.72). For Abelard's relations with the monastery see É.Jeauneau "Pierre Abélard a Saint-Denis", *Abélard en son temps* (ed. Jolivet) pp. 161 - 173.

15 HC 642-667. At Maisoncelle-en-Brie near Provins.

wrath of other heads of schools, while his treatise *de trinitate* led directly to his impeachment for heresy at the Council of Soissons in 1121.¹⁶

The threat of the King's judgement and the prospect of imprisonment sent him again to Champagne to seek the protection of Count Theobald.¹⁷ Near Quincey he built a small oratory to the Trinity (c.1123). Soon students began to arrive, sturdier buildings were constructed and renamed the Paraclete, another innovation condemned by his critics.¹⁸ The chronology of Abelard's works is notoriously difficult but it would seem that during his years at the Paraclete he wrote his theological treatises *Sic et Non*, the first part of the *Theologia Christiana* and the *Introductio*.

In 1125-6 Abelard was invited to become Abbot of St.Gildas in Brittany.¹⁹ The monks were a byword for licentiousness and when Abelard tried to establish a proper rule he went in danger of his life.²⁰ Into this life of constant struggle came the news that Suger, Abbot of St.Denis, had confiscated Argenteuil.²¹ Abelard came to the rescue of Heloise, by this time Prioress, and her nuns by giving them the Paraclete oratory.²²

16 HC 676-721. He was arraigned on three charges: i) tritheism (HC 725); ii) the denial of the proposition *Deus seipsum genuit* (751-81); iii) the attribution of omnipotence to the Father alone (871-906). For a discussion see Luscombe (p.104).

17 HC 942-995. He had questioned the authenticity of the identification of St.Denis, the patron saint not only of the Abbey but of France, with Dionysius the Areopagite.

18 HC 1033-1044. The site was by the Ardusson close to Nogent-sur-Seine. HC 1044-1129: Abelard explains why he changed the name to the Paraclete: *...quia tamen ibi profugus ac jam desperatus divine gratia consolationis aliquantulum respirassem, in memoria hujus beneficii ipsum Paracletum nominavi* (HC 1121-1124).

19 The order of events is confused. Abelard implies that ecclesiastical persecution forced the closure of the school and acceptance of the invitation to St.Gildas (HC 1200-39). He blames the persecution on *novi apostoli* (HC 1201), generally understood to be Norbert of Xanten and Bernard of Clairvaux. This suggestion is, however, untenable (see Muckle "Abelard's Letter of Consolation to a Friend" *Med.Stud.* 12 (1950) pp.212-3). Abelard's pupil, Hilary (PL 178.1855A), on the other hand, blames the closure on the unruly behaviour of the students. Luscombe (pp.54-55) summarizes the Paraclete school experiment and the reasons for its decline.

20 HC 1243-82 and 1494-1555.

21 See T.G.Waldman "Abbot Suger and the Nuns of Argenteuil" *Traditio* 41 (1985) pp.239-272.

22 HC 1304-1320. Pope Honorius II and King Louis VI agreed to the transfer of Argenteuil to St-Denis in 1129 (for a full discussion see McLeod, *Héloïse* pp.93ff.) The Papal Charter ratifying the gift of the Paraclete to the nuns was given by Pope Innocent II on 28 November 1131. Abelard complains that he was on the horns of a dilemma with regard to the nuns: if he stayed away from them, he was accused of abandoning a helpless community; if he visited, he was

With the installation of Heloïse at the Paraclete and Abelard's return to St.Gildas the *Historia Calamitatum* comes to a close.

The *Historia* came into the hands of Heloïse and prompted her to write to Abelard, partly to reproach him for his neglect of her through all the long years of their separation and his neglect of the Convent of which he was founder, partly to tell him of her anxiety for his life in the dangers of St.Gildas.²³ She longs for him to become her "confessor" but he refuses because of the inherent spiritual dangers. After the interchange of some four letters, Heloïse makes a conscious decision not to continue her "old, perpetual complaint" and seeks Abelard's guidance simply as the founder of the Convent.²⁴ It is with the Rule and the two theological works, the *Problemata Heloissae*, the *Hexaameron*, and the sermons which he wrote at her request, that the three books of hymns belong, for these are the gifts of the father-founder to his sister and daughters in Christ.

The sermons are of special value for the hymns discussed in this volume for both are written for the Feasts of the Church.²⁵ In the short letter accompanying the sermons Abelard says that he wrote the sermons shortly after completing "a little book of hymns or sequences" (*libello quodam hymnorum vel sequentiarum...composito*).²⁶ The parallel content of many of the sermons and *Libellus II* suggests that it is to these hymns in particular he refers.

There is no record of his resignation as Abbot, but John of Salisbury reports that in 1136 he was again teaching at Mont Ste. Geneviève.²⁷ In 1138 or 1139 William of St.Thierry published a *Disputatio* against thirteen alleged heresies in Abelard's *Theologia* which he sent to Bernard of Clairvaux and Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, the

accused of lust for Heloïse: ...*dicens me adhuc quadam carnalis concupiscentiae oblectatione teneri* (HC 1347-49).

23 *Epist.I* (Muckle pp.68-73).

24 *Epist.V* (Muckle "The Letters of Heloise on Religious Life and Abelard's First Reply" *Med.Stud.*17 (1955) pp.241-2).

25 Preface to Sermons: *In his autem scribendis seu disponendis ordinem festivitatum tenens, ab ipso nostrae redemptionis exordio sum exorsus.* (PL 178.379-380).

26 Preface to Sermons (PL 178.379-380).

27 John of Salisbury *Metalogicon* II, 10,867b (ed. Clemens Webb Oxford 1929):...*contuli me ad peripateticum palatium, qui tunc in Monte Sanctae Genovefae clarus doctor, et admirabilis omnibus praestidebat.*

papal legate.²⁸ At the Council of Sens Abelard appealed to the Pope. The Council found him guilty of heresy.²⁹

Bernard sent a description of the proceedings to the Pope. News of the papal condemnation reached Abelard at Cluny whose Abbot, Peter the Venerable, mediated a reconciliation between Abelard and Bernard and begged the Pope to allow Abelard to remain as a monk in Cluny. Permission was granted, the sentence lifted.³⁰

Abelard spent the last eighteen months of his life at Cluny and at Châlons-sur-Saône in study and prayer. In his letter of consolation to Heloise Peter the Venerable wrote:

Ibi iuxta quod incommoditas permittebat, antiqua sua renovans studia, libris semper incumbere nec, sicut de magno Gregorio legitur, momentum aliquod praeterire sinebat quin semper aut oraret aut scriberet aut dictaret.³¹

Here he wrote his *Apologia*, the versified *Mortuum* to his son Astralabe and the unfinished *Dialogus inter Philosophum, Iudaeum et Christianum*. He died on 21 April 1143.

3.2. MANUSCRIPTS OF THE HYMNS

There are two main manuscripts for Abelard's hymns for the Paraclete:³²

B = Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms 10147-10158, ff.81r-96v; late 12th/early 13th century. Contains a collection of hymns divided, as Abelard had done, into three books or *libelli*, each introduced by a Preface:

28 William of St.Thierry *Disputatio* (PL 180.249-82) and *Epist.* 326 (PL 182.531-3). J.M.Dechanet (*Guillaume de St.Thierry* (Paris 1978) p.69) suggests March 1138 for the sending of the letter and the *Disputatio*.

29 The Council was called as a forum for debate between Abelard and Bernard but there was no disputation. For dating see Sikes pp.229-231. Berengar's satirical, and libellous, account (*Apologeticus* in R.M.Thomson "The Satirical Works of Berengar of Poitiers: an edition with introduction" *Med.Stud.*42 (1980) pp.112-116) exaggerates, but there is no doubt that the Council amounted to a court of inquisition. On Berengar, Luscombe *The School of Peter Abelard* pp.29ff. Abelard was condemned on nineteen points. For the official list see Leclercq "Les Formes Successives" (*Rev.Ben.* 78 (1968) pp.103-4) and a good summary in Luscombe pp.115-142. The Papal Bull against Abelard (PL 79.515-7) is dated 21 July.

30 Peter the Venerable *Epist.*IV.4 (PL 189.305-6).

31 Peter the Venerable *Epist.*XXI (PL 189.350C-352C).

32 This section is based on C.Waddell, *Hymn Collections from the Paraclete*, I Introduction and Commentary (Cistercian Liturgy Series 8 (CLS), Gethsemani Abbey 1989) pp.6-8.

Libellus I: Cycle of Sunday and weekday hymns;

Libellus II: Cycle of hymns for "Feasts of the Lord" including Pentecost and Church Dedication;

Libellus III: Sanctoral cycle for both common and individual feasts. Ten occasional hymns are missing owing to a *lacuna*.

C = Chaumont, Bibliothèque municipale, ms 31; late 15th/ early 16th century. A diurnal for the Paraclete which contains collects and hymns for all the Hours of both the Day and Night Offices. In addition to all the hymns which appear in B (except those for the Holy Cross and Church Dedication which appear only in B), there are hymns for the Sacred Triduum which is part of the Holy Week Office, and the ten Sanctoral hymns missing in B.

Given the early date of B (late 12th/early 13th century) and the numerous scribal errors throughout C, B is generally to be preferred. Silvestre criticizes Dreves for attaching too much importance in his edition to C.³³ Szövérfy took Dreves as the *textus receptus*. Silvestre himself compares Szövérfy's readings with those of B and makes a substantial number of corrections and improvements. Burnett agrees with Silvestre in generally preferring B but thinks that comparison with C can on occasions prove useful.³⁴ The edition by Waddell again prefers B over C.³⁵

3.3. THE PARACLETE HYMNARY

The earliest evidence for the use of Abelard's hymns in the Paraclete liturgy is the Old French Ordinal of the Paraclete dating from the late thirteenth century.³⁶ This and the much later Paraclete Diurnal/Breviary extant in the manuscript **Chaumont 31** are in general agreement.³⁷

33 H.Silvestre "A propos d'une édition recente de l'*Hymnarius Paraclitensis* d'Abélard" *Scriptorium* 32 (1978) p.93 on J.Szövérfy, *Peter Abelard's Hymnarius Paraclitensis* I and II (Albany N.Y. and Brookline, Mass. 1975). Szövérfy's text is based on G.Dreves, *Petri Abaelardi Peripatetici Palatini Hymnarius Paraclitensis* (Paris 1895).

34 C.S.Burnett "Notes on the Tradition of the Text of the *Hymnarius Paraclitensis* of Peter Abelard" *Scriptorium* 38 (1984) pp.295-300.

35 See above n.32 p.ccxviii.

36 *The Old French Ordinal* ed. C.Waddell (CLS 3 and 4).

37 *The Paraclete Breviary* ed. C.Waddell (CLS 5-7).

The Paraclete hymnary consists of 187 hymns of which 129 are by Abelard.³⁸ The rest are a combination of Cistercian hymns and hymns from Gallic sources.³⁹

The Cistercian hymns in the Paraclete liturgy are those of the Cistercian hymnary before its second recension of 1140/47, suggesting that Cistercian hymns were adopted very early in the life of the Paraclete. Such an hypothesis is supported by Abelard's First Preface where he quotes Heloise's animadversions on the paucity of hymns and their discrepancies in the hymnal used by the nuns, objections which could well apply to the early Cistercian hymnal.

3.4. THE PREFACES

Each *Libellus* opens with a Preface. The first sets out the arguments for a new hymnary, the second establishes the Scriptural and patristic authority for the use of hymns and summarizes the content of *Libellus* I, the third provides a resumé of the type of hymns to be found in each of the three *Libelli* and reviews the distribution of the hymns.

Structure of Preface I

1. Address to Heloise. At first he was tempted to refuse her request that he write some hymns for the use of the nuns at the Paraclete.
2. The necessity for a new hymnary: a summary of Heloise's reasons:
 - i. the standard hymns lack authority:
 - a. the Church here, as in the Psalter, follows custom;
 - b. many hymns are unattributed;
 - ii. even those hymns attributed to the Fathers (e.g. Hilary, Ambrose and Prudentius) are musically impossible;
 - iii. hymns for certain saints are lacking;
 - iv. some hymns necessitate contradiction:
 - a. they do not accord with the Hours to which they are assigned;
 - b. they exaggerate i) the feelings of the singers, forcing them to lie;
 - ii) their subject - especially the power or importance of certain saints;

38 129 according to Waddell's numbering, 133 according to Dreves and Szövérfy: Waddell takes the three Nocturn hymns for Good Friday as one (for discussion see Waddell CLS 8 p.cccxix).

39 See Waddell CLS 8 pp.54-83 for the place of Abelard's hymns in the Paraclete liturgy.

3. Abelard accedes to Heloise's request for a new hymnary and asks that she and her nuns pray for him.

Structure of Preface II

1. Citation of Paul as the Scriptural authority for the use of Psalms, canticles and hymns in divine worship.
2. Provenance of the three elements:
 - i. Psalms and canticles are taken from Scripture;
 - ii. hymns are ecclesiastical compositions:
 - a) hymns in the life of the Church: individual hymns for individual times;
 - b) the ancients gave the name Psalm/hymn indiscriminately to any metrical praise;
 - c) Psalms can be called hymns according to the definition given in Preface I (*laus Dei cum cantico*); the difference is that Psalms are translated from the Hebrew.
3. Reference to the nuns' request for hymns - modesty *topos*.
4. Resumé of *Libellus I*:
 - i. hymns for Sunday and weekday cycles;
 - ii. one melody and one metre for the Night Office, one for the Day Office;
 - iii. Subject-matter of hymns: days of Creation:
 - a) Night Office hymns: historical - symbolism of darkness of history;
 - b) Day Office hymns: allegorical or moral exposition of the works of Creation - symbolism of the light of explanation.
5. Request for prayer including modesty *topos*.

Structure of Preface III

1. Introduction proper to *Libellus III*:
 - i. *Libelli I* and *II* provide hymns for ferial days and Feasts of the Lord;
 - ii. *Libellus III* will provide hymns for the Virgin, saints and martyrs.
2. Plea for help
 - i. to the saints in whose honour he writes - modesty *topos*;
 - ii. to the nuns who asked for the hymns.
3. Review of his plans for the distribution of the hymns:
 - i. introduction with modesty *topos*;
 - ii. previously nuns had only one hymn for Sunday and Feast Day Nocturns - he has provided groups of four for each Feast:

- a) one for each of the three Nocturns and one for Lauds;
- b) two can be sung at Vigils and two at Vespers;
- c) two can be sung at each of the two Vespers services.

4. Hymns for the Holy Cross:

- i. exception to the 4-hymn grouping: 5 hymns for the Cross;
- ii. rubric for the Holy Cross ceremony.⁴⁰

3.5. THE HYMNS OF *LIBELLUS II*

In his Preface to *Libellus I* Abelard gives an account of the motivating forces behind his composition of a new hymnary. He attributes the arguments to Heloise but finds himself in agreement with her. Many hymns in general use are musically inept; some necessitate contradiction, others are so hyperbolic as to compel hypocrisy in the singers. Abelard's hymns follow his own guidelines and endeavour to make good the deficiencies he sees in others. He avoids exaggeration and contradiction and, as far as we can tell, his hymns are musically coherent.⁴¹

He defines hymns in Augustine's terms as *laus Dei cum cantico*, a description which is especially pertinent to the hymns treated in this commentary, those written for the Feasts of the Lord (*Libellus II*) and for the Sacred Triduum. It is the story of redemption rehearsed in these hymns which calls forth his greatest praise of God, some of his most potent images and many of his most interesting and innovative metrical forms.

The third Preface, with its resumé of the structure of *Libellus II*, demonstrates that he composed each *Libellus* as a whole. For each Feast he has provided four hymns, one for each of the three Nocturns and one for Lauds. He does not, however, consider himself bound by his self-imposed structure but breaks out of it in the case of the Holy Cross hymns for liturgical reasons. It is his primary aim to make the hymns meaningful and relevant to the experience of the nuns for whom they are designed.

Relevance accounts for what Von den Steinen calls his "subjectivism", his projection of himself and his singers into the situation of the hymn and for his use of

40 See discussion on the problems raised by this paragraph on p.

41 For a discussion on the music of the hymns see Waddell CLS 8 pp.45-54, M.Huglo "Abélard, poète et musicien" *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 22 (1979) pp.349-361.

women as the protagonists as often as occasion permits.⁴² This is at its most evident in the first and last hymns for Candlemas, in those for Good Friday and Easter, and in the second for Ascension.

The imagery of *Libellus II* is, not surprisingly, rooted primarily in Scripture since these hymns are specifically tied to Feasts relating to Christ incarnate. The number of lines in which Abelard consciously evokes a particular Biblical passage is perhaps equalled by those where an evocation is spontaneous. His thorough knowledge of the Bible makes such reminiscence unavoidable, although unconscious.

Abelard's use of Scripture is often innovative, especially so in his use of the Song of Songs in the first two hymns for the Ascension. The Song has always proved a mine of metaphor for hymnographers, but Abelard appears to be the first to see the possibilities in its imagery for the ascension. His starting-point is one of Notker's sequences but he expands Notker's limited allusion to achieve a brilliantly original effect.

As with Notker's hymn, so with countless well-worn motifs; he transforms them from the commonplace by skilful poetic handling or by the introduction of a new perspective. His hymns for the Holy Cross consist of traditional *topoi* which are rendered original by the use to which he puts them. In the Lauds hymn he combines the typology of the wood which sweetened the waters of Mara with his exemplarist doctrine of the atonement: the cross becomes an example for the faithful.

It is clear from his theological works that his reading of the Fathers was wide, especially Ambrose, Augustine and Gregory the Great, and to a lesser extent, Cassiodorus, Fulgentius and Bede, to name but a few. As with the Biblical echoes, so with the patristic, the allusions are sometimes direct and deliberate, often unintentional. The third hymn for Candlemas, for instance, makes little sense unless one is familiar with Gregory the Great's commentary on the passage quoted from Ezekiel. In other cases Abelard follows tradition without referring directly to a particular work. I have endeavoured throughout this commentary to show the theological background to the hymns through quotation from the Fathers. Where I believe Abelard is making a deliberate allusion to a specific passage, I have quoted that passage; where he is following the general tradition, I have indicated the interpretation from several works.

42 Wolfram von den Steinen "Les sujets d'inspiration chez les poètes du XIIe siècle" *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 9 (1966) pp.165-175 and 363-383.

Although the imagery of the hymns is mostly Biblical and patristic, it is not restricted entirely to those sources. The apocryphal Gospels of James and Nicodemus are responsible for some of the elements in his treatment of the Nativity and for the references to the Harrowing of Hell in the Sacred Triduum, Easter and Ascension hymns. The depiction of Christ's entry into Heaven is an amalgam of the entry into Jerusalem in the Gospels and a Roman triumph, while the joyful welcome given Christ and the Church is described in terms of a contemporary prince returning to his kingdom with the bride he has won. Natural history as derived from the bestiaries or *Physiologus* plays its part in the hymns for Holy Saturday in the use of the lion-cub and the phoenix as types of Christ in His death and resurrection, and in the Ascension hymn which uses the attributes of the dove and the eagle as metaphors for the needs of the Church. Nature symbolism reminiscent of secular spring poetry occurs in the final hymn for Easter where the renewal of the earth is first juxtaposed with the resurrection of Christ, then inextricably enlaced with it.

Abelard normally follows patristic typological interpretation which sees in the events of the Old Testament shadows of the New.⁴³ Typological interpretation is at its most evident in *Libellus II* since it is here that the events of the New Testament are most consistently treated. The intermingling of the two Testaments is employed throughout the hymns of *Libellus II* in allusion to prophecy, to the law and to typology. In the Pentecost hymns direct antithesis of the two Testaments expresses most powerfully the contrast between the shadow of the Old Testament and the light of the New:

fumus illic caliginem
obscurae signat litterae;
splendentis ignis speciem
clarae signum hic accipe.⁴⁴

The effect of Abelard's dialectical and rhetorical training is evident throughout his hymnary in the architecture of individual hymns and of the groups to which they belong, in his command of language and in the stylistic figures which abound. The argument within each hymn generally moves in a logical progression, often through a series of balanced parallels or antitheses. The schematism of such a structure is off-set by the presence of a variety of rhetorical figures. Within the logical organisation of each

43 See Henri de Lubac *Exégèse Médiévale I* pp.171-207 and pp.305-355.

44 71.4./1-4.

hymn there is a certain *variatio*. Some move in a series of steps to a climactic conclusion, in others the focal point is the central stanza, a few are structured on ring-composition.

The hymns are not merely historical documents, nor yet solely the literary creations of a master of language, but religious and liturgical poems intended for use. This is not the place to list all the many stylistic features of Abelard's hymnody for they are discussed in detail in relation to the hymns in which they occur. Two alone should be mentioned since they are integral to his desire for relevance.

In his first Preface Abelard denounces the hyperbole which prevails in some hymns where exaggerated expressions force the singers into acts of hypocrisy:

Paucissimi quippe sunt, qui contemplationis ardore vel peccatorum suorum
compunctione flentes ac gementes illa digne valeant decantare.⁴⁵

Although Abelard ensures his hymns are free from such exaggeration, he, nevertheless, wishes to arouse emotion. In the festival hymns he generally achieves his aim by projection of the singers into the situation of the hymn through the judicious use of rhetorical questions or by personal identification.

E.Courtney defines rhetorical questions:

(They) imply and exploit agreement between speaker and audience, and involve the listeners, from whom in theory if not in fact an answer is demanded, in a way which plain statements do not.⁴⁶

The Lauds hymn for Good Friday ends with a fourfold rhetorical question which develops from a demand for a response from the faithful to one from all men:

Quis hoc fidelium audire perferat?
aut quis hoc audiens non homo ingemat?
quis siccis oculis hoc scelus audiat?
quem haec saevitia saevum non molliat?⁴⁷

The accumulation of questions is emotive. An emotional response is gained differently in a hymn which contrasts the positions of Christ as the Son of God and as the Son of Mary. The central stanza asks:

Quae sunt grates, quae retributio/ super istis a nobis Domino?⁴⁸

45 Preface I in Szövérfy II p.12.

46 E.Courtney *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London 1980) p.37.

47 45.3./1-4.

To the question is added the personal note of identification in the words *a nobis*. Introduction of the same personal note of identification results in Abelard's most intense line in the whole corpus:

Nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina.⁴⁹

This is a theological statement of man's responsibility for Christ's passion which is transformed by the anaphora of the double *nostra* from the factual into a passionate confession of sin.

Projection of the singers into the world of the hymn through various stylistic devices is linked with the process of self-identification with Christ which Donald Frank calls *imitatio Christi*.⁵⁰ Frank argues persuasively that Abelard went beyond the standard medieval practice of identification with major religious figures and focused his sense of identity on the human nature and career of Christ.

Abelard used his undeniable sense of persecution (a complex, it is fair to say, which was not without reason) to novel effect. Frank discusses ten or eleven instances of explicit identification with Christ in the *Historia*, some of which occur again in the hymns.⁵¹ I would suggest that there are several more implicit correlations, the most important of which is Abelard's description of twofold betrayal: Fulbert sealed his agreement to a secret marriage with a kiss "the easier to betray me":

Assensit ille, et tam sua quam suorum fide et osculis eam quam requisivi concordiam mecum inlit, quo me facilius proderet.⁵²

Again, one of Abelard's own servants betrayed him into the hands of his enemy:

Unde vehementer indignati et adversum me conjurati, nocte quadam...quodam mihi serviente per pecuniam corrupto, crudelissima et pudentissima ultione punierunt...Quibus mox in fugam conversis, duo qui comprehendi potuerunt oculis et genitalibus privati sunt, quorum alter ille fuit supradictus serviens qui, cum in obsequio meo maneret, cupiditate ad proditionem ductus est.⁵³

48 31.3./3-4.

49 42.8./1.

50 Donald K.Frank "Abelard as Imitator of Christ" *Viator* 1 (1970) pp.107-113.

51 See below pp. 160-163.

52 HC 422-4.

53 HC 581-591.

It was at night too that Christ was betrayed; the traitor was one of his own men who conspired with the scribes and Pharisees against his Master; for money he betrayed his Master with a kiss; and the traitor paid the penalty of his wickedness: not only did Christ die, but so did Judas. Each of these aspects has its place in Abelard's first hymn for Good Friday:

hac nocte proditor est per se proditus;
 ut his in pretio det mundi pretium;
 ne quid susceptio prosit pecuniae,
 quem vendis, praevenis mortis in funere;
 ut patientia probetur traditi
 monstrat hunc traditor per signum osculi.⁵⁴

It is because of the conscious identification of experience that this hymn is so potent: Abelard, like Christ, knows what it is to be betrayed.

Other facets of Abelard's poetic technique, his use of apostrophe, alliteration and assonance, chiasmus and parallelism, classical reminiscence and Biblical quotation and allusion, are discussed below where they appear in the hymns.

3.6. METRICAL ANALYSIS

The system of notation used below for the metres of the hymns was devised by Dieter Schaller and applied to the *Arundel Lyrics* by Christopher McDonagh.⁵⁵ The notation for the rhyme-schemes is traditional.

1. The Arabic numbers denote the number of syllables in the line. Where there is a strong diaeresis the syllables in each part of the line are indicated. When the line is repeated a superscript number is placed at the start of the first of the series.
2. Lines with proparoxytonic stress (i.e. those with the final stress on the antepenultimate syllable) are marked by an apostrophe.
3. A refrain is marked by a superscript R.
4. The rhyme-scheme is in letters after the numerical description.

54 42.2./1; 3./4; 4./3-4; 5./1-2. See discussion pp. 160-163.

55 D.Schaller "Bauformeln für akzentrythmische Verse und Strophen" *MtJ* 14 (1979) pp.9-21 and C.McDonagh *The Oxford Poems of Hugh Primas and the Arundel Lyrics* (Toronto Med.Lat. Texts 1984) pp.12-13.

Nativity 30-33	⁴ 4 6'; aabb
Epiphany 34-37	4/ 4/ 7/ 4/ 4/ 7; aabccb
Candlemas 38-41	⁴ 8'; aabb
Sacred	
Triduum 42-57	⁴ 6' 6'; aaaa
Easter 58-61	7' / R7' / 27' 5'; a ^R bacac
Ascension 62-65	28' / 24 6'; aabb
Holy Cross 66-68	³ 5; aab (stanza 2 ccb; stanza 3 ddb etc.)
Pentecost 69-72	⁴ 8' / 6 6' / 24 6'; ababccc
Church	
Dedication 73-76	⁴ 7'; abab

The rich variety of strophic forms evident in Abelard's hymns has no parallel in the work of any single composer of medieval hymnody. He has almost completely abandoned the traditional or standard forms, replacing them with original compositions. The exception in *Libellus* II is the cycle for Candlemas which is a variation on the most traditional of all hymnic forms, the Ambrosian iambic dimeter.

In his second Preface he mentions his decision to have one melody and one metre for the Night Office hymns, a different one for the Day Office:

Quos ita compositos esse cognoscatis, ut bipartitus sit eorum cantus sicut et
rhythmus, et sit una nocturnis melodia communis atque altera diurnis sicut et
rhythmus.⁵⁶

The same decision made for the groups of hymns in the second and third *Libelli* necessitated the invention of a number of stanza forms and the adaptation of a few existing ones.

As Waddell points out "the classification of Abelard's various strophic forms admits of more than one solution".⁵⁷ I believe Waddell is correct to organise the distribution of the lines according to the rhyme-scheme. It is possible to take the following lines as Szövérfy or as Waddell:

Verbo verbum virgo concipiens, ex te verus ortus est Oriens	Verbo verbum virgo concipiens ex te verus ortus est Oriens. ⁵⁸
--	--

56 Szövérfy II p.81. See p.14 for structure and content of Preface II.

57 Waddell CLS 8 p.38.

58 30.1./1-2. See Szövérfy II p.81.

Waddell bases his choice on the rhyme which appears only at the end of the 10-syllable line.

In spite of his metrical inventiveness, Abelard is content with an uncomplicated approach to rhyme. He eschews the two or three-syllable rhymes of his contemporaries and is satisfied with a monosyllabic rhyme at the end of lines. Dronke suggests his avoidance of stressed rhyme is an archaizing technique and his monosyllabic rhyming may be intended to have the same effect.⁵⁹

As with the rhymes, so the rhyme-schemes are surprisingly undistinguished, except where the more complex stanza forms demand a more elaborate rhyming pattern. The hymns for the Sacred Triduum have in each stanza a single rhyme *aaaa*, duplicating the structure of the Day Office hymns in *Libellus I*. A number of schemes are based on simple groups of two: the Nativity, Candlemas and Ascension hymns *aabb*, Church dedication *abab*. The inclusion of a refrain makes the Pentecost group look more promising but it too is structured simply: *abab* for the stanza, *ccc* for the refrain. The hymns for Epiphany and the Holy Cross are set in triplets, *aab ccb*, those for the Holy Cross retaining the final *b* rhyme throughout. The most complex is the Easter group with its internal refrain in the rondeau style: *a^Rbacac*.

The originality and elaboration of Abelard's strophic forms more than compensates for the simplicity of his somewhat conventional approach to rhymes and rhyme-schemes. He stands out among his contemporaries as both an innovator and a conservative. He has married chosen aspects of traditional hymnody to his own creativity and has produced in the process a number of hymns remarkable as much for their poetic as their theological interest.

⁵⁹ Peter Dronke "Virgines caste" *Lateinische Dichtungen des X. und XI. Jahrhunderts. Festgabe für Walther Bulst* (Heidelberg 1981) p.97.

4.1 *de nativitate Domini* - foreword

The overall structure of the four Nativity hymns is based on a twofold design. In one the first three hymns are interconnected in theme, while the fourth introduces and concentrates on a seemingly unanticipated motif. In the other design it is the second hymn of the four which is unconnected.

The theme of poverty which pervades 30-32 is expressed both explicitly and implicitly. The adjective *pauper* occurs five times, in each instance emphasized. By means of alliteration and assonance, the poet creates a strong impression with the phrase *pauper puerpera* (30.3./1); in the same stanza *pauper* is not only repeated but is followed by the emphatic *inquam*. In 31 *pauper* is succeeded in a striking juxtaposition by *Deus* and the phrase *immo pauperrimus* (31.3./1). Finally it is juxtaposed with *virgo* so that a chiasmic parallel emerges between *pauper Deus* and *Virgo pauper* (32.5./1), suggesting that the two rôles are complementary.

The frequent implicit references centre on the parallelism of the poverty endured by Christ and that endured by Mary. The Queen of Heaven gives birth in a stable (30.4./3-4); the King of Heaven is born in a hut (31.2./1-2). The hay on which Christ lies is the fodder of animals (*stratum habet foeni reliquias* 31.4./3); Mary, a royal queen, lies on a bed of straw (*stratum hoc straminis* 32.2./3). The hut where Christ is born is *villis* (31.2./2); the straw where Mary lies is *villis* (32.2./3).

Such verbal correspondence indicating the parallelism of the poverty of Christ and of Mary, is underlined by the deliberate echo set up between the first hymn for the Nativity and the third hymn for Candlemas:

of Mary	<i>Quam beata pauper puerpera, culus partus ditavit omnia</i> (30.3./1-2),
---------	--

of Christ	<i>Deus dives in omnibus, ut nos ditet, pauperrimus</i> (40.1./3-4).
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It is in the first line of the Candlemas hymn (*Qui paupertatem admonet* 40.1./1) that we find the reason for Abelard's insistence on the poverty of mother and Child. He sees in it an example set for all to follow. Such an interpretation ties in with his view of the atonement which is essentially exemplarist, a view which he posits in its clearest form in the last of the Holy Cross hymns (68.4./1-3).¹

¹ For Abelard's doctrine of exemplarism see Sikes *Peter Abailard* (Cambridge 1922) pp.207ff.

In this scheme the fourth hymn, with its eschatological theme, seems strangely unconnected with the rest of the group. The eschatology is, however, linked with another aspect of Mary, the loving mother of her helpless and sinning children. In the first three hymns her motherhood of Christ is a central motif. The love she showed her Son in her acceptance of poverty now widens to include all men who call on her for help.

In the other design it is the second hymn which lies outside the main group, since it is weighted more towards Christ than Mary. The first hymn introduces most of the Marian motifs which the later hymns recapitulate or expand. Mary is the one who has given birth to the Son of God (30.1). Her poverty is associated with the stable where she gives birth and is set in contrast to her royal lineage (30.3 and 4). The birth was unique, attended by no pain (30.5 and 6).

The third hymn (32. *Quam beatum*) brings together the three motifs of her poverty, her royalty and the painlessness of the birth in a contrast of the wealth and the pain of all other queens with Mary's poverty and her lack of pain. It adds to this composite theme a further instance of her uniqueness, that she suckled her Child with a virgin's milk. This leads into a comparison of Christ and all other kings' sons, but the emphasis even here is on Mary, for it is the privilege of drinking her milk which sets Christ apart. The fourth hymn picks up the idea of her royal descent introduced in the first hymn and expands it, by adding the element of promise, to include prophecy and prefiguration of her in the Old Testament (33.2./1-2). She, like her Son, is seen as the promised one of Israel.

The relationship of mother and Son is underlined in the first hymn by the juxtaposition of the physical circumstances of the birth and the miracle of the incarnation. But it is in the fourth hymn that the true significance for men of this relationship is made evident. In the first hymn it is the physical reality, in the fourth the spiritual blessing. The Son will, in filial obedience, answer the heartfelt plea of His mother on behalf of sinners and will turn from wrath to mercy.

The second hymn, in contrast, concentrates exclusively on Christ. It is, however, in counterpoint to the first hymn, adapting a number of its motifs but applying them to Christ. As Mary entered a stable instead of a chamber, so He was laid in a manger instead of a cradle: *pro cameris intravit stabula* (30.4./4) and *in praesepti pro cunis positus* (31.1./2).

The exclamations of blessing in the first hymn (30.3 and 4) become in the second the rhetorical questions of wonder (31.2./3-4) and of recognition that man cannot give God due thanks (31.3./3-4).

The final image in the second hymn, the angels offering homage to the Child, links it with the first hymn in which the angels are present in place of midwives and sing the joy of His birth (30.5./1-4), and with the third where angels offer homage to the Virgin as she suckles her Child (32.5./3-4).

4.2. 30. *in primo nocturno*

Argument: The Virgin gave birth to Christ, the Word, the true Dawn, the Sun. Happy is the day and happy the mother. In spite of her noble lineage, she gave birth in poverty, in a stable. Angels were there in place of midwives. There was no need for bathing after birth for she was free from staining and pain. Glory to God and peace to men, as the angels sing.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Verbo verbum virgo concipiens,
ex te verus ortus est Oriens
a quo vera diffusa claritas
circumductas abduxit tenebras. | 1. Virgin conceiving the Word by the word,
out of you has sprung up the true Dayspring
from Whom the true Light shed abroad
has taken away the shrouding darkness. |
| 2. Felix dies, dierum gloria,
huius ortus quae vidit gaudia;
felix mater quae Deum genuit,
felix stella quae Solem peperit. | 2. Happy day, glory of days,
which saw the joys of this dawning,
happy mother who gave birth to God,
happy star which brought forth the Sun. |
| 3. Quam beata pauper puerpera
culus partus ditavit omnia;
pauper, inquam, sed celsa genere
pontificum et regum sanguine. | 3. How blessed was she who gave birth in poverty,
whose giving birth has enriched all things;
in poverty, yes, but high in her descent
from priests and from the blood of kings. |
| 4. Vitae viam in via peperit,
hospitium, non domum habuit,
regum proles et coeli domina
pro cameris intravit stabula. | 4. She gave birth on the way to the Way of Life;
she had a lodging, not a home,
the child of kings, the Queen of Heaven,
instead of a chamber entered a stable. |
| 5. Obstetrices in partu deerant
sed angeli pro eis aderant,
quorum statim chorus non modica
huius ortus edixit gaudia. | 5. Midwives were absent at the birth
but in their stead were angels;
their choir straightway told out
the great joys of this dawning. |
| 6. Defuerunt fortassis balnea
sed quam lavent non erat macula,
non est dolor quem illa relevent,
nec scissura quam illa reparent. | 6. It may be that the bath was missing too,
but there was no stain to wash,
nor pain for it to relieve,
no tearing to restore. |
| 7. In excelsis sit Deo gloria,
pactis nobis in terra foedera,
quam super his voces angelicae
decantasse noscuntur hodie. Amen. | 7. Glory be to God in the highest,
to us on earth a covenant of peace:
the song which angel voices
are known to have sung over them today. Amen. |

1./2 te B: se C

5./3 chorus B: choors C: cohors Waddell

5./4 edixit Dreves, followed by Szövérfy and Waddell: eduxit B and C

6./3 quem B: quam C

The first stanza encapsulates many of the technical features of Abelard's hymnody. His delight in word-play is evident in the juxtaposition *verbo verbum* of the first line; the use of repetition and alliteration to make and underline connections, *verbo verbum virgo... verus...vera* and *ortus...Oriens*; the employment of antithesis, directly in *claritas... tenebras* (1./3-4) and indirectly through cognates with opposing meanings, *circumductas abduxit* (1./4). There is his use of Scriptural quotations, sometimes almost *verbatim*, often allusive. So *ortus est Oriens* (1./2) is an amalgam of two prophecies: *et orietur vobis...sol iustitiae* and *nos visitavit Oriens ex alto*.¹ The final couplet alludes and adds to John's Prologue: *lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae non comprehenderunt*.²

There are in the first four lines a problematic reading and a related problem of interpretation. *ex te* (1./2) seems to appear in one of the MSS as *ex se*. The difficulty is not helped by the lack of comment in the *apparatus critici* of both Szövérfy and Waddell.³ Szövérfy gives only *ex se* without any rejected reading. Waddell gives *ex te* from B in his Hymn Collections and likewise makes no reference to another reading. In the Paraclete Breviary he is confusing: *ex se* is in the text but the apparatus has "se] te ms." With *ex se* the syntax is baffling; with *ex te*, *virgo* would be vocative, *ex te ...Oriens* the main clause: "O maiden, conceiving the Word by the word...from you the true Dayspring has sprung up".

The problem of interpretation lies in *verbo* (1./1). The first couplet introduces the two great themes of Christmas: "In the beginning was the Word...The Word became flesh" and "Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a Son". If *verbum* (1./1) is Christ, what is meant by *verbo*? The most likely interpretation is that this is the word of the archangel announcing to Mary that she will conceive, for she says *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*. Such an interpretation is in keeping with tradition and can be upheld from Abelard's own writings and from those of his predecessors and contemporaries. Among hymns one tentatively attributed to Venantius Fortunatus has

mirantur ergo saecula
quod angelus fert semina,
quod aure virgo concipit
et corde credens parturit.⁴

¹ Mal.4.2; Luke.1.78.

² John 1.5.

³ Szövérfy II p.81; Waddell CLS 9.p.51 and CLS 5 p.53. Silvestre "A propos d'une édition récente de l'*Hymnarius Paraclitensis* d'Abélard" *Scriptorium* 32 (1978) p.97 prefers *se* over *te*.

Mary heard Gabriel's prophecy and, believing in her heart, she conceived. Similarly Leo speaks of the virgin conceiving with her mind before she conceived with her body:

Virgo regla...divinam humanamque prolem prius conciperet mente quam corpore.⁵

Abelard employs the same kind of play on words related to hearing:

...(virgo) auditui credidit, quasi aure concepit et ex fide audibilis verbi illud concipere Verbum Dei meruit.⁶

She believed the word she heard and conceived the Word of God. Finally, in the Paraclete Breviary there is the rather audacious, although traditional, Response, (*Christus*) *introwit per aurem virginis in regionem nostram*.⁷

It is possible that *verbo*, like *verbum*, also refers to Christ, although this seems unlikely since the theological implications are rather odd. It is, however, suggested by a passage in *Sermo II* written to be read alongside these hymns for Christmas. Abelard is commenting on the archangel's words to Mary:

Et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi. Et quod nascetur ex te sanctum vocabitur Dei Filius: Virtus quippe Patris Filius dicitur, quem Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam Apostolus nominat: eo quod quaecumque per sapientiam suam disponit, per eandem potenter effecit. Haec igitur Patris coaeterna sapientia obumbrare Virgini dicitur.⁸

The *virtus* of the Father is the Son; the Son is the *virtus* and the *sapientia* of God; the Wisdom (*sapientia*) of the Father overshadowed the Virgin. This would bear out the reading *ex se*, "the Dawn has risen out of Himself".

In view of the predominance of the first interpretation of *verbo* throughout western Christian literature it seems likely that this is indeed what Abelard means here, rather

4 Venantius Fortunatus AH 50.72.3./1-4 (p.87).

5 Leo the Great *Sermo* 21 (PL 54.191B).

6 *Sermo II* (PL 178.391B).

7 Waddell CLS 5 p.42. Szövérfy (II p.82) mentions the later series of hymns known as the "Joys of Mary" in which the motif recurs: *Gaude, virgo mater Christi, / quae per aurem concepisti / Gabriele nuntio* (AH 42.83-85). A thirteenth century English song translates:

"Glad us maiden, mother mild,
Through thine ear thou were with child,
Gabriel he said it thee..."

in *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century* ed. Carleton Brown (Oxford 1932) pp.32-33.

8 *Sermo II* (PL 178.396C) quoting I Cor.1.24.

than the more individual interpretation that *verbo* and *verbum* both refer to Christ. There is, however, a distinct possibility that he intends both since they both occur in *Sermo II*, the sermon designed for Christmas.

Abelard has given new life to a well-worn motif by compression and extension: *verbo* encapsulates the separate ideas of the angel's word and Mary's mental acceptance. Then the juxtaposition of *verbo* and *verbum*, Christ Himself, makes vivid the double miracle of the virgin-birth and the incarnation.⁹

The One Who is born of Mary is the Dawn, "the Dayspring from on high" of Whom Zacharias speaks:

Per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri in quibus nos visitavit Oriens ex alto.¹⁰

Given the importance of the *Benedictus* in the Christmas liturgy, this is the primary source for Abelard's phrase *ortus est Oriens*. The metaphor also occurs elsewhere in Messianic prophecy: *et orietur vobis...sol iustitiae*.¹¹ Although Abelard postpones the image of the sun until the end of the second stanza (*felix stella/ quae solem peperit* 2./4), he here uses the language normally associated with the motif of Christ the true Sun in a deliberate ploy to focus attention: an audience which has become immune through habit to the force of an image will react anew to that imagery when it is presented in a different context.

The Fathers and hymnists take up the motif of Christ the Sun or the Dawn from Zacharias, Malachi and from John: *erat lux vera*.¹² Ambrose glides through a profusion of images, of light, day and sun:

Splendor paternae gloriae
de luce lucem proferens,
lux lucis et fons luminis
diem dies illuminans
...verusque sol illabere.¹³

⁹ This line perhaps influenced a later hymn which has almost exactly the same words: *verbum verbo concepisti* (AH 15.65.1./2 p.93).

¹⁰ Luke 1.78.

¹¹ Mal.4.2; cf. Zach.3.8.

¹² John 1.9.

¹³ AH 50.5./1-5.

Abelard follows in a long tradition here in his play on light and in a later hymn when he sets Christ the true Sun against the real sun:

Dum crucem sustinens sol verus patitur,
sol insensibilis illi compatitur.¹⁴

The three lines

ex te verus ortus est Oriens
a quo vera diffusa claritas
circumductas abduxit tenebras (1./2-4)

owe much to a variety of sources. The first canticle for the Feast of the Nativity:

Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris vidit lucem magnam; habitantibus in regione
umbrae mortis lux orta est eis.¹⁵

John writes:

in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum; et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae
eam non comprehenderunt.¹⁶

There are reminiscences too of Notker's Christmas sequence:

quod sol verus radio sui
luminis vetustas mundi
depulerit genitus tenebras.¹⁷

Christ is the true Dawn risen out of Mary; He is the true Light Who has been shed abroad, Who has taken away the surrounding darkness. The repetition *verus* (1./2), *vera* (1./3) links the Dawn and the Light: Christ is both. The imagery of the final two lines, the banishment of the dark by the Light, is emphasized by echo and contrast: the opposites *claritas* (1./3) and *tenebras* (1./4) are stressed by rhyme and by position; the participle *circumductas* is cognate with *abduxit* (1./4) but establishes a contrast through the antithetic prefix, the contrast underlined by juxtaposition. The participles *diffusa* and *circumductas* are also set against each other by means of their prefixes: the light has been shed abroad whereas the darkness was drawn around, the one the shedding of light, the other the shrouding of darkness. *circumductas* is placed between

14 48.2./1-2.

15 Is.9.2.

16 John 1.4-5.

17 Notker der Dichter (ed. W. von den Steinen, St.Gallen 1948) Editionsband p.12 *Natus ante saecula* 6./3-6.

the two words which suggest that the *tenebrae* no longer hold sway. Abelard has already evoked through the language of these lines the imagery of Scripture and of earlier hymns. For Isaiah the darkness in which the people walk is the shadow of death, *in regione umbrae mortis*; for Notker the true Sun has dispelled the ancient darkness, *vetustas...tenebras*, *vetustas* evoking the idea of original sin. So Abelard has no need to spell out the symbolism in his hymn: dawn removes the darkness of the night and Christ has taken away the darkness of sin and death.

The dawn has dispelled the night and it is day, a happy day, the most glorious of days (*felix dies, dierum gloria* 2./1), for this day has seen the joy of the true Dawn's rising (*huius ortus quae vidit gaudia* 2./2). Thus the light-dark imagery of the first stanza is sustained in the second with the juxtaposition of the real day and the dawning of the true Dawn. The imagery of the first stanza is reiterated and echoed in *dies* (2./1), *ortus* (2./2), *stella* and *solem* (2./4). The power of the light increases steadily through the two stanzas from Dawn in the first to day in the second until it reaches its height in the last line in the Sun. The light-imagery is intensified by the fact that the hymn is sung at the first Nocturn of Christmas Day, at night in the depth of winter. The promise of the Light which banishes darkness is potent on the physical as well as the spiritual level.

As both Dreves and Szövérfy suggest, the invocation of the day at the start of the stanza has in all probability been borrowed from Adam of St. Victor's Easter sequence *Salve dies, dierum gloria*.¹⁸ Thus Abelard calls to mind the rest of the sequence, the second stanza of which continues *lux divina caelis irradiat*, showing the same emphasis on light as in Abelard's hymn.

The move to Mary in the fifth line is a natural extension of the *μακαριστός* *felix dies* (2./1), for who can be called happy if not Mary? *felix* is synonymous with Mary's more usual epithets *benedicta* and *beata*. Gabriel addresses Mary *benedicta tu in mulieribus*, while in the Magnificat Mary calls herself *beata*: *...beatam me dicent omnes generationes*.¹⁹ She is a blessed, a happy mother because she has given birth to God (*quae Deum genuit* 2./3). The stark juxtaposition of the words *Deum genuit* underlines the essential paradox of the incarnation, which is again stressed through metaphor in *felix stella quae solem peperit* (2./4). This final couplet brings together the two motifs of

¹⁸ Dreves p.154; Szövérfy II p.82 cites Adam of St. Victor (AH 54.146.1 p.222).

¹⁹ Luke 1.28 and 1.48.

the hymn, the imagery of light and the importance of Mary: she is the star which brings forth the Sun.

A number of influences combined to associate Mary with the stars. She is the star of Balaam's prophecy, the "great wonder" of the Apocalypse, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars".²⁰ The assimilation of pagan astral symbolism into Christian imagery caused Mary to don the symbols of the classical sky-goddesses, in particular their identification with the moon, but also with the stars. She was naturally associated with the constellation Virgo and from the twelfth century Virgil's lines in the fourth Eclogue were taken as prophetic of Mary:

iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
iam nova progenies caelo dimittitur alto.²¹

Jerome gives various interpretations of Mary's name:

Maria inluminatrix mea vel illuminans eos aut zmyrna maris aut stilla maris,

but chooses the last as the most likely:

Mariam plerique aestimant interpretari inluminant me...Sed mihi nequaquam videtur. Melius est autem ut dicamus sonare eam stillam maris sive amarum mare.²²

A copyist's error in the transcription of Jerome's work brought the astral imagery already linked with Mary into the region of etymology. Isidore is under the impression that Jerome wrote *stella maris*, not *stilla maris*. This interpretation he accepts and gives a reason: *Maria inluminatrix, sive stella maris. Genuit enim lumen mundi*.²³ It is this, the Star of the Sea, which became one of the most popular of the virgin's cult-titles. In the Christmas sequence *Laetabundus* which had a marked influence on part of Abelard's Epiphany hymn 37, the second and third stanzas read:

²⁰ Num.24.17; Apoc.12.1.

²¹ Virgil *Ecl.*4.6-7. For Mary's astral associations see Marina Warner *Alone of all her Sex* (London 1976) pp.255-269 and Hugo Rahner *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (trans. B.Battershaw, London 1963) pp.155ff.

²² Jerome *Lib.Interpr.Hebr.Nom.* 14.9 and 62.16-20 (CC 72 p.76 and p.137).

²³ Isidore *Etym.*VII.X.1. *DACL* 10.2. "Marie, Mère de Dieu" (p.2034) attributes the error to similarity of pronunciation: "Les copistes auront écrit *stella* pour *stilla*, parce qu'à leur époque on prononçait *stilla* comme *stella*."

Angelus consilii
natus est de virgine
sol de stella.

Sol occasum nesciens,
stella semper rutilans
semper clara.²⁴

As Christ is the Sun which knows no setting, Mary is the star eternally bright.

Reference to a star in a Christmas hymn automatically evokes the star which guided the Magi to Bethlehem. Maximus equates the star in the East with the star of Balaam's prophecy:

Illa enim stella gentibus mihi praecipue data videtur ut gentis etiam
Redemptorem natum esse agnoscerent illum quem Balaam ille quondam
gentilium sacerdos ex semine Iacob prophetaverat aliquando in mundum esse
venturum.²⁵

So Abelard's reference to the star has yet another layer of meaning, although he does nothing to expand the allusion.

The Messiah is called the Sun in Scripture, but the early popularity of the title seems to have derived more from the influence of the pagan cult of *Sol Invictus*. This cult which originated in Persia spread widely during late Imperial pagan Rome. The tenacity of the cult in the Christian era is suggested by the choice of 25 December, the birthday of *Sol*, for the celebration of the nativity of Christ when that festival became separated from Epiphany in 354. Halsberghe makes clear the parallel that can be drawn between *Sol Invictus* and Christ:

Sol Invictus or *Deus Invictus*, the sun-god who, although he seems each evening to be forced to submit to the powers of darkness, reappears each morning as the eternal victor.²⁶

The association of the cult of the sun and the birth of the true Sun was still much in evidence during the papacy of Leo the Great. He warns against the Devil who tricks men into believing that 25 December is honoured as the birth of the new sun rather than the birth of Christ and he fulminates against those who, even on the steps of St. Peter's, turn and bow to the rising sun.²⁷ Rahner sees in the attitude taken by the Church to this solar cult no suggestion of compromise but the complete dethronement of *Sol*:

²⁴ *Laetabundus* AH 54.2.3 and 4 (p.5).

²⁵ Maximus Taurinensis *Homil.de eptph.*3 (PL 57.263B-C).

²⁶ G.H.Halsberghe *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Leiden 1972) p.36.

²⁷ Leo the Great *Serm.*22 and 24 (PL 54.198B and 218C-219A).

...the dethronement of Helios meant for Christian theology that the mysticism and symbolism which had been developed in Hellenistic devotion were referred back to the concrete, historical and visible person of the man Jesus Christ (what he terms "the homecoming of Helios"). But here too the Church is uncompromising and as she begins to take over images, words and ideas from the devotional life of the sun-worshipping Greeks, she interprets them in a manner that only has relevance to the historically clear-cut figure of her founder, Jesus of Nazareth; it is he who from the very beginnings of Christian theology is 'the Sun of Righteousness', the 'Dayspring from on high'.²⁸

The three addresses *felix dies*, *felix mater*, *felix stella* (2./1,3,4) link the first stanza, with its emphasis on Christ the Light, to the prominent part Mary plays in the succeeding stanzas. *quam beata* (3./1) picks up the *πακαρισμός* of the second stanza, *felix mater* and *felix stella* (2./3 and 4), and integrates it into the new motif of poverty, *quam beata pauper puerpera* (3./1).

Szövérfy remarks on the stress laid in the hymn on the poverty of the Virgin.²⁹ This aspect of Mary's life is suggested, but not elaborated in the Gospels.³⁰ Her poverty is not a theme which inspires the Fathers and there is little in Abelard's prose writings to explain his insistence on poverty in the hymns. That Mary gave birth in poverty is emphasized by alliteration and assonance (*pauper puerpera* 3./1); the effect is sustained by *partus* (3./2) and underlines the paradox that this giving birth in poverty enriches all. Abelard echoes Paul:

Scitis enim gratiam Domini nostri Iesu Christi, quoniam propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis,

a verse which Abelard compresses in a later hymn:

Deus dives in omnibus,
ut nos dñet, pauperrimus.³¹

Although Paul gives the impetus to Abelard's thought, he refers to Christ's poverty, while in the hymn the emphasis is on the poverty of the Virgin in contrast to her noble birth. *pauper* (3./3) picks up *pauper* from the second line; it gains force both from the following *inquam* and from the chiasmus set up with the preceding lines *pauper puerpera...partus... pauper* (3./1-3).

28 H.Rahner *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* p.94.

29 Szövérfy II pp.82-83.

30 See Luke 1.46,48,52 and 2.4 where she makes the ritual offering due from the poor.

31 II Cor.8.9; 40.1./3-4.

Mary's ancestry is noble, descended from priests and kings. *celsa* not only denotes her high standing on earth but foreshadows the motif that she is Queen of Heaven (*regum proles/ et coeli domina* 4./3). With reference to her ancestry Szövérfy cites the first chapter in Matthew but that is the genealogy of Joseph; there is no genealogy of Mary in Scripture.³² Abelard is following in a long tradition which interpreted Isaiah's *Et egredietur virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet*, as prophecy of Mary and of Christ.³³ Leo explains:

In qua virga non dubie beata Virgo Maria praedicta est, quae de Iesse et David stirpe progenita, et Spiritu sancto fecundata, novum florem carnis humanae, utero quidem materno, sed partu est enixa virgineo.³⁴

Abelard himself says that although the genealogies given by the evangelists are those of Joseph, they imply that Mary too was of the house of David:

Denique, nec ipsam Christi genealogiam, quam enarrandam susceperunt evangelistae, usque ad matrem ipsius texuerunt, sed potius ad Ioseph sponsum eius perduxerunt: innuentes quidem huic, non tamen exprimentes, Mariam quoque de stirpe David procedere.³⁵

Abelard's reference to kings and priests in Mary's ancestry (*pontificum et regum sanguine* 3./4) alludes to the patristic tradition that Matthew gives the royal, Luke the priestly descent of Christ. Ambrose explains the difference between the two genealogies:

Quod vero per Salomonem Matthaeus generationem derivandam putavit, Lucas vero per Nathan, alteram regalem, alteram sacerdotalem Christi familiam videtur ostendere...³⁶

The alliteration in the first line of the fourth stanza *Vitae viam in via* (4./1) underlines the play on the words: on her way to Bethlehem Mary gave birth to the Way of Life. The words *viam vitae* condense into one phrase two parts of Christ's threefold claim, *Ego sum Via, Veritas et Vita*.³⁷ In the hymn He is not the Way and the Life, but the Way of Life, a description which fittingly expresses Abelard's thinking on the

32 Szövérfy II p.83 cites Matt.1.1ff.

33 Is.11.1.

34 Leo the Great *Sermo* 24 (PL 54.204B-C); cf. Honorius *Spec.Eccl.* (PL 172.904D).

35 *Sermo* II (PL 178.397C).

36 Ambrose *in Luc.* (CC Ser.Lat.14) p.77.

37 John 14.6.

incarnation and the death of Christ, that He came as an example.³⁸ He is the Way in whose path men should follow.

The journey (*in via* 4./1) leads into the contrast between *hospitium* and *domum* (4./2). The stanza is based on Luke's account of the birth:

Et peperit filium suum primogenitum; et pannis eum involvit et reclinavit eum in
praesepto quia non erat eis locus in diversorio.³⁹

The motif of poverty-stricken surroundings thus suggested in the Gospel is given a sharper definition in the hymn in the balanced second and fourth lines:

hospitium non domum habuit (4./2)
pro cameris intravit stabula (4./4).

It was in a lodging that Mary was forced to give birth, not in her own home; it ought to have been her own room, but it was a stable. The chiasmatically arranged order, home and chamber placed between lodging and stable, heightens the tension between the ideal and the reality. This tension is further underlined by the insertion between the two lines of one which stresses Mary's royalty. Through her earthly ancestry she is the "daughter of kings", *regum proles* (4./3) picking up *regum sanguine* from the third stanza (3./4); this royalty is now enhanced by the new position she has gained as the mother of Christ: she is *coeli domina* (4./3) the "Queen of Heaven".⁴⁰ In his sermon for the Feast of the Assumption Abelard sees in the Bridegroom and the Bride of the Song of Songs Christ and Mary:

Ad hanc specialiter illa vox Sponsi dirigitur, qua tam dulciter invitatur: Surge,
propera, amica mea, et veni...⁴¹

Mary is the Bride; as Christ is Lord of Heaven (*qui praesidet/ coeli palatio*) she is its Lady, *coeli domina*.⁴²

The final two stanzas owe more to the influence of the apocryphal gospels than to Matthew or Luke. Pseudo-Matthew tells how Joseph left Mary to search for midwives but, by the time he returned with them, the Baby had been born:

38 For Abelard's exemplarist doctrine of incarnation see Sikes *Peter Abailard* pp.207ff.

39 Luke 2.7.

40 See M.Warner *Alone of all her Sex* pp.103-117.

41 *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.543A-B) quoting CC 5.2.

42 31.2./2.

Et ibi peperit masculum quem circumdederunt angeli nascentem et natum adoraverunt dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Iam enim dudum Ioseph perrexerat ad quaerendas obstetrices.⁴³

Jerome, in spite of his castigation of the *deliramenta* of the apocryphal Gospels, accepts the redundancy of any midwife:

Nulla ibi obstetrix: nulla muliercularum sedulitas intercessit. Ipsa pannis involvit infantem, ipsa et mater et obstetrix fuit.⁴⁴

The fifth stanza paraphrases this account in a way which shows the direct influence of Notker's famous Christmas sequence *Natus ante saecula*:

Gaude, Dei genetrix,
quam circumstant obstetricum vice
concinentes angeli
gloriam Deo.⁴⁵

Abelard follows Notker in replacing the midwives who would normally be in attendance with angels, his *pro eis* (5./2) echoing Notker's *obstetricum vice*. They both mention the singing of the angels, *huius ortus edixit gaudia* (5./4) and *concinentes angeli*; but, while Notker makes specific reference to the words of their song, *gloriam Deo*, Abelard has only *gaudia*: he postpones the angels' song to the seventh stanza where it makes a fitting doxology.

obstetrices in partu deerant
sed angeli pro eis aderant (5./1-2)

is a perfectly balanced couplet, *obstetrices* paralleled by *angeli*, *deerant* by its opposite *aderant*, while the prepositional phrases *in partu* and *pro eis* hold the same position in each.

The last two lines of the stanza contain two textual problems. The first is *chorus* (5./3) as in B, *choors* in C which Waddell without comment emends to *cohors*.⁴⁶ I suspect that he bases his emendation on the military imagery of Luke's *et subito facta est cum angelo multitudo militiae caelestis*.⁴⁷ In Pseudo-Matthew the angels are

43 Pseudo-Matthew ch.XIII (ed. C.Tischendorf, Leipzig 1853) p.77.

44 Jerome (*De perpet.virg.Mariae Quae sententia et apocrypharum deliramenta convincti...* (PL 23.201C).

45 Notker (ed. W.von den Steinen) *Natus ante saecula* stanza 9 (p.12).

46 Waddell CLS 9 p.51.

transferred from the scene with the shepherds to the stable, but the song remains the same:

quem circumdederunt angeli nascentem et natum adoraverunt dicentes: Gloria
in excelsis Deo...⁴⁸

So *cohors*, the emendation, would be an apt allusion to this description of the angels. Both *cohors* and *chorus* could work equally well with the final verb *edixit* (5./6). *cohors edixit* echoes Luke's *multitudo caelestis...dicentium*. On the other hand, *chorus* is perfectly possible: it is a choir of angels that tells out the joy of Christ's birth.

edixit is, however, also problematic, for it is itself an emendation of the MSS readings *eduxit*. Szövérfy and Waddell follow Dreves' emendation *edixit*, but Silvestre retains *eduxit* "dans le sens poétique de 'faire éclore'", *educere* being a technical term for the job of the midwife.⁴⁹ This deserves some attention. Instead of seeing the angels solely as spectators at the birth, Abelard would then be suggesting with some audacity that they took the place of the midwives in a more literal sense. Yet he is careful not to say explicitly that they assisted at the birth of the Child, but that they assisted at the joy of His birth. If he did indeed write *eduxit*, he has come a long way from the picture in Notker where the angels are simply present and singing:

quam circumstabant obstetricum vice
concinentes angeli.⁵⁰

The reading *eduxit* with its implicit reference to midwives, would form a direct link between this and the following stanza which includes a list of the normal appurtenances to a birth which, like the midwives, are missing here - no bath, no blood, no pain. The apocryphal Gospels make no mention of the absence or the presence of a bath. Its absence can, however, be inferred from the passage in Pseudo-Matthew which is the influence behind the rest of the stanza, the astonished exclamation of the midwife:

Nulla pollutio sanguinis facta est in nascente, nullus dolor in parturiente.⁵¹

47 Luke 2.13.

48 See above n.44.

49 Silvestre p.97: see above n.3.

50 See above n.46.

51 See above n.44.

If there is no blood, there is no need of a bath to wash away the stains; if there is no pain, there is no need of a bath to relieve the suffering:

sed quam lavent, non erat macula,
non est dolor quem illa relevent (6./2-3).

The final line is slightly illogical in that it speaks of there being no tearing for the bath to restore. A bath might wash away blood, it might relieve pain, but it cannot heal the tearing that is part of childbirth. Abelard ignores the illogicality for it is his purpose to heighten the miraculous by the addition of a third negative clause and to emphasize Mary's virginity which was kept intact despite the birth, as he writes in *Sermo II*: *quia eius integritatem nec conceptus nec natus dissolvit*.⁵² This too is the next exclamation of the midwife's: *Virgo concepit, virgo peperit, virgo permanst.*

Szövérfy believes that the "logical idea" of the absence of a bath is used

to proceed to the subsequent symbolic image which is designed to symbolize Christ not being subject to sin (*non erat macula*) and therefore not subject to the 'ordinary circumstances' of childbirth, Christ being free from sin".⁵³

He is, I think, under a misapprehension for the lines do not in the first instance refer to Christ, but to Mary. It is her blood, her pain, the tearing of her body the bath would help, but it is not needed since she suffers none of these. The line *non erat macula* holds the clue to the correct interpretation of the underlying intention of the stanza. In *Sermo XXVI* Abelard refers to Mary in a quotation from the Song of Songs: *Immaculata mea, et macula non est in te*.⁵⁴ The main reference of the stanza is not to Christ's sinlessness, but to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The absence of pain does not indicate the virgin birth (*pace* Szövérfy) but Mary's own conception without sin. Mary, undefiled by sin, feels no pain in giving birth.

This motif appears frequently in hymns and sermons. Peter Damian writes:

concepit sine coitu,
emisit absque gemitu,

while Bernard sees in the bush that burns but is not consumed a prefiguration of Mary's lack of pain:

⁵² *Sermo II* (PL 178.389B).

⁵³ Szövérfy II p.48.

⁵⁴ *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.543B) quoting CC 5.2.

Quid deinde rubus ille quondam Mosaicus portendebat, flammam quidem emittens, sed non ardens, nisi Mariam parientem et dolorem non sentientem?⁵⁵

The first two lines of the doxology are modelled on the song of the angels:

Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.⁵⁶

Abelard retains the normal liturgical *in excelsis* in place of the Vulgate *in altissimis*. *foedera* is an addition which also has its roots in Scripture in another promise of the reign of peace under the Messiah:

Et servus meus David rex super eos, et pastor unus erit omnium eorum...et David servus meus princeps eorum in perpetuum. Et percutiam illis foedus pacis.⁵⁷

Today the Son of David is born and at His birth a covenant of peace is struck with men. The angels sang at the birth of Christ over the mother and Child and to the shepherds. They sang of peace to men of good will. Abelard makes their song more immediate through his substitution of *nobis* for *hominibus* and by his emphasis through position on *hodie*. The hymn comes to a triumphant and joyful close when Abelard reminds the nuns that it was on this very day that Heaven and earth met in a compact of peace which will last forever.

⁵⁵ Peter Damian AH 48.20.3./3-4 (p.33); Bernard of Clairvaux *Super "Missus est" Homilia 2* (PL 183.63C).

⁵⁶ Luke 2.14.

⁵⁷ Ezek.37.24-26.

4.2. 31. *in secundo nocturno*

Argument: The Son of God Who rules over Heaven endures the confines of a crib: who is not moved to wonder? God became poor for us: what thanks can we render Him? The One Who thunders now cries. He Who grants riches to kings lies on hay, the food of animals, although He is the food of angels. Animals and angels surround Him.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Dei patris et matris unicus
in praesepti pro cunis positus,
angustias praeseptis sustinet,
quem ambitus coeli non continet. | 1. God the Father's only Son and only Son of His mother
is laid in a manger instead of a cradle;
He tolerates the narrow bounds of the manger
Whom Heaven's expanse cannot confine. |
| 2. Excipitur vili tugurio
qui praesidet coeli palatio;
quis super hoc, quis non obstupeat?
cuius mentem hoc non commoveat? | 2. He is sheltered in a wretched hut
Who rules the palace of Heaven;
what man, I ask, what man would not marvel at this?
whose mind would this not thrill? |
| 3. Pauper Deus, immo pauperrimus,
sic factus est pro nobis omnibus;
quae sunt grates, quae retributio
super istis a nobis Domino? | 3. In this way God became poor,
most poor indeed, for all of us;
what thanks are there, what repayment
for these gifts from us to the Lord? |
| 4. In praesepti vagit ut parvulus,
qui concutit coelum tonitribus;
stratum habet foeni reliquias
qui regibus largitur purpuras. | 4. As a tiny Baby He cries in the manger
Who shakes the heavens with His thundering;
for a bed He has wisps of hay
Who bestows on kings their purple. |
| 5. Bestiarum infertur pabulo,
angelorum ipsa refectio;
instat inde grex animalium,
hinc angeli praebent obsequium. | 5. He is laid on the fodder of beasts,
though Himself the very food of angels;
on that side a herd of animals presses close,
on this angels offer homage. |
| 6. In excelsis sit Deo gloria,
pactis nobis in terra foedera,
quam super his voces angelicae
decantasse noscuntur hodie. Amen. | 6. Glory be to God in the highest,
to us on earth a covenant of peace:
the song which angel voices
are known to have sung over them today. Amen. |

Much of the emphasis of the preceding hymn was on Mary, especially on the paradox of her royalty and her poverty. In this, the second hymn for Christmas, there is a similar paradox, but it is the paradox inherent in the incarnation.

Christ is the only Son of God but He is laid in a manger; He tolerates the narrow confines of a crib, yet He cannot be compassed by Heaven's expanse (1./1-4); He is born in a stable but rules over the palace of Heaven (2./1-2); He cries in a stable, yet shakes the Heavens with His thunder (4./1-2); He has a bed of straw, but bestows their wealth on kings (4./3-4); He lies on the food of animals Who is Himself the food of angels (5./1-2). The main feature to emerge from this *précis* is that in each pair of antitheses Abelard puts the human before the divine, so that the difference, and the humiliation involved, are the more accentuated.

The hymn focuses on the third stanza. Discounting the doxology, it is the central one and its structure is different from the other four. There is no juxtaposition of lines emphasizing the paradox of Christ on the divine and human levels, only the oxymoronic *pauper Deus* (3./1). The first two stanzas form a pair leading up to this central stanza, the fourth and fifth an equivalent pair flowing from the centre. In the first six lines (1./1-2./2) there are three sets of oppositions, followed by two lines which speak in a double rhetorical question about man's wonder at the incarnation (2./3-4). The third stanza develops this idea of response to Christ's sacrifice of His position in Heaven for the lowliness of a stable on earth. Since God became poor for our sake, how, it demands, should we show our gratitude? In the second half of the hymn the first six lines (4./1-5./2) also consist of three sets of contrasts, followed by two lines which give the answer to the question posed in the third stanza: the only appropriate response to God's grace is that shown by the animals and the angels, love and adoration.

As Christ is the only Son of the Father so He is the only Son of His mother (*Dei patris et matris unicus* 1./1). The first of these is entirely Scriptural: *unicus* is equivalent to the *unigenitus* used by John: *et vidimus gloriam eius, gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre*.¹ Like *unigenitus*, *unicus* appears as a substantive in many hymns, almost without exception as a description of Christ's relationship to God the Father. So Prudentius writes

per Christum genitum, summe Pater, tuum
...qui tuus unicus
spirat de patris corde Paraclitum,

and Sedulius

¹ John 1.14; cf. 1.18, 3.16, 3.18; I John 4.9.

et os leonis pessimi/ calcavit unicus Dei,

while a Lauds hymn for Friday has the striking phrase *celstionantis unice*.² In his opening line Abelard integrates the customary motif of *Patris unicus* with the accepted teaching of the Church on the perpetual virginity of Mary, a common *topos* made unusual by its coalescence with *unicus*: thus are two commonplaces put together in a new way to make each more powerful. He underlines the originality of his expression in *Sermo II*: ipse ei (Mariae) quoque solus et unicus filius exstitit, sicut et patri.³

Abelard uses Luke's description of the shepherds finding the Child *positum in praesepio*, but he makes his own mark on the well-known story by the addition of the phrase *pro cunctis* (1./2).⁴ Christ may be the only Son, a special Child, but this uniqueness brings Him no privilege. The reverse, in fact, for it is not in a cradle that He is laid, but a manger. *angustias praeseptis sustinet* (1./3) expands the motif of the manger and then itself becomes the first half of a remarkable paradox. *sustinet* (1./3) is evocative for it suggests necessary endurance: this Baby only tolerates the narrow confines in which He is laid. So the way is paved for the final line which forms a vivid contrast to the narrow bounds of the crib. The lines are precisely balanced,

angustias praeseptis sustinet
quem ambitus coeli non continet (1./3-4):

the Child Who endures the constriction of the manger is the One Whom the whole expanse of Heaven cannot contain.

In Scripture the major emphasis in the teaching on the incarnation is the paradox of spirit becoming flesh (*Et Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis*).⁵ In hymns there seems to be at least as much stress on the spatial contrast of the Creator enclosed, in womb, in manger, in grave. Three times in his Christmas hymn *Agnoscat omne saeculum* Venantius Fortunatus employs an antithesis of this kind, while a twelfth-century MS has

vili iacet praesepio/ quem nulla claudit regio.⁶

2 Prudentius *Cath.*V.157-160 (CC Ser.Lat.126) p.28; Walpole *Early Latin Hymns* (Cambridge 1922) 31.90-91 (p.158); 71.3 (p.227).

3 *Sermo II* (PL 178.389C).

4 Luke 2.16.

5 John 1.14; cf. Phil.2.6-7.

Both Leo and Augustine in their sermons for Christmas make the same point:

et genetricis gremio continetur, qui nullo fine concluditur
and

intra corpusculum erat, sed intra se omnia continebat.⁷
Abelard has been directly influenced by lines in two of Fortunatus' hymns,

praesepti poni pertulit
qui lucis auctor exstitit

and

vagit infans inter arta conditus praeseptia.⁸

Here are the ideas of endurance (*pertulit* paralleled by Abelard's *sustinet* 1./3), of Christ as Creator and of the narrowness of the crib. That Abelard did indeed have the second quotation in mind is suggested by his echo of the same line later in the hymn: *in praesepti vagit ut parvulus* (4./1).

Although the surface meaning of *angustias* refers to the narrowness of the crib, the word is used in the Vulgate to indicate "difficulty of external circumstance or inward frame of mind".⁹ The double meaning is apt for Christ was straitened in body and spirit by being confined to a manger, a burden He had to endure (*sustinet* 1./3). Abelard uses *sustinet* again of the crucifixion, *Dum crucem sustinens sol verus patitur*,¹⁰ the occurrence of the same verb in the description of both the beginning and end of Christ's life on earth is deliberate. The endurance of the manger is a foretaste of the endurance of the cross, for it was in order to die that Christ became incarnate.

The scene widens from the manger to the building. God is received into the world in a hut (*vili tugurio* 2./1), *villis* being commonly used in hymns to describe the manger or

6 Fortunatus *Agnoscat omne saeculum* AH 50.71.3./3-4, 5./1-4 (p.85). The anonymous hymn is in AH 54.116.12./1-2 (p.178).

7 Leo *Sermo* 37 (PL 54.257B); Augustine *Sermo* 36 (PL 38-39.2015). The motif of the God Whom Heaven and earth cannot contain appears in Solomon's prayer for the dedication of the Temple II Reg.8.27; Is.40.12 introduces a variation on the theme which Abelard takes up in 32.1./4.

8 Walpole 38.17-18 (p.197) and 33.13 (p.169).

9 Lewis and Short p.119 *angustiae* I.C; cf. II Cor.12.10 and Gen.42.21.

10 48.2./1.

the stable.¹¹ A contrast is set up in the second line, *tugurio* balanced by *palatio*, *vili* by *coeli*:

Excipitur vili tugurio
qui praesidet coeli palatio (2./1-2).

This is not simply a recapitulation of the motif in the first stanza, for there the emphasis was on Christ's immensity as God, here on His power as King. In the first of his Ascension hymns Abelard writes of Christ's return to the palace:

ad paternum palatium
ad patris scandens solium.¹²

Christ descends from the royal courts of Heaven where He reigns into the poverty of a stable; He ascends again to the throne of the Father where He will reign forever.

The second couplet,

quis super hoc, quis non obstupeat?
culus mentem hoc non commoveat? (2./3-4),

consists of two rhetorical questions, the one supplementing the other. The repetition of *quis* focuses the attention of the singer or reader. There is a similar device in the first Good Friday hymn, where the effect of the repetition is to increase the feeling of responsibility and penitence: *nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina*.¹³ Likewise the hymn for Lauds ends with a series of questions, three of which begin with *quis*, the last *quem*; here we have the same type of variation in *quis...quis...culus* (2./3-4).¹⁴

The theme of the poverty of God forms the basis of the third stanza, *Pauper Deus, immo pauperrimus* (3./1). The juxtaposition of what would seem to be two mutually exclusive words is striking, made the more so by the intensifying *immo* and the superlative *pauperrimus*. This line echoes Paul's thinking: Christ, though God, became man, poor in comparison to God; not just a man, but a slave, the poorest of the poor; although rich, He became poor that through His poverty we might become rich:

...quoniam propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.¹⁵

11 See AH 54.116.12./1 (p.178); AH 51.215. 20./1-2 (p.272).

12 62.2./1-2.

13 42.9./1.

14 45.3./1-4.

Abelard's *sic factus est pro nobis omnibus* (3./2) echoes these words which he later paraphrases more closely:

Deus dives in omnibus,
ut nos ditet, pauperrimus.¹⁶

The motif of gratitude is a natural extension of the sacrifice Christ made in the incarnation. If He has done this for us, what return can we make to Him? A similar question occurs in the first of the Sacred Triduum hymns where Abelard asks

Quid nos miserrimi possumus dicere
qui, quae commisimus, scimus te luere?¹⁷

The *topos* in the present hymn is phrased as a double question and echoes the words of the Psalmist,

Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?¹⁸

This verse forms part of the prayer uttered by the priest after his communion in the Mass. The question is rhetorical, for there is no return that we can give. The only possible response is the Psalmist's: *calicem salutatis accipiam*, words which again are included in the priest's prayer and refer to the Eucharist. Through allusion to the Psalm and the liturgy of the Mass Abelard foreshadows the more obvious eucharistic motif of the final stanza.

He returns in the fourth stanza to the paradox of the incarnation, the Son of God come as a Baby. The crying of the infant is not mentioned in Scripture nor in the apocryphal Gospels, but appears with increasing regularity in the hymns and the writings of the Fathers.¹⁹ Abelard's words show the influence of Fortunatus' line *vagitt infans inter arta conditus praeseptis*.²⁰ He has already in the first stanza spoken of the

15 II Cor.8.9 and Phil.2.5-7.

16 40.1./3-4.

17 42.8./3-4.

18 Ps.115.12.

19 Maximus Taurinensis *Homil.XX* pictures the contrast of the crying Child and the angels who glorify Him: *Dumque vagiret ipse in cunis, dum ab angelis collaudaretur...* (PL 57.264D). Abelard has a similar contrast (stanzas 4 and 5). Walpole (p.170) cites a number of texts: Hilary *Trin.II.24*; Ambrose *in Luc.II.41*; Prudentius *Cath.XI.61*.

20 Venantius Fortunatus AH 50.66.5./1-2 (p.71).

narrowness of the manger in which the Child lies (1./3); now the Child cries. The diminutive *parvulus* (4./1) is more forceful than Fortunatus' *infans* and echoes the canticle of the day: *Parvulus enim natus est nobis*.²¹ Both *parvulus* and *vagit* underline the helplessness of the Child, enhancing the remarkable contrast which follows in the second line, *qui concutit coelum tonitribus* (4./2).

Fortunatus demonstrates the paradox inherent in God becoming a Baby through his use of the cognates *conditor* and *conditus*:

*missus est ab arce patris natus, orbis conditor...
vagit infans inter arta conditus praeseptis.*²²

He is the Creator God but lies enclosed in a manger. Abelard effects a much greater paradox for he focuses on three contrasts, the first of place, *praesepti* and *coelum* (it is interesting to note that *coelum* appears three times in this hymn in vivid contrast to the place where Christ is now, the manger and the stable, *angustias praeseptis...ambitus coeli* 1./3-4, *vili tugurio...coeli palatio* 2./1-2, *in praeseptis... concutit coelum* 4./1-2); the second of the contrasts is one of noise, *vagit* and *tonitribus*; the third of power and weakness, *concutit coelum* and *parvulus*. Of these the two elements of noise form the most striking contrast, but they are reinforced by the other components of the antithesis.

The God of the Old Testament thunders: *et intonuit de caelo Dominus et Altissimus dedit vocem suam*; thunder is associated with a theophany such as that at Sinai: *et coeperunt audiri tonitrua*.²³ Nevertheless, the description *concutit coelum tonitribus* (4./2) is more reminiscent of Jupiter, one of whose cult titles was *Iuppiter Tonans*. Both the simple *tonans* and the compound *celsitonans* appear frequently in early writers as synonyms of *Deus* through the assimilation of Jupiter and his attributes by the Christian God.

Although the fourth stanza begins with the manger, the emphasis of the opening couplet is not so much on place, but on the fact that the Son of God became a Baby. The second couplet then returns to the manger and to the hay with which it was filled. The hymn opens with the Child in a manger, not a cradle (*in praesept pro cunis positus*

²¹ Is.9.6.

²² Venantius Fortunatus AH 50.66.4./3-4 (p.71).

²³ Ps.17.8; Ex.19.16;

1./3); then the manger is in a mean hut (*vili tugurio* 2/1); here in the fourth stanza the manger is full of wisps of hay (*foeni reliquias* 4./3).

Szövérfy is probably correct in seeing an echo of Sedulius' *feno tacere pertulit*.²⁴ Here again is the idea of endurance. The final couplet, however, which gives significance to the hay seems to be original to Abelard. The Son of God deigns to lie on a bed of hay, yet He is the One Who bestows their purple on kings. That kings owe to God their power and wealth, symbolized by *purpuras*, is evident from the title given Him in Scripture of *Rex regum et Dominus dominantium*.²⁵ Abelard stresses the paradox by rhyming *reliquias* and *purpuras*: it is on left-over bits of hay that the true King lies, while those on whom He has bestowed wealth have all the costly trappings of earthly kingship. A similar contrast occurs in the next hymn where the poverty of Mary, the Queen of Heaven, is set against the luxury of queens on earth.²⁶

Bestiarum infertur pabulo (5./1) is an extension of and a gloss on the earlier lines *stratum habet foeni reliquias* (4./3): the hay on which Christ lies is the food of the animals which live in the stable. This gives greater force to the phrase *foeni reliquias*: no longer does it suggest simply wisps of hay, but rather the hay the animals have left, the food they have rejected. At this point in the hymn the poverty endured by Christ in His incarnation reaches its nadir.

The idea of the hay as food opens the way for the last of the paradoxes around which the hymn is built. The One Who is laid on the food of animals is Himself the Food of angels, *angelorum ipsa refectio* (5./2). This startling image derives in the first place from the Psalms: *panem angelorum manducavit homo*, a reference to the manna given to the Israelites to eat in the wilderness.²⁷ Christ uses manna as a prefiguration of Himself:

Patres vestri manducaverunt manna in deserto...et panis quem ego dabo caro mea est pro mundi vita.²⁸

24 Szövérfy II p.86 quoting Sedulius (Walpole 31.21 p.152)

25 I Tim.6.15, Apoc.17.14; cf. Rom.13.1.

26 32./2.

27 Ps.77.25. The account of the provision of manna is in Ex.16.14-16.

28 John 6.49-51.

Augustine comments that manna is a symbol of the true Bread from Heaven which is the Food of angels. Angels being imperishable are fed on imperishable food, but, in order that men might be fed, the Word of God, the Bread, had to become flesh.²⁹ The Food of angels became incarnate that He might also be the Food of men and, in the poverty into which He is born, was laid on a bed made from the food of animals.

Peter the Venerable who received Abelard into his monastery at Cluny towards the end of his life, writes

cum in feno iacet Deus,
tunc vile celat stabulum
caelestis escae pabulum.³⁰

Here is Abelard's *vili tugurio* (2./1), here the straw, but most significantly, the double idea of the fodder of animals, *pabulum* and the Food of Heaven, *caelestis escae*. It is difficult to say which of the two hymns was written first since the men were contemporaries and any computation of dates must leave room for error. I would, however, suggest that Abelard has used Peter's hymn, not *vice versa*, for Peter has not worked out the ideas to the same extent, nor does he underpin his ideas with the authority of Scripture as Abelard does through his echo of the Psalm.

The Eucharistic motif of Christ as Food is reinforced by the choice of *refectio*: *angelorum ipsa refectio* (5./2). Abelard uses *reficere* and its cognates on seven occasions in four of which the allusion is to the Eucharist.³¹ Here Abelard refers to Christ as Food and uses *refectio*. He mentions the miracle of the water changed into wine, a Eucharistic motif:

has in merum vertit vinum
et convivas reficit.

He speaks of the crucifixion in terms of the drink Christ gives to assuage our thirst:

Lignis duobus	Bibit Iudaeus
Christus appensus	sed Christianus
de se nos potat.	refectus exstat.

29 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.77.17* (CC Ser.Lat.39) p.260.30-33.

30 For Abelard at Cluny see **Introduction** p.11. Peter the Venerable AH.48.250.2./2-4 (p.234).

31 31.5./4, 37.1./4, 67.6./4, 93.1./4.

Here he refers to the blood of Christ and uses *refectus*. Augustine also uses the verb *reficere* in the practical application of Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman to whom He offers "living water", another Eucharistic symbol:

Da mihi, inquit, Domine, de hac aqua: sic et isti: Domine, da nobis panem hunc qui nos reficiat, nec deficiat.³²

The description of the hay as *bestiarum...pabulo* (5./1) immediately brings to mind the ox and ass of the traditional nativity scene. They are indeed so much a part of that scene that we tend to overlook the fact that they do not appear in either Matthew or Luke. They occur with regularity in hymns and sermons from an early date.³³ The apocryphal Pseudo-Matthew describes the scene and quotes the Old Testament prophecies which became linked with the nativity:

et posuit puerum in praesepio, et bos et asinus adoraverunt eum. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Isalam prophetam dicentem: Cognovit bos possessorem suum et asinus praesepe domini sui. Ipsa autem animalia in medio eum habentes incessanter adorabant eum. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Abacuc prophetam dicentem: In medio duorum animalium innotesceris.³⁴

Augustine accepts the prophecy from Isaiah as a reference to the Nativity:

et secundum Isalam prophetam, utrique in praesepe cibaria sua, tanquam bos et asinus, invenerunt.³⁵

Just as the apocryphal Gospel tells of the angels and animals worshipping the new-born Child, so Abelard juxtaposes them in the hymn: *inde grex animalium...hinc angeli* (5./3-4). These two lines are set in parallel by means of the antithetic *inde* and *hinc* but there is no real contrast: the animals press close, the angels offer homage, showing their adoration in the way peculiar to each. This couplet exactly balances the first couplet of the stanza (animals 5./1, angels 5./2, animals 5./3, angels 5./4): He Who lies on the food of animals is worshipped by those same animals; He Who is the Food of angels is adored by those very angels.

The love and homage offered to the Child by the animals and angels is the ultimate answer to the question posed in the third stanza,

32 Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* XXV.13 (CC Ser.Lat. 36) p.255.16-20.

33 AH 2.110.7./3-4 (p.82) *Agnoscat bos et asinus/ iacentem in praesepe.*

34 Pseudo-Matthew (ed. Tischendorf) ch.XIV p.80 quoting Is.1.3 and Habb.3.2 in the Septuagint.

35 Augustine *Sermo* 131 (PL 38-39.2007).

quae sunt grates, quae retributio
super istis a nobis Domino? (3./3-4).

The only appropriate response to God's grace is that demonstrated by animals and angels. It is striking that man must be shown the way not only by beings higher than himself, the angels, but also by lower creatures. The doxology of glory to God and peace to man flows naturally from the fifth stanza: the angels offer their adoration in the words that they sing: *in excelsis sit Deo gloria*.

4.4. 32. *in tertio nocturno*

Argument: Blessed is the bed on which the Virgin lies. Queens with all their wealth suffer in childbirth; Mary in her poverty has no pain. Princes have wet-nurses; Christ has a virgin's milk. Mary may be hungry but she feeds her Son, surrounded by angels who pay homage.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Quam beatum stratum hoc straminis
tantae latus quod pressit virginis,
quo parvulus nascens excipitur
cuius palmo coelum concluditur. | 1. How blessed is this bed of straw
against which the glorious Virgin's body nestles,
where the new-born Babe is sheltered
in Whose hand the heavens are contained. |
| 2. In sericis reginae ceterae
summo solent dolore parere;
vilis strati beatus lectulus
omnis fuit doloris nescius. | 2. On sheets of silk all other queens
are wont to give birth in the greatest pain;
the blessed couch of cheap straw
knew nothing of any pain. |
| 3. Regum satis in alimonia
sunt subacta nutricia ubera
educatur lacte virgineo,
virgo clauso quem fudit utero. | 3. For the nourishment of kings' sons
the breasts of nurses are forced into service;
He is fed on a virgin's milk,
He Whom a virgin brought forth, with hymen
unbroken. |
| 4. Nulli regum inter tot epulas
inter tantas et tot delicias,
concessum est ut lacte virginis
quis de suis alatur parvulis. | 4. To no king, amid so many feasts,
amid so many marvellous banquets,
has it been granted that any of his children
should be fed on a virgin's milk. |
| 5. Virgo pauper fortassis esurit
quae parvulum hoc lacte reficit;
stupent caeli, mirantur angeli
obsequio lactantis seduli. | 5. In her poverty the Virgin perhaps was hungry
but she strengthened the little One with this milk;
the heavens were amazed, the angels wondered,
attentive in homage to the Virgin who gave suck. |
| 6. In excelsis sit Deo gloria
pacis nobis in terra foedera,
quam super his voces angelicae
decantasse noscuntur hodie. Amen. | 6. Glory be to God in the highest;
to us on earth a covenant of peace:
the song which angel voices
are known to have sung over them today. Amen. |

3./1 satis C: natis B

The connection between this and the preceding hymn is made through the repetition of *stratum*, the hay in which Christ was laid (*stratum habet foeni reliquias*) and the bed of straw, *stratum hoc straminis* (1./1) on which the Virgin lies.¹ Just as the day which saw the joy of Christ's dawning is a happy day, so the bed is a blessed one because on it lies the Virgin who gave birth to Christ.²

The Virgin is described as *tantae* (1./2), a variation on the theme of Mary's royal descent and status, one of the important motifs in the first hymn for the Nativity:

...sed celsa genere
pontificum et regum sanguine
... regum proles et coeli domina.³

Here *tantae* paves the way for the comparison in the second stanza between Mary and other queens. The juxtaposition of the noun *straminis* (1./1) and the epithet *tantae* (1./2), the material of which the bed consists and the grandeur of the one who rests on it, underlines the paradox.

Like the pairs of antithetic lines which form the basic structure of the preceding hymn, so the last two lines of the first stanza make up a contrast reminiscent of an earlier one: the spatial reference in

quo parvulus nascens excipitur
cuius palmo coelum concluditur (1./3-4)

echoes the preceding hymn's

angustias praeseptis sustinet
quem ambitus coeli non continet.⁴

In that hymn Heaven could not contain the Child Who now endures the confines of a manger; in this the Child, sheltered in a manger, holds the heavens in the palm of His hand. The diminutive *parvulus* makes an effective contrast with the expanse of heaven. Abelard's lines echo the words of Isaiah: *Quis mensus est pugillo aquas et caelos palmo ponderavit*, a verse to which Venantius Fortunatus alludes twice: *mundum pugillo continens* and *cuius clauduntur cuncta pugillo*.⁵ It is possible that Abelard was also

1 31.4./3.

2 30.2./1-2 *felix dies.../ huius ortus quae vidit gaudia*.

3 30.3./3-4, 4./3.

4 31.1/3-4.

5 Is.40.12; Fortunatus *Quem terra pontus* (AH 50.72.4./3 p.87) and *Tempora florigero* (AH

influenced by one of the Christmas sermons of Leo the Great in his use of the verb *concluditur* (1./4), for Leo writes *et genetrix gremio continetur, qui nullo fine concluditur*.⁶

The second stanza reiterates two motifs introduced in the first stanza. *in sericis* (2./1) provides a contrast with *stratum hoc straminis* (1./1), *reginae ceterae* (2./1) with *tantae virginis* (1./2). Through *ceterae* Abelard simultaneously stresses the royalty of Mary and differentiates her from all others. As they are queens, so is she, but she is the Queen of Heaven, the *coeli domina* of the first hymn.⁷ She is set apart from them both in her poverty (she rests on straw, they on sheets of silk) and in her lack of suffering during childbirth.

The stanza falls into two sections, each of which divides into two subsections. The theme of the first couplet is the experience of queens in giving birth, that of the second the experience of Mary. There are two points of antithesis within the overall contrast: silk sheets are set against straw, great pain against no pain at all. It seems to me that Szövérfy is incorrect in glossing *in sericis* as "dressed in (elegant) silk clothing", since clothes are not at issue here.⁸ *in sericis* is opposed to *villis strati...lectulus* (2./3), the adjective *villis* and the diminutive *lectulus* underlining the contrast and reminding us that the bed Mary lies on is no bed, but a heap of straw.

The theme that Mary suffered no pain in giving birth to her Son,

...beatus lectulus
omnis fuit doloris nescius (2./3-4),

formed part of the first hymn for the Nativity where one complete stanza is given over to it, specifically the line *non est dolor quem illa (balnea) relevent*.⁹ In this present hymn the two lines which form the contrast between Mary and the queens are effectively balanced:

summo solent dolore parere (2./2)
omnis fuit doloris nescius (2./4).

50.69.69 (p.78).

6 Leo the Great *Sermo* 37 (PL 54.257B).

7 30.4./3.

8 Szövérfy II p.87.

9 30.6./3; see discussion pp.38-40.

The phrases *summo dolore* and *omnis doloris* occupy identical positions. Other queens must suffer the height of agony (*summo dolore*), but the Queen of Heaven suffers none (*omnis doloris nescius*).

There is a textual problem in 3./1: Szövérfy with Dreves reads *satis*; Waddell has *natis* in both B and C; neither *apparatus* refers to the other reading. Silvestre says that the reading of B is *natis*, of C *satis*. He prefers C over B, but without explanation: "*natis* (B) doit céder la place a *satis* (C)..."¹⁰ I prefer *satis* on the grounds that a scribe would be unlikely to substitute the unusual *satis* for the more common *natis*. There is some support for this choice in the resultant parallel alliterative patterns of stanzas 2 and 3:

...sericis... ...satis...
summo solent... (2./1-2) sunt subacta... (3./1-2).

With the reference to princes the hymn^{moves} from the contrast between Mary and other queens to that between Christ and the children of kings.

sunt subacta nutricum ubera (3./2) alludes to the normal practice of procuring a foster-mother to nurse the children of wealthy households. *sunt subacta* is well chosen to suggest the compulsion involved since the nurse had no choice. Abelard then makes the anticipated comparison that Christ, unlike royal princes, was nourished on His mother's milk, *educatur lacte uirgineo* (3./3), and he emphasizes the fact that it was the milk of a virgin: *lacte uirgineo* is echoed immediately in *uirgo* (3./4) and the idea vividly underlined in *clauso... utero* (3./4).

What is stated objectively in the two antithetic sections of the third stanza takes on a more subjective tone in the fourth. That Abelard regards being fed on the milk of a virgin an inestimable privilege is evident not only from the phrase *concessum est* (4./3) but from the fact that the fourth stanza is wholly given over to an extended recapitulation of the motif introduced in the third.

The crescendo

...inter tot epulas
inter tantas et tot delicias (4./1-2)

is balanced solely by *lacte* (4./3), the inference being that this milk, again *lacte uirginis*, far outweighs in value all the feasts of kings. The idea is striking, remarkable not so much for its lack of antecedents, as Szövérfy suggests, for there are some, but rather for the emphasis which Abelard gives it. Szövérfy says that he can find "no other source

¹⁰ Silvestre (see 30 n.49 above) p.97.

for this rather strange statement in Abelard's own writings or elsewhere", although he does suggest as a starting-point Sedulius'

parvoque lacte pastus est,
per quem nec ales esurit,

"which he then amplified according to his own taste."¹¹ These lines are, however, so completely different in intention that they cannot be Abelard's sole inspiration.

A woman addresses Christ with the words: *Beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisti*.¹² Bede, combining this exclamation with the Neoplatonist belief that babies live on milk because the soul descends from the galaxy into its earthly body, writes:

Beata culus ubera
summo repleta munere
terris alebant unicum
terrae polique gloriam.¹³

Fortunatus voices the double paradox of milk from a virgin and of the feeding with that milk of the One Who is the Bread sent from Heaven:

intemerata Deum suspendit ad ubera natum
et panem caeli munere lactis alit.¹⁴

He underlines the humility of Christ by invoking the paradox "that He, on whom all creation hangs, should hang from the breast of His human mother."¹⁵

Abelard reverses the traditional motif of *Maria lactans*. He transforms the privilege of Mary in suckling the Son of God into the privilege of Christ in being suckled by a virgin. The first and last lines of the stanza emphasize the uniqueness of the privilege that is Christ's through the phrases *nulli regum* (4./1) and *quis de suis...parvulis* (4./4), *quis* being equivalent to *aliquis*: not even one of the children of kings can enjoy the same privilege.

¹¹ Szövérfy II p.88 quoting Sedulius *A solis ortus cardine* AH 50.53.6./3-4 (p.58).

¹² Luke 11.27.

¹³ Bede *Adesto, Christe, vocibus* AH 50.88.5./1-4 (p.111).

¹⁴ Fortunatus *Carm.*VIII.3.103.

¹⁵ Marina Warner *Alone of all her Sex* p.193. For further discussion on the theme of *Maria lactans* see ch.13 "The Milk of Paradise".

The fifth stanza returns to the theme of the Virgin's poverty, the theme which formed the basis of the first hymn in the section and to which this hymn has already alluded in the contrast between Mary and other queens,

in sericis reginae ceterae
...vilis strati beatus lectulus 2./1-3).

Here the motif is explicit for the Virgin is *pauper* (5./1). It is significant that God Himself is described as *pauper* in the previous hymn: *Pauper Deus, immo pauperrimus*.¹⁶ Christ became poor for our redemption; Mary accepted her poverty for the same reason.

The motif of Mary's poverty is then linked with the main theme of the two preceding stanzas, the milk on which Christ was fed. The images of poverty and of food come together to produce the idea that the Virgin herself may have been hungry (*Virgo pauper fortassis esurit* 5./1). The pathos of her poverty and possible hunger is enhanced by the contrasting description in the fourth stanza of the rich banquets of kings.

Abelard inverts the traditional image so that the One on Whom all depend (*cutus palmo coelum concluditur* 1./4) has now Himself become dependent on another. There is also the inference that Mary portrays the ideal of motherhood, ready to deprive herself for the sake of her Son. To reinforce such a reversal of rôles Abelard uses the verb *reficit* (5./2) of Mary feeding Christ. In his hymns this verb is normally associated with the eucharistic motif of Christ refreshing His people.¹⁷ Here Christ, the Food of angels, the One Who gives eternal refreshment to His people, needs food Himself.

It is a feature of Abelard's *Hymni Festorum* that at every major stage in the history of salvation the heavens react.¹⁸ Now at His birth they stand amazed (*stupent coeli* 5./3); they foretell His epiphany; when He is baptized the heavens open wide; the sun shrinks in horror at the sight of the crucifixion; the resurrection causes the heavens to rejoice.

At the end of the preceding hymn animals press close to the Child in the manger and angels offer Him their homage (*praebent obsequium*).¹⁹ In this the heavens wonder

¹⁶ 31.2./1.

¹⁷ See discussion on 31.5./2 *angelorum ipsa refectio* pp.48-50.

¹⁸ 34.1./1-4; 36.2./3; 48.1./2-3; 58.4./4.

at the Virgin suckling the Child and angels offer her their homage (*obsequio lactantis seduli* 5./4). The echoes are deliberate, intended to involve all Creation in the worship of the Child and His mother. The animals of the first hymn represent earthbound creatures awestruck by God incarnate. The heavens represent the celestial regions awestruck that a woman suckles God. The angels, rational beings, offer homage to both because they see the double marvel of the Child and of Mary.

4.5. 33. *ad laudes*

Argument: Mary is to rejoice because she has brought joy to the saints. She was promised in ages past. The faithful seek her advocacy since, as mother of the Judge, she will have effectual influence. The love of the mother and that of her Son are directed towards the same end: the salvation of sinners.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Gaude, virgo, virginum gloria,
matrum decus et mater, iubilata;
quae commune sanctorum omnium
meruisti conferre gaudium.</p> | <p>1. Rejoice, Mary, glory of maidens,
splendour of mothers and mother, be joyful;
you have been found worthy to bestow
the joy shared by all the saints.</p> |
| <p>2. Patriarchis sanctis ac regibus
te filiam promisit Dominus,
te figurant legis aenigmata,
prophetarum canunt oracula.</p> | <p>2. To the holy patriarchs and to the kings
the Lord promised you as a daughter,
the mysteries of the Law prefigure you,
the utterances of the prophets sing of you.</p> |
| <p>3. Te requirunt vota fidelium,
ad te corda suspirant omnium,
tu spes nostra post Deum unica
advocata nobis es posita.</p> | <p>3. The prayers of the faithful seek you,
the hearts of all sigh to you,
you, after God our only hope,
have been appointed advocate for us.</p> |
| <p>4. Ad iudicis matrem confugiunt
qui iudicis iram effugiunt;
supplicare pro eis cogitur
quae pro reis mater efficitur.</p> | <p>4. They flee for refuge to the mother of the Judge
who flee from the wrath of the Judge;
she is constrained to plead for them
for she is made mother for sinners.</p> |
| <p>5. Pia mater, pietas Filius;
ad hoc gignit, ad hoc est genitus
ut salventur servi per gratiam
quam exhibet haec dies maximam.</p> | <p>5. Loving is the mother, her Son is love;
for this she gave birth, for this He was born
that slaves be set free through the grace
which this day manifests to the full.</p> |
| <p>6. In excelsis sit Deo gloria.
pactis nobis in terra foedera,
quam super his voces angelicae
decantasse noscuntur hodie.</p> | <p>6. Glory be to God in the highest;
to us on earth a covenant of peace:
the song which angel voices
are known to have sung over them today.</p> |

The hymn opens with an invocation to Mary to rejoice in her capacity of maiden and mother. The first couplet forms an elegant chiasmus (abccba) which opens and closes on a note of jubilation:

a b
c
 Gaude, virgo, virginum gloria,
c
b
a
 matrum decus et mater, iubila, (1./1-2)

The two outer sections, the imperatives, balance each other, while the inner parts contrast: Mary is a virgin, the glory of virgins; equally she is the splendour of mothers, herself a mother. She is the glory of maidens because she has kept her virginity although she has borne a Child (*virgo clauso quem fudit utero*).¹ She is the glory of mothers because she is the mother of God, the Θεοτόκος of the *Hymnos Akathistos* which is rooted deep in Greek patristic literature.² The paradox of the virgin-mother allied to the summons to rejoice becomes increasingly frequent as the opening motif of hymns in the West as the cult of Mary grows in importance.³

quae commune sanctorum omnium
 meruisti conferre gaudium (1./3-4)

links Mary's joy with that of the Church for it is she who has bestowed joy on all the saints (*sanctorum* 1./3 is the word regularly used in Scripture to denote Christians). *gaudium* (1./4), her gift to the saints, is placed in a prominent position at the end of the stanza to balance the imperative *gaude* at the start. The two joys are bound together.

That Mary was accounted worthy (*meruisti* 1./3) is a traditional motif which arises in the first place from the Annunciation: *Ave, gratia plena...invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum*; and thereafter from the apocryphal Gospels of James and Pseudo-Matthew in which her childhood, undefiled by sin, is recorded and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is popularized.⁴ In hymns the motif is commonplace.

1 32.3./4.

2 *Hymnos Akathistos* (ed. E.Wellesz, Copenhagen 1957) I.3, V.7, etc.

3 e.g. *Gaude, virgo mater Christi*, AH 15.69.1./1 (p.97); *Regina coeli, laetare/ quia virgo es et mater*, AH 15.102.1./1-2 (p.128).

4 Luke 1.28-30.

Abelard's hymn opens with the traditional summons to rejoice, and continues with the motif of worth, but the stanza ends on an original note. Whereas other hymns speak of her worthiness to bear Christ, Abelard says that she was worthy to bestow joy, a transformation of the traditional image. Yet, because the common tradition is evoked by the deliberate use of the words *Gaude*, *virgo* and *meruisti*, the reader expects the conclusion that Mary's joy arises from the birth of her Son. As Szövérfy suggests, the joy which Mary bestows on the saints is more than an emotion; rather it is Christ Himself, the personification of joy.⁵ The identification of joy with Christ occurs in various hymns and echoes the angel's message to the shepherds: *Ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium quod erit omni populo*.⁶

In the opening words of the second stanza,

Patriarchis sanctis ac regibus
te filiam promisit Dominus (2./1-2),

Abelard follows the traditional line of interpretation of Scripture, seeing prefiguration of Mary in two of the three major sections of the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets. The two halves of the stanza refer to each section: the Law in *patriarchis* (2./1) and *legis aenigmata* (2./3), the Prophets in *regibus* (2./1) and *prophetarum oracula* (2./4). The lines

te figurant legis aenigmata
prophetarum canunt oracula (2./3-4)

are carefully balanced to indicate the nature of the different types of prefiguration. *figurant* suggests a picture, *canunt* speech; *aenigmata* suggests mystery, *oracula* declaration. *prophetarum oracula* refers to prophecies such as *Ecce virgo concipiet...*⁷ *legis aenigmata* is reminiscent of the passage where Paul contrasts our present understanding with what we shall in the future know: *videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate*.⁸ The *aenigmata* of the hymn are the allegories of the Law which need the eye of faith, the mysteries of the burning bush, of Aaron's rod, of the manna in the

⁵ Szövérfy II p.90.

⁶ Luke 2.10; cf. *tu, Christe, nostrum gaudium* and *tu esto nostrum gaudium*, Walpole 113.17 (p.363) and 114.17 (p.365).

⁷ Is.7.14.

⁸ I Cor.13.12.

wilderness.⁹ Such allegories proved a source of delight to the medieval mind which agreed with Augustine's explanation:

Quid enim quod dicitur Testamentum Vetus, nisi occultatio Novi? Et quid est aliud quod dicitur Novum nisi Veteris revelatio?¹⁰

The third and fourth stanzas belong to the patristic treatment of Mary which concentrates on her mediation between God and man. The theology of the Church teaches that she has no power of herself to grant any boon, but only intercedes with her Son Who can refuse His mother nothing. Although the hymn opens with an invocation to Mary the Virgin (*Gaude, virgo, virginum gloria* 1./1), it is the second motif, the motherhood of Mary, which takes precedence in the final stanzas:

ad iudicis matrem confugiunt (4./1);
quae pro reis mater efficitur (4./4);
Pia mater (5./1).

This too is in line with tradition since her motherhood is the chief theme in patristic writing on her rôle as intercessor since it appears easier for guilt-ridden man to approach one who is a human mother than the One Who, although a Man, is also God. Marina Warner comments:

Her love of mankind is maternal, and her qualities of mercy, gentleness, loving kindness, indulgence, forgiveness, are all seen as motherly. All men are her children through Christ her son, who gave her to them from the Cross; and so she lavishes a mother's love and pity on all her brood.¹¹

The third stanza with its emphasis on Mary as our hope and advocate with God must be read with Abelard's hymn for the Marian feasts, *Singularis mater*:

ad te nos clamantes,
ad te suspirantes
in districta causa
tuus advocata.¹²

Here is the same anaphora, *ad te...ad te* (*te...ad te* 3./1-2), the same verb *susprare* in *susprantes* and *susprant* (3./2) and the same use of *advocata*. Both hymns, as

⁹ Ex.3.2; Num.17.8; Ex.16 ; see Raby *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginning to the Close of the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1953) pp.365-375.

¹⁰ Augustine *de civitate Dei* XVI.xxvi.

¹¹ Marina Warner *Alone of all her Sex* p.286.

¹² 80.2./1-4.

Szövérfy points out, rely heavily on the eleventh century antiphon *Salve, regina misericordiae*.¹³ The following table shows the extent of the correspondences:

Antiphon	Abelard 33 and 80
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra , salve.	33._Tu spes nostra 80. Spes post Deum nostra
ad te clamamus exsules filii Evae,	(33. te requirunt vota) 80. ad te clamant rei 80._ ad te nos clamantes
ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes..	33._ ad te corda suspirant 80._ ad te suspirantes
Eia ergo, advocata nostra ...	33._ advocata nobis es posita 80. iuves advocata
O clemens, o pia , o dulcis Maria:	33._ Pia mater

Salve regina is one of the best loved hymns to Mary. By echoing it so clearly, Abelard evokes its well-known images. The Mary of the antiphon is the Mary of his hymn, an advocate, a mother, merciful, loving, gentle. He has no need to list her qualities: the association of ideas will do that in the minds of his readers.

A sense of longing for Mary is captured in the increasing urgency of each line. The faithful seek Mary first with their prayers (*te requirunt vota fidelium* 3./1). The anaphora of *te* (*te requirunt...ad te corda* 3./1-2), picked up from the second stanza, heightens the emotion. The tension is developed by the use of *corda* and *suspirant* (3./2). It is no longer simply the words of a prayer which are involved, but the hearts of the faithful. Pathos enters with *suspirant*, with its twofold idea of sighs and longing, the inner desire and its physical manifestation. The particular emotive qualities of *corda* and *suspirant*, underlined by their juxtaposition, produce an impression of man's helplessness, unless Mary answers the prayer. Finally *omnium*, emphasized by position, balances and adds to *fidelium*: none is left untouched by this longing, all are involved from the heart.

Why do all reach out in supplication to Mary? Because she is our hope and our advocate (3./3-4). Although Abelard is careful to make Mary our hope second to God, and he does so again in the parallel Marian hymn (*spes post Deum nostra*), the position

13 Szövérfy II p.90 quoting *Salve regina* AH 50.245 (p.).

of *unica* at the end of the line shows the importance of her advocacy.¹⁴ It is significant that he employs the particular adjective *unica* of Mary since it is normally, although not invariably, used of Christ.¹⁵ Here it not only stresses the position Mary occupies as our hope, but makes an implicit reference to her uniqueness among men and women. As Christ is *unicus*, the only-begotten Son, but also "unique", so is Mary, for she alone has been blessed with motherhood in her virginity, the motif of the opening lines of the hymn. She is unique, too, since in her glorified body she belongs to both earth and Heaven.

The concept that two distinct and almost irreconcilable worlds are bridged by Mary lies at the heart of Christian imagery of her intercession.¹⁶

She is hailed in hymns as far apart as the *Hymnos Akathistos* and Anselm as Jacob's ladder stretching between earth and Heaven, for she is the ladder by which Christ descended into the world and the ladder by which men can ascend to Heaven:

Scala tu coelestis, per quam
descendit ipse Deus.¹⁷

Judgement, the theme of the fourth stanza, flows naturally from the end of the third, the position of Mary as advocate, for man needs no advocate except in face of judgement.¹⁸ Thus the eschatological motif is not as intrusive as Szövérfy suggests. Indeed he points out the logicity of the motif "since Christ's first Coming indicates also the second Parousia of the Lord" and rightly cites Romans 13, the Lesson for the first Sunday in Advent, an eschatological passage read during the Christmas season.¹⁹ The canticles for the Feast of the Nativity also have a judgemental aspect.²⁰ Moreover, in the hymn this is not the motif of judgement *per se*, but of escape from it, the reason for the incarnation.

14 80.6./3.

15 See discussion on 31.1./1 pp.42-3.

16 Marina Warner *Alone of all her Sex* p.286.

17 Anselm *Hymni de s. Virgine Maria* (PL 158.1035); cf. *Hymnos Akathistos III*. 12-15 (ed. Wallisz).

18 *advocatus* is used once in Scripture and describes Christ: *advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Iesum Christum nostrum*.

19 Szövérfy II p.91.

20 Is.9.2-7; 66.10-16; 26.1-12.

Whereas in the third stanza there was a feeling almost of despair, in the fourth and fifth there is a quiet confidence that Mary will answer the prayers of the faithful, the longing of their hearts, and will prove an effectual advocate. The first two lines,

ad iudicis matrem confugiunt,
qui iudicis iram effugiunt (4./1-2)

are elegantly balanced to suggest how Mary's pleading will be answered: she is the mother of the Judge Whose wrath we fear, but the Judge will undoubtedly hear His mother. The whole structure of the couplet, with *iudicis* coming before the break in each line, the resulting parallelism of **Genitive noun, Accusative noun, Verb** and the cognate but opposite *confugiunt* and *effugiunt*, effectively underlines this suggestion.

The second couplet,

supplicare pro eis cogitur
quae pro reis mater efficitur (4./3-4),

varies the balanced structure of the first. Here the phrases *pro eis* and *pro reis* are placed on either side of the diaeresis and the parallelism is emphasized by the jingling trisyllabic rhyme. The stanza grows to a climax from the initial "they", the unnamed subject of *confugiunt*, through the explanatory relative clause *qui iudicis iram effugiunt* and the pronoun *eis*, to their final identification as sinners, *rei*.

The concept that Mary is constrained (*cogitur* 4./3) to plead for sinners is not as odd as it first appears. If Mary is the mother of all and the mother of Christ in particular, she is bound to use her influence for the good of the rest of her children with her all-powerful Son Who is their Judge. Abelard refers to this again in *Sermo XXVI*:

Si ergo sanctorum oratio tantum valet ad placandam superni iudicis iram, quid de oratione matris sperandum sit, de qua tanto amplius peccatoribus est confidendum, et quodam debito in hoc ipsum teneri, quanto magis apud omnes constat, huius gloriae singularem honorem ut mater Dei esset, nonnisi pro peccatoribus adeptam fuisse?²¹

Such is the subject of the fifth stanza, *ad hoc gignit* (5./2): it was for the salvation of men that Mary became a mother.

It is possible to take the first line of the fifth stanza in two ways. If *pia mater* vocative, the meaning is "Loving mother, your Son is love"; if nominative, "Loving is the mother; her Son is love". The latter is to be preferred since, with it, the two lines of the

²¹ *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.544C).

couplet are evenly balanced, the first phrase of each referring to Mary, the second to Christ:

Pia mater, pietas filius;
ad hoc gignit, ad hoc est genitus (5./1-2).

Christ as the personification of *pietas* occurs again in Abelard's hymn *Mater pietatis* where it is also linked with the loving-kindness of Mary herself: *Mater pietatis,/ adsis pia nobis*.²² As in classical Latin, *pietas* has a variety of nuances, chief among which are the ideas of righteousness, devotion and love. Here devoted love is the most apposite since it is love that is the motive force behind the act of Redemption.

Szövérfy is fanciful when he says that the passive *est genitus*

expresses Christ's rôle in a double sense: at His birth and at the Last Judgement when yielding to Mary's intervention.²³

gignere has no link with the Judgement or with Mary's advocacy. Abelard is here emphasizing that Mary gave birth and Christ was born, both with the same end in view, the salvation of men, for the anaphora *ad hoc...ad hoc* looks forward to the single purpose clause *ut salventur servi* (5./3).

The sinners of the fourth stanza are linked with the slaves of the fifth who are saved by grace (*ut salventur servi per gratiam* 5./3), through the teaching of Christ that all who sin are slaves to sin: *omnis qui facit peccatum servus est peccati*.²⁴ Paul rejoices that Christians have been set free from the slavery of sin:

gratias autem Deo quod fulstis servi peccati...liberati a peccato servi facti estis iustitiae.²⁵

Paul adds to the motif that those who were once slaves to sin have been set free to become slaves to Christ, a theme which occurs frequently in Abelard's writings, both prose and poetry. Abelard opposes the slavery that is the result of fear, slavery to the Law, and the slavery that is the result of love, slavery to Christ, which is perfect freedom:

²² 78.1./1-2.

²³ Szövérfy II p.91.

²⁴ John 8.34.

²⁵ Rom.6.17-18.

In quo quid aliud praesignabat quam Christianam libertatem futuram, et servitutem tam legis quam peccati per Christum removendam...Hinc et Apostolus tempus timoris sub lege a tempore gratiae distinguens...²⁶

It is in the central stanza that the hymn becomes personal and subjective through the use of *nostra* and *nobis*:

tu spes nostra...
advocata nobis es posita (3./3-4).

The first two stanzas, after the introductory invocation, are historical, referring to Mary's part in the incarnation and to her relationship to the Old Covenant. In the third stanza there is a move from past to present tense (*te requirunt vota fidelium* 3./1), bringing her relationship to the Church into focus. The first couplet speaks in objective terms of "the prayers of the faithful, the hearts of all", but becomes subjective in the second couplet: Mary is **our** hope, she has become advocate for **us**. We are now identified with the faithful of the first line. It is our prayers which seek her aid, our hearts which long for her. In the fourth and fifth stanzas there is a move away from the personal, from "we" to "they" to "sinners" and "slaves". Yet the central identification lives on in the mind and colours our reading of the final lines: it is we who are the sinners for whom Mary pleads, the slaves who have been set free.

It is through grace that slaves are set free, *ut salventur servi per gratiam* (5./3), a paraphrase of Paul's succinct comment *...in Christo culus gratia estis salvati*.²⁷ And it is on Christmas Day that that grace was shown to its fullest extent (*quam exhibet haec dies maximam* 5./4), for the incarnation encapsulates the whole drama of redemption. In the act of becoming incarnate Christ undertook His mission to save the guilty and gave promise of its fulfilment. So the helplessness of the third stanza is swallowed up in the affirmation that in their love Christ and His mother will be gracious toward sinners. Small wonder, then, that the doxology ascribing glory to God and peace to man follows immediately on this stanza: there can be no other response.

²⁶ *Sermo* IV (PL 178.413A); cf. 70.6./1-4.

²⁷ Eph.2.4.

5.1. *de epiphania Domini* - foreword

The Feast of Epiphany, sometimes called the Theophany, celebrates the revelation of the divinity of Christ to the world.¹ The Feast arose in the Eastern Church where it originally commemorated only the baptism of Christ. By the fourth century it had grown to embrace, along with the baptism, His birth, the adoration of the Magi and the first miracle at Cana. In the Roman liturgy the celebration of the Nativity was excluded, and the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand made its appearance in a minor way although it seems never to have reached the importance accorded the other three epiphanies.

Augustine draws the events together:

...quod in hac die, sive quod in coelo stella ortus sui nuntium praebuilt, sive quod in Cana Gallaeae in convivio nuptiali aquam in vinum convertit, sive quod in Iordanis undis aquas ad reparationem humani generis suo baptismo consecravit, sive quod de quinque panibus quinque millia hominum satiavit.²

The correlation of the first four miracles appears early in hymnody.³

In the West the main focus of the Feast moved from the baptism to the manifestation of Christ's deity to the Gentiles in the visit of the Magi. An interesting feature of Abelard's four hymns is the equal prominence he gives to the Magi and the baptism. The miracle at Cana has much the lesser place, while the feeding of the five thousand is entirely omitted.

The motif which links the four hymns for Epiphany is the miraculous demonstration of Christ's divinity to the world in signs and wonders. The opening stanza of the section paves the way for the remaining hymns:

Nasciturum sive natum
coeli regem et terrae
miris signis eo dignis
praedicarunt utraque (34.1./1-4).

The first hymn is concerned with signs in the pagan world but moves at the end to one common to both pagan and Jew, the sign of peace shown by Janus and prophesied by Isaiah. This forms a bridge to the following three hymns which deal with the New

1 *Sermo* IV (PL 178.409B) *Quod enim Theophania vel Epiphania Graece dicitur, id Latine Dei apparitio nuncupatur.*

2 Augustine *Sermo* 136 (PL 38-39.2013); cf. *Sermo* 134 (PL 38-39.2010).

3 e.g. Ambrose *Illuminans altissimus* AH 50.10.2-6 (p.15).

Testament signs, the star (35), Christ's baptism (36) and the miracle of the transformation of water into wine (37). The final sign is treated cursorily, accorded only a single couplet, while the rest of the hymn concentrates on the incredulity of the Jews. It is this last hymn which picks up the word *signum* from the first hymn (*miris signis* 34.1./3) and repeats it to good effect in four of its five stanzas. Neither of the central two hymns of the section (35 and 36) contain *signum* but each has an equivalent, *documentum* (35.4./3) and *typum* (36.5./4).

The complex rhyme-scheme is based on triplets, **aab,ccb**. The 8-syllable lines (1 and 3) are internally rhymed. The 7-syllable lines (2 and 4) which do not contain a diaeresis are rhymed at the end of the line.

5.2. 34. *in primo nocturno*

Argument: The birth of Christ is heralded by wonders in heaven and on earth: a crown encircles the sun; oil flows from a tavern; slaves are set free; the title "Lord" is reserved for Christ: there is peace throughout the world.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Nasciturum sive natum
coeli regem et terrae
miris signis eo dignis
praedicarunt utraque.</p> | <p>1. Heavens and earth
have each heralded their King
on the point of birth or born
with wondrous signs worthy of Him.</p> |
| <p>2. Nam, Auguste, te florente
solem cinxit corona;
inundavit quod manavit
oleum de taberna.</p> | <p>2. For, Augustus, at the height of your power,
a crown ringed the sun;
the oil overflowed
which streamed from the inn.</p> |
| <p>3. Veniente redemptore
servis datur libertas:
servitutis iugum tollis,
et, quem nescis, praesignas.</p> | <p>3. With the coming of the Redeemer
liberty is granted to slaves:
you lift the yoke of slavery,
you foreshadow One Whom you do not know.</p> |
| <p>4. Interdictis nec permittis
te dominum vocari,
ut venturo possit Christo
decus hoc reservari.</p> | <p>4. You issue your interdict nor do you allow
yourself to be called "Lord",
so that this honour may be kept
for the Christ to come.</p> |
| <p>5. Iani portas tenet clausas
pax a Christo praemissa,
quae prophetae quondam voce
mundo fuit promissa.</p> | <p>5. The peace sent by Christ as an omen
keeps the gates of Janus shut,
the peace once promised to the world
by the voice of the prophet.</p> |
| <p>6. Pax in terris, in excelsis
sit gloria, sit summa
regi summo, Patri, Verbo,
Spiritui per saecula.</p> | <p>6. Peace on earth, glory in the highest,
the greatest glory
to the greatest King, to Father, Word
and Spirit throughout the ages.</p> |

6./4 saecula *metri causa*: saecula *B and C*

The four hymns written for Epiphany are based on signs of Christ's divinity. The opening stanza sets the scene and introduces the theme of signs. It is deliberately general in character, using both future and perfect participles (*nasciturum sive natum* 1./1) to suggest that some of the wonders which heralded Christ occurred in the years before, some at the time of His birth. Heaven and earth have both proclaimed Him:

coeli regem et terrae
...praedixerunt utraque (1./2-4).

By placing *regem* between *coeli* and *terrae* Abelard suggests that Christ's rule extends not only over men but over the universe. It is only right that the two spheres of His rule should acknowledge Him as He comes from Heaven to earth in His incarnation. Although *rex* is a title rarely given in the Gospels to Christ, except in mockery, His Kingship is regularly demonstrated and the ascription becomes commonplace in later literature.¹

No indication is given in this stanza of the nature of these signs except that they are miraculous (*miris signis* 1./3) and worthy of Christ (*eo dignis* 1./3). The first thought is that this hymn will tell of the star which appeared to the Magi, bringing them to worship the new-born King. Expectation is defeated when the second stanza opens with the apostrophe *Auguste* (2./1).

The rest of the hymn sustains the address to Augustus through the frequent use of the second person singular (*tollis...nescis...praesignas* 3./3-4, *interdicis...permittis* 4./1), but praises Christ. Where Augustus is praised, it is because he acts in such a way that Christ is honoured.

The second stanza opens with an allusion to the famous *ara coeli* vision beloved of mediaeval writers. Jacobus de Voragine tells how, on the day of the Nativity, the Sibyl was alone with the Emperor when she saw a golden ring appear around the sun. In the middle of the circle stood a maiden of wondrous beauty, holding a child. The Sibyl showed this wonder to Caesar; and a voice was heard saying, "This woman is the Altar of Heaven (*Ara Coeli*)!"²

In *Sermo* IV (for Epiphany) Abelard records his debt to the Christian historian and apologist Paulus Orosius whose *Historia adversus paganos* he plundered extensively for

¹ See Matt.27.29; Matt.2.2; Matt.21.5.

² Jacobus de Voragine *The Golden Legend* translated and adapted by Ryan and Ripperger (Arno Press, New York 1969) p.49.

material.³ That historian does not give the full version of the *ara coeli* legend but, following the description given by Suetonius, contents himself with

Nam cum primum...ex Apollonia rediens Urbem ingrederetur, hora circiter tertia repente liquido ac puro sereno circulus ad speciem coelestis arcus orbem solis ambiit.⁴

As befits an apologist, he adds a Christological interpretation:

quasi eum unum ac potentissimum in hoc mundo solumque clarissimum in orbe monstraret, cuius tempore venturus esset, qui ipsum solem solus, mundumque totum et fecisset et regeret.

Following this exegesis, Abelard consciously changes the *circulus* of Orosius to *corona*. *corona* symbolizes kingship and the hymn sings of a King's birth. This crown encircles the sun: Christ is the *sol iustitiae* of Malachi, a symbol already used in the first Nativity hymn.⁵

The second miracle in this stanza is described twice by Orosius:

His diebus trans Tiberim e taberna meritoria fons olei terra exundavit ac per totum diem largissimo rivo fluxit.⁶

He interprets:

quo signo quid evidentius quam in diebus Caesaris toto orbe regnantis futura Christi nativitas declarata est? Christus enim lingua gentis eius, in qua et ex qua natus est, unctus interpretatur.⁷

Orosius here refers to the etymology of *Christus*: from $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\mu$ 'to anoint'. The phenomenon, therefore, points forward to Christ's baptism, the subject of 35., since the chrism used by the Church consists of balsam and oil.

Abelard, in both sermon and hymn, shows how these two miracles are the outworking of the declaration in the first stanza, that wonders in the heavens and on earth heralded a King and Saviour:

3 *Sermo IV Qualla quidem sunt illa quae Paulus Orosius Antiquitatum ab Urbe condita libro VII commemorat...* (PL 178.410D).

4 Orosius *Historiarum adversus paganos* (ed. Zangemeister CSEL V) VI.20.5, following Suetonius *Augustus* 95: *...reverso ab Apollonia et ingrediente eo urbem repente liquido ac puro sereno circulus ad spectem caelestis arcus orbem solis ambiit...*

5 Mal.4.2; 30.2./4.

6 Orosius VI.18.34; cf. VI.20.6.

7 Orosius VI.20.6.

Quid enim praedicta corona solis, aut de terra unctio profluens, nisi coeli pariter ac terrae promittebant regem? Ipse quippe Salvator tam sol iustitiae quam Christus a chrismate, id est unctus ab unctione, nuncupatus est.⁸

When Orosius describes the miracle of the oil, he uses the verb *exundavit* which Abelard echoes in his sermon in the words *emanasse, exuberanter, exuberat*.⁹ In the hymn, however, he alters the prefix from *ex-* to *in-* (*inundavit* 2./3). There are three possible explanations, all allusions to the Old Testament: *inundavit* describes not only the flood-waters of Genesis (indicating the amount of oil flowing) and, perhaps more significantly, the water which flowed from the rock which Moses struck, a prefiguration of Christ on the Cross;¹⁰ but, most probably, the choice of *inundavit* has been influenced by the second canticle for the Christmas season:

Quia haec dicit Dominus: Ecce ego declino in eos ut flumen pacis, et ut torrens inundans gloriae gentium.¹¹

The third stanza works through ambiguity. A comparison between it and Orosius proves somewhat baffling. Because the verb *datur* (3./2) is passive there is no precise indication of the identity of the liberator or the nature of the liberation. The first line *veniente redemptore* (3./1) could be understood in two ways: at the time of Christ's birth slaves were freed, or since Christ comes slaves are set free; either temporal or causal, physical or spiritual. The parallels for a spiritual interpretation are obvious. Paul uses the metaphor frequently.¹²

servitutis iugum tollis (3./3) resolves the ambiguity by addressing Augustus directly: at the time of Christ's birth Augustus set slaves free. The very phrase, however, which resolves the ambiguity simultaneously underlines it, for *servitutis iugum* is a quotation from Galatians which refers to Christ's work of freeing those who are slaves to sin:

8 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.411B-C).

9 *Sermo IV* ...*et Romae sub eodem Caesare de taberna meritiora olet largissimum liquorem per diem integrum emanasse;... tanquam de taberna exuberanter oleum manat;...quasi de taberna oleum per totum diem manans exuberat.* (PL 178.411B-D).

10 Gen.17.6; Psalm 77.20. The *Glossa Ordinaria* summarizes the symbolism (PL 113.241D).

11 Is.66.12.

12 Rom.6.17-18 and Rom.7.6 ...*fuistis servi peccati... liberati estis a peccato; nunc autem soluti sumus a lege mortis....*; cf. Rom.8.2, II Cor.3.17; Gal.5.13.

qua libertate nos Christus liberavit state et nolite iterum iugo servitutis contineri.¹³

Now *veniente redemptore* (3./1) becomes causative: because Christ is born, slaves are set free. The last line of the stanza (*et quem nescis praesignas* 3./4) also brings the spiritual aspect to the fore: Augustus' action in the physical realm is but a foreshadowing of Christ's in the spiritual. So both interpretations are valid.

Abelard believes that Augustus liberated slaves about the time of Christ's birth and gives Orosius as his source:

(Augustus) qui etiam in tantum servitutem a regno suo studuit extirpare, ut, sicut praedictus historiographus meminit, omnes servos, quorum dominos reperit, eis restituerit, caeteros vero servos omnes necari fecit: ne videlicet eorum posteritas in regno remaneret.¹⁴

Abelard says that Augustus returned some slaves to their masters and crucified others because he wished to root out slavery from his kingdom. This is not consonant with Orosius' account:

milites, multitudine ferociores, quosdam pro accipiendis agris tumultus excitaverunt. Sed Caesar, animo ingens, viginti milla militum exauctoravit, triginta milla servorum dominis restituit, sex milla, quorum domini non exstabant, in crucem egit.¹⁵

An investigation of the Christian interpretation of Augustus' action of both Orosius and Abelard proves helpful. Orosius lays stress on the slaves of whom, he says, there are two types: those who recognize Christ as Lord, and those who reject His claims. The former are restored to Him, the latter are punished with death.¹⁶ Abelard has a different slant. He emphasizes the motivation of Augustus/ Christ, deriving his emphasis from Orosius' comment on Augustus' magnanimity (*animo ingens*).¹⁷ So he speaks of Augustus' desire to benefit men as friends, not to rule over them as slaves, preferring to be loved than feared:

Sed nec illud a tempore gratiae et verae libertatis alienum est, (Augustus) quod omne servorum genus a suo penitus dominio removit, nec a se aliquem servitute

13 Gal.4.31-5.1.

14 *Sermo* IV (PL 178.412D).

15 Orosius VI.18.33.

16 Orosius VI.20.7.

17 see n.14 above.

opprimi ferret, sed omnium libertate gauderet, quibus tanquam amicis prodesse magis quam tanquam servis praeesse eligeret, et amari potius quam timeri appeteret.¹⁸

This foreshadows Christian liberty and the abolition of slavery to the Law and to sin through the One Who said, "I shall no longer call you slaves, but friends".¹⁹ The choice of the noun *redemptore* (3./1) supports this: its cognate verb appears in the regular short reading for the Christmas season from Galatians: *ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret ut adoptionem filiorum rectperemus*.²⁰

It would appear, then, that Abelard has used Orosius as a starting-point but, in moving the emphasis from the slaves to Christ, he has changed the historical account. For both men history is made to serve a moral or theological end. Abelard has shifted the emphasis to Christ since the hymn is in praise of the new King.

The fourth stanza examines another act of Augustus which, although it does not strictly prefigure Christ, yet relates to Him. Orosius, once again following Suetonius, tells how the Emperor was seriously upset when the audience at a play took the words *o dominum aequum et bonum* to be a complimentary reference to him. The next day he issued an edict that the title should not be applied to him and he forbade his family to call him *Dominus* even in jest.²¹ Although Orosius makes no comment, Abelard both here and in *Sermo IV* suggests that Augustus' rejection of the title was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

Quis enim Spiritu sancto suggerente factum esse non videat cum in tanto sublimatus gloria Augustus praemineret, se dominum vocari omnino interdixit nec vel loco id se appellari, sed solummodo Augustum permetteret; quasi quadam divina dispositione venturo Christo huius appellationis decus reservaret...²²

18 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.412D).

19 John 15.15 quoted in *Sermo IV* referring to the act of Augustus: *in quo quid aliud praesignabat quam Christianam libertatem futuram, et servitutem tam legis quam peccati per Christum removendam, qui ait: Iam non dicam vos servos, sed amicos*. (PL 178.412D).

20 Gal.4.4-5; see Waddell CLS 3 p.53.

21 Suetonius *Augustus* 53; Orosius VI.22.4 writes: *domini appellationem ut homo declinavit;...gravissimo corripuit edicto dominumque se posthac appellari ne a liberts aut nepotibus suis vel serio vel loco passus est*.

22 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.412B).

He goes on to explain more fully why this honour in particular is to be kept for Christ when he quotes Christ's words: *Vos vocatis me Magister et Domine et bene dicitis: sum etenim*.²³

The echoes between sermon and hymn are noticeable, the same words and phrases occurring in both: *interdictis* (4./1) echoes *interdixit*, *permittis* (4./1) *permitteret*, *te domitrum vocari* (4./2) *se domitrum vocari* and *decus...reservari* (4./4) *decus reservaret*, while *venturo Christo* is the same in each. It is safe to say that nowhere else in the *Hymni Festorum* is there such a complete coincidence of sermon and hymn. It is the sermon which explains the seemingly tautologous *interdictis nec permittis* (4./1): these two verbs are deliberately employed to indicate the two methods by which Augustus banned the title, publicly, by decree in the Senate, privately, by a command in his household.

There is in the fifth stanza a shift in emphasis away from Augustus the agent of the previous two signs which herald Christ, to Augustus the recipient of a sign sent by Christ. It is not, suggests Abelard both here and in the sermon, the endeavours of the Emperor which bring peace and close the gates of Janus, but Christ's will that the world should be at peace at His coming.²⁴ The traditional symbolism of the gates of Janus was well-known; open in time of war, closed in peace.²⁵ In the *Res Gestae* Augustus claims with justifiable pride that the gates were shut three times during his principate.²⁶ They were closed first in January 29 at the end of the Civil War and again in 25 after the suppression of the Cantabri. Orosius puts the third closure in 2 BC, although in fact there was at that time war with Parthia. His purpose is to suggest that when Christ was born there was peace throughout the empire:

Igitur eo tempore, id est eo anno quo firmissimam verissimamque pacem ordinatione Dei Caesar composuit, natus est Christus, cuius adventui pax ista

²³ John 13.13.

²⁴ *Sermo IV (Orosius) docet quippe ibi, Augusto Caesare ab oriente triumphos importante, tantam a Domino pacem mundo esse collatam, ut ipse Augustus sopitis finitisque omnibus bellis, iam portas pacis prorsus obstruxerit...*(PL 178.410D-411A) following Orosius VI.20.1 and VI.22.5.

²⁵ Livy 1.19.2 *...Ianium ad infimum Argiletum indicem pacis bellique fecit, apertus ut in armis esse civitatem, clausus pacatos circa omnes populos significaret.*

²⁶ Augustus *Res Gestae* 13.

famulata est, in cuius ortu audientibus hominibus exultantes angeli cecinerunt:
Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.²⁷

Abelard reiterates Orosius' suggestion (*pacem ordinatione Dei Caesar composuit*) that this peace came as a result of God's will to coincide with Christ's birth, but extends the idea to say that the peace had been sent as an omen by Christ Himself (*pax a Christo praemissa* 5./2). The participle *praemissa* points back to *praedicarunt* (1./4) and *praestignas* (3./4), joining with them to suggest that the peace itself was a herald of Christ. Whereas Orosius links the peace of Augustus with the peace proclaimed to the shepherds by the angels, Abelard alludes in the first instance to the promise of Isaiah,

quae prophetae quondam voce
mundo fuit promissa (5./3-4),

which he quotes in the sermon:

ut etiam iuxta litteram illa impleretur Isalae prophetia qua pax mundo maxima in adventu Domini fuerat promissa, cum dicitur: Et conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres, et lanceas suas in falces. Non levabit gens contra gentem gladium nec exercebuntur ultra ad proelium.²⁸

Thus, in a way so subtle that it appears completely natural, Abelard links the signs which occurred in the pagan world to foreshadow Christ with those in Scripture. The opening of the doxology is entirely apt since it follows directly from the preceding stanza. There Abelard has drawn together pagan signs and the Old Testament; here he brings in the New, employing the quotation used by Orosius, the song of the angels, *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*. He reverses the order of the song,

Pax in terris, in excelsis
sit gloria... (5./1-2),

so that the doxology flows without a break from the prophecy of peace in the previous lines. This reversal also allows the true subject of the doxology, the ascription of glory to the Godhead, to become the main theme of the stanza.

The same play on the adjectives *summa* and *summo* appears in the refrain of the Pentecost hymns: *Summa summo regi Deo sit gloria*.²⁹ In this epiphany hymn the word-play includes the phrase *in excelsis* (6./1), glory in the highest to the highest King. The

27 Orosius VI.22.5.

28 *Sermo* IV (PL 178.411A) quoting Is.2.4.

29 70.1./5.

repetition *summa...summo* and their position enclosing the noun *regi* (*sit summa/ regi summo* 6./2-3) stresses that title in precisely the same way it is stressed in the first stanza (*coeli regem et terrae* 1./2). There the King of Heaven and earth is Christ alone, the incarnate God (*nasciturum sive natum* 1./1) Whom wonders in heaven but chiefly on earth proclaim; here glory is to be given in the heavens to the highest King, Father, Word and Spirit for ever.

5.3. 35. in secundo nocturno

Argument: The shepherds hear the song of the angels; the Magi follow the star; Herod in fear tries to trick the Magi. They find Christ and offer Him their gifts. They are warned not to return to Herod.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Angelorum stupent cantum
admoniti pastores,
magos nova ducit stella,
metu languet Herodes. | 1. At the song of the angels
the shepherds stand amazed and warned,
a strange star guides the Magi,
Herod faints with fear. |
| 2. Dat mandata magis stulta,
loquens eis in dolo;
sed illusus fuit dolus
fraudento fraudato. | 2. He gives the Magi the commands of a fool,
speaking to them in guile;
but the trick was turned,
the deceiver deceived. |
| 3. Illi coeptam tenent viam,
reperiunt quem quaerunt,
et oblati tribus donis
per haec ipsum describunt. | 3. They hold to the path on which they began,
they find the One they seek;
offering their three gifts
through these they proclaim Him. |
| 4. Ad Herodem ne redirent
admonentur in somnis,
et divino documento
sunt, quid agant, edocti. | 4. They are warned in a dream
not to return to Herod,
and by a divine sign
they are taught what they should do. |
| 5. Pax in terris, in excelsis
sit gloria, sit summa
regi summo, Patri, Verbo,
Spiritui per saecula. | 5. Peace on earth, glory in the highest,
the greatest glory
to the greatest King, to Father, Word
and Spirit throughout the ages. |

2./3 sed B and C; sic Dreves and Szövérfy

The inclusion in a hymn for Epiphany of the shepherds who are normally associated with the events of Christmas night would seem odd, were it not for the link it provides with the preceding hymn. There the doxology,

Pax in terris, in excelsis
sit gloria...,

is based on the words sung by the angels to the shepherds.¹ Here the shepherds stand in wonder at that very song:

Angelorum stupent cantum
...pastores (1./1-2).

A further reason for Abelard's apparently deliberate reservation of the shepherds from Christmas for this hymn is found in a reading for this Office from the Sermons of Leo the Great where the shepherds and the Magi are linked:

Iam tunc ergo coeli enarraverunt gloriam Dei, et in omnem terram sonus veritatis exivit quando et pastoribus exercitus angelorum Salvatoris editi annuntiator apparuit, et Magos ad eum adorandum praevia stella perduxit.²

The main reason is, however, connected with Abelard's approach to the hymns for the Nativity and Epiphany. When in the Christmas hymns he deals with contemporary reactions to the birth, those reactions are cosmic and celestial (*stupent coeli, mirantur angeli*).³ Here, on the other hand, the reactions are those of people. It is apt, therefore, to include the shepherds along with the Magi and Herod, while maintaining a parallel with the response of the natural world through the echo *stupent coeli* and *stupent...pastores* (1./1-2).

The star which guides the Magi is a new star (*magos nova ducit stella* 1./3). Its newness is indicated in Scripture but is not elaborated.⁴ Abelard elucidates his emphasis twice in *Sermo* IV:

Novum quippe coelestis Regis ortum in terris nova stella Magis revelavit...Summi vero Regis novum nativitatis modum, sicut conceptum, nova stella et incomparabili splendore praesignare debuit.⁵

¹ 34.6./1-2; cf. Luke 2.14.

² Brev.Rom. in *epiphania Dom.*, in 2. noct. *Lectio* V: Leo the Great *Sermo* 32.2 (PL 54.238A).

³ 32.5./3.

⁴ Matt.2.2-7.

⁵ *Sermo* IV (PL 178.409C and 414A).

The new star heralds a new kind of birth, the birth of the King of Heaven on earth. In the sermon he compares this celestial sign at Christ's birth with the darkening of the sun at His death:

...ut tam ortum quam occasum veri Solis et coelestis Regis gloriam coelestia
protestarentur signa.⁶

The personification of the sun is reflected in some measure by the active *ducti stella* in this hymn: the star was their guide. This personification is suggested by Matthew:

...et ecce stella quam viderant in oriente antecedebat eos usque dum veniens
staret supra ubi erat puer

and by the words of Leo in the sermon quoted above:

et Magos ad eum adorandum praevia stella perduxit.⁷

The shepherds are stunned; the Magi follow the star. Herod faints with fear (*metu languet Herodes* 1./4). *languet* effectively underlines the difference in the reactions of Herod and the others who heard the news of the birth. The shepherds and the Magi both respond positively, although the shepherds were "sore afraid".⁸

Herod, however, becomes immediately panic-stricken. The motif of his fear is Scriptural: *audiens autem Herodes rex turbatus est*, but no reason is given.⁹ The explanation traditional in the writings of the Fathers is that Herod feared the loss of his throne. Leo writes:

Herodes vero audiens iudaeorum principem natum, successorem suspicatus
expavit.

Conturbatur Herodes, timet saluti suae, metuit potestati.¹⁰

This fear, and the stupidity of such a fear, is a motif in hymns as early as Sedulius:

Hostis Herodes imple,
Christum venire quid times?
Non eripit mortalia
qui regna dat caelestia.¹¹

6 *Sermo* IV (PL 178.414A).

7 Matt.2.9; Leo the Great: see above n.2.

8 Luke 2.15.

9 Matt.2.3.

10 Leo the Great *Serm.*31 and 33 (PL 54.236A and 242A).

11 Sedulius *A solis ortus cardine* AH 50.53.8./1-4 (p.58).

Abelard explores the theme in his hymns *in festo innocentum*, celebrated during the week preceding Epiphany:

ius auferri sibi timet
principatus

and

Quid, Herodes,/ metu langues
super Christo?/ Non est meum,
inquit, regnum/ de hoc mundo.¹²

The second stanza is also allusive. The instructions which Herod gives to the Magi are foolish (*stulta* 2./1), a trick (*in dolo* 2./2). But what those instructions are is left unexplained. Here Matthew is clear:

Ite et interrogate diligenter de puero et cum inveneritis renuntiate mihi ut et ego adorem eum.

According to the angel these words were a trick:

futurum est enim ut Herodes quaerat puerum ad perdendum eum.¹³

Herod's trickery is underlined in the repetition *in dolo* (2./2) and *dolus* (2./3), but it is trickery which was in its own turn tricked (*sed illusus fuit dolus* 2./3). The means whereby the trick was reversed is suppressed until the fourth stanza. That Abelard was struck by the verb *illudere* in Matthew (*Tunc videns quoniam illusus esset a Magis, tratus est valde*) is suggested not only by its use here (*sed illusus fuit dolus* 2./3), but by the sustained play on the word in *Sermo XXXIV*:

Illusus a magis, occidit innocentes qui illudere nec peccare poterant. An illusum te, impie, credis quia dolum conceptum perficere nequis, et ordinationem tuo scelere praevire non permittis, et prius illudere quam illudi, seducere quam decipi, fraudem inferri quam errorem pati?¹⁴

It is this quotation which explains the description of the command as *stulta* (2./1). An act must be foolish if it attempts to prevent the will of God. In an Epiphany Sermon Gregory calls Herod's plan *callida* but his conclusion is the same as Abelard's:

Herodes ad callida argumenta convertitur...Sed quanta est humanae malitia contra consilium divinitatis?¹⁵

12 101.1./4-6 and 103.4./1-6.

13 Matt.2.8 and 13.

14 Matt.2.16; *Sermo XXXIV* (PL178.607D-608A).

It is likely that the change from Gregory's *callida* to *stulta* is deliberate, for Abelard is looking at the words of Herod from a divine point of view, while Gregory is suggesting Herod's own view.

It is significant that Abelard uses *stultus* to describe Judas: *Mercator omnium, Iuda, stultissime*.¹⁶ He and Herod endeavoured to bring about Christ's death but, in doing so, brought death on themselves, for Herod his son's death (*nec ipse/ infans tutus/ est a caede*), for Judas his own (*quem vendis, praevenis mortis in funere*).¹⁷

The phrase *fraudento fraudato* (2./4) shows again the influence of the Breviary in a reading from Fulgentius: *O calliditas ficta, o incredulitas impta, o nequittia fraudulenta*.¹⁸ Abelard's phrase with its alliteration and etymological word-play is the more effective. The line is echoed in a reference to Satan who is described in similar terms in the first hymn for Easter *fraus...fallitur*.¹⁹ The correlation of words and motif suggests a link between Herod and Satan. So in this stanza the defeat of Herod's plan points forward to the final defeat Christ inflicts on Satan in the resurrection.

The third stanza turns from Herod to the Magi, and with the fourth shows how Herod's machinations were foiled. The Magi leave Jerusalem and continue on their way to find the Child. The participle *coeptam* (*Illi coeptam tenet viam* 3./1) seems otiose but is possibly an attempt to reflect a notion which Abelard expounds in detail in *Sermo* IV that their entry into Jerusalem was a deviation from the path on which the star was guiding them:

...patet profecto eos a terra sua usque Hierosolymam, et rursum a Hierosolyma usque ad Bethlehem, praecedentis stellae ducatum habuisse.

15 Brev.Rom. *secunda die infra oct.epiph.*, in 3. noct., *Lectio* VII: Gregory the Great *Hom.X in Matt.* (PL 76.1111C).

16 42.4./1.

17 102.4./4-6 and 42.4./4.

18 Brev.Rom. *sexta die infra oct. epiph.*, in 2. noct., *Lectio* VI: Fulgentius *Sermo* IV.6 (CC Ser.Lat.91A p.913.100-1). The cognate *fraus* occurs in Leo's *Sermo* 31 in connection with Herod: *Quam felix foret, si Magorum imitaretur fidem, et converteret ad religionem quod disponebat ad fraudem*. (PL 54.236A).

19 58.2./1.

Quod ergo illis ab Herode recedentibus scriptum est: Et ecce stella...antecedebat eos. Et iterum: Videntes autem stellam gavisii sunt gaudio magno valde, satis innuitur quod ex consortio Herodis, vel impietatis urbis ad quam divertunt stellae apparitionem, quandiu ibi fuerunt, amiserunt.²⁰

The inference is that the Magi ought never to have gone to Jerusalem; they should have kept to the journey which they had begun, trusting wholly in the star, as they are now forced again to do.

The second couplet,

et oblati tribus donis
per haec ipsum describunt (3./3-4),

combines narrative and theological comment, the first phrase echoing Matthew's *et apertis thesauris suis obtulerunt ei munera, aurum, thus et myrrham*.²¹ Again Abelard has no need to mention the gifts in detail, not only because they are already known to all, but because they are described in the Offices of the day.²² *per haec ipsum describunt* (3./4) incorporates the theological element. That these gifts represent the kingship, divinity and mortality of Christ is the interpretation prevailing from very early in patristic texts and in hymns. The antiphon to the Magnificat summarises:

aurum sicut regi magno, thus sicut Deo vero, myrram sepulturae eius,
alleluya.²³

The fourth stanza opens with a reference to the Magi's dream:

et responso accepto in somnis ne redirent ad Herodem, per aliam viam
reversi sunt in regionem suam.²⁴

The phrases Abelard uses (*ad Herodem ne redirent/ admonentur in somnis* 4./1-2) are, with the exception of *admonentur*, direct quotations from Matthew. *admonere*

20 *Sermo* IV (PL 178.414C-D); cf. ps.-Augustine *Sermo* 139.2 *Magi ad Herodem intrantes, stellam perdiderunt...Moneo ne intretis ad Herodem; quia melius est peccatum cavere, quam emendare...sicut et Magi postquam ab Herode recesserunt, stellam quam perdiderant, videre meruerunt*. (PL 38-39.2018).

21 Matt.2.11.

22 CLS 5 p.63.

23 CLS 5 p.66; cf. Gregory the Great *Hom. in Matt.*10 (PL 76.1112D), Augustine *Sermo* 131 (PL 38-39.2007), Leo the Great *Sermo* 31 (PL 54.236B). In hymnody Notker (ed. von den Steinen) p.104 v.3.

24 Matt.2.12.

and its cognate noun *admonitio* are used in this context by pseudo- Augustine, Leo and Gregory, the last appearing in the Office for the day: *et ne redire ad Herodem debeant in somnis admonentur*.²⁵ *admonentur* is also a deliberate glance back to the opening stanza:

Angelorum stupent cantum
admoniti pastores (1./1-2),

again a reminiscence of pseudo-Augustine, *pastores admoniti ab angelis... venerunt*.²⁶ Just as the shepherds are warned of Christ's birth by a divine messenger, so the Magi are warned by a divine message of the danger of returning to Herod.

The final couplet,

et divino documento
sunt, quid agant, edocti (4./3-4),

appears to be a repetition in different words of the preceding lines,

Ad Herodem ne redirent
admonentur in somnis (4./1-2),

sunt...edocti (4./4) paralleling *admonentur* (4./2), *divino documento* (4./3) *in somnis* (4./2) and *quid agant* (4./4) *ad Herodem ne redirent* (4./1). This forms almost a complete chiasmus, although a slight displacement of phrases occurs in the last line. It is, however, uncharacteristic of Abelard to end a hymn on the weak note of mere repetition. The conjunction *et* (4./3) suggests that there is some further meaning, albeit elusive. Abelard's sermons are in this case of no assistance.

A possible hint comes in the Breviary in a reading from Ambrose which begins with the word *documentum*. Ambrose writes that there are two roads by which the Magi can return. The one which goes back to Herod is the one of sin, the other belongs to Christ and leads to their own country (*patria*). *patria* is traditionally used of Heaven, so that the double meaning here is clear:

Accipe aliud documentum. Alia venerunt via magi, alia redeunt...Duae quippe
sunt viae, una quae ducit ad interitum, alia quae ducit ad regnum. Illa

²⁵ Gregory *Hom.X* (PL 76.1111D), in the Breviary *secunda die infra oct. eptph., in 3.noct., Lectio VII*; Ps.-Augustine *Sermo* 131.2 *...per somnium leguntur admoniti* (PL 38-39.2006); Leo *Sermo* 33 *secundum admonitionem somni non eodem quo venerant itinere revertuntur* (PL 54.242).

²⁶ Pseudo-Augustine *Sermo* 131.1 (PL 38-39.2007).

peccatorum est, quae ducit ad Herodem, haec via Christus est, qua reditur
ad patriam.²⁷

It may seem far-fetched to suggest that Abelard is alluding to this interpretation when there is no proper indication of his intention in either sermon or hymn but, since it is unlikely that the concluding lines of the hymn merely repeat the previous thought, a theological or allegorical interpretation of some kind is appropriate. The interpretation suggested for these lines is not necessarily the sole one, although it appears to be the inner meaning of the warning given to the Magi generally found in the writings of the Fathers. Yet, if, as seems likely, the hymn is to be elucidated by the sermon, it fails at the end.

27 Brev.Rom. *sexta die infra oct. epiph.*, in *3.noct.*, *Lectio IX* Ambrose in *Luc.II.46* (CC Ser.Lat. 14 p.51 ll.644-9). A similar idea occurs in Gregory *Hom.X* (PL 76.1113C-D) and in Leo the Great *Sermo 33* (PL 54.242).

5.4. 36. *in tertio nocturno*

Argument: Christ is baptized by John although He does not need baptism. He Himself baptizes men. The heavens are opened and the Spirit descends in the likeness of a dove. The Father acknowledges His Son and men in Him. The dove is the perfect symbol of grace.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Consecrandas intrat aquas
baptizatur a servo,
qui peccata tollit nostra,
qui non eget baptismo,</p> | <p>1. He enters the waters to sanctify them,
He is baptized by a slave,
He Who takes away our sins,
Who has no need of baptism,</p> |
| <p>2. baptizatus qui baptismo
vere suo baptismat;
statim coeli sunt aperti
quos peccatum claudebat.</p> | <p>2. Who, Himself baptized, baptizes
in a baptism truly His own;
at once the heavens were opened
which sin kept shut.</p> |
| <p>3. Revelatus est descensus
Spiritus in columba;
baptizandis, renascendis
gratia demonstrata.</p> | <p>3. The descent of the Spirit
was revealed in a dove;
grace was shown to those
to be baptized, reborn.</p> |
| <p>4. Est audita vox paterna
Filiū protestata,
et renatos facit veros
filios illa data.</p> | <p>4. The voice of the Father was heard
bearing witness to His Son,
and that word makes those reborn
His true sons.</p> |
| <p>5. Avis blanda, mansueta
Deum monstrat placatum;
nec divinae quemquam aequae
gratiae tenet typum.</p> | <p>5. The bird, kind, gentle,
shows that God is appeased;
He has no symbol of divine grace
to equal it.</p> |
| <p>6. Pax in terris, in excelsis
sit gloria, sit summa
regi summo, Patri, Verbo,
Spiritu per saecula. Amen.</p> | <p>6. Peace on earth, glory in the highest,
the greatest glory
to the greatest King, to Father, Word
and Spirit throughout the ages. Amen.</p> |

1./2 baptizatur *B* and *C*: baptizatus *Szövérfy*

2./1 baptizatus *Silvestre*: baptizato *B* and *C*: baptizatos *Szövérfy*

Here Abelard develops the symbolism of the manifestation of the divinity of Jesus in His baptism. The traditional view held that this second epiphany occurred exactly thirty years after the first.¹ Like the preceding hymn, this too contains both narrative and theological elements, the latter to a much greater degree than in 35.

The hymn opens with Christ's entry into the waters of Jordan to be baptized by John:

Baptizatus autem Iesus confestim ascendit de aqua, et ecce aperti sunt ei caeli;
et vidit spiritum Dei descendentem sicut columbam, et venientem super se. Et
ecce vox de caelis dicens: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.²

In the first couplet Abelard adds two elements to the narrative in the words *consecrandas* (1./1) and *servo* (1./2) which do not appear in the Gospel accounts. *servo* alludes to John's expression of his unworthiness: *Ioannes autem prohibebat eum dicens: Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me?*³ In his sermon on John Abelard uses the same metaphor, *servus*, there more pointed because it is juxtaposed with its opposite *Dominus*:

Ad servum Dominus...venit ut ab eo baptismum suscipere.⁴

Although this reversal of rôles is suggested in Scripture, its development comes in the writings of the Fathers. Augustine comments:

et Baptista...tremefactus ait: Ego a te baptizari debeo, et tu venis ad me? id est quoniam ego creatura sum, tu Creator; ego servus, tu Dominus; ego figura, tu Veritas.⁵

An antiphon for the Octave of Epiphany has the same juxtaposition: *Baptizat...servus domini suum*.⁶

consecrandas (1./1) is partially explained in the last line of the stanza *qui non eget baptismo* (1./4): although Christ did not need to be baptized, He chose baptism in order to sanctify the waters for the baptism of men. This is not a Biblical concept but arose in

1 See **foreword** p.68.

2 Matt.3.16-17.

3 Matt.3.14.

4 *Sermo XXXIII* (PL 178.598A).

5 Augustine *Sermo* 134 (PL 38-39.2010); cf. Notker (ed. W.von den Steinen) *Laudes salvatori* 5./1-2 (p.28) *servi subit/ manus baptizandus*.

6 CLS 5 p.69.

patristic discussions about the meaning of Christ's baptism. Twice it appears in the Breviary, in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus and of Maximus:

Ferunt enim hodie Christum Dominum..., suscepto a Ioanne baptisate,
consecrasse fluentia Iordanis...⁷

Augustine develops the theme that Jesus was baptized not for His own sake, but for ours:

Baptizatur ergo Iesus non sibi, sed nobis; baptizatur non ut purificetur aquis,
sed ut aquas ipse sanctificet.⁸

The following two couplets

qui peccata tollit nostra,
qui non eget baptismo,
baptizatur qui baptismo
vere suo baptizat (1./3-4, 2./1-2)

consist of a tricolon of relative clauses describing the One Who was baptized. *qui peccata tollit nostra* (1./3) echoes the Baptist's words, *Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi*.⁹ The line is linked with the words of the *Agnus Dei* in the Mass: *Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi*; but more especially with the First Epistle of John,

Et scitis quia ille apparuit ut peccata nostra tolleret: et peccatum in eo non est.¹⁰

The change from *peccatum* and *mundi* to *peccata* and *nostra* makes the phrase more subjective: the sins are many and they are ours.¹¹

Abelard is attracted not only by the emotive force of *peccata nostra* of John's Epistle but by the phrases on either side of *ut peccata nostra tolleret*. The first, *ille apparuit* "He appeared", links the verse to the Feast of the Epiphany. The second, *et peccatum in eo non est*, is the doctrine to which Abelard alludes in the second clause of the tricolon, *qui non eget baptismo* (1./4).

7 Brev.Rom. *quinta die infra oct.epiph.*, in 2.noct., *Lectio IV: Maximus Taurinensis Homil. XXIII de epiph.* 7 (PL 57.273A); and *die octava epiph.*, in 2.noct., *Lectio V: Gregory of Nazianzus Oratio 39 in sancta lumina* (PG 36.352B).

8 Augustine *Sermo* 134 (PL 38-39.2010).

9 John 1.29.

10 I John 3.5.

11 A similar effect is achieved by *Nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina* (42.9./1).

Scripture does not specifically state that Christ did not need to be baptized although that is the implication of John's protest: *Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me?* Baptism is, however, a symbol of the washing away of sin and since Christ was without sin, He did not require baptism.¹²

The third and longest clause of the tricolon has been subject to emendation. The MSS *baptizato*, accepted by Waddell, lacks coherence but is supported by the rhyme-scheme of the hymn.¹³ It is probable that the scribe has been influenced by the pattern to write *baptizato*, in spite of its meaninglessness.

Szövérfy emends to *baptizatos*, presumably those already "baptized unto repentance" by John, but who still need the baptism that is Christ's. This is possible, but unlikely, for it would cause an abrupt change from the generality of *qui peccata tollit nostra* and *qui non eget baptismo* to the specific of a reference to those who were there, who had been baptized by John. I prefer Silvestre's emendation *baptizatus*. The hymn thus echoes Matthew's account: *baptizatus.../statim coeli sunt aperti* (2./1+3) echoing *Baptizatus autem Iesus...et ecce aperti sunt coeli*.¹⁴

He is the One Who has been baptized (*baptizatus*) but now He baptizes others in a baptism which is peculiarly His (*baptismo/ vere suo* 2./1-2). This must refer in the first place to the baptism which John the Baptist describes: *...ipse vos baptizabit in Spiritu sancto et igni*.¹⁵ That the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the baptism which is truly Christ's own is borne out by *Sermo IV*:

multis cum Iesu baptizatis, pariter nemo est praeter eum, super quem aperiri coelum vel Spiritus descendere memoretur.¹⁶

It is this baptism that the apostles receive at Pentecost:

apparuerunt illis dispersitae linguae tanquam ignis, seditque supra singulos eorum; et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto.¹⁷

12 For washing as a symbol of baptism see Acts 22.16, I Cor.6.11 and Heb.10.22.

13 See **Introduction** p.21.

14 Matt.3.16.

15 Matt.3.11; cf. John 1.33.

16 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.415C).

17 Acts 2.3-4.

There may be another allusion in these lines, although it is impossible to prove that Abelard had it in mind. It is a reference to the words of Jesus when He was asked by James and John to give them positions of importance in His kingdom: *Potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibo? aut baptismo, quo ego baptizor, baptizari?*¹⁸ He is alluding to His passion and death. Paul makes it clear that in baptism we share in Christ's death: *An ignoratis quia quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo Iesu, in morte ipsius baptizati sumus?*¹⁹ So in the polyptoton *baptizatus...baptismo...baptizat* Abelard is not only delighting in the *variatio*, but suggesting through the word-play various levels of meaning.

After this excursus into the theology of baptism, the narrative vein is resumed in *statim coeli sunt aperti* (2./3). Abelard picks up *statim* from Mark's Gospel (*et statim ascendens de aqua, vidit apertos caelos*) and the rest of the line from Matthew (*Baptizatus autem Iesus confestim ascendit de aqua, et ecce aperti sunt et coeli*).²⁰ This event, too, is given a symbolic interpretation not present in the Gospels but developed by the Fathers. Gregory of Nazianzus is quoted in the Office:

...et vidit non dividi coelum, sed aperiri, quod sibi ac nobis post se aliquando Adam ille concluserat; sicut et igneo gladio paradisos fuerat conclusus.²¹

Adam by his sin shut Heaven for himself and for us. Abelard says that sin has kept Heaven shut (*quos peccatum claudebat* 2./4), so that the opening of the heavens symbolizes the removal of sin, a figure which makes a natural link with the description of Christ as the One *qui peccata tollit nostra* (1./3). This image recurs twice in his sermons:

...et eum iam venisse demonstrat qui nos a peccato penitus abluat, et ipsam etiam peccati poenam coelos reserando deleat...
Baptismus quippe coelos reserat.²²

There is a significant parallel in the Ascension hymn *Optatus votis omnium*:

18 Mark 10.38.

19 Rom.6.3.

20 Mark 1.10 and Matt.3.16.

21 Brev.Rom. *dle octava eph.*, in 2.noct., *Lectio VI*: Gregory of Nazianzus, translated by Rufinus.

22 *Sermo III* and *Sermo IV* (PL 178.404A and 415C).

est elevatus in nubibus/ et spem fecit credentibus
aperiens paradisum/ quem protoplasti clausuerant.²³

That the opening of the skies at Christ's baptism is seen as an intimation of the opening of eternal life to sinners is clear from the exhortation Abelard gives in *Sermo IV*:

...semper necessarium esse opem divinam postulare ut in ea quam perceperunt
sanctificatione valeant permanere et sic sibi aperiri ianuam coelestis vitae.²⁴

He demonstrates his ability to choose the most apt word when he writes *revelatus est descensus/ Spiritus* (3./1-2). We are again reminded by *revelatus est* that this is the Feast of the Epiphany, the revelation of Christ's divinity. The verb not only achieves this reference to the Feast but suggests the doctrinal point made in the Gospels and expounded by the Fathers that the Spirit and the dove are not one. Luke is perhaps the clearest in this instance:

et descendit Spiritus sanctus corporali specie sicut columba in ipsum.²⁵

This is underlined in the hymn by the phrase *descensus Spiritus*: it is the fact of the Spirit's descent that is revealed in the dove, not the Spirit Himself.

The choice of a dove to show forth the Spirit's coming reveals something of the Spirit's nature: the Spirit offers grace to men (*gratia demonstrata* 3./4). Why it is that the dove is the chosen symbol of that grace is suppressed until the fifth stanza. It is simply a statement of the fact that is made here.

The juxtaposition of the two gerundives *baptizandis, renascendis* (3./3) underlines the integral connection between baptism and rebirth which is at the heart of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus:

nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non potest introire in regnum
Dei.²⁶

The narrative continues in the fourth stanza when the Father's voice is heard from Heaven bearing witness to His Son.

Est audita vox paterna
Filium protestata (4./1-2)

23 *Optatus votis omnium* Walpole 112.13-16 (p.360).

24 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.415C).

25 Luke 3.22 Abelard elaborates the point in *Sermo IV* (PL 178.415D-416A).

26 John 3.5; the theme recurs in Titus 3.5.

is the poetic rendering of the account in Matthew:

Et ecce vox de caelis dicens: Hic est Filius meus dilectus in quo mihi
complacui.²⁷

By adding the adjective *paterna* Abelard draws together in the space of five lines the three Persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Spirit: *Spiritus in columba* (3./2), *vox paterna* (4./1), *filium* (4./2). All three have their rôle in the baptism, the second epiphany.

To the narrative is appended in the second couplet a theological element,

et renatos facit veros
filios illa data (4./3-4),

so that a balance is established between this and the preceding stanza. In parallel with the third stanza, this couplet moves from the significance of the miracle for Christ to its significance for men. As Christ baptizes them in His own baptism (...*qui baptismo/ vere suo baptizat* 2./1-2), His baptism being a forerunner of theirs, so they share in the manifestations of grace which came upon Him at His baptism.

The Father claimed Christ as His Son and thus claims men too in Him (*et renatos facit veros/ filios...* 4./3-4). This statement compresses two important doctrines, one of which has been mentioned above: *renatos* is an echo of the words to Nicodemus, *nisi quis renatus fuerit...*, and echoes the gerundive *renascendis* (3./3). Grace has been shown to those who require new birth; now the Father claims as His own sons those who have been re-born. It is in Paul's Epistles that is found the widespread teaching that God adopts men in Christ, and in John's writings that the descriptive "sons of God" is used extensively.²⁸

The allusion to the doctrine of adoption and sonship is subtle. The verb *facit* underlines the paradox that men are not the true sons of God, yet He has the power to make them sons (i.e. by adoption). They are adopted and thus are not true sons but, because they have been reborn (*renatos* 4./3), they are indeed true sons (*veros filios* 4./3-4). This comes about only through the word of God (*illa <vox> data* 4./4), a reference to the creative power of the Word.

²⁷ Matt.3.17.

²⁸ See Rom.8.15 ...*sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum...*; cf. Gal.3.26 and 4.5; John 1.12; I John 3.1-2.

The dove is kind, it is gentle (*Avis blanda, mansueta* 5./1), a fitting symbol of God's grace (3./1-2,4). Abelard twice describes the dove in his prose writings, in the *Theologia Christiana* and, significantly for the hymn, in *Sermo IV*:

columba...super eum insederit iuxta illud propheticum: Spiritus Domini super me, eo quod unxerit me; ad annuntiandum mansuetis misit me. Unde et bene in huiusmodi ave quae prae ceteris in tantum blanda et mansueta esse creditur ut iracundiae felle carere dicatur.²⁹

Not only is the dove described in precisely the same terms as in the hymn, *blanda et mansueta*, but the last clause in the exposition explains the second line of the couplet *Deum monstrat placatum* (5./2). Kindness and gentleness are characteristics the opposite of wrath (...*iracundiae felle carere dicatur*). That God chose a dove through which to reveal His Spirit shows that His anger has been appeased. *placatum* has a double intention: it means that God's wrath against man because of his sin has been placated, but it also echoes the Father's words of commendation *hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui*.³⁰ Notker achieves the same effect by juxtaposing the participles of the two verbs *placere* and *placare*:

vere filius es tu meus
mihimet placitus,
in quo sum placatus.³¹

The syntax of the final couplet *nec divinae quemquam aequae/ gratiae tenet typum* (5./3-4) is not simple. One would expect *avis* to be the subject of *tenet*, as of *monstrat*, but that makes no sense. The answer must be to understand *Deus* as the subject, although though this is syntactically somewhat harsh. The lines provide a fitting climax to the hymn. God chose the dove to reveal to the world His new dispensation of grace, not because that bird is a good symbol of divine grace, but because it is the best.

29 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.416A) quoting Is.61.1; cf. *Theol.Christ.* I.34 (CC Cont.Med.12) p.86.

30 Matt.3.17.

31 Notker (ed. W.von den Steinen) *Festa Christi* 12./1-3 (p.22).

5.5. 37. *ad laudes*

Argument: Christ turns the waters of baptism into true wine, another sign which demonstrates His divinity. The Jews refuse to believe the signs. The Gentiles and the world of nature recognize Him. Nothing convinces the Jews; they will learn only through exile.

1. Qui baptismo nobis suo
aquas sanctificavit,
has in merum vertit vinum
et convivas reficit.

1. He, Who with His own baptism
has sanctified the waters for us,
transforms these waters into true wine
and refreshes His guests.

2. Unde clara dies ista
trino facto resplendet,
qua per tanta mundo signa
mundi salus apparet.

2. So this bright day
shines with the threefold act,
when to the world through such great wonders
the world's Saviour appears.

3. Nec post tanta vel maiora
signa credit Iudaeus
quem ad unam statim stellam
requisivit Chaldaeus.

3. But after such great wonders, and greater,
the Jew does not believe
in the One Whom the Chaldaean sought
at the appearance of a single star.

4. Elementa suum cuncta
recognoscunt auctorem;
te nec signa nec lex ipsa
movent, miser, ad fidem.

4. All the elements
recognize their Creator;
not wonders, not the Law itself
stir you, wretch, to faith.

5. Si nec signis nec prophetis
arbitraris credendum,
exsul longa saltem poena
tuum disce reatum.

5. If you think wonders are not to be trusted,
nor the prophets,
at least learn your offence
in your long punishment as an exile.

6. Pax in terris, in excelsis
sit gloria, sit summa
regi summo, Patri, Verbo,
Spiritus per saecula. Amen.

6. Peace on earth, glory in the highest,
the greatest glory
to the greatest King, to Father, Word
and Spirit throughout the ages. Amen.

2./2 trino facto *B and C: primo fastu Dreves followed by Szövérfy*

The hymn opens with a recapitulation and an unusual connection of thought. The first couplet is a reworking of three lines in the preceding hymn:

Consecrandas intrat aquas...
baptizatus qui baptismo
vere suo baptizat.¹

Abelard repeats the motif of baptism to provide a bridge to the third manifestation of Christ's divinity. He suggests that the very waters of Christ's baptism become wine:

aquas sanctificavit
has in merum vertit vinum (1./2-3).

The transformation of water into wine, the miracle at Cana, is thus associated in what initially seems a rather bizarre manner with the second epiphany at His baptism.²

While other hymns generally describe in graphic terms the process of the water becoming wine, Abelard emphasizes the quality of the wine (*merum* 1./3) and the refreshment of the guests (*et convivae reficit* 1./4).³ This emphasis reflects the comment of the *architriclinus* to the bridegroom:

Omnis homo primum bonum vinum ponit et cum inebriati fuerint, tunc id quod deterius est; tu autem servasti bonum vinum usque adhuc.⁴

The final couplet (1./3-4) is intended to work on two levels: the wine produced by the miracle does indeed refresh the guests at the wedding, but the wine is also the wine of the Eucharist. This extra dimension is achieved through *reficit*, the verb which is used again in the prose passage parallel to the hymn: *Quod vero aquis in vitrum conversis convivae Dominus refecit...*⁵ Abelard's use of *reficere* and its cognate noun *refectio* in images of the Eucharist is discussed above.⁶

As *reficit* has two levels of allusion, so does *convivae*. They are the guests at the marriage in Cana, but equally and on a deeper, spiritual level, the guests at the marriage-feast of Christ and His Church. The antiphon to the *Benedictus* for Lauds, the

1 36.1./1 and 2./1-2.

2 See John 2.1-11.

3 e.g. AH 14.27.4./1-4 p.40 and AH 50.10.5./1-4 p.15.

4 John 2.10.

5 *Sermo* IV (PL 178.417A).

6 See above pp.48-50.

Office for which this hymn was written, links baptism and the marriage-feast in spiritual terms:

Hodie coelesti sponso iuncta est Ecclesia, quoniam in Iordane lavit Christus eius crimina; currunt cum muneribus Magi ad regales nuptias; et ex aqua facto vino laetantur convivae; alleluia.⁷

The symbolism of the antiphon runs parallel to that of the hymn: in His baptism Christ washes away the sins of the Church, so making her fit to be His Bride. The Magi bring their gifts to this royal wedding of Christ the King to the Church. The guests are glad because the water of baptism which has cleansed them is now transformed into the wine of the Eucharist which foreshadows the eternal marriage-feast. Through the use of *reficere* in its two senses of the physical refreshment afforded by wine and of the spiritual refreshment of the Eucharist, through the use of *convivas* to indicate not only the wedding in Cana, but also the marriage-feast of the Lamb, Abelard draws together the historical, allegorical and anagogic meanings of the first miracle, the three levels of Scripture.

The miracle at Cana is associated with Epiphany not only because it was the first of Jesus' miracles but because of John's phrase: *Et manifestavit gloriam suam*.⁸ In *Sermo IV* Abelard comments: *Denique miraculo aquae in vinum conversae divinitatis eius potentia declaratur*.⁹ The words *manifestavit*, *gloriam* and *declaratur* provide a background for the light imagery of the second stanza, introduced by *clara* (2./1) and intensified in *resplendet* (2./2). Such an image is particularly apt for a Feast which celebrates revelation.

This second stanza appears at first to be but a resumé of the nature of the Feast. It is a bright day, because it shines with the manifestation of Christ to the world. Abelard deliberately chooses the verb *apparet* to close the stanza because, as he explains in the Sermon, it translates the Greek term:

Quod enim Theophania vel Epiphania Graece dicitur, id Latine Dei apparitio...nuncupatur.¹⁰

7 CLS 5 p.64.

8 John 2.11.

9 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.409D).

10 *Sermo IV* (PL 178.409B).

Dreves, followed by Szövérfy, emends *trino facto* (2./2) to *primo fastu*. *trino facto*, however, refers to the three different incidents in Scripture in which Christ was revealed to the world on the Feast, the appearance of the star, the events surrounding His baptism, and the miracle at Cana. In addition to the light imagery, there is the word-play of the repetition *mundo ...mundi* (2./3-4): the Saviour of the world is shown to the world He comes to save.

Why should Abelard in this the final hymn for Epiphany be concerned to stress the reason for this Feast, a reason which has already been made clear in the first hymn:

Nasciturum sive natum/ coeli regem et terrae
miris signis eo dignis/ praedicarunt utraque?¹¹

It is here, however, where we find the parallel that we find the reason for the repetition, in the echo *signis* and *signa*:

qua per tanta mundo signa
mundi salus apparet (2./3-4).

While the first hymn stressed that the signs heralded the birth of a King, this last hymn underlines a different aspect of Christ's incarnation: He is the Saviour. The fact that the signs, of baptism and miracle, in the first stanza are described in such a way as to suggest the Eucharist makes this emphasis particularly appropriate, since it is through His baptism and His crucifixion that Christ is the Saviour of the world.

per tanta...signa...apparet (2./3-4) fuses the idea of revelation and the motif of *signa* which recurs throughout the hymn. In the opening stanza there are two examples of *signa*, although they are not so termed, Christ's baptism and His first miracle. It is through such signs that He is revealed as Saviour. *tanta...signa* (2./3) is intensified in *tanta vel maiora/ signa* (3./1-2) in a stanza which expresses incredulity at the unbelief of the Jews in the face of such *signa*. The fourth stanza continues the treatment of the Jews' lack of belief where the motif of wonders is associated with the Law: *te nec signa nec lex ipsa/ movent...* (4./3-4). In the fifth the witness of the prophets is added to that of the wonders: *...nec signis nec prophetis* (5./1).

After the two introductory stanzas, the hymn focuses on the unbelief of the Jews. The two couplets of the third stanza are balanced one against the other:

Nec post tanta vel maiora/ signa credit Iudaeus
quem ad unam statim stellam/ requisivit Chaldaeus (3./1-4).

¹¹ 34.1./1-4.

Nec post tanta vel maiora/ signa credit Iudaeus
quem ad unam statim stellam/ requisivit Chaldaeus (3./1-4).

tanta vel maiora (3./1) contrasts dramatically with *unam* (3./3) as does the plural *signa* (3./2) with the singular *stellam* (3./3): the Jews have been granted numerous and unmistakeable reasons for belief, the Chaldaeans a single star. Implicit is the idea that the refusal of the Jews under these circumstances makes their offence (*reatum* 5./4) the greater. The verbs (*nec credit* (3./2) and *requisivit* (3./4) are parallel but in different tenses: the Jews still do not have faith even after the signs (*post signa* 3./1), the Gentiles responded at once (*statim* 3./3). The final contrast lies between the proper nouns *Iudaeus* (3./2) and *Chaldaeus* (3./4), both of which are emphasized not only by their position at the end of each couplet, but by the disyllabic rhyme *-daeus*, the only one in this hymn.

The contrast remains undeveloped but would, nonetheless, have found a response in Abelard's original audience. The Jews are God's chosen people but they refuse to believe. In emphasizing their incredulity Abelard is following a favourite theme in patristic writing: Cassiodorus describes Psalm 13 as a castigation of the Jews and comments that they refused to believe that Christ was God incarnate *ut malo voto petor incredulitas tingeretur*.¹² Abelard, commenting on Romans, writes

...non sunt illi (i.e. Iudaei) fracti propter bonum tuum...sed propter malum suum, id est incredulitatem.¹³

The Chaldaeans, as he explains in *Sermo* IV, not only represent the Gentiles as a whole, but are the most in error among the Gentiles, *Chaldaeus* being chosen for its association with magic and astrology, yet they believe.¹⁴

Since *post tanta...signa* (3./1) echoes per *tanta...signa* (2./2) it is probable that both refer to the same signs of baptism and the first miracle, the subject of the introductory stanza. *vel maiora* (3./1) is more allusive, but the immediate reference in the following couplet to the star (*ad unam...stellam* 3./3) suggests that maiora signa are

¹² Cassiodorus *Expos.in Ps.13* (CC Ser.Lat. 97) p.26.23-28.

¹³ *Comm.in Rom.IV.xl.20* (CC Cont.Med.11) p.263.

¹⁴ *Sermo* IV *Bene magi, primitiae gentium, ad fidem primo tracti fuerunt, ut qui maxime erroris tenuerant magisterium, ipsi postmodum etiam suae conversionis exemplo fidei facerent documentum*. (PL 178.409D). The Chaldaeans are associated with astrology and magic in Dan.2.2; in the classics with astrology: Cicero *de div.*1.1.2; Juvenal X.94; Pliny *Hist.Nat.*18.25.57. cf. Isidore *Etym.*III.25.1.

those which occurred in the natural world. This is underlined by the opening words of the next stanza:

Elementa suum cuncta
recognoscunt auctorem (4./1-2).

These are references not only to the star and its parallel at the crucifixion, the darkening of the sun, but also to the wonders described in the first hymn of the section.¹⁵

Just as in the third stanza the unbelief of the Jews is set against the faith of the Gentiles, so in the fourth it is set against the recognition the elements accord their Creator. The "belief" of the natural world is not introduced gratuitously; the way has been paved by the reference to the star in the preceding stanza. In 35 that star was personified as the guide of the Magi (*magos nova ducti stella*);¹⁶ here that personification is extended to the whole world. The couplet also looks back to the opening stanza, to the water which turned into wine at Christ's bidding, a specific example of an element recognizing its Creator. Abelard has been influenced in his choice of words and allusion by lines of an early hymn:

elementa mutata stupent
transire in usus alteros,

but the primary influence has undoubtedly been the Epiphany Sermon of Gregory which contrasts the testimony of the elements with the obduracy of the Jews: *Omnia quippe elementa auctorem suum venisse testata sunt*.¹⁷

The obstinacy of the Jews is stressed in the final couplet,

te nec signa nec lex ipsa
movent, miser, ad fidem (4./3-4),

through the two negatives *nec...nec*, and the apostrophe *miser*, which makes the condemnation more personal and thus the more forceful. The third stanza opens with the words *nec post tanta vel maiora/ signa* (3./1-2); this is paralleled and expanded by the double *nec* in 4./3 and by the addition of the Law as a proof of Christ's deity (*nec signa nec lex ipsa* 3./3). A further parallel appears in the fifth stanza where the Law is replaced by the witness of the prophets:

...nec signis nec prophetis

¹⁵ Matt.27.45; see above 32 n.21.

¹⁶ 35.1./3.

¹⁷ AH 50.10.5./1-4 (p.15); Gregory *Homil.in Matt.X.2* (PL 76.1111A).

arbitraris credendum (5./1-2).

Here too is the personal address in *arbitraris*.

As Szövérfy points out, there are reminiscences in stanzas 3-5 of the eleventh-century Christmas sequence *Laetabundus*.¹⁸ To the two verses Szövérfy cites (10. *Si non suis vatibus* and 11. *Infelix propera*) I would add a third (9. *Isaias cecinit*):

9. Isaias cecinit;
synagoga meminit
nunquam tamen desinit
esse caeca.

10. Si non suis vatibus
credat vel gentilibus
Sibyllinis versibus
haec praedicta.

11. Infelix propera,
crede vel vetera
cur damnaberis, gens misera?

In the hymn the vocative *miser* (4./4), apostrophizing the Jewish race, derives from the sequence's *gens misera* (11./3) which also addresses the Jews. Where the sequence alludes to the Sibylline prophecies which looked forward to Christ (...*gentilibus/Sibyllinis prophetis* 10./2-3), Abelard substitutes the Magi (*Chaldaeus* 3./4), a more apt references in a hymn for Epiphany. Yet he loses nothing by the substitution, for *Chaldaeus* has all the notions of magic and prophecy inherent in *Sibyllinis*.¹⁹

In the fifth stanza the lines *Si nec...prophetis/... credendum* (5./1-2) are closely modelled on *Si non suis vatibus/ credat* (10./1-2) in the sequence. Szövérfy believes that "the prophets (*vates*) in the Sequence *Laetabundus* are substituted here by the word *lex* (4./3)".²⁰ But Abelard, as we have seen, alludes directly to *vatibus* in his fifth stanza in the parallel word *prophetis* (5./1). Unless he is making two references to the sequence's *vates*, it is more likely to be *Isaias cecinit* (9./1) which he transforms into *lex*. Where the sequence refers twice to prophecy, first in the particular *Isaias*, then in the general *vatibus*, Abelard mentions the prophets only once (*prophetis* 5./1). He rejects the proper noun *Isaias*, and replaces it with *lex*, a distinct entity in the Old Testament. This adds a third witness available to the Jews: alongside the witness of miracles, of both pagan and Jewish prophets, there is that of the Law.

The obstinacy of the Jews is thus revealed in its fulness and their refusal leads to the sole conclusion possible: punishment. That punishment is exile:

18 Szövérfy I p.88 and II p.98 quoting *Laetabundus* AH 54.2.stanzas 9,10,11 (p.5).

19 For Abelard's interest in the Sibyls see P.Dronke *Hermes and the Sibyls: Contrivations and Creations* (Inaugural Lecture Cambridge March 1990)

20 Szövérfy II p.98.

Exsul longa saltem poena
tuum disce reatum (5./3-4).

The emphatic imperative *disce* (5./4) is important for an understanding of Abelard's thinking. It holds out the hope that their exile is not final: they are to learn their offence. The belief that the Jews would finally repent is an influential strand of thought in, among others, Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus and Bede.²¹ It stems from Paul's lengthy excursus on the place of the Jews in the scheme of salvation where he dismisses the idea that the Jews have been utterly rejected:

Dico ergo numquid reppulit Deus populum suum: absit; ...non reppulit Deus plebem suam quam praescivit.²²

The motif of exile is unusual and does not appear in Abelard's prose works. The closest Abelard comes to it is in the concept of *reprobatio*, the exclusion of the Jews from grace:

...de prima videlicet electione Iudaici populi et reprobatione gentilium, et de nova nunc electione gentilium in conversione multorum et reprobatione Iudaeorum.²³

Abelard has here been influenced by Paul's image of pruning and engrafting:

Bene: propter incredulitatem fracti sunt... Sed et illi, si non permanserint in incredulitate, inserentur: potens est enim Deus iterum inserere illos.²⁴

It is probable that Abelard had in mind not only the spiritual exile of the Jews from God but also their physical exile after the fall of Jerusalem. He writes of their scattering throughout the world:

...vel in hoc etiam dispersi per mundum in perpetuam captivitatem pro peccato in Christum commisso fidei nostrae plurimum attestantur, et magna potentiae Christi praeconia praebent.²⁵

21 Abelard *Comm.in Rom.IV.xl.26* (CC Cont.Med.11 p.266) quotes Gregory the Great *Moral.35.14.34* (PL 76.768C) *Sed in extremo Israelitae omnes ad fidem cognita Eliae praedicatione occurrent;* cf. Cassiodorus *Expos.in Ps.13.1* (CC Ser.Lat.97)p.126; Bede *Tob.Alleg.Interpr.* (PL 91.934B).

22 Rom.11.1-2; cf. Rom.11.26.

23 *Comm.in Rom.IV.xl.33* (CC Cont.Med.11) p.271; cf. IV.xl.1 p.256.

24 Rom.11.20 and 23.

25 *Comm.in Rom.IV.xl.11* (CC Cont.Med.11) p.260.

Because the main body of the hymn ends on a note of implied hope, the doxology is again apt. Peace on earth will include the Jews and glory will be given to the God they now reject.

6.1. *de hypapante Domini* - foreword

Du Cange glosses *Hypapanti*:

barbare, ex Graeco ὑπαπάντη quae appellatione donatur festum purificationis beatae Mariae, ab occursu seu oblatione tunc facta a sene Simeone et Anna vidua.¹

Du Cange's explanation... indicates that this Feast has at least two interconnected features: it celebrates the meeting of Simeon and Anna with the infant Christ and it commemorates the purification of the Virgin according to the Law of Leviticus. With the growth in popularity of the cult of the Virgin the latter feature became so important that the feast became more generally known as *in purificatione beatae Mariae*. The Feast's most popular name, however, referred neither to the presentation nor to the purification, but to ritual itself, to the candle-lit procession which moved through the town: *Candelaria* or Candlemas. In his Sermon for the day Abelard pays equal attention to Christ's presentation and Mary's purification, but in his first hymn it is the light shed by the candles that takes prime place.²

The origin of the Feast has occasioned much debate and has remained shrouded in the mists of obscurity. It has aroused interest because the ritual contains two distinct and, to a great extent, incompatible elements, the penitential Rogation and the celebratory procession with its candles and joyful hymns. In his hymns Abelard ignores the penitential aspect and concentrates on the light and the joy.

Some liturgists see the origin of the Feast in the Roman *Lupercalia*, others in the *Amburbale*, still others deny that the Christian Feast has any connection with pagan ritual.³ Bede traces the Candlemas procesion to a Roman quinquennial lustration ceremony held at the beginning of February. He says that Christianity transformed this procession into a feast in honour of the purification of Mary and, significantly for Abelard's first hymn, ties it in with the parable of the wise virgins:

...plebs universa, cum sacerdotibus ac ministris...per ecclesias, perque congrua urbis loca procedit, datosque a pontifice cuncti cereos in manibus gestant ardentes...non utique in lustrationem terrestris imperii quinquennem, sed in

1 Du Cange *Glossarium* IV p.272 *Hypapanti*.

2 *Sermo V ...et cum hostis in templo est praesentatus, et more feminarum mater eius purificatione observavit legalem...* (PL 178.419C).

3 A good summary of the differing views is D.de Bruyne's article "L'origine des processions de la Chandelier et des Rogations à propos d'un sermon inédit" *Rev.Bén.* 34 (1922) pp.14-26. The sermon traces the Rogations to the *amburbale*, the procession to the *amburbale*.

perennem regni coelestis memoriam, quando, iuxta parabolam virginum prudentium, omnes electi...obviam sponso ac regi suo venientes, mox cum eo ad nuptias supernae civitatis intrabunt.⁴

A homily wrongly attributed to Eligius suggests that the pagan rite involved the lighting of candles and in this he is followed by John Beleth. Eligius writes:

Unumquodque autem quinquennium vocabatur lustrum, eo quod ipso expleto censuque soluto, in unum conveniente populo Romano, sacrificium celebraretur, et cum cereis ac lampadibus urbs Roma lustraretur...Nunc igitur vanae superstitionis errorem pulchre Christiana devotio ad veram convertit fidei religionem...⁵

De Bruyne, however, wisely warns against using Christian texts for establishing pagan rites.⁶

The first two hymns for Candlemas are so rooted in the liturgy of the festival that it will prove helpful to look first in some detail at the ritual. The day began with a procession to the church, symbolizing the bringing of Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem. There then took place the ritual lighting of candles as a symbol of the entrance into the world of the true Light. An early description of the procession is found in a French MS of the ninth century:

ipsa autem die, aurora ascendente, procedunt omnes de universas diaconias (sic) sive de titulis cum letania vel antiphonas psallendo et cerea accensa portantes omnes in manibus per turmas suas et veniunt in ecclesia sancti Adriani martyris et exspectant pontificem (sic). Interim ingreditur pontifex sacrario et induit se vestibus nigris et diaconi similiter planitas induunt nigras. Deinde intrant omnes ante pontificem et accipiunt ab eo singula cerea.⁷

Andrieu prints a much fuller description from a twelfth-century Romano-Germanic Pontifical where the *Nunc dimittis* and the antiphon *lumen ad revelationem* appear.⁸ The *Nunc dimittis* occurs in the Paraclete Breviary, the antiphon does not, although both are echoed in Abelard's hymn.⁹

4 Bede *de temporum ratione* XII (PL 90.351C-352A), copied by Rabanus Maurus *de cleric. instit.* II.33 (PL 105.345D-346A); Amalarius (PL 105.1160).

5 Pseudo-Eligius *Homil.* II (PL 87.602C-D); .cf. Beleth (PL 202.86).

6 See above n.3, p.22.

7 Andrieu *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen-âge* III p.235 *Ordo XX*.

8 Andrieu *Le Pontifical Romain au moyen-âge* I pp.206-9 *Ordo XXVII*.

9 CLS 6 p.232.

According to the Romano-Germanic Pontifical the procession starts at a spot some distance from the church. Prayers are said which emphasize the importance of light in the ceremony:

tuam supplices deprecamur clementiam, ut has candelas quas nos tui famuli in tui nominis magnificentia suscipientes gestare cupimus luce accensas, benedicere et sanctificare atque lumine supernae benedictionis accendere digneris...

The symbolic significance of light is stressed in succeeding prayers:

Domine Iesu Christe, lux vera qui illuminas omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, effunde benedictionem tuam super hos cereos et sanctifica eos lumine gratiae tuae et concede propitius ut, sicut haec luminaria, igne visibili accensa, nocturnas depellunt tenebras, ita corda nostra invisibili igne...illustrata, omnium vitiorum cecitate careant...¹⁰

After more prayers which include references to the presentation of Christ by His parents and to the recognition of His deity by Simeon, the candles are aspersed and lit. During the procession to the church various canticles are sung, among which the most significant for Abelard's first hymn is *Adorna thalamum tuum*.¹¹

The four hymns for Candlemas are thematically diverse, to such an extent that the third (40. *Qui paupertatem admonet*) has seemingly little in common with the other three. Subtlety, however, is Abelard's hallmark: the hymns require close examination for the connections to be seen.

The Bridegroom and the Bride for whom Sion, the Church on earth, is to prepare the bridal-chamber in 38, are the Child and His mother who come to the Temple in 39. The Child of 39 is the One Who, as both Child and Man, measures the mystical Temple, the Church, of 40. In 41 the Church universal rejoices in the presence of its Lord, the Child Who has come to the Temple.

In the first hymn Abelard calls Sion, the Church on earth, to prepare to greet the Bridegroom and Bride. The address to Sion incorporates, without differentiation between periods of history, the wise virgins of the parable, who here represent the nuns of the Paraclete, monks or priests, Simeon and Anna. The second hymn involves narrative and theological comment: it retells the story of Christ's presentation in the Temple and speaks of the mystical symbolism of the sacrifices. The offering Mary made

¹⁰ See above n.8.

¹¹ Written by John of Damascus, this is one of very few antiphons to have been taken by the Roman Church from the Byzantine.

was that demanded in Leviticus of the poor, and poverty opens the third hymn: Christ has been the example of poverty in deed and word. Thus He is competent to measure the symbolic Temple of Ezekiel's vision, which is interpreted as the Church. Like the first hymn the final one consists of a series of commands addressed to both sexes and all ages. Again as in 38 no difference is made between people of then and now.

The recurrent motif of the Temple/Church holds together the four hymns in spite of their seemingly diverse themes. In addition there is a chiasmic structure which links the first and the last hymns, the second and the third. 38 and 41 are addressed to the Church and to individuals; through each runs a series of imperatives or jussives, summoning the addressees to greet Christ or be joyful in His presence. There is in each a stress on universality in the repetition of *omnis*.¹² In 38 Mary is called *domina* (*et occurrentes dominae/ surgant adolescentulae*); in 41 there is a reference to Christ in the cognate adjective *domnicam* (*confitentem dominicam/ ostenderunt praesentiam*).¹³ 39 and 40 form a pair through the emphasis on Christ as a Child in the deliberate repetition of *parvulus*.¹⁴ The element of typology in each provides another link: in 39 the sacrificial birds symbolize innocence and chastity, while the lamb foreshadows Christ; in 40 Ezekiel's vision of the man who measures the Temple is a type of Christ and the Church.

12 *domus omnis cum omnibus/ occurrat luminaribus* and *revela lumen omnibus* (38.3./3-4 and 4./4); *Omnis sexus et quaelibet/ aetas plaudat ac iubilet;/ movet omnes ad gaudium/ qui venit salus omnium* (41.1./1-4).

13 38.2./3-4; 41.5./3-4.

14 39.2./1-2; 40.4./1-2.

6.2. 38. *in primo nocturno*

Argument: Sion, the wise virgins and the brethren are to welcome with the light of candles the Light of the world. Simeon is to reveal this light to the nations, Anna to prophesy and to praise God.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Adorna, Sion, thalamum,
quae praestolaris Dominum,
sponsum et sponsam suscipe
cum cereorum lumine.</p> | <p>1. Sion, you who wait on the Lord,
prepare the bridal-chamber,
welcome the Bridegroom and His Bride
with candle-light.</p> |
| <p>2. Prudentes illi virgines
vestras aptate lampades,
et occurrentes dominae
surgant adolescentulae.</p> | <p>2. Wise virgins,
trim your lamps for Him,
let the young girls rise
and run to meet their Lady.</p> |
| <p>3. Faces accendant famuli,
veroque mundi lumini
domus omnis cum omnibus
occurrat luminaribus.</p> | <p>3. Let the servants light torches,
and all the house
with all their lamps
run to meet the world's true Light.</p> |
| <p>4. Beate senex, propere,
promissa comple gaudia,
et revelandum gentibus
revela lumen omnibus.</p> | <p>4. Happy old man, hasten,
fulfil the promised joy
and reveal the Light
to be revealed to all peoples.</p> |
| <p>5. Devota Deo vidua
eiusque templo dedita
pari propheta gaudio
et confitere Domino.</p> | <p>5. Widow, devoted to God
and dedicated to His temple,
prophesy with equal joy
and praise the Lord.</p> |
| <p>6. Deo Patri cum Filio
cum Spiritu Paraclito,
ut est una substantia
sic et una sit gloria. Amen.</p> | <p>6. To God the Father with the Son
and with the Spirit, the Paraclete,
as they are one in substance
so may they be one in glory. Amen.</p> |

References to light abound in the hymn, beginning with the physical candles of the ceremony and moving to the spiritual: Sion is to welcome the Bridegroom and His Bride with the light of candles (*cum cereorum lumine* 1./4); those candles become in turn the lamps of the wise virgins (*aptate lampades* 2./2) and the torches of the famuli (*faces accendant famuli* 3./1); all should greet with lights (*luminaribus* 3./4) the true Light of the world (*vero mundi ...lumine* 3./2); He is the Light to be revealed to the world by Simeon (*revela lumen omnibus* 4./4). The multiplicity and variety of words used to indicate light (*cereorum, lumine, lampades, faces, accendant, lumini, luminaribus, lumen* and, to some extent, *revela* and *revelandum*) suggest the impact made in the church in the dark of an early winter's morning by this sudden and dramatic influx of light. It serves as a picture to remind the participants of the main element of the feast: in the words of Simeon that Christ is the *lumen ad revelationem gentium*, in the words of Zacharias that He came *...illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent*.¹ The emphasis on light suggests that for Abelard the true significance of the day still lay in the meeting of Simeon with Jesus, rather than in the purification of the Virgin, an emphasis which was steadily gaining in popularity in the twelfth century.

Besides the light motif there are further allusions to the liturgy. The first line *Adorna, Sion, thalamum* (1./1) echoes the antiphon *Adorna thalamum tuum, Sion, et suscipe regem Christum*.² This is the more common form of the antiphon which appears in the Romano-Germanic Pontifical quoted above as *Ave Maria gratia plena. Adorna thalamum tuum*.³

The *invitatorium* for Matins reads

Ecce venit ad templum sanctum suum Dominator Dominus: gaude et laetare,
Sion, occurrens Deo tuo.⁴

These words link the address to Sion in the first stanza and the instructions to the young girls in the second:

et occurrentes dominae
surgant adolescentulae (2./3-4).

1 Luke 2.32 and 1.79.

2 Brev.Rom. *in purificatione Mariae* First Nocturn, Response to *Lectio* I; Abelard has, however, replaced this standard response with his own: *Tulerunt Iesum in Ierusalem, ut sisterent eum Domino sicut scriptum est in lege Domini* (CLS 6 p.231).

3 See **Foreword** to this section p.105 n.8.

4 Brev.Rom. *in purif.Mariae, ad mat. invitat.*

The seventh reading of the day is taken from Ambrose and includes the phrase *vidua confitetur*, an echo of Luke's description of Anna: *Et haec, ipsa hora superveniens, confitebatur Domino*, echoed in the hymn, *et confitere Domino* (5./4).⁵ The eighth reading, again from Ambrose, speaks of Simeon:

*exspectans videre promissum; sciebat enim quia beati oculi qui eum viderent.*⁶

In the hymn he is *Beate senex* (4./1) and is told to fulfil the joy which has been promised (*promissa comple gaudia* 4./2). The second couplet,

*et revelandum gentibus
revela lumen omnibus* (4./3-4),

echoes the response to this reading:

Susciplens Iesum in ulnas suas Simeon, exclamavit et dixit: Tu es vere lumen ad illuminationem gentium,

itself a paraphrase of the words in Luke.⁷

The hymn is constructed around commands to five different groups or individuals: Sion, the virgins, who should be identified with the nuns of the Paraclete, the *famuli*, Simeon and Anna. One stanza is given to each and each is addressed in the first line of the appropriate stanza.

The command to Sion in the opening words of the hymn, *Adorna, Sion, thalamum* (1./1), is a direct reminiscence of the antiphon *Adorna thalamum tuum, Sion, et suscipe regem Christum*. The personification of Sion in the hymn as the handmaid of the Bridegroom and Bride is a departure from the antiphon where Sion is the Bride herself. Sion, Jerusalem, the city of the temple, here must be, as often, an image of the Church.⁸ It is the Church as the handmaid of the Lord who is being summoned to make ready the bridal-chamber for His coming.

The metaphor of Christ the Bridegroom appears in both the Old and New Testaments. He calls Himself the Bridegroom in His answer to the complaint of the Pharisees that His disciples did not fast, and in the parable of the wise and foolish

⁵ Ambrose *Exp. in Luc.* 2.58 (CC Ser. Lat. 14) p.56 echoing Luke 2.39.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Brev. Rom. in purif. Mariae, Third Nocturn, Response to *Lectio VII*.

⁸ Isidore *Etym.* VIII.1.5 *Pro peregrinatione autem praesenti Ecclesia Sion dicitur...*

virgins He is the Bridegroom for Whom all are waiting.⁹ In the Old Testament Psalm 18 reads

in sole posuit tabernaculum suum et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo.¹⁰

The application of this verse to the incarnation is very ancient, *thalamus* being interpreted as the womb of the Virgin.¹¹ Here the picture is transformed: Christ is bringing His Bride to the bridal-chamber.

Biblical imagery would suggest that the Bride is the Church, the new Jerusalem of the Apocalypse.¹² That cannot be so here since Sion, the Church, is presented as the handmaid preparing the bridal-chamber. The Bride can be no other than Mary, for it is she who comes with the infant Christ to the temple. There is something of a paradox in this description of the mother and her Son as *sponsus* and *sponsa* (1./3). The terminology derives first and foremost from the parable of the virgins which forms the basis of the second stanza but also from the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs which sees in the Lover and His Beloved the figures of Christ and Mary. Abelard comments:

Ad hanc (sc. Mariam) specialiter illa vox Sponsi dirigitur, qua tam dulciter invitatur: Surge, propera, amica mea, et veni.¹³

In *Sermo I* he interprets the Psalmist's *Astitit regina a dextris tuis* as an allusion to Mary:

Magnum est, filia, incomparabile bonum te coelestis regis sponsam effici spiritualement ut quasi regina coelorum ei iuncto latere assistas...¹⁴

⁹ Luke 5.34-35; Matt.25.1ff.

¹⁰ Ps.18.6.

¹¹ cf. Ambrose *Intende qui regis Israel* (AH 50.8.5./1-2 p.14) and Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.18: hoc est, ille tamquam sponsus, cum Verbum caro factum est, in utero virginali invenitur* (CC Ser.Lat.38) p.109.

¹² Apoc.21.2.

¹³ *Sermo XXVI* quoting CC 2.10 (PL 178.543A); cf. Alan of Lille *Eluc.in Cant.Cantic.* quoting CC 1.1 and Luke 1.38 (PL 210.54).

¹⁴ *Sermo I* (PL 178.387D) quoting Ps.44.10.

Mary is as much Christ's Bride as His mother and, because He is *Domnus*, she is the Lady (*domina* 2./3) whom the nuns delight to serve. Abelard has already given her this title in the Nativity hymn where she is the Queen of Heaven, *coeli domina*.¹⁵

The instruction to Sion the handmaid to prepare the chamber for the Bridegroom paves the way for the allusion in the second stanza to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins:

Tunc simile erit regnum caelorum decem virginibus: quae accipientes lampades suas exierunt obviam sponso et sponsae. Quinque autem ex eis erant fatuae, et quinque prudentes...Media autem nocte clamor factus est: Ecce sponsus venit, exite obviam ei. Tunc surrexerunt omnes virgines illae, et ornaverunt lampades suas.¹⁶

The verbal echoes are, for the most part, obvious: *virgines, prudentes, lampades*. A fourth reminiscence is found in *surgant* (2./4) which echoes the *surrexerunt* of Matthew. The timing, too, is echoed, for the main part of the parable takes place at night (*Media autem nocte clamor factus est...*), the time at which the hymn is to be sung, although not the time of the event which is being celebrated. It is through the parable that Abelard makes the link between the event and the service for which the hymn is intended. In this way the anachronism is concealed, yet anachronism is one of Abelard's complaints about the standard hymns in Preface I.¹⁷

In the hymn it is only the wise virgins who have a place, since the hymn is characterized by a sense of expectant joy which leaves no room for "weeping and gnashing of teeth". It would, moreover, be inappropriate to speak of the foolish who were unprepared for the Bridegroom's arrival, since the virgins addressed here must be the nuns of the Paraclete who, by the very fact that they are singing the hymn, are showing their readiness for His coming.

The identification of nuns in general with the wise virgins of the parable is seen in an early hymn for the Nocturn service at midnight where the epithet *sanctae* is used of *virgines* instead of *prudentes* to show that nuns are meant:

ipsum profecto tempus est quo voce evangelica venturus sponsus creditur regni caelestis conditor.	occurrunt sanctae virgines obviam tunc adventui, gestantes claras lampadas, magno laetantes gaudio. ¹⁸
--	--

15 30.4./3.

16 Matt.25.1-7.

17 See summary of Preface I in **Introduction** p.13.

Abelard makes specific the correlation between the wise virgins of the parable and the nuns of the Paraclete in the closing words of his address to them in *Epistle VIII*:

...quo ad sortem vel descriptionem illarum quinque prudentium virginum
pertingere valeatis, quas in depingenda virgine Christi Dominus nobis in
Evangelio proponit.¹⁹

Not only are there present in the convent *virgines*, the nuns proper, but also the *adulescentulae* (2./3). Szövérfy takes this to be a further reference to the nuns, but he offers no explanation why they should be addressed as "young girls".²⁰ It is more likely that these are the novices in the convent or, perhaps, those girls who were being educated by the nuns, as Heloïse herself had been at Argenteuil. *adulescentulae* would be an appropriate description of both these groups, so that, although they are not full members of the convent, they are not excluded from the call to celebrate, but are to rise to meet the Bride, their Lady, as she draws near. A sense of excitement is evoked by the participle *occurentes* (2./3): there is no hesitation or shadow of reluctance in their greeting.

The *famuli*, the third group present at the service, are next addressed. It is not clear from the hymn who these are, nor does the parallel sermon shed any light. Szövérfy suggests that they are the monks of the double monastery of the Paraclete.²¹ Certainly, in his letter giving a "Rule" to the convent Abelard provides early Church parallels for some association between the convent and a nearby monastery, although it is not clear that the monastery was his own foundation.²² So, although there may be relatively few of the *famuli* at the service, they are still included for they too are to light torches (*faces accendant famuli* 3./1).

The choice of *famuli* to describe these brothers is governed more by liturgical association than by Abelard's perception of their rôle. In the first prayer of the ceremony the celebrant says:

18 Walpole 41.25-32 pp.209-210.

19 *Epist.VIII* (PL 178.258A).

20 Szövérfy II p.99.

21 Szövérfy II p.99. P.Bourgain ("Héloïse" *Abélard en son temps*, ed.Jolivet, p.217) argues that the Paraclete was not truly a double monastery.

22 *Epist.VIII* (PL 178.274D-275A) *Oportet itaque sicut Alexandriae sub Marco evangelista legimus esse factum in ipso Ecclesiae nascentis exordio, ut monasteriis feminarum monasteria non desint utrorum et per eiusdem religionis viros omnia exinsecus feminitis administrentur.*

...tuam supplices deprecamur clementiam, ut has candelas quas nos tui famuli...cupimus luce accensas, benedicere...digneris.²³

The *famuli* are first and foremost servants of the Lord, only secondly servants of the nuns.

All the groups are brought together in the phrase *Domus omnis* (3./3). This is an occasion of such celebration that all must be included, from the highest to the lowest, the abbess to the most junior novice. It is all the members of the household (*Domus omnis*) who, with all their lamps (*cum omnibus/...luminaribus* 3./3-4), greet the true Light (*vero ...lumine* 3./2). Again there are echoes of the liturgy from the prayer

Domine Iesu Christe, lux vera ...effunde benedictionem tuam...ut sicut haec luminaria, igne visibili accensa, nocturnas depellunt tenebras...,

where there is a similar double reference to Christ the true Light and to the *luminaria* of the choir.²⁴

A sense of anticipation is evoked by the twofold *occurrentes* and *occurrat* (2./3 and 3./4): they are all to run to meet the Bridegroom. It is enhanced in the line *Domus omnis cum omnibus* (3./3) through its stress on "all" and through the assonance of -om and -um. That sound does not in itself suggest excitement, but Abelard's obvious delight in the proliferation of the syllables is infectious. The imperative *aptate* (2./2) and the jussives *surgant* (2./4), *accendant* (3./1), *occurrat* (3./4) suggest the urgency of their preparation for the welcome of the Bridegroom and His Bride. There is no sluggishness; all is enthusiasm and light.

The fourth stanza moves from the present celebration of the Feast to the event it commemorates. There is no hiatus between the stanzas. This unity is achieved partly by the structure of the hymn which does not differentiate between people of widely separated historical periods, but addresses all in the same terms, partly by the recurrent motif of light which reaches its climax in this stanza.

The addressee is Simeon, the old man (*senex* 4./1) described in Scripture as *homo iste iustus et timoratus*, and in various prayers of the liturgy as *venerabilis senex, iusti Simeonis, sancti Simeonis*.²⁵ Abelard chooses a new epithet, *beatus*, in line with the

23 See **Foreword** to this section p.105 n.8.

24 *ibid.*

25 Luke 2.25 and the liturgical prayers in Andrieu *Pontifical* pp.206-9 (see **Foreword** to this section p.105 n.8); cf. the antiphon for Nocturns CLS 6 p.232: *Symeon iustus et timoratus expectabat redemptionem Israel, et Spiritus sanctus erat in eo.*

joyful celebration of the festival. It looks forward to the rest of the stanza where the reason for his happiness is adumbrated.

The sense of expectation reaches a climax in the triple imperative *propera...comple...revela* (4./1,3,4) arranged in an ascending tricolon. *propera* picks up the excitement of *occurentes* and *occurrat* from the preceding stanzas. The command to hurry, however, seems redundant for the joy of seeing the Messiah had long been promised to Simeon so that it would be natural for him to be in haste to see its fulfilment.²⁶ The final couplet,

et revelandum gentibus
revela lumen omnibus (4./3-4),

suggests why he is summoned to hasten: in the joy promised to Simeon is the joy desired by the nations. It is Simeon's part to reveal to all peoples the Messiah, the true Light, the focus of their hopes.

Abelard clearly echoes a phrase in Simeon's prophecy and, at the same time, alters its meaning. He alludes to Simeon's description of Christ as *lumen ad revelationem gentium*.²⁷ The addition in the hymn of the imperative *revela* creates the paradox that Simeon is to reveal light when, in normal circumstances, it is light which reveals. So the joy broadens from the bliss of one man for whom a promise has been fulfilled to the bliss of the nations to whom hope of salvation is now extended.

The hymn draws to a more subdued close with the moving picture of Anna, the widow who has spent a lifetime devoted to the service of God in His temple.

Devota Deo vidua
eiusque templo dedita (5./1-2)

interprets the description in Luke

Et haec vidua usque ad annos octaginta quattuor; quae non discedebat de templo, ieiuniis et obsecrationibus serviens nocte ac die.²⁸

There is an interplay between

eiusque templo dedita (5./2)

and a line in the following hymn,

in templo templum offerunt,

²⁶ Luke 2.26 *Et responsum acceperat a Spiritu sancto non visurum se mortem nisi prius viderat Christum Dominum*, used as the antiphon for Terce (CLS 6 p.233).

²⁷ Luke 2.32.

²⁸ Luke 2.37.

where *templum* is Christ.²⁹ That metaphor is more fully discussed later, but I would suggest that Abelard consciously intended the double meaning in this hymn too. In the light of the pun *in templo templum offerunt*, Anna's devotion to God's temple takes on another layer of meaning. She has indeed been devoted to the temple in Jerusalem all the years of her widowhood, but her recognition of the Child as the Lord suggests her devotion to Christ the true Temple.

The final couplet again contains an echo of Scripture. Szövérfy is correct in pointing out that *confitere* is a "Scriptural commonplace, especially in the Psalms", but Abelard chooses that verb precisely because Luke does: *Et haec ipsa hora superveniens confitebatur Domino...*³⁰

Here too Abelard adds to Scriptural reminiscence his own interpretation of events, an interpretation which is amplified in *Epistle VII* where he lays stress on the rôle Anna played in the recognition of the divinity of the infant Jesus.³¹ As there, in the words

Dominum Iesum Christum in templo cum sancto Simeone pariter meruit
suscipere....

so here in the hymn he emphasizes her equality with Simeon: she is to prophesy with a joy equal to his (*part propheta gaudio* 5./3). The motif introduced here of the equality of the sexes in the plan of salvation becomes an important motif in the last hymn for the Feast:

Omnis sexus et quaelibet
aetas plaudat et iubilat.³²

The final line of the fifth stanza, *et confitere Domino*, leads into the doxology. Anna is told by the singers to praise the Lord and they themselves proceed to add their words of praise to Father, Son and Spirit. In the choice of theme for the last couplet of the doxology, the equality of the Persons of the Trinity in substance and glory, Abelard alludes to the motif introduced in the preceding stanza of the equality of man and woman in salvation. The final phrase *sic et una sit gloria* (6./4), is later echoed in the last hymn for the Feast which again takes up the theme in the lines

Gaude vir, gaude femina,

²⁹ 39.1./2; see discussion pp.119-120.

³⁰ Szövérfy II p.100; Luke 2.38.

³¹ *Epist.VII* (PL 178.237C).

³² 41.1./1-2.

communi laeti gloria,
surely no accidental echo.³³

³³ 41.2./1-2.

6.3. 39. *in secundo nocturno*

Argument: Mary and Joseph present Christ in the temple. He is the offering on our behalf, the price of our redemption. The doves, the purificatory sacrifice, are symbols. A symbolic lamb is not required since Christ is the true Lamb.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Parentes Christum deferunt,
in templo templum offerunt;
legi parere voluit
qui legi nihil debuit.</p> | <p>1. His parents bestow Christ,
in the temple they offer the Temple:
He wished to obey the Law
Who owed nought to the Law.</p> |
| <p>2. Offer, beata, parvulum,
tuum et patris unicum;
offer, per quem offerimur,
pretium quo redimimur.</p> | <p>2. Blessed mother, offer your little One,
your only Son and the only Son of His Father,
offer Him through Whom we are offered,
offer the Price by Whom we are redeemed</p> |
| <p>3. Procede, virgo regia,
profer natum cum hostia:
tollantur aves mysticae
tibi vel ipsi congruae.</p> | <p>3. Go forward, royal maiden,
present your Son with the offering:
let the mystic birds be received,
fit for you and fit for Him.</p> |
| <p>4. Monstret columba simplicem,
designet turtur virginem;
pauper quidem haec hostia
sed magna sunt mysteria.</p> | <p>4. Let the dove signify innocence,
let the turtle-dove mark a virgin;
this sacrifice is indeed poor
but great are its mysteries.</p> |
| <p>5. Haec quidem erat pauperum,
cum esset agnus divitum;
sed agni veri latio
non eget agno mystico.</p> | <p>5. This was indeed the sacrifice of the poor,
while a lamb was the sacrifice of the rich;
but the offering of the true Lamb
needs no mystic lamb.</p> |
| <p>6. Deo Patri cum Filio,
cum Spiritu Paraclito,
ut est una substantia
sic et una sit gloria.</p> | <p>6. To God the Father with the Son
and with the Spirit, the Paraclete,
as they are one in substance,
so may they be one in glory.</p> |

The anticipation of the previous hymn, where the coming of the Bridegroom and His Bride is eagerly awaited, is now fulfilled. *Parentes Christum deferunt* (1./1): the parents bring the Child, the Bridegroom has come. The hymn opens with narrative but this element is quickly subsumed in theological comment on the symbolism of the event. The scene of the hymn is set in the first couplet which evokes in a few words the story in Luke's Gospel:

Et postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis eius secundum legem Moysi tulerunt eum in Ierusalem ut sisterent eum Domino.¹

The reference in the second couplet to the Law (*legi parere voluit* 1./3) needs no explanation in the hymn because the readings for the First Nocturn, from Exodus and Leviticus, contain the commands of the Law for the presentation of a first-born son and for the sacrifice for the mother's purification:

(from Exodus) Sanctifica mihi omne primogenitum quod aperit vulvam in filiis Israel; (from Leviticus) Cumque expleti fuerint dies purificationis suae, pro filio sive pro filia, deferet agnum anniculum in holocaustum et pullum columbae sive turturem pro peccato...Quod si non invenerit manus eius, nec potuerit offerre agnum, sumet duos turtures vel duos pullos columbarum, unum in holocaustum, alterum pro peccato.²

Once the scene is set Abelard immediately adds a twist to the narrative through the word-play of *in templo templum offerunt* (1./2). The metaphor derives from the words Christ used as a sign of His death and resurrection: *Respondit Iesus et dixit eis: Solvite templum hoc et in tribus diebus excitabo illud.*³ John comments *Ille autem dicebat de templo corporis sui*. It is found early in patristic writings in the works of Tertullian and Fulgentius, but seems to have fallen out of favour thereafter. Tertullian writes

...ut in praeteritum in templo commorabatur ante adventum Christi, qui est verum Dei templum.⁴

Fulgentius has

...idem Deus et templum...templum, in quo reconciliati (sumus); Deus, cui reconciliati.⁵

1 Luke 2.22ff.

2 Brev.Rom. *in festo purif.Mariae*, First Nocturn *Lectio* I Exod.13.2; *Lectio* II Lev.12.6 and 8.

3 John 2.19 and 21.

4 Tertullian *adv.Iudaeos* (PL 2.675C).

5 Fulgentius *de fide* 22 (CC Ser.Lat.91A) p.726.

Abelard adds to this tradition by a deliberate juxtaposition of the material and the metaphor, so paving the way for the paradox which he expounds in the second couplet. The One Who is the true Temple considered it fitting that He be offered in a temple made with hands, not because He was under the Law, but because He chose to obey the Law.

Szövérfy suggests that Christ stands above the Law because He is the Law's Legislator but this is not the point at issue here.⁶ It is rather because Christ is perfect that He is not under the Law. Abelard establishes a parallel between the willing submission to the Law shown by Christ and by Mary in coming to the Temple since she herself did not require purification:

Circumciscus tamen more aliorum, et cum hostis in templo praesentatus, et more feminarum mater eius purificationem observavit legalem, in qua nihil purificandum fuerat purgandum. Quae enim virgo de Spiritu sancto concepit et peperit, nihil legi debebat in ritu purificationis.⁷

It is interesting that he transfers the phrase *nihil legi debebat* which in the sermon describes Mary to Christ in the hymn, *qui legi nihil debuit* (1./4). The parallelism again underlines the complementary rôles played by Christ and Mary in the plan of redemption: just as each endured poverty, so each accepted subjection to the Law as a mark of humility.⁸

It is also a mark of Christ's humanity that He desired in all things to be obedient to the Law. Not otherwise could His identification with mankind be complete. This incident finds a parallel in His baptism about which Abelard writes

Baptizatur a servo
...qui non eget baptismo.⁹

As a number of commentators suggest, both events are an enactment of the principle enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount: *nolite putare quoniam veni solvere legem aut prophetas: non veni solvere sed adimplere*.¹⁰

⁶ Szövérfy II p.100 citing II Cor.5.20ff., Heb.5.3ff., I Pet.2.22.

⁷ *Sermo V* (PL 178.419C).

⁸ See **Foreword** to the Nativity hymns p.23.

⁹ 36.1./2-4; see discussion p.88.

¹⁰ Matt.5.17. See Rabanus Maurus *de cleric. instt.* II.33 (PL 107.345B-C); John Beletth *Rat.Div.Offic.* (PL 202.86C).

Abelard's *Sermo V*, originally written for this Feast for monks rather than the nuns of the Paraclete (he addresses his congregation as *fratres*), consists of an extended commentary on Galatians 4.3-7 especially

At, ubi venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum, factum ex muliere, factum sub lege: ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret.¹¹

There are three names for this Feast: *dictitur enim vel Purificatio beatae Mariae, vel Candelaria, vel ἡ Παρθενοῦς Domini*.¹² In the first of the four hymns Abelard lays the emphasis on the presentation of Christ in the temple, and he underlines the imagery of Candlemas through the numerous references to light. Here, in the second hymn, Mary is given a place of importance, not indeed with regard to her purification, but rather to her offering of her Son. The hymn begins ^{with} Mary and Joseph (*Parentes Christum deferunt* 1./1), but the second and third stanzas address Mary alone (*Offer, beata, parvulum* 2./1, *Procede, virgo regia* 3./1).

As in the previous hymn, so here the imperatives give a spontaneity to the scene which brings before our eyes Mary as she is on the point of offering her Son. The double offer (2./1 and 2./3) picks up and emphasizes *offerunt* from the first stanza. It is only now that the full significance of that verb becomes clear. It does not occur in the story in Luke where the equivalent is *...ut sisterent Domino*, but it does appear along with the verb *deferre* in the command in Leviticus:

deferet agnum anniculum in holocaustum et pullum columbae sive turturem pro peccato...et tradet sacerdoti qui offeret illa coram Domino.¹³

The use of these two verbs in the hymn is the first intimation that Christ Himself is the sacrifice.

The second line *tuum et patris unicum* (2./2) is important in this connection for it is a deliberate reminiscence of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis. God said to Abraham: *Tolle filium tuum unigenitum, quem diligis, Isaac...atque offer eum ibi holocaustum*.¹⁴

11 *Sermo V* (PL 178.417B-C) quoting Gal.4.4-5, the *Capitulum* for Sext (CLS 6 p.233).

12 John Beleth *Rat.Div.Offic.* (PL 202.86B).

13 Luke 2.22 and Lev.12.6-7.

14 Gen.22.2.

The repetition of *offer* and the echo of the phrase *tuum unigenitum* in *tuum unicum* is a reminder that the sacrifice is made not solely by Mary but by God Himself.¹⁵

Mary offers to God the One Who will later offer Himself on the Cross.¹⁶ In his sermon for Candlemas, Abelard prays:

Ipse nos offerat Patri suo, cui hodierna die cum nostrae carnis substantia
praesentatus est in templo.¹⁷

As Christ identifies Himself with us in obedience to the Law, so we partake with Him in this offering to the Father, an extension of the Pauline teaching on baptism.¹⁸

Christ is the sacrifice by which we can approach God, the Price by which we are redeemed from slavery to sin (*pretium quo redimimur* 2./4). This motif reappears in two more of Abelard's hymns: the first refers to Christ's willing sacrifice, *ut servum redimat se dedit pretium*, while the second emphasizes that it was for money that Judas sold the Price of the world, *ut his in pretio det mundi pretium*.¹⁹ The imagery derives from the language of the New Testament where Paul writes *Empti estis pretio magno* and Peter

scientes quod non corruptibilibus auro vel argento redempti estis...sed pretioso
sanguine quasi agni immaculati Christi.²⁰

The immediate influence is again the passage in Galatians with which Abelard opens *Sermo V* ...*ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret*. It is as an echo that he uses *redimimur* in the hymn.

The first two stanzas concentrate through the imagery of sacrifice on the presentation of Christ in the temple, the last two on the sacrifice demanded by the Law of a lamb or two doves. The third stanza forms a structural link between these two themes. The imperatives of the second stanza, *offer... offer...*, run on into the first couplet of the third, *procede ...profer...*(3./1-2): Mary is told to go forward and to present

¹⁵ cf. 31.1./1.

¹⁶ 42.8./1-2 *Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine,/ morti te offerens...*

¹⁷ *Sermo V* (PL 178.425A). The basis of this prayer is found in the liturgy for Nocturns (CLS 6 p.232)...*ut sicut unigenitus filius tuus hodierna die cum nostrae carnis substantia in templo est praesentatus, ita nos facias purificatis tibi mentibus praesentari*.

¹⁸ See Rom.6.3-4 and Gal.3.27.

¹⁹ 26.3./4 and 42.3./4.

²⁰ I Cor.6.20; I Pet.1.18-19; cf. I Cor.7.23

her Son. It is at this point that Abelard subtly introduces the new theme. To the phrase *Profer natum* he adds *cum hostia*, the first indication in the hymn that there is another sacrifice. The second couplet,

tollantur aves mysticae
tibi vel ipsi congruae (3./3-4),

flows naturally from *cum hostia*, announcing the type of sacrifice. The point is quickly made that these birds are more than the ritual sacrifice of Leviticus: they are *mysticae*, symbols which apply equally to Mary and to Christ (*tibi vel ipsi congruae* 3./4).

The adjective *mysticae* is echoed in the fourth and fifth stanzas, *magna sunt mysteria* (4./4) and *non eget agno mystico* (5./4). This proliferation underlines the main theme of the hymn, the symbolism of the presentation of Christ. In each case *mysticus* or *mysterium* refers to the typological element in the offering. The birds, the dove and the pigeon, foreshadow the innocence of Christ and the virginity of Mary; the offering of the lamb foreshadows the sacrifice of the true Lamb.

The Law demands the offering of either two turtle-doves or two pigeons.²¹ Abelard adapts the command to suit his purpose. Because it is the symbol within the sacrifice that is important, he suggests that Mary offered one bird of each kind so that two symbols are involved,

monstret columba simplicem
designet turtur virginem (4./1-2).

He is not alone in interpreting Luke's account in this way. Bede writes: *Hostia haec pauperum erat...Columba ergo simplicitatem, turtur indicat castitatem*.²² The dove signifies the innocence of Christ Who, in being born of a virgin, entered the world without sin and remained sinless throughout His life.

In his comment on *simplicem* Szövérfy cites the instruction to the disciples in Matthew:

Ecce ego mitto vos sicut oves in medio luporum: estote ergo prudentes sicut serpentes et simplices sicut columbae.²³

The Fathers used this as a figure in their expositions on the nature of the Holy Spirit. Tertullian comments:

²¹ Lev.12.8.

²² Bede *Homil.* XV (PL 94.80B); cf. Bernard of Clairvaux *Serm. super Cant. Cantic.* 59 (ed. Cisterc. 1958) II p.139.

²³ Szövérfy II p.101 citing Matt.10.16.

sanctissimus Spiritus...columbae figura delapsus in Dominum, ut natura Spiritus sancti declararetur per animal simplicitatis et innocentiae, quod etiam corporaliter ipso felle careat columba. Itaque: Estote, inquit, simplices sicut columbae, ne hoc quidem sine argumento praecedentis figurae.²⁴

Bede then applies the adjective *simplex* to Christ Himself:

Nam et ipsa singulariter simplex et casta nostri Salvatoris humanitas, quae oblata est Deo Patri pro nobis, non incongrue per immolationem columbae sive turturis potest figuraliter exprimi.²⁵

The turtle-dove symbolizes virginity and is an apt symbol of Mary.²⁶ Mary, though a mother, remains a virgin, a point which has just been restated in *Procede, virgo regia* (3./1) although, in view of the vast hymnological and patristic material on the subject, it hardly needs reiterated.²⁷

The last couplet,

pauper quidem haec hostia,
sed magna sunt mysteria (4./3-4),

summarizes the third and fourth stanzas and introduces a new motif which will form the basis of the fifth. The contrast between the poverty of the sacrifice and the depth of the mystery it signifies is heightened by the parallel structure which opposes *pauper* and *magna*, *hostia* and *mysteria*. The symbol is of greater importance than the vehicle in which it is carried.

Pauper opens the way for the subject of the next stanza which begins with a reference to the poverty of Mary and Joseph. The initial demand of the Law for the sacrifice of a lamb and a dove was modified in the case of the poor to two doves.²⁸ In this couplet,

Haec quidem erat pauperum
cum esset agnus divitum (5./1-2),

24 Tertullian *de baptismo* 8 (PL 1.1316B-1317A) cf. Cyprian *de unitate Ecclesiae* IX *In domo Dei, in Ecclesia Christi, unanimes habitant, concordēs et simplices perseverant. Idcirco et in columba venit Spiritus sanctus: simplex animal et laetum, non felle amarum, non morsibus saevum...* (PL 4.522B).

25 Bede *Homil.*XV (PL 94.81A).

26 See D'Arcy Thompson *A Glossary of Greek Birds* 2 (London 19360 p.241 on πάλαια and περιστέραι.

27 See 30.stanzas 5 and 6 and discussion pp.36-40.

28 The subject of Mary's poverty has already received extensive treatment in the hymns for the Nativity. See pp.23, 34, 36, 57.

pauperum contrasts vividly with *divitum* in the following line and the contrast is sharpened by position and rhyme. A link between them is thus indicated. Szövérfy suggests that the phrase *agnus divitum* probably refers to the Lamb of the Apocalypse.²⁹ This surely cannot be relevant here. Abelard is rather keeping within the bounds imposed by the context of the hymn and is referring not to the Lamb of the Apocalypse, but to the lamb demanded by the Law in Leviticus as the offering of the rich. On this understanding the two lines now form an intriguing paradox. In her poverty Mary offers the sacrifice due from the poor, a sacrifice that is richly symbolic of purity and virginity. But, although she does not realize it, she is also offering the lamb demanded of the rich, for she offers the true Lamb Himself.³⁰

In the final couplet,

sed agni veri latio
non eget agno mystico (5./3-4),

the lamb of the offering is juxtaposed with the true Lamb of Whom it is a symbol. Abelard suggests that it would be superfluous for Mary, even were she able to afford it, to offer a lamb. For a lamb, which is only the shadow of the true Lamb, cannot be required when that true Lamb is present. So the hymn comes full circle: it opens with the offering of Christ the true Temple, *in templo templum offerunt* (1./2), and closes with the sacrifice of Christ the true Lamb, ...*agni veri latio* (5./3).

²⁹ Szövérfy II p.101 citing Apoc.5.6, 5.12 etc.

³⁰ The Lamb of God is an image of Christ in both the Old Testament and the New *e.g.* Is.53.7, John 1.29 and Apoc.5.6.

6.4. 40. *in tertio nocturno*

Argument: Christ urges His disciples by His own example to embrace poverty. From childhood He showed in deed what He later taught. His life is the Gospel in action and is thus the standard against which the Church is measured.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Qui paupertatem admonet
hanc in se prius exhibet:
Deus dives in omnibus
ut nos ditet pauperrimus. | 1. He Who urges poverty
first shows it in Himself:
God, rich in all things,
became most poor to make us rich. |
| 2. Factis primum exhibuit
quod verbis tandem docuit,
a cunis mox incipiens
et re vocem praeveniens. | 2. He showed first in actions
what He later taught in words,
beginning early from the cradle,
anticipating the teaching with the deed. |
| 3. Hic est ille funiculus
in manu viri lineus:
subtilis evangelicae
sermo legis in opere. | 3. This is that line of flax
in the hand of the man:
the fine teaching of the gospel law
in action. |
| 4. Hic est mensurae calamus
quem gestat manu parvulus
ut super montem positum
mensuret aedificium. | 4. This is the rod of measurement
which the Child holds in His hand
to measure the building
set on the mountain-top |
| 5. Mensurae quippe calamus
liber est evangelicus,
quem manu fertur gerere
qui scriptum complet opere. | 5. Inasmuch as the measuring-rod
is the book of the Gospel,
He Who fulfils the written word in deed
is said to hold it in His hand. |
| 6. Hoc super ipsum posita
mensuratur ecclesia,
dum in hoc quisque percipit
quantum crescit aut deficit. | 6. By this is measured the Church
which is founded on Him,
while each man perceives
how much he grows or falls. |
| 7. Deo Patri cum Filio
cum Spiritu Paraclito,
ut est una substantia
sic et una sit gloria. | 7. To God the Father with the Son
and with the Spirit, the Paraclete,
as they are one in substance,
so may they be one in glory. |

4./3 super B and C: supra Dreves and Szövérfy

6./4 aut C: ac B: et Dreves and Szövérfy

The body of this hymn is essentially a paraphrase in poetry of an ancient interpretation of a passage from the prophecy of Ezekiel.¹ The first stanza does not form part of this interpretation but provides a transition between the preceding hymn and this one. The link is made through the motif of poverty, the note on which 39 ends and with which this opens. In the final stanza of 39 Mary makes the offering due from the poor, *Haec (sc. hostia) quidem erat pauperum*;² here her Son urges poverty in His disciples. Although poverty is not, in fact, the subject of the hymn, it serves as an introductory *exemplum* of the generalization which holds together the seemingly fragmented motifs: Christ became poor and teaches His disciples to do likewise, an example of action anticipating words.

The general teaching for which the first stanza provides an *exemplum* is suggested in the opening lines

Qui paupertatem admonet,
hanc in se prius exhibet (1./1-2),

is given its most explicit expression in

Factis primum exhibuit
quod verbis tandem docuit (2./1-2)

and is restated in *et re vocem praeveniens* (2./4). So the hymn moves from the particular to the general, opening the way for the metaphors of the plumbline and the yardstick. The plumbline is the law of the Gospel in action,

subtilis evangelicae
sermo legis in opere (3./3-4).

This yardstick is the teaching of Christ

Mensurae quippe calamus
liber est evangelicus (5./1-2).

Because Christ has fulfilled all the law of the Gospel, His own teaching (*qui scriptum complet opere* 5./4), He is worthy to hold the yardstick against which the building, the Church, is measured

ut supra montem positum
mensuret aedificium (4./3-4).

Such is the general pattern of the hymn.

Qui paupertatem admonet (1./1) sums up the teaching of Christ on poverty in the Gospels where He gives the solemn warning

¹ Ezek. 40.2ff.

² 39.5./1.

Facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire quam divitem intrare in regnum
caelorum.³

Christ has been true to His own teaching since, before He expressed His will in words, He expressed it in action (*hanc in se prius exhibet* 1./2). The second couplet dwells on the foremost example of the poverty of Christ in a reference to the incarnation. The mainspring for the paradoxical

Deus dives in omnibus,
ut nos ditet, pauperrimus (1./3-4)

is, as Szövérfy rightly cites, in Corinthians: *Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis*.⁴ Abelard gives expression to the same wonder through the structure of the couplet with its emotive juxtapositions and alliteration. The alliterative and assonantal *Deus dives...ditet* underlines the richness of God, which is then contrasted sharply with *pauperrimus*. *pauperrimus* is itself emphasized by the fact that it is both superlative and postponed until the final position in the couplet. The reason for Christ's sacrifice, that by it we are made rich (*ut nos ditet* 1./4), is set between the two contrasting adjectives *dives* and *pauperrimus*, and the juxtaposition of this clause with *pauperrimus* underlines the oxymoron.

A similar amazement pervades the Christmas hymns where it is the contrast between the divinity of the Child, with all which that entails, and the poverty-stricken surroundings into which He was born that is the main theme. This is especially so in those lines which parallel this stanza with their suggestion of the reason for such a sacrifice, that we might become rich:⁵

Quam beata pauper puerpera
culus partus ditavit omnia

is explicit, making its point, as here, through alliteration and assonance, *pauper*, *puerpera*, *partus* followed by the contrasting *ditavit*. It is interesting to note that the parallel is in more than meaning: here in 40 the alliteration and assonance are in the words to do with riches, and the contrast is with *pauperrimus*; in 30 the alliteration and assonance are rather in words which have to do with poverty and the contrast is formed by *ditavit*.

³ Matt.19.24; cf. Matt.19.21 and Matt.10.10.

⁴ Szövérfy II p.102 cites II Cor.8.9.

⁵ 30.3./1-2.

Although the second stanza moves away from the motif of poverty to a generalization of the connection between Christ's words and His deeds, it is here that we find a second level of the expression of poverty. It is the poverty in which He dwelt throughout his life, suggested in the line *a cunctis max inceptiens* (2./3). There is an echo of this phrase in the Christmas hymns in *in praesaeptis pro cunctis positus* where the point is made that He did not have even a cradle and is further emphasized in the same hymn in the phrases *Excipitur vili turgurio* and *stratum habet foeni reliquias*.⁶ This is the outworking of Christ's own words: *Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet*.⁷ He has the authority to demand poverty of His disciples since He Himself has suffered it. In the same way He demonstrated in action all the precepts which He later set before His followers (*Factis primum exhibet/ quod verbis tandem docuit* 2./1-2).

Harmony of word and deed is a recurrent motif in Abelard's writings, both in the theological works and in his letters to Heloise. In the latter he twice emphasizes at considerable length the necessity for the abbess to conduct herself in such a way that her words are mirrored in her deeds:

Qui coepit facere et docere (Act.1.1), prius videlicet facere, postmodum docere. Quia melior atque perfectior est doctrina operis quam sermonis; facti quam verbi...In hac autem omnium exempla debent eminere virtutum, ut omnia quae aliis praeceperit propriis praeveniat exemplis, ne ipsa quae praecepit moribus oppugnet, et quod verbis aedificat factis ipsa destruat...⁸

The image of building in this last echo is fundamental to an understanding of the rest of the hymn which is based on an interpretation of Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple in Jerusalem:

In visionibus Dei adduxit me in terram Israel et dimisit me super montem excelsum nimis, super quem erat quasi aedificium civitatis vergentis ad austrum. Et introduxit me illuc; et ecce vir cuius erat species quasi species aeris, et funiculus lineus in manu eius et calamus mensurae in manu eius.⁹

Szövérfy comments that these stanzas form "one of Abelard's most 'outlandish' passages based on Scriptural background".¹⁰ The passage is, however, only outlandish

6 31.1./3, 2./1, 4./3.

7 Matt.8.20.

8 *Epist.VII* (PL 178.268D-269A and 270A); cf. *Theol.Christ.* II.45 (CC Cont.Med.12) p.45 and II.93. p.93.

9 Ezek.40.2-3.

if the accepted interpretation of Ezekiel's vision is unrecognized. Szövérfy himself quotes from Hieronymus Lauretus a passage which sheds some light on the hymn and says that Lauretus' wording "goes back to much older sources". These sources are Jerome's Commentary on Ezekiel, the Homilies of Gregory the Great and Rabanus Maurus' Commentary which quotes lengthy sections of Gregory *verbatim*.¹¹

Jerome and Gregory see the difficulty in understanding Ezekiel's vision of the Temple in a literal sense and explain it as allegory. Jerome expounds each of the elements *iuxta mysticos sensus*: "L'homme au roseau, par exemple, c'est Jésus-Christ, le véritable Architecte".¹² De Lubac then describes Gregory's approach:

Gregoire...a peut-être raison de penser que l'édifice ne pouvait avoir pleine consistance hors de l'imagination du prophète et qu'il faut donc, pour lui donner sa vérité, le prendre, suivant l'intention de l'Esprit-Saint, comme le symbole d'une réalité qui est, pour le chrétien, *sanctae Ecclesiae aedificium, caelestis civitatis aedificium*.¹³

It is in this tradition that Abelard follows. The language of the hymn indicates that Abelard is paraphrasing either Gregory or Rabanus.

Hic, the first word of both the third and the fourth stanzas, links this new section of the hymn with what has gone before. The line of flax and the measuring-rod are the teachings of Christ expressed in action. Gregory writes:

Scimus autem quod funiculus lineus subtilior est quam si funiculi fiant aliunde. Et quid in funiculo lineo, nisi subtiliorem praedicationem, id est spiritalem debemus accipere? Censura etenim legis funiculus fuit, sed lineus non fuit, quia rudem populum non subtili praedicatione coercuit, in quo per poenae sententiam non peccata cogitationis, sed operis resecauit. At postquam per semetipsum Dominus etiam cogitationes hominum praedicando religavit, et perfectum esse peccatum etiam in corde innotuit, funiculum lineum in manu tenuit. Ait enim: Audistis quia dictum est antiquis: Non moechaberis; ego autem dico vobis, quia qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, iam moechatus est cum ea in corde suo. Funiculus ergo lineus praedicatio est subtilis, quae mentem audientis ligat, ne se vel in misera cogitatione dissolvat. Et notandum quod dicitur, quia ei

10 Szövérfy II p.102 quotes Lauretus *Silvae allegoriarum totius Scripturae* ed. Fr. Ohly (Munich 1971) p.482.

11 Jerome *Comm.in Hiezech.* (CC Ser.Lat.75 p.549ff.); Gregory the Great *Homil.in Ezech.* II.1 (PL 76.937-945); Rabanus Maurus *Comm.in Ezech.* XIV (PL 110.882-891).

12 Jerome *in Hiezech.* (CC Ser.Lat.75 p.551 l.86) trans. Henri de Lubac *Exégèse Médiévale* II.1 p.398.

13 de Lubac *Exégèse Médiévale* II.1 p.396 quoting Gregory (PL 76.948C).

funiculus in manu est, id est praedicatio in operatione. In se enim ostendit omne quod docuit, sicut scriptum est: Quae coepit Iesus facere et docere.¹⁴

We see from this why Abelard has emphasized by position the adjective *lineus*: this plumbline is a new instrument of judgement, a better one than the old which only measured actions while the new measures thoughts as well. It is, therefore, *subtilior*, a difficult word to translate for it includes the ideas of fineness, an apt description of a line spun from flax, and of precision which is necessary in a true plumbline.

The fourth stanza introduces the object that is to be measured:

ut super montem positum
mensuret aedificium (4./3-4).

The language echoes that of Ezekiel's vision:

et dimisit me super montem excelsum nimis super quem erat quasi aedificium civitatis vergentis ad austrum.¹⁵

The close echoes indicate that the reading *super montem* (4./3) is to be preferred to Dreves' reading *supra montem*.¹⁶ The building in Ezekiel is the new Temple; in the hymn it is the Church, as Abelard clarifies in the final stanza:

Hoc super ipsum posita
mensuratur ecclesia (6./1-2).

The similarity in the language of the two stanzas is striking. It is an established *figura* that the Temple of the Old Testament foreshadows the Church of the New.¹⁷ Such is the force of Gregory's comment on the verse:

Notandum est quod non dicitur, Super quem erat aedificium, sed 'quasi aedificium', ut videlicet ostenderetur quod non de spiritalis, sed de corporalis civitatis aedificio cuncta dicerentur...Et ipsa est civitas, scilicet sancta Ecclesia quae regnatura in coelo adhuc laborat in terra.¹⁸

Gregory interprets the mountain on which the Church is set as Christ Who, as Man, is of the earth but Who, as God, partakes of the divine:

14 Gregory (PL 76.943A-C); Rabanus (PL 110.886A-B) quotes Gregory *verbatim* but omits the last two sentences.

15 Ezek.40.2.

16 *super* appears in B and C; Dreves, followed by Szövérfy, has changed this to *supra*.

17 e.g. Augustine *Enarr. in Ps.28.9* (CC Ser.Lat. 38 p.171.9.5-7).

18 Gregory (PL 76.938C-D). Rabanus quotes Gregory *verbatim* (PL 110.883A-B).

"Et dimisit me super montem excelsum nimis." Quem ergo significat mons excelsus nisi mediatorem Dei et hominum hominem Christum Iesum? Qui de terra quidem, sed ultra terram est, quia caro eiusdem Redemptoris nostri de imis habet materiam, sed in summis praeeminet ex potestate... Mons ergo iste est et excelsus et nimis, quia etsi de terra est per substantiam humanitatis, incomprehensibilis tamen erat ex altitudine divinitatis.¹⁹

Gregory sees the problem inherent in this interpretation of the mountain, for it is not only the mountain which is Christ, but the man who holds the line and the rod. He compares it with a similar paradox set up by Christ Himself when He said "I am the Door" and "I am the good Shepherd":

Si igitur ipse pastor, et ipse ostium, et intrat pastor per ostium, cur non hoc loco et ipse mons, et ipse vir intelligitur, qui aedificium metitur in monte?²⁰

While the line of flax is the life of Christ, the words of the Gospel in action, the measuring-rod is the actual teaching of the Gospel:

Mensurae quippe calamus
liber est evangelicus (5./1-2).

Gregory again:

Potest etiam calamus mensurae Scriptura sacra pro eo intelligi, quod quisquis hanc legit, in ea semetipsum metitur vel quantum in spiritali virtute proficit, vel quantum a bonis quae praecepta sunt longe dislunctus remansit.²¹

Together the line and the yardstick form the practice and theory of the Gospel.

The line of flax is in the hand of a man (*in manu viri* 3./2); the measuring-rod is held by a child (*quem gestat manu parvulus* 4./2). Abelard ensures that the reference to Ezekiel is seen and understood by giving a very full quotation from the prophecy: *Et ecce vir...et funiculus lineus in manu eius* echoed in

Hic est ille funiculus
in manu viri lineus (3./1-2).

Once the context has been established, the terms of reference can be changed: the man of the third stanza becomes the child of the fourth. The transformation is only superficial for the man and the child are one and the same. Later in the same vision the man says of the Temple: *locus solii mei...ubi habito in medio filiorum Israel in*

19 Gregory (PL 76.937C-938A). Rabanus quotes Gregory but adds an individual interpretation. (PL 110.882D-883A).

20 Gregory (PL 76.941C) quoting John 10.9 and 11. Rabanus (PL 110.884D).

21 Gregory (PL 76.945A). Rabanus (PL 110.887B).

aeternum.²² This is an Old Testament apotheosis of the One who in after years would come as the Child.

There are two reasons why Abelard^{has} chosen at this point to present Christ as a child. First, that the hymn is being sung at the Feast which commemorates the presentation of the Child in the Temple. The other is explained in the fifth stanza but refers back to the second.

quem manu fertur gerere,
qui scriptum complet opere (5./3-4)

makes clear why Christ is worthy to hold the plumbline and the yardstick: He has fulfilled in action all the law of the Gospel, and He has done this from childhood, *a cunctis max tricipiens* (2./3). Thus, as both Man and Child, He provides the standard against which the Church can be measured (*ut super montem positum/ mensuret aedificium* 4./3-4).

The motif of measuring recurs in the sixth stanza and is expressed in very similar terms to the fourth.

ut super montem positum/ mensuret aedificium (4./3-4),

Hoc super ipsum posita/ mensuratur ecclesia (6./1-2)

are in parallel, for the one illumines the other. The similarity of *super montem positum* and *super ipsum posita* suggests that the *ipsum* of the sixth stanza is the mountain on which the building is set. *ipsum* could otherwise refer to the Gospel of the preceding stanza (*liber evangelicus* 5./2), certainly a possible interpretation, but not, I think, the one intended here. The mountain is Christ Himself, so that here the Church is built on Him.

Hoc (6./1) could also refer to the *liber evangelicus* of the fifth stanza, but the effect of the anaphora *Hic* (3./1), *Hic* (4./1), *Hoc* (6./1) points to a different meaning. It is the teaching of the Gospel fulfilled in action in the life of Christ (*factis primum exhibuit/ quod verbis tandem docuit* 2./1-2) against which the Church is measured. The meaning of the couplet is complex: the Church founded on Christ is measured against the life and teachings of Christ which are the plumbline and yardstick Christ holds in His hand.

The final couplet,

dum in hoc quisque percipit,
quantum crescit aut deficit (6./3-4),

²² Ezech.43.7.

could mean one of two things: if the Church is tested against the yardstick that is Christ, it will be clear to all to what extent the Church is reaching the standard of the Gospel and to what extent she is falling short. It is also possible to take *quisque* as the subject not only of *percipit*, but also of *crescit* and *deficit*: by setting his life against Christ's a man is enabled to see in what ways he measures up to the Gospel and in what he fails. Szövérfy takes the lines to mean the first of these possibilities:

The Church is measured by this "strict" yardstick (the teachings of the Gospels). This statement clearly indicates Abelard's strict 'reformist' attitude toward his contemporaries in the Church.²³

Gregory's comment, on the other hand, suggests a more individual and personal reference:

...quisquis hanc (i.e. Scripturam sacram) legit, in ea semetipsum metitur vel quantum in spiritali virtute proficit, vel quantum a bonis quae praecepta sunt longe disiunctus remansit; quantum iam assurgat ad bona facienda, quantum adhuc in pravis actibus prostratus iaceat.²⁴

The disjunctives *vel..vel..* in Gregory's Homily support the reading *aut* in the hymn, *quantum crescit aut deficit* (6./4), although *aut* is the reading of C which is not usually to be preferred over B.

Although the emphasis of the hymn is weighted towards interpreting these lines as a reference to the Church, it is more likely, given Abelard's reliance on Gregory throughout, that he follows him in this too and speaks here of the individual. There would otherwise be no point to *quisque*. This emphasis on the individual does not in itself preclude a subsidiary reference to the Church, for the Church consists of people, as Gregory points out when he quotes from I Peter:

Et ipsa est civitas, scilicet sancta Ecclesia...cuius civibus Petrus dicit: Et vos tamquam lapides vivi supraedificamini.²⁵

Three questions remain to be answered. What made Abelard choose such a subject for a hymn for the Feast of Christ's presentation? And, having made that choice, how does he fit the subject of the hymn into the context of the festival?

It is unlikely that Abelard would have chosen the passage from Ezekiel as the basis of the hymn had he not been familiar with Gregory's interpretation, for the hymn

²³ Szövérfy II p.103.

²⁴ Gregory (PL 76.945A). Rabanus (PL 110.887B).

²⁵ Gregory (PL 76.938D) quoting I Peter 2.5.

paraphrases and summarizes Gregory's Homily rather than the vision itself. The link between the Homily and the festival lies in the emphasis on the Law. In the preceding hymn Abelard has

legi parere voluit
qui legi nihil debuit:

this was the reason for the presentation of Christ, to fulfil the Law.²⁶ For Gregory the *funiculus lineus* of Ezekiel's vision is the new law of the Gospel which subsumes the old Law of Moses, the Law that Christ obeys in His presentation.

Since the choice of subject is not immediately obvious, Abelard tries in various ways to make connections between it and the festival. Because Christ was presented in the Temple as a Child, there are three references to His childhood. The first brings to mind His incarnation as a baby,

Deus dives in omnibus,
ut nos ditet, pauperrimus (1./3-4);

a cunis max incipiens (2./3) widens the scope of reference from the cradle to His early years, while in the fourth stanza it is the Child Who holds the rod of measurement (*quem gestat manu parvulus* 4./2).

The other link is more tenuous because it relies on the singers' realization that the *aedificium* of Ezekiel's vision (*ut super montem positum/ mensuret aedificium* 4./3-4) is the Temple, and it is in the Temple that Christ was presented.

Finally, was on Gregory or Rabanus that Abelard relied? There is a single clue that would point to familiarity with the primary source, Gregory's Homilies which contains two sentences on the *funiculus lineus* missing from Rabanus:

Et notandum quod dicitur, quia ei funiculus in manu est, id est praedicatio in operatione. In se enim ostendit omne quod docuit sicut scriptum est: Quae coepit Iesus facere et docere.²⁷

It is these sentences which embody much of Abelard's emphasis in the hymn. especially the two couplets:

subtilis evangelicae
sermo legis in opere (3./3-4).

quem manu fertur gerere
qui scriptum complet opere (5./3-4).

²⁶ 39.1./3-4.

²⁷ Gregory (PL 76.943B); Rabanus Maurus (PL 110.886A-B).

6.5. 41. *ad laudes*

Argument: All are to rejoice because salvation has come for all. Male and female share in the glory of the incarnation. Elisabeth declares the identity of Mary's Child. John the Baptist, still in the womb, recognizes the Messiah. Simeon and Anna reveal the Christ.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Omnis sexus et quaelibet
aetas plaudat et iubilet,
mouet omnes ad gaudium
qui venit salus omnium. | 1. Let each sex, let every generation
clap their hands and rejoice:
He Who comes, the Salvation of all,
moves all to joy. |
| 2. Gaude, vir, gaude, femina,
communi laeti gloria,
virum, quem Deus induit,
ignara viri peperit. | 2. Rejoice, man, rejoice, woman,
glad in the glory you share;
the woman who knew no man
has brought forth a Man in Whom God clothes Himself. |
| 3. Congaude, virgo, virgini;
mater est ^{et} Altissimi,
nupta nuptae congaudeat
quae mox conceptum praedicat. | 3. Maiden, rejoice with the maiden:
she is the mother of the Highest;
let the bride rejoice with the bride
who proclaims the One next conceived. |
| 4. Conclusus adhuc utero,
quo potens infans gaudio
vitam mundi, quam senserat,
mundo statim annuntiat. | 4. A babe, still enclosed in the womb,
empowered by this joy
straightway declares to the world
the Life of the world Whom he had sensed. |
| 5. Hinc senex, inde vidua
laude Christum prophetica
confitentes dominicam
ostenderunt praesentiam. | 5. Here the old man, there the widow,
with prophetic praise
acknowledging the Christ
have revealed the presence of the Lord. |
| 6. Deo Patri cum Filio
cum Spiritu Paraclito,
ut est una substantia,
sic et una sit gloria. | 6. To God the Father with the Son
and with the Spirit, the Paraclete,
as they are one in substance,
so may they be one in glory. |

1./3 mouet *B* and *C*: monet *Dreves* and *Szövérfy*

1./4 qui *B*: que *C*

Two themes run through this hymn: the universality of the summons to rejoice and the joy with which the incarnation is greeted. The first is introduced in

Omnis sexus et quaelibet
aetas plaudat et iubilet (1./1-2).

Szövérfy suggests that there may be an echo of the final stanza of Prudentius' hymn *Corde natus ex parentis*:

Te senes et te iuvenes, parvulorum te chorus,
turba matrum virginumque, simplices puellulae,
voce concordespudicis perstreant concentibus
saeculorum saeculis.¹

Certainly there are here old and young, married and unmarried, young girls and babies, but the wording of Abelard's hymn shows more resemblance to two other passages, one of them a Psalm, the other part of a sermon by Ambrose. Psalm 46 calls the people to praise:

Omnes populi plaudite manibus, iubilare Deo in voce laudis iuvenes et virgines,
senes cum pueris laudent nomen Domini.²

It is the concurrence of the verbs *plaudere* and *iubilare* which suggests the Psalm as a source for the hymn.

Ambrose writes

Omnis aetas et uterque sexus eventorumque miracula fidem adstruunt: virgo generat, sterilis parit, mutus loquitur, Elisabet prophetat, magus adorat, utero clausus exsultat, vidua confitetur, iustus exspectat.³

Although the context is different, the similarity of the phrase *Omnis aetas et uterque sexus* with the lines *Omnis sexus et quaelibet/ aetas* (1./1-2) and the list of those involved, especially the phrases *utero clausus* and *vidua confitetur* which have their parallels in the hymn (*conclusus adhuc utero* 4./1 and *...vidua/...confitentes* 5./1-3) indicate Abelard's debt, conscious or unconscious, to Ambrose.

The motif is picked up and elaborated in each of the remaining stanzas. The phrase *omnis sexus* (1./1) is divided in 2./1 into its two constituent parts, *vir* and *femina*. The third stanza lays the emphasis on the second of these constituents, subdividing *femina* into *virgo* (3./1) and *nupta* (3./3). The second phrase, *quaelibet aetas*, is also evoked here in the indication that the women are of different ages: they

1 Szövérfy II p.103 citing Prudentius *Cathem*.IX.109-111 (CC Ser.Lat.126) p.51.

2 Ps.46.1.

3 Ambrose *Expos.in Lucam* II.58 (CC Ser.Lat.14 p.56).

are maiden and bride. The fourth stanza turns to men in the person of John the Baptist. It is not, however, his maleness which is stressed, but his age: not only is he *trifans* (4./2), but he is still unborn. The last stanza brings in those of both sexes who are old, *senex* and *vidua* (5./1). *Vidua* does not necessarily suggest age but we know that this is Anna, the widow who is eighty-four years old.⁴

Thus Abelard echoes the words of the Psalmist but adds to the categories and adapts them to the context of the hymn. He draws together all those who have appeared in the earlier hymns in the section, the *virgines* and *famuli*, *Simeon* and *Anna* of 38, the Virgin Mary of 39 and adds the figures of Elisabeth and John who, according to the Gospel record, were the first to announce the presence of the Messiah.⁵

A note of joy, the second of the two main themes, resounds throughout the hymn generally in forms of the noun *gaudium* and its cognates. Cassiodorus in his Commentary on Psalm 46, the source of the verbs *plaudat ac tubilet* (1./2), glosses the latter *Iubilare vero gaudere est*.⁶ Each sex and every generation is to applaud and be jubilant for Christ promises joy (*gaudium* 1./3) to all men. The two sexes are told to rejoice (*Gaude vir, gaude femina* 2./1); they are joyful (*laeti* 2./2). Maiden and bride are enjoined to be happy together (*Congaude...congaudeat* 3./1-3). The infant John proclaims his recognition of the Christ with joy (*gaudio* 4./2). The fifth is the only stanza which does not mention the joy of the pair who recognize the Messiah; there is no need at this point to restate the theme which is now subsumed in the note of praise that sounds explicitly in the word *laude* (5./2) and implicitly in the final couplet

confitentes dominicam
ostenderunt praesentiam (5./3-4).

We turn to a more detailed study. That Christ came as the salvation of all is a Scriptural commonplace, the title occurring in both Old and New Testaments.⁷ The impetus for the description here is Simeon:

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace quia
viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.⁸

⁴ Luke 2.37 *et haec vidua usque ad annos octaginta quattuor.*

⁵ Luke 1.40ff.

⁶ Cassiodorus *Expos.in Ps.46.2* (CC Ser.Lat.97) p.421.29-30.

⁷ e.g. Is.52.10, Matt.1.21.

Abelard has already used the phrase once in the festival hymns, in the last of the hymns for Epiphany where he describes the signs which manifested Christ to the world:

qua per tanta mundo signa
mundi salus apparet.⁹

The emphasis of the stanza is on universality, that of the salvation offered by Christ and of the consequent joy to which He summons mankind. The threefold use of *omnis* (1./1), *omnes* (1./3), *omnium* (1./4), with *omnis* and *omnium* occupying first and last positions in the stanza, underlines the point and echoes the first hymn in the section where all the house with all their lamps run to meet the Light of the world:

veroque mundi lumini
domus omnis cum omnibus
occurrat luminaribus.¹⁰

The double *gaude* of the second stanza picks up *gaudium* from 1./3 and emphasizes that the summons to rejoice is equally to male and female. *vir* and *femina* are not only general in their application, echoing *omnis sexus* (1./1), but particular to the context in which the hymn is to be sung. As is suggested in the first hymn for Candlemas, there are both nuns and monks present at the service.¹¹ The equality of honour granted to male and female in the incarnation is indicated by the parallel structure of the first line (*Gaude vir, gaude femina*), is specified in the second (*communi laeti gloria*) and is explained in the final couplet. The glory which men and women share is that God became flesh. That He came as a man is the peculiar glory of the male sex, that He was born of woman without the agency of man, the glory of the female. In *Sermo I* Abelard elucidates the somewhat compressed thinking of the hymn, showing the significance of this equal but different honour:

Concepit Dominum femina ut Creatorem pareret creatura. Communis quidem salus haec est hominum, specialis gloria feminarum. Primus Adam de terra plasmatus, non de femina est natus: in(m)o de eius costa femina est formata. Secundus Adam, ac prioris et omnium tam factor quam redemptor, nostri sexus formam de femina decrevit assumere, ut in utroque sexu consisteret gratia, sicut in utroque praecesserat culpa...¹²

8 Luke 2.29-30.

9 37.2./3-4.

10 38.3./2-4.

11 See 38.2./1 and discussion pp.113-4.

12 *Sermo I* (PL 178.379A-381A).

As each sex through separate sins brought about the Fall, so each must play a different part in the Redemption which they both will share. There are echoes here of Abelard's Nativity hymn *Gaude virgo*:

...et mater, iubilans,
quae commune sanctorum omnium
meruisti conferre gaudium.¹³

It is a theme which recurs constantly in Abelard's writings, the special place of woman in the plan of salvation, making her equal with man in their common glory.

The image in which Abelard describes the incarnation, *virum quem Deus induit* (2./3), the image of clothing oneself, occurs in another of his sermons: *caro virginis quae se verus Agnus induit* and again in the Lauds hymn for Holy Saturday where the phoenix puts on its wings: *alas...pristinam/ rursum induit*.¹⁴ The phoenix is analogous to Christ in His resurrection; although the image is slightly different, it serves to connect the incarnation and the resurrection, the one a birth, the other a re-birth.

Layering of images makes the third stanza more complex than the preceding two. Maiden is told to rejoice with maiden. The latter is then identified as Mary: *mater est haec Altissimi* (3./2), words reminiscent not so much of Gabriel's announcement to Mary where *Altissimi* refers to God the Father, but rather to Zacharias' prophecy about his son, the Baptist: *Tu, puer, propheta Altissimi vocaberis*.¹⁵

Who then is the *virgo* commanded to rejoice with Mary? There is no obvious candidate in the Gospel whom this description fits, but Abelard in a later hymn in honour of John the Baptist has

Senex hunc et sterilis
illum virgo genuit.¹⁶

Because the birth of her son was miraculous (in *Sermo I* he writes *Elisabeth...obtinuit ex gratia quod habere non poterat ex natura*), Elisabeth can be called *virgo*.¹⁷

There is a further dimension to *virgo* which arises from the parallel instruction to the *virgines* in the first hymn for Candlemas,

13 33.1./2-4.

14 *Sermo II* (PL 178.389C); 53.3./3-4.

15 Luke 1.31-32 and 1.76.

16 116.1./1-2.

17 *Sermo I* (PL178.387A).

Prudentes illi virgines
vestras aptate lampades,

where the virgins are not only those of the parable but the nuns of the Paraclete.¹⁸ Here too, then, the nuns singing the hymn are drawn into the action of the hymn.

The possibilities of *nupta nuptae* (3./3) are legion. That either *nupta* or *nuptae* is Elisabeth is demonstrated by the words *quae mox conceptum praedicat* (3./4). Elisabeth it was who greeted Mary:

Benedicta tu inter mulieres et benedictus fructus ventris tui; et unde hoc mihi ut
veniat mater Domini mei ad me?¹⁹

Thus she announces the identity of the One Whom Mary has conceived in the months after Elisabeth conceived her son. If *nupta* is Elisabeth and the antecedent of *quae...praedicat*, then *nuptae* must be Mary.

The positions of *congaude* and *congaudeat*, however, suggest a different possibility: that *nupta* is Mary and *nuptae* Elisabeth. Thus the two lines

Congaude, virgo, virgini
nupta nuptae congaudeat

would make up a chiasmus (command, Elisabeth, Mary/ Mary, Elisabeth, command) with lines 2 and 4 paralleling each other as descriptions of the preceding datives. When Mary is described as *nupta*, she is not so much Joseph's bride as the Bride of Christ. Abelard has already used this image in hymn 38 where Sion is instructed to welcome the Bridegroom and His Bride (*sponsum et sponsam suscipe*), as Mary brings her Son to the Temple.²⁰

In addition to these two interpretations is the one which Szövérfy mentions, that *virgo* and *nupta* are images of the Church.²¹ As Mary is *Virgo mater*, so is the Church. Alan of Lille compares them:

Sicut enim Ecclesia Dei mater est Christi in membris per gratiam; sic Virgo
mater est Christi, capitis per humanam naturam.²²

18 38.2./1-2; see discussion pp.112-113.

19 Luke 1.42-43.

20 38.1./3.

21 Szövérfy II p.104.

22 Alan of Lille *Elucidatio* in CC. (PL 210.60).

nupta is an early image based on the Song of Songs and the vision of the new Jerusalem in the Apocalypse. In the Song the Lover and His Beloved are, according to Ambrose, Cassiodorus and Gregory the Great, among others, figures of Christ and the Church. A phrase from Gregory reads *sponsa enim ipsa perfecta Ecclesia est; sponsus Dominus*.²³

In addressing the *virgo* and the *nupta*, the hymn is summoning the whole Church to rejoice with Mary and Elisabeth. It is unnecessary to decide on any one of these interpretations, for the ambiguity is probably intended. To choose one, to narrow the scope of the stanza, is against the whole tenor of the hymn. To appreciate the complex interlacing of the different images is to recognize in this the main theme of the hymn, the universality of the call to rejoice.

Thus an extra dimension is brought to the opening phrase *quaelibet aetas* (1./1-2) when the present and the past coalesce in Elisabeth who is to rejoice with Mary, and Mary with Elisabeth, and in the Church who is to rejoice with both. The universality of the joy is developed in that this is a command not only to individuals but to the Church as a whole through the ages as both Virgin Mother and the Bride of Christ.

The fourth stanza provides an *exemplum* of a child who joys in the presence of Christ. This child is different in both sex and age from the individuals of the previous stanza and so continues the obedient fulfilment of the command with which the hymn opens: *Omnis sexus et quaelibet/ aetas plaudat et tubilet* (1./1-2). The language of the first couplet

conclusus adhuc utero
quo potens infans gaudio (4./1-2)

reflects its source in Luke:

...repleta est Spiritu sancto Elisabeth...et dixit:...ecce enim ut facta est vox
salutationis tuae in auribus meis, exsultavit in gaudio infans in utero meo.²⁴

infans is chosen not simply because it appears in Luke but for its double meaning of "baby" and "unable to speak". The latter meaning creates an ingenious twist when taken with the final verb *annuntiat* (4./4). The strength of the child's joy is such that it empowers him (*quo potens...gaudio* 4./2) to proclaim the presence of the Life of the world, although he is yet *infans*.

²³ Gregory the Great *Super CC Expos. Prooemium* (PL 79.477C); cf. ps-Ambrose *Comm.in CC* (PL 15.1946A- 1947A); Cassiodorus *Expos.in Ps.Praef.17* (CC Ser.Lat.97 pp22-23).

²⁴ Luke 1.41-44.

That Abelard was struck by the record in Luke of the joy of the unborn child is suggested by the occurrence of the same motif in a later hymn:

Domini praesentiam/ clausus adhuc utero
quam voce non poterat/ prophetavit gaudio.²⁵

The emphasis is different. There the child, because he cannot proclaim it vocally, shows by his joy that Christ is present. In this hymn, although the situation is the same, the emphasis is placed on vocal announcement through the position of *annuntiat*, through the contrast between it and *infans*, and through the phrase *quo potens...gaudio*. The words of the prophecy of Elisabeth are thus transferred to John, for it was his joy which impelled her to speak.

vitam mundi...
mundo statim annuntiat (4./3-4)

looks forward to John's rôle as herald of the Lord, according to Zacharias' prophecy: *Tu, puer, propheta Altissimi vocaberis*.²⁶ The force of *statim* is twofold: no sooner does John realize that Christ is at hand than he proclaims it; but, more so, he proclaims it while yet unborn.

The One Whom He announces to the world is the Life of that world, an amalgamation of images which occur in John's Gospel: *in ipso vita erat et vita erat lux hominum*; and Christ says of Himself *Ego sum...Vita*.²⁷ The implicit contrast that it is John, still shut in the womb, who has perceived the Life of the world and who must tell to that world that the Messiah has come, while the world remains unaware, is reminiscent of the words of the Prologue: *in mundo erat et mundus per ipsum factus est et mundus eum non cognovit*.²⁸

In the final stanza we stay with Scripture but move to the particular event which the Feast commemorates, the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. The scene is evoked by the parallel *Hinc senex, inde vidua* (5./1), Simeon and Anna. Simeon rejoices that he has seen God's salvation (*viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum*).²⁹ This is the salvation which is the reason for the joy of all:

²⁵ 115.3./1-4.

²⁶ Luke 1.76.

²⁷ John 1.4 and 14.6.

²⁸ John 1.10.

movet omnes ad gaudium
qui venit salus omnium (1./3-4).

Anna's widowhood is mentioned in Luke, but, more importantly for the hymn, she is described as *prophetissa filia Phanuel*.³⁰ When Christ is brought into the Temple, she gives praise to God and speaks about the infant Messiah to all present:

haec, ipsa hora superveniens, confitebatur Domino et loquebatur de illo omnibus
qui exspectabant redemptionem Ierusalem.³¹

Abelard picks up *prophetissa* in *prophetica*, *confitebatur* in *confitentes*, just as he does in the first hymn in the section:

pari propheta gaudio
et confitere Domino.³²

Using words which evoke the picture of Anna, he describes how both Simeon and Anna proclaim the presence of the Lord. It is significant that Abelard chooses to remind us of Anna rather than Simeon. In every possible instance he grants women the place of honour in the history of salvation. He gives a similar emphasis in *Epistle VII*:

Dominum Iesum Christum in templo cum sancto Simeone pariter meruit
suscipere...³³

This tendency is especially appropriate here in a hymn written first and foremost for a community of nuns.

29 Luke 2.30.

30 Luke 2.36.

31 Luke 2.38.

32 38.5./3-4.

33 *Epist.VII* (PL178.237B-C).

7.1. *infra sacrum triduum* - foreword

The fourteen hymns for the Sacred Triduum should not properly be included among the *Hymni Festorum*, Abelard's *Libellus* II for the Paraclete. Although Good Friday and Holy Saturday are special days, they are not Feasts of the Lord. The Sacred Triduum hymns are a separate entity and should be classed rather with Abelard's liturgical innovations for the celebration of Holy Week at the Paraclete.¹

I have, nevertheless, included them in this study for three reasons: because they have been traditionally placed with the *Hymni Festorum*; because they show an affinity with the *Hymni Festorum* which they do not have with either of the other two *Libelli*; and, most importantly, because it is my purpose to discuss the hymns which treat of Christ. To omit the fourteen hymns which deal with His death, and thus to move straight from His presentation in the Temple to His resurrection, would be to lose a significant part of Abelard's Christological thinking in his hymn-writing.

Since these hymns do not truly belong to *Libellus* II, they need not conform to the specifications laid down for that book in the Third Preface: that there should be one hymn for each of the three Nocturns and one for Lauds.² The Sacred Triduum group supplies one hymn, instead of three, for Nocturns, one for Lauds and adds hymns for the Day Office, one for each of the Hours from Prime to Compline on Good Friday, Prime to None on Holy Saturday.

The belief that all Abelard's hymns must fit into the scheme of the *Hymni Festorum* induced Dreves to split the first long hymn for Good Friday into three to provide one hymn for each of the Nocturns. The resultant hymns make satisfactory reading and their length (three stanzas) accords well with those for Lauds and the Day Office. Dreves also took the final stanza of the Lauds hymn, which appears at the end of all the subsequent Sacred Triduum hymns, and attached it to his three new Nocturn hymns as a quasi-doxology. In all this he has been followed by Szövérfy. Waddell, in contrast, remains true to the MS reading of one long hymn which I too have followed.

The first hymn for the Sacred Triduum, for Nocturns of Good Friday, is intended to be sung also at Vespers of Maundy Thursday. It opens with the departure of Judas from the Last Supper and his collusion with the Jewish authorities. The second section (stanzas 4-6) deal with the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. The final stanzas, which have inspired a number of translations, turn from the events of the night to an examination

1 The hymns occur only in C: see **Introduction** p.12

2 For a resumé of the Third Preface see **Introduction** pp.14-15.

of our relationship with Christ.³ It foreshadows the final stanza of each of the remaining hymns until Easter: it is our sin which has brought Christ to the cross and our response is to desire to share His suffering. The motifs of *compassio* and sharing in His glory are interlinked: if we willingly spend these three days in grief, we will share the joys of resurrection.⁴

The Gospels set the major events of the Passion at particular hours. Abelard follows these in the rest of the Good Friday hymns. The Lauds hymn continues the story with a rehearsal of the trial held by Annas and Caiaphas before dawn. At Prime Christ is brought before Pilate who attempts to prevent the crucifixion. At Terce He is led to Calvary, at Sext darkness covers the earth and at None He dies. In the evening Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take the body from the cross and lay it in a tomb. During the night, says Abelard in the Compline hymn, the women keep vigil.

The narrative of the events is mingled with interpretation and teaching. So, for instance, the darkness was brought about by the sun's refusal to countenance the sin of man against the true Sun. The *compassio* of the sun contrasts with the cruelty of men, but also looks forward to the *compassio* of the faithful.⁵

The hymns for Holy Saturday are structured on a different basis. Abelard starts with Friday as the sixth day of the week, Saturday as the seventh, the days on which God made man and then rested from His work. The days of creation had long been interpreted allegorically and Abelard's hymn is no exception. On the sixth day of Holy Week, Good Friday, Christ finished His work on earth. He is the second Adam in Whom all men are newly created. On this, the seventh day, God's first rest is paralleled by Christ's rest in the tomb.

Abelard's evocation of the days of Creation in the first hymn for Saturday opens the way for the animal imagery of the subsequent hymns. The hymn for Lauds begins a series (53-56) which centres around the beast-motifs of the lion and the phoenix. The symbolism of these creatures was taken in part from Scripture, in part from pagan mythology. The bestiaries in which the stories were contained claimed to have a factual

3 For two of the finest translations see F.Bland Tucker "Alone Thou goest forth, O Lord", contained in most modern hymnals, and Helen Waddell *Medieval Latin Lyrics* (London 1943) p.167 "Alone to sacrifice Thou goest, Lord".

4 cf. 42.9./1 and 3-4 with 45.4./3-4.

5 See 48.2./1-4.

basis. The typology, or in some cases the moral, came later. The second century Greek *Physiologus*, translated into Latin in the fourth, was the ultimate source for many of the stories in later bestiaries, both Latin and vernacular. Such stories, with their descriptions of outlandish creatures and their typological expositions, caught the imagination of poet, artist and people alike.

The hymn for Sext introduces a new motif taken from the Psalms of the river of death from which Christ drank. This forms the basis of the final hymn which has another link with the first hymn for Holy Saturday through the metaphor of David and Goliath, types of Christ and Satan.

7.2. 42. *in cena Domini ad vespas et in parasceve ad nocturnos*

Argument: Christians weep remembering the beginning of Christ's Passion, His betrayal by Judas. While Christ institutes the Eucharist, Judas sells Christ and buys death for himself. Christ is bound that He may set men free; the Judge of all is judged. Christ offers Himself for the sins which we have committed. We are moved to pray that we may suffer with Him in order to merit pardon. Our sorrow will change to joy at the resurrection.

1. Haec nox, carissimi, nox illa flebilis
qua comprehenditur dies a tenebris,

plis fidelium est plena lacrimis;
aquas immanitas compellit sceleris.

1. This night, beloved, that night of weeping,
when the day is overcome by the shadow of
dark,

is filled with the holy tears of the faithful;
the heinousness of the sin calls forth a tide of
tears.

2. Hac nocte proditor est per se proditus,

qui lupus fuerat permixtus ovibus;
agnus ad victimam per lupum traditus
scelus antidotum fecit sceleribus.

2. On this night the traitor was by himself
betrayed,

the wolf who had mingled with the sheep;
the Lamb, by the wolf delivered to the sacrifice,
has made this sin a cure for sins.

3. Dum sacrum celebrat Christus mysterium
egressus traditor sanctum collegium,
ad pravum congregat pravos consilium
ut his in pretio det mundi pretium.

3. While Christ celebrates the sacred mystery
the traitor left the holy company
and gathers the wicked for his wicked design
to give to them for a price the world's Price.

4. Mercator omnium, Iuda, stultissime,
cum mortis emptio sit vitam vendere,
ne quid susceptio prosit pecuniae,

quem vendis, praevenis mortis in funere.

4. Judas, most foolish merchant of all,
since to sell life is the purchase of death;
lest your taking money should bring you any
gain,

you precede the One you sell in death's
extinction.

5. Ut patientia probetur traditi
monstrat hunc traditor per signum osculi
ploque imple permixta nomini
nec salutatio defuit crimini.

5. To prove the long-suffering of the One betrayed
the traitor marks Him out by the sign of a kiss,
and by unholy mingling with the holy name
the greeting attended the sin.

6. Tentus ligatus est a servis Dominus
ut servos solveret peccati nexibus,
ut reus traditus reis iudicibus

supremus omnium iudex iustissimus.

**6. Held and bound was the Lord by slaves
that He might loose slaves from the bonds of sin,
as though guilty He was handed over to guilty**

judges,

the supreme Judge of all and the most just.

**7. Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine,
morti te offerens quam venis tollere;**

quid nos miserrimi possumus dicere,
qui, quae commisimus, scimus te luere.

**7. Alone, Lord, You go to sacrifice,
offering Yourself to the death You come to
destroy;**

what can we, most wretched creatures, say,
who know that You atone for the sins we have
committed.

8. Nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina,
qui tua criminum facis supplicia,
quibus sic compati fac nostra pectora
ut vel compassio digna sit venia.

**8. Ours, Lord, ours are the sins;
You make the sins' penalty Your own;
make our hearts so the share Your sufferings
that at least our compassion may win mercy.**

9. Nox ista flebilis praesensque triduum
quo demorabitur fletus sit vesperum
donec laetitiae mane gratissimum
surgente Domino, sit maestis redditum.

9. Let this night of weeping and these three days when tears shall linger, be the evening, until the most welcome morning of joy is restored to us in our sorrow, with the rising of the Lord.

Abelard addresses the hymn to the *carissimi*, the beloved, a form introduced by Peter and John in their Epistles which becomes a stereotype in the homilies of preachers.¹ Abelard himself begins a sermon to the nuns of the Paraclete, *Audistis, charissimae*.² It is, however, most unusual in a hymn, but by its very strangeness Abelard alerts us that the hymns *in parasceve Domini* combine to form a sermon, incorporating the narrative of the Passion, theological comment and, perhaps most significant of all, an appeal to the emotions.

The opening stanza forms a general introduction which includes all these elements. Through the chiasmic order of *haec nox...nox illa* (1./1) are suggested the intertwining and identification of the night which saw the start of the Passion with the night on which it is remembered. As the nuns consider the Passion, this night becomes in their emotional experience that first Good Friday.

The narrative element comes to the fore in the second line (*qua comprehenditur dies a tenebris* 1./2), where we see Christ overwhelmed by His enemies in a metaphor which springs from the words of the Prologue to John's Gospel *et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt*.³ Abelard takes this as his point of departure, substituting *dies* for *lux* in order to make a more effective contrast with *haec nox*. The image is familiar from Ambrose, *dilem dies illuminans* and from the popular *Christe, qui lux es et dies*.⁴ It is a natural extension of the Biblical images of Christ as Sun, Light and *oriens ex alto*, "the Dayspring from on high".⁵

In his sermon for Holy Week Abelard continually plays on the theme of the opposing forces of light and dark:

Venientes afferunt lanternas, ut qui sunt in tenebris caecitatis ipsam lucem caplant mundi...O caeci et vere in tenebris venientes contra lucem et in nocte adversum diem...⁶

1 II Pet.3.1; I John 1.7; Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* LXII.1 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.483.

2 *Sermo XXIX* (PL 178.555A). Szövérfy (II p.105) implies that Ambrose's *Exsultet* influenced *carissimi*. This is possible, but it is the reason that is significant. The influence of *Haec nox est ...Haec igitur nox est...* is seen, not in *Haec nox...nox illa* (1./1), but in the repetition *Haec nox...Hac nocte* (1./1, 2./1).

3 John 1.5.

4 Ambrose *Splendor paternae gloriae* AH 50.5.1./4; AH 51.22.1./1.

5 Mal.4.2; John 1.9 and 8.12; Luke 1.78; cf. Abelard's Nativity hymn 30.1./2.

6 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.471A-C).

The tone of the sermon is one of incredulity that the dark powers should have the temerity to rise up against the Light; in the Gospel one of triumph that the Light has not been overcome by the darkness; but in the hymn there is a deep grief, for here the darkness is victorious, the Light dimmed.

The reason for this deliberate contradiction of the source is simple but effective. John, in writing the Prologue, is speaking from the standpoint of the resurrection, whereas Abelard takes each event as it happens, in a successful attempt to excite in the hearts of the faithful the very hurt and bewilderment of the disciples at the time. The conscious evocation of John's words, but with a contrary intention, achieves a paradox between the two views of the same reality.

It is a night of weeping because the faithful, living through Christ's Passion in the Offices of the day, weep for their Lord. There is an added dimension in the final line *aquas immanitas compellit sceleris* (1./4) where the tears are not simply those of pity, but tears of repentance for the heinousness of the crime perpetrated against Christ. Abelard uses the same phrase (*immanitas sceleris*) in describing Judas who, he says, was appalled by the realization of what he had undertaken: *Stabat tanquam stupefactus et concepti sceleris immanitate perturbatus*.⁷ Here, however, in the hymn's general opening stanza the crime is not only the betrayal of Christ into the hands of His enemies, but the whole of His Passion, betrayal, trial and crucifixion. So it is not just Judas who is overcome by what he has done, but all the faithful for whose sin Christ suffered. This identification with those who caused His death recurs later in the hymn in one of its most compelling stanzas: *Nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina* (8./1). It is only right that there should be tears.

aquas (1./4) is not a common word for "tears", nor is it merely an attempt to ring the changes of expression. As it follows *flebilis* and *lacrimis*, the surface meaning is indeed tears, but there may also be two further allusions: to the waters of baptism and to the water which flowed from Christ's side as He hung on the cross: *unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit, et continuo exiit sanguis et aqua*.⁸ The water which flowed from His side is depicted in art collected in a cup for the cleansing of the Church.⁹

⁷ *Sermo XI* (PL 178.472A).

⁸ John 19.34.

⁹ For illustrations see Emile Mâle *The Gothic Image* pp.189 and 192.

The three images, repentance, baptism and Christ's death, are interconnected: such is the enormity of the crime of the crucifixion that men are compelled by shame to repent in tears and seek baptism, thus entering the number of the faithful. That Abelard saw tears as a proof of true repentance is clear from his quotation of Ambrose in the section of the *Ethica* which discusses confession. Ambrose is speaking of Peter's realization that he has denied his Lord:

Non invenio, inquit, quid dixerit, invenio quod flevit. Lacrimas eius lego, satisfactionem non lego. Lavant lacrimae delictum quod voce pudor est confiteri, et veniae fletus consulunt, et verecundiae. Lacrimae veniam non postulant, sed merentur.¹⁰

Repentance is the prerequisite of baptism, the water which symbolizes the washing away of sin. Thus, under the primary notion of "tears", *aquas* contains a much wider range of imagery.

Although *sceleris* (1./4) speaks of the crime committed against Christ in the whole of His Passion, it is narrowed down in the second stanza to one particular aspect, the first of a series of individual crimes. In the paradoxical statement ...*proditor est per se proditus* (2./1-2) Abelard concentrates on the betrayal of Christ by Judas. This adds a new dimension to the earlier line *qua comprehenditur dies a tenebris* (1./2) so that the verb *comprehenditur* now takes on the more physical meaning of "seized" or "grasped". The thought-pattern of the lines, with their evocation of the metaphorical language of John's Prologue and of the concrete event of the betrayal and arrest, reflects Luke's narration of the action. To those who had come against Him Christ says: *haec est hora vestra, et potestas tenebrarum*. Luke continues: *comprehendentes autem eum*.¹¹ The echo is too close to be accidental. Augustine plays on the same double meaning:

comprehenderunt ad quem non accesserunt, quoniam dies ille; illi vero tenebrae permanserunt, nec audierunt: Accedite ad eum et illuminamini.¹²

¹⁰ *Ethica* XXV (ed. Luscombe *Peter Abelard's Ethics* p.100 and PL 178.669B-C) quoting Ambrose in *Lucam* X.88 (CC Ser.Lat.14) p.371.

¹¹ Luke 22.53-54.

¹² Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.*CXII.6 (CC Ser.Lat.36) pp.635-636 referring to John 18.12 and quoting Ps.33.6.

Szövérfy suggests that the opening of the second stanza may also have been influenced by Augustine.¹³ The passage of Augustine would certainly have delighted Abelard with its play on *tradere*, "to give" and "to betray":

(Iesus) sciens quia omnia dedit ei Pater in manus, ergo et ipsum traditorem. Nam si eum in manibus non haberet, non utique illo uteretur ut vellet. Proinde iam traditor traditus erat ei quem tradere cupiebat, atque ita malum tradendo faciebat, ut de illo tradito bonum fieret quod nesciebat.¹⁴

Augustine's closing words are certainly paralleled in the final line of Abelard's stanza, *scelus antidotum fecit sceleribus* (2./4), where Christ uses evil to effect good. It does not, however, explain the phrase *per se* (*proditor est per se proditus* 2./1).

In a long passage in *Sermo XI* Abelard points out that Judas betrayed himself twice, once at supper when he dipped his hand in the dish along with Jesus, and when he asked if he was the traitor, a question which Christ answered: *Tu dixisti*.¹⁵

Christ warns His disciples to beware of false prophets *qui veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium, intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces*, and says that He is sending them into the world *sicut oves in medio luporum*.¹⁶ Augustine writes of Judas

lupus ovina pelle contextus, et inter oves alto patrisfamilias consilio toleratus, didicit ubi tempus exiguum dispergeret gregem, insidiis appetendo pastorem.¹⁷

Abelard retains the imagery and combines the two Biblical allusions: the wolf is, and has been, among the sheep while they remained unaware.

In the following line, *agnus ad victimam per lupum traditus* (2./3), Abelard diverges from Augustine who keeps throughout to the Scriptural imagery of the disciples as sheep and Christ as Shepherd.¹⁸ Abelard, still in accordance with Scripture, transforms the metaphor, speaking of Christ the Lamb. The combination of *agnus* and *ad victimam* echoes the words of Jeremiah: *quasi agnus mansuetus qui portatur ad victimam*.¹⁹ In changing the image from Christ the Shepherd to Christ the Lamb

¹³ Szövérfy II p.105.

¹⁴ Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* LV.5 (CC Ser.Lat.36) pp.465-466 quoting John 13.3.

¹⁵ John 13.26 and Matt.26.25. Abelard discusses this at length in *Sermo XI* (PL 178.465Aff.).

¹⁶ Matt.7.15 and 10.16.

¹⁷ Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* CXII.2 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.634.

¹⁸ e.g. John 10.14 and Heb.13.20.

Abelard achieves a more emotive juxtaposition: just as he pictures the day overwhelmed by darkness in the first stanza, so here he suggests that the wolf will be victorious. A shepherd can stand against a wolf, a lamb cannot.

antidotum, (*scelus antidotum fecit sceleribus* 2./4), alludes to the traditional motif of the cross as an instrument of healing. The motif is left undeveloped in this hymn but receives a much fuller treatment in the Holy Cross hymns where it will be discussed at greater length.²⁰ Healing as an image of salvation is common in the Old Testament. Isaiah writes of the Messiah

ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera
nostra...et livore eius sanati sumus

and Jeremiah prays

Sana me, Domine, et sanabor; salvum me fac, et salvus ero.²¹

Judas' sin in betraying Christ to His death is used by Christ as a remedy for sin in that the betrayal led to the crucifixion and resurrection and ultimately, therefore, to redemption. In his Commentary on Romans Abelard explains:

Traditio illa, quam et Iudas operatus est, communem omnium redemptionem est
operata...Iudae vero nequitiam in salutem omnium Dominus convertit.²²

The economy of words in the hymn emphasizes the paradox.

The third stanza is essentially narrative: the institution of the Eucharist, the departure of Judas from the disciples to meet with Christ's enemies, his price for betraying his Master. It is not, however, pure narrative, for Abelard adds his own signature through antithesis, word-play, juxtaposition and metaphor.

The central couplet,

egressus traditor sanctum collegium
ad pravum congregat pravos consilium (3./2-3),

19 Jer.11.19. This is more likely to be the inspiration for the imagery than Szövérfy's suggestion *traxit ab ore lupi qua sacer agnus oves* from Venantius Fortunatus (AH 50.68.4 p.75) where the correlation lies only in vocabulary, *lupus*, *oves*, *agnus*. The situation is different and the wolf is Satan, not Judas.

20 See 66-68, especially 67, p.343ff.

21 Is.53.5 and Jer.17.14.

22 *Comm.in Rom.*I.3.12 (CC Cont.Med.11) p.104.282-285.

echoes the words in *Sermo XI sacrum statim collegium egreditur, quo pravum desiderium amplius maturaret*.²³ The effect of the contrast between *sacrum* and *pravum* in the prose is heightened in the hymn by the extended alliterative play on *sacrum...sanctum...pravum...pravos*. The phrases run in parallel: it is a sacred mystery that Christ celebrates with the holy company (*sacrum mysterium...sanctum collegium*), but an evil purpose for which Judas gathers his evil associates (*ad pravum congregat pravos consilium*). Within this parallelism there exists a chiasmus. The phrases *sanctum collegium* and *congregat pravos* contrast with each other but the prefix *con-* underlines the balance: the disciples form a "holy gathering", Judas "gathers the wicked".

Although the adjective is rendered tautologous by the meaning of *mysterium*, Abelard qualifies *mysterium* with *sacrum*. He does so not only for the purposes of contrast and alliteration but for a philological reason. *sacramentum* is the Christian translation of the Greek *μυστήριον*. Isidore associates the two words and links them with the Eucharist.²⁴

The last line brings together the actual and the metaphorical. The priests promised Judas money to betray Christ.²⁵ In Matthew's account the word *pretium* is used when Judas tries to undo his deed by returning the money to the priests who answer: *non licet eos mittere in corbonam: quia pretium sanguinis est*.²⁶ This is the first price of Christ, the thirty pieces of silver. The second, the metaphorical, the image of Christ "the Price of the world", originates in the Old Testament in such phrases as Isaiah's prophecy *Noli timere, quia redemi te*, and expanded in the New in *empti enim estis pretio magno* and *redemisti nos Deo in sanguine tuo*.²⁷ The expression *pretium* becomes traditional in hymns after its use by Venantius Fortunatus in his two influential Holy Cross hymns *Pange, lingua, gloriosi* and *Vexilla regis prodeunt*:

²³ *Sermo XI* (PL 178.466B).

²⁴ Isidore *Etym.* VI.19.38-42: *Sacrificium dictum quasi sacrum factum, quia prece mystica consecratur in memoriam pro nobis Dominicae passionis; unde hoc eo iubente corpus Christi et sanguinem dicimus. Quod dum sit ex fructibus terrae, sanctificatur et fit sacramentum... Sacramentum est in aliqua celebratione, cum res gesta ita fit ut aliquid significare intellegatur... Unde et Graece mysterium dicitur, quod secretam et reconditam habeat dispensationem.*

²⁵ Matt. 26.15.

²⁶ Matt. 27.6.

²⁷ Is. 43.1; I Cor. 6.20; Apoc. 5.9.

sola digna tu fulsti
ferre pretium saeculi

and

beata, culus brachii
pretium pependit saeculi.²⁸

It has already appeared in the Paraclete Hymnary in the daily hymn for Lauds: *ut servum redimat se dedit pretium*.²⁹ Although the metaphorical *pretium* is commonplace, the contrast which Abelard makes here between the two very different "prices" of Christ, His worth to the priests and His worth to the world, seems to be innovative. That he delighted in this juxtaposition is clear from its appearance again in prose: he writes of Judas *et in pretio pecuniae ipsum mundi pretium ponere*.³⁰

The vocative *mercator* which opens the second section of the hymn is a traditional epithet of Judas primarily because he sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but it also alludes to his station among the disciples and his attitude to money. John says that he was in charge of whatever money the disciples possessed and that his mercenary attitude was instanced in his reaction to the anointing of Jesus by Mary Magdalene: *quare hoc unguentum non vaenit trecentis denariis, et datum est egenis?* John comments

Dixit autem hoc, non quia de egenis pertinebat ad eum, sed quia fur erat et loculos habens...³¹

In *Sermo XI* Abelard gives the traditional interpretation that the reason Judas sold Christ was to reimburse himself for what he saw as his own loss in the wasteful extravagance of Mary:

...Iudam occasionem accepisse vendendi Dominum, quasi hoc pretio illud suum damnum restauraret.³²

The language of commerce is widely used in connection with Judas. Augustine, using a synonym of *mercator*, calls him *venditor redemptoris* and describes the transaction as *mercedem... redemptoris*.³³ The immediate source for *mercator* is found

28 Venantius Fortunatus (AH 50.66.10.1-2; 67.6./1-2 p.74).

29 26.3./4.

30 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.473C).

31 John 13.29 and 12.3-6.

32 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.462D).

in the responsory of the Second Nocturn for Maundy Thursday, the day on which this hymn would be sung. The responsory is itself a quotation from the well-known Cistercian *Hymnum dicamus Domino* sung on Maundy Thursday:

Iudas mercator pessimus
osculo petit Dominum.³⁴

Abelard has transformed his source from the commonplace by addressing Judas directly, making this hymn the more vivid, and by replacing the standard epithet *pessimus* with the unusual *stultissime*.³⁵ The adjective stands out because it is postponed to the end of the line, so that follows the vocative *Iuda*.

Judas was a fool not to realize that he could not sell Christ with impunity (*cum mortis emptio sit vitam vendere* 4./2): the transaction brought about his own death. This is, of course, one of the meanings of the traditional *pessimus* which has the same double-entendre as the English "worst". Judas is most evil and most inept. The earlier stanzas centre on his wickedness: there he is *proditor* (2./1), *lupus* (2./3), *traditor* (3./3) and he forms an evil plan with evil associates (*ad pravum congregat pravos consilium* 3./3). Here, in contrast, the incompetence of his business acumen is under scrutiny. So three stanzas (2, 3 and 4) incorporate both aspects of *pessimus*.

Then, too, the description *mercator...stultissime* puts a more human face on Judas than do the more general *traditor* and *proditor* and the beast imagery of *lupus*. He gains a personality (he is a merchant and a bad one at that) with which it is easier to identify. Marie Collins points out that the increasingly personal approach to religion, obvious in figures such as Bernard of Clairvaux, led to an emotive comparison between Judas, worst of dealers, and contemporary Christians.

To be put on a par with, or below, the friend of Christ who sold Him, brings home vividly the personal betrayal involved when a sinner sells Christ by even the smallest lapse.³⁶

33 Augustine *Tract. in Ioh.* LV.4 and LXII.4 (CC Ser.Lat.36) pp.465 and 484.

34 *Hymnum dicamus Domino* (AH 51.75.13-14 p.76).

35 The function of the device of apostrophe is discussed by the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* IV.15.22: *Exclamatio est quae conficit significationem doloris aut indignationis alicuius per hominis aut urbis aut loci aut rei cuiuspiam compellationem...Hac exclamazione si loco utemur raro, et cum rei magnitudo postulare videtur, ad quam volumus indignationem animum auditoris adducemus.*

36 Marie Collins "Mercator Pessimus? The Medieval Judas" *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* II (1983 ed. Francis Cairns ARCA II) pp.208-9.

In spite of the well-documented animosity that characterized the early relations of Abelard and Bernard, there is no reason to doubt that Abelard was unaffected by the prevailing mood. In fact, his own intensely personal approach is clear in stanzas 7-9, *Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine*, the most sensitive in all his Good Friday hymns.

There is one further reason why Abelard chooses *stultissime*. Herod, in the second hymn for Epiphany, acts foolishly (*dat mandata magis stulta*).³⁷ The orders which he gives are *stulta*, since he is easily outwitted. His stupidity and its disastrous effects for himself are seen still more clearly in the hymns for the Feast of the Innocents, the children slaughtered by Herod in his attempt to rid himself of the Christ-child. His foolishness is implied in the mockery of Augustus who, when he heard that Herod had refused to spare his own son, joked, in an allusion to Jewish dietary laws, that it was better to be Herod's pig than his son.³⁸ So Herod, like Judas, discovers that those who set themselves against Christ have their deeds rebound on their own heads.

The thread which links together Judas and Herod is their foolishness (*stultissime* and *stulta*). A more complete identification exists between Herod and Satan: Herod's trickery is described *sed illusus fuit dolus, / fraudulento fraudato*, Satan is depicted in similar terms *fraus...fallitur*.³⁹ A further parallel, one which works not through verbal echoes, but through grammatical structure, brings in Judas. Connected with Herod in his stupidity, he is linked with both Herod and Satan in the line *...proditor est per se proditus* (2./1). All the phrases which show the eventual defeat of the evil purposes of each use the passive voice, Herod in *illusus fuit dolus*, Satan in *fraus fallitur*, Judas in *proditor est proditus*.

The second line, *cum mortis emptio sit vitam vendere* (4./2), provides two pairs of contrasts: *mortis/vitam*, *emptio/vendere*. This juxtaposition of opposites, the alliteration of *vitam vendere* and the parallel structure of the word-order combine together to heighten the effect of the paradox. The metaphor owes something to Paul's warning to the Romans *stipendia enim peccati, mors*, where there is similar imagery from the world of commerce aligned with the same outcome, death.⁴⁰

37 35.2./1. See discussion p. 81.

38 102.6./1-6 *Malum, inquit, / est Herodis / esse natum; / prodest magis / talis regis / esse porcum*.

39 35.2./3-4 and 58.3./1.

40 Rom.6.23.

Is *vitam* (4./2) the life of Christ, as Szövérfy suggests, or Christ the Life, in accordance with His own words *Ego sum Via et Veritas et Vita*?⁴¹ In all probability Abelard is being deliberately ambivalent in order to evoke all possible facets of the paradox. In support of the interpretation Christ the Life, it is worth noting that Ambrose writes *ipsius mors vita est...ipsius resurrectio vita est universorum* and in the hymn *Hic est dies verus Dei* he has *moriatur ut vita omnium, resurgat ut vita omnium*.⁴² In *Hymnum dicamus Domino* there occur the lines

vita mundi suspenditur
per quem resurgunt mortui.⁴³

The intention is different, the imagery the same. In these examples Christ's death brings life. Abelard turns that traditional paradox on its head since for Judas the result is death, not life. So he transforms a blend of commonplace motifs by adding a new paradox.

The second half of the stanza is a comment on the story, found only in Matthew, of Judas' death. Overcome by remorse, he hanged himself.⁴⁴ By omitting any reference to Judas' remorse, the cause of his suicide, Abelard suggests that his death was a judgement, the inevitable result of his design against Jesus. The alliteration and assonance of the three words *vendis*, *praevenis* and *funere* (4./4) forge the link between the betrayal and the death. It was only right that the traitor should enter death ahead of the One Whom he had betrayed to death, without enjoying the fruits of his bargain with the Jewish leaders. So the line *ne quid susceptio prosit pecuniae* (4./3) adds to the understanding of *stultissime*, for what merchant would choose to sell something from which, because it brings about his death, he could not enjoy the profit? Throughout the stanza there is an emphasis on the commercial aspect of the betrayal: the imagery is built up through *mercator*, *emptio*, *vendere*, *prosit*, *pecuniae*, *vendis*. This serves to underline the essential shallowness of Judas' nature, giving greater weight to the epithet *stultissime*.

In the following stanza the emphasis is divided equally between Jesus and Judas, between betrayed (*traditi* 5./1) and betrayer (*traditor* 5./2). The aspects of the treachery

41 Szövérfy II p.107 "Judas sold Christ's life (*vitam*) and bought for himself death"; John 14.6.

42 Ambrose in Ps.36.36 (CSEL 64 p.99) and *Hic est dies verus Dei* (AH 50.12.7./1-2 p.16).

43 Ambrose *Hymnum dicamus Domino* (AH 51.75.31-32 p.76).

44 Matt.27.3-5.

which Abelard picks out, the kiss and the greeting, prove in equal measure the depth of Christ's *patientia* and Judas' *crimen*. The kiss and greeting occur together in Matthew and Mark.⁴⁵ The kiss has a long history in hymns and sermons on the Passion: all Christians react with horror that this was used as the sign of betrayal, a kiss which normally signifies peace and love. Sedulius writes

pacem ferebat osculo
quam non habebat pectore.⁴⁶

Abelard himself in *Sermo XI* makes the unadorned comment

Hoc osculum non pacis, sed proditionis signum est illud de quo Matthaeus commemorat,

but later exclaims angrily

...et Dominus, signum proditionis detestans, ait: Iuda, osculo Filium hominis tradis? Hoc est: Cur, infelix, osculum in signo proditionis elegisti, quod inter inimicos etiam summa foederatio solet esse pacis? Infelicissime omnium hominum, bonum tibi esset si natus non fulisses...⁴⁷

The hymn's emphasis on the greeting seems, in contrast, to be innovative. Not that it does not occur in hymnody and patristic writings, but it is not given such a position of prominence. Abelard refers to it twice in the couplet

pioque imple permixta nomini
nec salutatio defuit crimini (5./3-4).

Christ accepts the holy title of "Rabbi" from an unholy traitor who employs it as part of his treachery. The play on the words *pioque imple* and the double negative *nec...defuit* underline the depths to which Judas has sunk: he has no qualms of conscience.

Christ's acceptance of the kiss and the greeting proves His *patientia*. *patientia* contains a wealth of nuance: patience, suffering, endurance, all of which are appropriate. Here the primary notion is "submissiveness". Christ has just prayed in the Garden that the cup might pass from Him, but he ends with the words *Pater mi, si non potest hic calix transire...fiat voluntas tua*.⁴⁸ In accepting the kiss and greeting, He begins the outworking of His submission to His Father's will.

⁴⁵ Matt.26.48-49; cf. Mark 14.44.

⁴⁶ Sedulius AH 50.53.19 p.59.

⁴⁷ *Sermo XI* (PL 178.473B-474A). For a possible autobiographical note see **Introduction** p.19.

⁴⁸ Matt.26.39 and 42.

The fourth stanza centres around Judas, the fifth is divided in emphasis between Judas and Christ. In the sixth, the focus is on Christ alone. Judas has played his part and has been duly punished. He is now dismissed. The attention shifts fully to Christ in a stanza which consists of one paradox after another.

That Abelard was employing all the Gospels in his treatment of the Passion is evident in the first line: *Tentus ligatus est* (6./1) is a conflation of the phrases *tenuerunt eum* and *eum ligatum*, respectively from Matthew and John.⁴⁹ The first couplet revolves around the concept of slavery. On one level the *servi* (6./1) are the priests' servants who laid hold of Christ (*servus* is used by all four Evangelists to describe the servant whose ear Peter cut off).⁵⁰ In the whole of the Paraclete *Hymnarius servus* occurs only four more times, once referring to John the Baptist, the other three as a description of man in general.⁵¹ It is this second idea that recurs here. Through the juxtaposition of the opposites *servi* and *Dominus* there is suggested the man/God contrast which, in a complete reversal of the normal relationship, makes the paradox *..ligatus est a servis Dominus* (6./1) all the more potent. That Abelard saw this, and by implication the trial, as evidence of Christ's *patientia* is indicated by a comment in *Sermo XI*:

Sed vincula sustinet implorum, ut in omni patientia probatus, vincula solveret peccatorum.⁵²

servos (6./2.) picks up the generalization of the first line, but modifies it through the inclusion of the word *peccati*. Thus it becomes the Pauline concept of men as slaves to sin.⁵³ Abelard combines in 6./1-2 the physical and the spiritual in the paradox that the Lord was bound by slaves to set slaves free from the bonds of sin. The paradox is reinforced by the antithetic *tentus ligatus est...ut solveret...nexibus*.

There are a further three paradoxical statements in the second couplet, the central idea of which is the contrast between the "criminal" and the judges. Again in *Sermo XI* Abelard comments on the judges, Annas and Calaphas:

49 Matt.26.50 and John 18.24.

50 Matt.26.51; cf. Mark 14.47, Luke 22.50, John 18.10.

51 The reference to John the Baptist is in 36.1./2, those to man in 26.3./1-4, 33.5./3 and 70.6./2.

52 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.477B).

53 e.g. Rom.6.17-18.

pontificibus tanquam legisperitis primo praesentatur, ut ab his, qui legem se cognoscere testabantur, secundum legem iudicaretur, et ab eis inciperet malitia, per quos potius esset refrenanda.⁵⁴

Their guilt is established.

Here, too, there may be an autobiographical allusion. If *ut reus traditus* is taken in conjunction with a phrase addressed to Christ from a later hymn *ut reus traheris* (46.1./2) and compared with Abelard's description of his treatment after the Council of Soissons, the correlation is clear:

Inde quasi reus et convictus abbati Sancti Medardi...traditus, ad claustrum eius tanquam ad carcerem trahor.⁵⁵

Matthew quotes the priests' condemnation of Christ: *Reus est mortis*.⁵⁶ Abelard echoes this sentence twice in the double *reus (ut reus traditus reus iudicibus* 6./3)) so that there is a parallel between Christ and His judges. He is treated as though He were guilty by those who are themselves truly guilty. That is the first paradox. Their guilt is then set against His justice: Christ is *iudex iustissimus* (6./4) judged by *reus iudicibus*, a paradox which heightens the sense of His submissiveness. Thirdly, not only is He the most just Judge, but He is the supreme Judge of all men (*supremus omnium iudex* 6./4). Here the paradox is implicit: if He is supreme, then those who judge Him are less than He. With this accumulation of paradox, working through a complete reversal of rôles, Abelard brings home the incredibility of the arrest and trial of Jesus. He aims to make the nuns stand in awe and wonder at this evidence of the *patientia* of Christ.

The opening stanza addresses the *carissimi*, contemporary Christians who, although outside the events, can, by considering the unfolding drama as they sing, participate in the emotion of the Passion. They are asked in that opening hymn to concentrate on the suffering of betrayal which Christ endured for the sake of His people. The second section (stanzas 4-6) confronts us with the traitor, now given a name, whose treachery is made the more immediate by the apostrophe *Iuda* (4./1). The attention moves in the last stanza of the section from Judas to Christ, and here, in the third section, the gaze is focused, again through apostrophe, on the Lord as He goes forward as a willing Sacrifice, the suffering Saviour.

⁵⁴ *Sermo XI* (PL 178.477C).

⁵⁵ HC 906-909.

⁵⁶ Matt.26.66.

The emotive *Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine* (7./1) sets the tone for the remainder of the hymn. The emotion is all the more real in that it is subdued. It has none of the somewhat frenetic hysteria of the later Franciscan hymns; rather a deep and abiding grief. Little can be added to von den Steinen's perceptiveness: "Doux accent, méditatif, dans la tonalité du vendredi saint..."⁵⁷ *Solus*, prominent by position, and the emotive *victimam* together portray the human suffering of Christ, the only suffering with which we can identify. It is this desire for identification which is the inspiration of all the hymns for Good Friday.

The prominence of *solus* suggests its significance. It is true on two levels: it is theologically correct that Christ alone could atone for sin.⁵⁸ It is, however, the second level which is the more important here where His human suffering is the main motif: it is the literal loneliness of One Who, left alone in Gethsemane, abandoned by the disciples, denied by Peter, reached the depths in the cry of dereliction *Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?*⁵⁹ It is significant too that the word *solus* appears in the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah which combines these two aspects of His aloneness, quoted in *Sermo XI: Torcular calcavit solus, et de gentibus non est vtr mecum*.⁶⁰

There have been indications in the hymn of Abelard's conscious *imitatio Christi*.⁶¹ Here his own experience of persecution, of desolation, gives him an insight into the sufferings of His Lord. It is partly this personal identification which accounts for the depth of emotion, albeit restrained.

As in the first section, so here the Cross is seen as an *ara*: Christ is the Sacrifice for the sin of man. In the second stanza He is portrayed as the Lamb led to the slaughter

57 W.von den Steinen "Les sujets d'inspiration chez les poètes latins du XII^e siècle" *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 9 (1966) p.371. He continues "...on laisse à l'arrière-plan, très loins, les voles du *Deus Christus* qui orientait la poésie des grands prédécesseurs; et ce qui inspire notre poète, ce qui l'émeut, c'est le destin terrestre de son *pauper Dominus*. Il s'adresse à lui, et ce que le Maître lui enseigne, ce n'est pas la transformation du cosmos, mais une leçon humaine, une exhortation 'Seigneur, tu as souffert, fais que nous souffrions avec toi, afin que nous puissions avoir part à ton ascension'."

58 Heb.9.7 and 11-12.

59 Matt.27.46.

60 Is.63.3 Abelard explains why Christ said to those who had come to arrest Him *sinite hos abire* (John 18.8):...*ut solus ipse torcular passionis intraret, sicut ex persona eius Isaias praedixerat.* (PL 178.473A).

61 See above n.47 and 56.

by His persecutors *agnus ad victimam per lupum traditus* (2./3). Here, the other side of the picture is given: He is the Lord Who takes the initiative, offering Himself as the one and only Sacrifice.

Christ is the willing Victim *morti te offerens* (7./2). Each word of this half-line has been chosen with care: *offerens* picks up the image of *victimam* from the first line and together they reflect the doctrine that Christ is both Priest and Victim.⁶² *offerens* also suggests that the decision to die lay in His hands, not in those of His enemies. Abelard puts this point forcefully, quoting Christ's own words:

Dum homines Deo vim facere parant, sponte Dominus, non intractus, occurrit
passioni, sicut ipse dixerat: Nemo tollit a me animam meam, sed ego pono
eam.⁶³

Again in *Sermo XI* the two aspects of *offerens* meet when he declares

sciens iam advenisse tempus congruum passionis, offert se in pascha, tanquam
pascha vel agnus ad immolandum.⁶⁴

With the addition of *quam ventis tollere* (7./2), the statement *morti te offerens* becomes a paradox. That Christ's death destroys death is an oft-repeated motif in the Pauline epistles, in the writings of the Fathers and in hymnody.⁶⁵ Only because of this truth does the crucifixion have any meaning. Thus in two lines, the simplicity of which conceals a wealth of meaning and allusion, Abelard combines the images of Christ the Priest, the Sacrifice and the Victor. The proximity of these words to *Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine*, suggests that the most important of these images for the hymn is that of the willing Sacrifice.

The attention turns in the second couplet,

quid nos miserrimi possumus dicere,
qui, quae commisimus, scimus te luere? (7./3-4)

to mankind. A more subjective mood is introduced which is subsequently heightened through this and the following stanza by the repetition of *nos* and *nostra*, the three first

62 Fulgentius *de fide* 22 (CC Ser.Lat.91A) p.726 *idem scilicet sacerdos et sacrificium...: sacerdos, per quem sumus reconciliati; sacrificium, quo reconciliati. cf. Heb.7.26-27*

63 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.471A) quoting John 10.18.

64 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.471B).

65 Paul echoes the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah and Hosea (Is.2.8, Hos.13.14) in I Cor.15.54-55 and II Tim.1.10. Ambrose *mortisque regnum diruit* (AH 50.6.3./3 p.12); Venantius Fortunatus *qua vita mortem pertulit/ et morte vitam reddidit* (AH 50.67.8./3-4 p.74).

person plural verbs *possumus*, *commisimus*, *scimus*, the telling description *miserrimi*, culminating in the double *compati/ compassio* at the end of the eighth stanza. In this way Abelard ranges himself with those to whom he is speaking through the medium of the hymn. He is no longer the preacher set apart from his flock whom he addresses as *carissimi* (1./1), but, like them, the cause of Christ's death.

The reason for our wretchedness is explained in the final line (7./4): we are most miserable since we know that Christ must suffer for what we have done. The emphasis has shifted from the guilt of Judas (*agnus ad victimam per lupum traditus* 2./3) and that of the judges (*ut reus traditus reis iudicibus* 6./3) to the guilt of all men, and ours in particular: none is innocent of His death.

luere (7./4) is an interesting choice, being the infinitive of two separate verbs, the meanings of which here complement each other. Washing is common in the Old and New Testaments as a symbol of the removal of guilt and the defilement of sin. The Psalmist prays *Lava me ab iniquitate mea* and John, in the Prologue to the Apocalypse, blesses Christ Who *lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo*.⁶⁶ Ambrose uses the compound *abluere* in a play on words

mysterium mirabile!
ut abluat mundi luem,
peccata tollat omnium
carnis vitia mundans caro.⁶⁷

The other verb is etymologically akin to the Greek *λύειν* and is used in the sense 'to atone for', 'to pay a debt' or 'to expiate' throughout classical Latin and in patristic writings.⁶⁸

In the face of our realization that Christ is suffering because of what we have done, Abelard asks if there is anything for us to say: *Quid nos miserrimi possumus dicere?* (7./3). The answer is given in two parts in the following stanza. All we can do is to acknowledge our guilt: *Nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina* (8./1) and to pray that we may be joined with Christ in His suffering: *quibus sic compati fac nostra pectora* (8./3).

⁶⁶ Ps.51.2; Apoc.1.5.

⁶⁷ Ambrose (AH 50.12.5./1-4 p.16); cf. Acts 22.16 and I Cor.6.11.

⁶⁸ Cicero *Fin.*5.22.64 *quae per vim oblatum stuprum voluntaria morte lueret*; cf. Tertullian *Anim.*58.8.d. (PL 2.796C).

The repeated *nostra sunt* before the predicate *crimina* adds emotion to a bare, factual statement. It is a heartfelt cry of recognition of guilt and responsibility. *qui tua criminum facis supplicia* (8./2) provides a stark contrast to the first line, underlined by antithesis, by parallelism and by repetition:

Nostra sunt, Domine, nostra sunt crimina
qui tua criminum facis supplicia (8./1-2).

tua is set against the double *nostra*; *supplicia* against *crimina*, both in the same emphatic position at the end of their respective couplets; *crimina*, qualified by *nostra*, is picked up by *criminum*, which in turn is juxtaposed with *tua*, a juxtaposition which emphasizes the paradox in that Christ and sin are at opposite ends of the spectrum. It is the paradox of redemption that these opposites meet. Ours is the sin, His the punishment.

The prayer *quibus sic compati fac nostra pectora* (2./3) is a spontaneous outcome of this recognition. The wording looks forward to that of the prayer which rounds off all the remaining hymns of the Sacred Triduum: *Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine*, but the desired result of the prayers differs.⁶⁹ There it is to share in His glory (*tuae participes ut simus gloriae*), here to win mercy (*ut vel compassio digna sit venia* 8./4).⁷⁰ There is, however, no dichotomy since winning His mercy and sharing His glory are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

The final stanza opens on the same note of grief which characterizes the rest of the hymn, echoing in *Nox ista flebilis* (9./1) the opening words of the hymn: *Haec nox, carissimè, nox illa flebilis* (1./1). There comes in the second half of the stanza a dramatic change of tone from sorrow to anticipated joy. The stanza is constructed around various antitheses: now it is night but the morning is at hand, literally so since this is the hymn for Nocturns. It is night too in a metaphorical sense since Christ is on His way to death, but there is also the promise of morning, metaphorical and literal, in the anticipation of the resurrection.⁷¹ The night is the time for tears (*flebilis...fletus* 9./1, 9./2) because the Lord is suffering; joy comes in the morning (*donec laetitiae mane gratissimum* 9./3) when He will rise from the dead. Grief is expressed in the two etymologically linked words, *flebilis* and *fletus*, which are balanced in a chiasmus of adjective, noun, noun,

69 45.3./1.

70 45.3./4.

71 See Matt.28.1.

adjective by the unlinked *laetitiae* and *gratisimum*. The sorrow is intense, the joy expansive.

The night is actual and it is symbolic: *vesperum* (9./2) is an image of the soul's grief. *mane*, balancing both *nox* and *vesperum*, symbolizes the brightness of joy which lifts the shadow from the soul. In the choice of *vesperum* to portray the soul's night rather than the more intense *nox* we see the fount of the imagery. The Psalmist writes *ad vesperum demorabitur fletus et ad matutinum laetitia*.⁷² The echoes are close. The imagery of night and morning is a symbol of the whole Passion, a time of doubt and despair, a time of deepening gloom; the resurrection will bring joy, the dawning of hope.

surgente Domino (9./4) is a joyous shout of triumph. Here for the first time in the stanza the resurrection is articulated. Yet *surgente* itself evokes the imagery of night and day through which the stanza gains its power. Christ is the rising Sun Who will dispel the gloom of darkness. He is the Dawn, the Dayspring from on high, Who promises joy to the sorrowing.⁷³ But that is still in the future and the stanza draws to a close in a minor key on *maestis*, bringing us back to our present sadness.

At almost every stage in the hymn there is a corresponding passage in *Sermo XI* which expands our understanding of Abelard's view of the Passion and of his emotional reaction to it. The extent to which the hymn is more effective than the sermon in appealing to the emotions is surprising. The sermon includes the same contrasts but the hymn makes them more poignant by intertwining the different paradoxes and through its masterly economy of language.

72 Ps.29.6.

73 Luke 1.78.

7.3. 45. in parasceve ad laudes

Argument: Christ is judged by false priests; He is mocked and maltreated. The only reaction proper to man is grief and pity.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Noster et omnium salvator, Domine,
tam rex quam pontifex cunctorum maxime
Annae iudicium subis et Caiaphae,

falso pontificis tumentum nomine.</p> | <p>1. Our Saviour, Lord, and of all the Saviour,
greatest King of all and highest Priest,
You submit to the judgement of Annas and
Caiaphas,

who are swollen with the false name of priests.</p> |
| <p>2. Horum ludibria priora pateris,
palmas, tunc alapas et sputa suscipis,
velata facie coram his caederis,
Propheta, clamitant, quis te percusserit.</p> | <p>2. You suffer first their mockery;
here You endure ^{then the blows} the slaps and the spitting;
Your eyes blindfold, You are struck before them;
"Prophecy" they scream "who hit You."</p> |
| <p>3. Quis hoc fidelium audire perferat?
aut quis hoc audiens non homo ingemat?
quis siccis oculis hoc scelus audiat?
quem haec saevitia saevum non molliat?</p> | <p>3. Which of the faithful could bear to hear this?
What man, hearing this, would not groan?
Who could hear this crime with eyes tear-dry?
What man in his savagery would this savagery
not soften?</p> |
| <p>4. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.</p> | <p>4. Lord, make us so to suffer with You
that we may share in Your glory,
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

- 1./4 tumentum C: sumentum *Dreves and Szövérfy*
2./2 palmas tunc alapas *Waddell*: primas hic alapas C¹

¹ Emendation is clearly necessary because of the tautology and obscurity of *priora* and *primas*. Waddell's arguments for his emendations are convincing (CLS 8 p.ccxix), referring to Matt.26.27 *palmas in faciem etus dederunt* and John 19.3 *et dabant et alapas*, the last in a series of brutal acts. He points out that in medieval script *primas* is close to *palmas*, as is *hic* to *tunc*.

In the preceding hymn Christ is the Paschal Lamb offering Himself without reservation for the sins which we have committed. His sacrifice demands a response from us: through true compassion we can win mercy.²

In the hymn now under consideration the personal aspect is reiterated in the opening word, the emphatic *Noster*. Christ has paid the penalty for our sins and is now our Saviour, our King, our Priest. Not only ours, but of all men (*Noster et omnium* 1./1). The accumulation of images, *salvator*, *rex*, *pontifex*, underlines not only the incongruity of the treatment meted out to Him, but its very evil. The choice of these three titles is explained in Abelard's sermons: Christ is Saviour of all because He suffers for all: *...ut solus ipse torcular passionis intraret*; King of all because He is God and Priest of all through His incarnation and sacrifice:

sic et Christus rex universorum per divinitatis potentiam, sacerdos hominum factus per assumptae humanitatis hostiam....³

The juxtaposition of these titles with the description of the trial makes the fact that He must endure judgement all the more startling.

After the introductory couplet, the hymn moves into a more narrative vein. This, along with the following five hymns, fills in the details of the stark sketch drawn by the words *Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine*.⁴ Abelard describes the sufferings Christ endured at each stage of the journey from betrayal to the Cross in words which, for all their vividness, accord with the tone of 44, the "doux accent, méditatif" peculiarly appropriate to Good Friday.⁵

The last of the titles, *pontifex*, leads naturally to Annas and Caiaphas, the High Priests who presided over the judgement of Christ. The stanza relies for much of its impact on the antithesis between Christ the true High Priest and these false ones (*falso pontificis tumentum nomine* 1./4). The writer to the Hebrews describes the true Priest:

talis enim decebat ut nobis esset pontifex sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus.⁶

2 42.8./3-4.

3 *Serm.* XI and II (PL 178.473A and 388C-D).

4 42.7./1.

5 See 42. n.58.

6 Heb.7.26.

Annas and Caiaphas are false because, being manifestly unjust, they do not conform to this prescription. Only the truly corrupt priest would dare to set himself in judgement over the true High Priest. Their falsity is underlined in the phrase *falso...nomine*, both words emphasized by position: they are wrongly called priests (*falso*) and they are priests in name alone (*nomine*). Christ, in contrast, is *Rex iste summus et Sacerdos supremus et Salvator verus*.⁷

Not only are they false, but they are arrogant. *tumentum* (1./4) is a graphic metaphor which probably owes something to Paul's warning to Timothy: *et erunt homines..elati, superbi, blasphemii...proditores protervi, tumidi...*, for what are Annas and Caiaphas if not arrogant blasphemers, treacherous and puffed up with pride?⁸

The transition from the first to the second stanza is effected smoothly through *horum* (2./1), referring to Annas and Caiaphas, and through the motif of endurance introduced in *subis* (1./3) and picked up by *pateris* (2./1). The verbal parallels suggest that Abelard was following closely the accounts of the trial in Mark:

Et coeperunt quidam conspuere eum, et velare faciem eius, et colaphis eum caedere, et dicere ei: Prophetiza; et ministri alapis eum caedebant;

and Luke:

...illudebant ei, caedentes. Et velaverunt eum et percutiebant faciem eius; et interrogabant eum, dicentes: Prophetiza, quis est qui te percussit?⁹

priora (2./1) stresses that this was only the beginning of the agony Christ would undergo: this was the early mockery, the first indications of the physical brutality continued in the torture of the soldiers retold in the following hymn.¹⁰ The physical torture is limited to one line, *palmas tunc alapas et sputa suscipis* (2./2), the mental torment of the mockery takes up the last two lines:

velata facie coram his caederis,
Propheta, clamitant, quis te percusserit. (2./3-4).

The blindfolding of Christ and the jeering command completely overshadow the physical violence of *caederis*.

⁷ Abelard (?) *Expos.symb.apost.* (PL 178.622C).

⁸ II Tm.3.4.

⁹ Mark 14.65 and Luke 22.63-64.

¹⁰ See 46.1./3-4.

The alliteration and assonance of the whole stanza is noteworthy: the plosive *p* repeated throughout in *priora pateris, palmas...alapas, sputa..suscriptis, propheta and percusserit* evokes onomatopoeically the sound of the slaps; while the sibilants in *pateris, primas..alapas, his caedertis*, and especially *sputa suscriptis*, vividly conjure the spitting and the hissing ridicule. The sibilant is used again to good effect in the last line *quis te percusserit?* where the derision is almost palpable.

Following the final section of the preceding hymn, the first two stanzas address Christ and retell the story of His suffering in the second person, thus creating a subjective atmosphere. In the same way, there is a move in the third stanza to a summons to the reader. The stanza is a direct appeal to the emotions, demanding the response of *compassio*, an appeal which rests on four rhetorical questions.¹¹ All these questions are linked by anaphora, the repeated *quis...quis...quis...quem...*, and the first three by the repetition of *audire*, in each question in a different form (*audire...audiens...audiat...*). The questions intensify from endurance of the description of Christ's suffering through groans to tears and, finally, to the softening of the hardest heart. The description of the trial, the reason for these reactions, also gathers strength as it moves from *hoc* (3./1 and 3./2) to *hoc scelus* (3./3) and thence to *haec saevitia* (3./4).

Szövérfy thinks that the whole of the third stanza is "addressed to the faithful, *par excellence*".¹² The first of the questions is undeniably addressed to the Christian in the phrase *Quis...fidelium*: can anyone who loves Christ remain impervious to His suffering? But the sphere of reference now widens to include those not yet numbered among the faithful since the second and third questions (*quis...homo, quis...*) seem to address man in general: is any man left unmoved by Christ's Passion? Will he not groan? Will he not weep? The last question then confronts man in his entirely unregenerate state: he is *quem...saevum*. In a sensitive paradox the savagery of men towards Christ can soften the heart even of the savage. The answer to all the questions is so evident that it can be left unspoken. There is no-one, no matter who or what he is, who can remain untouched by Christ's suffering. The hymn has come full circle. The brutality suffered

¹¹ Szövérfy punctuates the stanza with three interrogatives, making the first couplet one question. I think it more likely that each line is an entity: the anaphora of *quis*, the move from *Quis...fidelium* to the more general *quis...homo*, and the two different forms of *audire* demand this separation.

¹² Szövérfy II p.110.

by Christ so softens the heart of man that He can in truth be the Saviour of all (*Noster et omnium Salvator, Domine* 1./1).

The efficacy of such an accumulation of questions to move a congregation is suggested by its frequent occurrence in sermons.¹³ Abelard has a close parallel to this stanza in his sermon for Holy Week:

Quis fidelium, Domine, hanc etiam tuae passionis anxietatem sine compassione possit audire? hanc pro nobis tuam perturbationem queat sustinere?...Quis siccis oculis hoc intelligat? Cuius cor lapideum dolor iste non scindat?¹⁴

If an answer is needed to these questions, it is given in the final stanza. The only response possible is the prayer *Tu tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine* (4./1). Like the two opening stanzas, this addresses Christ directly but, while their emphasis is in theology and narrative, this is a prayer which identifies the objects of the appeal in the third stanza with those singing the hymn - *nos*. Our hearts have been so moved that we desire only to share in Christ's suffering, knowing that suffering is not the end, but rather the joy of sharing in the glory of the resurrection.

The final stanza, which appears at the end of all the remaining hymns for the Sacred Triduum, repeats and expands the motifs introduced in the closing lines of the preceding Nocturn hymn. The lines form close parallels:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>42. quibus sic compati fac nostra pectora
ut vel compassio digna sit venia.
Nox ista flebilis praesensque triduum
quo demorabitur fletus sit vesperum,
donec laetitiae mane gratissimum,
surgente Domino, sit maestis redditum.¹⁵</p> | <p>45. Tu tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gloriae.</p> |
|---|---|

There are almost identical prayers for *compassio*, a repetition of the phrase *praesens triduum*, the three days' grief and the joy of Easter. The present hymn, however, goes beyond Easter and heralds the joy of Heaven where those who have suffered with Christ will share His glory.

¹³ e.g. Leo the Great (*Leon le Grand, Sermons*, ed. Dom Rene Dolle Paris 1961, Vol.III pp.46-47) *Quid hac specie religionis inustus? quid hac clementiae simulatione crudelius? qua lege, Iudaei, quod vobis non licet facere, licet velle?* Quintilian IX.II.7-9 discusses the use of questions as rhetorical devices to give a sense of urgency or to excite pity: *Figuratum autem, quotiens non sciscitandi gratia adsumitur, sed instandi...aut miserationis...* It is for these reasons that Abelard uses the figure here.

¹⁴ *Sermo XI* (PL 178.470A).

¹⁵ 42.8./3-4 and 9./1-4.

In *Sermo XI* Abelard cites Scriptural authority for his emphasis on *compassio* when he quotes from Corinthians: *At apostolus: Si unum patitur membrum, compatiuntur omnia membra.*¹⁵ His choice of words in the hymn, however, owes more to another of Paul's Epistles where the verbal parallels are striking: *si tamen compatiimur ut et conglorificemur.*¹⁶ For Abelard the point of the prayer for *compassio* is that by entering into the sufferings of Christ we may enter His glory (*tuae participes ut simus gloriae* 4./2). It is with this thought too that he opens his Holy Week sermon:

...ut tantis beneficiis digni reperiamur, et redemptionis participes simus, et resurrectionis consortes.¹⁷

The second couplet of the stanza,

sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae (4./3-4),

reiterates and clarifies the thought of the first. We cannot suffer in the same way as Christ, but through grief we may share in His sufferings. Thus, we return to the theme of this day's weeping, the motif which opened the Nocturn hymn:

Haec nox, carissimi, nox illa flebilis...
piis fidelium est plena lacrimis,
aqua immanitas compellit sceleris.¹⁸

As in 42 Abelard does not stop at this point but looks beyond the grief, setting a limit of three days to mourning, to the resurrection joy of Easter. *risus* is a dramatic contrast to *luctus*, signalling the release of tension and the transformation of grief. The purpose of this suffering with Christ through sorrow is to make the gladness of Easter the more intense.

Quid igitur, writes Abelard, si et biduum illud Dominicae passionis ac sepulturae in luctu compassionis praecipuae ducimus, ut post fletum gratior habeatur risus, nec iam Dominicae pressurae recordemur, resurrectionis gloria superveniente.¹⁹

15 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.470A) quoting I Cor.12.26.

16 Rom.8.17.

17 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.453C).

18 42.1./1 and 3-4.

19 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.487A).

7.4. 46. *in parasceve ad primam*

Argument: Christ is brought before Pilate and is made the object of derision. Pilate, after attempting to allay the wrath of the Jews, yields to pressure. He washes his hands.

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|---|--|
| <p>1. Dammandus, Domine, Pilato sisteris

et ad spectaculum ut reus traheris,

coronam spineam, sceptrum arundinis
et vile coccinum sumens illuderis.</p> | <p>1. You are brought before Pilate, Lord, to be
condemned
and, like a criminal, You are dragged out on
show;
Your crown of thorns, Your sceptre a reed,
wearing base scarlet, You are mocked.</p> |
| <p>2. Gentilis iudicis mentem crudelitas
et innocentiae commovet puritas:
flagellis praevenit mortis angustias

ut vel sic parcere possit impietas.</p> | <p>2. The cruelty and the purity of Your innocence
touches the heart of the judge, a Gentile:
with scourges he tries to prevent the straits of
death
so that, even thus, impiety can show mercy.</p> |
| <p>3. Qui caesum denique coactus tradere,
ut ab hoc animum purgaret scelere
manus abluere decrevit publice,
mundum se profitens a iusti sanguine.</p> | <p>3. Forced finally to hand You over scourged,
to cleanse his soul of this sin
he resolved to wash his hands in public,
professing himself innocent of this just Man's
blood.</p> |
| <p>4. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae,
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.</p> | <p>4. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory,
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

All the hymns for Good Friday are rooted in the pattern of the Hours which follow the indications of Scripture for the time of particular events of the Passion. The betrayal, arrest and trial of Jesus before the High Priest took place during the hours of darkness and have thus been rehearsed in the Night Office. Matthew continues the story: *mane autem facto...et tradiderunt Pontio Pilato praesidi*, a fitting subject for the first Hour of the Diurnal Office.¹ Here again Abelard speaks to Christ directly, thus making more immediate a story which could be in danger of growing stale through enforced repetition.

The position of *damnandus*, its spondaic rhythm and its alliteration with *Domine* heighten the sense of inevitability. From the start of the hymn, in spite of Pilate's subsequent attempt to prevent it, the condemnation of Christ is a foregone conclusion. The gerundive underlines the point that Christ was brought before Pilate, not to be judged by him, but that the judgement already reached by the Jews should be ratified in condemnation.

The second line portrays the scene where Christ is brought before the crowd. The phraseology is consciously emotive, the physical cruelty suggested by *traheris* balanced by the mental cruelty of *ad spectaculum*. *Traheris* is an Abelardian addition, designed to create the greatest possible pathos. *ad spectaculum* conjures up the picture of the hostile crowd which can shout only "Crucify Him".² It is before this crowd that He is dragged to be put on show. *ut reus traheris* echoes *ut reus traditus* in the first hymn, (*ut reus traditus reis iudicibus*) recalling the paradox of the innocent One judged by the wicked.³ Here a similar situation obtains.

The motif of psychological torture rises in a crescendo. The verbal echoes suggest that Abelard was following Matthew's account:

chlamydem coccineam circumdederunt ei, et plectentes coronam de spinis
posuerunt super caput eius, et arundinem in dextera eius. Et...illudebant ei.⁴

The paradox is implicit, but nonetheless vivid, that Christ the true King (in the preceding hymn He is *tam rex quam pontifex cunctorum maxime*) is mocked with all the

¹ Matt.27.1-2.

² Luke 23.21.

³ 42.6./3.

⁴ Matt.27.28-29.

trappings of earthly kingship.⁵ Abelard adds poignancy to the bare account by condensing the Gospel accounts into concise, vivid phrases: *coronam spineam, sceptrum arundinis, vile coccinum*. The first two begin with the emblem of royalty, immediately undercut by the material from which each is made, thorns and a reed. The third achieves its effect through the oxymoron of *vile* describing a robe of scarlet, the most expensive of dyes and the colour of kings.

A comparison of Abelard's treatment of the torture of Christ with that of Ambrose shows that the latter concentrates on the mystical interpretation of His sufferings whereas Abelard takes the abuse on a physical level only. Ambrose proposes two interpretations of the crimson robe:

Clamydem autem coccineam induitur a militibus et purpuream tuniceam, in altera designans matrum palmas, in altera regiae potestatis insignia, quod caro eius fusum toto orbe terrarum sanguinem esset susceptura pro nobis et passio regnum paritura de nobis.⁶

The intention of the two commentators is entirely different. Ambrose is intellectual, Abelard wishes to arouse *compassio*, and achieves his aim through what, on the surface, may seem a simplistic treatment.

The attention moves in the second and third stanzas away from Christ's sufferings to an examination of Pilate, his actions and his motives. Some of Abelard's comments in the second stanza are a reworking of Scripture, others a standard interpretation which appears in Augustine, among others.

Pilate is moved by the cruelty of the Jews and of the soldiers who have abused Christ, the subject of the first stanza, and he is moved, too, by Christ's obvious innocence:

Gentilis iudicis mentem crudelitas
et innocentiae commovet puritas (2./1-2).

There is certainly evidence in the Gospels for the second of these causes in Pilate's insistence that Christ has done nothing to merit death. Luke, in particular, makes this point five times:

Nihil invenio causae in hoc homine;...nullam causam inveni in homine isto ex his in quibus eum accusatio...et ecce nihil dignum morte actum est ei...Quid enim mali fecit iste? nullam causam mortis invenio in eo.⁷

⁵ 45.1./2.

⁶ Ambrose *Expos.in Luc.X*.104-106 (CC Ser.Lat.14) pp.375-6.

Abelard underlines His innocence through the two complementary nouns *innocentiae* and *pūritas* (2./2). Not only does His innocence contrast sharply with the guilt of the Jewish leaders who in the Nocturn hymn are described as *reus iudicibus*, even though He is the One treated as a criminal (*ut reus* 1./4). His purity also implies a contrast with their falsity, a motif introduced in the preceding hymn (*falso pontificis... nomine*).⁸

That the cruelty of the Jews struck a chord of pity in Pilate has no parallel in Scripture, unless it is in Matthew's comment *Sciebat enim quod per invidiam tradidissent eum*.⁹ Abelard's concern in this stanza is psychological. By investigating Pilate's motivation towards clemency, he wishes to move the hearts of Christians. Thus it is of little importance that the compassion aroused in Pilate by this cruelty is not Biblical, as long as it fulfils the purpose of evoking a similar pity in the faithful.

The skill with which the hymn awakes this compassion is consummate: Pilate is first and foremost heathen (*Gentilis* 2./1, emphasized by position); moreover, he is Christ's judge (*iudicis* 2./1). We know what to expect of those who judge Him; witness His treatment at the hands of His own people. Thus the word *crudelitas* (2./1) comes as no shock: this is exactly as we have anticipated. The surprise is sprung in *commovet* (2./2) when we realize for the first time that Pilate, although a pagan, is a judge of a different calibre. *Gentilis* (2./1) now takes on another aspect: there is an identification between this man and contemporary Christians. All are in one sense Gentiles, precisely because they are not Jews. So Pilate's compassion foreshadows the compassion of the faithful. This treatment of the Gentile Pilate is paralleled in Abelard's final hymn for Epiphany where he contrasts the stubborn incredulity of the Jews with the immediate response of the Gentiles:

Nec post tanta vel malora
signa credit Iudaeus
quem ad unam statim stellam
requisivit Chaldaeus.¹⁰

Matthew and Mark associate the flogging of Jesus (*flagellis praevenit mortis angustias* 2./3-4) with later events, after the decision has been taken to crucify Him.¹¹

7 Luke 23.4,14,15,22.

8 42.6./3 and 45.1./4.

9 Matt.27.18.

10 37.3./1-4.

John and Luke put it earlier. John gives a factual account: *tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Iesum et flagellavit...*¹² Luke examines the reason, suggesting that Pilate wished Christ to be flogged to circumvent the death-sentence demanded by the Jews: *Quid enim mali fecit iste? nullam causam mortis invenio in eo; corripiam ergo illum et dimittam.*¹³ This is taken up by Augustine who attributes to Pilate only a good motive in the scourging:

Hoc Pilatus non ob aliud fecisse credendus est, nisi ut eius iniuriis Iudaei satiati sufficere sibi existimarent, et usque ad eius mortem saevire desisterent.¹⁴

angustias (flagellis praevenit mortis angustias 2./3) is an acute choice, recalling its use in the Nativity hymn where the perception of God as a Baby provokes a vivid contrast with His splendour as King of Heaven:

angustias praesaepis sustinet
quem ambitus coeli non continet.¹⁵

That was Christ's first experience of the confinement involved in the incarnation. Here we have the second: He must endure the straitening of death. Although the one occurrence of *angustias* evokes the other, the confining in each is different, the first physical, the second spiritual. Yet they interact, each widening the scope of the other. So, to the physical imprisonment of God in a manger is added a spiritual dimension, foreshadowed in the same Nativity hymn

Excipitur vili turgurio
qui praesidet coeli palatio,

where the physical and the spiritual coalesce.¹⁶ Similarly, the physical straitening of death, latent in the Good Friday hymn, is given expression in another of the Sacred Triduum hymns in the diminutive use of *lectulus* as the tomb: *hunc illi lectulum terrenum commodas.*¹⁷

11 Matt.27.26 and Mark 15.15.

12 John 19.1; cf. Matt.27.26 and Mark 15.15.

13 Luke 23.22.

14 Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.CXVI.1* (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.647.

15 31.1./3-4.

16 31.2./1-2.

17 52.4./3.

I am unconvinced by Szövérfy's suggestion that *ut vel* (2./4) means "as if".¹⁸ *ut...possit* is a final clause, *vel* the equivalent of *saltem*. The phrase is paralleled in *Sermo XI* in the same context: *ipsum tandem flagellavit...ut sic saltem ad misericordiam Iudaeorum flecteret saevitiam*.¹⁹ This passage suggests too that the impiety is not that of the Jews (*pace* Szövérfy) but of Pilate.²⁰ The order to flog the incarnate God, although impious in itself, was designed to spare Him the sentence of death. Abelard comments again:

Pilatus...ipsum secum tam crudeliter tractatum adduxit, tentans utrum ex hoc si quomodo eorum duritiam mollescere et ad pietatem inclinare.²¹

The sympathy with which Abelard views Pilate is unchallenged by this act of impiety since it is one of his main theological propositions that the evil or good of an action lies in the intention, rather than in the act itself, the ethic of the good intention:

Et hoc quidem est examen verae iustitiae, ubi cuncta quae fiunt secundum intentionem pensantur magis quam secundum operum qualitatem.²²

For the opening of the third stanza (*Qui caesum denique coactus tradere* 3./1) Abelard amalgamates two sources: he uses language influenced by Mark (*Pilatus autem volens populo satisfacere...tradidit Iesum flagellis caesum*) but is clearly looking to John in his choice of the participle *coactus*, a choice which is not apposite to Mark's words.²³ John writes

Exinde quaerebat Pilatus dimittere eum. Iudaei autem clamabant dicentes: Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Caesaris...Pilatus autem, cum audisset hos sermones, adduxit foras Iesum...Tunc ergo tradidit eis illum ut crucifigeretur.²⁴

Pilate was forced through fear to go against his better judgement.

18 Szövérfy II p.112.

19 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.482A).

20 Szövérfy II p.112.

21 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.482B-C).

22 *Comm.in Rom.I.1.17* (CC Cont.Med.11) p.65; cf. I.3.12 *omnia quippe opera ex intentione pensanda esse Dominus docuit...* (p.105) and I.2.15 (p.86). See Sikes p.184ff., Luscombe *Peter Abelard's Ethics* (Oxford 1971) pp.xxxi-xxxv and Grane *Peter Abelard* (London 1970) pp.104-5.

23 Mark 15.15.

24 John 19.12-13 and 16.

Szövérfy misses the point when he says that "this stanza is a straight-forward narration".²⁵ Certainly, it is the record of Pilate's two actions, handing Jesus over to the Jews and washing his hands of the deed, in line with Matthew's description: *accepta aqua, lavit manus coram populo, dicens: Innocens sum a sanguine iusti huius*.²⁶ But the stanza is more than a mere rehearsal of the facts, for all that is required for that is the couplet

*manus abluere decrevit publice,
mundum se profitens a iusti sanguine (3./3-4).*

In addition to the act and the profession, there is psychology and symbolism. Psychological comment is contained in the words *ut ab hoc animum purgaret scelere* (3./2). Pilate realizes his guilt but wishes to exculpate himself. That Abelard intentionally emphasizes the symbolic nature of his action is suggested by the substitution of the adjective *mundum* for the *innocens* of the Gospel. Where one word would have been sufficient had his purpose been pure description, he now has three, *purgaret*, *abluere* and *mundum*. Each of these, as well as being a literal term for washing, is a religious metaphor for cleansing from sin.²⁷

Abelard's treatment of Pilate is clearly sympathetic: his heart is moved to compassion by Christ's innocence and by His suffering at the hands of the Jews; he attempts to spare Him death; he is forced against his will to agree to the crucifixion; he declares His innocence. All of this makes Pilate a superb foil to Judas and the Jews. Yet there is also a subtle, underlying comment on the efficacy of his exculpatory act in the contrast of *animum* and *manus*:

*ut ab hoc animum purgaret scelere
manus abluere decrevit publice (3./2-3):*

is it possible that the washing of hands can cleanse the soul from sin?

In the Psalms the washing of hands is an image of freedom from the defilement of sin. The Psalmist writes *Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas*.²⁸ Pilate's act appears on a par with this but is, in reality, quite different. The Psalmist is conscious of his

²⁵ Szövérfy II p.112.

²⁶ Matt.27.24.

²⁷ *purgare*: Eccl.47.13 *Dominus purgavit peccata ipsius*; *abluere*: Acts 22.16 *ablue peccata tua*; *mundus*: Dan.13.46 *mundus ego sum a sanguine huius*.

²⁸ Ps.72.13.

innocence: he has done nothing of which to be ashamed. Pilate, on the other hand, washes his hands and goes on to commit the sin. Ambrose saw it in black and white when he wrote *Lavit quidem manus Pilatus, sed facta non diluit*.²⁹ Likewise the tenth century hymnist who composed

Noxius Pilatus/ in voce excusatus,
aqua manum lavavit,/ et Christum cruciavit.³⁰

Abelard understands the psychological motivation behind the action but, nonetheless, comes to the same, albeit implied, conclusion.

²⁹ Ambrose *Expos. in Luc. X.* 100 (CC Ser. Lat. 14) p. 374.

³⁰ AH 23.29.13 (p. 25).

7.5. 47. *in parasceve ad tertiam*

Argument: Christ, handed over by Pilate as the people had demanded, carries the Cross to Calvary. He is offered a bitter drink and is stripped of His clothes.

1. Iam hora tertia diei venerat
cum plebs obtinuit quod postulaverat,
quem crucifigerent praeses tradiderat,

qui crucem balulans iam crucem tolerat.

1. Now the third hour of the day had come
when the mob gained what it had demanded:
the governor had delivered Him for them to
crucify;
as He carries His cross, He already bears
the pain of that cross.

2. Ubi Calvariam pervenit Dominus,
qui locus reis est ad necem deditus,
amaro poculo delusum prinitus,
ut crucifigerent denudant vestibus.

2. When the Lord reached Calvary,
the place reserved for the killing of criminals,
they mocked Him first with a bitter drink,
then, to crucify Him, stripped Him of His clothes.

3. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.

3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory,
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the joy of Easter grace.

1./3 praeses C: praesul Dreves and Szövérfy

Mark states that Christ was crucified at the third hour: *Erat autem hora tertia: et crucifixerunt eum*.¹ Yet the hymn, although it is for Terce does not deal with the crucifixion, but with the events immediately prior to it. The crucifixion itself is the subject of the next hymn, *Sexta, qua Dominus crucem ascenderat*, following the accounts of Matthew and John who put it at the sixth hour.² Augustine explains this confusion between Mark and the other evangelists in two ways. He suggests first that Mark is recording the time at which the Jewish crowd shouted the words of condemnation, *Crucifige, crucifige*, Matthew and John the hour when the soldiers nailed Him to the cross. He proposes an alternative solution, that Matthew and John are counting six hours from the beginning of the Day of Preparation for the Passover, (i.e. the ninth hour of the night), which would mean that Christ was crucified at the third hour of the day, as Mark says. Augustine then leaves the choice to the reader.³

In the hymn Abelard follows Augustine's first proposal, that this was the hour Pilate yielded, although in the Prologue to the *Sic et Non* he gives a much simpler solution:

Item ergo simpliciter dicamus quomodo scriptum est in Matthaeo et Ioanne quod Dominus hora sexta crucifixus sit, in Marco quidem hora tertia; error scriptorum fuit, et in Marco hora sexta scriptum fuit.⁴

Nevertheless, although he considers Mark's mention of the third hour a scribal error, it is a fortunate one, for it enables him to write a separate hymn for Terce which remains true to the chronology of the Gospels.

The first stanza looks back to the previous hymn where Pilate realizes that he must give Christ into the hands of his enemies (*qui caesum denique coactus tradere*).⁵ For the first time the rôle of the people is brought into focus. We have been shown the part played by Judas, by Annas and Caiaphas and by Pilate, all of whom have, in their several ways, been condemned. but the final order for crucifixion could never have been

1 Mark 15.25.

2 Matt.27.45 and John 19.14.

3 Augustine *In Ioh.* CXVII.1-2 (CC Ser.Lat.36) pp.651-2 He closes the discussion: *Harum duarum solutionum istius difficultis quaestionis, eligat quisque quam volet.*

4 *Sic et Non* (PL 178.1341B).

5 46.2./1.

given had not the people demanded it (*Cum plebs obtinuit quod postulaverat* 1./2). Mark is decisive:

...illi magis clamabant: Crucifige eum. Pilatus autem volens populo satisfacere... tradidit Iesum...ut crucifigeretur.⁶

In an earlier verse Mark calls the people *turba*.⁷ Abelard deliberately avoids *populus*, substituting *plebs*, with its underlying notion of contempt, the equivalent of Mark's *turba*.

The final line of the stanza, *qui crucem batulans tam crucem tolerat* (1./4) is the most Abelardian in the hymn. A phrase found in John, *batulans sibi crucem*, is used first in its literal sense, then extended to form a paradox with the next phrase, *crucem tolerat*.⁸ There is word-play in the double *crucem*, the first the physical cross which Christ carried to the place of execution, the second the torture of that cross.⁹ It cannot be that Abelard is thinking of the torture as the crucifixion itself, since he is careful to leave that until the sixth hour. But, as Christ carries the cross, He begins to feel the pain that the cross will inflict in its fullness when He is crucified. Abelard makes a pertinent comment:

Susceptus tandem ut ad crucifigendum duceretur, ipsum quoque crucis patibulum gestare compulsus est, ut nec interim ei parceretur, ipso crucis pondere prius afflicto quam in ea crucifixus.¹⁰

The word-play is complicated by the occurrence in Luke of a similar phrase in a different context: *et qui non batulat crucem suam et venit post me, non potest esse meus discipulus*, where Christ uses the metaphor of the cross to explain that discipleship involves suffering.¹¹ That Abelard had this meshing of images in mind is suggested by his use of *batulare* in a similar context in prose:

6 Mark 15.14-15.

7 Mark 15.11 *Pontifices autem concitaverunt turbam ut magis Barabbam dimitteret eis.*

8 John 19.17.

9 The influence of the classical authors read in the schools is clear in the punning on *crux*, for it is in the plays of Plautus and Terence that *crux* denotes "torture": *quae te mala crux agit?* Plautus *Bacch* 4.2.2; *quaerere in malo crucem*, Terence *Phormio* 3.3.11. For the classical authors known in the twelfth century see C.H.Haskins *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Harvard 1927) ch.4 pp.93-126.

10 *Sermo XII* (PL 178.482C-D).

Quod quid virium nostrarum non est, ut calicem salutaris accipiamus, hoc est passioni Iesu patiendo communicemus, et nostram quoque crucem balulando, eum sequamur.¹²

So the lines refer not only to the suffering of Christ, but to the theme of *compassio*, our suffering with Christ. We too must follow Him to crucifixion, sharing His pain.

Calvary is nowhere in Scripture designated the place *reus...ad necem deditus* (2./2), but the implication is present in that Christ was crucified along with two thieves. The word *Domínus*, which has appeared in all the hymns in this section, usually in the opening lines, has been postponed here to good effect. Its juxtaposition with the place reserved for the death of criminals heightens the sense of Christ's degradation and the humility with which He endures. This is the third time *reus* is used in connection with Christ. He is the most just Judge tried *ut reus* by judges who are themselves guilty; He is the Lord brought before Pilate *ut reus* to be condemned; here, again the Lord, He is to be executed among criminals.¹³ This emphasis on Christ as a criminal and, in the last instance, numbered among criminals, is surely intended to recall the prophecy of Isaiah *et cum sceleratis reputatus est*.¹⁴ Abelard makes this point in *Sermo XII*:

Crucifixus denique ad summam eius ignominiam inter latrones constituitur, ut ex similitudine poenae simul reus crederetur culpa.¹⁵

So Christ reaches the place of crucifixion. The lines

amaro poculo delusum primitus,
ut crucifigerent denudant vestibus (2./3-4)

detail the last two trials He has to endure before the final agony of the cross, the mockery of the bitter cup and the stripping of His clothes.

poculo is by metonymy the liquid within the cup. Here again I find myself in disagreement with Szövérfy who cites in explanation the occasion in Matthew *...acceptam spongiam implevit aceto et inposuit harundini et dabat et bibere* (with parallels in Mark and John).¹⁶ All these instances refer to the drink given to Jesus as

11 Luke 14.27.

12 *Sermo XII* (PL 178.484A).

13 42.6./3-4 and 46.1./1-2.

14 Is.53.12.

15 *Sermo XII* (PL 178.482D).

16 Szövérfy II p.113 cites Matt.27.48, Mark 15.36 and John 19.29.

He hung on the cross, a drink which was lifted up to Him in a sponge. If Szövérfy is correct, it seems odd that Abelard should call this a *poculum*. Odd too that the next hymn starts with Christ's ascent of the cross (*Sexta qua Dominus crucem ascenderat*). The mistake is compounded by a reference in Matthew to the time of this drink: *Et circa horam nonam...*¹⁷ Abelard is referring to an earlier drink also recorded in both Matthew and Mark: *Et perducunt illum in Golgotha...et dabant ei bibere murratum vinum*.¹⁸ This reference is proved by Mark's words two verses later: *Erat autem hora tertia...*¹⁹

Abelard, however, makes use of this double "bitter drink". By choosing the adjective *amaro*, he releases a host of images familiar to his readers. It brings to mind the Psalmist's words which Augustine quotes as a comment on John's Gospel:

atque ut hoc etiam consummaretur quod scriptum praedixerat: Et in situ mea potaverunt me aceto, "Sitio" inquit.²⁰

This explains *delusum* (2./3). Whether Abelard understood that the bitterness of the drink was intended to be an analgesic, or not, is immaterial. He follows tradition in interpreting it as part of the mockery Christ had to undergo.

There are further levels of symbolism inherent in the phrase *amaro poculo*. As a metaphor, the bitter cup is the cup of sin and death which Christ prayed would be taken from Him: *Pater, si vis, transfer calicem istum a me*.²¹ Abelard uses *calix* and *poculum* interchangeably in this context. Later in the Sacred Triduum series the cup is the cup of sin from which Christ drinks death:

quod de hoc biberis in via, Domine,
mortem videlicet sceleris calice.²²

In 57 and 68 it is the cup of death: *Hoc mortis poculum* and *Calix praeclarus/ mortis est potus*.²³ So the image is extended from the cup of bitterness through the cup of sin to the cup of death.

¹⁷ Matt.27.46.

¹⁸ Mark 15.22-23; cf. Matt.27.33-34.

¹⁹ Mark 15.25.

²⁰ Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* CXIX.4 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.659 quoting Ps.68.22.

²¹ Matt.26.39.

²² 56.2./3-4.

²³ 57.2./1 and 68.3./1-2.

A different, though related, symbol is evoked by *amaro*: it looks forward to the motif of bitterness in the hymn *Lignum amaras/ tridulcat aquas*, where, in an evocation of the waters of Mara, the cross, the source of bitter death, sweetens the waters of bitterness for man.²⁴ Christ drinks the cup that man need not fear it: *amarum poculum prior medicus bibit ne bibere timeret aegrotus*.²⁵ So Abelard hints again at the recurring theme of *compassio*.

Before Christ is crucified, He is stripped of His clothes (*ut crucifigerent denudant vestibus* 2./4). This is not stated explicitly in Scripture but implied in that the soldiers divided His clothes while He hung on the Cross: *et crucifigentes eum, dividerunt vestimenta eius*.²⁶ By making this follow on from the notion of mockery in the previous couplet, Abelard adds his own interpretation to the story. It is clear that clothing must be removed before crucifixion but Abelard, through this juxtaposition, suggests that this is done as the final degradation.²⁷ Therefore, moved to our heart's core by all He endures, we ask to share His suffering, *Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine*.

24 68.1./1-2. The incident occurs in Ex.15.23-25. For a discussion p.354ff.

25 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.98.3* (CC Ser.Lat.39) p.1380.

26 Mark 15.24.

27 Ambrose, however, sees Christ's nakedness as a symbol of His identity as the second Adam, the One Who conquers where Adam fell. *Expos.in Luc.X.110* (CC Ser.Lat.14) p.377.

7.6. 48. *in parasceve ad sextam*

Argument: While Christ hangs on the Cross, darkness covers the earth because the sun cannot endure to look on the evil perpetrated by men against their true Sun.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Sexta, qua Dominus crucem ascenderat,

solis obscuritas mundum obnubilat
tamquam aspicere scelus abhorreat
quod mundus proprium in solem perpetrat.</p> | <p>1. At the sixth hour when the Lord had ascended
the cross,
the darkening of the sun shrouds the world
as if it shrinks from gazing on the evil
which the world commits against its own Sun.</p> |
| <p>2. Dum crucem sustinens sol verus patitur,
sol insensibilis illi compatitur:
quo summum hominum scelus arguitur
et, quantis tenebris errant, ostenditur.</p> | <p>2. While the true Sun suffers, enduring the cross,
the sun which has no feeling feels with Him:
by this is the worst evil of men rebuked,
by this is shown in what shadows they stray.</p> |
| <p>3. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae,
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.</p> | <p>3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory,
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

Here is the retelling of a single event in the course of the crucifixion and an exposition of its symbolism. Each of the synoptic Gospels relates the story of the darkness which covered the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour. The choice of words in the phrase *solis obscuritas* (1./2) suggests that Abelard was influenced in particular by Luke:

Erat autem fere hora sexta, et tenebrae factae sunt in universam terram usque in horam nonam. Et obscuratus est sol.¹

At mid-day the sun was darkened and left the world in shadow because it could not bear to look on the evil committed by men against their true Sun:

tamquam aspicere scelus abhorreat
quod mundus proprium in solem perpetrat. (1./3-4).

The image of Christ the Sun has already been discussed in relation to the first of the Nativity hymns, where He is *Oriens* and *Sol*.² He is the *sol iustitiae* of Malachi, the *Oriens ex alto* of Zacharias, the *lux vera* of John and the lamp of the New Jerusalem, *lucerna eius est Agnus*.³

That the sun grows dark from shame is an ancient theme in both Greek and Latin patristic works. Cyril of Jerusalem writes that when the sun saw its Lord dishonoured, it could not bear the sight and turned away its face:⁴

ὁ γὰρ ἥλιος Δεσπότην ἀτιμαζόμενον ἰδὼν, ἐξελίμπανεν
τρέφων, οὐ φέρων τὴν θάαν.

Jerome links the miracle with two Old Testament prophecies:

Et hoc factum reor ut compleretur prophetia, dicens: Occumbet sol meridie, et contenebrabitur super terram in die lux; et in alio loco: Videturque mihi clarissimum lumen mundi, hoc est, luminare malus retraxisse radios suos ne aut pendentem videret Dominum aut impij blasphemantes sua luce fruerentur.⁵

Using the same vein of imagery Augustine suggests that the death of Christ is the true sunset: *occasus Christi, passio Christi*.⁶

1 Luke 23.44-45; cf. Matt.27.45 and Mark 15.33.

2 30.1./2 and 2./4.

3 Mal.4.2; Luke 1.78-79; John 1.9; Apoc.21.23.

4 Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechesis* IV.10 (PG 33.469A).

5 Jerome *Comm.in Matt.*IV.27 (PL 26.220B) quoting Amos 8.9 and Jer.15.9.

6 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.*103 *Sermo* 3.21 (CC Ser.Lat.40) p.1517.

The motif found its way into art. In many miniatures depicting the crucifixion the sun hides its head, and in frequent examples from the twelfth century there are inscribed near the sun above the Cross the couplet

Igneus sol obscuratur in aethere
quia Sol iustitiae patitur in cruce.⁷

Abelard's reworking of this traditional motif gains in power through the chiasmus *solis...mundum...mundus...solem*:

solis obscuritas mundum obnubilat...
quod mundus proprium in solem perpetrat (1./2+4).

The contrast is elegantly worked, the first pair referring to the physical, the second to the spiritual. The parallelism is enhanced by the alliterative pattern of the lines: *s ob m ob/ m p s p*. The intervening line (1./3) contains the evocative *abhorreat*, a personification which paves the way for the *compassio* of the sun, the main theme of the second stanza.

Abelard's fourth sermon, where he discusses the appearance of comets as a sign of change in the world, is important for an understanding of this hymn. Comets foreshadow the deaths of kings or turmoil in kingdoms. It is, thus, only natural, he argues, that a star should herald the birth of the King of kings:

Summi vero Regis novum nativitatis modum, sicut et conceptum, nova stella et incomparabili splendore praesignare debuit.⁸

He links the appearance of the star at Christ's birth with the clouding of the sun at His death, suggesting that the sun hides itself in darkness either because it fears Christ's death or in sorrow over the depth of the sin:

Cuius et mortem tanquam expavescens, vel de sceleris magnitudine dolens sol obscuratus, mundo indicat universo; ut tam ortum quam occasum veri Solis et coelestis Regis gloriam coelestia protestarentur signa.

It is right that the heavenly bodies should react in marvellous ways at the most critical points in the life of Christ. In the sermon the sun is personified through the participles *expavescens* and *dolens*, both paralleled in the hymn by the verbs *abhorreat* (1./3) and *compatitur* (2./2).

It is possible that Abelard has been influenced, whether consciously or not, in the last line of the stanza (*quod mundus proprium in solem perpetrat* 1./4) by the Prologue

⁷ See Rahner *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* p.117.

⁸ *Sermo* IV (PL 178.414A).

to the fourth Gospel. John speaks of the true Light (*lux vera*) which was in the world (*in mundo erat*). He came to His own (*in propria venit*) but they did not recognize Him (*et mundus eum non cognovit*).⁹ Abelard, on the other hand, insists that the world did recognize its Lord. This is a major motif in the last hymn for Epiphany:

Elementa suum cuncta
recognoscunt auctorem.¹⁰

For John *mundus* means man, for Abelard the physical world of nature: man did not recognize Christ, nature did.

The second stanza is not the "repetition and expansion of the first one" that Szövérfy claims.¹¹ Abelard adds two new dimensions to the motif of the darkening of the sun. In the first stanza the sun hides, ashamed of the evil perpetrated against the true Sun by His own people. In this stanza shame yields to the pathetic fallacy of the sun identifying itself with the physical suffering of the true Sun. As Christ enters the shadow of death, so the sun, feeling with Him, grows dark. The contrast of the *compassio* of the sun and the evil of men is underlined by the paradoxical (*sol*) *insensibilis...compatitur* (2./2). These two aspects of the darkening of the sun are found again in *Sermo XI* where Abelard writes:

Sol obscuratus est, tanquam immanitatem sceleris conspiceret non ferret. Ipsa quoque insensibilia, tanquam tuam sentirent passionem, compassionis exhibuerunt affectum.¹²

Two questions are implied: if the purely physical parts of creation can "feel" for the suffering of Christ, how can man, the rational and "sensible" part be so degenerate as to crucify the One Who gives life? How, too, can man not be moved by the vision of that suffering to pray the prayer of the final stanza, *Tu, tibi compati, sic fac nos, Domine* (3./1)?

There is a deliberate ambivalence about the meaning of *arguitur* (*quo summum hominum scelus arguitur* 2./3). Overtly the sun's *compassio* denounces man's sin in crucifying Christ. The personification of the sun through the verbs *compatitur* and *arguitur* underlines the depths to which man has sunk since it is the sun's response

9 John 1.9-11.

10 37.4./1-2. For further discussion see p.100.

11 Szövérfy II p.114.

12 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.470B).

which is the only valid one. The second meaning of *arguitur*, "to make clear", forms a paradox with the event: the sun by growing dark shows forth clearly the sin which man has committed.

The physical darkness which descends on the earth because the sun is clouded becomes in the final line (*et, quantis tenebris errant, ostenditur* 2./4) a symbol of the spiritual darkness of men lost in sin. Abelard has in mind the words of Isaiah, a passage familiar to the nuns because it begins the first Cantic for Christmas: *populus qui ambulat in tenebris*.¹³ In changing the verb from *ambulat* to *errant*, Abelard emphasizes the "lostness" of men who have wandered from their true destiny through sin. Using a similar image Prudentius prays that God may guide his soul back to Paradise *quam liquerat exsul et errans*.¹⁴ Both Prudentius and Abelard have chosen *errare* for its two senses of wandering and sinning, thus making God's judgement on Cain, *vagus et profugus eris super terram*, more pertinent to the condition of all men.¹⁵

The prayer *Tu, tibi, compati sic fac nos, Domine*, is a suitable climax to the hymn. The sun's demonstration of *compassio* is an example for men to follow for it is the only possible response to Christ's suffering.

13 Waddell CLS 7 p.383 *Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris: vidit lucem magnam*, quoting Is.9.2. For comment see CLS 3 pp.359-361.

14 Prudentius *Cathem.*X.169 (CC Ser.Lat.126) p.59.

15 Gen.4.12 and 14.

7.7. 49. in parasceve ad nonam

Argument: Christ has paid the penalty; the sun returns, a symbol of the pardon men can now receive through the death of the true light. The miraculous events surrounding His death are described.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Nona, qua lux vera poenam finierit,

subtractam lucem hanc mundo restituit
ut beneficio, quod mundo reddidit,

promittat veniam illis quos terruit. | 1. The ninth hour, when the true Light completed
the punishment,
has restored to the world this light withdrawn,
so that by this blessing, which it has granted
again to the world,
it may promise pardon to those whom it terrified. |
| 2. Luce iam reddita stupent quod cernitur:

motu mirabili terra concutitur,
cum saxis pariter et velum scinditur,
locus, quo dormiunt sepulti, panditur. | 2. In the light now restored they stand amazed
at what they see:
the earth is shaken by a stange quaking,
rocks and veil together are rent,
the place where the buried sleep is opened wide. |
| 3. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae. | 3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory;
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace. |

1./1 poenam Waddell: poena C¹
2./4 sepulti C: sepulchri Dreves and Szövérfy

1 See Waddell CLS 8 p.cccxix.

The ninth hour sees the end of the darkness which covered the whole earth from the sixth hour when Christ was crucified. It was at the ninth hour that He died. Matthew relates the eclipse of the sun to the suffering and death of Christ:

a sexta hora tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram usque ad horam nonam. Et circa horam nonam...Iesus...emisit spiritum.²

In 48 Christ is the true Sun (*sol verus*); here He is the true Light (*vera lux* 1./1).³ This metaphor, which is a direct quotation from John (*erat lux vera*), is linked with an allusion to Christ's last words from the Cross. The phrase *poenam finierit* (1./1) recalls in thought, although not in word, the cry: *Consummatum est*.⁴ The result is a strange, but effective blending: light has paid the penalty.

It is worth noting that Abelard nowhere in these hymns speaks directly of Christ's death. All is achieved through metaphor and allusion. Von den Steinen makes the point with reference to the preceding hymn:

Certes Abélard ne se complait pas à produire les images sanglantes qu'on verra si souvent plus tard; on n'entend pas chez lui *Salve caput cruentatum, conquassatum, vulneratum*, et quand il lui faut bien mentionner la mort de son Seigneur, il se contente d'une allusion symbolique à l'éclipse de soleil.⁵

For Abelard the motif of light and darkness demonstrates more vividly the death of Christ than would a detailed description.

The ninth hour restores to the world the light that had disappeared (*subtractam lucem hanc mundo restituit* 1./2). The first reference of these lines is obviously to the eclipse of the sun in the Gospels but already in the preceding hymn that has become symbolic: the sun hid its light in compassion for the suffering of Christ as He endured the cross.⁶ Christ dies and the sun returns to the world. The change in the first line from the image of Christ the Sun to Christ the Light is undoubtedly an intentional reminiscence of Christ's statement: *Ego sum lux mundi*.⁷ Abelard has turned this echo

2 Matt.27.45-50.

3 48.2./1; John 1.9.

4 John 19.30.

5 See above 42 n.58, p.372.

6 48.2./1-2 *Dum crucem sustinens sol verus patitur/ sol insensibilis illi compatitur*.

7 John 9.12.

on its head: Jesus, the true Light, is the Light of the world. That true Light has died and has thus, in a sense, been taken away from the world. Yet, in the removal of that Light, the sun, the physical light of the world, is now restored to the world.

The second couplet,

ut beneficio, quod mundo reddidit,
promittat veniam illis quos terruit (1./3-4),

interprets the preceding lines. The restoration of the sun, a blessing in itself, is a foreshadowing of a far greater blessing, the promise of pardon inherent in Christ's death. In 48 the sun shrank from looking on the evil of man (*tamquam aspicere scelus abhorreat*);⁸ its return implies that the evil is at an end. Christ has completed the punishment (*lux vera poenam finierit* 1./1).

There is another symbol inherent in the restoration of the sun which promises pardon. Although it is unstated in the hymn, it was undoubtedly part of Abelard's intention for it is an ancient theme. The return of the light to the world points forward to the resurrection, the restoration of the true Light to His people. Firmicus Maternus writes:

ecce post triduum lucidior solito dies oritur et reddita soli praeteriti luminis
gratia: omnipotens Deus Christus splendidioribus solis radiis adoratur: exultat
salutare numen et triumphales currus eius iustorum ac sanctorum turba
comitatur.⁹

In the last line, *promittat veniam illis quos terruit* (1./4), Abelard adds something of his own imagination to the record of the Gospels. He puts himself in the place of the witnesses of the crucifixion and realizes their reaction to the darkness which fell so suddenly, a darkness which lasted a full three hours. He sees that terror would be the only possible emotion. The Gospels do talk of fear, but it is the fear of the soldiers and the bystanders when they realize that Christ chose the very moment of His own death and when they see the strange events detailed in the following stanza, not the fear of the darkness itself.¹⁰

8 48.1./3.

9 Firmicus Maternus *de errore profanarum religionum* 24 (CSEL) p.115. For discussion of the imagery and further references see Rahner *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* ch.4 pp.113-122.

10 Luke 23.48 and Matt.27.54.

The first stanza closes on terror banished because the darkness is over. The second opens with a reiteration of the return of the light (*Luce iam reddita* 2./1), That very light, however, brings with it a renewal of fear since the people are now faced with still more of the supernatural in the events which follow. It is Matthew alone who relates all three:

et ecce velum templi scissum est...et terra mota est et petrae scissae sunt, et monumenta aperta sunt: et multa corpora sanctorum, qui dormierant, surrexerunt.¹¹

The hymn remains close to the wording of the Gospel, taking advantage of Matthew's double use of *scissum...scissa* to link the two events of the temple-veil and the rocks. The resulting abbreviation makes the line the more forceful (*cum saxis partiter et velum scinditur* 2./3). Abelard adds his own mark by including the adjective *mirabili* (2./2) to stress that this was no ordinary earthquake, but one that was on a par with the miraculous eclipse of the sun, another sign and symbol.

It is significant that, although Abelard is following Matthew closely, he does not give the full account as it appears in the Gospel. He omits the resurrection of the saints from the open graves since, as he explains in *Sermo XIII*, this must have taken place, not on Good Friday, but at Easter itself:

nequaquam ex his verbis intelligendi sunt ipso die Dominicae crucifixionis resurrexisse, sed tunc tantum in fissura petrarum eorum sepulchra aperta fuisse, et postmodum, ipso die resurrectionis, post eius resurrectionem suscitatos esse...¹²

Although he suppresses the rest of the quotation from Matthew, he does allude to it in the verb *dormiunt* (2./4) which echoes the phrase *multa corpora sanctorum qui dormierant*. Szövérfy points out that the verb *dormire* is a common symbol for death and cites the Psalms in support, but the reason for its use here is that it appears in Matthew's account of the supernatural events.¹³

In the last three lines the reasons for the renewal of fear are accumulated: earthquake, rocks and temple-veil rent, graves opened. The earthquake is supernatural (*mirabili* 2./1) and accounts for their awe (*stupent* 2./2). The concentration of passive verbs (*cernitur, concutitur, scinditur, panditur*) adds to the sense of events set in motion

11 Matt.27.51-52.

12 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.487D-488A).

13 Szövérfy II p.115 citing Ps.3.6.

by a force which cannot be controlled. In contrast and providing a moment of calm before the final horror is the verb *dormiunt*, active in voice, but suggesting rest, a skilful juxtaposition with the terror of the open graves.

The third stanza, *Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine* (3./1) is that shared by all the hymns except the first. Here the link with the main body of the hymn is at its weakest. The suffering of Christ is a motif only in the opening line (*Nona, qua vera lux poenam finierit*), while the stanza immediately preceding this is a catalogue of preternatural occurrences, powerful in evoking a sense of mystery and awe, but not of *compassio*.

7.8. 50. *in parasceve ad vespas*

Argument: Christ is taken down from the cross. His tomb is sealed and a guard set so that His resurrection might be the more miraculous. The guards must either report a lie or confess the truth of the resurrection.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Facto iam vespere cruce depositum
et aromatibus conditum Dominum
diligens sepelit cura fidelium;
monstrat qui fugerat plium obsequium.</p> | <p>1. Now it was evening: taken down from the cross
and wrapped in spices
the loving care of the faithful buries the Lord;
the one who had fled shows devoted homage.</p> |
| <p>2. Ingenti lapide sepulchrum clauditur
quod cura maxima fideque <colitur>,
immundis aditus sic intercluditur,
quo mirabilius resurgat, agitur.</p> | <p>2. The tomb is sealed with a huge stone
and is tended with the greatest care and faith;
entrance is denied by the impure:
this is done that His rising may be the more
miraculous.</p> |
| <p>3. Nec minus gloriae confert Dominicae,
quod pravi deputant suos custodiae,
ut sic iniquitas victa perspicue
confusa comprimat ora blasphemiae.</p> | <p>3. That the wicked set their own men on guard
enhances the glory of the Lord,
so that their iniquity, thus clearly defeated
may curb their confused words of blasphemy.</p> |
| <p>4. Aut ergo mortuum reddat custodia
ut ei salva sint promissa praemia,
aut, quae conspexerit, fatens magnalia

nostra sic praedicet nobiscum gaudia.</p> | <p>4. Either the guards would report Him dead
so that their promised rewards would be assured;
or, confessing the mighty deeds which they had
seen,
would tell out with us our joys.</p> |
| <p>5. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gloriae.</p> | <p>5. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory,
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

1./4 fugerat: fuerat C

2./2 colitur Dreves, followed by Waddell: molitur Szövérfy

We come now to the penultimate hymn in the section for Good Friday, to the service of Vespers where Abelard commemorates the laying of the Lord in the tomb. Although none of the Gospels has the word *vespere*, the time is suggested by Matthew and Mark in the phrases *cum autem sero factum esset* and *et cum iam sero esset factum*.¹ Christ has died; the strange events related in the previous hymn are at an end. There is a certain tranquillity as the faithful take His body from the cross and prepare it for burial in the tomb.

The choice of the participle *depositum* (1./1) is governed not so much by its occurrence in Mark and Luke, but more by the liturgical rite generally known as the *Depositio*.² This ceremony involved the burial of the Host, or the cross, or the cross and Host together, in a specially prepared *sepulchrum*. Because the *Depositio* was not an official part of the liturgy, although it was clearly influenced by the *Adoratio crucis*, the traditions vary widely, and in many places there is no record of such a ceremony. Where it did take place, the rubric is in some cases very simple, in others highly elaborate. There are, however, sections which are common to most.

The setting for the burial was a receptacle called the *sepulchrum*. When the Host alone was buried, this seems to have been a box in the shape of a *turris*, the form of Christ's tomb in Jerusalem as it was conceived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. When the cross itself was the object of burial, part of the altar or of the church itself was screened off as the sepulchre and the cross laid there. Often, in an enactment of the events of the Gospels, the cross was wrapped in a linen cloth and the sepulchre or the Cross was censed, recalling the spices in which Christ was laid. There was further realism in some ceremonies where a stone was used to cover the *sepulchrum*. Common to all the traditions was the Responsory:

Sepulto Domino, signatum est monumentum; volventes lapidem ad ostium monumenti; ponentes milites qui custodirent illud. Versus: Ne forte veniant discipuli eius et furentur eum, et dicant plebi: Surrexit a mortuis.³

The *Depositio* took place at one of three points during the liturgy: after the *adoratio crucis* or the *communio fidelium* or Vespers. As the influence of a ceremony of this type

¹ Matt.27.57; Mark 15.42.

² Luke 23.53. *et depositum involvit sindone...*; Mark 15.46. See Karl Young *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford 1933) Vol.I pp.112-148 for an extensive treatment of the *Depositio*.

³ The Responsory is taken from Matins of Holy Saturday (see Young pp.112-113).

can be clearly seen in the hymn, I would suggest that Abelard was used to a tradition where the *Depositio* happened after the *communio*, immediately before Vespers: the hymn would have added impact, if it were recalling events just enacted.

Abelard's eclectic use of the Gospels for his own purposes is well illustrated in this stanza. Matthew and Mark provide the source of the time in *vespere*; Mark and Luke give *depositum*; John suggests the content of the lines

et aromatibus conditum Dominum
diligens sepelit cura fidelium (1./2-3).

It is in John's narrative alone that Christ is wrapped in spices before it is laid in the tomb.⁴ In the two other Gospels which mention *aromata*, it is not until Easter that the spices are brought by the women.⁵

The line *monstrat qui fuerat piwm obsequium* (1./4) is awkward. I propose the emendation *fugerat*. In the following hymn Abelard contrasts the loyal women with the fearful disciples who fled:

gregis arietes metu disperserat.⁶

The emendation *fugerat* (1./4) suggests not only the two secret disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, who took Christ's body from the cross, but the inner band of eleven, for all fled at one time or another.⁷

Szövérfy suggests that the impersonal form *cura fidelium* is used because Joseph and Nicodemus were acting symbolically on behalf of the faithful.⁸ Although this has some truth in it, I would argue that this "impersonality" results rather from the *Depositio*. For what have the faithful, those present in the church, just done but with loving care buried their Lord in the tomb? So the *piwm obsequium* of the last line is not only the act of piety of the two secret disciples, but the service rendered their Lord by Christians each Good Friday.

As stanza 1 opens with narrative and moves into comment, so does the second. All the Gospels mention the stone which was placed at the entrance to the tomb, Matthew

4 John 19.40. *Acceperunt ergo corpus Iesu et ligaverunt illud linteis cum aromatibus.*

5 Mark 16.1; Luke 24.1.

6 51.2./2.

7 John 19.37-39.

8 Szövérfy II p.116.

and Mark at this point, Luke and John at the time of the resurrection.⁹ Matthew has *saxum*, the other three *lapis*; it is *lapis* which occurs in the rubric for the *Depositio* and in the Responsory *volventes lapidem ad ostium monumenti*.¹⁰

The line *quod cura maxima fideque* [] (2./2) contains a textual crux in the absence of the verb from the MS. Dreves proposes *colitur*, Szövérfy *molitur* on the grounds that it is "probably better", although he does not expand.¹¹ If we allow *molitur*, the meaning is "the tomb was built with great love and faith". We know, however, that Joseph had built the tomb for himself so that the concept of love and faith is inappropriate.¹² *colitur*, on the other hand, ("the tomb was tended with the greatest care and faith") makes sense if Matthew's reference to the women is taken into consideration: *erant autem ibi Maria Magdalene et altera Maria, sedentes contra sepulchrum*.¹³ The two women kept watch near the tomb, a picture developed in the next hymn, *Plas vigiliis agendo feminae...*¹⁴ There too, in the opening word *plas* is the suggestion of faith, while love is the theme of the second stanza:

Oves intrepidas amor servaverat,
et foras caritas timorem miserat.¹⁵

cura appears in the first and second stanzas (*cura fidelium* 1./3 and *cura maxima* 2./2): in both instances those who show this love are not named. Such parallelism must be deliberate and is intensified by the repetition of *fidelium...fide* (*diligens sepelit cura fidelium* and *quod cura maxima fideque colitur*). If the impersonal *cura fidelium* is intended to draw together the original participants in the burial and those who have just enacted it in the *Depositio*, then that is the reason here too for the rather vague *cura maxima fideque*. The vigil kept by the women at the tomb is reflected in some

9 Matt.27.60; Mark 15.46; Luke 24.2; John 20.1.

10 For the Responsory see above n.3. *lapis* appears in rubrics documented in Young *The Dramatic Associations of the Easter Sepulchre* (Wisconsin 1920) p.80. and *The Drama of the Medieval Church* p.553.

11 Dreves p.169; Szövérfy II p.116.

12 Matt.27.60.

13 Matt.27.61.

14 51.1./1.

15 51.2./3-4.

versions of the *Depositio* where candles are lit before the *sepulchrum* and continue to burn until the dawning of Easter.¹⁶ There is a still closer echo in other traditions where two monks watch over the "tomb" until the time of resurrection.¹⁷ There is a possibility, unable, of course to be verified, that the nuns of the Paraclete did just this. So the reference here and in the opening line of 51 (*Pias vigilias agendo feminae*) would be directly pertinent.

The last line of the second stanza (*quo mirabilis resurgat, agitur*) suggests that the placing of the stone at the entrance to the tomb made the resurrection all the more miraculous. *agitur* is explained by the preceding line, *immundis aditus sic intercluditur* (2./3). Szövérfy, taking *immundis* to be a dative of disadvantage, says

the rock closing the entrance of the Sepulchre becomes a symbol of faith which renders impossible access to the Lord for those who are 'impure'.¹⁸

This cannot be correct. Firstly, this interpretation admits of no link with the final clause *quo mirabilis resurgat* (2./4): "access to Christ is denied to the impure so that He may rise more miraculously" does not make sense. Then the suggestion is that the impure wished entrance, which is manifestly untrue.¹⁹ Matthew gives the accurate picture:

Iube ergo custodiri sepulchrum...ne forte veniant discipuli et furentur eum et dicant plebi: Surrexit a mortuis....Illi (Iudaei)...munierunt sepulchrum, signantes lapidem, cum custodibus.²⁰

Those to whom entrance was denied were the disciples, not the *immundi*.

immundis is more likely a dative of the agent: "entrance was denied by the impure", an interpretation which has the warrant of Scripture and which makes a proper

16 See Young *Dramatic Associations* pp.43, 102, 115, 119.

17 From the *Regularis Concordia*, drawn up in the tenth century by St. Ethelwold for the Benedictine monasteries in England: *Nocte vero ordinentur duo fratres aut tres aut plures, si tanta fuerit congregatio, qui ibidem psalmos decantando excubias fideles exerceant* (Young *The Drama of the Medieval Church* p.133.); see also Young *Dramatic Associations* pp.36, 86, 115.

18 Szövérfy II p.116.

19 Szövérfy's understanding of *immundis* as a dative of disadvantage is upheld by the rubric of one extant version of the *Depositio*. The text from Bamberg reads: *...et sera diligenter munit sepulchrum, ne Christi corpus per impios aut haereticos vel Iudaeos inde auferri, vel alia quevis contaminatio fieri queat* (Young *Dramatic Associations* p.115). The weight of evidence, however, supports the interpretation that the tomb was sealed to keep out the followers of Jesus.

20 Matt.27.64-66.

connection with the final line. Because of the precautions taken by the *immundi*, the resurrection could not have been the mere theft of the body by the disciples. The miracle is thus seen the more clearly.

The opening lines of the third stanza,

Nec minus gloriae confert Dominicae
quod pravi deputant suos custodiae (4./1-2),

reiterate the idea in a chiasmus formed with the end of the second stanza: *immundis aditus sic intercluditur* (2./3) is balanced by *quod pravi deputant suos custodiae* (3./2); *quo mirabilius resurgat, agitur* (2./4) by *nec minus gloriae confert Dominicae* (3./1). This balance is a further indication of the meaning of *immundis aditus sic intercluditur*. The glory of the resurrection is the greater because the *pravi* or *immundi* cannot in all truth deny its validity since their own people were at hand to prevent the disciples stealing the body.

The general sense of 3./3-4,

ut sic iniquitas victa perspicue
confusa comprimat ora blasphemiae,

is that the iniquity of the wicked, in their attempt to prevent the resurrection, is defeated when, in spite of their precautions, Christ rises. So much is clear. The complexity arises when Abelard says that their clear defeat (*victa perspicue* 3./3) confounds their confused words of blasphemy, *ora* being metonymy for *verba*. It is not obvious to what particular statement of blasphemy Abelard is referring. Szövérfy suggests that their blasphemy lies in "branding the prospect of the resurrection as a lie."²¹ This, assuredly, is blasphemy, but it is not confused.

The reference, I would suggest, is to the reaction of the priests to the evidence of the guards:

...pecuniam copiosam dederunt militibus, dicentes: Dicite quia discipuli eius nocte venerunt et furati sunt eum nobis dormientibus...²²

The priests set a guard to prevent the disciples stealing the body; the guards report the resurrection; the priests then bribe them to say that the disciples have done precisely what they were to be stopped from doing. There is blasphemy here and there is confusion, for, in spite of the evidence of their own people, they still refuse to believe. The juxtaposition of *perspicue* and *confusa* (3./3-4), although the words are not

²¹ Szövérfy II p.116.

²² Matt.28.12-13.

syntactically related, creates an effective oxymoron which underlines the contrast of the clear victory of Christ over the confusion and defeat of His enemies.

Faced with their instructions from the priests, the guards have to make a choice:

Aut ergo mortuum reddat custodia...
aut, quae conspexerit, fatens magnalia (4./1-3).

They must report the lie that Christ is still dead or confess what they have seen.

The second line (*ut et salva sint promissa praemia* 4./2) points out why they may choose the lie: thus they will receive the reward promised them by the priests (*...pecuniam copiosam dederunt militibus*).²³ In the hymn, the ultimate decision of the soldiers is left open. All is potential because there still remain two nights before the resurrection. But we are already aware that they will choose the money and the lie. So at the beginning and end of the Passion hymns we have people who commit evil for gain: Judas betrayed Christ to His death for money, and for money the witnesses of His resurrection denied what they had seen.²⁴

The truth of the alternative is emphasized by the position of the relative clause *quae conspexerit* (4./3), brought forward before its antecedent *magnalia*, so that the fact that they are eye-witnesses, albeit in spite of themselves, is stressed. *Fatens* (4./3) reiterates this, paralleling *reddat* (4./1), but more specific: what they report could be true or false; what they confess must be true. *magnalia* completes the emphasis: these are great and glorious events to which they are witness.

The final line (*nostra sic praedicet nobiscum gaudia* 4./4) brings in a more personal note with *nostra* and *nobiscum*. We will soon be proclaiming our joy on Easter morning. If the guards bear witness to the truth, they will become one with us in our joy. Abelard here employs a variation on the technique used in earlier hymns for Good Friday in attempting to draw together the original participants in the drama of the Passion and contemporary Christians. Previously he has endeavoured to make the faithful identify with the first disciples or with the sufferings of Christ through an emotional involvement. Here he invites those who took part in the events of long ago to join with the Christians in the church in their joy.

The order of the alternatives set before the guards is important. Although the choice is left open, it would be natural to expect that the second will be the one

²³ Matt.28.12.

²⁴ 42.3./4 *ut his in pretio det mundi pretium*.

eventually taken. Here this is not so for we know already that they will choose their reward.²⁵ Abelard's positioning of the alternatives is deliberate. He wants to end on a note of joyous hope, looking forward to the glory of Easter.

This last couplet provides a successful link with the final stanza. Although this is still the night of weeping when we have laid the Lord's body in the tomb, praying that we might share in His sufferings, our hope is in the resurrection and the promise that we may at the last share in His glory.

²⁵ Matt.28.15 *at illi accepta pecunia fecerunt sicut erant docti.*

7.9. 51. in parasceve ad completorium

Argument: The women, unafraid of the guards, keep vigil at the tomb. The disciples have fled in terror but in the women love conquers fear.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>Pias vigilias agendo feminae,
viris cedentibus, non norunt cedere;</i></p> <p><i>custodes positos vident intrepidae,
minantes gladios cernunt tutissimae.</i></p> | <p>1. In keeping their holy vigil the women
know not how to flee, although the men have
fled;
fearlessly they see the guards in position,
they gaze on menacing swords with perfect
assurance.</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Facta percussio quam pastor tulerat
gregis arietes metu disperserat;
oves intrepidas amor servaverat
et foras caritas timorem miserat.</i></p> | <p>2. The smiting which the Shepherd had endured
had scattered in fear the rams of the flock;
love had kept the ewes unafraid;
love had cast fear aside.</p> |
| <p>3. <i>Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.</i></p> | <p>3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory;
so now to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

1./3 *intrepidae* Dreves followed by Szövérfy; *intrepide* C

1./4 *tutissimae*: *tutissime* C followed by Dreves and Szövérfy¹

¹ The MS has the ending *-e* (*intrepide*, *tutissime*) signifying either the adverb or the adjective (*intrepidae*, *tutissimae*). Dreves, followed by Szövérfy, changes the first to *intrepidae*, but retains *tutissime*. The parallelism of the lines, however, suggests that they should be both the same. I have chosen the adjectival ending because it is more emphatic as a description of the women.

The canticle with which the service of Compline opens serves as a starting point for the hymn. Matthew writes of some of the women who followed Christ: *Erant autem ibi Maria Magdalena et altera Maria, sedentes contra sepulchrum*.² Following tradition Abelard takes this to mean that the women kept a vigil at the tomb. In the preceding hymn he has already hinted at this interpretation: *quod cura maxma fideque [colitur]*.³ Now he articulates the same idea clearly in *pias vigílias agendo feminae* (1./1). If, as seems probable, the nuns used the extra-liturgical ceremony of the *Depositio*, it is possible that they also kept a vigil over the *sepulchrum*.⁴ This then would point to a clear identification of the nuns with the women at the tomb.

The women remained near the tomb, although the men have already fled:

...feminae,
viris cedentibus, non norunt cedere (1./1-2).

The disciples, for the most part, are not presented in complimentary terms in the story of the Passion: when Christ was arrested in Gethsemane, they all fled; at His trial, Peter denied Him; when He died, they stood far off.⁵ It is only John who records that one remained close, but Abelard chooses to disregard this.⁶ His purpose is to concentrate on the fearlessness and love of the women who gain in stature through comparison with the men. The juxtaposition of *feminae* and *viris* and the repetition *cedentibus...cedere* together emphasize the paradox that it is the women who, against the traditional view of the weaker sex, remain steadfast and loyal to their Lord, while the men are reduced to cowardice.

Abelard's originality and his sensitivity towards those for whom he is writing shine through in his handling of this theme. It is not uncommon to find other authorities putting women on a par with men, while emphasizing their inferiority as the weaker sex.⁷ What is unusual is his suggestion that these women are superior to the men. *Epistle VII* contains a parallel:

2 Matt.27.61.

3 50.2./2; see discussion on p.201.

4 See discussion on 50. pp.201-2.

5 Mark 14.50; Matt.26.74-75; Luke 23.49.

6 John 19.25-26 *Stabant autem iuxta crucem Iesu mater eius...Cum vidisset matrem et discipulum stantem quem diligebat...* Yet even this disciple is not reported as staying beside the tomb.

7 See Mary McLaughlin "Peter Abelard and the dignity of women: Twelfth century <<feminism>>"

Hae quippe, ipso apostolorum principe negante, et dilecto Domini fugiente, vel ceteris dispersis apostolis, intrepidae perstiterunt nec eas a Christo vel in passione, vel in morte formido aliqua vel desperatio separare potuit.⁸

The prominent place Abelard here assigns to women, a place of dignity and honour, is a result of his concern to make the hymns appropriate to the context for which they are being composed. His desire throughout the hymns for Good Friday has been to involve the faithful in the events and emotions of the Passion. Here that intention reaches its climax in the implicit identification of the nuns with the women at the tomb.

Donald Frank in his article "Abelard as Imitator of Christ" shows how Abelard hoped that his own burial would be like that of Christ.⁹ He cites the example of the women at Christ's tomb:

Quae de Domini Iesu Christi sepultura sollicitae, eam unguentis pretiosis, et praevenerunt et subsecutae sunt, et circa eius sepulchrum studiose vigilantes, et sponsi mortem lacrymabiliter plangentes, sicut scriptum est: Mulieres sedentes ad monumentum lamentabantur flentes Dominum.

Frank suggests that in his frequent references to the constancy of the women, Abelard is underlining his faith in Heloise and her nuns who had already provided him with a place of retreat at the Paraclete and would pray for him over his tomb. In both the Letters and the hymn he gives the impression of an uninterrupted vigil over Christ's tomb, an impression which is not warranted by Scripture. It is, however, what Abelard seeks for himself from the nuns.

custodes positos vident intrepidae,
minantes gladios cernunt tutissimae(1./3-4)

paints a graphic picture of the danger facing the women. The picture is based on Matthew's account of the setting of the guards but Abelard adds his own motif of threatening swords (*minantes gladios*), a natural, but evocative extension of the Scriptural image.¹⁰ The lines gain much of their effect through chiasmus (*custodes*

in theory and practice" in *Colloque Pierre Abélard, Pierre le Vénérable* (Cluny 1972) pp.287-333.

8 *Epist.*VII (PL 178.229D).

9 *Epist.*II (ed. Muckle) ...*cadaver, obsecro, nostrum ubicumque vel sepultum vel expositum tacuerit, ad coemeterium vestrum deferri faciat ubi filiae vestrae, immo in Christo sorores, sepulchrum nostrum saepius videntes, ad preces pro me Domino fundendas amplius trivitentur.* *Medieval Studies* 15 (1953) pp.76-77.

10 Matt.27.65-66.

positos...minantes gladios) and parallelism (*vident intrepidae...cernunt tutissimae*). In each case the source of fear is given first and the description of the women's reaction held to the end of the line, *intrepidae* and *tutissimae*.

The guards are in position to keep watch over the tomb, a passive rôle which quickly changes to menace in the active *minantes gladios*. It is conceivable that the women could be fearless when faced with soldiers who are simply standing guard, but how will they react to an active threat? Abelard increases apprehension, only to defeat expectation in the final word *tutissimae*. Why they possess such complete reassurance in the face of danger is not explained until the end of the next stanza.

The second stanza is divided equally between the reasons for the fear of the disciples and for the contrasting steadfast loyalty of the women. It opens with a reminiscence of the words of Jesus Who quotes Zaccharias: *Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves gregis*.¹¹ The Shepherd has endured the smiting (*facta percussio quam pastor tulerat* 2./1), the physical suffering of the cross and the mental anguish of utter loneliness.¹² That loneliness is part of the smiting is suggested by the scattering of the flock. Yet not all the sheep have fled; the rams alone (*gregis arietes metu disperserat* 2./2). The juxtaposition of *arietes* and *metu* forms an effective contrast with *oves intrepidus* (2./3), each phrase, given the nature of the animals, a contradiction in terms.¹³ Abelard makes the prophecy more pertinent to the situation with the inclusion of *metu* and by changing *oves gregis* to *gregis arietes*. In *Epistle VII* he makes it abundantly clear to whom he is referring: *fugunt arietes, immo et pastores Domini gregis*.¹⁴

He moves to a consideration of the ewes of the flock. The adjective *intrepidus* is repeated from the first stanza where it describes the women (*vident intrepidae* 1./3): so the identification of the women and the sheep is made unmistakeable. He makes the

11 Matt.26.31 quoting Zach.13.7. Abelard (*Prob.Helotissae* 38 PL 178.719B-D) discusses Christ's application of the prophecy to Himself.

12 cf. Matt.27.46 *Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?*

13 Isidore *Etym.*XII.1.11 gives the etymology of *aries*: *Aries vel ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἄρεος, id est a Marte, vocatus; Etym.*XII.1.9 describes a sheep as *...corpore inermis, animo placidum...*

14 *Epist.*VII (PL 178.231B).

same parallel in *Epistle VII*: *hae quippe (mulieres)...intrepidae perstiterunt* and *remanent oves intrepidae*.¹⁵

If it was fear that caused the rams to flee (*metu disperserat* 2./2), it was love that kept the sheep unafraid (*amor servaverat* 2./3). The parallel structure of the phrases underlines the contrast. The final line (*et foras caritas timorem miserat* 2./4) appears at first to be but a repetition of 2./3. It does indeed reiterate the motif of love but extends it, giving a further insight into the love's power. In commenting on this closing line, Szövérfy cites Ambrose: *metumque solvat caritas*, and a passage in Abelard's *Sermo V ...de timore servorum in amorem traduceret filiorum*.¹⁶ These are only distant parallels. Abelard closely echoes John: *Timor non est in caritate: sed perfecta caritas foras mittit timorem*.¹⁷ Thus Abelard again implies the superiority of the women over the men. Because the women have demonstrated in practice the truth of John's words, they have shown that their love is the greater.

A love which brings women to a place full of terror to keep vigil over the tomb of their Lord, to share, in some measure, in His death, is the mainspring of that *compassio* which is the recurrent theme throughout the Sacred Triduum hymns. The nuns of the Paraclete will naturally wish to follow their lead, praying *Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine*.

¹⁵ *Epist.VII* (PL 178.229D and 231B).

¹⁶ Szövérfy II p.118.

¹⁷ I John 4.18.

Man was created on the sixth day; on the seventh God rested from the works of creation:

Complevitque Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat et requievit die septimo ab universo opere quod patrarat. Et benedixit diei septimo et sanctificavit illum quia in ipso cessaverat ab omni opere suo quod creavit Deus ut faceret.³

Abelard echoes *requievit* and *cessaverat* from this passage both here, *quievit Dominus cessando septima* (1./2), and in the Nocturns hymn for Saturdays, the seventh day of the week, *diem ergo sanctificat quo cessando quieverat*.⁴

The story of Creation can, like the rest of Scripture, be understood on four levels, the historical, the mystical, the moral and the anagogic. Abelard concentrates on the first three:

Triplex intelligentia	Alunt parvos historica
diversa praebet fercula	pascunt adultos mystica
deliciis abundat varilis	perfectorum ferventi studio
sacrae mensa scripturae fertilis.	suscipitur moralis lectio. ⁵

It is these different interpretations that form the subject of the various treatises *in Exaemeron* and the prooemia to works on Genesis. For Abelard the six days of Creation are to be interpreted mystically:

Mystica vero dicitur expositio, cum ea praefigurari docemus quae a tempore gratiae per Christum fuerant consummanda, vel quaecunque historia futura praesignari ostenditur.⁶

The six days normally symbolize the six ages of mankind down to and including the incarnation of Christ: So Honorius writes:

Sex quoque dies primi designant sex aetates mundi...Sexta die homo de munda terra formatur, et sexta aetate Christus de Virgine generatur.⁷

Augustine, on the other hand, sees in the sixth day a different symbolism which looks forward to Christ's passion and rest in the tomb:

3 Gen.2.2-3.

4 9.4./1-2; cf.9.3./1 *Quievit die septimo*.

5 2. stanzas 3 and 4.

6 *Expos.in Hexaem.* (PL 178.770B-C).

7 Honorius *Exaem.* (PL 172.259C-260A).

Ipsa quippe die sabbati requievit in sepulchro, eumque totum diem habuit sanctae cuiusdam vacationis, posteaquam sexto die, id est parasceve, quam dicunt sextam sabbati, consummavit omnia opera sua...⁸

In this hymn Abelard follows the second of these interpretations of the sixth and seventh days of Creation.⁹ The first couplet of the stanza sets forth the historical, the creation of man and the resting of God; it is the *historia* of the third line. The second couplet,

plena mysteriis magnis historia
praesentis temporis praesignat opera (1./3-4),

indicates not only that the sixth and seventh days can be understood symbolically but also what they symbolize. Prefiguration is emphasized in *mysteriis magnis* (1./3) and *praesignat* (1./4). The particular interpretation suggested by the phrase *praesentis temporis ...opera* (1./4), is that these two days of Creation prefigure the last two days of Holy Week, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Szövérfy, on the other hand, believes that Abelard is referring to the more common symbolic interpretation of the six days as the six ages of man and that the phrase *historia/ praesentis temporis* (1./3-4), which he takes as a unit, is "the last stage of the history of Salvation ...in which Christ redeemed mankind" and quotes in support Abelard's Lauds hymn (*Christus*)...*aetate saeculi sexta qui passus est*.¹⁰ This, as we have seen, is a traditional interpretation but, through the word *praesentis* (1./4) and the emphatic *heri* (2./1) at the start of the second stanza followed immediately by a reference to the crucifixion (*heri dominica facta est passio* 2./1), Abelard makes it clear that he is here speaking of the events of Holy Week.

The two couplets of the second stanza are interlocked through the repetition: *consummata est...consummatum est* (2./2-3). In the passage from Augustine *de Genesi* quoted above, the verb *consummare* is also used: *...posteaquam sexto die, id est parasceve,...consummavit omnia opera sua*.¹¹ Augustine gives the reason for its use: *Nam et hoc verbo usus est quando ait: Consummatum est; et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum*. It is these last words from the cross, that Abelard quotes.¹²

⁸ Augustine *de Genes.* IV.1 (PL34.304); cf. Ambrose *Exaem.* VI.10.76 (CSEL 32).

⁹ In his *Hexaem.* Abelard chooses the former interpretation (PL 178.772D-773A).

¹⁰ Szövérfy II p.118 quoting 26.1./4.

¹¹ See above n.9.

Just as the works of Creation were completed on the sixth day, so the work of redemption was finished by Christ's death on the sixth day. *consummata est* (2./2) is employed primarily to open the way for the quotation in the next couplet of Christ's last words, but it also relates to two sentences in Abelard's *Hexameron*:

...cum ea praefigurari docemus quae a tempore gratiae per Christum consummanda and ...sed statim primis parentibus creatis totam operam huius sextae diei consummatum esse.¹³

All that God did in creation prefigures what Christ had to fulfil in the season of grace: the creation of man was the fulfilment of all God's works of creation; man's redemption, his re-creation, through Christ's death is the fulfilment of all Christ's works.

in mysterio (2./3) suggests that the words *consummatum est* are to be understood not merely on the historical level, but, more importantly, on the mystical, *in mysterio* being equivalent to the *mystica intelligentia* of the Nocturns hymn quoted above.¹⁴ Christ, realizing that He was on the point of death, cried out that His sufferings were at an end. The mystical interpretation is more profound: He recognized that man's redemption had been won and that the task for which He had come was now complete; therefore, He cried "It is finished". In *Sermo XXVI* Abelard glosses the phrase *consummatum est*, using the image of *Christus medicus*:

Unde et exspirans ait: Consummatum est, hoc est, completum humanae salutis medicamentum.¹⁵

The opening lines of the third stanza,

Finitis itaque tantis agonibus
quibus diabolum prostravit Dominus (3./1-2)

recapitulate and expand the first couplet of the second stanza,

Heri dominica facta est passio,
et consummata est nostra redemptio (2./1-2).

There Abelard speaks of Christ's passion with objectivity, here he elaborates what was involved in the completion of man's redemption. Szövérfy suggests that *agonibus* is deliberately chosen for its twofold sense of struggle and suffering, (the struggle Christ had with the Devil and the agony of His suffering), with the idea of suffering uppermost

¹² John 19.13.

¹³ *Expos. in Hex.* (PL 178.770B-C and 768C); cf. (PL 178.768D).

¹⁴ See above n.6.

¹⁵ *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.564A). For the image of *Christus medicus* see discussion on 67 p.346ff.

in Abelard's mind.¹⁶ The double meaning is undoubtedly present but, from a comparison with Abelard's prose writings, it is the idea of struggle that is the more important.¹⁷ The cross is the battleground on which Christ struggles with the Devil and overcomes him: ...*diabolum prostravit Dominus* (3./2).

The choice of *prostravit* is determined by the typology of the battle between David and Goliath although the allusion is not made specific until the final hymn in the section where Christ is David laying low Goliath with his own sword:

illud intellege Goliae gladium
quo David stravit hunc, non habens proprium.¹⁸

prostravit is entirely appropriate to the slaying of Goliath and is thus extended to Christ's victory over Satan.¹⁹ The verbs *sternere* and *prosternere* are traditional in the context of this prefiguration and the occurrence of *prostravit* here anticipates the explicit reference in the last hymn for Holy Saturday.

In the second stanza and the first half of the the third Abelard has concentrated on the work of the sixth day, the redemption of man on the cross, introduced in the opening words *Sexta iam homine creato feria* (1./1). The finished work of Christ has been stressed through the use of the perfect tense, *facta est passio* (2./1), the emphatic *heri*, the repetition *consummata est...consummatum est* (2./2-3) and the participle *fnitit* (3./1). The hymn now returns to the other motif introduced in the first stanza, *quievit Dominus cessando septima* (1./2), the rest of the Lord. Just as God rested after the work of creation was complete, so Christ rests in the tomb after the work of redemption has been fulfilled in the defeat of Satan.

Abelard refers to the tomb in which Christ was laid as *lectulus* (3./3), again a traditional motif emanating in the first place from Job, *trifernus domus mea est; et in tenebris stravi lectulum meum*, but more importantly from the mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs: *in lectulo meo quaesivi quem diligit anima mea*.²⁰ Alan of Lille takes

¹⁶ Szövérfy II p.119.

¹⁷ Following New Testament usage (I Cor.9.25 and II Tim.2.5), Abelard invariably uses *agon* in the sense of "struggle" or "fight": e.g. *Serm.*IX and XXXII (PL 178.447D and 577C).

¹⁸ 57.2./4 Abelard uses *prosternere* again in 60.1./1-2. It occurs in another 12th.cent. hymn *Hic est David qui prostravit/ Philisthaeum lapide* (AH 21. 37.3./1-2). See discussion p.269ff.

¹⁹ I Reg.17.49.

²⁰ Job 17.13 and CC.3.1.

these words to be those of Mary Magdalene when she sought Jesus in the tomb.²¹ He interprets the *lectus*:

Lectus autem intelligitur sepulchrum in quo requevit corpus Dominicum.

Seven centuries earlier Maximus had used *lectulus* of the tomb when he attempts to explain Christ's state of being as He lay in the grave:

...non tam in sepulchro mortuus iacuit, quam velut lectulo dormiens conquevit.²²

Bernard of Clairvaux asks why the diminutive *lectulus* is used rather than *lectus* since even the universe is too narrow to contain the Son of God. The diminutive is apt:

Parvulus denique natus est nobis...At isdem Dominus in Sion magnus, apud nos parvulus, apud nos infirmus repertus est, ex uno iacere, ex altero et in lectulo iacere habens.²³

It is significant that Abelard uses the same diminutive in the Nativity hymns to denote the manger in which Christ was laid: *vilis strati beatus lectulus*.²⁴ Bernard suggests that the *lectulus* has three points of reference in the incarnation: it is the tomb, the manger and the womb of the Virgin:

Annon lectulus tumulus? Annon lectulus praeseptum? Annon lectulus uterus Virginis?²⁵

That this concept of the three resting-places of Christ is not peculiar to twelfth century theologians is shown by Maximus who likens the sepulchre to the womb: *Quae comparatio ventris et tumuli*.²⁶

The passive *paratus est* (3./3) paves the way for the fourth stanza which picks it up in *paraveras* (4./1). The apostrophe *Ioseph* (4./1) is unexpected and, for that reason, the more effective. Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus "for fear of the Jews",

21 Alain de Lille *Eluc.in Cant.Cantic.*3 (PL 210.72) interprets this as *figura* of John 20.1: *Hoc est manifestum in Maria Magdalena quae frequenter "dum adhuc essent tenebrae ivit ad sepulchrum" et non inveniret corpus Iesu...*

22 Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 39.3 (CC Ser.Lat.23) p.153.

23 Bernard of Clairvaux *Super Cant.Cantic. Sermo* 75.III.6. (S.Bern.Opera Vol.II Edit.Cisterc. 1958) quoting Is.9.6.

24 32.2./2.

25 See above n.23.

26 Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 39.1 (CC Ser.Lat.23) p.152.

went to Pilate on the evening of the crucifixion to obtain permission to remove the body of Jesus from the cross and bury it.²⁷ The story occurs in all the Gospels but it is Matthew alone who records that the tomb was Joseph's own.²⁸

Since it is easier for the singers to identify with Joseph than with Christ, Abelard brings the hymn to a close on a subjective note which contrasts well with the objectivity of the preceding stanzas. The point comes home the more dramatically that Christ was taking Joseph's (and the nuns') place in the tomb.

The second line of the stanza, *tuam et omnium vitam quo tumulas* (4./2), with its assonant *tuam...tumulas*, has within it two interrelated ideas which combine together to produce a powerful image. Abelard has already spoken of Christ as the Life in his Sacred Triduum hymns: *cum mortis emptio sit vitam vendere*.²⁹ Here Christ is the Life of all men including Joseph, the one who is burying Him. The Life of the world has died and is now buried in a tomb intended for someone else. In addition to this is the idea found in Paul's Epistles that in Christ we too have died, are buried and are raised to life through the symbol of baptism:

An ignoratis quia quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo Iesu, in morte ipsius baptizati sumus? Consepulti enim sumus cum illo per baptismum in mortem ut quomodo Christus surrexit a mortuis per gloriam Patris, ita et nos in novitate vitae ambulemus.³⁰

Thus, when Joseph buries Christ in the tomb, he is burying the *vita* in a double sense: burying Christ the Life and burying his own life and that of all men.

The final couplet,

hunc illi lectulum terrenum commodas,
per quem in lectulo coelesti recubas (4./3-4),

with its paralleling of *lectulum* and *lectulo* and of the opposites *terrenum* and *coelesti*, underlines the paradox that Joseph provides a resting-place on earth for the One Who has prepared a resting-place for Joseph in Heaven. There is a further paradox in the contrasting *terrenum* and *coelesti*: in addition to their meanings of earthly and heavenly, they express the temporal contrast of temporary and eternal. Thus the third line looks

²⁷ John 19.38.

²⁸ Matt.27.58-60.

²⁹ 42.4./2. See discussion on the image pp.158-9.

³⁰ Rom.6.3; cf. Col.2.12.

forward to the motif which underlies all the remaining hymns for Holy Saturday that Christ's death is transitory; He will be swift in His awakening.

The promise of eternal rest to Joseph brings us back to the symbolism of the six days of Creation, introduced in the first stanza with the creation of man on the sixth day and God's rest on the seventh. As the sixth day of creation prefigures not only the sixth day of redemption but also the sixth age of mankind, so the seventh foreshadows the rest both of Christ in the tomb and of man in Heaven.³¹ This last motif is the subject of what is Abelard's most well-known, if not his greatest, hymn for Vespers on Saturday:

O quanta, qualia sunt illa Sabbata
 quae semper celebrat superna curia,
 quae fessis requies, quae merces fortibus,
 cum erit omnia Deus in omnibus.³²

Tu, tibi compati...(5./1) is most apt as a conclusion to the hymn for it makes ours what in the fourth stanza is Joseph's alone. There he shared in the sufferings of Christ by burying his Lord in his own tomb but, as a result, he has the promise of eternal bliss. In the fifth stanza we ask to share in the Lord's sufferings that we too may share in the joy of His rising.

31 26.1./1-4.

32 29.1./1-4.

7.11. 53. *sabbato sancto in laudibus matutinis*

Argument: Christ is the lion-cub which sleeps for three days until awakened by its father's roar. Christ is the phoenix which rises from the dead and ascends into heaven. The phoenix is unique and virgin. Because of its Christlikeness it excels all beasts.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Dormit hoc triduo leonis catulus,
sicut praedixerat sermo propheticus,
donec hunc suscitet rugitus patrius
cum dies venerit quo fit hoc tertius.</p> | <p>1. The lion-cub sleeps for these three days
as the word of prophecy had foretold,
until his father's roar should waken him
when the third day comes when this takes place.</p> |
| <p>2. Avis mirabilis phoenix et unica
quam et lux reparat, ut ferunt, tertia,

non minus peragit Christi mysteria
vel resurgentium promittit gaudia.</p> | <p>2. The phoenix, a bird wonderful and unique,
which, so they say, the third dawn restores
to life,
no less enacts the mysteries of Christ
and promises the joys of those who rise again.</p> |
| <p>3. Haec cum in funere formam resumpserit
alasque pristinas rursum induerit,
volatu solito se sursum erigit
cum coelos etiam Christus ascenderit.</p> | <p>3. When it has resumed its shape again in death
and reclothed itself in its first wings,
with accustomed flight it soars upwards,
for Christ too ascended into Heaven.</p> |
| <p>4. Sexus et comparis haec avis nescia
sicut est unica, sic semper integra,
similitudine Christi plenissima
transcendit bestias et volatilia.</p> | <p>4. This bird knows neither sex nor equal;
as it is unique, so is it always pure;
filled with likeness to Christ
it surpasses beasts and birds.</p> |
| <p>5. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.</p> | <p>5. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory;
so to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

The popularity of the *Physiologus*, on which this and the following three hymns are based, tended to increase the fluidity of the individual stories, so that, while there is much general agreement, the details do not always tally.¹ In this hymn it is the lion's roar which rouses the lion-cub: *donec hunc suscitaret rugitus patris* (1./3). Szövérfy quotes a different version:

donec veniat pater eius die tertia et, essufflans in faciem eius die tertia, suscitatur eum,

where the lion breathes into the cub's face.² Abelard is obviously following a slightly different tradition, possibly the versified *Physiologus* of Theobaldus or the same source:

Natus non vigilat, dum sol se tertio gyrat,
sed dans rugitum pater eius suscitatur illum.³

It was an accepted part of natural philosophy that a lion-cub slept for three days after it was born and was woken by its father. Isidore relates the facts without allegorizing them:

cum genuerit catulum, tribus diebus et tribus noctibus catulus dormire fertur; tunc deinde patris fremitu vel rugitu veluti tremefactus cubilis locus, suscitare dicitur catulum dormientem.⁴

Much later Alan of Lille transforms the bare facts into poetic prose:

1 For *Physiologus* see Introduction to Sacred Triduum hymns pp.146-7.

2 Szövérfy II p.121 quoting from *Physiologus Latinus - Versio Y* (ed. Francis J. Carmody Berkeley, California 1941) p.101. Carmody's edition has been unavailable to me. Hugh of St.Victor (*de bestiis* II.1 PL 177.57C) writes that the cub is awakened by its father's breathing: *...quod cum leaena parit, suos catulos mortuos parit, et ita custodit tribus diebus, donec veniens pater eorum in faciem eorum exhalet, ut vivificentur. Sic omnipotens Pater Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Filium suum tertia die suscitavit a mortuis, dicente Iacobo: Dormiente tamquam leo, et sicut catulus leonis suscitabitur*. This in turn accords with the earliest extant Greek *Physiologus* I can find, that attributed to Epiphanius, Bishop of Constance: ἔτι καὶ τέλει τὸν αὐτῆς σχῆμα ἢ λέωνος, ἄνουν τε καὶ τυφλὸν τυγχάνοντα ἐρβλέπουσα, προσκαθέσεται προσέχουσα αὐτῷ τριήμερον. μετὰ δὲ τὸ συμπληρωθῆναι τὰς τρεῖς τῶν ἡμερῶν, προσπελάσων ὁ ἄρρεν λέων καὶ ἐρφυσήσας αὐτῷ, καὶ εὐθὺς βλέπει καὶ σῇ. (Pg 43.520)

3 Theobaldus *Physiologus I de leone* 6-7 (Mittelaltersches Studien und Texte, Band VI, ed. P.T.Eden, Leiden 1978).

4 Isidore *Etym.* XII.2; cf. *Gloss.Ord.* on Genesis which prefixes its quotation from Isidore with a reference to *Physiologus*: *Atunt physici quod catulus leonis, cum fuerit natus, tribus diebus dormit et tribus noctibus. Deinde patris fremitu tremefactus cubilis locus excitat dormientem: Christus quoque in cubili sepulchri tribus noctibus iacens, somnium mortis implevit.* (PL 113.178C).

illic leo, rugitus carmina auribus natorum immurmurans, in illis vitae suscitabit igniculum.⁵

In all these quotations, be they prose or verse, early or late, one constant factor is the verb *suscitare*. It owes its recurrence to a Biblical influence, although the death-like sleep of the cub after birth has no place in Scripture. In Genesis Jacob pronounces his benediction on Judah and prophesies over him:

Catulus leonis Iuda, ad praedam, mi fili, ascendisti; requiens accubulisti ut leo et ut catulus leonis; quis suscitabit eum?⁶

Because Christ is of the tribe of Judah and is given in the Apocalypse the title *leo de Iuda*, Jacob's prophecy was naturally associated with Him.⁷ Rabanus Maurus says simply

catulus est Christus, ut in Genesi: Catulus leonis Iuda, id est Christus de tribu Iuda.⁸

Earlier Gregory had a more extended version:

Quis est iste catulus leonis nisi ille de quo in Apocalypsi ad Ioannem dicitur: vicit leo de tribu Iuda.⁹

Elsewhere he expounds the thinking behind such typology lest anyone should misunderstand the way in which this figurative treatment is used. Although Christ is called the Lamb and the Lion and is likened to a serpent, He is in essence none of these, but figuratively can be all:

Vocatur etenim agnus, sed propter innocentiam. Vocatur leo, sed propter potentiam...Atque ideo per haec omnia dici figuraliter potest, quia de his omnibus credi aliquid essentialiter non potest.¹⁰

It is to the prophecy in Genesis that Abelard alludes in *suscitat*, as again in the third hymn for Easter which also relies on the *Physiologus* tradition:

5 Alan of Lille *de planctu naturae* (PL 210.438A).

6 Gen.49.9.

7 Apoc.5.5.

8 Rabanus Maurus *Alleg.in Sacr.Script.* (PL 112.889A).

9 Gregory the Great *Expos.in Ps.*5 (PL 79.609C).

10 Gregory *Moral.in Iob* 30.21 (PL 76.560B-C).

Ut leonis catulus
 Resurrexit Dominus
 quem rugitus patrius
 die tertia
 suscitavit vivificus
 teste physica.¹¹

Although there is only a passing glance at Genesis in this hymn for Lauds, the prophecy forms the basis of the next two hymns, *Leonis catulum Iudam quis suscitavit* (54) and *Ascensus catuli quo praedam eruit* (55), where the emphasis is on the harrowing of Hell, Christ's mission during the three days' sleep in the tomb. Here, as in the Easter hymn, the stress is on the mystery of the resurrection. In this context *suscitavit* (1./3) reflects not only the wording of the prophecy but also the language of resurrection in the New Testament:

Deus vero et Dominum suscitavit et nos suscitabit per virtutem suam and sicut enim Pater suscitavit mortuos.¹²

Szövérfy takes *sicut praedixerat sermo propheticus* (1./2) to refer to Christ's prophecies of His death and resurrection.¹³ The context, however, of the sleeping lion-cub and the allusion in *suscitavit* point to the prophecy in Genesis as the *sermo propheticus*. The details are different but not only do the *Physiologus* tradition and the prophecy share common ground, but *Physiologus* quotes the prophecy in support of its claims.¹⁴

The hymn now moves to a consideration of a second type of Christ's death and resurrection from the world of nature in the phoenix. There are different versions of the myth but in *Sermo XIII*, the sermon for Easter, Abelard recounts that the bird, realizing its death is at hand, builds itself an aromatic tomb where it dies. In the warmth of the sun the spice grows hot, the phoenix bursts into flames and dissolves into ash. After some days it revives like a bee and gradually regains its feathers until it returns to its former state:

Quae (sc. phoenix) cum sibi mortem post annos plurimos imminere praesenserit, struem quamdam et domunculam sepulchri ex ramusculis aromaticis vel ipsis

¹¹ 60.4./1-6.

¹² I Cor.6.14; John 5.21; cf. II Cor.4.14.

¹³ Szövérfy II p.121 cites numerous examples e.g. John 2.19, Matt.16.21.

¹⁴ See Hugh of St.Victor *de bestiis* II.1 (PL 177.57C) *Sic omnipotens Pater...Filius suum tertia die suscitavit a mortuis, dicente Iacobo: Dormitabit tamquam leo, et sicut catulus leonis suscitabitur.*

aromatibus sibi praeparat tanquam fetorem cadaveris sui per fragrantiam exprimere satagat. In hanc itaque aromatum structuram se conferens expirare dicitur, et sole desuper aestuante, et aromata ipsa caleficiente, combustus in cinerem solvitur. Unde post aliquot dies, in modum apīs suscitatus, paulatim alas et plumas induens in pristinum redit statum.¹⁵

Abelard goes on to stress that the phoenix is analagous to Christ both in nature and in the manner of its resurrection. He begins the description of the phoenix

culius quidem avis naturam et resurrectionis modos si ad Christum referamus, convenienter singula ei convenire videbimus... and ends Quae singula nulli tam congrue ut Christo videntur convenire.

He lists some of the parallels: the phoenix does not build itself a nest and Christ had nowhere to lay His head; the phoenix prepares a tomb of spices and Christ inspired Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus to prepare spices for His burial; the phoenix is cremated as the Paschal lamb of the Old Testament is roasted.¹⁶

The two epithets which introduce the phoenix, *mirabilis* and *unica* (2./1), look forward respectively to the third and fourth stanzas where each is elaborated. *mirabilis* suggests the element of the marvellous in the legend of the phoenix, especially the manner of its death and return to life. *unica* is part of the traditional description of the phoenix: Ovid has *et vivax phoenix, unica semper avis* and the poem attributed to Lactantius

hoc nemus, hos lucos avis incolit unica phoenix,
unica, si vivit morte refecta sua.¹⁷

Abelard, assuming in the nuns an acquaintance with the legend, speaks of the resurrection of the phoenix before mentioning its death. He says here that the bird rises to life on the third day (*quam et lux reparat, ut ferunt, tertia* 2./2), whereas the sermon is much less specific, having only *post aliquot dies*. This difference is of no real importance but it does reflect the two different traditions of the myth. In one it is assumed that the worm, which emerges either from the ashes of the phoenix or from its decomposing remains, acquires after some time wings and grows into a bird identical to its predecessor. It is only in the *Physiologus* and the texts dependent on it that the period of three days is specified. A letter formerly attributed to Jerome elucidates the three day period:

15 *Sermo* XIII (PL 178.488C).

16 *Sermo* XIII (PL 178.488B-D) citing Luke 9.58 and Matt.27.57.

17 Ovid *Amores* II 6.54; pseudo-Lactantius *de ave phoenix* 31-32.

Et crastino die de cinere gignitur vermis; secundo pennas effert, tertio ad antiquam redit naturam.¹⁸

Van der Broek concludes that

the motif of the three days was inserted into the existing tradition by the author of the *Physiologus* as a means of bringing out the typological symbolism of the phoenix: the events in the life of the phoenix are meant to reflect those in the life of Christ, who also rose from the grave after three days.¹⁹

Abelard is more specific about the time in the hymn than the sermon for two reasons. In the sermon he examines in detail a variety of parallels between the phoenix and Christ, while here he emphasizes solely the correlation of the double death and resurrection. And, perhaps of greater importance for the structure of the hymn, he wishes to link the phoenix with the lion-cub of the first stanza. So *lux...tertia* (2./2) echoes *dies... tertius* (1./4) and the lines are modelled on the same structure:

cum dies venerit, quo fit hoc, tertius,
quam et lux reparat, ut ferunt, tertia.

dies and *lux* occupy the same position in the first half of the line, before the verb; the second part of the line begins with a subordinate clause and both lines end on the stressed numeral. This parallelism is necessary for the first stanza, with its different motif, would otherwise be almost completely divorced from the rest of the hymn. *non minus* (*non minus peragit Christi mysteria* 2./3) provides another much needed link as it sets up a parallel between the cub and the phoenix as types of Christ: the phoenix enacts the mysteries of Christ no less than does the lion-cub. Even so, the first stanza remains oddly irrelevant and one is tempted to suggest that it might belong rather to 54, 55 or 56, were it not that there the lion-cub is very definitely the cub of Genesis, while here it is that of the *Physiologus* tradition.

In the early Church the phoenix was most commonly the symbol of the man who through death has won life in Paradise. For Clement of Rome, writing at the end of the first century, the phoenix gives evidence of the possibility of the final resurrection of the body:²⁰ ἡ δὲ Θεὸς τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὴν ἀπιστίαν, καὶ ὄνειον εἰς τοῦτο κατεργάσατο

18 Pseudo-Jerome *Epist.*XVIII (PL 30.193A).

19 R.van den Broek *The Myth of the Phoenix* (Leiden 1972) pp.215-216.

20 Clement of Rome *Epist.*I.25 quoted by Cyril of Jerusalem in *Catechesis* 18.8 (PG 33.1025A-1028A).

φοίνικα οὕτω καλούμεν τοῦτο, ὡς γράφει Κλήμης, καὶ ἱστοροῦσι πλείονες, μονογενὲς ὑπαρχόν, κατὰ τὴν Αἰγυπτίων χώραν ἐν περιόδοις πεντακοσίων ἐτῶν ἐρχομενον. Δεικνύουσι τὴν ἀνάστασιν... εἶτα, πτεροφυίσας ὁ προαιρημένος φοῖνιξ, καὶ τέλειος, οἷος ἦν ὁ πρότερος, φοῖνιξ γενόμενος. ἀνίσταται τοιοῦτος εἰς ἄερα οἷος καὶ ἐτελευτήκει. Σαφεστάτην νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν ἀνθρώποις ἐπιδείξας.

Zeno, the fourth-century bishop of Verona, also concerned with the question of the reality of a bodily resurrection for mankind, is emphatic about the substantiality of the new phoenix:

non umbra, sed veritas, non imago, sed phoenix, non alia, sed quamvis mellior alia, tamen prior ipsa.²¹

This interpretation is not limited to early patristic writings for Abelard's contemporary Hugh of St. Victor sees the resurrection of the phoenix as a type and a proof of physical resurrection:

...hoc exemplo agitur, ut futurae resurrectionis veritas a singulis fieri credatur, et resurrectio phoenicis est spes, et species, seu specimen futurae resurrectionis.²²

The second interpretation of the phoenix as a type of Christ in His death and resurrection is found only in the *Physiologus* and the texts which it influenced.²³ These two differing symbolisms are, of course, not mutually exclusive for, as Paul teaches, the resurrection of man depends on the fact of Christ's resurrection: *et sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur*.²⁴

It is in death that the phoenix finds life (*haec cum in funere formam resumpsert* 3./1); the alliteration *funere formam* underlines the miracle. The aspect of the bird's return to its former state on which Abelard concentrates is the growth of its wings. The image of clothing in which he expresses this, *alasque pristinas rursum induerit* (3./2), is paralleled in his sermon, *paulatim alas et plumas induens in pristinum redit statum*. Claudian has a similar image:

victuri cineres nullo cogente moveri
incipiunt plumaque rudem vestire favillam.²⁵

21 Zeno *Lib.I Tract.XVI* (PL 11.381A-B).

22 Hugh of St. Victor *de bestiis* I.49 (Pl 177.49A). He continues: *Ecce volucrum natura simplicibus resurrectionis argumentum praestat et quod Scriptura praedicat, opus naturae confirmat*.

23 *Physiologus* ch.IX "If this species of bird has the power to kill himself in such a manner as to raise himself up, how foolish are those who grow angry at the words of the Saviour, "I have the power to lay down my life, and I have the power to take it up again" (John 10.18). The phoenix represents the person of the Saviour..." Trans. M. Curley (Univ. of Texas Press 1979).

24 I Cor.15.22.

25 Claudian *Carm.Mtr.*27.67-68.

Like many of his predecessors Abelard is at pains to emphasize, through *resumpserit*, *pristinās* and *rursum*, that the phoenix which died and the phoenix which rose to life are one and the same, for it is only because they are that the possibility of resurrection is demonstrated.

The final couplet of the third stanza,

volatu solito se sursum erigit
cum coelos etiam Christus ascenderit (3./3-4),

makes a direct link between the phoenix and Christ: it is only because Christ has ascended that the phoenix can echo that act by taking its accustomed flight. Although the link is not usually expressed in terms of cause and effect, there is demonstrated here the idea which underlies all typological interpretation, that typology of Christ in the Old Testament or in nature is equivalent to prophecy. As a prophecy is validated only by its fulfilment, so an event is significant only in so far as it points to Christ. In the same way the flight of the phoenix occurs as an analogy to Christ's ascension.

The analogue of the flight and the ascension is an unusual one. The phoenix is a type of Christ in His death and resurrection, not normally in His ascension. In this Abelard seems to have taken the typology one step further than most. He has been influenced by the emphasis given in all the major transmissions of the myth on the phoenix' flight once it has been restored to life.

The reasons for the flight and the description of it vary. Herodotus alludes to the story, which he rejects, that a young phoenix carries the body of its father in an egg of myrrh from Arabia to the temple of the sun to bury it there:²⁶ τοῦτον δὲ λέγουσι μνησθῆναι τάδε, ἐροῖ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες, ἐξ Ἀραβίης ὀρρώμενον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ ἡλίου κορῖσειν τὸν πατέρα ἐν σφύρῃ ἐμπλάσσοντα καὶ θάπτειν ἐν τοῦ ἡλίου τῷ ἱερῷ.

Although Herodotus makes no mention of the means of death of the old phoenix and the origin of the new one, he is obviously following the version where the young bird is generated from the decomposing remains of the old one. This is also the version followed by Ovid who says that this is an act of *pietas* by the young bird.²⁷ Pseudo-Lactantius too relates that the phoenix carries its predecessor's remains to Heliopolis

²⁶ Herodotus II.73,3.

²⁷ Ovid *Metam.* XV 405 *fertque plus cunasque suas patrumque sepulchrum.*

and that from Heliopolis it flies back to its country of origin which, given the description in the poem, is Paradise.²⁸ Abelard is clearly following this tradition.

The fourth stanza returns to the motif introduced earlier in the second stanza by the epithet *unica* (2./1), which is now repeated, (*sicut est unica* 4./2), and elaborated. The bird is *unica* because it is the only one of its kind (*sexus et comparis haec avis nescia* 4./1). It is probable that the phrase *sexus nescia* alludes to the fairly widespread belief that the phoenix was asexual since in *Sermo XIII* Abelard writes

haec quippe avis quia unica esse perhibetur, nec masculini, nec ⁱⁿfemini sexus
esse cognoscitur.²⁹

This belief alternated with the outwardly contradictory belief that it was hermaphroditic; outwardly contradictory, but not inherently, for both beliefs reflect the idea that the phoenix is above sexuality. Pseudo-Lactantius writes:

femina vel mas haec, seu neutrum, seu sit utrumque,
felix quae Veneris foedera nulla colit:
mors illi Venus est, sola est in morte voluptas.³⁰

Van den Broek argues convincingly that the phoenix in Lactantius' poem and thus, in all probability, in many other works, is a symbol of the early Christian *virgo*:

Lactantius was concerned in the first place with the eschatological
Paradise that the *virgo* brought to realization in his earthly life.³¹

Abelard's phoenix also seems to be symbolic of the Christian *virgo* as he finishes his Easter sermon with the phoenix as the symbol of virginity and gives a clarion call to the nuns to live as the angels who do not marry:

Resurgens phoenix formam apīs induit, quae corruptionem carnis nescit; quia in illa resurrectionis gloria "neque nubent neque nubentur, sed erunt sicut angeli Dei in coelo". Quam quidem gloriam et vos, Christi virgines, iam in terris adeptae, nec tam humane quam angelice viventes, tanto huius solemnitatis diem devotius colite, quanto eam, ut ante praefati sumus, ad excellentiam vestri honoris amplius pertinere constat.³²

28 Pseudo-Lactantius *de ave phoenice* 117-122

29 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.488B).

30 Pseudo-Lactantius *de ave phoenice* 163-165.

31 Van den Broek p.382.

32 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.488D-489A) quoting Matt.22.30. The phoenix takes on the shape of a bee because bees are asexual and produce by parthenogenesis. See Augustine *de bono coniugalit* 2.2 (PL 40.373-5), probably influenced by Virgil *Georgics* IV.197-9.

The symbol of the Christian *virgo* is accompanied in Abelard's sermon by the Christological symbolism. The phoenix is most apt as a type of Christ in both excellence, for both are unique, and in virginity:

Quod enim unica est avis, nec parem vel dignitate vel colitu cognoscit, tam excellentiae quam virginitati Christi pulcherrime aptatur. Quis enim unicus et dignitate singularis ita ut Christus?³³

It is on this Christ-centred symbolism that the hymn concentrates: the phoenix is filled with the likeness of Christ, *similitudine Christi plenissima* (4./3) because it is above sexuality and it does not have an equal, *sexus et comparis haec avis nescia* (4./1); because it is the only one of its kind, *unica* (4./2); and because it is always *integra* (4./2). This last epithet is difficult to translate for it contains different shades of meaning. Its basic sense is "perfect" or "whole": the phoenix, and Christ, lacks nothing; it does not need a mate to make it whole. Literally it means "unpierced" and thus "virgin". As an extension of this it means "pure" or "spotless": this must contain the idea expressed in Lactantius that the phoenix is untouched by the flame of sexual love, so that for the phoenix and for Christ it emphasizes virginity, as Abelard indicates: *avis...tam excellentiae quam virginitati Christi pulcherrime aptatur*.³⁴

Abelard's choice of adjectives for the phoenix (*unica*, *integra* and, in the sermon, *singularis*) is determined not only by tradition but by his conscious interweaving of the two main strands of the phoenix symbol, Christ and the Christian *virgo*. The phoenix of the hymn points primarily to Christ's death and resurrection (*viz.* the parallel between the phoenix and the lion-cub), but it also points to Christ the *virgo*, the One to whom all Christian *virgines*, among whom are the nuns of the Paraclete, should look as pattern and guide. As we have already seen, Abelard brings his sermon to a close with the phoenix as the symbol of virginity and calls on the nuns to live the life of Heaven:

Quam quidem gloriam et vos, Christi virgines, iam in terris adeptae, nec tam humane quam angelice viventes...³⁵

33 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.488C). Abelard here uses the two adjectives given by Isidore *Etym.*XII.7.22 as etymologies of phoenix: *Phoenix Arabiae avis, dicta...quod sit in toto orbe singularis et unica. Nam Arabes singularem "phoenicem" vocant.*

34 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.488C).

35 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.489A).

In the hymn Abelard stresses that the phoenix surpasses all other creatures, *transcendit bestias et volatilia* (4./4); in the sermon it is the transcendence of Christ: *Quis enim unicus et dignitate singularis ita ut Christus?* The hymn brings the two ideas together in the line *similitudine Christi plenissima* (4./3): it is because the phoenix is filled with the likeness of Christ that it is sublime. It is possible that the image of the phoenix transcending other animals and birds is an echo of a passage in Lactantius where the birds follow the phoenix as far as they can but only it is able to continue into the ethereal realms:

sed postquam puri pervenit ad aetheris auras,
mox redit (sc. chorus volantium); illa suis conditur inde locis.³⁶

It is also probable that Abelard had in mind the words of Paul exalting the name of Christ over every other name:

Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum, et donavit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen: ut in nomine Iesu omne genu flectatur caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum.³⁷

The stanza which closes all the hymns, except the first, for Good Friday and for this day, Holy Saturday, *Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine*, is curiously unrelated to this and the following two hymns. For here the sufferings of the Lord are over, the lion and the phoenix herald the triumph of His resurrection.

³⁶ Pseudo-Lactantius *de ave phoenice* 159-160.

³⁷ Phil.2.9-11.

In Genesis Jacob pronounces his benediction and prophecies over each of his sons before he dies. When he reaches Judah, he says

*catulus leonis iuda ad praedam, mi fili, ascendisti; requiens accubuisti, ut leo et quasi leaena; quis suscitabit eum?*²

There are at least two variant readings: *accubans dormit ut leo, et quasi leaena, quam suscitare nullus audebit*, and *recumbens requievit ut leo, et ut catulus leonis; quis excitabit eum?* These variants are given by Rabanus Maurus who, a few lines later, gives yet another: *quis suscitabit eum?*³ It is probable that Abelard was following an amalgam of these.

It is on this prophecy that hymns 54, 55 and the first stanza of 56 are based. Christ was born into the tribe of Judah according to the genealogy in Matthew and in the Apocalypse He is hailed as the victorious Lion of Judah: *ecce vicit leo de iuda*.⁴

The preceding hymn shows clearly that the three-day sleep of the lion-cub is a type of Christ in the tomb. By analogy Jacob here demands to know who is to raise Christ from the dead. He poses the question but, according to Abelard, he already knows the answer (*iacob interrogat cum hinc non dubitet* 1./2). Why then does he ask? Abelard's response is that Jacob is so awed by the miracle that constitutes the answer to his question that he wishes us to share in that wonder:

*cum ergo quaerit hoc, super hoc obstupet,
ut rem mirabilem nobis insinuet* (1./3-4).

The hymn leaves the question unanswered as the second stanza moves immediately to the other part of Jacob's prophecy. The question seems to be simply a peg on which to hang the rest of this hymn and the following one, a means by which to introduce the Biblical typology of the lion-cub by evoking the well-known prophecy in Genesis. In fact, it does not need to be answered here since the reply has already been given in the preceding hymn: *donec hunc suscitet rugitus patris*.⁵ As the father's roaring will wake the cub, so the Father will raise His Son from the dead. So Paul writes to the Galatians: *...per Iesum Christum et Deum Patrem qui suscitavit eum a mortuis*.⁶

2 Gen.49.9.

3 Rabanus Maurus *Enarr.in Num.*III (PL 108.754A-B).

4 Apoc.5.5. See discussion on 53. pp.220-222.

5 53.1./3.

A second answer occurs more frequently in patristic theology, that it is through His own divine power that the Son is raised. Pseudo-Augustine uses the same imagery of the lion and continues:

Quod autem dicit: Quis suscitabit eum? quia nullus nisi ipse, iuxta quod ipse ait: Solvite templum hoc et in triduo resuscitabo illud.⁷

Gregory's answer is similar:

Sed nullus eum suscitavit, quia per divinitatis potentiam ipse a mortuis resurrexit.⁸

It is in essence unimportant whether Christ rose from the dead through the power of the Father or through His own, for they are one and the same divine power.

The second stanza opens with an almost direct quotation from Jacob's prophecy: *ad praedam catulum dicit ascendere* (2./1) closely echoes *catulus leonis...ad praedam...ascendisti*. Szövérfy believes that the cub goes up for its prey just as "Christ rises to complete the task of Redemption".⁹ Abelard, however, nowhere uses the verb *ascendere* of the resurrection and he states specifically in this stanza that the ascent for the prey took place while Christ rested in the tomb:

et in hac etiam qua dormit requie
de lupi faucibus illam erueret (2./2-3).

This Szövérfy correctly sees as a reference to Christ's descent into Hell and that took place in the time between Christ's death and His resurrection. The first line, then, cannot refer to the resurrection, but rather to the rescue of the just from Satan's thrall, the harrowing of Hell.

If this is the case, *ascendere*, echoing Jacob's words, although apt for the cub, creates a paradox when used to describe a descent. That descent is, however, only one

6 Gal.1.1.

7 Pseudo-Augustine *de benedict.Iacob* (PL 35.2205) quoting John 2.19.

8 Gregory the Great *Expos.in Ps.5* (PL 79.609C); cf. Paulinus *Epist. XXIII* (PL 61.267C-D) *Idem enim Dominus leo, ille, qui vicit, et catulus est leonis, sua sponte sopitus, et a semetipso resuscitatus de quo scriptum est: Quis suscitabit eum?...animam suam, sicut ipse testatur, eadem resumpsit potestate, qua posuit.*

9 Szövérfy II p.122. In his support it must be admitted that the Pseudo-Augustine work *de bened.Iacob* (PL 35.2202) parallels the ascent of the cub with the resurrection: *'Ad praedam, mi fili, ascendisti' ostendit eum* (i.e. Christum) *captivos populos esse ducturum, et iuxta intelligentiam sacratorem ascendisse in altum, et captivam duxisse captivitatem. Sive, quod melius puto, captivitas passionem, ascensus resurrectionem significat.*

part of the redemptive process which began with Christ's ascent of the cross, as the following hymn indicates:

Ascensus catuli quo praedam eruit
fuit cum Dominus crucem ascenderit.¹⁰

The cub of the prophecy prefigures Christ but the analogy is not precise in every detail. The cub goes up for its prey, then lies down to rest; Christ ascends the cross and rests in the tomb. So far the prefiguration holds good, but there is now a further dimension in what Christ must do: He is to rescue the prey that is already in the realm of Satan, the souls of the just confined in Hell. He too must enter Hell and can do so only in death. The cub rests after seizing his prey, Christ rescues His people in His rest.

The image in which this act of rescue is expressed, the tearing of the prey from the jaws of the wolf, owes much to Fortunatus. In the sequence *Tempora florigero*, parts of which were sung as an Easter processional from the eleventh century onwards, the image of the Lamb tearing the sheep from the wolf is startling: *et de fauce lupi subtrahit agnus oves*.¹¹ Abelard has changed the image from Christ the Lamb rescuing His sheep from the wolf to Christ the Lion seizing from the wolf the prey that is rightfully His, itself an ingenious paradox. The language is more powerful than that of Fortunatus, made so by the substitution of the verb *erueret* for the much weaker *subtrahit*.

Implicit in these lines is the metaphor of the Good Shepherd of John's Gospel Who lays down His life for the sheep, as distinct from the hireling who flees at the sight of the wolf, abandoning the flock to its mercies:

Ego sum pastor bonus; pastor bonus animam suam dat pro ovibus.
Mercennarius et qui non est pastor cuius sunt oves propriae videt lupum
venientem et dimittit oves et fugit et lupus rapit et dispergit oves.¹²

It is from this passage that the identification of the wolf with Satan originally derives.

It is a feature of Abelard's writing on the harrowing of Hell that he consistently uses the verb *erueret* to describe the rescue. Here and in the following hymn it appears

10 55.1./1-2.

11 Venantius Fortunatus AH 50.69.84 (p.78); cf. *Crux benedicta nitet* AH 50.68.4 (p.75) *traxit ab ore lupi quia sacer agnus oves*. For the place of the sequence in the Easter liturgy see *The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse* (ed. Raby, Oxford 1959) p.461.

12 John 10.11-12. For the wolf as Satan see Ambrose *Exaem.* VI.4.27 (CSEL 32) p.223 *...et si in te insurrexerit lupus, petram cape et fugit. petra tua Christus est. si ad Christum confugis, fugit lupus nec terrere te poterit.*

with the lion-cub: *de lupi faucibus illam eruire* (2./3) and *Ascensus catuli quo praedam eruit*; in the Easter hymn *spoliato barathro/ suos eruit* and for the ascension *circumstabant/ victorem eruit*.¹³ Again in the ascension sermon he has *...ipso mortis auctore morte sua triumphato, quasi spoliatorum tropaea in suis quos eruit captivis...*¹⁴ It proves a favourite with him because of the double meaning it shares with *eripit* in the next hymn (*iustos de tartaro confestim eripit*): "to tear out" and "to rescue".¹⁵ From the point of view of Satan, Christ seizes the prey, from that of the prey, He rescues it.

The paradox that He should spoil Hell, rescuing the prey from the wolf, while He slept is enhanced by the juxtaposition of *dormit* and *reque* (2./2) and by the postponement of *reque* from its natural position with *in hac* to the end of the line. This seeming contradiction is resolved in the last line, *quod fit per animam defuncto corpore* (2./4), for He descended into Hell through the spirit while His body remained at rest in the tomb. Sister Jane Patricia renders the last couplet

Out of the wolf's power taking away
souls of the dead with their bodies today.¹⁶

defuncto corpore (2./4), however, must refer to the body of Christ taken from the cross and laid in the tomb. It is at this point in the hymn that he turns the image of sleep and rest into the reality of Christ's death. What he is emphasizing here is that Christ in the spirit entered the regions of Hell to release the captives while His body broken in death waited in peace in the tomb for the moment of resurrection, the miracle of which Jacob speaks in the first stanza.

¹³ 55.1./1; 58.2./3-4; 65.1./5-6.

¹⁴ *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497B).

¹⁵ 55.1./4.

¹⁶ Sister Jane Patricia *The Hymns of Abelard in English Verse* (University Press of America 1986) p.73.

7.13. 55. *sabbato sancto ad tertiam*

Argument: The lion-cub's ascent for the prey is Christ's ascent of the Cross. By His death Christ redeemed us and rescued the just from Hell. After the cub went up for its prey it rested, prefiguring Christ Who rested in the tomb for three days.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Ascensus catuli, quo praedam eruit,
fuit cum Dominus crucem ascenderit,
in qua nos redimens cum exspiraverit
iustos de tartaro confestim eripit.</p> | <p>1. The ascent of the cub by which he seized the prey
took place when the Lord ascended the cross;
when He died there redeeming us
He at once snatched the just from Tartarus.</p> |
| <p>2. Cum iam ascenderit ad praedam catulus,
requiescentis est factus accubitus,
quia cum fuerit cruce depositus

sepultus triduo quievit Dominus.</p> | <p>2. After the cub now went up for the prey
there followed his reclining at rest
because, when He was taken down from
the cross,
the Lord rested for three days in the tomb.</p> |
| <p>3. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.</p> | <p>3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with you
that we may share Your glory;
so to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.</p> |

This hymn is a continuation of 54 and is based on the same prophecy of Jacob over his son Judah.¹ The typological significance of the prophecy is made explicit in the opening couplet. In 54, in spite of the rather odd image evoked by the use of *ascendere*, the ascent of the cub was seen as Christ's descent into Hell; in this hymn the parallel is with Christ's ascent of the cross, underlined by the repetition *ascensus...ascenderit*:

*ascensus catuli...
fuit cum Dominus crucem ascenderit* (1./1-2).

Here the use of *ascendere* is more natural as a description of the elevation of Christ on the cross and has already occurred in this context in the Good Friday hymn *Sexta qua Dominus crucem ascenderit*.²

Szövérfy comments on *in qua nos redimens cum exspiraverit* (2./3)

This is a result of the Crucifixion which, seen from the point of view of the event, is still cast into the future, whereas the immediate effect is the liberation of the "just" from "limbo".³

He appears to have taken *exspiraverit* as Future-Perfect Indicative, whereas it is clearly Perfect Subjunctive. While he is generally correct in pointing out that Christ's death is both prospective and retrospective in its redemptive effect, the act of redemption cannot, as he suggests, be in the future. The present participle *redimens* is exactly contemporaneous with *exspiraverit*: in His death He redeemed us, although we were not yet living.⁴ *Exspiraverit* is a conscious echo of the words of both Mark and Luke in their descriptions of the Lord's death: *Iesus autem emissa voce magna exspiravit* and *et haec dicens exspiravit*.⁵

The implication of *iustos de tartaro confestim eripit* (1./4) is that Christ rescued the just from Hell when He was on the cross. Yet in the previous hymn Abelard says that Christ rescued the prey during the time His body lay in the tomb:

*et in hac etiam qua dormit requie
de lupi faucibus illam eruere*.⁶

1 Gen.49.9.

2 48.1./1.

3 Szövérfy II p.123.

4 Scripture upholds this: Apoc.5.9 and Gal.3.13.

5 Mark 15.37 and Luke 23.46.

6 54.2./2-3.

The apparent contradiction is to some extent resolved when it is realized that Christ's "sleep" began the moment He died. He could, therefore, rescue the just immediately (*confestim*). There was no need to wait until His body was laid in the tomb.

The first stanza parallels the cub's ascent for the prey with Christ's ascent of the cross. The second stanza parallels the cub's rest with the three days Christ lay in the tomb. The first couplet,

cum iam ascenderit ad praedam catulus
requiescentis est factus accubitus (2./1-2),

follows the Genesis prophecy exactly, even to the phrase *requiescentis accubitus* which echoes *requiescens accubuit*.

The reason for the lion-cub's rest (*requiescentis est factus accubitus/ quia .../...quievit Dominus 2./2-4*) is paralleled in the phoenix hymn by the reason for phoenix' ascent:

volatu solito se sursum erigit
cum coelos etiam Christus ascenderit.⁷

Just as it is because Christ has ascended into Heaven that the phoenix soars upward, so the cub lies down to rest after it has gone up for the prey, precisely because on the cross Christ rescued the prey and then rested for three days. What was said on the phoenix holds good here, that the phoenix and the cub are prophecy in action: what each does has significance only inasmuch as it reflects what Christ does.

cruce depositus (2./3), like *exspiraverit* (1./3), shows the influence of Mark and Luke. Mark writes *Ioseph autem...deponens eum involvit sindone* and Luke *Et depositum involvit sindone*.⁸ The phrase occurs too in the Good Friday hymn *Facto iam vespere cruce depositum*.⁹ As in that hymn, so here there is an echo of the liturgical *depositio* enacted on Good Friday.¹⁰

⁷ 53.3./3-4.

⁸ Mark 15.36 and Luke 23.53.

⁹ 50.1./1.

¹⁰ See discussion on 50. pp.199-200.

7.14. 56. *sabbato sancto ad sextam*

Argument: The lion-cub will soon awake; Christ will soon rise. As the Psalmist foretold, Christ has tasted death.

1. Adhuc ut dormiens pausat leunculus
sed ut evigilet prope est terminus,
somni quam funeris dicendus potius:

velox dominicae mortis est transitus.

1. Still the lion-cub rests as if he sleeps,
but the end is close when he should awake;
it must be called the end rather of sleep than
of death:
swift is the passing of the Lord's death.

2. Torrentis impetum istum intellege
de quo meminimus psalmistam dicere,
quod de hoc biberis in via, Domine,
mortem videlicet sceleris calice.

2. Understand the force of that torrent
of which we remember the Psalmist speaks,
that You, Lord, on Your journey drank from it:
that is, You drank death from the cup of sin.

3. Tu, tibi compati sic fac, nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.

3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with you
that we may share Your glory;
so to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter grace.

Now that he has established through the terms *catulus leonis* and the simple *catulus* the two sources of the typology of the lion-cub, Jacob's prophecy in Genesis and *Physiologus*, Abelard here, for the sake of variety, changes the name of the cub to *leunculus*.¹ In the first couplet he draws together the two images of the cub from *Physiologus* and Genesis, their point of contact being the cub's sleep. In Genesis the cub lies down to rest and Jacob asks who will rouse it; in *Physiologus* the cub does not wake until its father rouses it.

The sleeping of the cub is introduced in the first hymn of this series: *Dormit hoc triduo leonis catulus*.² Later the cub's rest is seen as a prefiguration of Christ's rest in the tomb: *sepultus triduo quievit Dominus*.³ It would be thus possible to think that the cub's sleep was actually death or, conversely, that the Lord's death was merely sleep. Abelard, therefore, is at pains in this hymn to elucidate the analogy. That the cub's sleep is not a true sleep is evident from the phrase *ut dormiens* (1./1), "as if asleep". Nor is it death in the usual sense of the word, since its end is to be called the end of sleep rather than of death:

...terminus
somni quam funeris dicendus potius (1./2-3).

Sleep is the image that can best describe the cub's state of being and, therefore, the state of being of Christ, even though it is not the full truth. It cannot be called death for death contains the notion of finality and Christ will be raised to life. Sleep, on the other hand, presumes an awakening. Yet Christ did die, as Abelard emphasizes twice in this and the next stanza: *velox dominicae mortis est transitus* (1./4) and *mortem videlicet sceleris calice* (2./4). That death is, however, swift in its passing and so is more like sleep than death.

The imagery of sleep, and awakening, prevails in this stanza in three words which are entirely dissimilar etymologically and grammatically: *dormiens*, *evigilet* and *somni*. The two lines

sed, ut evigilet, prope est terminus
somni quam funeris dicendus potius (1./2-3)

1 See discussions on 53-55.

2 53.1./1.

3 55.2./4.

look forward through *evigilet*, *terminus* and *somni* to the resurrection and pave the way for the final line *velox dominicae mortis est transitus* (1./4) which makes explicit the identification of the cub's sleep and the death of Christ. Christ has died but, because His death is transitory and not final, it is more like sleep.

In *Sermo IX* Abelard offers two interpretations of *velox dominicae mortis est transitus* (1./4). Christ's crossing into death was swift in that the crucifixion took much less time than would normally be the case:

Scimus quippe Dominum hora sexta crucifixum, circa nonam expirasse, et Pilatum miratum fuisse quod tam celeriter obierit, antequam latrones fractis cruribus mori cogerentur.⁴

More to the point for the hymn is the second interpretation that death was for Christ a swift experience since He rose to life after three days:

Velox quoque ad transeundum iste somnus fuit, quia cito Dominus resurrexit. Quasi ergo reclinatorio Dominus obdormivit, quia mortis somnum velocem et transitorium habuit....⁵

The adjective *velox* in both hymn and sermon and the adverb *cito* in the sermon emphasize the short time which elapsed between the death of Christ and His resurrection: death could not hold Him for longer than was necessary to complete His task of redemption by rescuing the just from Hell:

et in hac etiam, qua dormit, requie
de lupi faucibus illam eruere.⁶

transitus is in itself important for it refers to Easter, the day of resurrection. Isidore writes that *Pascha*, the Hebrew Passover and the Latin Easter, derives from the Hebrew word for "crossing" (*transitus*) because the Jews crossed out of Egypt and Christ crossed from the world to His Father.⁷ Abelard in his Easter sermon elaborates this line, speaking of the new life into which Christ crossed through the resurrection:

Pascha autem Hebraice, phase Graece, Latine transitus dicitur. In veteri quippe Pascha, Dominus per Aegyptum transiens, primogenitis interfectis, et per transitum maris Rubri populum suum liberans, de nomine transitus hanc

4 *Sermo IX* (PL 178.446B-C).

5 *Sermo IX* (PL 178.446B).

6 54.2./2-3.

7 Isidore *Etym.* VI 17,11 quoting John 13.1.

solemnitatem insignivit. Praesens quoque Dominicae resurrectionis dies non incongrue Pascha dicitur. Ipsa quippe immutatio humanae naturae de mortalitate ad immortalitatem, de corruptione ad incorruptionem, quidam in Christo transitus et motus fuit.⁸

There is an awkward hiatus between the first and second stanzas that is not entirely dispelled by the adjective *velox* which to some extent opens the way for the metaphor of the torrent. The Psalm in question (*de quo meminimus psalmistam dicere* 2./2) is *Dixit Dominus Domino meo*, one of the Messianic Psalms which Christ took as a prophecy of Himself.⁹ *Meminimus* is a skilful touch: Abelard reminds the nuns that they should remember singing this very Psalm at Vespers on the preceding Tuesday, the Tuesday of Holy Week.¹⁰

The words in the Psalm to which the hymn alludes are *de torrente in via bibit*. Abelard echoes each part in *torrentis* (2./1), *de hoc bibentis* (2./3) and *in via* (2./3). In elucidation of the reference Dreves quotes Bede: the torrent signifies the flow of human existence which consists of birth, death and suffering. In all these elements Christ partook through His incarnation, so drinking from the torrent. Yet His drinking was different from that of other men since He remained untouched by sin.¹¹ Bede here follows Augustine, but adds the idea of suffering as part of the human condition. Augustine likens the course of human life to the course of a river as it swells and tumbles down from the hills:

Primo quis est torrens? Profluxio mortalitatis humanae. Sicut enim torrens pluviabilibus aquis colligitur, redundat, perstrepat, currit et currendo decurrit. id est, cursum finit; sic est omnis iste cursus mortalitatis...De hoc torrente bibit ille...Hoc habet torrens iste, nativitatem et mortem : suscepit hanc Christus: natus est, mortuus est: ita de torrente in via bibit...De torrente ergo in via bibit, quia in via peccatorum non stetit.¹²

8 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.485C) quoting John 13.1.

9 Luke 20.24-23 quoting Ps.109.9.

10 Brev.Rom. *Feria III maioris Hebdomadae ad vespas.*

11 Dreves p.174 quoting Bede in *Psalmorum Lib.Exegesis* (PL 93.1036) *Torrens est fluxus nostrae mortalitatis. De hoc torrente Verbum Dei Patris veniens in hanc vitam nascendo, moriendo, patiendo. Sed "in via" tantum, id est, in transcurso inde bibit, quia immunis ab omni peccato fuit.*

12 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.*109.20 (CC Ser.Lat.40) p.1620.

Abelard puts a slightly different emphasis on the river: it is not for him human life and death, but simply the death that all must die. It is possible that he has been influenced in this by Cassiodorus:

Torrens fuit turb^ulenta persecutio Iudaeorum, de qua Dominus Christus bibit in via, id est in hac vita dum corpore pertulit. Sed dum in via dicitur, illata vis ostenditur et velocissimus transitus indicatur.¹³

Christ can be described as drinking from this river "in passing" (*in via*) since for Him death is not final, but the prelude to a swift awakening. This emphasis suits the context of the hymn as the liturgy of Holy Saturday not only concentrates on the Christ's rest in the tomb but also looks forward to the resurrection.

In the final line, at the climactic point of the hymn, *mortem videlicet sceleris calice* (2./4), the torrent of the first line becomes the cup from which Christ drank death. The image derives from Christ's words in Gethsemane in which He prayed that the cup of death might be taken from Him:

mi Pater, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste...Pater mi, si non potest hic calix transire nisi bibam illum, fiat voluntas tua.¹⁴

In the usual liturgy for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, although not in that proposed by Abelard for the Paraclete, there are two allusions to the cup:

in monte Oliveti oravit ad Patrem: Pater, si fieri potest, transeat a me calix iste and Calicem salutaris accipiam.¹⁵

While these sources are the springboard for the image, Abelard adds to it dramatically with the inclusion of the word *sceleris*. The death that Christ died came from the cup of sin; it was the result of sin but, as is underlined in the following hymn, Christ, being sinless, had no need to die. What for us is the cup of salvation is presented in its full horror: it is the cup of sin which the sinless One tasted and died.

The final stanza *Tu, tibi compati* is relevant to the hymn as a whole, unlike in the earlier hymns for Holy Saturday. Although we cannot drink of the cup of sin as did Christ and die for the sin of man, yet we can ask to share in His sufferings that we might be made worthy of entering into His resurrection.

¹³ Cassiodorus *Expos.in Ps.*109.7 (CC Ser.Lat.98).

¹⁴ Matt.26.39 and 42; cf. John 18.11.

¹⁵ Brev.Rom. *Feria v in coena Domini* Response and Antiphon for Matins and Vespers.

7.15. 57. *sabbato sancto ad nonam*

Argument: It was against Christ's nature that He should drink from the river of death for death is the result of sin and He had no sin. Death is man's deserved punishment. David killed Goliath with Goliath's own sword, a type of Christ destroying death through death.

1. Non naturalis est sed adventitius
quo Christus biberit torrentis rivulus,

quia qui fuerit peccati nescius
mortis sententiae non erat subditus.

1. It is not natural, but foreign to His nature
the stream of the torrent from which Christ
drank,
since He Who knew no sin
was not subject to sentence of death.

2. Hoc mortis poculum quod per diabolum
nobis transfusum est in poenae debitum,
illud intellege Goliae gladium
quo David stravit hunc non habens proprium.

2. This cup of death which was poured for us
by the Devil as our due punishment:
understand that this was the sword of Goliath
with which David, not having a sword of his
own, laid him low.

3. Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae;
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.

3. Make us, Lord, so to suffer with You
that we may share Your glory;
so to spend these three days in grief
that You may grant the laughter of Easter
grace.

This hymn flows without interruption from the preceding one. *torrentis rivulus* (1./2) picks up the earlier *torrentis* (*torrentis impetum istum intellege*) while *hoc mortis poculum* (2./1) echoes *mortem videlicet sceleris calice*.¹ Abelard here attempts to explain part at least of the mystery of Christ's death. As it is expressed in the second couplet,

quia qui fuerit peccati nescius
mortis sententiae non erat subditus (1./3-4),

His death was not the result of His own sin, for He had none. In legal imagery He could not be subject to the sentence of death since He was not guilty. Yet He did die. Thus His drinking from the river of death was unnatural.

The paradox is emphasized by the twofold description, negative and positive, *non naturalis...sed adventitius* (1./1). One of the technical usages of *adventitius* in classical Latin describes property "obtained otherwise than by direct inheritance from one's parents".² This definition is pertinent to the hymn because all men inherit sin and death through sin from Adam: in the words of Paul,

propterea sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit et per peccatum mors et ita in omnes homines mors pertransiit in quo omnes peccaverunt.³

Christ, however, being the Son of God and born of a virgin, did not inherit sin and the death that results from it. He was without sin. In one of his Holy Cross hymns Abelard uses words very similar to *peccati nescius* (1./3):

quippe qui cuncta
portat peccata,
nescit peccatum.⁴

Both are reminiscent of New Testament phraseology: *eum qui non noverat peccatum*.⁵ The singular *peccati*, and in the Holy Cross hymn *peccatum*, echoes not only this quotation from Paul but also John the Baptist's words of acclamation: *Ecce agnus Dei qui tollit peccatum mundi*.⁶ *peccatum* in all these instances is generic.

1 56.2./1 and 4.

2 OLD Cicero *de invent.*^{2.64}...non est una pecunia propterea quod altera pupilli iam erat adventicia.

3 Rom.5.12.

4 68.6./1-3.

5 II Cor.5.21; cf. I Pet.2.22 and I John 3.5.

6 John 1.29. In the *Agnus Dei* the word is *peccata*.

In 56 the river became the cup of sin from which Christ drank death:

torrentis impetum...
quod de hoc biberis...
mortem videlicet sceleris calice.⁷

Here the river becomes the cup of death, *hoc mortis poculum* (2./1). The cup of sin and the cup of death are inextricably bound together and the words *calix* and *poculum* are interchangeable. In the Holy Cross hymn the cup of death, which here is *mortis poculum*, is there *calix mortis*.⁸ In *Sermo XI* Abelard has both words in the same passage, again where he is speaking of Christ's death:

Calicem dicit mortem suam transitoriam...Qua videlicet morte, tamquam poculo quodam desiderium suum de nostra redemptione, quasi sitim suam erat refecturus.⁹

This cup of death has been poured out for us by Satan, (*quod per diabolum/ nobis transfusum est* 2./1-2) since death is the punishment due to us as a result of sin (*in poenae debitum* 2./2).

This is clearly an extension of the metaphor of Christ drinking the cup of death, a major motif in the preceding hymn. But what does Abelard mean when he says that the cup was poured out for man by the Devil? There are, I think, two parts to the answer. First, that it was through the Devil that sin entered the world, for Satan in the shape of the serpent, by tempting Eve, caused her to sin and that sin led to death.¹⁰ Secondly, it is the Devil who possesses the power of death: *...eum qui habebat mortis imperium, id est diabolum*.¹¹ The cup of death is the punishment due to man, *nobis...in poenae debitum* (2./2), because man is guilty of sin. *debitum* echoes the thought, although not the words, of Romans: *stipendia enim peccati mors*.¹²

In an audacious transformation of the image, the cup of death which is Satan's weapon against mankind becomes the sword of Goliath with which David slew him:

7 56.2./1-4.

8 68.3./1-3 *calix praeclarus/ mortis est potus/ ipsis per ipsum*.

9 *Sermo XI* (PL 178.468B).

10 Gen.3.1-7.

11 Heb.2.14.

12 Rom.6.23.

cumque gladium non haberet in manu David, cucurrit et stetit super Philisthaeum et tulit gladium eius et eduxit de vagina sua et interfecit eum praeciditque caput eius.¹³

The phrase which introduces this new metaphor, *illud intellege*, paralleling the previous hymn's *istum intellege*, points to the typological allegory for which the story of David and Goliath provided a rich source of material.¹⁴

Augustine makes a direct link between David and Christ and between Goliath and Satan:

in figura Christi David, sicut Goliath in figura diaboli; et quod David prostravit Goliath, Christus est qui occidit diabolum.¹⁵

Cassiodorus refines the image, changing the *figura* David/Christ to David/the Church:

Goliath ad diabolum pertineat cum ministris, David ad universum respiciat populum christianum, qui inimicum suum terribilem petrae noscitur soliditate superasse.¹⁶

In a different context Abelard twice employs the image in the *Theologia Christiana* as a justification of his use of secular philosophical arguments to underpin Christian theology: *et tumidum Goliath proprio ipsius gladio tugulavit*.¹⁷ His emphasis in the *Theologia* parallels that in the hymn: it is not so much the defeat of the enemy that is in view, but the fact that David used Goliath's own sword to slay him. In this he was probably influenced by Ambrose:

Sicut David abstulit Goliath gladium, et ipsius gladio caput eius exsecuit; sic verus David, humilis atque mansuetus Dominus Iesus, intelligibilis Goliath caput armis ipsius amputavit.¹⁸

The same stress appears in Abelard's Easter hymn:

13 I Reg. 17.50-51.

14 56.2./1.

15 Augustine *Enarr. in Ps.* 33.4 (CC Ser. Lat. 38) p. 276. Further patristic citations are collected by J.M. Manly, "Familia Goliath", *Modern Philology* V (1907-8) pp. 201ff. and P.G. Walsh "Goliath and Goliardic Poetry", *Medium Aevum* LII (1983) pp. 1ff.

16 Cassiodorus *Expos. in Ps.* 143. concl. (CC Ser. Lat. 98) p. 1289.

17 *Theol. Christ.* III. 53 (CC Cont. Med. 12) p. 217; cf. II. 2 pp. 132-133.

18 Ambrose *Expos. Ps.* 118. 21. 11 (CSEL 62) p. 479; cf. Gregory the Great *Moral in Iob* 16 (PL 76. 50B-C) who changes the *figura* again to suit his own purposes: *Unde et David typum Domini, Goliath vero haereticorum superbiam signans...*

Gollas prostratus est,
...ense iugulatus est
hostis proprio.¹⁹

As David, a type of Christ, turned his own sword against Goliath, a type of Satan, so Christ turned the weapon of death against the Prince of death. By dying although innocent of sin, Christ broke the power of death.

¹⁹ 60.1./1-4.

8.1. *de resurrectione Domini*

The Easter Hymns are characterized not only by the internal refrain in each stanza, but also by the note of jubilation which resounds throughout. It is this sense of joy, more so than even the refrain, which draws the four hymns together into one outburst of praise. This joy is the fulfilment of the Psalmist's prophecy which Abelard paraphrases at the end of the first Good Friday hymn:

donec laetitiae mane gratissimum
surgente Domino sit maestis redditum.¹

It is the answer to the prayer which closes the rest of the hymns for the Sacred Triduum:

sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.²

In the first of the hymns Christians are called on to rejoice that the Lord has risen. The theological implications of the resurrection are enumerated with the emphasis on the defeat of Satan and the consequent liberation of those in his thrall. The hymn ends, as it began, on a note of praise, but here it is not only Christians who rejoice but the whole of Heaven and earth. In the two hymns which follow Abelard moves from the universal to the particular, from the joy of all creation to that of women: in 59 we have the Mary of the Old Testament and her counterpart of the New, Mary Magdalene, the Hebrew women and the faithful followers of Christ who accompany Mary to the tomb on the first Easter morning; in 60 it is the daughters of Sion who sing "The Lord has risen", who lead out choirs, who give praise to the Victor. The position Abelard accords to women is, in general, higher than that given by his contemporaries. His respect for them, a probable result of his love for Heloise, leads him to assign women their due place wherever possible in accordance with Scripture. It is wholly apt that hymns destined specifically for a Convent should allow the singers an opportunity to identify with the protagonists in the hymns.

That 59 and 60 are intended to form a subsection is clear, too, from the use of Old Testament characters and events as prefigurations of the New. The Egyptians with their Pharaoh, Goliath and the Philistines are traditional *figurae* of Satan, David and Samson of Christ.

The final line of 60 introduces a prefiguration of a different kind, that of Physiologus: natural science, as contained in the Bestiaries, also prefigures the

1 42.9./3-4, paraphrasing Ps.29.6: see discussion pp.166-7.

2 45.4./3-4.

resurrection. The perspective begins to broaden once more and we return from the particular to the universal in the exuberant and beautiful language of 61 where the awakening of nature in all its joyous abundance is a symbol of the resurrection and redemption into the joy of life eternal.

8.2. 58. *in primo nocturno*

Argument: Christians are to rejoice because the Lord has risen, defeating Satan, despoiling Hell, rescuing the just. Satan has been deceived by the incarnation as a fish by the bait on a hook. Heaven and earth resound with God's praise.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Christiani, plaudite,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 victo mortis principe,
 Christus imperat:
 victori occurrite
 qui nos liberat.</p> | <p>1. Christians, clap your hands,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 the prince of death is vanquished,
 Christ reigns:
 run out to meet the Victor
 Who sets us free.</p> |
| <p>2. Superato zabulo,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 spoliato barathro
 suos eruit;
 stipatus angelico
 coetu rediit.</p> | <p>2. The Devil is defeated,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 Hell is plundered,
 He has rescued His own:
 surrounded by the angel host
 He has returned.</p> |
| <p>3. Fraus in hamo fallitur,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 quae dum carne vescitur
 circumposita,
 virtute transfigitur
 carni insita.</p> | <p>3. Deceit is deceived on the hook,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 while it feeds
 on the encompassing flesh,
 it is pierced by the power
 implanted in that flesh.</p> |
| <p>4. Captivatis inferis,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 ditatisque superis
 coelum iubilat,
 hymnis, psalmis, canticis
 terra resonat.</p> | <p>4. The demons are taken captive,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 the angels enriched,
 Heaven sings for joy,
 with hymns and psalms and canticles
 earth echoes the praise.</p> |
| <p>5. Deo patri gloria,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 salus et victoria
 Christo Domini,
 par honor per saecula
 sit Spiritui.</p> | <p>5. Glory to God the Father,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 salvation and victory
 to the Lord's Anointed,
 equal honour through the ages
 to the Spirit.</p> |

The note of jubilation sounded in the opening line *Christiani, plaudite* characterizes all the hymns for Easter. It is this sense of joy, more so than even the constant refrain *Resurrexit Dominus*, which draws the four hymns together into one sustained outburst of praise. The exultant imperative *plaudite* is taken from Psalm 46: *Omnes gentes, plaudite manibus, tubilate Deo in voce exultationis. Quoniam Dominus excelsus, terribilis, rex magnus super omnem terram.*¹ The Psalm is a hymn of praise to the God Who has conquered the nations. The hymn is likewise one of praise to the Lord Who has conquered death. The refrain *Resurrexit Dominus* is not merely a device to hold the hymns together, but is integrated into each stanza. Here it answers the question implicit in the first line: why are Christians to rejoice? Because Christ has risen.

This opening couplet is both a contrast to and a fulfilment of the final stanza of the hymns for the Sacred Triduum in which Christians pray to share in Christ's suffering that they may also taste the joy of His rising:

Tu tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,...
sic praesens triduum in luctu ducere
ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae.²

The exuberance of *Christiani, plaudite* (1./1) marks a complete change of tone. It is the answer to the prayer *ut risum tribuas paschalis gratiae*.

The two themes which intertwine through the hymn are introduced in the second couplet, the defeat of Satan and the reign of Christ

victo mortis principe
Christus imperat (1./3-4).

Satan appears in each stanza but only in the third does he play a major rôle. He enters in a phrase which is a subtle contrast of subject and grammatical construction: *victo mortis principe* (1./3). He is accorded a position of immense power, *princeps mortis*, but the phrase is participial and subordinate, reflecting his defeat. The title prince of death is an amalgam of descriptions in the New Testament where he is

princeps huius mundi, princeps potestatis aeris huius and ...eum qui habebat
mortis imperium.³

¹ Psalm 46.2, read during the Feast of Ascension (*Breviary in ascensione Domini, in secundo nocturno*), a Feast which Abelard links closely with Easter.

² 45.4./1, 3-4.

³ John 12.31 and 16.11; I Cor.2.6 and Eph.2.2; Heb.2.14.

The phrase *mortis princeps* occurs in one of Notker's sequences in a stanza which shows close parallels with this hymn:

Iam victor Christus,
 baratro populato
 mortis principe vinculado
 ab inferis
 pompa regreditur nobili.⁴

Abelard employs the phrase here to emphasize the nature of Christ's victory. The death of Christ suggests that the prince of death is victorious but Christ's resurrection shows that the prince of death no longer holds sway. It is no coincidence that Abelard speaks of Christ's victory as *Christus imperat* (1./4), an allusion to the power once wielded by Satan *qui habebat mortis imperium*.

Satan in the second stanza is *zabulus* (*superato zabulo* 2./1), again in a subordinate clause. This name carries with it no mark of respect, none of the dignity and power of *mortis princeps*. *diabolus*, of which *zabulus* is a correlative form, occurs again and again in Scripture and is chosen here to evoke all the various facets of his nature. Not only is Satan the prince of death, but he is the one who seduced man from God, who tempted Jesus, who caused Judas to betray his Lord.⁵ *zabulus* emphasizes his evil, not his power.

The third stanza focuses on a single aspect of his character. He is *fraus* (3./1), deceit personified. Jesus describes him as a liar and the father of lies.⁶ Abelard could scarcely have chosen a more contemptible vice, so that, although this is the one stanza where Satan is the protagonist, he is not allowed the aura which surrounds him at the start of the hymn, nor even the stature of a person. In the fourth stanza again in a subordinate phrase, *captivatis inferis* (4./1), Satan is no longer given a place in his own right, but is simply included among the other demons of Hell. There is thus a descent through the hymn in the depiction of Satan, from the solemn grandeur of the title *princeps mortis* to the humble status of an *inferus*.

The second motif which recurs throughout the hymn is the victory of Christ. He is portrayed as the Victor Who returns in triumph after the defeat of His enemy. The central image is of the triumphal procession in which the people run out to meet the

⁴ Notker (ed. von den Steinen) *Laudes Christo redempti* 12./1-5 (p.110).

⁵ Apoc.12.9; Matt.4.1; John 13.2.

⁶ John 8.44.

Victor, a motif which is picked up and amplified in 60 where the return of David after the slaying of Goliath is seen as a prefiguration of the resurrection:

Vero David obviae
choros proferant,
victori victoriae
laudes concinant.⁷

In this present hymn the theme is introduced by the triumphant acclamation *Christus imperat* (1./4). Not only is *imperat* is a deliberate reminiscence of the description of Satan as *...eum qui habebat mortis imperium*, but, as Szövérfy points out, *Christus imperat* is part of the liturgical acclamation *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat*.⁸ This acclamation is part of what is now known as the *laudes regiae*. Because these *laudes* celebrated earthly kingship, they were addressed to the victorious Christ as the eternal King of Heaven and earth. Thus they were particularly appropriate to Easter. In France where the authority of the Capetian kings was weak, the *laudes regiae* tended to appear as festal *laudes* associated more with the great festivals of the Church than with the glorification of the king.⁹

The Christians who were bidden *plaudite* (1./1) are now told to run out to meet the Victor (*victori occurrite* 1./5). The subjective note of the imperatives is enhanced for those singing the hymn when they are equated with the Christians of the opening line in the clause *qui nos liberat* (1./6). Through *occurrere* they are also associated with the first disciples who ran (*currere*) to see for themselves the empty tomb.¹⁰

There is a reiteration of the defeat of Satan at the start of the second stanza (*superato zabulo* 2./1) where it is emphasized again that this is the consequence of Christ's rising, this the reason for joy. The effect of the resurrection does not stop there: Hell is despoiled and the just rescued:

spoliato barathro
suos eruit (2./3-4).¹¹

7 60.2./3-6.

8 Heb.2.14; Szövérfy II p.127.

9 For a full exposition see H.E.Cowdrey *Popes, Monks and Crusaders* (London 1984) ch.VIII "The Anglo-Norman *Laudes Regiae*".

10 Luke 24.12; John 20.4.

11 For the frequency of *erueri* in the context of the harrowing of Hell see discussion on 54.2./3 p.233-4; cf. Odo of Cluny who puts into Mary Magdalene's mouth the prayer *et me de barathri faucibus clementer eripias...* (*Sermo* II PL 133.715A).

In this way the scope of the line *qui nos liberat* (1./6) is widened to include all Christ's people, those of the old dispensation as of the new.

The plundering of Hell is a precursor to the triumphal procession of the final couplet:

*stipatus angelico
coetu rediit* (2./5-6).

The same language appears in the ascension hymns, especially 63 and 65 *spoliatis nunc redit tartaris* and *victor redit subacto zabulo*; in 65 too Christ is met by those coming out to greet Him, *pompas educti obvias*.¹² Such conscious similarity suggests that Christ's return from Hell to the world in the resurrection looks forward to His return from the world to Heaven in the ascension. Although the verbal reminiscences are deliberate and the parallel intended, the similarity is not precise: Christ is surrounded at His resurrection by angels (*stipatus angelico/ coetu rediit*), at His ascension by those whom He has rescued (*circumstabant victorem eruti*).¹³

There is in the fourth stanza a variation in the victory motif in *captivatis inferis* (4./1). It is here that we find the reason for Abelard's choice of angels to accompany Christ in His triumphal procession. He wants to point the contrast between the *superi* (4./3) and the *inferi* (4./1), that is between angels and demons, those angels who fell with Satan. The latter are imprisoned, the former enriched by the spoils of Hell, no other than the just whom Christ has rescued. Abelard's ascension sermon contains a lengthy piece which elucidates the balanced phrases *captivatis inferis/... ditatisque superis*. It describes the triumphal procession of Christ as He ascends. He has conquered His ancient enemy (a traditional description of the Devil) and has rescued His people from Satan's power. He leads them in procession into Heaven. A choir of angels precedes Him and His captives follow their Liberator with praise and jubilation.¹⁴

¹² 63.1./4; 65.5./4; 65.2./2.

¹³ 65.1./4.

¹⁴ *Sermo XV* (Pl 178.496D-497B) ...*et introibit rex glorie, non quidem terrenus, sed qui ad coelestis glorie celsitudinem suos de potestate diaboli ereptos in hoc hodierno triumpho secum pariter introducat...Suos...nunc secum ad coelestia perducens quasi victor hodie de antiquo hoste superato...Sic et hodie tam praecedentium angelorum chori quam captivi liberatorem suum sequentes summa et ineffabili tubilatione victori laudes acclamabant.*

As in the sermon, so in the hymn there are all the elements of a Roman triumph: the Victor returning from the battle is acclaimed with joy by His people. He is surrounded by His heavenly army. In His train He leads His vanquished foes captive. He shows forth the spoils He has won from the enemy and with them He enriches His army.¹⁵ Jubilation resounds from Heaven (*coelum tubilat* 4./4) and earth echoes the praise,

hymnis, psalmis, canticis
terra resonat (4./5-6),

in precisely the manner suggested by Paul to the Ephesians:

sed implemini Spiritu Sancto, loquentes vobismetipsis in psalmis et hymnis et
canticis spritualibus...¹⁶

The final stanza flows from the preceding lines. The doxology is the song which Heaven and earth pour forth in praise of their triumphant Lord:

coelum tubilat,
hymnis, psalmis, canticis,
terra resonat (4./4-6).

One couplet is given to each Person of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit. Here again the refrain is integral to the first couplet. Why is glory to be given to the Father? Because Christ is risen and it is the Father Who has raised Christ from the dead:

Deum Patrem qui suscitavit eum a mortuis...cui est gloria in saecula
saeculorum.¹⁷

That salvation and victory are ascribed to Christ (*salus et victoria/ Christo Domini* 5./3-4) in the doxology for the resurrection is particularly apt for it is through the victory of Christ over Satan in the resurrection that salvation has been won for man. Although *salus et victoria* is reminiscent of doxologies in Scripture, the phrase actually occurs in some of the *laudes regiae* from which the words *Christus imperat* in the first stanza are taken:

¹⁵ Plutarch *Life of Aemilius Paulus* 32-34.

¹⁶ Eph.5.19; cf. Col.3.16.

¹⁷ Gal.1.1 and 5; cf. Jacob's question in 54.1./1 *Leonis catulum Iudam quis suscitet* and the answer given earlier in 53.1./1-3 *Dormit hoc triduo leonis catulum/...donec hunc suscitet rugitus patrius.*

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat; N. Normannorum ducti
invictissimo pax, salus et victoria.¹⁸

A second point of interest lies in the reading *Christo Domini*. This is somewhat odd since the title *Domitus* is normally reserved in these hymns for Christ Himself, whereas it here refers to the Father. The phrase *Christus Domini* does, however appear in Scripture several times. Its occurrence in Psalm 2,

Adstiterunt reges terrae et principes convenerant in unum adversus Dominum et
adversum Christum eius,

is the most relevant because that Psalm is sung during Nocturns, the service for which this hymn was written.¹⁹ *Christus Domini* is also a favourite designation for the king ever since the eighth century when anointing was introduced as part of the coronation rite.²⁰ Given the influence of the *laudes regiae* on this hymn, it is possible that here too Abelard is indebted to contemporary terminology.

The final couplet ascribing honour to the Spirit in equal measure with the Father and the Son is paralleled in the doxology for Candlemas where Abelard insists on the equality of the Persons of the Trinity.²¹

Into this hymn whose main theme is Christ's victory over Satan is set a stanza (3) which is so overwhelmingly different in its theme, language and tone that a shadow of doubt is cast on its authenticity. The theme is well-worn: the Devil, seeing Christ incarnate, mistakenly presumes that death will have power over Him. Deceived by the flesh as a fish by bait, he seizes on Christ in the crucifixion but finds himself caught by the power residing within the flesh.

The image seems to have made its first appearance in the fourth century in the works of the contemporary bishops Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory of Nyssa. Cyril writes:²²

δέλεαρ τοίνυν τοῦ θανάτου γέγονε τὸ σῶμα, ἵνα ἐλπίσας
ὁ δράκων, ἐξερέσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἤδη καταποθέντας.

18 cf. Apoc. 19.1. For the *laudes regiae* see above n.9 Appendix p. .

19 Breviary, *Dominica resurrectionis, ad nocturnum*.

20 P.E.Schramm *A History of the English Coronation* (trans. L.G.Wickham Legg Oxford 1937) pp.7 and 118.

21 38.6./1-4.

22 Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechesis* XII (PG 33.741C).

Gregory has²³ ὡς ἂν εὐληπιτον χένοιντο τῷ ἐπιβητοῦντι ὑπὲρ ἡρῶν τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα, τῷ προκαλύμναι τῆς φύσεως ἡρῶν ἐνεκρύφθη τὸ Θεῖον, ἵνα κατὰ τοὺς λίχνους τῶν ἰχθύων τῷ δελέαι τῆς σαρκὸς συνκποσπασθῇ τὸ ἄγκιστρον τῆς Θεότητος.

It seems probable that Cyril influenced Gregory since the latter's is the more developed of the two images. Gregory in his turn influenced later writers who in general hold to his basic picture.

In his *Homilies on the Gospels* Gregory the Great links the incarnation with Leviathan in the Book of Job. The passage is long but two sentences will suffice to show that Abelard probably had Gregory as his immediate source:

In hamo eius incarnationis captus est, quia dum in illo appetit escam corporis, transfixus est aculeo divinitatis. Ibi quippe inerat humanitas, quae ad se devorantem duceret; ibi divinitas, quae perforaret; ibi aperta infirmitas quae provocaret; ibi occulta virtus quae raptoris faucem transfigeret.²⁴

It is the occurrence in such close proximity of the words *hamus*, *virtus*, *transfixus est* and *transfigeret* which suggests Abelard's direct reliance on this passage for his choice of *in hamo* (3./1), *virtute* (3./5) and *transfigitur* (3./5). So the meaning of *virtute*, which is unclear in the hymn, is elucidated: it is the power of Christ's divinity, the opposite of the weakness of the flesh which entices Satan (*infirmitas quae provocaret*).

Abelard makes his own contribution to the established tradition when he substitutes for Satan the fish, *draco* or *Leviathan*, Satan as *fraus*. Thus the metaphor of the hook and bait which is essentially a deceitful method of catching the prey is given an extra twist. In an allusion to Hilary's mutilated alphabetic hymn *Fefellit saevam verbum factum et caro*, Abelard suggests that Christ's incarnation with His power concealed in flesh (*virtute.../ carni insita* 3./5-6) was a wholly appropriate way to overcome Satan, since it was designed to defeat Deceit by deceit.²⁵ The alliterative *fraus...fallitur* (3./1) underlines the dramatic irony.

23 Gregory of Nyssa *Orat.Catech.* XXXIV (PG 45.64D-65A).

24 Gregory the Great *Homil.in Evang.II.XXV.8* (PL 76.1195A). The same image recurs in *Moral.in Iob* 40.19-20 (PL 76.680A-C and 682B-C). Later he introduces a refinement of the image, adding to the metaphor of the hook that of the line: *Hulus hami linea illa est per Evangelium antiquorum patrum propago memorata*. (PL 76.682D) For a depiction in art see Mâle p.380. Gregory's influence reaches through the centuries. He is copied, often *verbatim*, by Odo of Cluny and is the source for Bruno of Asti (c.1040-1123) in his *Expos.in Iob*. (PL 164.685D-686B).

25 Hilary AH 50.2.1./1 (p.6).

The stanza is well-constructed and effective in its own right but it seems strangely at odds with the rest of the hymn. As the central stanza it could be expected to have direct links with the preceding and the subsequent lines, but any links are not only indirect but tenuous. Certainly it tells of Satan's defeat and is more explicit than the phrases *victo mortis principe* (1./3) and *superato zabulo* (2./1). The metaphor of the fish-hook also implies capture, the image with which the fourth stanza opens, *captivatis inferis* (4./1). In spite of this relationship, however, the tone is wholly different. There is majesty in the victory of Christ in the other stanzas, here a sense of the ludicrous. It is difficult to see why Abelard introduced the metaphor here but, as the stanza works no better in the other hymns for Easter, any argument for transposition is doomed from the start. Perhaps it is just that he could not resist such a potent image.

8.3. 59. *in secundo nocturno*

Argument: Mary, the sister of Aaron, singing in praise of the Lord Who has overthrown the Egyptians, foreshadows Mary Magdalene who is to sing in praise of the Lord Who has defeated Satan. She is worthy to be the first to see the risen Christ and to bring the news to the disciples.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Da Mariae tympanum,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 Hebraeas ad canticum
 cantans provocet;
 holocausta carminum
 Iacob immolet.</p> | <p>1. Give Mary a timbrel,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 with singing let her summon
 the Hebrew women to song;
 let Jacob offer
 sacrifices of song.</p> |
| <p>2. Subvertens Aegyptios
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 Rubri maris alveos
 replens hostibus
 quos involvit obrutos
 undis pelagus.</p> | <p>2. Overwhelming the Egyptians
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 filling the channels of the Red Sea
 with His enemies
 whom the sea has enveloped
 and wrapped in its waves.</p> |
| <p>3. Dicat tympanistria
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus;</i>
 illa quidem altera
 re non nomine,
 resurgentem merita
 prima cernere.</p> | <p>3. Let the timbrel-player say
 <i>"The Lord has risen";</i>
 different indeed in reality
 but not in name,
 she was worthy to be the first
 to see Him rising.</p> |
| <p>4. Cantet carmen dulcius
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus</i>
 reliquis fidelibus,
 mixta feminis
 cum ipsa narrantibus
 hoc discipulis.</p> | <p>4. Let her sing the sweeter song
 <i>"The Lord has risen"</i>
 to the rest of the faithful,
 as she mingles with the women
 who with her proclaim this
 to the disciples.</p> |
| <p>5. Deo Patri gloria,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 salus et victoria
 Christo Domini,
 par honor per saecula
 sit Spiritui. Amen.</p> | <p>5. Glory be to God the Father,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 salvation and glory
 to the Lord's Anointed,
 equal honour through the ages
 to the Spirit. Amen.</p> |

The opening image, the command to give Mary the tambourine, weaves together the experience of two women. Mary of the Old Testament, the prophetess sister of Aaron, took in her hand the timbrel with which to lead a hymn of praise to God after He had brought them in safety through the Red Sea:

Sumpsit ergo Maria prophetissa, soror Aaron, tympanum in manu sua.¹

Yet the line *Da Mariae tympanum* (1./1), taking the form of an instruction, immediately brings to mind another Mary, the one most intimately associated with the resurrection, Mary Magdalene. From the start, then, there is an intertwining of *figura* and fulfillment. A shift from Mary of the Old Testament to her counterpart in the New takes place explicitly in the third stanza (*illa quidem altera/ re non nomine* 3./3-4), but is also subtly present in the first two.

Because of the Old Testament context of the opening stanzas, the refrain in 1./2 and 2./2 differs in its surface meaning. Here *Domnus* is not Christ the Son, but the Lord God of Israel Who has risen against His enemies.² At a deeper level, however, the more usual meaning is evident because of the underlying element of prefiguration.

The first stanza follows the story of the Old Testament Mary:

egressaeque sunt omnes mulieres post eam cum tympanis et choris, quibus
praecinebat dicens: Cantemus Domino...³

As in Exodus Mary encourages the women to sing, so in the hymn she calls them to song. The emphasis on singing in 1./3-5 in *canticum*, *cantans* and *carminum* is picked up in the fourth stanza by *Cantet carmen...*(4./1). This repetition is a conscious reference back to the songs of praise in the preceding hymn:

coelum iubilat
hymnis, psalmis, canticis
terra resonat.⁴

Here then is a hymn with which the earth resounds, a hymn which incorporates in itself two hymns, that of Mary the prophetess and that of Mary Magdalene. The repetition heightens the sense of boundless joy which is the hallmark of these hymns.

1 Ex.15.20.

2 *resurgere* occurs in this sense in Ecclesi.17.19.

3 Ex.15.21.

4 58.4./4-6.

The final couplet depends on the imagery of sacrifice. Szövérfy, in his translation of *holocausta carminum* (1./5) as "fiery songs of joy", puts the emphasis on the fact that *holocausta* are burnt-offerings.⁵ The stress of the hymn, however, is on the idea of sacrifice: such is the point of *innolet* (1./6). The paradox "sacrifices of song" blends Old and New Testaments: the same idea, expressed in different forms, appears in both. The Psalmist vows *tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis*, while the writer to the Hebrews enjoins *per ipsum ergo offeramus hostiam laudis semper Deo*.⁶ Among the Cistercian canticles for Easter in use at the Paraclete before Abelard chose his own is a reading from Hosea which is pertinent:

Quia misericordiam volui, et non sacrificium; et scientiam Dei plus quam holocausta.⁷

Abelard has designed a notable contrast. The canticle includes the very verse in which God declares that He does not desire *holocausta*; Abelard writes a hymn where he instructs us to give God *holocausta*, but they are *holocausta carminum*.

Szövérfy says that Jacob who is to make this sacrifice (1./6) is "representative of the Jews and of the Old Testament in general".⁸ Dronke goes further:

Jacob by an established *figura* is the Jewish race, the nation who denies that Christ arose. If Jacob were to respond by answering Mary's song, this would be truly a sacrifice, fulfilling what was figured in the ancient holocausts and surpassing them.⁹

What neither Szövérfy nor Dronke takes into consideration is the equally well-established *figura* that Jacob is the Church. Jerome interprets his name as "the supplanter": *Iacob subplantator vel subplantans*.¹⁰ Cassiodorus makes the identification of Jacob and the Church explicit:

5 Szövérfy II p.129.

6 Ps.115.17; Heb.13.15.

7 Hos.6.6. See Waddell CLS 3 p.359.

8 Szövérfy II p.129.

9 Peter Dronke *The Medieval Lyric* (London 1978) p.52.

10 Jerome *Liber Inter.Hebr.Nom.* (CC Ser.Lat.62) p.136 cf. pp.67 and 157. Isidore (*Etym.*VII.vii.5) expands the interpretation.

Per Iacob enim patriarcham frequenter diximus significari populum fidelem, qui liberatus est a captivitate diaboli...¹¹

Jacob is the Church because the Church has supplanted the Jews. At the same time, however, Jacob continues to represent the Jewish race. Such an interpretation fits more smoothly into the hymn where the Old Testament *figurae* foreshadow the New Testament fulfilment. As Mary prefigures Mary Magdalene and the Hebrew women her companions, so Jacob, the Jewish nation rescued from the power of Pharaoh, prefigures the Church rescued from the grip of Satan.

Why does Mary in the Old Testament lead the praise to God? Why should Jacob sing songs of joy? It is because the Egyptians have been overcome, the army of Pharaoh has been drowned in the Red Sea:

fugientibusque Aegyptiis occurrerunt aquae, et involvit eos Dominus in mediis fluctibus.¹²

The refrain in the second stanza forms the main clause with the first line: *Subvertens Aegyptios/ Resurrexit Dominus* (2./1-2). For it is the Lord Who overthrows the Egyptians, He Who fills the sea with His enemies. Because the refrain usually celebrates Christ's resurrection, the figurative nature of the rest of the stanza is clear.

From early in patristic writings the Egyptians are seen as a symbol of the powers of darkness. Cassiodorus writes that the Egyptians symbolize demons: *...ab Aegyptiorum, id est a daemonum turba* and also that Egypt symbolizes the world: *Aegyptus hic mundus est qui...affligit populum Christianum*. He adds the image of darkness: *Aegyptus, ...pro incolarum suorum tenebrosa nigredine...significat mundum*.¹³ Abelard draws together the symbols of darkness and the world: *Aegyptus quippe, quae tenebrae interpretatur, mundus est*.¹⁴ His interpretation fits well with Rabanus Maurus' more extensive passage where he identifies the Egyptians with the Devil and his angels:

Interfecit quippe exercitum spiritualium Aegyptiorum cum vero Pharaone, quando diabolum et satellites eius, cum tota nequitia et multitudine peccatorum

11 Cassiodorus *Exp. in Ps.* 84.2 (CC Ser. Lat. 98) p. 774; cf. *Expos. in Ps.* 77.21 (p. 717): *Iacob significat subplantator, qui frequenter a parte ponitur gentium, quae venientes ad Christum Israeliticum populum supplantasse monstrantur, quando illis introeuntibus, istos constat expulsos.*

12 Ex. 14.27.

13 Cassiodorus *Exp. in Ps.* 113.1; Ps. 134.8 (CC Ser. Lat. 98) pp. 1029 and 1217; Ps. 67.32 (CC Ser. Lat. 97) p. 601; cf. Rabanus Maurus *Comm. in Ex.* I (PL 108.66A).

14 *Sermo* II (PL 178.394D).

in aquis spiritualibus, ubi credentes per similitudinem mortis eius baptizati a morte peccatorum resurgunt, submersit et aeterno damnavit interitu.¹⁵

The baptismal *figura* of the Red Sea is found in Paul and quickly becomes widespread in the writings of the Fathers.¹⁶ Abelard explains that baptism is symbolized by the sea; its redness is the blood of Christ. It was through the Red Sea that the Israelites reached the promised land, and through baptism that Christians reach Heaven:

Non enim nisi per mare Rubrum transitum habuerunt Israelitae ad terram promissionis, hoc est baptismus, qui per mare designatur; non potest sine rubore, id est sanguinis Christi effusione, quemquam ad veram promissionis terram, id est caelestem Ierusalem, transmittere.¹⁷

Because this symbol is pervasive, this stanza undoubtedly contains an allusion to baptism. It is not, however, the main motif since Abelard here concentrates on the defeat of the enemy rather than the saving of the faithful.

Dronke endeavours to link the baptismal *figura* with the overthrow of the enemy:

The "ocean" (*pelagus* 2./6) can mean the Red Sea once more; but it also means the risen Christ, an ocean embracing the sunken, embracing his enemies, in quite another sense, a "true ocean" of which the Red Sea is only a *figura*. This interpretation...is guaranteed by the most ancient part of the Good Friday liturgy, in which the Red Sea, opened at the divine command, figures Christ's body, opened with a lance by his persecutors.¹⁸

The section of the liturgy to which Dronke refers is the *Improperia*, an antiphonal dialogue between two choirs, which includes the words *Ego ante te aperui mare: et tu aperuisti lancea latus meum*.¹⁹

If, however, we examine the other sections of the *Improperia*,

15 Rabanus Maurus *Comm.in Ex.I* (PL 108.66A).

16 I Cor.10.1-2. For the association of the Red Sea with baptism see Tertullian *de baptismo* IX (PL 1.1318A) *Primo, quidem, cum populus de Aegypto libere expeditus, vim regis Aegypti, per aquam transgressus evadit, ipsum regem cum totis copiis aqua exstinxit. Quae figura manifestior in baptismi sacramento? Liberantur de saeculo nationes per aquam scilicet, et diabolum, dominatorem pristinum, in aqua oppressum derelinquunt; cf. Cassiodorus Exp.in Ps.65.6; 73.13; 80.6; 105.1; 126.24.*

17 *Comm.in Rom.II.IV.11* (CC Cont.Med.11) p.130.

18 See n.9 above, p.53.

19 *Missale Romanum in passione et morte Domini, Improperia.*

(Ego propter te flagellavi Aegyptum cum primogenitis suis: et tu me flagellatum tradidisti...Ego eduxi te de Aegypto, demerso Pharaone in Mare Rubrum: et tu me tradidisti principibus sacerdotum...Ego te potavi aqua salutis de petra: et tu me potasti felle et aceto),

it is clear that, although the Old Testament event foreshadows the New, it is not an allegory. Each pair sets up a striking contrast, so that God's opening of the Red Sea as a blessing to His people is juxtaposed with their cruel treatment of His Son when they opened His side with a spear. This does not mean that the sea is Christ's body, as Dronke suggests.

The point Abelard is making is found earlier in Rabanus Maurus. It is the contrast between the result of the resurrection for the faithful and for the enemies of Christ, Satan and his minions:

...quando diabolum et satellites eius,...ubi credentes...baptizati a morte peccatorum resurgunt, submersit et aeterno damnavit interitu.²⁰

The overthrow of the Egyptians is elaborated through the stanza, beginning with the present participle *subvertens*, followed by the finite *trivolvit* and brought to a conclusion in the perfect participle *obrutos*: the victory is won, the enemy utterly vanquished. The sea is present everywhere in the stanza, *rubri maris*, *alveos*, *undis*, *pelagus*, for it is the waters which have overwhelmed the Egyptians. The verb *trivolvit* is especially effective with its imagery of enfolding all in the waves. The calm of the final *undis pelagus* forms an effective contrast with the preceding lines where all is chaos and overthrow. At the end nothing remains but the sea.

With the third and fourth stanzas the hymn moves from *figurae* to fulfilment. The *tympanistria* (3./1) is now solely Mary Magdalene, for she is to say the joyful words *Resurrexit Dominus*. In his Easter sermon Abelard elaborates the parallel that lies between the two Marys by identifying the Hebrew women with Mary Magdalene's companions:

Quod si Novi Testamenti revolvamus seriem, et in hac Maria et caeteris cum ea feminis alteram Mariam et cum ipsa devotas feminas quibus primum Dominus suae resurrectionis gaudium exhibuit.²¹

In the hymn he postpones the treatment of the women with Mary, those who are the counterparts of the *Hebraeas* (1./3), until the fourth stanza (*mixta feminis/ cum ipsa narrantibus* 4./4-5).

20 Rabanus Maurus *Comm.in Ex.I* (PL 108.66A).

21 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.485A).

In the Gospels Mary Magdalene has no timbrel, but the singers have already declared that she should be given one (*Da Mariae tympanum* 1./1) so that she may praise the Lord. In *Sermo XIII* Abelard explains the association between the timbrel and praise by quoting from the Psalms:

Unde et Psalmista in tympano Deum laudare nos adhortans, ait: Laudate eum in tympano.²²

He allegorizes Mary's timbrel in the Old Testament as mortification of the flesh:

Tympanum autem quod manu gestabat mortificationem carnis insinuat, quam habebat in opere, quo eius canticum Deo magis esset acceptum.

Through a parallel symbolism, therefore, Mary Magdalene can be called *tympanistria* because she has taken up the spiritual timbrel, the mortification of the flesh:

Illa corporale tympanum sumpsit, haec spiritale habuit. Quo enim haec viventem Dominum amplius dilexerat, super eius morte amplius afflicta et quasi mortificata fuerat.

The hymn unfolds along the precise pattern of the sermon which continues:

Unde et prima de resurrectione consolationem meruit, quae eius morte amplius anxia et maesta fuit.²³

This, then, is the reason why the treatment of the other women is postponed to the next stanza: that Mary may be given her due place as the first to see the risen Jesus.²⁴

The fourth stanza opens in a way similar to the third, but here the sense of joy is greater because now the command is *cantet* (4./1), not merely *dicat* (3./1). So the hymn comes full circle, echoing the words of the first stanza about the other Mary:

Hebraeas ad canticum
cantans provocet (1./3-4).

The song is the same, *Resurrexit Dominus*, yet it is sweeter (*dulcius* 4./1). When the first Mary sang, it was a song of triumph.²⁵ When Mary Magdalene sings "the Lord Has risen", it is a song of sheer gladness: the defeat of the enemy is indeed a matter for joy,

22 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.464D) quoting Ps.90.4.

23 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.485A).

24 Here Abelard follows John 20.10-18.

25 Ex.15.21 *Cantemus Domino, gloriose enim magnificatus est, equum et ascensorem eius deiecit in mare.*

but far more the fact that her Lord is alive. It is this that she tells the disciples, for this that she becomes "the apostle of the apostles":

Apostolorum autem apostola dicta est, hoc est legatorum legata: quod eam Dominus ad apostolos primum direxit, ut eis resurrectionis gaudium nuntiaret.²⁶

The influential sermon of Odo of Cluny on Mary Magdalene provides a background for the title "apostle of the apostles". At the start of the sermon he calls her the "consort of the apostles", "the messenger of the resurrection":

...sed apostolorum consors effecta, illis donata est Dominicae resurrectionis nuntia.²⁷

In his closing words he suggests that she has a right to be called an apostle:

Et si discipuli ideo apostoli vocati, quia missi sunt ab ipso (i.e. Christ) ad praedicandum Evangelium omni creaturae, nec minus beata Maria Magdalena ab ipso Domino destinata est ad apostolos, quatenus dubietatem et incredulitatem suae resurrectionis ab illorum cordibus removeret.

Although Mary is given pride of place in the announcement of the resurrection, Abelard does not forget the other women, Mary, the mother of James, Joanna, Salome, who joined her in the telling.²⁸ Again the hymn follows the pattern of the sermon:

Post ipsam vero, ad caeteras feminas hoc gaudium resurrectionis priusquam ad apostolos vel quoslibet viros pervenit...In veteri quippe Pascha praedicti viri primitus, etiam postmodum feminae cecinisse memorantur; in nostro autem Pascha, hoc est Dominicae resurrectionis die, spiritale canticum exultationis de apparitione resurrectionis prius feminae quam viri adeptae sunt.²⁹

In both sermon and hymn Abelard is concerned to give women a place of honour. It is not only that he respects women to a higher degree than do most of his contemporaries, but it is also wholly apt that hymns destined for a convent should

26 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.485A-B). In his influential sermon on Mary Magdalene (*Sermo II*) Odo of Cluny calls her "the consort of the apostles" (*apostolorum consors*), "the messenger of the resurrection" (*Dominicae resurrectionis nuntia*) and explains that she has a right to the title apostle: *Et si discipuli ideo apostoli vocati, quia missi sunt ab ipso ad praedicandum Evangelium omni creaturae, nec minus beata Maria Magdalena ab ipso Domino destinata est ad apostolos, quatenus dubietatem et incredulitatem suae resurrectionis ab illorum cordibus removeret.* (PL 133.714C and 721B-C).

27 Odo of Cluny *Sermo II* (PL 133.714C and 721B-C).

28 See Luke 24.9-10, Matt.28.1, Mark 16.1.

29 *Sermo XIII* (PL 178.485B).

allow the singers every opportunity to identify with the protagonists of these hymns.³⁰

³⁰ *Sermo XIII* too is obviously written with the nuns of the Paraclete specifically in mind, for its opening and closing motif is the honour of women: *Quantum ad devotionem vel honorem feminarum paschalis exsultatio solemnitate pertineat, tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti paginae testantur* (PL 178.484B). *Quam quidem gloriam et vos, Christi virgines, iam in terris adeptae, nec tam humane quam angelice viventes, tanto huius solemnitate diem devotius colite, quanto eam, ut ante praefati sumus, ad excellentiam vestri honoris amplius pertinere constat* (PL 178.489A).

8.4. 60. *In tertio nocturno*

Argument: Goliath has been defeated and slain with his own sword. The daughters of Sion are to praise the true David. Samson removes the gates of the city, leaving his enemies in confusion. Christ rises just as the lion-cub is wakened from death.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Gollas prostratus est,
<i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
ense iugulatus est
hostis proprio,
cum suis submersus est
ille Pharaos. | 1. Goliath has been laid low,
<i>The Lord has risen,</i>
the enemy slain
with his own sword,
that Pharaoh drowned
with his hosts. |
| 2. Dicant Sion filiae:
<i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
vero David obviae
choros proferant, ¹
victori victoriae
laudes concinant. | 2. Let the daughters of Sion say
<i>"The Lord has risen",</i>
let them lead out choirs
to meet the true David
and sing to the Victor
songs of victory. |
| 3. Samson noster validus
<i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
circumsaepus hostibus
portas sustulit;
frustratus allophylus
stupens ingemit. | 3. Our strong Samson
<i>The Lord has risen,</i>
hedged about with foes
he has lifted up the gates;
baffled, the foreigner
gapes and groans. |
| 4. Ut leonis catulus
<i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
quem rugitus patrius
die tertia
suscitat vivificus,
teste physica. | 4. Like the lion-cub
<i>The Lord has risen;</i>
the life-giving roar
of its father
wakes it on the third day,
as natural science bears witness. |
| 5. Deo Patri gloria,
<i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
salus et victoria
Christo Domini,
par honor per saecula
sit Spiritui. Amen. | 5. Glory to God the Father,
<i>The Lord has risen,</i>
salvation and victory
to the Lord's Anointed,
equal honour through the ages
to the Spirit. Amen. |

¹ *choros* has a double reference: first to the dances of I.Reg.18.6 *egressae sunt mulieres... cantantes choroque ducentes in occursum Saul regis in tympanis et in sistris*; but, since that would be inappropriate for nuns, it also indicates the Easter processions of the Paraclete nuns. See Waddell CLS 3 pp.337-344 (cf. CLS 4 pp.112-124). In *Epist.X* Abelard reproaches Bernard for the Cistercian disregard of processions: *Processionum fere totam venerationem a vobis exclusistis* (PL 178.339D). The Paraclete retains many, although not all, traditional processions.

The typology David/Christ, Goliath/Satan has been discussed with reference to Abelard's final hymn for the Sacred Triduum where, as here, he concentrates on the slaying of Goliath with his own sword:

illud intellege Goliae gladium
quo David stravit hunc non habens proprium.²

The sword is allegorized as the cup of death poured out for us by the Devil as our due punishment:

Hoc mortis poculum quod per diabolum
nobis transfusum est in poenae debitum.³

Death as the result of sin is Satan's weapon against man. Christ became Man but, because He was without sin, that weapon could not prevail against Him. So these lines, *Goliath prostratus est...* (1./1-4), reiterate through a different metaphor the triumph of the earlier hymns (*victo mortis principe; subvertens Aegyptios*) and the doctrinal message of *Fraus in hamo fallitur...*⁴

The verb *prosternere* (*Goliath prostratus est* 1./1) belongs to the traditional treatment of the David and Goliath theme. Both Augustine and Cassiodorus use it in the passages quoted above.⁵ In Ambrose, there are the parallel phrases *habet prostrati hostis exuvias* and *detracta sunt spolia prostrato*.⁶ In one of his most influential hymns Caelius Sedulius writes *Tu decus omne tuis, qui sternis caede Gollam*.⁷ Abelard stays with the tradition both here and ⁱⁿ the Holy Saturday hymn where he, like Sedulius, uses the simple form *sternere*: *quo David stravit hunc. sternere* and *prosternere* are so frequently used in this context because they well depict the manner of Goliath's death: *infixus est lapis in fronte eius, et cecidit in faciem super terram*.⁸

2 57.2./3-4: see discussion and references pp.245-7.

3 57.2./1-2.

4 58.1./3; 59.2./1; 58.3./1ff.

5 See above p.246; Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.33 Sermo* I.4 (CC Ser.Lat.38) p.276; Cassiodorus *Expos.in Ps.143* (CC Ser.Lat.98) p.1281.

6 Ambrose *Expos.in Ps.118.162* (PL 15.1583C).

7 Caelius Sedulius *Cantemus, socii, Domino cantemus honorem* AH 50.52.23 (p.55).

8 I Reg.17.49.

hostis, an epithet of the Devil of great antiquity, occurs in hymnody as early as Ambrose.⁹ It derives from a variety of Scriptural sources, notably *triniticus autem...est diabolus* and *adversarius vester diabolus*.¹⁰ Abelard uses it again in the ascension sermon which has close ties with these hymns: *quasi victor hodie de antiquo hoste superato triumphat*.¹¹ The metaphor forges a link between this hymn and the preceding one:

Rubri maris alveos
replens hostibus.¹²

There the enemy was overwhelmed by the sea, here by the sword. There the *hostes* were the Egyptians, the army of Pharaoh. Thus *hostis*, describing Goliath and the Devil, paves the way for the third metaphor of the stanza:

cum suis submersus est
ille Pharao (1./5-6).

The presence of Pharaoh in this hymn causes something of a hiatus between the first and second stanzas. The opening four lines introduce Goliath in his defeat, the final couplet shifts to Pharaoh, but the second stanza returns immediately to the story of Goliath in the references to the daughters of Sion and to David. This hiatus is, however, more apparent than real. The phrase *ille Pharao* (1./6) suggests the direction of Abelard's thinking: in the same way that Christ can be called *verus David* (2./3), Goliath can be called "that Pharaoh". Thus Pharaoh and the Egyptians of the previous hymn are set up as *figurae* of Goliath and the Philistines, who are in their turn *figurae* of Satan and his host. The result is a potent layering of images.

The language of the final couplet *cum suis submersus est/ ille Pharao* (1./5-6) is directly reminiscent of Moses' song of praise: *principes eius submersi sunt in mari Rubro*.¹³ Abelard, using the same vocabulary in his sermon, links this with the sacrament of baptism:

9 Ambrose AH 50.7.7./3-4 (p.13) *Nec hostis invidi dolo/ pavor quietos suscitet*.

10 Matt.13.24 and I Pet.5.8.

11 *Sermo XVI* (PL 178.497B).

12 59.2./5-6.

13 Ex.15.4.

(Maria) cum in illa videlicet populi liberatione, et hostium submersione non tam corporum salutem attenderet, quam animarum figurari prospiceret, quam quotidie in sacramento baptismatis divina operatur gratia.¹⁴

As in the preceding hymn, so in this there is undoubtedly present an allusion to baptism, but it is no more than that.¹⁵ It would be well-nigh impossible for anyone imbued with Abelard's sense of symbolism to sing of the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian hosts without being conscious of the baptismal significance.

In 59 Mary was enjoined to sing "The Lord has risen" (*Dicat tympanistria:/ Resurrexit Dominus*);¹⁶ now the daughters of Sion are to do likewise (*Dicant Sion filiae:/ Resurrexit Dominus 2./1-2*). They form a counterpart to the Hebrew women whom the first Mary was to provoke to song.¹⁷ On the return of Saul and David to Jerusalem after the slaying of Goliath and the rout of the Philistines, the women came out to meet them:

egressae sunt mulieres de universis urbibus Israel cantantes chorosque ducentes in occursum Saul regis in tympanis et in sistris... Percussit Saul mille et David decem millia.¹⁸

That Abelard had this incident in mind is indicated not only by the context, but also by the verbal echo of *chorosque ducentes* in *choros proferant* (2./3) and through the appearance of *tympana* in the story, a word used twice in the preceding hymn, the companion-piece to this.¹⁹

Sion is usually synonymous with Jerusalem and, according to Isidore, comes to stand for the Church:

Pro peregrinatione autem praesenti Ecclesia Sion dicitur, eo quod ab huius peregrinationis longitudine posita promissionem rerum caelestium speculetur; et idcirco Sion, id est speculatio, nomen accepit.²⁰

14 *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.484D).

15 See discussion on 59.2./3 p.263.

16 59.3./1-2.

17 59.1./3-4 *Hebraeas ad canticum/ cantans provocet*.

18 I Reg.18.6ff.

19 59.1./1 *Da Mariae tympanum*; 3./1 *Dicat tympanistria*.

20 Isidore *Etym.* VIII.1.5 and XV.1.5; cf. Cassiodorus *Exp.in Ps.* 2.7, 47.3 (CC Ser.Lat. 97) pp.43

Abelard follows the tradition:

Sion, id est specula, dicitur ecclesia quae in altum se per desiderium
attollens...²¹

Thus the daughters of Sion are not only the women of Jerusalem celebrating the victory of David over Goliath, but the whole Church honouring Christ, the true David in his defeat of Satan.

Sion filiae has a special reference here to the nuns of the Paraclete. The true daughters of Sion are invited to come out to meet the true David, singing a greater song in praise of a greater victory. Such is the force of the juxtaposition of the cognates *victori* *victoriae* (2./5). The alliteration, along with the exuberant *choros proferant...laudes concinant* (2./4-6), heightens the pervasive tone of jubilation.

From *figurae* of Satan, Goliath and Pharaoh, Abelard has turned to David, a *figura* of Christ. He now introduces Samson as a second type of Christ, making it abundantly clear in the phrase *Samson noster* (3./1) that his function here is figurative.²² The reference is to the incident recorded in Judges where the Philistines have caught Samson in one of their cities. Determined to kill him, they set guards at the gate:

Dormivit autem Samson usque ad medium noctis et inde consurgens
apprehendit ambas portae fores cum postibus suis et sera, impositasque
humeris suis portavit ad verticem montis.²³

Samson sleeps in the city; Christ sleeps in the tomb.²⁴ Samson is hedged about with guards so that he will not escape; Christ's tomb is beset with guards so that He

and 426.

21 *Comm. in Rom. IV. ix. 33* (CC Cont. Med. XI) p. 248.

22 Szövérfy (I p. 99) is misleading when he says "Abelard is prudent enough to skip all the other elements of Samson's story which might be inconvenient for him". This could be said also about David's story with almost equal emphasis. His comment suggests that a type of Christ must be like Him in his moral life. It is, however, usually in only one or two respects that an Old Testament character is said to prefigure Him. Jesus Himself gives the Pharisees "the sign of Jonah" (Matt. 12. 40) as a symbol of His death and resurrection. He does not imply that He, like Jonah, will be disobedient to the will of God.

23 Jud. 16. 2-3. Szövérfy (II p. 131) correctly cites this encounter as the background, but elsewhere (I p. 91) comments that the hymn refers to "Samson's self-destruction, symbolizing Christ's willingness to sacrifice Himself for mankind", the incident in Judges 16. 25-31 where Samson pulls down the pillars on the Philistines and on himself.

24 cf. 53. 1./1 *Dormit hoc triduo* and the complementary metaphor of the tomb as *lectulus*:
52. 4./3 *hunc illi lectulum terrenum commodas*

will not rise.²⁵ But Samson carries off the gates of the city and Christ bursts the bonds of death and the tomb.

The gates which Samson removes are real gates, the rock which bars the entrance to the tomb a real rock. There are, however, spiritual gates of which the physical are only a symbol. In rising Christ has broken through the gates of Hell, a motif which has appeared already in the Easter hymns: *spoliato baratro/ suos eruit*.²⁶ Tertullian describes the effect of Christ's resurrection in this imagery:

adeo eam (vitam) significat quae portas adamantinas mortis et aeneas seras
inferorum infregit...²⁷

Isidore identifies the *Allophyl* with the *Philisthaei*, the foreigners and age-old enemies of Israel:

idem et allophyl, id est alienigenae, ob hoc, quia semper fuerunt inimici Israel, et
longe ab eorum genere ac societate separati.²⁸

allophylus (*frustratus allophylus* 3./5), therefore, works on two levels. It is the correct term for the Philistines who, in the context of the hymn, are the enemies of Samson, but is at the same time synonymous with Satan, the ancient enemy of Christ and of the Church. Further, the linking of the three events, Samson, the resurrection and the harrowing of Hell, suggests that *allophylus* has a third reference: to the soldiers who guarded the tomb, who were Romans and foreigners.

A parallel reaction to the resurrection is found at both the tomb and in Hell. The Roman guards faint with fear: *prae timore autem etus exterriti sunt custodes et facti sunt velut mortui*.²⁹ Pseudo-Athanasius, discussing the descent, describes Hell's reaction:

Dominus noster descendit in infernum quem ut videt infernus exhorruit et
perculsus ait...³⁰

25 cf. 50.3./1-2 *Nec mtrius gloriae confert Dominicae,/ quod pravi deputant suos custodiae*. See discussion on 50. p.203.

26 58.2./3.

27 Tertullian *de resurr.carnis* 44 (SPCK 1960 ed. Evans) p.122; cf. *Evangelium Nicodemi* XXI (Toronto Med.Lat. Texts ed. Kim) p.40.

28 Isidore *Etym.* IX.2.58.

29 Matt.28.4.

30 Pseudo-Athanasius *de virginitate* 16 (PG 28.272A); cf. *Evang.Nicod.* XXII p.42.

It appears from the fact that *allophylus* is singular that Abelard's main figurative intention is to establish "the foreigner" as a type of Satan. The singular, in contrast to the plural *hostibus* (3./3), provokes a direct opposition between *Samson noster* (3./1) and his enemy. Because Samson looks forward to Christ, the "foreigner" prefigures Satan, and his anguished fear is also Satan's. The parallel with the guards is, therefore, conscious, but incidental to the main argument.

The final stanza presents us with a complete change, to a theme which seems to have little in common with the preceding verses. From a series of Old Testament *figurae* we move to a prefiguration of Christ found in the Bestiaries.³¹ The method by which Abelard introduces this *figura* also differs, for here he employs a simile

ut leonis catulus
Resurrexit Dominus (4./1-2).

In the earlier stanzas Goliath and Pharaoh represent Satan, David and Samson represent Christ; here, on the other hand, Christ is *like* a lion-cub.

It is probable that Abelard has made the connection between Samson and the lion because of the celebrated incident and riddle recorded in Judges 14 where Samson killed a lion and after a few days found in its corpse a swarm of bees and a honeycomb. He used this as the basis of a riddle with which to fool the Philistines:

apparuit catulus leonis saevus rugiens et occurrit ei...et dilaceravit leonem...Et post aliquot dies ...revertens...declinavit ut videret cadaver leonis et ecce examen apium in ore leonis erat ac favus mellis...Dixitque eis (Samson):...de forti egressa est dulcedo.³²

The verbal echo *catulus leonis* suggests the allusion, and the connection is strengthened by the traditional typology of the incident. The lion is Christ, the honey the word of salvation. Thus Paulinus of Nola:

Quamobrem puto et ipse nobis leo est, in cuius mortui ore cibum mellis invenimus...Aut in cuius mortui ore favus et apes, nisi in cuius verbo salutis...³³

Paulinus identifies this lion with the lion-cub of Genesis, the subject of the Holy Saturday hymns:

³¹ See **foreword** to this section p.249.

³² Jud.14.5-14.

³³ Paulinus of Nola *Epist.*23.16 (CSEL 29) pp.173-4; cf. Ambrose *de Spiritu Sancto* II Prologue 5-14 (CSEL 79) pp.87-92.

idem enim Dominus leo ille, qui vicit, et catulus est leonis, sua sponte sopitus, et a semetipso resuscitatus...³⁴

So the lion in the story of Samson is one and the same with the lion-cub of Genesis and, by attraction, the lion-cub of *Physiologus*, which is roused from its deathlike sleep after three days. This almost perfect analogy with Christ's resurrection provides a fitting climax to the hymn.

³⁴ See discussions on hymns 53-55.

8.5. 61. *ad laudes*

Argument: It is fitting that Christ is raised to life in the springtime when the world receives new life after the winter. Nature rejoices in its own renewal and in the resurrection of the Lord. Christ enters joy eternal, a joy which is tasted by all creation.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Veris grato tempore
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 mundus reviviscere
 cum iam incipit,
 auctorem resurgere
 mundi decuit.</p> | <p>1. In the welcome springtime
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 when the world now begins
 to come again to life,
 it was fitting for the world's Creator
 to rise from the dead.</p> |
| <p>2. Cunctis exsultantibus
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 herbis renascentibus,
 frondent arbores,
 odores ex floribus
 dant multiplices.</p> | <p>2. Everything leaps for joy,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 the grass springs up again,
 the trees break into leaf
 and give forth many scents
 from their blossoms.</p> |
| <p>3. Transacta iam hieme,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus</i>
 in illa perpetuae
 vitae gaudia
 nullius molestiae
 quae sunt conscia.</p> | <p>3. Now the winter is past,
 <i>The Lord has risen</i>
 into those joys
 of eternal life
 which know
 no trouble.</p> |
| <p>4. Qui restauret omnia
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus;</i>
 tamquam ista gaudia
 mundus senserit
 cum carne dominica
 iam refloruit.</p> | <p>4. To renew all things
 <i>The Lord has risen;</i>
 as if the world sensed
 those joys of His
 it has now flowered again
 with the body of the Lord.</p> |
| <p>5. Deo Patri gloria,
 <i>Resurrexit Dominus,</i>
 salus et victoria
 Christo Domini,
 par honor per saecula
 sit Spiritui. Amen.</p> | <p>5. Glory to God the Father,
 <i>The Lord has risen,</i>
 salvation and victory
 to the Lord's Anointed,
 equal honour through the ages
 to the Spirit. Amen.</p> |

The freshness of this hymn makes it one of Abelard's most attractive. Yet, although it is decidedly his most sensuous hymn and lacks the more obvious levels of understanding present in the rest of *Libellus II*, it possesses more than a simple appeal to the senses.

The shift in the last stanza of the preceding hymn from Old Testament *figurae* to the witness of natural science (*teste physica*) forms a transition to the spring imagery of this, the final hymn for Easter.¹ The opening couplet,

Veris grato tempore
Resurrexit Dominus (1./1-2),

sets the scene by combining at the start the twin motifs around which the hymn is constructed, spring and resurrection. Here, as in all the stanzas, the refrain is integrated, for it was in the springtime that the Lord rose.

From the resurrection of Christ the hymn moves to the renewal of nature (*mundus reviviscere/ cum iam incipit* 1./3-4) and thence returns to the resurrection (*auctorem resurgere/ mundi decuit* 1./5-6). In spring the Lord rose, in spring nature is renewed: the fitness of the timing is underlined by the repetition *mundus...mundi* (1./3, 1./6) and by the introduction of a new motif, subsequently left undeveloped, that the Lord Who has risen is the Creator of the world which is being re-born. This thought finds a slight parallel in one of Notker's sequences,

Illuxit dies
quam fecit Dominus
Mortem devastans,

although Abelard's is much the more explicit.²

The manifestation of the joy of nature in the rising of the Lord is the theme of the second stanza. It opens with the exuberant happiness of all things (*cunctis exsultantibus* 2./1) and after the refrain details the various elements and their responses: grass, trees, blossoms. The freshness of the world is suggested by the image of new birth *renascentibus* (2./3), paralleling *reviviscere* in the same position in the previous stanza (1./3). The sense of sight predominates - *herbis renascentibus, frondent arbores, floribus*; to this is added the sense of smell:

odores ex floribus
dant multiplices (2./5-6).

¹ 60.4./6.

² Notker (ed. von den Steinen) *Laudes salvatori* 15./1-3 (p.30).

The stanza shows the influence of a theme which pervades the Psalms, the abounding joy of all creation in its Creator:

Laetentur caeli et exultet terra, commoveatur mare et plenitudo eius; gaudebunt campi et omnia quae in eis sunt. Tunc exultabunt omnia ligna silvarum.³

It shows too the influence of the hymns of older poets and contemporary secular poetry. Indeed, the first line, *Veris grato tempore* (1./1), is reminiscent of similar phrases in the *Carmina Burana*: *Veris dulcis in tempore* and *Ecce gratum / et optatum/ ver reducti gaudia*.⁴

In this poetry the same motifs recur: new leaves, the fresh green of the grass, flowers, blossom and bird-song.⁵ These are the essence of spring. Abelard includes them all, except the song of the birds. The omission is conscious, for birds are not of precisely the same nature as the other elements. Birds live throughout the winter when all around yields to death; their song is not so much an expression of their own rebirth as a glad announcement of the rebirth of the rest of nature. For this reason they would not be so fitting a part of the hymn: they may rejoice at Christ's resurrection but they cannot symbolize it.

The third stanza opens with an allusion to the Song of Songs: *Iam enim hiems transit* is echoed in *Transacta iam hieme* (3./1).⁶ The Song continues:

imber abiit et recessit. Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra, tempus putationis advenit; vox turturis audita est in terra nostra, ficus protulit grossos suos, vineae florentes dederunt odorem suum.

The correspondences between this passage and the hymn are evident: the passing of winter, the trees, flowers, scent. The echo effects a smooth transition from the hymns for Easter to those for the ascension which owe much of their imagery to the Song.⁷

In the metaphor of the hymn, the winter is the winter of death. Winter is the time when nature lies dormant and death the time when Christ slept in the tomb.⁸ That has now passed because the Lord has risen into new life.

3 Ps.95.11-12.

4 *Carmina Burana* 85.1./1 and 143.1./1-3 (ed. Hilka-Schumann Heidelberg 1941).

5 e.g. CB (ed. Hilka-Schumann) 142.1./1-2; 137.1./1-8; 74.1./1-10; 140.3./1-4.

6 CC 2.11-13.

7 See discussion p.287ff.

The refrain, as usual integral to the structure of the stanza, is here not to be taken so much with the first line, although they obviously interact, but rather with the succeeding lines: Christ has risen into a new life of eternal joy:

Resurrexit Dominus
in illa perpetuae
vitae gaudia (3./2-4).

This life is of a different kind to that which He experienced on earth, for it is the life which He left behind on His incarnation. It is to underline this point that Abelard employs two separate verbs in the first stanza when he suggests the analogy between the renewal of nature and the resurrection. *reviviscere* (1./3) indicates revival into the same kind of life, with death still to come, *resurgere* (1./5) rising into eternal life. Abelard is not the first to make this distinction for Notker writes

Favent igitur
resurgenti
Christo cuncta gaudiis.
Flores, segetes
redivivo
fructu vernant...⁹

The motif of joy, which is implicit in the earlier stanzas but now explicit in *gaudia* (3./4), again echoes secular poetry, where spring provides a setting for, or a counterpoint to, the main love theme.¹⁰ Abelard too is likely to have written such love-lyrics for, as Heloise reminds him (*frequenti carmine tuam in ore omnium Heloissam ponebas*) and as he himself writes (*et si qua invenire liceret carmina, essent amatoria, non philosophiae secreta*).¹¹ In the love-poems of the *Carmina Burana* nature rejoices in winter's banishment, gloom flees and love blossoms:

Ecce gratum/ et optatum
ver reducit gaudia.../ iam iam cedant tristia.¹²

8 cf. 53.1./1 *Dormit hoc triduo*.

9 Notker (ed. von den Steinen) *Laudes salvatori* 17./1-6 (p.30).

10 See *Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse* (ed. Raby Oxford 1959): the Cambridge Songs *Levis exsurgit zephyrus* p.173; the anonymous 12th-century *Himale tempus, vale* p.300; Walter of Châtillon *Declinante frigore* p.278.

11 *Epist.* II (PL 178.188A) and HC 354-6.

12 CB (ed. Hilka-Schumann); cf. 137.1./1-2 *Ver redit optatum/ cum gaudio; gaudeat iuventus/ nova ferens gaudia*.

These are the joys of spring. The joys of the resurrection are similar: the winter of death has been overcome and the promise fulfilled that the night of weeping would yield to the morning of gladness:

donec laetitiae mane gratissimum
surgente Domino sit maestis redditum.¹³

The joys of spring are transient but the joys of the resurrection everlasting: *illa perpetuae/ vitae gaudia* (3./3-4). Its joys are underlined in the final couplet:

nullius molestiae
quae sunt conscia (3./5-6):

Christ has entered again that life which knows no trouble. The words of the hymn echo in thought, although not in verbal reminiscence, the prophecy of the Apocalypse:

Et absterget Deus omnem lacrimam ab oculis eorum, et mors ultra non erit,
neque luctus, neque clamor neque dolor erit ultra.¹⁴

Abelard gives his most glorious expression of this in the Vespers hymn for Saturdays *O quanta, qualia/ sunt illa Sabbata* which promises the same life of eternal joy, peace and rest where all sorrows have come to an end: *illic molestiis/ finitis omnibus*.¹⁵ Creation rejoices in the resurrection because the promise of eternal joy is not for Christ alone. He is the *primitiae dormientium*, the first-fruits of those who sleep, the One Who has risen in order to restore all things: *qui restauret omnia* (4./1).¹⁶

The relationship in this and earlier hymns between spring and the resurrection is not purely one of symbol or analogy. The theme of spring renewal and the resurrection can be traced back to Venantius Fortunatus' *Tempora florigero*.¹⁷ There the most relevant lines suggest an interweaving which is more than symbol:

Ecce renascentis testatur gratia mundi
omnia cum Domino dona redisse suo.
Namque triumphant post tristia Tartara Christo
undique fronde nemus, gramina flore favent.¹⁸

13 42.9./3-4.

14 Apoc.21.4.

15 29.5./1-2.

16 I Cor.15.20. This verse is used in the Paraclete liturgy as the *Capitulum* for None at Easter (see Waddell CLS 5 p.143).

17 See Szövérfy II p.132.

Notker in a stanza which balances that quoted above, speaks of the joy of all creation:

Tellus herbida
resurgenti
plaudit Christo, quae tremula
eius morte
se casuram minitatur.¹⁹

In both Fortunatus and Notker the renewal of nature is to some extent dependent on the resurrection. Abelard's hymn follows a similar pattern, setting up the parallel between nature's rebirth and Christ's rising in the first stanza:

mundus reviviscere
cum iam incipit,
auctorem resurgere
mundi decuit (1./3-6).

The parallel is emphasized in the second stanza (*Cunctis exsultantibus/ Resurrexit Dominus* 2./1-2) and in the joy expressed by the trees, grass and flowers. That nature is rejoicing not only in its own rebirth but in Christ's resurrection is suggested by the fact that *Resurrexit Dominus* forms the main clause. The third stanza moves from the spring imagery of rebirth to concentrate on Christ and the resurrection, His rebirth into eternal life. The final stanza reverses the relationship between spring and the resurrection introduced in the opening lines of the hymn, the purely temporal relationship of

Veris grato tempore
Resurrexit Dominus (1./1-2).

Instead it establishes a relationship of cause and effect: it is because Christ has risen that all things come to new birth:

Qui restaurat omnia
Resurrexit Dominus (4./1-2)

Here the more theological implications of the resurrection for nature are indicated. Szövérfy suggests that the reading should be *restaurat*, removing the final sense of the clause, because "the spring image is here associated with Christ in a spiritual sense".²⁰ It is possible so to argue for the rest of the hymn (although I believe that the two motifs

18 Venantius Fortunatus AH.50.69./31-34 (p.77).

19 Notker (ed. von den Steinen) *Laudes salvatori* 18./5-8 (p.30).

20 Szövérfy II p.133.

of spring and the resurrection are more closely woven together) but that affords no reason why Abelard should not add an extra dimension in the closing lines of the hymn.

The concept that the Lord has risen in order to bring about a new Creation is entirely Scriptural. It occurs in the Apocalypse: *Et dixit qui sedebat in throno: Ecce nova facio omnia*; and alongside the resurrection of man, Paul writes of the resurrection of nature:

Quia et ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis in libertatem gloriae
filiorum Dei.²¹

But because it is so far only Christ Who has been raised, the joys of eternal life are not yet creation's; they are still the joys of Christ alone (*ista gaudia* 4./3). Nevertheless, it is as if nature already experiences some of the joy that lies ahead when she bursts into flower at the time of the resurrection.

This is another manifestation of the sympathy of nature with Christ which has been used to considerable effect in the Good Friday hymn:

solis obscuritas mundum obnubilat,
tamquam aspicere scelus abhorreat...
Dum crucem sustinens sol verus patitur,
sol insensibilis illi compatitur.²²

The parallel is underlined by the occurrence of *tamquam* in both hymns, used, as it were, to apologize for the metaphor (*tamquam aspicere scelus abhorreat* and *tamquam ista gaudia/ mundus senserit* 4./3-4). At the cross creation feels for the sufferings of Christ, here shares in the joys of His resurrection. The renewal of spring is no longer merely a symbol of the resurrection, but has become part of it, so paving the way for the last couplet.

The evocative image of the reflowering of the Lord's body is taken from the Psalms:

Dominus adiutor meus et protector meus, in ipso speravit cor meum et adiutus
sum et refluviit caro mea.²³

Abelard has used the image earlier in the *Hymni Diurni*:

...quam verus lucifer surgendo contulit,
caro dominica cum refluviit.²⁴

21 Apoc.21.5 and Rom.8.21.

22 48.1./2-3 and 2./1-2.

23 Ps.27.7.

The image in that hymn seems to be appended with no attempt to relate it to the rest of the hymn; here, on the other hand, it is the climax of the imagery of the whole hymn. In spring nature bursts into flower, in spring Christ's body reflowers into new life. In the preceding stanzas it is the verb *resurgere* (in the refrain *resurrexit*) that is employed for Christ in His resurrection, while verbs with a different nuance describe nature in *reviviscere*, *renascentibus*, *restauret*. The image of *refloruit* is the resolution of the two themes, the renewal of nature and the resurrection, for it is only here that the one verb is used for both:

tamquam ista gaudia
mundus senserit
cum carne dominica
iam refluoruit (4./3-6).

9.1. *in ascensione Domini* - foreword

The hymns for the Feast of the Ascension are arranged with a consummate artistry which employs the stylistic features of chiasmus, parallelism and contrast to create a composite picture.

In the first hymn Abelard uses the imagery of the Song of Songs to present Christ as the Bridegroom, in ascending, summoning His Bride, the *ecclesia triumphans*, to sit with Him at the right hand of the Father. The opening stanzas of 63 present the stages of Redemption culminating in the resurrection, thus preparing the way for the description of the ascension as witnessed by the disciples, based on the narrative in Acts. The Church, represented by the disciples, remains on earth, the *ecclesia militans*, while Christ ascends to Heaven, Redeemer and Victor. As in 62, so in 64, the Church is invited by Christ to take her place in Heaven. She is, however, as Abelard stresses in the first line, *in terris adhuc positam* (64.1./1), still on earth, so may join Him in spirit alone. The emphasis is on the prayer of the *ecclesia militans* to the Bridegroom in Heaven. In the final hymn (65) the scene is Heaven where the ascension is witnessed by the angels. The picture is that of a triumphal procession with Christ as both Redeemer and Victor. The Church is present in the procession, the *eruti* of 1./6. The angels' questions are answered by the Church, the *salvati populi* of 2./6.

The most obvious structural feature is the chiasmic order of place (Heaven, earth, earth, Heaven) and of the Church (*ecclesia triumphans, militans, militans, triumphans*). There is, however, a variation within the chiasmus. 62 and 64 are contrasted: Christ addresses the Church, the Church prays to Christ; 63 and 65 are similarly constructed: Christ leaves earth, Christ arrives in Heaven. That Abelard intended the connection is to be seen in the repetition in the first stanza of 63 and the last of 65:

<i>spoliatis</i>	<i>Victor reddit</i>
<i>nunc reddit tartaris.</i>	<i>subacto zabulo.</i>
(63.1./5-6)	(65.5./5-6)

Again in 63 angels appear to the amazed disciples to tell them that Christ will come again; in 65 it is the angels who are amazed (the same phrase *super hoc mirantibus* is used for both) and the disciples, the Church, who answer their questions.¹ The pictures of Christ follow the same pattern: He is Bridegroom in 62 and 64, Redeemer and Victor in 63 and 65.

¹ 63.4./2 and 65.3./2.

The final point about the arrangement of these hymns has to do not only with their place in the series but with their internal structure. The first three are constructed on similar lines: each starts from Heaven, moves to earth and returns to Heaven. In 62 Christ calls from Heaven to the Bride who responds by joining Him in Heaven; in 63 Christ leaves Heaven in His incarnation and returns in His ascension; in 64 Christ speaks to the Church on earth and she replies. This pattern is broken in 65 but deliberately so in that this is the final hymn and the culmination of what has preceded: here Christ and the Church enter Heaven together.

9.2. 62. *in primo nocturno*

Argument: Christ summons His Bride to follow Him as He ascends to the throne of the Father. The court of Heaven waits for her to take her place beside Him, adorned as a queen. Glory is given to the ascended Christ Who rules over all.

1. In montibus hic saliens
venit colles transiliens,
sponsam vocat de montis vertice:
"Surge, soror, et me iam sequere."

1. Leaping upon the mountains
He comes, skipping over the hills,
from the mountain-top He calls His Bride:
"Arise, My sister, and follow Me now."

2. Ad paternum palatium,
ad patris scandens solium,
sponsae clamat: "Dilecta, propera,
sede mecum in patris dextera.

2. Ascending to His Father's palace,
to His Father's throne,
He shouts to His Bride: "Beloved, hasten,
sit with Me at My Father's right hand.

3. Omnis turba te civium,
te regnum manet patrium,
tuae tota cum patre curia
praesentiae requirit gaudia.

3. All the host of citizens,
My Father's kingdom awaits you,
the whole court with My Father
desires the joys of your presence.

4. Quae regis sponsae congruant,
quae reginae conveniant,
hic intextas ex auro cyclades
cum purpuris gemmatis indues.

4. What befits the King's Bride,
what becomes a queen,
here you will put on: robes woven from gold
with jewelled garments of crimson.

5. Sit Christo summo gloria
qui scandens super sidera
cum Spiritu, cum Patre supera
Deus unus regit et infera.

5. Glory to Christ on high
Who, ascending above the stars,
with the Spirit and with the Father one God,
rules the world above and the world below.

The vivid imagery of the first stanza which describes Christ's ascension in terms of leaping on the mountains and skipping over the hills,

in montibus hic saliens,/ venit colles transiliens (1./1-2),

is the imagery of the Bridegroom in the Song of Songs: *Ecce iste venit, saliens in montibus, transiliens colles*.¹ The air of excitement and joyful anticipation which pervades this part of the Song is reflected in the hymn in the rhyming and assonant *saliens, transiliens*. The Bride rejoices because her Beloved calls her to Him: *Et dilectus meus loquitur mihi: Surge, propera, amica mea, et veni*.² Again the hymn follows the Song, although not *verbatim*:

sponsam vocat de montis vertice:/ "Surge, soror, et me iam sequere" (1./3-4).

Soror is one of the Bride's names in the Song, for the Beloved calls her *soror mea sponsa*.³ The Bridegroom in the Song continues His invitation in the lovely phrases

Iam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt in terra,
tempus putationis advenit, vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.⁴

Although these words are not echoed in this hymn, they have been in the final hymn for Easter, the one immediately preceding this, where the resurrection is greeted by the renewal of spring:

Transacta iam hieme,/ Resurrexit Dominus...
tamquam ista gaudia/ mundus senserit
cum carne dominica/ iam refloruit.⁵

The winter of Christ's incarnation, the winter of His death, is over and gone. His joy is boundless: it sends Him leaping on the mountains, leaping back to Heaven.

Taken by itself, the quotation from the Song of Songs in the first couplet (*in montibus hic saliens/ venit colles transiliens*) seems to be merely a peg for the bridal symbolism of the following stanzas, an emotive allusion which evokes a sense of joy and expectation, were it not that Abelard reintroduces the imagery of the leaping in the second hymn for Ascension in an entirely different context:

1 Cant.Cantic.2.8.

2 CC 2.10.

3 CC 4.9-10, 5.1.

4 CC 2.11-12.

5 61.3./1-2 and 4./3-6.

Quibusdam quasi saltibus
 superni patris filius
 ad terrena venit a superis,
 spoliatis nunc redit tartaris,

This is not the joyful leaping on the hills but the double leap of the incarnation and the ascension, the leap from Heaven into the world and the leap back to Heaven.⁶ The background to this interpretation of the Song in the Church Fathers will be discussed in relation to the following hymn (63).⁷

The two remaining half-lines, *de montis vertice* (1./3) and *et me iam sequere* (1./4), are Abelard's additions to the language of the Song. *de montis vertice*, the place from which the Bridegroom calls His Bride, is appropriate not only to the imagery of the Song, for He is leaping on the mountains, but also to the physical locality of the ascension, the Mount of Olives.⁸ A tenth-century trope for the Feast of the Ascension contains a phrase similar to that in the hymn: *Montis oliviferae Christus de vertice scandens*.⁹

Christ calls His Bride to follow Him in words reminiscent not only of the Song, *surge, soror* (1./4), but also of His command to Peter given in the days between Easter and the ascension: *dicit et Iesus:... Tu me sequere*.¹⁰ This, as Szövérfy points out, is significant for the interpretation of the hymn since Peter represents the Church and the Church is Christ's Bride:

In terris adhuc positam
 sponsam Christus ecclesiam/...vocat.¹¹

There are, however, two more allusions in the command, *et me iam sequere* (1./4), the first to the Virgin Mary who is also portrayed as the Bride of Christ and to whom Abelard says that the invitation of the Song is specially directed:

6 63.1./1-4.

7 See discussion pp.296-7.

8 Acts 1.12.

9 AH 49.123.1./1 (p.66).

10 John 21.22, cited by Szövérfy II p.134.

11 64.1./1-2. For Peter representing the Church see Matt.16.18.

Ad hanc specialiter illa vox Sponsi dirigitur, qua tam dulciter invitatur: Surge, propera, amica mea, et veni.¹²

The Church is identified with Mary, as with Peter.¹³ The second allusion is suggested by the last phrase *et me iam sequere* (1./4). In the Apocalypse the 144,000 are described: *...virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit*.¹⁴ In *Sermo I* Abelard describes virgin martyrs who have chosen death rather than yield up their virginity:

vitae dispendium elegerunt, et sic Agnum sequi quocumque ierit, non solum permanentes virgines, verum etiam factae mulieres.

In his sermon on the Assumption he writes of virgins who follow the example set by Mary:

...hulus perfectionis viam, qua solae virgines Agnum sequuntur quocumque ierit, proprio declaravit exemplo.

Virgins too are the brides of Christ (Jerome calls Eustochium *sponsa Christi* and in erotic language depicts her with Jesus as swooning lovers) and it is promised to virgins that they will follow the Lamb.¹⁵ Thus the invitation, *et me iam sequere*, is also addressed to the nuns of the Paraclete.

The first two stanzas are parallel in structure. In each there is the activity of Christ in ascending and in each the call to the Bride. Christ is pictured as leaping on the mountains and later as climbing to Heaven:

In montibus hic saliens Ad paternum palatium,
venit colles transiliens (1./1-2) ad patris scandens solium (2./1-2).

In each couplet the first line is emphasized by a repetition in the second: *transiliens* picks up *saliens* and *patris paternum*. There is a movement away from the earthly setting of the first stanza to the heavenly setting of the second, from the mountains of the world to the palace of Heaven. This reflects the movement of Christ's ascension as

12 Abelard quotes from the Song in *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.543A). Mary is His Bride in the hymn for the presentation of Christ in the Temple 38.1./3: *sponsum et sponsam suscipe*.

13 See Marina Warner *Alone of All Her Sex* ch.7 "Maria Regina" and pp.194, 220, 258.

14 Apoc.14.4 quoted in *Serm.I* and *XXVI* (PL 178.381D and 539D).

15 Jerome *Epist.*22.1; cf. Abelard 122.1./5 *virgo sponsa, virgo sponsus est* and 120.1./1; Ambrose *de virginibus* I.V.8 *spectate et aliud virginis meritum! Christus virginis sponsus* (PL 16.205C). For further discussion see Elizabeth Clark "Devil's Gateway and Bride of Christ" in *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith* (Studies in Women and Religion 20 1986) pp.27-29.

He is lifted up from the Mount of Olives and, covered by a cloud, He rises to Heaven, no longer within the sight of His disciples. This accounts for the sense of urgency in the last couplet of the second stanza. In the first stanza Christ calls to His Bride to follow Him; here He shouts to her to hurry:

sponsam vocat de montis vertice:
 "Surge, soror, et me iam sequere" (1./3-4)
 sponsae clamat: "Dilecta, propera,
 sede mecum in patris dextera" (2./3-4).

vocat has changed to *clamat*, *surge* to *propera*, the vocative *soror* to the more intimate *dilecta*. The final imperatives in each of the couplets reflect the different settings. As Christ leaves the world He calls His Bride to follow Him, but as He enters Heaven He sees what awaits her and encourages her to hurry. The joy of sitting at the Father's right hand with her Bridegroom will be such that He cannot bear her to tarry.

The parallelism of the couplet

ad paternum palatium,
 ad patris scandens solium (2./1-2)

emphasizes that it is to His Father's palace and His Father's throne that Christ ascends. The repetitive cognates *paternum* and *patris* are echoed in the final line in Christ's invitation to His Bride, *sede mecum in patris dextera* (2./4). The words of this invitation appear originally in the Psalms: *Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis*.¹⁶ They are quoted by Christ as a reference to Himself and are sung as an antiphon during Ascension Week:

Dominus quidem Iesus, postquam locutus est eis, ascendit in celum et sedit a dextris Dei, alleluya.¹⁷

This then is the invitation originally given by the Father to the Son, now by the Son to His Bride, who is the Church.

Later in the hymn Abelard alludes to a verse from Psalm 44: *Astitit regina a dextris tuis*.¹⁸ He applies this to Mary in his sermon for the Assumption, and Mary is a symbol of the Church:

¹⁶ Ps.109.1 quoted by Christ (Matt.22.24) as evidence of the deity of the Son of David.

¹⁷ CLS 5 p.167.

¹⁸ Ps.44.10 applied to Mary in *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.542D-543A).

(Christus) qui quemadmodum coelos ascendens, a dextris Dei sedisse describitur, ita hodie matrem assumptam a dextris suis collocasse non dubitant, cui olim per Prophetam dictum fuerat: Astitit regina a dextris in vestitu deaurato.

The idea of the Church sharing the throne of Christ finds its earliest expression in Paul:

Et cum essemus mortui peccatis convivificavit nos Christo...et consedere fecit in caelestibus in Christo Iesu.¹⁹

The setting of the third stanza is purely secular. The Prince has left the kingdom to seek His Bride and, having won her, is now returning. As they enter the city a throng of citizens comes out to welcome them. Here is the delight of their hearts, the Beloved of His Father. They wait in breathless expectation to see the Bride He has won. At the palace the whole court is eager to do her honour and the King, the Father of the Prince, waits to greet her with joy.

The second and third stanzas are linked together by the fivefold *paternum*, *patris*, *patris*, *patrium*, *patre*. It is to His Father's palace and His Father's throne that Christ ascends; it is at His Father's right hand that He and His Bride will sit; it is His Father's kingdom and His Father Himself Who desire the joy of the Bride's presence. This accumulation emphasizes the loving relationship that exists between the Father and the Son in which the Bride is invited to share. It is possible that Abelard is thinking of Paul's description of the relationship of the Church to the Father, that the faithful are not only sons of the Father but heirs with Christ: *si autem filii et heredes, heredes quidem Dei, coheredes autem Christi*..²⁰

The same idea is suggested by the choice of the epithet *dilecta* (2./3) for the Bride. Abelard has transferred the epithet *dilectus* from the Bridegroom to the Bride, for in the Song it is invariably the Bridegroom Who is the Beloved, *dilectus*, while the Bride is *amica*, *soror* or *sponsa*.²¹ In the New Testament *dilectus* is the word used of Christ by the Father at His baptism and transfiguration: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*.²² Like the transferred invitation to sit on the Father's right hand, *dilectus* is now extended to describe the relationship between the Son and His Bride. The Bride is invited to take part in the relationship of love which is the bond of the Trinity.

¹⁹ Eph.2.5-6.

²⁰ Rom.8.15-17.

²¹ CC 2.3 and 2.9.

²² Matt.3.17 and 17.5.

Abelard describes the assumption of the Virgin in words similar to those of the third stanza:

Soli quippe angeli ascendenti Christo occurrere potuerunt; ipse vero pariter cum tota superna curia, tam angelorum quam fidelium animarum eius animam suscepit.²³

Throughout the two sermons on the annunciation and the assumption he applies to Mary the words of the Song of Songs and of Psalm 44 which in the hymn he applies to the Church. The Apocalypse provides the underlying image in the portrayal of the New Jerusalem as a bride coming to her husband:

vocem turbarum multarum in caelo dicentium: Alleluia...et audiui quasi vocem turbae magnae...: Gaudeamus et exsulemus et demus gloriam ei: quia venerunt nuptiae Agni, et uxor eius praeparavit se.²⁴

Although they express one idea, the two phrases

Quae regis sponsae congruant,
quae reginae conveniant (4./1-2)

are not mere rhetorical tautology. *regis sponsae* and *regina* both mark the royalty of the Bride but it is significant that *regis sponsae* precedes *regina*: she is only a queen because she is the Bride of the King. There is here an allusion to the song of the twenty-four elders of the Apocalypse who, in their hymn of praise to the Lamb, sing ...*fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes: et regnabimus super terram*.²⁵ The elders represent the Church and the Church is the Bride of Christ. He will reign and the Church will reign with Him.

The final lines of the stanza describe the Bride's new clothing. She will wear all that befits a queen, robes woven with gold and jewelled garments of crimson:

hic intextas ex auro cyclades
cum purpuris gemmatis indues (4./3-4).

For the robes of gold Abelard has adapted the description of the bridal garments of the queen in Psalm 44:

Regina adstat ad dexteram tuam ornata auro ex Ophir...Tota decora ingreditur filia regis; texturae aureae sunt amictus eius.²⁶

23 *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.541B).

24 Apoc.19.1-6.

25 Apoc.5.9-10.

26 Ps.44.10.

The word *cyclas* is rare in classical and medieval Latin and never occurs in Scripture. Where it does appear, it is often linked with gold.²⁷ Its use in a letter formerly attributed to Ambrose is apposite to the hymn. The letter celebrates St. Agnes, the early Christian martyr who rejected marriage with a young man of noble birth because she was already betrothed to Christ. None of the gifts the young man offers can match those bestowed by Christ:

Discede a me; quia iam ab allo amatore praeventa sum,...circumdedit me
vernantibus atque coruscantibus gemmis...Induit me cyclade auro texta...²⁸

Later in the letter *cyclas* occurs again: Agnes has been martyred and as her parents keep vigil at her tomb, they see a host of virgins,

quae omnes auro intextis cycladis (*sic*) indutae cum ingenti lumine praeteribant:
inter quas etiam vident beatissimam Agnem similiter fulgentem, et ad dexteram
eius Agnum stantem.

The martyred virgin has received the riches promised by her Lover and is now His Bride. (The description of the marriage-feast of Christ in the Apocalypse, *nuptiae Agni*, provides the basis for the pun *Agnem...Agnum*.²⁹) The words of the hymn,

hic intextas ex auro cyclades/...Indues (4./3-4),

show a remarkable similarity to the phrases in Pseudo-Ambrose, the one describing the garments Agnes will wear, *induit me cyclade auro intexta*, and that describing the appearance of the virgins, *omnes auro intextis cycladis indutae*.

Abelard speaks on two other occasions of garments of gold, in a hymn and in his first sermon.³⁰ The phraseology in both cases is strikingly similar. For the Feast of Virgins he writes

Et regina sponsi tenens dexteram,/...In vestitu deaurato renitet.

So is the virgin martyr described and so, in the sermon, the Virgin Mother:

...quasi regina coelorum ei iuncto latere assistas, et cum eo, ceteros omnes
praecedas in vestitu deaurato.

27 Propertius 4.7.41 *haec nunc aurata cyclade signat humum* (Abelard could not, of course, have read Propertius); Venantius Fortunatus *Carm.* 8.3.271 *brattea gemmatam cycladem fila catenant*.

28 Pseudo-Ambrose *Epist.* I (PL 17.814A and 819D).

29 Apoc. 19.7.

30 122.3./1-3 and *Sermo* I (PL 178.387D).

Thus the garments of gold are worn by the Virgin Mary, by the virgin martyrs and here in the hymn by the Church, for all three are the Bride of Christ.

The accumulation of detail in the second couplet underlines the richness of the apparel: not only is it woven with gold, not only is it dyed with crimson, the symbol of wealth, the symbol of royalty, and of martyrdom, but it is also studded with jewels. This is what befits a queen, such is the clothing of the King's Bride.

A tenth-century trope for Nocturns on the Feast of the Ascension has in its second stanza *Scandens tribunal dexteræ/ Patris* and as its doxology

Gloria tibi, Domine,/ qui scandis super sidera,
cum Patre et sancto spiritu/ in sempiterna saecula.³¹

In Abelard's hymn we find also in the second stanza

Ad paternum palatium,
ad patris scandens solium (2./1-2)

and in the doxology *qui scandens super sidera* (5./2): the echoes are close. The rest of the doxology is based loosely on the closing words of Paul's hymn of praise:

...ut in nomine Iesu omne genu flectat caelestium et terrestrium et infernorum et
omnis lingua confiteatur quia Dominus Iesus Christus in gloria est Dei Patris.³²

The final lines, *supera...regit et infera* (5./3-4), reflect the three areas of Christ's rule, Heaven, earth and Hell, combining the latter two under *infera*. It is apt that *summo* should be applied now for the first time in Abelard's doxologies to Christ, for it is His ascension, His return to the heights from which He came, that is being celebrated: He is the One Who has gone up on high.

³¹ AH 51.88.2./1-2 and 8./1-4 (p.94).

³² Phil.2.11-12.

9.3. 63. *in secundo nocturno*

Argument: Christ leapt to earth in His incarnation and returns in His ascension. The story of redemption is summarized. The disciples stand amazed as He ascends. Angels prophesy His return as a Judge.

1. Quibusdam quasi saltibus
superni patris filius
ad terrena venit a superis,
spoliatis nunc redit tartaris.

1. The Son of the heavenly Father
came, as it were, leaping down
to earth from Heaven;
He plundered Hell and now leaps back.

2. A sinu venit patrio
matris susceptus utero,
in sepulchro de cruce positus
resurrexit, per quem resurgimus.

2. He came from His Father's bosom,
He was conceived in His mother's womb,
taken down from the cross, placed in a tomb,
He has risen again: through Him we rise again.

3. Ascendentem ad aethera
nubes excepit lucida,
ferebatur, erectis manibus
benedicens suis adstantibus.

3. As He ascended to the upper air
a bright cloud received Him;
He was taken up, with outstretched arms
blessing His disciples who stood by.

4. Ascendentem cernentibus
ac super hoc mirantibus
astiterunt in albis angeli
tam facie quam veste nitidi.

4. As He ascended they watched
and wondered at it;
angels in white stood by them,
their faces and raiment shining.

5. Quid, inquit, attoniti
sic coelum intuemini?
quem euntem in coelum cernitis,
sic veniet in forma iudicis.

5. "Why" they said "are you gazing
thus amazedly into Heaven?
The One you see going into Heaven
will come like this as a Judge."

6. Sit Christo summo gloria
qui scandens super sidera
cum Spiritu, cum Patre supera
Deus unus regit et infera.

6. Glory to Christ on high
Who, ascending above the stars,
with the Spirit and with the Father one God
rules the world above and the world below.

1./3 a B and C: e Dreves and Szövérfy

The opening line of the hymn *Quibusdam quasi saltibus* (1./1) immediately links this with the preceding hymn,

In montibus hic saliens/ venit colles transiliens.¹

There the leaping on the mountains stood as an image of Christ's joy in His ascension. Here the leaps are not simply those of the ascension but also of the incarnation: Christ leapt to earth and, having spoiled Hell, now leaps back to Heaven, *spoliatis nunc reddit tartaris* (1./4). The third line, *ad terrena venit a superts* (1./3), becomes concrete in the later couplet:

A sinu venit patrio
matris susceptus utero (2./1-2).

In the first stanza the brief phrase *spoliatis...tartaris* (1./4) refers specifically to the plundering of Hell. That plundering could not have taken place without the crucifixion, burial and resurrection, for all are necessary to it, events detailed in the second stanza: *in sepulchro de cruce positus/ resurrexit* (2./3-4).² Finally, the reason why Christ left Heaven in His incarnation and returned in His ascension, the redemption of man, is expressed in the last line of the second stanza, *per quem resurgimus* (2./4).

Abelard is one of few to apply the dramatic imagery of the leaps in the Song of Songs to the whole of the incarnation. Gregory the Great is one of the first:

Ecce iste venit saliens in montibus. Veniendo quippe ad redemptionem nostram quosdam, ut ita dixerim, saltus dedit. Vultis, fratres charissimi, ipsos eius saltus agnoscere? De coelo venit in uterum, de utero venit in praesepe, de praesepe venit in crucem, de cruce venit in sepulchrum, de sepulchro rediit in coelum.³

Notker echoes some of Gregory's ideas in his Ascension sequence *Summi triumphum regis*, several lines of which are, unfortunately, missing. In the second stanza he calls Christ Idithun: *Huic nomen extat/...conveniens Idithun*.⁴ Jerome

1 62.1./1-2.

2 Although the harrowing of Hell took place before the resurrection, the resurrection was necessary to it, for Christ could only rescue the just through His defeat of death which became effectual by His rising again.

3 Gregory the Great *Homil. in Evang.* II.30 (PL 76.1219A-B).

4 Idithun is a singer in Ps.38 (title); Notker (ed. von den Steinen) *Summi triumphum regis* 2./1-4, 4./1-3, 5./1-3 (p.50).

interprets: *Idithun transsilvens eos sive saliens eos*.⁵ Notker continues with an unmistakable allusion to the Song of Songs,

Nam transilvit
omnes strenue montes
colliculosque Bethel,

and elaborates the imagery of *transilire* in the same way as Gregory. Christ's first leap was from Heaven into Mary's womb and so into the world:

Saltum de caelo dedit
...in virginalem ventrem,
inde in pelagus saeculi.

Then comes the leap into the darkness of Hell, *tetras Flegetontis/ assiluit tenebras* and in the eleventh stanza the final leap of the ascension:

Denique saltum dederat/ hodie maximum...
nubes polosque/...cursu praepeti transvolans.

The doxology of the preceding hymn, and for all the Ascension hymns, is, as we have seen, based on the song of praise in Philippians. It is from this same passage that is derived the idea of the "parabola" of the incarnation, the descent of Christ into the world and into the Underworld and His ascent from Hades and into Heaven, what von den Steinen calls "den wunderbaren Bogen seiner Erdenbahn".⁶ His description of Notker's vision could apply equally well to Abelard's:

Die Himmelfahrt nicht als grelle Unbegreiflichkeit, nein als sinnvolles Ziel, als die
Krönung eines gottmenschlichen Lebens - das ist des Dichters Vision.

The sketch of the history of redemption in the second stanza is brought to a conclusion in the third with the reference to the ascension,

Ascendentem ad aethera
nubes except lucida (3./1-2).

This refers back to the end of the first stanza where the ascension is summarized in the brief phrase *nunc redit* (1./4). These lines serve as an introduction to the main theme, a description of the ascension which is almost wholly narrative, based for the most part on the first chapter in Acts:

⁵ Jerome *Lib. Interpr. Hebr. Nom.* (CC Ser. Lat. 72) p. 119. Cassiodorus (*Exp. in Ps. 38.1*) translates *Idithun transilitor* and interprets it as one who overcomes the temptations of the world: *...qui supra mundi istius in ea iam puritate consistit, ut futurae tantum beatitudinis praemia consequatur* (CC Ser. Lat. 97) p. 353; cf. Augustine *Enarr. in Ps. 38.1* (CC Ser. Lat. 38) p. 401.

⁶ W. von den Steinen vol. II p. 241.

Et cum haec dixisset, videntibus illis elevatus est et nubes suscepit eum ab oculis eorum; cumque intuerentur in caelum eunte illo, ecce duo viri adstiterunt iuxta illos in vestibus albis, qui et dixerunt: Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in caelum? Hic Iesus qui adsumptus est a vobis in caelum, sic veniet quemadmodum vidistis eum euntem in caelum.⁷

Luke's Gospel provides two of the details in the hymn:

et elevatis manibus suis benedixit eis, et factum est, dum benediceret illis, recessit ab eis et ferebatur in caelum.⁸

Some of the echoes of these two passages are so close as to be *verbatim*: *ferebatur* (3./3) and *adstiterunt* (4./3) are taken straight from Luke; *in albis* (4./3) and *euntem in coelum* (5./3) from Acts. There are phrases where the changes are slight: *nubes exceptit* (3./2) from *nubes suscepit*, *erectis manibus* (3./3) from *elevatis manibus*, while *quid...coelum intuemini* (5./1-2) is a conflation of *cumque intuerentur in caelum* and the angels' question *quid statis aspicientes in caelum*. Szövérfy suggests that *erectis manibus* (3./3) was possibly influenced by representations in art of Christ's ascension, showing Him with outstretched arms.⁹ It is impossible to tell with any degree of certainty which was the major influence, the artistic or the literary, but I suspect the latter, given the obvious influence of the narrative on the rest of the description in the hymn. The phrase *et elevatis manibus suis benedixit eis* is, of course, the influence behind the depiction in art.

Abelard has added details to the narrative as it appears in Luke and Acts. He describes the cloud as *lucida*, an epithet that has no parallel in the New Testament accounts. The adjective does, however, appear in Matthew as the description of the cloud which covered the Mount of the Transfiguration: *ecce nubes lucida obumbravit eos*.¹⁰ Abelard has deliberately transposed the scene of the transfiguration on to the scene of the ascension, for the transfiguration is traditionally taken as a prefiguration of the ascension. Maximus combines these motifs with a third, Christ the Light of the world:

Nubes ergo ab oculis apostolorum suscepit Salvatorem. Videamus ergo quae ista nubes sit, quam splendida, quam praeclara, quae lucem mundi Christum

⁷ Acts 1.9-11.

⁸ Luke 24.50-51.

⁹ Szövérfy II p.136.

¹⁰ Matt.17.5.

suscipere meretur...Illa enim nubes quae ascendentem suscepit Christum, quae et testimonium Christo etiam in monte perhibuit...¹¹

The wonder of the apostles is underlined in the twofold *mirantibus* and *attoniti* (5./1). This amazement is implied in Acts by the very fact that they continue gazing into heaven although the cloud has veiled Christ from their sight.

He replaces the *duo viri* of the Acts' narrative with *angeli*. That too is implied for who could these two men be who so suddenly appear, able to answer the apostles' wondering silence, if not angels? In Acts they are clothed in white (*in vestibus albis*), echoed in the hymn's *in albis* (4./3), but Abelard again colours the plain narrative through the addition of the shining faces of the angels taken from the resurrection accounts in Matthew and Luke: *erat autem aspectus eius sicut fulgor; et vestimentum eius sicut nix*.¹² I doubt if Abelard has consciously conflated these various accounts in order to suggest that the angels of the resurrection and of the ascension are one and the same. It is more likely that the white clothing of the men in Acts suggested a radiance which in turn struck a chord in his memory of both clothes and faces shining.

In his popular *Hymnum canamus gloriae* Bede echoes the phrases of Acts less closely than Abelard:

Quos alloquentes angeli:	a vobis ad caelestia
Quid astra stantes cernitis?	qui regna nunc assumptus est,
Salvator hic est, inquit,	venturus inde saeculi
Iesus, triumpho nobili	in fine iudex omnium. ¹³

It is perhaps the effect of the liturgy that has caused Abelard to follow the wording of Acts so carefully. The liturgy includes a dramatic element when it uses the words of the angels as an antiphon:

Viri Galilaei, quid aspicitis in celum? hic Ihesus qui assumptus est a vobis in celum, sic veniet, alleluya.¹⁴

Two aspects of the stanzas quoted from Bede are of interest for Abelard's Ascension hymns. First, there is the idea of the ascension as a *triumphus nobilis* which Abelard

¹¹ Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 44.3 (CC Ser.Lat.23) p.179.

¹² Matt.28.3; cf. Luke 24.4.

¹³ Bede AH 50.82. stanzas 16 and 17 (p.104).

¹⁴ CLS 5 p.167. For the mimetic possibilities of the antiphon see Karl Young *The Drama of the Medieval Church* I (Oxford 1933) pp.484, 487, 489.

elaborates in his last hymn in the section;¹⁵ secondly, there is the eschatological ring of the final couplet:

venturus inde saeculi
in fine iudex omnium.

The words of the angels in the closing line of Abelard's hymn, *sic veniet in forma iudicis* (5./4), is the only major example of interpretative writing in the final three stanzas. Nowhere in the narratives in either Luke or Acts is it suggested that the return of Christ will be the return of a Judge, nor is that interpretation given in the Breviary where the version in Acts is quoted in antiphons during Ascension week.¹⁶ The angels say only *sic veniet quemadmodum vidistis eum euntem in caelum*.

Abelard and Bede have taken their idea of Christ returning in a cloud in judgement from Christ's own words in Luke and from a verse in the Apocalypse. Christ describes the signs that will announce the end of the world and continues *tunc videbunt Filium hominis vententem in nube cum potestate magna et maiestate...*, echoing Daniel's vision of the Christ's power as Judge.¹⁷

In the Apocalypse too Christ is pictured as a King and a Judge seated on a cloud:

Et vidi et ecce nubem candidam, et supra nubem sedentem similem Filio hominis, habentem in capite suo coronam auream et in manu sua falcem acutam.¹⁸

Here too the cloud is bright, *nubes candida*, so linking it with Abelard's description of the cloud in which Christ ascended: *Ascendentem ad aethera/ nubes exceptit lucida* (3./1-2). The angels say that Christ will return just as He has left, and He has ascended in a cloud. Daniel, Christ and the writer of the Apocalypse describe the Son of Man coming in a cloud to judge the world. It follows that when Christ returns He will come as a Judge, *in forma iudicis*. Notker gives the same interpretation:

<p>Et tremens iudicem expectet affuturum, ut duo angeli fratres docuerunt:</p>	<p>Qui Iesus a vobis assumptus est in caelum, iterum veniet, ut vidistis eum.¹⁹</p>
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¹⁵ See discussion on 65 pp.314ff.

¹⁶ CLS 5 p.167.

¹⁷ Luke 21.25-27 echoing Dan.7.13-14.

¹⁸ Apoc.14.14.

¹⁹ Notker (ed. von den Steinen) *Summi triumphum regis* stanzas 13 and 14 (p.50).

Augustine puts a rather different interpretation on the words of the angels. He emphasizes the Manhood of Christ:

Ille resurgens, et in terram ipse veniet iudicaturus...Apparebit enim homo iudicans, sed in claritate; quia "sicut eum vidistis ire" dixerunt angeli "sic veniet". Forma ipsa veniet ad iudicem.²⁰

Christ will appear as a a Man, not as God, for it is not given to the wicked to look on God.

Abelard has taken the more visual approach, underlining the strangeness of the scene on the Mount of Olives. It is the sight of Christ ascending in a cloud, not His appearance as a Man, which causes the disciples' astonishment. They would not wonder at the thought of His return as a Man, for that is how they have always known Him, but the very fact that He will return, and on clouds of judgement, evokes their awe. Again Abelard demonstrates his ability to put himself in the place of those who were actually there, seeing with their eyes and participating in their reactions.

²⁰ Augustine *Enarr. in Ps.85* (CC Ser.Lat.39) p.1193.

9.4. 64. *in tertio nocturno*

Argument: Christ summons the Church, which is still on earth, to ascend to Heaven in spirit. The Church must pray for help; she will need the wings of a dove and the wings and eyes of an eagle, for Heaven is the home of winged creatures.

1. In terris adhuc positam
sponsam Christus ecclesiam
ad se sursum vocat cotidie,
et hortatur mente conscendere.

1. The Church, His Bride,
though yet on earth,
Christ each day calls to Him on high
and urges her to ascend in spirit.

2. Dicat haec: "Post te trahe me,
nitenti dextram porrige;
super pennas ventorum evolas:
quis sequetur ni pennas conferas?"

2. Let her reply: "Draw me after You,
stretch out Your right hand to me as I struggle;
on the wings of the winds You fly up:
who will follow unless You grant wings?"

3. Columbae pennas postulet
ut ad quietem properet;
alas petat potentis aquillae
quibus alta possit conscendere.

3. Let her desire the wings of a dove
that she may hasten towards a place of rest;
let her pray for the wings of a strong eagle
on which she may ascend on high.

4. Dabit cum alis oculos
ut veri solis radios
irreflexis possit obtutibus
intueri, quo nil felicius.

4. With the wings He will give eyes
that on the true Sun's rays
with steadfast vision
she may gaze in bliss incomparable.

5. Pennatis animantibus
ille locus aethereus
pro meritis virtutum congruit,
quibus alas hic Deus dedit.

5. That heavenly region
is fit for winged creatures
in accordance with the merits of their virtues,
creatures to whom God has given wings here below.

6. Sit Christo summo gloria
qui scandens super sidera
cum Spiritu, cum Patre supera
Deus unus regit et infera.

6. Glory to Christ on high
Who, ascending above the stars,
with the Spirit and with the Father one God,
rules the world above and the world below.

1./3 sursum B: rursum C, followed by Dreves and Szövérfy¹

¹ *sursum* better suits the context of the ascension and is supported by Abelard's quotation of Col.3.1 in *Sermo XV* ...*ipsum nunc mente sursum quaeramus, ubi est in dextera Dei sedens* (PL 178.498C); cf. Augustine ...*pennae animarum quae sunt, nisi a quibus sursum adtolluntur?*

The evocation of the imagery of the Song of Songs and the Apocalypse links this with the first hymn for Ascension. As the Beloved of the Song calls his Bride to him, so Christ summons the Church to His side, for the Church is His Bride, *sponsam...ecclesiam* (1./2). This concept originates in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians where he commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church:

...Christus dilexit Ecclesiam...ut exhiberet ipse sibi gloriosam Ecclesiam, non habentem maculam, aut rugam, aut aliquid huiusmodi, sed ut sit sancta et immaculata.²

The image takes on substance in the Apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, a type of the Church, coming down from Heaven from God, *ornatam sicut sponsam viro suo*.³

In the first hymn for Ascension the Bride is to follow Christ at once, *surge, soror, et me iam sequere*.⁴ Here, however, Christ calls her every day, *ad se sursum vocat cotidie* (1./3), for the Church in this hymn is the Church on earth, *in terris adhuc positam* (1./1), the *ecclesia militans*, not the *ecclesia triumphans* whose place is with Christ at the right hand of the Father.

The setting of the first stanza, the separation of Christ and the Church, has its background in the High Priestly prayer of Christ recorded in John's Gospel:

Et iam non sum in mundo, et hi in mundo sunt, et ego ad te venio... Pater, quos dedisti mihi, volo ut ubi sim ego, et illi sint mecum: ut videant claritatem meam...⁵

Christ speaks of His return to the Father: after His death and resurrection, the ascension. His disciples, however, must remain in the world. Yet Christ prays that they may be where He is. Thus they must reach Heaven spiritually, in Abelard's phrase, *mente conscendere* (1./4).

Church Fathers utter similar exhortations to that expressed by Christ in the hymn. Augustine suggests to his flock that if a man's spirit is with Christ in Heaven, then he will be at peace on earth:

(see below n.47).

² Eph.5.25-32. The background lies in the Old Testament metaphor of Israel as the beloved of God: see Is.62.5, Jer.3.1, Hos.2.16, 19.

³ Apoc.21.2.

⁴ 62.1./4.

⁵ John 17.11 and 24.

Salvator noster, dilectissimi fratres, ascendit in coelum; non ergo turbemur in terra. Ibi sit mens, et hic erit requies. Ascendamus cum Christo interim corde: cum dies eius promissus advenerit, sequemur et corpore.⁶

Augustine here uses *mens* and *cor* interchangeably since both are antitheses of *corpus*, although his choice of *corde* in the last sentence is probably determined by the jingle thus established with *corpore*. A letter formerly attributed to Jerome contains the very phrase that occurs in Abelard's hymn:

Et in paradisum mente conscenderis, toties in terra non eris, quoties terram despexeris.⁷

Abelard finds support for the image of a spiritual, as opposed to a physical, ascension in Philipians:

Unde et Paulus: Nostra, inquit, conversatio in coelis est. He comments: Illuc ergo Christus conscendit opere ut eum apostoli sequerentur mente, et tanto ardentius appeterent esse, quod Dominum suum noverant praecessisse.⁸

Such is Christ's call to the Church. Abelard determines her answer in the second stanza, *Dicat haec* (2./1). She is to respond with an echo of the Bride's words in the Song of Songs: *trahe me! post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum*.⁹ Gregory the Great expounds the various leaps of Christ, from Heaven into the womb and through the cycle of the incarnation to the leap of ascension.¹⁰ He adds that Christ made these leaps to cause us to run after Him:

Ecce, ut nos post se currere faceret, quosdam pro nobis saltus manifesta per carnem Veritas dedit...ut nos ei diceremus ex corde: Trahe nos post te (two MSS have Trahe me post te), curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum.¹¹

For Gregory the Bride of the Song is the Church. For Bernard she is the soul; he denies the interpretation which sees in the words of the Bride the prayer of the Church to ascend to Heaven. Rather it is the prayer of the soul to emulate Christ's life:

6 Augustine *Sermo* 177 (PL 39.2082 Appendix).

7 Pseudo-Jerome *Epist.*XVIII (PL 30.191D).

8 *Sermo* XXII (PL 178.523D-524A) quoting Phil.3.20.

9 CC 1.3.

10 See discussion on 63 pp.296ff.

11 Gregory *Homil.in Evang.*II.30 (PL 76.1219B).

An Ecclesia forte id dixerit, cum intueretur dilectum ascendentem, gestiens eum sequi atque assumi cum ipso in gloria?...Hoc sentirem, si dixisset: Trahe me ad te. Nunc vero quia "post te", magis illud mihi postulare videtur, ut conversationis eius valeat vestigia sequi, ut possit aemulari virtutem, ut normam tenere vitae et morum queat apprehendere disciplinam.¹²

Bernard's objection does not bear close scrutiny. In the context of the ascension, the Church, as Gregory and Abelard agree, can quite properly say "Draw me after You", rather than "Draw me to You". Her prayer is to be with Christ in Heaven but, as He is already there, the phrase "after/ behind You" is apt. In a similar way Abelard uses this very phrase in his sermon on the Assumption of the Virgin. He suggests that the Church in general or the nuns of the Paraclete in particular should pray to Mary: *Trahe me post te*.¹³ For she, he says, was drawn that she might draw, she was taken up to Heaven that she might bring others: *Tracta quippe est ut trahat, assumpta est ut assumet*.

Bernard clarifies why the Bride uses the verb *trahere* in spite of its nuance of unwillingness. The Bride must be drawn by Christ because she is unable, not unwilling, to ascend in her own strength:

Trahe me post te...Quid? Sponsane ergo necesse habet trahi, et hoc post sponsam, quasi vero invita eum et non libens sequatur? Sed non omnis qui trahitur, invitatus trahitur. Nec enim infirmum aut debilem, eumque videlicet qui per se ire non valet, trahi ad balneum seu ad prandium piget...¹⁴

Similarly, Abelard writes that Christ must draw us because we do not know what our strength really is: *Quod quiastrarum virtutum non esse scimus, ipse nos illic post se gratia sua trahat*.¹⁵

It is because the soul, according to Bernard, or the Church, as in the hymn, is weak that she must ask Christ to stretch out His hand to help her in her struggles, *nitenti dextram porrige* (2./2): she cannot ascend in spirit, as He exhorts her, without His aid. In *Sermo IX* Abelard discusses our ascension in the imagery of the Song of Songs, connecting it with Christ's passion in which we too must share:

12 Bernard *Super Cantica Sermo* 21.I.1 (Edit.Cist.I 1957) p.122.

13 *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.545C).

14 Bernard *Super Cant.Sermo* 21.I.1 p.121.

15 *Sermo XVI* (PL 178.500A).

Per ascensum, ut dictum est, purpureum conscendendum nobis est ad reclinatorium aureum; quia nisi communicemus passioni Christi, participes non erimus suae resurrectionis.¹⁶

He then uses a phrase similar to that in the hymn to emphasize that none of this can take place unless Christ holds out His hand to draw us to Him: *Quod ut eo trahente possimus, manum porrigat, qui ut conscendamus invitat.*

Szövérfy rightly indicates the image of Peter walking on the waves as an example of Christ stretching out His hand to save:

Cum coepisset mergi, clamavit dicens: Salve me fac. Et continuo Iesus extendens manum apprehendit eum.¹⁷

The same image occurs as a metaphor in the Old Testament. The Psalmist cries *Porrigere manum tuam de alto, eripe me et libera me ex aquis multis*.¹⁸ The use of *porrigere* in the hymn suggests that Abelard was consciously echoing the Psalm. Through this twofold reference, to Peter and to the Psalmist, Abelard indicates that the Church's struggle is a double one. She is the *ecclesia militans*, the Church which must battle against the powers of darkness; she needs to be rescued from the dangers which surround her, the metaphorical or spiritual waters of the Psalmist's plea. At the same time as she strives against evil, she is also striving, like Peter, towards Christ. He was almost drowned because he did not keep his eyes on Christ. So the Church needs help in turning from the world to fix her gaze on Heaven. Ambrose describes the eternal happiness of Heaven, the beatific vision of Abelard's fourth stanza, for which the Church longs, and prays: *Sed nunc, Pater, etiam atque etiam extende ad suscipiendum hunc pauperem manus tuas*.¹⁹ As Christ calls His Bride daily (*cotidie vocat* 1./3), so the Church constantly (*etiam atque etiam*) needs His sustaining hand to draw her to Him.

The third line, *super pennas ventorum evolas* (2./3), is a quotation from Psalm 17: *volavit super pennas ventorum*.²⁰ The Psalm is a hymn of praise to the Lord of might and power Who rescues His faithful people, an apt allusion, made the more so by the

16 *Sermo IX* (PL 178.448A).

17 Szövérfy II p.137 citing Matt.14.30-31. For a general picture of the treatment of Peter in hymns see Szövérfy *A Mirror of Medieval Culture* (Proc.Connecticut Acad.1965) pp.221ff.

18 Ps.143.7.

19 Ambrose *de bono mortis* XII.53 (CSEL 32) p.748.

20 Ps.17.11 and 17; cf. Ps.103.3 *qui ambulas super pennas ventorum*.

reference in the Psalm to the hand of God stretched out to save the Psalmist from peril: *Extendit manum de alto, prehendit me, extraxit me de aquis multis*. The application to the ascension of the vivid image of Christ flying up on the wings of the winds is suggested by the language of the first part of the verse from which the quotation comes: *Et ascendit super cherubim et volavit; volavit super pennas ventorum*: the verbal echo, *ascendit*, makes the connection between the Psalm and the hymn.

Although the description of the ascension through the metaphor of flight is not original to Abelard, it is not a commonplace. Maximus relates the ascension to the flight of an eagle, an image which occurs later in the hymn referring to the Church's spiritual ascension. He compares Christ to the eagle which seeks the heights, abandoning the earth for the purity of the upper air:

Meminit sanctitas vestra quod aquilae illi de psalterio, cuius iuventutem legimus, comparaverim Salvatorem; est enim similitudo non parva:...et sicut aquila, relictis terrenis sordibus, sublime volans, purioris aeris salubritate perfruitur; ita et Dominus terrenorum faecem deserens peccatorum, in sanctis suis volitans purioris vitae simplicitate laetatur. Per omnia igitur aquilae comparatio convenit Salvatori.²¹

Rabanus Maurus extends the comparison to include the incarnation:

In Scriptura sacra vocabulo aquilae... incarnatus Dominus ima transvolans et mox summa repetens designatur...Aquila vocabulo...volatus Dominicae ascensionis exprimitur.²²

If Christ ascended on the wings of the wind, how much more does the Church need wings if she is to follow Him? The wings for which she must pray are spiritual wings for she is to ascend in spirit, not yet in body: *et hortatur mente conscendere* (1./4). Christ alone can bestow such wings and the Church, in response to His call to ascend, replies *quis sequetur ni pennas conferas?* (2./4). Her question opens the way for the second part of the hymn where the wings becomes symbols of the peace and power which should characterize the Church.

The wings for which the Church is to pray are those of the dove and of the eagle,

Columbae pennas postulet...
alas petat potentis aquilae (3./1-3).

Szövérfy explains that "the dove is a 'peaceful bird' which leads over to the next thought *ad quietem*".²³ Abelard has already employed this symbolism:

21 Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 56.2 (CC Ser.Lat.23) p.225.

22 Rabanus Maurus *de universo* VIII (PL 111.243C).

Avis blanda, mansueta/ Deum monstrat placatum

and Monstret columba simplicem.²⁴

The dove is kind, gentle and, above all, pure.

Szövérfy implies that Abelard is criticizing the factional politics of the contemporary Church and that he is encouraging her to strive for inner peace in the sense of harmony between the factions. He cites in support Psalm 67: *pennae columbae deargentatae*.²⁵ Closer to the language of the hymn is a different Psalm: *quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae, et volabo, et requiescam*.²⁶ Here is the dove, the wings, the flight and the peaceful rest of Abelard's hymn. The context of the verse in the Psalm suggests that Abelard, recognizing the struggle the Church faces in the world, is pointing out that her mind should be fixed on Heaven. This not only suits the argument of the hymn thus far (the Church is on earth but should ascend to Heaven in spirit; the Church is struggling to reach Heaven and needs wings to lift her above her struggles), but is confirmed in the lines which follow.

The Church seeks peace but she also needs strength, strength to lift her to Heaven in spirit and strength to overcome her troubles in the world. She needs the strength of a powerful eagle. In the Homily quoted above Maximus refers to the eagle in the Psalm which renews its youth: *renovabitur ut aquilae iuventus tua*.²⁷ Isaiah has a similar but longer comparison with the eagle which promises new strength to the faithful:

qui sperant autem in Domino mutabunt fortitudinem, assument pennas sicut aquilae, current et non laborabunt, ambulabunt et non deficient.²⁸

The eagle has the strength in its wings to reach the heights of heaven, (*alas.../ quibus alta possit conscendere* 3./3-4) and it is towards Heaven that the Church is striving. *conscendere* is deliberately chosen to make the link between the eagle's flight and the

23 Szövérfy II p.138.

24 36.5./1-2; 39.4./1. For the symbolism see pp.94 and 123-4.

25 Szövérfy II p.138 citing Ps.67.14. It is possible that he has taken the earlier words of the verse, *si dormitis in medios clericos*, as a reference to clerics; but *cleri* are "lots". On the other hand, Cassiodorus *Exp.in Ps.67.14* (CC Ser.Lat.97 p.591) does interpret the silvered dove as *ecclesia militans*.

26 Ps.54.7.

27 Ps.102.5; see above n.20.

28 Is.40.31.

Church's ascension, for in the first stanza Christ exhorts His Bride *mente conscendere* (1./4), to ascend in spirit.

The wings by which the Church is enabled to rise up in spirit while she yet remains on earth are the wings of the dove and the eagle, symbols of her need to set her heart on the things of Heaven, not of the world, so giving her peace in the midst of her troubles, and of the strength which she requires to keep apart from the taint of the world to seek a life of greater purity.

The fourth stanza lies outside the main theme of the hymn, the ascent of the Church in spirit on spiritual wings. It is linked with the rest of the hymn only through the motif of the eagle, but now it is the eagle's sight which is symbolic, not its wings. Abelard says that Christ will give as an unasked boon the gift of the eyes of an eagle in addition to its wings for which the Church is to pray: *Dabit cum alis oculos* (4./1).

What is it about an eagle's eyes that the Church needs in her quest? The *Natural Histories* of Aelian and Pliny, plundered by the Church Fathers for spiritual *exempla* from the world of nature, tell how the eagle is the only creature to be able to gaze into the rays of the sun. So much is this an incontrovertible sign of the bird's true identity that the eagle itself uses it to detect degeneracy in its chicks. Aelian writes:²⁹

αὐτίους τῇ αὐγῇ τοῦ ἡλίου ἴσθησιν αὐτοῖς ὕγροῖς ἐπεὶ καὶ ἀπτήνας·
καὶ ἐὰν ρέν σκαρδαρύξῃ τις τὴν ἀκρὴν τῆς ἀκτίνος δυσωπούμενος,
ἐξεώσθῃ τῆς καλιᾶς, καὶ ἀπεκρίθῃ τῇσδε τῆς ἐστίας· ἐὼν δὲ
ἀντιβλέψῃ καὶ μάλα ἀτρέπτως, ἀρείνων ἐστὶν ὑπονοῖας καὶ τοῖς
θυγρίαις ἐχθέγραπται...

Among the Latin Fathers Tertullian is the first to apply this characteristic to spiritual matters. He compares the owl's view of the sun with that of the eagle. The owl denies the sun's existence because it cannot look on it, whereas the eagle knows the sun because it can gaze straight into its rays:

solem noctuae nesciunt oculi; aquilae ita sustinent, ut natorum suorum
generositatem de pupillarum audacia indicent: alioqui non educabunt, ut
degenerem, quem solis radius averterit.³⁰

29 Aelian *Περὶ Σώων* 2.26.

cf. Pliny *Nat.Hist.*X.3.10; Lucan *de bello civ.*IX.902-906. For further references see D'Arcy Thompson *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford 1936) pp.8-9.

30 Tertullian *de anima* 8 (PL 2.699B).

Ambrose has a somewhat more elaborate version.³¹ Isidore etymologizes: *Aquila ab acumine oculorum vocata* and continues

Nam et contra radium solis fertur obtutum non flectere; unde et pullos suos ungue suspensos radiis solis obicit, et quos viderit immobilem tenere aciem, ut dignos genere conservat; si quos vero inflectere obtutum, quasi degeneres abicit.³²

Although Isidore does not attempt to spiritualize the eagle's sight, there is a verbal echo of his etymology in the hymn. The phrase *irreflexis obtutibus* (4./3) points to the influence of Isidore, or a dependent text (Rabanus Maurus, for instance, is entirely dependent on him) through the double use there of the words *obtutum*..*flectere* and *irreflectere obtutum*. Accordingly, I would suggest that Szoverffy's understanding of the meaning of *irreflexis* as "unimpaired" is incorrect.³³ The point made by Isidore and the other authorities is that the eagle gazes at the sun without averting its eyes: *irreflexis* must mean "unswerving" or "steadfast". Such a translation better suits the context of the Church keeping her eyes fixed on Christ.

Christ will give the Church the eyes of an eagle that she may gaze on Him, the true Sun, *ut veri solis radios/..possit../ intueri* (4./2-4). In Abelard the motif of the true Sun first appears in his hymns for the Nativity, when the Sun becomes incarnate.³⁴ At the time of the crucifixion the sun is extinguished as the true Sun suffers.³⁵ Because Christ has ascended the true Sun now shines in Heaven and Heaven has no need of any other, for its Sun is the Lamb.³⁶ Ambrose shows why man in his present state cannot look on the face of God by calling to witness the injury done to a man if he looks on the sun which, like himself, is a creature:

Nam si solis radios oculi nostri ferre non possunt, et si quis diutius e regione solis intenderit, caecari solere perhibetur: si creatura creaturam sine fraude

31 Ambrose *Exaem.*V.18.60 (CSEL 32) pp.185-6.

32 Isidore *Etym.*12.10-11; cf. Rabanus Maurus *de universo* VIII (PL 111.243B).

33 Szövérfy II p.138.

34 30.1./2 and 2./4.

35 48.1./2 and 2./1.

36 Apoc.21.23 *et civitas non eget sole...nam lucerna eius est Agnus.*

atque offensione sui non potest intueri, quomodo potest sine periculo seu vibrantem cernere vultum Creatoris aeterni, corporis huius opertus exuvias?³⁷

The true Sun shines with such an overwhelming glory that even the Church, His Bride, cannot look on Him without an eagle's eyes.³⁸

Three images have coalesced to bring into Abelard's hymn the motif of the eagle's eyes, despite the fact that it is essentially irrelevant to the main theme, the Church's need for wings to carry her above her earthly tribulations. The image is first suggested by the prayer in the preceding stanza for the wings of the eagle but it is rather for its sight than the power of its wings that the eagle is famed. Then there is the sense of the overwhelming brightness of the glory of God evident in one of the canticles chosen by Abelard for Ascension:

Et vidi quasi speciem electri, velut aspectum ignis, intrinsecus eius per circuitum... vidi quasi speciem ignis splendentis in circuitu... Haec visio similitudinis gloriae Domini.³⁹

The third image is that of the transfiguration, a prefiguration of the ascension.⁴⁰ Matthew describes the appearance of Christ: *et transfiguratus est ante eos. Et resplenduit facies eius sicut sol.*⁴¹

The stanza ends with a reference to the beatific vision, that eternal vision of God which is promised to the faithful in the Apocalypse: *sed sedes Dei et Agni in illa erunt, et servi eius servient illi. Et videbunt faciem eius.*⁴² The Church is called to ascend in spirit and in spirit she will be given the eyes of an eagle so that she may gaze on the true Sun, which is incomparable blessedness: *quo nil felictus* (4./4). Her spiritual apprehension of the beatific vision, of seeing her Bridegroom face to face, will give her peace while she is yet in this world and will renew her strength in the midst of her struggles.

37 Ambrose *de bono mortis* XI.49 (PL 14.590D-591A).

38 Abelard (92.2./1-3) uses the metaphor of the eagle's sight of St. John the Evangelist; cf. Augustine *Tract. in Ioh.* 15.1 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.150 cited by Szövérfy II p.194; Gregory the Great, quoting Ezek.1.10.

39 Ezek.1.27-2.1. This is the third canticle of the day (CLS 7 p.389).

40 See discussion on 63 p.298.

41 Matt.17.2.

42 Apoc.22.3-4.

The hope of the beatific vision is one of the major incentives towards Christian living offered by the Fathers, for what could be more blessed than to see face to face the One Whom we now see only as in a mirror? Using quotations from Paul and John Augustine bids his flock follow so that the promise of the vision of God might be theirs:

Haec est magna promissio; si amas, sequere...Hoc totum per fidem...manentes in corpore; cum autem perambulaverimus viam, et ad ipsam patriam venerimus, quid erit nobis laetius? quid erit nobis beatius?⁴³

At the end of his sermon on John Abelard encourages the nuns to trust in the saint's intercession on their behalf. He brings together the images of the marriage-feast, the heavenly Bridegroom, the Bride and the beatific vision:

Culus nos intercessio ita in sancto confirmet proposito, ut ad illud supernum, quo ipse invitatus est, convivium perveniat: ut illic mentem feliciter quam hic carnem reficiatis, sponso vestro coelesti perenniter coniunctae, culus praesentiae visio ipsa est summa beatitudo.⁴⁴

Such is the hope Abelard holds out to the nuns of the Paraclete and to the Church in general. Only let her pray for the wings of the dove and the eagle and she will also be granted the sight of God.

The final stanza returns to the main theme of the hymn and draws together its various strands. Christ has ascended on the wings of the winds into the sky, *ille locus aethereus* (5./2). The sky is the home of winged creatures, the dove and the eagle of the preceding stanza. Heaven too is the home of winged creatures, the seraphim and the four living creatures of Ezekiel's vision.⁴⁵ Thus the Church and the faithful as individuals need wings if they are to find a home in Heaven. The wings for which she has prayed, the powers of the dove and the eagle, will fit her for Heaven as long as God has granted her prayer here on earth: *quibus alas hic Deus dedit* (5./4).

Abelard adds one new motif to the recapitulation of the main theme, that Heaven is fit for winged creatures in accordance with their deserving, *pro meritis virtutum congruit* (5./3). He has been influenced in this by Augustine's commentary on Psalm 103 *qui ambulat super pennas ventorum*. Augustine writes that the wings of the wind are the wings of the soul. The wings of the soul are its *virtutes*, its good works:

43 Augustine *Tract. in Ioh.* 34.9 (CC Ser.Lat.36) pp.315-316 on I Cor.13.12 and I John 3.2.

44 *Sermo XXV* (PL 178.539A).

45 Is.6.2; Ezek.1.6 and 1.25.

Pennae ventorum, pennae animarum quae sunt, nisi a quibus sursum
adtolluntur? Pennae ergo animarum virtutes, bona opera, recte facta.⁴⁶

He goes on to say that all the soul's virtues are summed up in obedience to the two commands to love God and one's neighbour. It is God Who gives love, God Who gives the wings: *Iam dat illis caritatem: iam dat illis alas et pennas.*⁴⁷ While Abelard omits the motif of love, he follows Augustine precisely in all other respects. God gives wings to souls which show by their virtuous lives that they are fit for a place in Heaven:

pro meritis virtutum congruit
quibus alas hic Deus dederit (5./3-4).

This is His answer to the Bride's prayer of the second stanza:

quis sequetur ni pennas conferas? (2./4).

Thus the hymn comes full circle. Christ summons His Bride Who is still on earth to ascend to Him in spirit. She prays for wings that she may obey His command and in the final stanza God promises that she will ascend to heaven with the wings He has bestowed.

46 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.*103.13 (CC Ser.Lat.40) p.1486.

47 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.*103.14 (CC Ser.Lat.40) p.1487.

9.5. 65. *ad laudes*

Argument: Christ enters the heavenly Jerusalem in triumphal procession. He is hailed by angels and the people He has saved. The angels ask "Who is this King?" and the people reply "It is the Lord".

1. Cum in altum ascenderet
et ima secum traheret
triumphantis maestitas Domini,
circumstabant victorem eruti.

1. When the majesty of the Lord triumphant
was ascending up on high
drawing with Him the creatures below,
those whom He had rescued surrounded the Victor.

2. Superna regis civitas
pompas educit obvias,
"Chere" cantant victori angeli,
et "Osanna" salvati populi.

2. The heavenly city of the King
leads out processions to meet Him;
"Hail" sing angels to the Victor,
and "Hosanna" sing the people He has saved.

3. Illis tamquam quaerentibus
et super hoc mirantibus
hi respondent et alternantibus
ita cantum mulcent sermonibus:

3. To the angels who question
and wonder at this
the people reply, and with antiphonal words
they thus make sweet their song:

4. "Quis est iste rex gloriae?
Quod hoc decus victoriae?
Quis est iste de Edom veniens
purpureo vestitu renitens?"

4. "Who is this King of Glory?
What is this honour of victory?
Who is this coming from Edom
in crimson robes resplendent?"

5. "Fortis et potens Dominus,
triumphans victis hostibus,
manu forti potens in proelio,
victor redit subacto zabulo."

5. "The strong and mighty Lord,
triumphing over His conquered enemies,
with His strong hand mighty in battle,
the Victor returns, the Devil defeated."

6. Sit Christo summo gloria
qui scandens super sidera
cum Spiritu, cum Patre supera
Deus unus regit et infera.

6. Glory to Christ on high
Who, ascending above the stars,
with the Spirit and with the Father one God
rules the world above and the world below.

In this, the last of his hymns for Ascension, and in his sermon for the day Abelard portrays Christ's ascension as the triumphal procession of a victorious king. Both the hymn and the sermon are constructed around two passages, one from the New Testament, the other from the Old. Paul writes *ascendens in altum, captivam duxit captivitatem* and in Psalm 23 there is the antiphonal sequence:

Ad tollite portas, principes, vestras et elevamini,
portae aeternales, et introibit rex gloriae.
Quis est iste rex gloriae?
Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus potens in proello.¹

Both passages are reflected in the hymn, Paul's words in the first stanza and the Psalmist's in the final three. The second stanza serves as a link between the two and in itself echoes Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Abelard's ascension sermon begins with the victory procession as Christ enters Heaven:

Ascensionis festiva iucunditas, quaedam est ab angelis Christo triumphanti
pompa victorialis exhibita.²

He then compares the entry into Heaven with the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem. Just as Christ was there welcomed by crowds, so now He is welcomed by angels:

In Ramis quippe palmarum Ierosolymam veniens, imperiali more, a turbis cum
laudibus est susceptus...Sicut autem ibi tunc ab hominibus more triumphalis
pompa, ut diximus, est honoratus; ita hodierna die ascendens in coelum, ab
angelis ei occurrentibus est susceptus.³

He speaks of Christ's triumph over Hell and His victory procession with those whom He has rescued from Satan's thrall:

... et introibit rex gloriae, non quidem terrenus, sed qui ad coelestis gloriae
celsitudinem suos de potestate diaboli ereptos in hoc hodierno triumpho secum
pariter introducat.⁴

He tells how men twice imprisoned by Satan are now led in victory:

1 Eph.4.8 paraphrasing Ps.67.19 *ascendisti in altum, cepisti captivitatem*; Ps.23.7-8.

2 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.495D-496A).

3 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.496A-B). Later he returns to the same comparison: *Conferamus autem cum gloria huius triumphus illam, quam diximus venerationem in Ramis palmarum et primum exhibitam, et qua similitudine iugantur per singula videamus; ita tamen ut illi longe praecellere consideremus.* (PL 178.497C).

4 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.496D-497A); cf. *sed ipso mortis auctore morte sua triumphato, quasi spoliis tropaea in suis, quos eruit, captivis, nunc refert gloriosa...* (497B).

Suos itaque, ut diximus, bis captivatos, nunc secum ad coelestia perducens, quasi victor hodie de antiquo hoste superato, triumphat.⁵

Christ is welcomed by angelic hymns of triumph:

...ita praedictae liberatio captivitatis triumphales hodie ab angelis habuit.⁶

Not only do the angels sing His praises but those too whom He has set free:

Nec solum qui praeibant, verum etiam qui sequebantur, laudes ibi praecinebant. Sic et hodie tam praecedentium angelorum chori quam captivi liberatorem suum sequentes, summa et ineffabili iubilatione victori laudes acclamabant.⁷

The hymn reflects this pattern. There is the triumphal procession of the first stanza,

Cum in altum ascenderet
et ima secum traheret
triumphantis maestitas Domini (1./1-3),

and the Victor surrounded by those whom he has rescued from Hell: *circumstabant victorem eruti*. He is hailed by angels, "*Chere*" *cantant victori angeli* (2./3) and by the people He has saved, *et "Osanna" salvati populi* (2./4). Their hymn of praise ends by stressing Christ's glorious victory over Satan:

Fortis et potens Dominus,
triumphans victis hostibus,
manu forti potens in proello,
victor redit subacto zabulo (5./1-4).

The image of the ascension as a triumphal procession into Heaven goes back at least to the fourth century. Maximus says that it was the practice for a train of captives to precede the chariot of the triumphant king, but that when Christ ascended His captives accompanied Him:

Quam bene triumphum Domini propheta describit. Solebat, sicut dicunt, regum triumphantium currus captivorum pompa praecedere: ecce Dominum euntem ad coelos non praecedit, sed comitatur gloriosa captivitas...⁸

Abelard too describes those whom Christ has brought to Heaven with Him as surrounding Him: *circumstabant victorem eruti* (1./4). Cassiodorus sees in the triumph a vivid metaphor of the ascension:

5 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497B).

6 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497C).

7 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497D).

8 Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 56.3 (CC Ser.Lat.23) p.225.

Quam pulchre per ideam figuram triumphantis actus ipse describitur...Ille enim crucifixus descendit ad inferos et liberatos a captivitate perduxit ad caelos...⁹

As Christ ascends, He draws with Him *tna* (1./2). Does Abelard mean mankind (those on earth) or the just whom Christ has rescued from Hell? Szövérfy says that *tna* has the double meaning "lowly" and "human" (earthly).¹⁰ A passage in Jerome supports Szövérfy, suggesting that "we" (*nos*) are the Devil's prisoners: *captivasti nos, qui captivi tenebamur a diabolo*.¹¹

I would argue that the meaning has more to do with the passage from Ephesians closely echoed in the first line (*Cum in altum ascenderet* 1./1) than with the lowliness of man. Paul describes Christ descending into the lower regions of the earth (*in inferiores partes terrae*) and, when He ascended, leading captivity captive.¹²

The precise significance of *tna*, therefore, is coloured by the interpretation given to the words "led captivity captive". Since the phrase *in inferiores partes terrae* is usually taken to indicate Christ's descent into Hell, *captivitas* could, according to Augustine, mean either Satan/Death which held men captive, or the just in Satan's thrall (he ignores Jerome's suggestion that the reference is to mankind in general).¹³ Thus it is possible that the victory procession in the hymn includes under *tna* the conquered enemies of Christ in addition to His other 'captives', those whom He has released from Hell. Augustine decides on the second interpretation, likening the use of the abstract *captivitas* to that of *militia*:

Ipsos itaque homines qui captivi tenebantur appellans captivitatem, sicut militia cum dicitur et intelleguntur qui militant, eandem captivitatem a Christo captivatam dicit.

9 Cassiodorus *Exp.in Ps.67.19* (CC Ser.Lat.97) p.594.

10 Szövérfy II p.139.

11 Jerome *Tract.de Ps.67.19* (CC Ser.Lat.78) p.44.

12 Eph.4.8-9 *Ascendens in altum, captivam duxit captivitatem...Quod autem ascendit, quid est, nisi quia et descendit primum in inferiores partes terrae.*

13 Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.67.26* (CC Ser.Lat.39) p.889 *Sed quid est: Captivasti captivitatem? Utrum quia vicit mortem, quae captivos tenebat in quibus regnabat? an ipsos homines appellavit captivitatem, qui captivi sub diabolo tenebantur?*

Cassiodorus, likewise, accepts this interpretation.¹⁴ In this he agrees with Origen who describes Christ plundering the strong man's house, which is Hell (*id est infernum*) and leading those who rose with him into the heavenly Jerusalem.¹⁵ Abelard comments:

Captiva quippe captivitas genus humanum bis a diabolo captivatum dicitur; primo videlicet eius persuasione a paradiso exsulatum, et praesentibus aerumnis expositum, postmodum de hac luce ad inferni tenebras delectum.¹⁶

He appears to include under the general term *captivitas* both those on earth and the just in Hell since both are captive to Satan. The preceding sentence, however, makes clear through the use of *eruit* that he is thinking specifically of the latter, the just in Hell:

...quasi spoli^a tro^a in suis, quos eruit, captivis, nunc refert gloriosa, sicut et de ipso olim Psalmographus praecinerat dicens: Ascendens in altum captivam duxit captivitatem.¹⁷

traheret (et t^a secum traheret 1./2) must also be taken into account. It echoes the previous hymn where the Church on earth is to pray *Post te trahe me* in response to Christ's invitation to ascend with Him.¹⁸ She is called to sit with Him at the right hand of the Father (*sede mecum in patris dextera*) but she cannot come unless He draws her.¹⁹ Jerome links the idea of the Church ascending with Christ's prophecy that when He is lifted up, He will draw all things to Him:

quid hac die felicius...in qua nos omnes fecit secum resurgere et vivere et sedere in caelestibus, impletumque est illud quod ipse dixit in evangelio: Cum autem exaltatus fuero, omnia traham ad me?²⁰

14 Cassiodorus *Exp. in Ps.* 67.19 (CC Ser.Lat.97) p.54 *Ille enim crucifixus descendit ad inferos et liberatos a captivitate perduxit ad caelos...Haec sunt spolia illa quae superius dixit, unde sancta ornata Ecclesia, unde Domini regna complenda sunt. 'Ascendit' ipse utique qui propter nos descendit eruendos.*

15 Origen *ad Rom.* V (PG 14.1052) *Prius ergo eum alligavit in cruce, et sic ingressus est domus eius, id est infernum, et inde "ascendens in altum, captivam duxit captivitatem", eos scilicet qui cum ipso surrexerunt et ingressi sunt sanctam civitatem Ierusalem coelestem.*

16 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497B).

17 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497B). For Abelard's use of *eruer* in connection with the Harrowing of Hell, see discussion on 54 pp.234-5.

18 64.2./1.

19 64.2./4.

20 Jerome *in die Dominicae paschae* (CC Ser.Lat.78) pp.549-550 quoting John 12.32.

If these various facets are taken into consideration, Abelard would appear to be combining in *ima* the two different interpretations of *captivam duxit captivitatem*. In His ascension Christ draws to Heaven all that is below, both those whom He has set free from Hell and the Church which is still on earth, although the emphasis is on the former. Support for this view can be found in the doxology for the ascension hymns, where *infera* (*supera*/ *Deus unus et regit infera* 6./3-4), the equivalent of *ima*, includes both earth and Hell.

The use of the abstract noun *maiestas Domini* (1./3) is arresting. Abelard may have been thinking of two New Testament passages in which Christ is *ad dexteram maiestatis in excelsts* and as coming in majesty as a Judge, surrounded by His angels: *cum autem venerit Filius hominis in maiestate sua et omnes angeli cum eo, tunc sedebit super sedem maiestatis suae*.²¹ In the Old Testament *maiestas* occurs three times in the nominative, in each occasion in the phrase *maiestas Domini*.²² Abelard follows the Old Testament usage but alludes to the New Testament contexts.

The placing of the three words *triumphantis*, *maiestas* and *Domini* in the one line and the unusual use of the abstract as the subject of *ascenderet* and *traheret* heighten the sense of Christ's power and glory as He ascends in victory. This sense is further strengthened in the wondering questions of the angels,

Quis est iste rex gloriae?
Quod hoc decus victoriae?
Quis est iste de Edom veniens
purpureo vestitu renitens? (4./1-4),

and in the acclamation of the final stanza:

Fortis et potens Dominus,
triumphans victis hostibus (5./1-2).

It is entirely appropriate that the *eruti* should surround the Victor (*circumstabant victorem eruti* 1./4) as He ascends in triumph since they are the first to be rescued.²³ Christ's victory over death and Satan is emphasized throughout this hymn in the multiplicity of expressions of triumph and might: *triumphantis maiestas Domini* (1./3), *victorem* (1./4), *victori* (2./3), *rex gloriae* (4./1), *decus victoriae* (4./2), *fortis et potens*

²¹ Heb.1.3; Matt.25.31.

²² 2 Par.7.1, Ezek.43.4, 2 Macc.2.8.

²³ See the Sacred Triduum hymns 54-55 pp.230-7.

Dominus/ triumphans victis hostibus (5./1-2), manu forti potens in proelio (5./3), victor (5./4).

There is a close connection between the second stanza and the third hymn for Easter, where Christ is prefigured in the joyful acclamation of Jerusalem as her citizens come out to meet David, fresh from his victory over Goliath:

Dicant Sion filiae/ "Resurrexit Dominus",
vero David obviae/ chorus proferant,
victori victoriae/ laudes concinant.²⁴

The welcome given to David in the Old Testament is a prefiguration of the welcome given to the Son of David on Palm Sunday. These two welcomes are seen as a double prefiguration of Christ's entry into the heavenly Jerusalem at His ascension.

The link with David is made clear more through the similarity of situation than through verbal correspondence, although this does exist: *obvias/obviae, victori/victori*. The link with Palm Sunday is, as we have already seen, fully elaborated in the sermon, while in the hymn *civitas* as a description of the angels, *populi* of mankind and the acclamatory *Osanna* suggest the connection. The typology is underlined by the antiphonal sequence in the final stanzas which echoes the Palm Sunday wonder of the citizens of Jerusalem who demanded of each other "Who is this?" The language of the hymn reflects Matthew's account:

Turbae...clamabant dicentes: Osanna filio David!...Et cum intrasset Ierosolymam commota est universa civitas dicens: Quis est hic? Populi autem dicebant: Hic est Iesus, propheta a Nazareth Galilaeae.²⁵

Two different greetings are given to Christ in the hymn. The angels sing *Chere* (2./3), the saved people *Osanna* (2./4). *Chere* is a form of the Greek *χαίρει*, translated as *ave*.²⁶ The choice of *Osanna* is determined partly by its use on Palm Sunday, partly by

24 60.2./1-6.

25 Matt.21.9-11.

26 Isidore *Etym.* 12.7.24 (*Psittacus*) *ex natura autem salutat dicens: "have" vel χαίρει. χαίρει* is the initial word of hundreds of Greek hymns (see H.Follieri *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae* vol.5. (Studi e Testi 215 Vatican 1966) pp.49-69). It became known in the Western Church mainly through the influence of the Hymnos Akathistos. According to Wellesz (*A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* 2nd.ed. (Oxford 1961) p.389). *Χαίρεισμοί* were originally associated with the name of Christ.

its meaning. Jerome translates *Osanna* as *O Domine, saluum me fac.*²⁷ Isidore expands this explanation: "save thy people" or "save the world":

Osi enim salvifica interpretatur; anna interlectio est, motum animi significans sub deprecantis affectu;...et dicitur Hebraice osanna, quod interpretatur salvifica, subaudiendo vel: populum tuum, vel: totum mundum.²⁸

Abelard's final phrase, *salvati populi* (2./4) is, therefore, nothing other than an etymological pun on the meaning of *Osanna*.

In *Sermo XV* Abelard underlines the similarity of the questions asked by the citizens of Jerusalem and by the angels, the citizens of Heaven (*Superna regis civitas* 2./1):

Denique illo ingrediente civitatem cum tanta turbac exsultatione, alii admirantes quaerebant: Quis est hic? Et alii quaerentibus respondebant: Hic est Iesus... Sic et in hodierno triumpho, aliis angelis, ut diximus, interrogantibus: Quis est iste rex gloriae? alii respondebant: Dominus fortis et potens, potens in proelio.²⁹

The hymn differs from the sermon, for in the latter angels ask the questions and angels provide the answers: *cum aliis admiranantibus saepius quaererent...alii respondentes dicebant...*³⁰ In the hymn it is again the angels who ask, but the Church, the saved people, which replies:

Illis tamquam quaerentibus...
hi respondent (3./1-3).

It is the Church which knows experientially the reason for the triumphant procession since it was on His people's behalf that Christ won the victory.

Another difference between the hymn and the sermon is the reason given for the questions. In the sermon they are asked by angels who are utterly amazed to see a Man ascending in glory above all nature:

Super quo tam glorioso et admirabili triumpho, aliis quaerentibus et cum summa admiratione dicentibus: Quis est hic? ut dicitis, tantus rex, quem in humana forma et a nobis olim despecta, super omnem naturam, id est angelicam conscendere videmus altitudinem; vel unde inferior natura hanc adipisci meruit dignitatem?³¹

27 Jerome *in die Dom.pasch.* (CC Ser.Lat.78) p.550.

28 Isidore *Etym.* VI.22-23.

29 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497D-498A).

30 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.496B).

31 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497A) cf. *Sermo XXVI ...Domino ascendente in coelos quidam angelorum*

In the hymn, on the other hand, Abelard suggests by the use of *tamquam* (*Illis tamquam quaerentibus* 3./1) that the angels already know the answer. The reason for the question and answer sequence, then, lies in the opportunity it gives for praise. *mulcent* (*et alternantibus/ ita cantum mulcent sermonibus* 3./3-4) adds a further reason: the antiphonal singing involved in such questions and answers is pleasing to the ear and the dramatic element brings the whole situation to life.

The hymn omits any mention of the commands to open the gates which precede the questions in Psalm 23 and in the sermon. The first direct verbal echo of the Psalm appears in the fourth stanza in the first of the three questions, *Quis est iste rex gloriae?* (4./1). It is only here and in the fifth stanza that the verbal correspondences are marked. The Psalm is, however, so well known that the mere mention of the antiphonal question and answer would suggest its influence.

The second question, *quod hoc decus victoriae?* (4./2), although it is framed by two quotations from the Old Testament, is Abelard's own creation. The angels ask not only the identity of the King Who comes in triumph, but the reason for that triumph. Both questions are answered in the first couplet of the fifth stanza,

Fortis et potens Dominus
triumphans victis hostibus (5./1-2):

the King is the Lord Who has defeated His enemies.

The final question,

Quis est iste de Edom veniens
purpureo vestitu renitens? (4./3-4),

is a paraphrase of Isaiah: *Quis est iste qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra?*³² The passage continues *Quare ergo rubrum est indumentum tuum, et vestimenta tua sicut calcantium in torculari?* The Man answers: *Torcular calcavi solus...et aspersus est sanguis eorum super vestimenta mea...* Thus Isaiah prophesies Christ's passion, His lonely battle with His enemies, His blood shed on the cross. Jerome explains *Edom* as *rufus vel terrenus*.³³ Later writers generally understand *rufus* as *sanguineus*. Augustine

dubitantes, vel potius admirantes, de tanta glorificati hominis magnificentia, caeteros assistentes non semel interrogabant: Quis est iste rex gloriae? (PL178.539A) quoted by Szövérfy II p.140. Jerome (*In Esaiam* XVII.63.1) attributes the questions to fear: *Interrogant igitur angeli, rei novitate perterriti* (CC Ser.Lat.73A) p.721.

32 Is.63.1-3.

33 Jerome *Hebr.Nom.* (CC Ser.Lat.72) p.65.

has *Idumaei quippe interpretantur vel sanguinet vel terrent*.³⁴ Christ ascends in triumph but shows by His appearance what His triumph has cost.

Crimson also signifies royalty and Christ enters Heaven as a King. Crimson is the colour of the robe with which the soldiers mocked Him before the crucifixion, (*induunt eum purpura*), and crimson the colour of the garments promised by Christ to His Bride as His queen, (*cum purpulis gemmatis indues*).³⁵ The secondary meaning of *purpureus*, "bright" or "shining", also plays a part. This meaning is evoked by the final word of the stanza, the participle *rentens* (*purpureo vestitu rentens* 4./4) which looks back to the image of light in the first line, *rex gloriae* (4./1). The visual imagery of this stanza gains its power from the vivid colours, the purple of Christ's robes and the splendour of the gold of the glory which envelops Him. These are the marks of a King.

The saved people, the *salvati populi* of the third stanza (3./4), answer the angels' questions in the words of Psalm 23: *Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus potens in proello*. Abelard echoes the Psalm closely:

Fortis et potens Dominus
...potens in proello (5./1-3).

The expression *manu forti* (5./3) is reminiscent of the Psalmist's description of the Lord: *Domino...in manu potenti et brachio excelso*.³⁶ It brings to mind the Church's plea for Christ's help in the preceding hymn: *nitenti dextram porrige*.³⁷ In the sermon Abelard expounds the meaning of the adjectives. Christ is strong to face all adversity in spite of the weakness of His human form; mighty in that, unlike Adam, He has not been overcome by Satan, but has defeated Him in battle:

Fortis scilicet ad omnia adversa toleranda, nec remissus in aliquo, quamvis in forma humanae infirmitatis appareat. Potens, sicut statim determinans, subiungit, potens in proello, nec, ita ut vetus Adam, a tentante superatus diabolo, sed ipso mortis morte sua triumphato...³⁸

³⁴ Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.*82.7 (CC Ser.Lat.39) p.1142; cf. Cassiodorus *Exp.in Ps.*87.8-9 (CC Ser.Lat.98) p.764 and Isidore *Etym.*VII.6.33-34.

³⁵ Mark 15.17; 62.4./4.

³⁶ Ps.136.12.

³⁷ 64.2./1.

³⁸ *Sermo* XV (PL 178.497A-B).

The final line, *victor redit subacto zabulo* (5./4), is an elaboration of *victis hostibus* (5./2) and thus gives a more complete answer to the angels' second question, *quod hoc decus victoriae?* (4./2). They are now told the identity of the enemy Christ has conquered, the Devil (*subacto zabulo*). The line is reminiscent of the first of the Easter hymns, *Superato zabulo...redit*.³⁹ The main motifs of the ascension are well summarized: Christ is returning to Heaven, the home He left to rescue mankind; now He returns as Victor, having defeated Satan, worthy of the praise of angels and men.

³⁹ 58.2./1-6.

10.1. *in inventione sanctae crucis*: foreword

Among the various legends about the discovery of the cross the most popular is that recorded by Paulinus of Nola.¹ St. Helena, on a visit to Jerusalem, consulted a number of Christians and Jews about the site of the crucifixion and eventually found the place on which all were agreed: three crosses were discovered. She prayed for guidance and was inspired to bring each cross into contact with a corpse. At the touch of the third cross the man was restored to life:

Postremo dominicam crucem prodit resurrectio, et ad salutaris ligni tactum
morte profuga funus excussum, et corpus erectum est.

A festival was instituted to celebrate the discovery of the true cross and on one day each year it was shown to worshippers in Jerusalem. It was naturally considered to be a relic of such great power and sanctity that pilgrims desired to take a sliver of the wood home. So the Feast became widespread.

Three of the most famous hymns for the Feast were composed in 568 by Venantius Fortunatus to celebrate the reception of a piece of the cross by the Convent of the Holy Cross in Poitiers. Of these, *Pange, lingua, gloriosi* and *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, are major influences on Abelard's first hymn.²

In his third Preface Abelard writes that he had decided to compose four hymns for each of the Feasts so that there would be a separate hymn for each of the three Night Hours and one for Lauds.³ He then recalls that the hymns for the festival *in inventione sanctae crucis* were different:

De cruce autem, memini, quinque conscripti sunt hymni, quorum primus
singulis praeponatur horis, invitans diaconum crucem de altari tollere et in

¹ Paulinus of Nola *Epist.* 31.5 (CSEL 29) pp.272-73. Trans. and annotated by P.G. Walsh, *Letters of St. Paulinus* (Ancient Christian Writers London 1967) II pp.130-131.

² The third is *Crux benedicta nitet* AH 50.66 (p.71), 67 (p.74) and 68 (p.75).

³ Abelard's Third Preface: *Quattuor itaque hymnos singulis festivitibus ea ratione decrevimus, ut in uniuerso trium nocturnorum proprius decantetur hymnus et laudibus insuper matutinis non desit suus*. For discussion see Szövérfy II p.141 and Waddell CLS 8 pp.64-65.

medio chori afferre atque ibidem eam quasi adorandam ac salutandam statuere,
ut in eius quoque praesentia tota per singulas horas peragatur sollemnitatis.

This postscript causes a problem, for there are in the sole manuscript to contain these hymns only three hymns, nor does the Service Book for the Convent, the Old French Ordinary, make any mention of the unusual instruction to the priest to lift the cross from the altar and take it to the centre of the choir. The latter does not in itself constitute a particular problem as the Ordinary dates only from the fifteenth century. Abelard's *quinque hymni* has led commentators to postulate a conflation of hymns and the first of the three (66) has been variously divided into two or three separate hymns.

Dreves, the earliest of the commentators, splits 66 into two almost equal sections, making his division after the fifth stanza. He points out that there would in this case still be at least one hymn missing from Abelard's five:

Neque sola doxologia nobis deperit, sed unus minimum hymnus...immo arbitror ex duobus hymnis unum conflatum fuisse a librario. Certe 'Salve, coelestis...' videtur esse exordium reliqui poematis et facile dividitur post verba: Est religata.⁴

Szövérfy prefers three hymns made up of stanzas 1-3, 4-7 and 8-11, marked A, B and C in the hymn below. All these sections fulfil his criterion that "each new hymn should form an indivisible, logical unit".⁵

Dreves points out that there are difficulties in positing a conflation when the rhyme-schemes of the hymns are compared.⁶ The third line of each stanza ends in a single rhyming syllable: in 67 it is *-at* (*conspectu sanat, suspensus curat, ex se ministrat*); in 68 *-um* (*eis immissum, per crucifixum, compatiendum*). Throughout 66 the third line ends in *-a*. This argues a single hymn. Waddell suggests that two hymns are

⁴ Dreves p.183.

⁵ Szövérfy II p.141.

⁶ Dreves p.184 *Dissuadet ἐπολοτελεύτων ratio. In tertio hymno omnes versus in -um desinunt, in secundo in -um, in nostro in -a; si duo essent hymni, aliter primi, aliter alterius versus forte destinerent.*

indeed missing, probably due to the inattention of the scribe.⁷ The fact that the manuscript is in some disarray at this point supports his view. The problem will be discussed further after an examination of the hymn in question.⁸

Each hymn is structured precisely but differently. They are held together by two themes: the concept of the *ligni sacramentum* and the motif of *Christus medicus*.⁹ The former appears in the last section of the first hymn, *Tu lignum vitae*, and moves in the same hymn to the wood of the Ship of Life.¹⁰ It is implicit at the start of 67 where the bronze serpent is hung on Moses' staff and made explicit in the reference to the wood of the cross: *lignis duobus*.¹¹ 68 opens with the *lignum* which sweetened the waters of Mara.

The motif of *Christus medicus* likewise occurs in the final section of 66 and is worked out more fully in the following two hymns. In 67 Christ heals the poison of the serpent, giving the cure from Himself (stanzas 1-3 and 5-6). In 68 the suffering of the divine Physician sweetens the bitterness of suffering for the Christian (stanzas 1-4 and 7).

The doxology is missing from all the hymns, indicated only by the two words *Personis trino*. This *incipit* has yet to be identified.

7 Waddell (CLS 8) p.64.

8 See pp.339-340.

9 See below pp.345-7.

10 66.8./1; 10./2.

11 67.1./1; 5./1.

10.2. 66.^{ad}/_{noct.}

Argument: The Cross is hailed as Christ's standard. It is the Tau which marks the brows of penitents and kings, the Tree of Life which provides an antidote to the deadly apple, the ship which carries men to Heaven.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A. 1. Salve, coelestis
vexillum regis,
salve, crux sancta,</p> <p>2. qua spoliato
praedone diro
praeda reducta,</p> <p>3. Averni portae
lacent contritae,
claustra confracta.</p> | <p>1. Hail, banner
of the heavenly King,
hail, holy Cross,</p> <p>2. by which the dread thief
has been despoiled
his plunder restored,</p> <p>3. the gates of Avernus
lie crushed,
and the bars broken.</p> |
| <p>B. 4. Tau beatum,
quo poenitentum
fronte signata,</p> <p>5. interfectoris
ira crudelis
est religata,</p> <p>6. vile latronum
quondam tormentum
eras pro poena,</p> <p>7. nunc gloriosum
frontibus regum
signum impressa.</p> | <p>4. Blessed Tau,
by which, because the brows of the penitent
have been marked,</p> <p>5. the murderer's
cruel rage
has been bound,</p> <p>6. once you were the base torture
of thieves
as their punishment,</p> <p>7. now on the brows of kings
you are imprinted
as a glorious sign.</p> |
| <p>C. 8. Tu lignum vitae
in qua rex ipse
conscendit, palma,</p> <p>9. ut fructu tui
letalis pomi
restauret damna.</p> <p>10. Felici nautae
qua quasi nave
fruendo vita</p> <p>11. per mare magnum
hoc navigandum
est ad superna.</p> | <p>8. You are the Tree of Life,
the palm-tree
which the King Himself ascended,</p> <p>9. so that with your fruit
He might restore the losses
of the deadly apple.</p> <p>10. On this, as though it were a ship,
the blessed sailor,
enjoying eternal life,</p> <p>11. must sail
over this great sea
to the realms above.</p> |

The hymn opens with an introductory stanza, followed by five pairs of stanzas:

1. Greeting of the Cross;
2. Despoiling of the thief and
3. trampling of Hell;
4. Tau on penitents' forehead
5. binds the wrath of Satan;
6. Cross a punishment for thieves;
7. Cross a seal on the foreheads of kings;
8. Cross is a palm
9. whose fruit is the antidote to the apple;
10. Cross is the ship
11. on which to sail to Heaven.

The first stanza hails the cross: it is the standard of the heavenly King (*coelestis/vexillum regis* 1./1-2); it is the holy cross (*crux sancta* 1./3). Abelard consciously echoes two well-known hymns connected with the festival. The first, Venantius Fortunatus' glorious *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, is the reason for Abelard's phrase *vexillum regis*.¹ Fortunatus' hymn celebrates the mystery of Christ triumphant in death on the cross. It personifies the cross, addressing it in a series of second person singular verbs, ending with the words *salve, ara*, and describes it as a tree.²

Abelard owes his opening word and his third line, *salve, crux sancta*, to a sequence by Heribert of Rothenburg: *Salve, crux sancta, / arbor digna*.³ It could be argued that the greeting of the cross with these words is not surprising given the traditional place of such motifs in hymns and sermons. There are, however, other evocations which suggest that Abelard had the sequence in mind. Heribert alludes to the harrowing of Hell, to the signing of Christians with the cross, to the cross as a standard (*signum*, not *vexillum*),

1 Venantius Fortunatus AH 50.67. (p.74). The cross as *vexillum* is not original to Fortunatus: in the more ancient hymn *Rex aeterne Domine* it is *vexillum fidei* (Walpole 42.36, p.215); Prudentius (*Psych.*347) has *vexillum sublime crucis*; cf. Minucius Felix *Octavius* 29.7. It was Venantius who made the image popular.

2 The image of the tree occurs in all Venantius' hymns for the Holy Cross: *Pange, lingua* (AH 50.66.2./5-6, 8./1-2, 9./1, p.71); *Vexilla regis* (AH 50.67.4./1, p.74); *Crux benedicta* (AH 50.68.9, p.75).

3 Heribert of Rothenburg AH 53.82.1-2 (p.144), cited by Szövérfy II p.141.

to the life which comes from the wood that brought death.⁴ By referring directly to these two well-known hymns, Abelard lets loose a flood of images.

The ancient hymn *Rex aeternae Domine* refers to the fight the Christian must wage throughout his life against the machinations of Satan:

tu hostis antiqui vires/ per crucem mortis conterens,
qua nos signati frontibus/ vexillum fidei ferimus.⁵

It is under the standard of the cross that he goes into battle and by the power of the cross that he is victorious.

In a separate tradition the cross is still seen as a *vexillum*, but more as the standard of Christ Himself, for it was on the cross that He vanquished the Devil.⁶ This hymn belongs to that tradition: the cross is the standard of Christ, the heavenly King, the standard by which he has rescued His people from Satan's thrall (*praeda reducta* 2./3) and burst the gates of Hell (*Averni portae/ iacent contritae* 3./1-2).

Whereas in previous hymns, notably those for Easter, Abelard depicts Satan as a powerful adversary, here the emphasis is more on Satan the thief.⁷ In *Sermo XVI* he writes that the Devil has taken mankind prisoner, for he stole man from his rightful Lord in the Garden of Eden.⁸ Satan the thief is not an unusual image but Abelard is innovative in linking it so directly with the cross. The impetus for this connection comes from Isaiah where there are the two motifs of God raising His standard and the rescue of captives:

Haec dicit Dominus Deus: Ecce levabo ad gentes manum meam, et ad populos exaltabo signum meum...Numquid tolletur a forti praeda? Aut quod captum fuerit a robusto, salvum esse poterit? Quia haec dicit Dominus: Equidem et captivitas a forti tolletur; et quod ablatum fuerit a robusto salvabitur.⁹

4 See above n.3, lines 7./1-2, 7./3-4, 6./1-4, and stanzas 3-5.

5 Walpole 42.33-36 (p.215); cf. Gregory the Great *Lib.Sacr.* (PL 78.101D-102A) *Sacrificium, Domine, quod immolamus, placatus intende, ut ab omni nos exuat bellorum nequitia, et per vexillum sanctae crucis Filii tui, ad conterendas potestatis adversae insidias, nos in tuae protectionis securitate constituat.*

6 Cyril of Jerusalem *Catachesis* 13.41.(PG 33.821A)

7 cf. 58.1./3 *mortis principe*; 60.1./1 *Goliath*; 60.1./8 *ille Pharaon*. The exception is 58.3./1 where Satan is *fraus*.

8 *Sermo XV* (PL 178.497B).

9 Is.49.22-25.

Satan is indeed a dread thief, but a thief now despoiled of his prey.

In Isaiah the image is that of the release of captives, the stealing back of stolen goods from the thief. It is reminiscent of a New Testament passage which has the same underlying image, the parable of the strong man bound.¹⁰ That Abelard had this in mind is suggested by his use of the metaphor of binding in the fifth stanza (*est religata* 5./3). The parable is often used by the Church Fathers to explain Christ's descent into Hell. Origen, for example, describes Christ binding Satan, the strong man, on the cross, then entering Hell in order to remove Satan's possessions, the souls which are there kept in thrall:

Hic enim alligato forti, et in cruce sua triumphato, perrexit etiam in domum eius, in domum mortis, in infernum, et inde vasa eius diripuit, id est animas quas tenebat abstraxit.¹¹

The third stanza depicts the appearance of Hell after Christ descends in triumph to rescue the just. The harrowing of Hell was an immensely popular subject in vernacular drama and in art. In the mystery cycles of England it is by turns theatrical, majestic and farcical.¹² It lends itself to pictorial representation and occurs in both Byzantine and Western art.¹³ The imagery derives in the main from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, part of which is a vivid depiction of the confrontation between Christ and the powers of darkness:

Et dixit Inferus ad sua impla officia: "Claudite portas crudeles aereas et vectes ferreos subponite..." Haec audiens omnis multitudo sanctorum cum voce increpationis dixit ad Inferum: "Aperi portas tuas ut intret Rex Glorae." Et exclamavit David dicens: "Nonne cum essem vivus in terris praedixi vobis, "...quia contrivit portas aereas et vectes ferreos confregit."¹⁴

So ends the first theme, the triumph of the Cross, the despoiler spoiled, the powers of Hell vanquished.

¹⁰ Matt.12.29; cf. Mark 3.27.

¹¹ Origen *Comm.in Rom.V*, trans. Rufinus (PG 14.1052).

¹² See V.A.Kolve *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford 1966) pp.192-97; for the farcical element, R.D.S.Jack *Patterns of Divine Comedy* (Edinburgh 1990) pp.53-54.

¹³ For illustrations see G.Schiller *Ikongraphie der Christlichen Kunst* Band 3 (Gütersloh 1971) pp.352-53 Plates 112, 115, 116.

¹⁴ *Gospel of Nicodemus* XXI (ed. H.C Kim Toronto Med.Lat.Texts 1973) pp.40-41, quoting Ps.23.7 and Ps.106.16.

The fourth stanza, which marks the start of Szövérfy's second hymn, changes the symbol under which the Cross is seen from the *vexillum* to the *Tau* (*Tau beatum* 4./1). The *Tau* in the prophecy of Ezekiel was generally interpreted as the sign of the Cross:

T figuram demonstrans Dominicae crucis, unde et Hebraice signum interpretatur. De qua dictum est in Ezechielo angelo: "Transi per medium Ierusalem, et signa thau in frontes virorum gementium et dolentium".¹⁵

Those who grieved over the sin of Jerusalem are in one sense the *poenitentes* of Abelard's hymn (*quo poenitentium/ fronte signata* 4./1-2). They were signed with the *Tau* and were protected from death. But the *poenitentes* also have a wider and more contemporary reference. Augustine speaks of the sign of the cross in the sacrament of baptism:

Si dixerimus catechumeno, Credis in Christum? respondet, Credo, et signat se: iam crucem Christi portat in fronte.¹⁶

So the *poenitentes* are also those who have publicly repented of their sin at baptism and are signed with the *Tau*. The *Tau* is a sign that the newly-baptized now belong to Christ and, as in Ezekiel, it acts as a saving protection, here from the wrath of Satan:

Tau beatum/ quo...
interfactoris/ ira crudelis
est religata (4./1-5./3)).¹⁷

The mark which protects recalls the earliest expression of such a deliverance when the first-born of the Israelites were saved from death through the sign of blood on the door-posts and lintels of their houses.¹⁸ As a memorial Moses instructs the people to keep the Passover: *erit quasi signum in manu tua et quasi monumentum ante oculos tuos*. Peter Damian brings together the image of the *vexillum* and this theme of protection:

Linuntur utrique postes, ne vastator angelus audeat inferre perniciem; et nos crucis vexillum in corde gestamus et fronte, ne repentinus hostis irruens valeat auferre salutem.¹⁹

¹⁵ Isidore *Etym.*I.3.9. quoting Ezek.9.4.

¹⁶ Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.*XI.3 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.111; cf. *de catechizandis rudibus* 20 (34) ed.J.P.Christopher (Patristic Studies VIII Washington 1926).

¹⁷ The same idea of the T as a saving protection appears in Apoc.7.3. *Nolite nocere terrae et mari nec arboribus quoadusque signemus servos Dei nostri in frontibus eorum*; cf. Apoc.9.4.

¹⁸ Ex.12.22-30 and 13.9.

¹⁹ Peter Damian *Sermo* XVIII.5 (CC Cont.Med.57) p.112.

The significance of this for Abelard's hymn is in the typological interpretation already discussed in relation to the hymns for Easter, the association of the Israelites with the faithful, Pharaoh with Satan, Egypt with Hell.²⁰ Thus the marking of the Tau on the brow of the penitent at baptism symbolizes the Christian's redemption, Satan's defeat, and the rescue of the just from Hell.

est religata (5./3) makes specific the tacit allusion in the second stanza to the parable of the strong man bound. But in typical fashion Abelard immediately changes the terms of reference, for it is not the strong man or the thief that is bound, but the rage of a murderer (*interfactoris/ tra crudelis/ est religata* 5./1-3). The thief is Satan and the thief is bound; the murderer is also Satan, for it was of Satan that Christ said: *ille homicida erat ab initio*.²¹ Satan is a murderer on three counts: he it was who introduced death into the world through his temptation of Eve; he sought to slay Christ, as he boasts to Death in the Gospel of Nicodemus;²² he continues to seek the destruction of Christians: *adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit quaerens quem devoret*.²³ It is for this reason that the Christian needs the saving protection of the Cross, the Tau, which binds Satan's wrath, making it ultimately ineffective.

Stanzas 6 and 7 form a pair which combines the symbol of the Tau with the cross itself. *Quondam* (6./2) paves the way for the dramatic reversal of attitude to the Cross marked by the adversative *nunc* at the start of the seventh stanza:

vile latronum	nunc gloriosum
quondam tormentum...(6./1-2)	frontibus regum(7./1-2).

The contrast is emphasized by the balancing but antithetic adjectives *vile* (6./1) and *gloriosum* (7./1) and nouns *latronum* (6./1) and *regum* (7./2). The cross was once an ignominious punishment for thieves. *latrones* is used in the Synoptic Gospels of the two thieves between whom Christ was crucified: *tunc crucifixi sunt cum eo duo*

²⁰ See discussion pp.262-3.

²¹ John 8.44.

²² Gospel of Nicodemus XX p.39 ...*populum meum antiquum Iudaicum excitavi zelo et ira aduersus eum...lignum praeparavi ad crucifigendum eum et aculeos ad configendum, et in proximo est mors eius ut perducam eum ad te, subiectum tibi et mihi.*

²³ I Pet.5.8.

latrones.²⁴ John describes Barabbas, whose place Christ took on the cross, as a *latro*.²⁵ Abelard writes of the curse of crucifixion:

Nullum autem patibulum execrabilius cruce antiquitus censebatur, nulla mors adeo turpis et detestabilis iudicabatur.²⁶

But what was once the basest of punishments has been transformed into a glorious sign or mark on the brows of kings (*nunc gloriosum/ frontibus regum/ signum impressa 7./1-3*).²⁷

The cross is drawn on the foreheads of penitents at baptism (4./2-3) and is set on the foreheads of kings (7./1-3). Herein lies an argument for the separation of stanzas 4-7 into one hymn. The repetition *fronte.frontibus, signata...signum* and the balancing genitives *poenitentium...regum*,

poenitentium *frontibus regum*
fronte signata;(4./2-3) *signum impressa*(7./2-3),

combine in a short but elegant example of ring-composition.

Szövérfy gives two possible explanations of the sign of the cross on the foreheads of kings: a reference either to the decorative crosses on medieval crowns or to the ceremony of anointing a king on the forehead with oil in the shape of a cross at his coronation.²⁸ Augustine refers to the cross "affixed" to the brows of kings but does not elucidate:

si spectet pietas (Iesum), videt regem balulantem lignum ad semetipsum figendum, quod fixurus fuerat etiam in frontibus regum.²⁹

Szövérfy's second suggestion is much the more likely, given the parallel Abelard has made between this and baptism.³⁰ Moreover, it is improbable that a cross on a crown

²⁴ Matt.27.38; cf. Mark 15.27 and Luke 23.33.

²⁵ John 18.40.

²⁶ *Sermo XII* (PL 178.479D).

²⁷ Although *impressa* (7./3) describes *Tau* (4./1) it agrees with *crux* (1./3) for the rhyme-scheme. This indicates that stanzas 1-7 must be sung together, either as one hymn, or as an invitational hymn followed by a second hymn.

²⁸ Szövérfy II p.142.

²⁹ Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.*117.3 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.652.

³⁰ According to P.E.Schramm *A History of the English Coronation* (Oxford 1937) p.109 anointing in the form of a cross is first known to have been used in France in 869.

would be described as "imprinted" on the forehead, whereas *impressa* is an apt choice for drawing the cross in oil by hand. The same verb occurs in a similar context in one of his hymns for the festival of church dedication,

Alphabeti duplicis/ dum figuras exprimit
cancellatis lineis/ crucis signum imprimit,

where the sign of the cross is smeared in ash on the floor of the church.³¹

The eighth stanza begins by addressing the cross anew as *Tu* and under a different guise as the *lignum vitae*, the Tree of Life. This phrase occurs first in Genesis: *lignum etiam vitae in medio paradisi, lignumque scientiae boni et mali*.³² Abelard describes these two trees as so closely intertwined that life and death are juxtaposed:

In medio autem paradisi tam lignum vitae quam lignum scientiae boni et mali
fuisse referuntur, quasi sibi invicem ita copulata ut alterum alteri adhaereret,
sicut vitis ab ulmo ferri solet, et quasi in uno mors et vita simul sunt collocata.³³

The underlying thought of these two stanzas (8 and 9) is clear: as the tree of life in Eden became a tree of death to man through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, so the Cross, a tree of death, becomes a tree of life to man through Christ's obedience. Christ is the second Adam, a *figura* which goes back to Paul: *et sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur*.³⁴ Ambrose makes the correlation between the Tree of Life and the cross the more potent by identifying them: *paradisum nobis crux reddidit Christi. hoc est lignum quod Adae Dominus demonstravit*.³⁵

The lines *in qua rex ipse/ conscendit, palma*, (8./2-3) echo the words of the Bridegroom or King in the Song of Songs: *Ascendam in palmam et apprehendam fructus eius*.³⁶ Since this is the customary antiphon for Vespers on this Feast, the imagery would be familiar to the Paraclete nuns. Abelard associates the motif with the imagery of *Christus medicus* in both prose and verse. In *Sermo XXVI* he elaborates the typology

³¹ 74.7./1-4.

³² Gen.2.9; cf. Prov.3.18. where the Tree of Life is the personified Wisdom of God. See also 67.n.13 p.345.

³³ *Sermo* II (PL 178.392D).

³⁴ I Cor.15.22.

³⁵ Ambrose in Ps.35.3 (CSEL 64) p.51.

³⁶ CC 7.8.

of Christ the new Adam and the palm-tree/Cross. Christ, the new Adam, climbed the cross so that with its life-giving fruit He might cure the effects of the deadly poison man tasted when he ate the fruit of the forbidden tree:

Adam novus in ligno crucis redemit et de ligno ligni damna reparavit et noxii
pomi lethiferum gustum quasi medicamine quodam curavit; fructibus illis de
arbore crucis assumptis, de quibus ipsemet ait: Ascendam in palmam et
apprehendam fructus eius.³⁷

In the hymn he again focuses on the fruit of the cross as an antidote:

ut fructu tui
letalis pomi
restauret damna (9./1-3).

The stanza is reminiscent of Fortunatus' hymn *Pange, lingua: quando pomi noxialis morte morsu corrumpit* and *ipse lignum tunc notavit damna ligni ut solveret*.³⁸ Abelard combines the two ideas of *pomi noxialis* and *morte*, poison and death, into the one phrase *pomi letalis* (9./2), providing a more telling contrast with the fruit of the Cross which is the *lignum vitae* (8./1). "The losses of the deadly apple", *letalis pomi/...damna* (9./2-3), are the loss of paradise and of eternal life, both of which Christ restores through the Cross: *Adam novus in ligno crucis redemit et de ligno ligni damna reparavit*.³⁹ An illustration common in Books of Hours shows Eve plucking the fruit from the forbidden tree around which the serpent winds himself; Adam looks on. One of the branches of the tree blossoms into a crucifix. Disobedience and obedience, sin and its antidote are juxtaposed and interlaced in pictorial form.⁴⁰

Abelard plays on the double meaning of contrasting nouns *fructu* (9./1) and *damna* (9./3) and the verb *restauret* (9./3): "so that with the profit that comes from you He makes good the losses of the deadly apple". The losses (*damna*) incurred from Adam's eating of the apple in the Garden are offset by the profit (*fructus*) accrued from Christ's

37 *Sermo XXVI* (PL 178.545D-546A). Honorius *Expos. in C.C.VII* (PL 172.467D) identifies the palm and the cross and elaborates the meaning of the fruit as the resurrection, ascension, the descent of the Spirit and the salvation of all.

38 AH 50.66.2./3 and 5 (p.71).

39 See above n.35.

40 For illustrations see *The New Catholic Encyclopaedia* vol.14 "Tree of Life" p.269 and Rahner *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* Plate 1.

death on the cross. This financial metaphor is similar to that in Abelard's third hymn for Pentecost: *cordis exarat tabulas/ ut reparetur ratio*.⁴¹

The tree which the King of the Song of Songs climbs is a palm: *Ascendam in palmam...* The palm is identified in the hymn with the Tree of Life (*Tu lignum vitae/ in qua rex ipse/ conscendit, palma* 8./1-3). In his sermon Abelard concludes his exegesis on the work of *Christus medicus* on the cross:

Quid enim per palmam, qua victoria designatur, nisi crux Dominica significatur qua ipse diabolum triumphavit?⁴²

He identifies the Tree of Life and the cross with the palm which is a potent symbol of victory common to both the Romans and the Jews. Isidore writes

Palma dicta quia manus victricis ornatus est... Est enim arbor insigne victoriae.⁴³

It recurs throughout Christian literature and art in connection with victory, a prominent symbol on sarcophagi representing the promise of eternal life.

The final pair of stanzas turns from the cross as the Tree of Life to the cross as the Ship of Life. The transition may seem abrupt and the links between the two images somewhat tenuous; not so to the medieval consciousness imbued with a sense of what the Greeks referred to as *μυστήριον τοῦ ξύλου*, the Latins as *sacramentum ligni*.⁴⁴ The sailor (the Christian) is to sail on the tree of the cross as if it were a ship (*qua quasi nave* 10./2).

The ship is a common Christian symbol which has a twofold derivation. In classical works, both Greek and Latin, sailing is regarded as dicing with death. Juvenal writes:

...dolato
confusus ligno, digitis a morte remotus
quattuor aut septem, si sit latissima taeda.⁴⁵

⁴¹ 71.6./3-4.

⁴² See above n.37.

⁴³ Isidore *Etym.*17.7.1.

⁴⁴ Augustine *de catech.rud.*20 (34) p.86 *Nec ibi defuit ligni sacramentum*. For a full discussion and bibliography see Rahner pp.61ff.

⁴⁵ Juvenal *Sat.*XII.57-59. For detailed references see Rahner "Das Meer der Welt" *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 66 (1942) p.91ff.; "Das Schiff aus Holz" *ibid.* p.206ff. and 67 (1943) p.2ff.

The storms endured at sea were a metaphor for the change and chance of life.⁴⁶ Similarly, the Jews saw in a rough sea the picture of a life of tribulation. The Psalmist begs God: *Emitte manum tuam de alto, eripe me et libera me de aquis multis*.⁴⁷ As in the natural world a man needs a ship to keep him safe from the turbulent waves of the sea, so in the world of the spirit the Christian requires a boat in which to sail the sea of life, a boat which will keep him from drowning in the waves of temptation and tribulation.

The Fathers generally see the Church as that ship. A prayer from the Roman liturgy reflects the symbolism that is common in much patristic writing:

Exaudi nos, Domine Deus noster, et Ecclesiam tuam inter mundi turbines fluctuantem clementi gubernatione moderare, ut tranquillo cursu portum perpetuae securitatis inveniat.⁴⁸

If the Church is the ship, it follows that the cross is its mast, as Justin comments:

Mare non scinditur nisi tropaeum illud, quod dicitur velum, integrum in nave maneat.⁴⁹

Such is the normal conception of the ship and the mast, the Church and the cross.

Abelard follows a slightly less orthodox line where the cross itself is the ship. He has the authority of Augustine who says that no-one can traverse the sea of this world, unless he is carried on the cross of Christ:

Sic est enim tanquam videat quisque de longe patriam, et mare interiaceat; videt quo eat, sed non habet qua eat;...interiacet mare huius saeculi qua imus...Instituit lignum quo mare transeamus. Nemo enim potest transire mare huius saeculi nisi cruce Christi portatus.⁵⁰

Abelard follows this line precisely: the sea that must be crossed is this world (*mare...hoc* 11./1-2); it is great (*mare magnum* 11./1); but happy is the man who sails it on the ship that is the cross (*felici nautae/ qua quasi nave* 10./1-2), for he is already enjoying that eternal life (*fruendo vita* 10./3) which will be fully his when he reaches the harbour of Heaven.

Abelard links the two parts of this last section of the hymn not only through the idea of wood in the tree and the ship, but through the etymological play on *fructu* (9./1)

46 Anth.Pal.X.65./1-2. πλοῦς σφαλερὸς τὸ δῆν χειμαζόμενοι γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ
παλλὰκι νευηγῶν πταίομεν οἰκτροτέρᾳ.

47 Ps.143.7; cf. Ps.129.1.

48 Prayer from the Roman liturgy in Rahner p.348.

49 Justin Apol.I.55.3.

50 Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.*2.2. (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.12.

and *fruendo* (10./3). One of the profits from the cross is eternal life; the sailor who sails on the ship of the cross profits from eternal life.

The choice of *superna* (11./1) is audacious in the context for it seems that the sea stretches between earth and Heaven. Honorius has a similar image where he sees the cross as the Ark sailing to the stars:

Genus animantium ligno de undis diluvii sublevatur, qui Ecclesia adminiculo
ligni crucis de periculosis fluctibus mundi ad astra exaltatur.⁵¹

Many of the images in Abelard's hymn can be traced to Venantius' *Pange, lingua, gloriosi*, and *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.⁵² The latter is deliberately echoed in the opening stanza *Salve, coelestis/ vexillum regis* (1./1-2). The same hymn speaks of Christ reigning from the cross: *regnavit a ligno Deus* (stanza 4). In his eighth stanza Abelard has Christ the King climbing the tree (*Tu lignum vitae/ in qua rex ipse/ conscendit* 8./1-3). Venantius has the fruit of the cross (*fructu* 7./3) echoed in Abelard's *fructu tui* (9./1).

There are marked correspondences between *Pange, lingua* and the third section of Abelard's hymn. Part of Venantius' second stanza,

quando pomi noxialis/ morte morsu corrui,
ipse lignum tunc notavit,/ damna ligni ut solveret,

forms the basis of Abelard's ninth stanza,

ut fructu tui
letalis pomi
restauret damna (9./1-3).

With a masterly economy of words Abelard both echoes and adds to Venantius. *pomi* and *damna* are in each; *letalis* summarizes *noxialis/ morte*; Abelard's choice of *fructu* suggests the tree (*lignum*), but also provides a contrast to *pomi* and gives rise to the financial imagery of *fructu...restauret damna*.

Venantius' final image of the cross as a sailor,

atque portum praeparare
nauta mundo naufrago,

⁵¹ Honorius *Spec.Eocl.* (PL 172.943B).

⁵² AH 50.66 (p.71) and 67 (p.74).

is the source of Abelard's closing stanzas. Abelard, however, has changed the image from the cross as sailor to the cross as ship. This is in keeping with his treatment of the cross which is much less a personification than in Venantius.

Abelard's own contributions include the twofold anointing, of penitents and kings, with the sign of the cross, the cross as a punishment and a glory, the quotation from the Song of Songs, and the pun on *fructus* and *damna*. Although there is much in this hymn that is influenced by Venantius, Abelard has condensed, revised and added to his source to such an extent that the result is an original poem.

Is this hymn, then, one, two or three hymns? If the hymn is divided as Szövérfy suggests, we will have in all five hymns with 3, 4, 4, 6, 7 stanzas respectively. Abelard is normally more consistent in the number of stanzas in each hymn in a section. On the other hand, the 11 stanzas which at present make up 66. are still not consistent with 67. and 68. Dreves' point about the rhyme-scheme argues for a single hymn.⁵³ There are also thematic links between the sections:

- | | |
|--|---|
| A | C |
| a. triumph: <i>vexillum</i> (1./2) and <i>palma</i> (8./3) | |
| A | B |
| b. the strong man bound: <i>praedone</i> (2./2) and <i>religata</i> (5./3) | |
| A | B |
| c. cruelty of Satan: <i>diro</i> (2./2) and <i>crudelis</i> (5./2) | |
| A | C |
| d. Christ the King: <i>regis</i> (1./2) and <i>rex</i> (8./2). | |

It will be noticed that these thematic links lie between sections A and B, or A and C, not between B and C.

As Szövérfy points out, there are definite divisions within the hymn: the anaphora of *Tau* (4./1) and *Tu* (8./1) marks new sections and could easily mark the start of new hymns. The first section (stanzas 1-3) concentrates on the victory won on the cross over Satan and Hell; the second (stanzas 4-7) has a circular structure, beginning and ending with the sign of the Tau on the forehead; in the third (stanzas 8-11) the two images of the cross, the Tree of Life and the Ship of Life, are connected.

It is possible that the first section is the invitatory hymn which Abelard mentions in his third Preface, especially as the first word *Salve* echoes his instruction *quasi adorandam ac salutandam*.⁵⁴ These three stanzas would, in that case, stand at the

⁵³ Dreves p.184.

beginning of each Hour. They would be sung first in conjunction with the second hymn (stanzas 4-7), retaining the thematic links of the parable and the cruelty of Satan, then along with the third hymn (stanzas 8-11) with the links of triumph and Christ the King. The only problem is that there are no links between this "Invitatory" hymn and hymns 67 and 68. Perhaps, as with the rhyme-scheme, Abelard felt that he should not be completely bound by the structure he had set himself.

54 See foreword p.325.

10.3. 67.

Argument: As the bronze serpent healed the poison of the serpents in the wilderness, so Christ's death heals man from the poison of Satan, the serpent in Eden. Moses struck the rock twice and water flowed; Christ was nailed to two pieces of wood and gives the Christian the water of eternal life.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Serpens erectus
serpentum morsus
conspectu sanat; | 1. The serpent lifted up
heals the bites of serpents
when men look on it; |
| 2. antiqui virus
serpentis Christus
suspensus curat: | 2. Christ hanging from the Cross
cures the poison
of the ancient serpent: |
| 3. sophia patris
medelam cunctis
ex se ministrat. | 3. the Wisdom of the Father
gives the cure to all
out of Himself. |
| 4. Prophetæ virga
silex bis icta
aqua redundat; | 4. The rock struck twice
with the prophet's staff
overflows with water; |
| 5. lignis duobus
Christus appensus
de se nos potat: | 5. Christ hung on two timbers
quenches our thirst
from Himself: |
| 6. bibit Iudæus,
sed Christianus
refectus exstat. | 6. the Jew drinks,
but the Christian,
refreshed, lives on. |

The *figurae* which herald the cross in the preceding hymn almost all have their source in patristic writings. The exception is the palm-tree which the King ascends, an image taken from the Song of Songs, but even it is given a peculiarly patristic interpretation.¹ In 67 there is an entirely different kind of *figura*. This hymn, together with 68, concentrates on one section of Old Testament typology, three incidents in the life of Moses: the healing of the people through the brazen serpent, the provision of water from a rock in 67, and in 68 the sweetening of the waters of Mara. Wood is the common motif: Moses raises the serpent on a pole, he strikes the rock with his staff and drops wood into the bitter waters.

The six stanzas of the hymn form two parallel sections:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| A. | B. |
| 1. O.T. prefiguration | 4. O.T. prefiguration |
| 2. N.T. fulfilment | 5. N.T. fulfilment |
| 3. theological comment | 6. theological comment |

The first prefiguration to which the hymn refers is recorded in Numbers.² The Israelites have murmured against the Lord:

quamobrem misit Dominus in populum ignitos serpentes, ad quorum plagas et mortes plurimorum.

The people approach Moses in penitence; Moses obeys the command of the Lord:

Fecit ergo Moyses serpentem aeneum, et posuit eum pro signo: quem cum percussi aspicerent, sanabantur.

Christ Himself points to this incident as prefiguring His own death:

Et sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in deserto, ita exaltari oportet Filium hominis: ut omnis qui credit in ipsum non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam.³

This is the interpretation on which later writers build. In general, they add little to the main *figura* except to elaborate the significance of the wood which is left undeveloped in the Gospel. Moses is told to set up the serpent as a sign or standard (*pro signo*). The Fathers take as read the inference that it was lifted on a pole of wood.

Augustine, whose interpretation is that followed by the majority of commentators, works out the allegory: the snakes are the sins of the flesh, the serpent lifted on high

¹ See discussion on 66 stanzas 8 and 9 pp.335-6.

² Num.21.4-9.

³ John 3.14-15.

the death of Christ: the bite of the serpent is deadly but the death of Christ brings life; Christ is Life, yet Life dies; death is destroyed through death, as the bronze serpent destroys the poison of the deadly serpents:

Interim modo, fratres, ut a peccato sanemur, Christum crucifixum intueamur...Quomodo qui intuebantur illum serpentem morsibus serpentum, sic qui intuentur fide mortem Christi, sanantur a morsibus peccatorum.⁴

Just as the serpent on the pole healed the deadly poison of the serpents in the people who looked up at it, so Christ's death on the cross heals the death by which man is afflicted. Like heals like.

In one work Rabanus Maurus follows Augustine's interpretation that the serpent is the death of Christ.⁵ In another he sees the typology in a new light. His interpretation hangs on the image of Satan as the serpent in the Garden of Eden:⁶

Sed quid illud significat, quod morsus mortiferi serpentum, exaltato et respecto aeneo serpente, sanabantur, nisi quod nunc in typo Salvatoris, qui ferum antiquum serpentem in patibulo triumphavit, diaboli venena superantur, ita ut qui vere expresseque imaginem Filii Dei passionemque eius conspexerit, conservetur?⁶

Here Christ is Himself the serpent Who on the cross triumphs over the ancient serpent and Who through His death overcomes the poison of the devil.

Abelard's first stanza, a masterpiece of brevity, leads by a natural extension of the image of the serpents' bite (*serpentum morsus* 1./2) to the serpent's poison (*antiqui virus/ serpentis* 2./1-2). Peter Damian has a similar transition:

Recte ergo serpens aeneus pro signo ponitur, et populus aspiciens a morsu serpentium liberatur; quia quicumque in Salvatore, qui in cruce suspensus est, ex desiderio imitationis intendunt, omne mox virus et lethiferos morsus veteris serpentis evadunt.⁷

Damian speaks of the *veterosus serpens*, Abelard of the *antiquus serpens*. Abelard's is the Scriptural term. The fiery serpents of the Old Testament become the ancient serpent, a description of Satan familiar from the Apocalypse, *serpens antiquus qui*

4 Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* 12.11 (CC Ser.Lat.36) pp.126-127.

5 Rabanus Maurus *Homil.* LX (PL 110.261D).

6 Rabanus Maurus *Enarr.in Num.* III.2 (PL 108.713A); cf. Peter Damian *Sermo* XLVIII.2 *aeneus itaque serpens Dominum figuravit, qui infusum nobis venenum diabolicae suggestionis abegit* (CC Cont.Med.57) pp.293-4.

7 Peter Damian *Sermo* XLVIII.3 (CC Cont.Med.57) p.294.

vocatur diabolus et Satanas, and from the Fathers.⁸ Cyprian transfers the epithet from the serpent to his poison in words of which this stanza is reminiscent: *venena serpentis antiqua curasset*.⁹

There is a neat contrast in the parallel statements on the bronze serpent and Christ: the serpent is raised up, *serpens erectus* (1./1), Christ is hanging, *Christus/suspensus* (2./2-3). That the antithesis is a conscious opposition is clear from the parallel structures of the first two stanzas:

<i>serpens erectus</i>	<i>antiqui virus</i>
<i>serpentum morsus</i>	<i>serpentis Christus</i>
<i>conspectu sanat;</i>	<i>suspensus curat.</i>

sanat (1./3) balances *curat* (2./3) precisely; *serpens* (1./1) and *Christus* (2./2) are also balanced, one at either end of the first couplet, as are the problems each cures, *serpentum morsus* (1./2) and *virus/ serpentis* (2./1-2). Not only are these last two phrases chiastically arranged (serpent, bite, poison, serpent; genitive, accusative, accusative, genitive), but so on a larger scale are the problems and their cures: *serpens* (cure), *morsus* (problem), *virus* (problem), *Christus* (cure). The only words in the two stanzas which are not balanced are the entirely unconnected *conspectu* (1./3) and *antiqui* (2./1).

The third stanza contains the theological comment on the *figura* and its fulfilment. Christ is here the personified Wisdom of the Father, *sophia patris* (3./1). There is only one instance in the New Testament where Christ is undoubtedly meant by the phrase "wisdom of God": *nos autem praedicamus ...Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam*.¹⁰ In Luke the wisdom of God speaks: *Propterea et sapientia Dei dixit...*¹¹ This is taken as a reference to Christ for, when God speaks, it is through the Logos, and the Logos is Christ.¹² Abelard interprets a reference to Wisdom in Proverbs as Christocentric: Christ is both Wisdom and the Tree of Life:

⁸ Apoc.12.9.

⁹ Cyprian *de opere et eleemosynis* I (PL 4.625).

¹⁰ I Cor.1.23-24.

¹¹ Luke 11.49.

¹² See Abelard *Theol.Christ*.I.16 (CC Cont.Med.12) p.78.

Scriptum quippe est de sapientia, quae Dei Verbum intelligitur, quia lignum vitae est his qui apprehendunt eam.¹³

He continues,

Quid autem humanitas nisi arbor maledicta et tamquam lignum mortis antea erat? Quasi ergo vitae lignum mortis insertum intelligite, cum in Virgine velut in bona terra haec insertio sit facta.

He is careful to equate the words *sophia* and *sapientia* for those who might be confused by the less common *sophia*: *nomine quidem cum nos a vera sophia, hoc est sapientia Dei Patris quae Christus est, Christiani dicamur.*¹⁴

The identification of the Wisdom of God with the Son of God is taken over from Paul by the Fathers. Prudentius, for instance, has *corde Patris genita est sapientia, filius ipse sit.*¹⁵ Augustine, in a sentence to which we shall have cause to refer again, writes *sic sapientia Dei hominem curans seipsam exhibuit ad sanandum, ipsa medicus, ipsa medicina*: this is the very work of Christ.¹⁶

It is necessary to look briefly at the associated concept of *Christus medicus* which this quotation introduces since Abelard uses the image not only in this hymn but to a lesser degree in the others for the Feast. The background is found in the Old Testament in God's words to His people and in prophecies of the Messiah. At the waters of Mara, the *figura* of the next hymn, the Lord promises *Ego enim Dominus sanator tuus*; Isaiah says of Christ: *Ipse vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras...et livore eius sanati sumus*, while the great Messianic prophecy of Malachi proclaims *Et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum Sol iustitiae et sanitas in pennis eius*; Christ refers to Himself as the Physician: *Non necesse habent sani medicum, sed qui male habent.*¹⁷

13 *Sermo I* (PL 178.386) quoting Prov.3.18 *Lignum vitae est (sapientia) his qui apprehendunt eam.* Rahner *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (London 1962) p.59. comments, "It is among the fundamental principles of the early Christian theology of symbolism that everything revealed by God in the Old Testament, from the Tree of Life (Gen.2.9) to the personal Wisdom of God (Prov.3.18) in which this tree of life was embodied, is only made known to us because of its relevance to the coming event of our salvation through the death on the cross of the divine Wisdom made man."

14 *Theol.Christ.II.43.* (CC Cont.Med.12) p.149.

15 Prudentius *Apoth.(I Praef.)* l.2. (CC Ser.Lat.126) p.73.

16 Augustine *de doctr.Christ.I.14.13.*

17 Ex.15.26.; Is.53.5.; Mal.4.2.; Mark 2.17.

The symbol pervades the writings of the Fathers (Cyprian, in the quotation above, has *venena serpentis antiqua curasset*), but it probably finds its fullest expression in Augustine.¹⁸ Arbesmann has made a thorough study of the symbol in "The Concept of *Christus medicus* in St. Augustine", an article to which I am indebted for many references.¹⁹ It is an image which is taken up with alacrity by hymn-writers, partly because the symbol is potent, partly because it has been so elaborated elsewhere that the hymnist need only make a brief allusion to evoke a vast range of related images.²⁰ Abelard elaborates the theme in these hymns for the Holy Cross. The first allusion comes in 66,

ut fructu tui
letalis pomi
restauret damna,

where the adjective *letalis* suggests the need for healing.²¹ It is developed in this present hymn, where the verbal *sanat* (1./3), *vrus* (2./1), *curat* (2./3), *medelam* (3./2) and *ministrat* (3./3) combine with the typological *figura* of the healing of the Israelites to create a powerful symbol of the efficacy of Christ's death on the cross as a cure for the death to which man is subject. In 68 there is a further allusion,

lignum amaras/ indulcat aquas

which involves the idea of the sweetening of bitter medicine to make it palatable.²²

We return to the words of Augustine quoted above,

sic sapientia Dei hominem curans seipsam exhibuit ad sanandum, ipsa medicus,
ipsa medicina.²³

Augustine sees Christ, the Wisdom of God, as both doctor and medicine, the One Who prescribes the cure and Who is the cure. That Abelard had this sentence in mind when he wrote these stanzas cannot be proved, but the evidence is suggestive. Augustine

¹⁸ See above n.4.

¹⁹ R. Arbesmann "The Concept of *Christus medicus* in St. Augustine" *Traditio* 10 (1955) pp.1-28.

²⁰ e.g. the ancient hymn *Rex aeternae Domine: bonus adstistis medicus* and *ut nostra cures vulnera* (Walpole 42.56, 62, p.216); *ut flagitemus vulnerum/ a te medellam omnium* (*ibid.* 68.8 p.272); *Iesus redemptor omnium/ sanavit orbem languidum* (*ibid.* 104.3-4, p.337).

²¹ 66.9./1-3.

²² 68.1./1-2.

²³ See above n.16.

speaks of Christ as *sapientia Dei*, Abelard has the parallel *sophia patris*; Augustine has *curans* and *ad sanandum*, Abelard *curat* and *sanat*; and Abelard's slightly odd phrase *ex se ministrat* makes sense as a rendering of Augustine's *seipsam exhibuit ad sanandum*. I find the echoes convincing.

In the last section of the preceding hymn the cross is the Tree of Life with whose fruit the losses incurred through the forbidden fruit are restored to man. In this present hymn the cross is the wood of the prophet's staff. As the bronze serpent on the staff cured the Israelites, so Christ cures the poison of original sin in man. He gives the cure out of Himself:

medelam cunctis/ ex se ministrat (3./2-3).

medelam is a conscious reminiscence of Fortunatus's lines:

et medelam ferret inde/ hostis unde laeserat,

in which Christ takes the cure for man from the place where the enemy poisoned man: from the tree.²⁴ This is the theme of the preceding hymn:

Tu lignum vitae.../ut fructu tui
letalis pomi/ restauret damna.²⁵

Abelard takes the idea for these lines in 66 from Fortunatus, but verbally evokes Fortunatus in 67. The intertwining of images binds the three hymns together.

With the fourth stanza there begins a new section of three stanzas which, like the first section, opens with an Old Testament prefiguration. Again it is an incident in the life of Moses, when he struck a rock so that water flowed out to refresh the Israelites. There are two occasions on which this happened, the first when, in obedience to God's command, Moses struck the rock once with his staff, the second in disobedience when he struck twice: *Cumque eleuasset Moyses manum, percutiens utraque bis silicem, egressae sunt aquae largissimae, ita ut populus biberet et tumenta*.²⁶

Both incidents are seen as prefigurations of Christ's death on the cross. The fourth century bishop Gregory of Elvira comments that the rock is Christ's body which poured forth living water after it was struck by the cross:

²⁴ Venantius Fortunatus *Pange, lingua gloriosi* AH 50.66.3./5-6 (p.71); cf. *Omne delictum ablue, / piam medelam tribue* (AH 2.107.4./3-4).

²⁵ 66.8./1, 9./1-3.

²⁶ Ex.17.5-6 and Num.20.7-11.

Petram autem illam imaginem dominicae carnis habuisse nulla dubitatio est; quae caro crucis ligno percussa aquam vivam sitientibus tribuit, sicut scriptum est: Flumina e ventre eius procedent.²⁷

It is the second incident to which the hymn refers: *silex bis icta* (4./2).

The emphasis in the first line is not so much on Moses as on his staff, *prophetae virga* (4./1). Honorius lists the various times at which the staff played a crucial part, adding after the first event that the staff is the cross:

Virga Moysi (sic) in draconem mutatur, a qua dracones magorum devorantur. Virga haec est sancta crux...Hac virga mare dividitur, populus redimitur, hostis insequens undis immergitur...Hac virga bis petra percutitur et aqua producit, dum Christus duobus lignis affligitur et aqua redemptionis ex eo elicitur.²⁸

The double striking of the rock is a symbol of the two pieces of wood of the cross, the words with which Abelard's fifth stanza, the stanza of fulfilment, opens: *lignis duobus* (5./1). Both Honorius and Abelard seem to be following Augustine who begins his exposition by quoting Paul:

petra autem erat Christus...Sed quod virga petra percutitur, crux Christi figuratur. Ligno enim accedente ad petram gratia ista manavit; et quod bis percutitur, evidentius significat crucem. Duo quippe ligna sunt crux.²⁹

Like stanzas 1 and 2, Old Testament prefiguration and New Testament fulfilment, the parallel stanzas 4 and 5 are neatly balanced:

prophetae virga	lignis duobus
silex bis icta	Christus appensus
aqua redundat;	de se nos potat.

The nominative *silex* is balanced by *Christus*, the participle *icta* by *appensus*, the verb *redundat* by *potat*. *Variatio* is provided by *lignis* which, although it parallels *virga*, does not occupy the same position in the line, and by the equivalents *bis* and *duobus*, which are in different lines.

Although the fifth stanza is in structural terms the equivalent of the second (*antiqui virus...*), it is also reminiscent of the third, the stanza of theological comment. There Christ gives the cure out of Himself, *ex se ministrat* (3./3); here He gives us to drink from Himself, *de se nos potat* (5./3).³⁰

²⁷ Gregory of Elvira *Tract.Orig.*15.11. quoting John 7.38 (CC Ser.Lat.69) p.114.

²⁸ Honorius *Spec.Eccl.* (PL 172.943D-944A).

²⁹ Augustine *Quaest.Num.*35 (CC Ser.Lat.33) pp.260-1, quoting I Cor.12.13.

³⁰ *potare* in ante-classical and post-Augustan Latin is active, but in late Latin it is causative "to give to drink, to cause to drink". Lewis and Short (pp.1409-1410) cite Ps.59.5 *potasti nos vino*;

What, then, is the drink with which He quenches our thirst? Peter Damian gives one answer which derives in some measure from Paul's words, *et omnes unum Spiritum potati sumus*, and also from the interpretation given by Augustine on the water issuing from the rock: *significata est ergo de Christo profluens gratia spiritalis, qua interior sitis irrigaretur*.³¹ Damian sees in the gushing water a symbol of the outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit:

Huic itaque petrae lignum crucis accessit, et mox, tamquam aquae profluentis inundantiam, larga sancti Spiritus dona profudit.³²

It is possible that Abelard too is thinking along these lines: the use of the verb *redundat* (4./3) would support this interpretation since it echoes the words generally used to describe the outflowing of the Spirit. Damian, in the passage above, has *inundantia* and in the parallel passage *inundantia* and *inundamur*. There is, however, another possibility for the nature of the drink which accords better with the language of these stanzas.

Abelard uses the verb *potare* in an elaboration of the image of drinking: *Nilus itaque de paradiso manans ipsa Dei sapientia est de superis descendens, ut nos de fonte vero potaret*.³³ This last phrase, *de fonte vero*, gives the clue to the origin of the image, apart, that is, from the typology of the water from the rock. Christ tells the Samaritan woman at the well that the man who drinks of the water which He gives will never thirst again:

Omnis qui bibit ex aqua hac, sitiet iterum; qui autem biberit ex aqua quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in aeternum.³⁴

That water flows from Himself: *Bibebant autem de spiritali...petra; petra autem erat Christus*.³⁵ The Psalmist promises that God will give men to drink from the spring of

Ps.68.22 *potaverunt me aceto*.

31 See above n.29.

32 Peter Damian *Sermo XVIII.7* (CC Cont.Med.57) p.114; cf. *Sermo XLVIII.7* p.297.

33 *Sermo XXI* (PL 178.520B).

34 John 4.13.

35 Peter Damian *Sermo XVIII.7* (CC Cont.Med.57) p.114.

life: *et torrente deliciarum tuarum potabis eos quoniam tecum est fons vitae*.³⁶ The drink received from Christ is eternal life.

This interpretation is in line with the significance of the first *figura* in the hymn, for the cure which Christ gives is the death of death, that is, life. Here the water which flows from Christ the rock is the water of life. Gregory of Elvira calls it "living water": *quae caro crucis ligno percussa aquam vivam sitientibus tribuit*.³⁷

The echo of Augustine in the sixth stanza clarifies Abelard's intention. Augustine contrasts the healing of the Israelites by means of the brazen serpent with that effected by Christ's death on the cross. The Israelites were healed, yet in course of time died a natural death, but those whom Christ heals have eternal life:

sed illi sanabantur a morte ad vitam temporalem, hic (i.e. Christ) autem ait: ut habeant vitam aeternam. Hoc enim interest inter figuratam imaginem et rem ipsam; figura praestabat vitam temporalem; res ipsa cuius illa figura erat, praestat vitam aeternam.³⁸

It is for this reason that Abelard contrasts *bibit* and *exstat*,

Bibit Iudaeus,
sed Christianus
...exstat (6./1-3):

the Jew drank but eventually died a normal death; the Christian lives on.

The participle *refectus* echoes Augustine's commentary on Christ's conversation with the woman at the well:

"Da mihi" inquit "Domine, de hac aqua:" sic et isti "Domine, da nobis panem hunc, qui nos reficiat, nec deficiat."³⁹

Here Augustine has brought together images of Christ as the spring of the water of life and as the bread of life from Heaven, just as Christ Himself does:

Ego sum panis vitae; qui venit ad me non esuriet et qui credit in me non sitiet unquam.⁴⁰

Christ contrasts the bread Moses gave to the Israelites in the wilderness with the true bread:

36 Ps.35.9.

37 See above n.27.

38 Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* 12.11 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.127.

39 Augustine *Tract.in Ioh.* 25.13 (CC Ser.Lat.36) p.255.

40 John 6.35; 47-50.

qui credit in me habet vitam aeternam. Ego sum panis vitae. Patres vestri manducaverunt in deserto manna et mortui sunt; hic est panis de caelo descendens ut si quis ex ipso manducaverit non moriatur.

Abelard transfers this contrast between the manna and the bread to the water which sprang from the rock and that which springs from Christ. The Jew drank and died; the Christian drinks and lives for ever.

10.4. 68.

Argument: As the wood sweetens the waters of Mara, so the example of Christ sweetens suffering for the Christian. Christ has drunk the most bitter cup of death for He took man's sin upon Himself. His followers must suffer too.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Lignum amaras
indulcat aquas
eis immissum; | 1. The wood plunged
into the bitter waters
sweetens them; |
| 2. omnes agones
sunt sanctis dulces
per crucifixum. | 2. all sufferings
are sweet to the saints
through the Crucified. |
| 3. Calix praeclarus
mortis est potus
ipsis per ipsum; | 3. The celebrated cup of death
has been drunk
for them by Him. |
| 4. quaeque tormenta
sunt eis grata
per hoc exemplum. | 4. every torment
is welcome to them
through His example. |
| 5. "Ut dolor meus
dolor est nullus,"
attendunt scriptum; | 5. They heed what is written:
"There is no sorrow
like unto My sorrow;" |
| 6. quippe qui cuncta
portat peccata,
nescit peccatum. | 6. for He Who bears
all sins,
knows no sin. |
| 7. Passio pro cunctis
est universis
compatiendum. | 7. All must suffer
with the One
Who suffered for all. |

Like 67, this hymn has a well-defined structure: of the seven stanzas the first six form three pairs, each of which is a restatement and extension of the preceding pair, the seventh a realization of the logical result of the argument. The *figura* of the wood which made what was bitter sweet leads on to the proposition that the crucifixion of Christ makes suffering sweet to the saints (stanzas 1 and 2). Because Christ tasted death for all men, the saints, through His example, welcome martyrdom of all kinds (stanzas 3 and 4). In the third pair (stanzas 5 and 6) Abelard stresses the uniqueness of Christ's death in order to refute the possible objection that the torture suffered by martyrs is sometimes worse than that suffered by Christ. The final stanza summarizes the message of the hymn: Christians must suffer with the One Who suffered for all.

The *figura* on which the hymn is founded is the third of the incidents in the life of Moses mentioned in the discussion on 67. Here we have the sweetening of the waters of Mara. The Israelites complain because the waters at Mara are bitter and undrinkable; God provides a miracle:

nec poterant bibere aquas de Mara eo quod essent amarae...At ille (Moyses)
clamavit ad Dominum qui ostendit ei lignum; quod cum misisset in aquas, in
dulcedinem versae sunt.¹

Abelard echoes the language of Exodus closely: *lignum* occurs in both the passage and the hymn, as do *aquae* and *amarae*; *indulcat* (1./2) corresponds to the phrase *in dulcedinem* and *inmisit* (1./3) to *misisset in*. He has deliberately placed *lignum* and *amaras* together in the first line of the hymn so that the incident to which he is referring will be clear at the outset: their juxtaposition points to only one event.

Lignum is given the position of prime importance because it links this hymn with the preceding two: in 66 there is the phrase *lignum vitae* and in 67 *lignis duobus*.² Since both are unquestionably references to the Cross (*Tu, lignum vitae, / in qua rex ipse / conscendit* and *lignis duobus / Christus appensus*), *lignum amaras* (1./1) must contain a figurative meaning. Augustine comments briefly: *per lignum aquas dulces fecit, praefigurans gloriam et gratiam crucis*.³ Tertullian links the *figura* with the sacrament of baptism:

1 Exod.15.23-25.

2 66.8./1 and 67.5./1.

3 Augustine *Quaest.Ex.*57 (CC Ser.Lat.33) p.95.

Hoc lignum tunc in sacramento erat, quo Moyses aquam amaram indulcavit;
unde populus, qui siti peribat in eremo, bibendo revixit: sicuti nos...ligno
passionis Christi aquam edulcatam baptismatis potantes...reviximus.⁴

Although the notion of baptism is not explicit in Abelard's hymn, it is unlikely that it was far from his mind.

Honorius elaborates the typology of the wood when he tells a legend in which the wood is not merely a *figura*, but the very wood of the cross: the wood with which Moses sweetened the waters was brought to Jerusalem where it was eventually thrown into a pool. In honour of the wood an angel troubled the waters once yearly. The first person to enter the pool was healed. The soldiers used this wood for the cross:

Hoc ergo sumpto, crucem inde fecerunt, humeris Christi portandum
imposuerunt, eumque ad salvationem populi ut serpentem in deserto in ipso
exaltaverunt.⁵

He discusses the significance of the pool as a type of the waters of baptism:

unus in aquam descendens sanatur, utique Christianus populus qui in undam
baptismatis descendens regeneratur.⁶

indulcat (1./2) is echoed by *dulces* in the second stanza:

omnes agones
sunt sanctis dulces
per crucifixum (2./1-3).

As the wood sweetened the bitter waters, so the Cross sweetens the bitterness of suffering for the faithful. The general interpretation is that suffering is sweet because it leads to eternal life. Honorius again:

Populus...est Christianus populus. Cui aquam per lignum indulcoravit, quia ei
mors per crucem levigatur...Quo ligno aqua fit potabilis, quia amore crucis
Christi fit mors multis optabilis, dum sperant se exutos corpore vestiri stola
immortalitatis.⁷

Abelard's interpretation, however, is not in the mainstream of the tradition and will need to be discussed in relation to the fourth stanza which restates and extends this stanza.

4 Tertullian *adv.Iudaeos* (PL 2.675A-B).

5 Honorius *Spec.Eccl.* (PL 172.944C).

6 See above n.5. The pool appears in John 5.2.

7 Honorius *Spec.Eccl.* (PL 172.944A-B).

The cup (*calix praeclarus* 3./1) is a motif common to both the Old and New Testaments. In a metaphorical sense it often represents those afflictions which God visits upon an individual or a nation, usually Israel. So Isaiah:

...Ierusalem, quae bibisti de manu Domini calicem irae eius; usque ad fundum calicis soporis bibisti, et potasti usque ad faeces.⁸

In the New Testament Christ uses the metaphor to speak of His death. He asks James and John: *Potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibo?* and in Gethsemane He prays *Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.*⁹

The metaphor of the cup is integral to the concept of *Christus medicus*.¹⁰ The cup contains the medicine which must be drunk to the dregs. Augustine, the foremost proponent of the motif of *Christus medicus* in Christian Latin literature, uses the metaphor to stress that the virtue of humility is the foundation of the Christian life. For him the humility of Christ, the divine Physician, shown in His incarnation, His life of service, His death on the cross, has cured man from the deadly tumour of pride which caused man's fall through the sin of Adam and Eve.

As a variation on this theme of the *medicus humilis* is the *calix humilitatis*: Christ has drunk from the cup of humility in that the Physician has deigned to drink the medicine Himself before giving it to the patient.¹¹ In a phrase, which is echoed in Abelard's hymn through the close association of the bitter waters and the cup of death, Augustine speaks of the *calix amaritudinis*:

docuit nos ferre insultantes, docuit adversus linguas hominum esse patientes, bibere modo calicem amaritudinis, et postea accipere sempiternam salutem.¹²

He instructs the Christian to drink this bitter cup in order to be cured; he need not fear its bitterness because Christ has already drunk of it:

⁸ Is.51.17; cf. Ier.25.15.

⁹ Mark 10.38; Matt.26.39.

¹⁰ See discussion on 67 pp.345-7.

¹¹ Augustine Morin 568 quoted by Arbesmann "The Concept of *Christus medicus* in St. Augustine" *Traditio* 10 (1955) pp.1-28. Morin: *Miscellanea Agostiniana: Testi e studi* (Rome 1930) I: *Sancti Augustini sermones post Maurinos reperti*, a text which I have, unfortunately, not been able to read.

¹² Augustine *Enarr.in Ps.*48.1.11 (CC Ser.Lat.38) p.560.

Bibe, aeger, calicem amarum, ut sanus sis, cui non sunt sana viscera: noli trepidare, quia ne trepidares, prior bibit medicus; id est, passionis amaritudinem bibit prior Dominus.

Christ is the example for the Christian to follow: *calicem humilitatis etus bibamus*.¹³ This is precisely the line Abelard takes in the fourth stanza in *per hoc exemplum* (4./3): since Christ has drunk from the cup of death (*calix.../ mortis est potus* 4./1-2) all suffering is welcome to the saints through His example. That the fourth stanza is an intentional reworking of the second is demonstrated by the parallel structures of each: *quaeque tormenta* (4./1) is the equivalent of *omnes agones* (2./1); *sunt eis grata* (4./2) repeats *sunt sanctis dulces* (2./2) and *per hoc exemplum* (4./3) balances *per crucifixum* (2./3).

Although Abelard does not suggest anything new by *per hoc exemplum*, the phrase is much more than a mere reiteration of an Augustinian motif, for in his theological works Abelard develops exemplarism as the centre of his doctrine of the Atonement. He regards Christ's death on the Cross as an *exemplum* of the love of God for man. When men see and understand this love, they in turn will be drawn to love for God and to a desire to follow in Christ's path, the path of suffering and humility. In *Sermo XII* he quotes from Ps.115:

Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?...Calicem salutaris accipiam. Quod quia virium nostrarum non est ut calicem salutaris accipiamus, hoc est passioni Iesu patiendo communicemus, et nostram quoque crucem balulando, eum sequamur.¹⁴

J.G.Sikes explains Abelard's exemplarist theory:

The Cross becomes merely the incentive which induces us to follow in the road that Jesus trod; it was by showing us in his person and in his words the way in which men ought to live that the incarnate Lord freed us from the penalty of Adam's sin. For Abailard, Jesus was not the Man of Sorrows carrying the burden of our guilt or the victim offered up to the Father as a recompense for our sins, so much as the divine Logos made manifest to the world, incarnate because He would reveal to mankind the path of righteousness...Abailard regards the work of Christ as inspiring a new motive into our actions.¹⁵

So the Christian not only expects suffering but rejoices in it. The example of Christ crucified for man evokes in man a gratitude which regards affliction as a joyful response

¹³ Augustine Morin 568.

¹⁴ *Sermo XII* (PL 178.484A).

¹⁵ J.G.Sikes *Peter Abailard* (Cambridge 1932) ch.VIII pp.207-208 and p.209.

to His sacrifice. That He has drunk a cup more bitter than anything demanded of His followers serves to make any suffering not merely bearable, but sweet. Such is the emphasis of the fifth stanza, an adapted quotation from Lamentations: *Attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus*.¹⁶ Abelard develops his theme in *Sermo XII*:

Conferant martyres quae passi sunt et videant in comparatione Dominicae passionis nulla esse vel parva quae passi sunt. Unde et bene in eius persona suspirantis Ieremiae lamentatio proclamat: Attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus. Attendant hoc mulieres...pro nihilo ducentes quae passi sunt servi in consideratione Dominicae passionis.¹⁷

The saints pay heed to the prophecy (*attendunt scriptum* 5./3), just as Abelard encourages the nuns to do in the sermon, *Attendant hoc mulieres*: they are to realize that their sufferings are nothing to His.

The sixth stanza develops the significance of the prophecy *Ut dolor meus...*(5./1-2). Abelard has already anticipated in the third stanza the possible objection that the afflictions of the martyrs are in some cases more severe than those endured by Christ: the cup from which Christ has drunk is, he says, special; it is a *calix praeclarus* (3./1). He now explains how it differs from that tasted by the saints. Christ's sorrow is unique because He alone did not have to endure death, for death is the result of sin.¹⁸ Christ had no sin, yet He took on Him the sin of the world: *Eum qui non noverat peccatum, pro nobis peccatum fecit*.¹⁹ Augustine's *Christus medicus* passage quoted above continues: *Bibit qui peccatum non habebat, qui quod in eo sanaretur non habebat*.²⁰

portat peccata (6./2) is reminiscent of the prophecies of Isaiah which describe the Messiah: *et iniquitates eorum ipse portabit* and *et dolores nostros ipse portavit*.²¹ The latter phrase fits neatly with the theme of the fifth stanza, and it is probably Isaiah's words, with their verbal link with the quotation from Lamentations (*dolor*), that caused Abelard to choose *portat* as the verb in 6./2: there is no sorrow like unto Christ's sorrow

¹⁶ Thren.1.2.

¹⁷ *Sermo XII* (PL 178.483B).

¹⁸ Rom.5.12 ...*per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit et per peccatum mors*; cf. Rom.6.23.

¹⁹ II Cor.5.21.

²⁰ See above n.11.

²¹ Is.53.11 and 53.4.

for He carries all our sins. *cuncta portat peccata* also echoes the Baptist's words, *Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi*.²² *peccatum mundi* becomes in the liturgy *peccata mundi*, a change which Abelard retains for a special purpose: Christ bore all the different sins of men (*peccata*) although He Himself knew not even one (*nescit peccatum* 6./3).

cuncta (6./1) is picked up in the seventh stanza by *cunctis* (7./1): Christ bore **all** the sins of men and so suffered for **all** men. The stanza is elegantly structured with the balancing cognates *passo* and *compatiendum* at the beginning and end. The variation *cunctis* (7./1) and *universis* (7./2) emphasizes that Christ suffered for all, so all must suffer. The chiasmatically arranged pattern of **p** and **c**, *passo...cunctis...compatiendum* underlines the correlation.

This final stanza is the realization in practice of the theoretical argument set out in the rest of the hymn. That Christ's suffering makes all suffering sweet is the theory; that all must suffer is the theory in practice. The three lines

*passo pro cunctis
est universis
compatiendum (7./1-3)*

summarise the theme which runs through the hymns for Good Friday, a feast which is naturally associated with this through the central rôle of the Cross in each. There the theme is at its most explicit in the stanza which takes the place of the doxology:

Tu, tibi compati sic fac nos, Domine,
tuae participes ut simus gloriae.²³

In the Sacred Triduum hymns the sweetness of suffering with Christ derives from the hope of eternal joy, whereas in this hymn for the Holy Cross affliction is sweet because it is the only possible response to Christ's love for men.

²² John 1.29.

²³ 45.4./1-2; cf. 42.8./1-3 and 48.2./1-2.

11.1. *de Pentecoste* - foreword

The first hymn celebrates the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were bestowed on the apostles at Pentecost and prays in its first and last stanzas that these same gifts be poured out today. The gifts are not those usually associated with Pentecost, the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit in wind, fire and tongues, but the seven graces of the Spirit in the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah.¹ Abelard thus sets Pentecost in its Old Testament context but, by referring throughout the hymn to the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer, he emphasizes that the prophecy of the Old Testament has been fulfilled in the New. This is the pattern of the three subsequent hymns.

The second hymn focuses on the numerology of Pentecost: the Feast occurs fifty days after the resurrection. Fifty in the Old Testament signifies the year of Jubilee when men are freed from their debts. In the New Testament the Spirit Who came at Pentecost fulfils this foreshadowing since He sets men free from the Law, putting love in its stead.

The hymn for the third Nocturn contrasts the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai with its New Testament parallel, the descent of the Spirit on the disciples in the upper room. The divine manifestations which occurred on each occasion are juxtaposed, as are the opposite reactions of fear and love which they produced.

In the fourth hymn two Old Testament passages are interlaced: the Tower of Babel and Joel's prophecy:

Et erit post haec effundam Spiritum meum super omnem carnem: et prophetabunt filii vestri et filiae vestrae...²

At Babel the earth's one language became many so that people could not understand each other; at Pentecost, in fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, the earth's many languages became one in the mouths of the apostles, for they spoke new tongues and all men could understand.

69 has no verbal links with the other three because it lies outside the main focus of the section: it concentrates on Isaiah's graces of the Spirit, 70-72 on the gifts of the Spirit at the first Pentecost of the Church as recounted in Acts.

The other three hymns are, however, verbally interlinked. The final stanza of 70 contrasts the Law of Moses, which brought fear to the heart of man, with the new law of

¹ Is. 11.2-3.

² Joel 2.28.

love. 71 opens with the giving of that old Law to Moses at Sinai when men were struck by fear:

Lex vetus...	Tradente legem Domino
servos metu coercuit (70.6./1-2)	mons tremens metum attulit (71.1./1-2).

Similarly, in the last stanza of 71 the Paraclete is called *divina consolatio* (71.6./2) and in the first stanza of 72 He is *divinus...Spiritus* (72.1./2), a variation on the more common *Spiritus sanctus*. The work of the Spirit in 71 is to engrave the tablets of the heart with the new commandment of love, His work in 72 to enrich the heart with knowledge of new languages:

divina consolatio	divinus replens Spritus
cordis exarat tabulas (71.6./2-3)	corda ditat scientia
	linguas loquelis omnibus (72.1./2-3).

In the four hymns Abelard introduces the major prophecies and typologies associated with Pentecost, some in elaborate schemes, others by allusion and echo. The result is a rounded view of the Feast in both the Old and New Testaments. The focus, nonetheless, is on the meaning of Pentecost today for the nuns who are singing the hymn. The first hymn opens with a prayer that the Holy Spirit may come into our hearts, that God may consecrate us as temples to Himself. After the discussion of each grace the refrain asks that this grace may be ours: *Tu hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam* (69.2./5). The final stanza, which recurs at the end of the three subsequent hymns, links the first Pentecost with the Feast today, joining the apostles with the nuns of the Paraclete: the apostles on whom the Spirit first descended pray that the same gifts may be bestowed on us.

11.2. 69. in primo nocturno

Argument: We ask the Spirit Who came to the apostles at Pentecost to grant us the same graces which He bestowed on them. Each of the graces is named and described.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Adventu sancti Spiritus
 nostri cordis altaria
 ornans, Deus, virtutibus,
 tu tibi templa dedica
 <i>illa septiformi, quam habet gratia
 contra septem illa daemonia,
 cuius dona bona sunt omnia.</i></p> | <p>1. At the Holy Spirit's coming
 adorn, O God, the altars of our hearts
 with virtues,
 and dedicate them to Yourself as temples
 <i>with that sevenfold grace which He has
 against those seven demons;
 the gifts of His grace are all good.</i></p> |
| <p>2. Per timorem nos Domini
 primum a malo liberat,
 ut pauper huius saeculi
 coelum dives introat:
 <i>Tu hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam
 poenam reus ne reddas debitam
 sed nomini tuo da gloriam.</i></p> | <p>2. Through fear of the Lord
 He first delivers us from evil,
 so that the poor of this world
 may enter Heaven rich:
 <i>Give, Lord, give us this grace;
 do not give us sinners our due punishment,
 but give glory to Your Name.</i></p> |
| <p>3. Das pietatis viscera
 ne superet temptatio;
 mites facit haec gratia,
 quorum terra possessio:
 <i>et hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam</i></p> | <p>3. You give piety of heart
 lest temptation overcome;
 this grace makes men meek:
 the earth is their inheritance:
 <i>Give, Lord, give us this grace too</i></p> |
| <p>4. Apponis et scientiam
 per quam flenda cognoscimus;
 consolaris per veniam
 cum hanc primo fecerimus:
 <i>et hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam</i></p> | <p>4. You apportion knowledge also
 through which we know for what we should weep;
 You give comfort through forgiveness
 when we have first forgiven:
 <i>Give, Lord, give us this grace too</i></p> |
| <p>5. Fortitudine roboras
 esuriam iustitiae;
 veri panis saturitas
 viaticum est animae
 <i>et hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam</i></p> | <p>5. With fortitude You strengthen
 hunger for righteousness;
 the true Bread which satisfies
 is the way-bread of the soul's pilgrimage:
 <i>Give, Lord, give us this grace too</i></p> |

- 1./5 habet B and C: habes Dreves and Szövérfy
 2./5 tu B: et C
 3./1 das C: da B

6. Summum illud *consilium*
 das de misericordia;
 ut idem reddas praemium
 vis hanc, non sacrificia:
et hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam

6. You give that supreme *counsel*
 about mercy;
 so that You may give the same as a reward:
 this is Your will, not sacrifices:
Give, Lord, give us this grace too

7. *Intellectus* es Spiritus
 quo videtur divinitas
 mundi cordis luminibus:
 haec est regni sublimitas:
et hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam

7. You are the Spirit of *understanding*
 through Whom God is seen
 by the eyes of the pure in heart:
 this is the splendour of the Kingdom:
Give, Lord, give us this grace too

8. Das tandem *sapientiam*
 per quam fiant pacifici,
 nomen Patris sanctificans
 in quo sint Dei filii:
et hanc da, Domine, da nobis gratiam

8. You give at the last *wisdom*
 that through it peacemakers may be made,
 hallowing the name of the Father
 in Whom they are sons of God:
Give, Lord, give us this grace too

9. Apostolorum precibus
 quos hac in die consecras
 isdem nos charismatibus
 confirma quos regeneras
illa septiformi, quam habet gratia
contra septem illa daemonia,
cutus dona bona sunt omnia.

9. Through the prayers of the apostles
 whom You set apart today
 with these same gifts strengthen us
 whom You bring to new birth
with that sevenfold grace which He has
against those seven demons;
the gifts of His grace are all good.

8./4 sint B: sunt C

9./5 habet Dreves and Szövérfy: habes C: B has only *illa septiformi*

"This and the following hymns are among the most interesting specimens of Abelardian hymnody." So remarks Szövérfy in his introduction to the section.¹ There is much indeed to make this hymn in particular warrant close study.

The first hymn to be sung on the Feast of Pentecost celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on believers. It is not, however, the story in Acts, with its focus on the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit in wind, fire and tongues, which inspires this hymn, but the different graces or gifts of the Spirit as recorded in the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah:

Et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini: spiritus sapientiae et intellectus,
spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis; et replebit eum
spiritus timoris Domini.²

The first and last stanzas summarise these seven graces in the words *virtutibus* (1./3) and *charismatibus* (9./3). The stanzas balance each other: both are prayers which ask that the Spirit Who came to the apostles at Pentecost may likewise come to the faithful today. Each of the inner seven stanzas (stanzas 2-8) portrays one of the Spirit's graces in its first line. The stanzas reverse the order of the graces as they appear in Isaiah, starting with *timor Domini*, ending with *sapientia*. The reversal stems from the Psalmist's pronouncement that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom".³ The Paraclete Collects for Lauds to Compline, written by Abelard, follow the same pattern.⁴

To each stanza is appended a six-line refrain, that for the first and last stanzas summarizing the graces in the words *illa septiformi... gratia*, while for the inner stanzas the refrain is a request for the grace under discussion.

In each of the central stanzas there is an echo of one of the Beatitudes. Sometimes the echo is a close verbal parallel, sometimes an allusion. The Beatitudes are taken stanza by stanza in the order in which they stand in the Gospel of Matthew.⁵

1 Szövérfy II p.147.

2 Is.11.2-3. The three remaining hymns for Pentecost are based on Acts.

3 Ps.110.10.

4 C.Waddell "Peter Abelard as creator of liturgical texts" *Petrus Abaelardus 1079-1142* ed.Thomas (Trier 1980) p.272.

5 Matt.5.3-9. Augustine discusses whether there are seven Beatitudes or eight: *de serm.Dom.1.3.10* (CC Ser.Lat.35) 133-147.

Beatitude

Beati *pauperes* spiritu quoniam ipsorum est
coelorum

Beati *mites* quoniam ipsi *possidebunt*
terram

Beati qui *lugent*
quoniam ipsi *consolabuntur*

Beati qui *esuriunt* et *sitiunt iustitiam*
quoniam ipsi *saturabuntur*

Beati *miseriordes* quoniam
ipsi *misericiordiam* consequentur

Beati *mundo corde*
quoniam ipsi *Deum videbunt*

Beati *pacifici* quoniam
fili Del vocabuntur

Hymn

ut *pauper* huius saeculi regnum
coelum dives introeat (2./3-4)

mites facit haec gratia
quorum *terra possessio* (3./3-4)

per quam flenda cognoscimus
consolaris per veniam (4./2-3)

esuriem iustitiae
veri panis *saturitas* (5./2-3)

...das de *misericiordia*
ut idem reddas praemium (6./2-3)

quo *videtur divinitas*
mundi cordis luminibus (7./2-3)

...*pacifici*
nomen Patris sanctificans
in quo sint *Del filii* (8./2-4)

It is evident in some cases, notably stanzas 2,3,5,7 and 8, that the echoes form a close verbal parallel, or at least a clear correlation with the appropriate Beatitude. Elsewhere the echo is allusive. Thus in the fourth stanza the sole verbal association lies between *consolaris* (4./3) and *consolabuntur*, but there is also the hint of an echo where *flenda* (4./2) reflects *lugent*. *misericiordia* (6./2) is at first glance the only word which suggests the fifth Beatitude, but on further examination it becomes clear that Abelard intends the line *ut idem reddas praemium* (6./3) to express the *quia*-clause of the Beatitude, *Beati misericordes quia ipsi misericordiam consequentur*: mercy is the reward for mercy.

In addition to Isaiah and the Beatitudes, the hymn also employs a third Scriptural passage, the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer in reverse order, to each of which allusion is made in stanzas 2-8.⁶

⁶ Matt.6.9-13.

Lord's Prayer**Hymn**

<i>Pater noster sanctificetur nomen tuum</i>	<i>nomen Patris sanctificans (8./3)</i>
<i>veniat regnum tuum</i>	<i>haec est regni sublimitas (7./4)</i>
<i> fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra</i>	<i>vis hanc, non sacrificia (6./4)</i>
<i>panem nostrum supersubstantialem</i> <i>da nobis hodie⁷</i>	<i>veri panis saturitas (5./3)</i>
<i>et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos</i> <i>dimittimus debitoribus nostris</i>	<i>...per veniam</i> <i>cum hanc primo fecerimus (4./3-4)</i>
<i>et ne inducas nos in temptationem</i>	<i>ne superet temptatio (3./2)</i>
<i>sed libera nos a malo</i>	<i>primum a malo liberat (2./2).</i>

As in the case of the Beattitudes, so here some stanzas show a close verbal parallel with the Prayer, others give only a slight hint of their source. The first two stanzas set the pattern with clarity. ...*a malo liberat (2./2)* and *ne superet temptatio (3./2)* immediately bring to mind the last two petitions *sed libera nos a malo* and *ne inducas in temptationem*. The first reminiscence is almost word for word the phrasing in Matthew, whereas the second makes the connection by using the same type of clause and in the one word *temptatio*. The last stanza, as befits the climax, is the only other place where the allusion is unmistakable: *nomen patris sanctificans (8./3)* cannot but refer to the invocation and petition *Pater noster...sanctificetur nomen tuum*.

The allusions in the remaining stanzas are less conspicuous, but the reverse order is maintained. Thus *...per veniam/ cum hanc primo fecerimus (4./3-4)* is a reworking of the petition *et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*. *per veniam* summarizes the request *dimitte nobis*: we are praying for pardon; while *cum hanc primo fecerimus* alludes to the condition attached to the petition, *sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*. The phrase *primo fecerimus (4./4)* echoes the tense used in protasis of the parallel passage in Matthew: *Si enim dimiseritis hominibus peccata eorum, dimittet et vobis Pater vester caelestis delicta vestra*.⁸

esuriam iustitiae (5./2) not only directly echoes the fourth Beatitude but, taken in conjunction with the following line *veri panis saturitas (5./3)*, is an obvious allusion to

⁷ The reading *supersubstantialem* is discussed below p.371.

⁸ Matt.6.14.

the petition *panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie*. Both the Prayer and the hymn emphasize the mystical interpretation of the bread for which we ask: it is the true Bread, Christ, the mystic food of the soul.

The sixth stanza holds the most recondite echo: *vis* (6./4) appears to sum up *flat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra*. It is, however, worth noting that the instruction given to the catechists on this part of the Prayer reads: *id est, fiat voluntas tua ut, quod tu vis in caelo, hoc nos in terra positi inreprehensibiliter faciamus*.⁹

In the seventh stanza the relationship between the appropriate petition and the hymn is also tenuous, but at least here, in *regni* (7./4), there is an undeniable echo of *veniat regnum tuum*.

Abelard's choice of these three sets of seven, Isaiah's gifts of the Spirit, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer is governed by Augustine's treatment of the Beatitudes in his Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount where he links the three septets. The number seven would seem to be the deciding factor in the choice. Augustine writes:

Videtur etiam mihi septenarius iste numerus harum petitionum congruere illi septenario numero ex quo totus iste sermo (i.e. the Sermon on the Mount) manavit.¹⁰

Seven is the perfect number. It recurs throughout Scripture and in patristic texts: there are the seven deacons in the early Church, the seven Churches in Asia, the seven candlesticks and the seven stars of the Apocalypse, the seven virtues, the seven graces of the Spirit, the seven deadly sins. These last two are significant for the hymn where the sevenfold Spirit and the seven demons are set against each other in the refrain shared by the first and last stanzas:

illa septiformi, quam habet, gratia
contra septem illa daemonia (1./5-6).

The Christian needs the seven graces of the Spirit to contend against the seven demons by whom he is constantly beset.

There are thus three sequences of seven around which the inner stanzas (2-8) are constructed. Augustine elucidates the reverse order of the gifts of the Spirit and their interrelation with the Beatitudes. He suggests that the Beatitudes are steps by which we ascend towards God, starting from the attitude of humility expressed in the words

9 M.Andrieu *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge* II.69.7-9.

10 Augustine *de serm.Dom.*II.38 (CC Ser.Lat.35) 828-830.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit". The sevenfold operation of the Holy Spirit, about which Isaiah speaks, accords with these seven steps in the Beatitudes. The order of each is significant: the enumeration of the gifts begins in Isaiah with the highest; the Beatitudes start with the most humble. Isaiah moves from wisdom through the other gifts to fear of the Lord. The Psalmist, however, says that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". Thus the graces in Isaiah should be taken in ascending order: fear of the Lord, piety, knowledge, fortitude, counsel, understanding, wisdom. Fear of the Lord corresponds to humility, identified with the "poor in spirit" of the Beatitudes:

Timor Dei congruit humilibus, de quibus hic dicitur: Beati pauperes spiritu, id est non inflati, non superbi, quibus apostolus dicit: Noli altum sapere, sed time.¹¹

There follow the three septets in tabular form as they occur in Abelard's hymn:

Graces	Beatitudes	Lord's Prayer
timor Domini	Beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum	sed libera nos a malo
pietas	Beati mites quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram	ne inducas nos in temptationem
scientia	Beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur	et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris
fortitudo	Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam quoniam ipsi saturabuntur	panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie
consilium	Beati misericordes quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur	fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra
intellectus	Beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt	veniat regnum tuum
sapientia	Beati pacifici quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur	Pater noster, sanctificetur nomen tuum

Abelard follows Augustine in reversing the order of the gifts of the Spirit but, unlike him, also reverses the order of the Lord's Prayer. It is this fundamental difference and the reasons for it that I shall discuss in the following pages. For this purpose we need to

11 Augustine *de serm.Dom.I.4.11*. (CC Ser.Lat.35) 148-152 and 188-199 quoting Rom.11.20.

examine the correlations which each author makes between the three septets, the graces of the Spirit, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer.

Augustine writes that the poor in spirit are not proud since they submit to divine authority. They submit because they fear that they will receive punishment after death. If fear of the Lord thus guarantees a place in Heaven, then men should hallow His name with fear for ever.¹² So Augustine understands *timor Dei* to be the fear of the punishment God will visit upon unrepentant sinners.

That interpretation could also be Abelard's:

per timorem nos Domini
primum a malo liberat (2./1-2):

fear of the Lord keeps us from evil because we are afraid to excite His wrath. This does not, however, fit comfortably with the other hymns for Pentecost, namely 70 and 71:

<p>Lex vetus tamquam frigida servos metu coercuit, in Christo mater gratia filios Deo genuit.</p>	<p>Tradente legem Domino mons tremens metum attulit, Spiritus in cenaculo susceptus illum abstulit.¹³</p>
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In *Sermo XIV* Abelard explains the petition *sed libera nos a malo*.¹⁴ Here we ask for strength to endure adversity, for strength which will stop us slipping from the path of righteousness through cowardice (*pusillanimitas*). There is a distinction between *pusillanimitas* and *timor Domini*, the one a craven, the other a healthy fear. The former occurs in Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians (*corripite inquietos, consolamini pusillanimos, suscipite infirmos*) where it is obviously a deficiency, not a grace;¹⁵ *timor Domini*, on the other hand, is regarded in Scripture as a virtue: *timor Domini odit malam arrogantiam et superbiam et viam pravam*, a verse which underscores the connection between *timor Domini*, humility and deliverance from evil.¹⁶

¹² Augustine *de serm. Dom.* I.3.10.149-152 and II.11.38.830-833.

¹³ 70.6./1-4; 71.1./1-4.

¹⁴ *Sermo XIV* (PL178.495C).

¹⁵ I Thess.5.14; cf. Ps.55.8.

¹⁶ Prov.8.13; cf. Prov.15.33. and 16.6. 27. It is interesting to note that elsewhere (*Enarr. in Ps.18.II.10 CC Ser. Lat.38. p.110*) Augustine gives a different interpretation of the phrase *timor Domini*: *Timor Domini, non servilis, sed castus; gravis amans, non puniri timens ab eo quem tremit, sed separari ab eo quem diligit...Hic est Spiritus sanctus; id est, hunc donat, hunc confert, hunc inserit Spiritus sanctus*. It is probably this that Abelard has in mind.

Piety is the second of the graces. Augustine says that it is necessary for those who study the Scriptures to be meek in godliness so that they will not become unteachable. When God's kingdom comes into our lives (i.e. when He reigns in our lives) we become meek; when His kingdom comes on earth (i.e. at the Day of Judgement) the meek will rejoice because they will be granted the earth as their possession.¹⁷

In his hymn Abelard suggests that inner piety, *pletatis viscera*, will guard us from yielding to the temptations of the world:

Das pletatis viscera
ne superet temptatio (3./1-2).

He supports this in *Sermo XIV*:

Ne inducas nos in tentationem, ac si dicatur, ne permittas nos ita tentari ut in
adversitatibus deficiamus vel pravis concupiscentiis succubamus victi.¹⁸

How, then, does this grace make men meek (*mites facti haec gratia* 3./3)? It does so by showing them that they cannot rely on themselves in the face of temptation and adversity.

Augustine suggests that with the gift of knowledge (*scientia*), the third grace of the Spirit, comes the realization that the body and soul are in continual conflict. When we pray "Thy will be done..." we are asking for harmony between body and soul so that there will no longer be conflict nor the grief engendered by that conflict.¹⁹

Abelard, on the other hand, follows the thought that knowledge brings with it recognition of sin which in turn leads to sorrow for that sin: ... *scientiam/ per quam flenda cognoscimus* (4./1-2). But the promise to those who mourn is that they will be comforted and that comfort comes through God's forgiveness (*consolatis per veniam* 4./3). There is, however, the condition that we first show forgiveness to those who have wronged us: *cum hanc (i.e. veniam) primo fecerimus* (4./4).²⁰

17 Augustine *de serm.Dom.*I.3.10.152-156 and II.11.38.833-840.

18 *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.495C).

19 Augustine *de serm.Dom.*I.3.10.156-159 and II.11.38.840-849.

20 In *Sermo XIV*, however, he links *miser cordia* with the fifth petition, agreeing with Augustine: *Aequum quippe est, et hoc iustitia exigit, ut quales per misericordiam nos exhibeamus proximo, talem nobis inveniamus Deum* (PL 178.494D).

The fifth is the one stanza in which both Augustine and Abelard agree on the combination of grace, beatitude and petition, naturally so, since this is the mid stanza of the seven which are constructed on the three septets. Nevertheless, here too is a difference of interpretation. Augustine writes that, since it is a great struggle for the soul to tear itself away from the sins it finds pleasure in and to seek after the way of justice, there is need of fortitude. For fortitude we need the daily bread which will give us the necessary strength to continue the struggle against sin.²¹

For Abelard too the hunger for righteousness is a spiritual hunger which needs a spiritual grace to encourage it and spiritual food to satisfy. Without the gift of fortitude or perseverance that hunger would soon grow weary and die. Whereas Augustine takes the bread to be physical bread, the food of the body. Abelard understands it to be the spiritual food of the soul (*viaticum est animae* 5./4). This difference arises from the two traditions of the petition, *cotidianum* in Luke, *supersubstantialem* in Matthew.²² Abelard prefers the latter for three reasons: the Church uses the Prayer as found in Matthew except for this one word where Luke's *cotidianum* is substituted; *supersubstantialis* better expresses the value of the bread; we are guilty of presumption when we change Matthew's words since he heard the Prayer from Christ Himself.²³

In *Sermo XIV* Abelard expounds the meaning of the *panis supersubstantialis*. It is understanding of Scripture. Understanding the Word of God is more important than bodily nourishment since it is the food of the soul, as Christ answers the Devil: *Non in pane solo vivet homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit de ore Dei*.²⁴ It is this food that we need if we are not to faint on our pilgrimage through life: *In hac praesenti vita, hoc nobis viaticum ministra, ne deficiamus in via*.²⁵ Abelard underlines this interpretation of the Prayer's petition when he speaks of the threefold understanding of Scripture as dishes at a banquet which God has prepared to sustain us on our earthly pilgrimage:

ut his nostra peregrinatio
sustentetur quasi viatico.²⁶

21 Augustine *de serm. Dom.* I.3.10.159-164 and II.11.38.849-852.

22 Luke 11.3; Matt. 6.11.

23 *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.494B-C).

24 Matt. 4.4.

25 *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.494B).

26 *Hymni Nocturnales* 2.3./1-2 *Triplex intelligentia/ divina praebet fercula* and 6./3-4.

In the hymn before us the petition in the Prayer is considered from a somewhat different angle. By his use of the telling phrase, *verē panis* (5./3), Abelard suggests the *panis supersubstantialis* is none other than Christ Himself. This accords well with Christ's words *sed Pater meus dat vobis panem de caelo verum...Ego sum panis vitae*.²⁷ There is, however, no real divergence between these two interpretations: the bread is at one and the same time Scripture and Christ, for He is not only the Bread of Life, but the Word of Life.²⁸ The lines also contain a subtle reference to the Mass where Christ is daily taken on the lips of the faithful in the form of bread.

Consilium, the next of the graces in Abelard's order, is discussed by Augustine thus: a man can escape from the miseries of sin only if he is helped by a higher being, in this instance, by God. It is only just that the man who wants help should himself give help to those weaker than he. Receiving and showing mercy are then connected with the petition for forgiveness: if we forgive, then we can hope for forgiveness.²⁹

In the *Sermo* Abelard comments on the third petition *Fiat voluntas tua*:

Tunc autem voluntatem Dei facimus cum quod ipse approbat et nobis consulit implemus.³⁰

In the hymn he sums up God's will as the desire for mercy rather than for sacrifices:

vis hanc (sc. misericordiam), non sacrificia (6./4).

He takes this opposition from God's words in Hosea: *misericordiam volui et non sacrificium*.³¹ Showing mercy is also in our interests (*nobis consulit*) since, if we are merciful, we shall also receive mercy. Thus in the hymn Abelard links this petition with the Beatitude *Beati misericordes quoniam misericordiam consequentur*.

Augustine expounds *intellectus*, the penultimate grace, in the following terms: purity of heart allows us to contemplate God for He can be seen only by the pure and serene understanding. We must pray that we be not led into the temptation to seek after both the temporal and the eternal, two mutually exclusive goals.³²

²⁷ John 6.32 and 35.

²⁸ John 1.1 and 4.

²⁹ Augustine *de serm.Dom.*I.3.10.164-170 and II.11.38.852-855.

³⁰ *Sermo* XIV (PL 178.493C).

³¹ Hos.6.6: cf. Matt.12.7.

³² Augustine *de serm.Dom.*I.3.10.170-173 and II.11.38.855-859.

Abelard too says that it is through understanding that we see God:

Intellectus es spiritus
quo videtur divinitas (7./1-2),

but this vision is granted solely to the eyes of the pure heart (*mundi cordis luminibus* 7./3). In the *Sermo* he moves from the first petition to the second, linking them inextricably in the passage

Ut autem ita nomen eius sanctificetur in nobis, orandum nobis est ut, expulso a nobis regno diaboli sive peccati, de quo Apostolus: Non regnet peccatum in vestro mortali pectore ad obediendum concupiscentiis eius, regnum Dei adveniat in nobis.³³

He makes a significant comment later:

...nulla est mentis munditia ubi eorum quae praecipit Deus manet ignorantia;

here *ignorantia* is the opposite of *intellectus*. It is clear that Abelard is taking the petition *adveniat regnum tuum* on a spiritual rather than a physical level. (Augustine takes it on both.) The Kingdom is within: after the Devil has been dethroned and expelled (the point of the prayer which makes up the refrain for the first and last stanzas), God's Kingdom must take over in our lives.

So we reach the last of the graces, *sapientia*. Augustine's comments should here be quoted *verbatim* since much of his argument depends on his language:

Postrema est septima ipsa sapientia, id est contemplatio veritatis, pacificans totum hominem et suscipiens similitudinem Dei, quae ita concluditur: Beati pacifici quoniam ipsi filii Dei vocabuntur;...Si sapientia est qua beati sunt pacifici quoniam ipsi filii Dei vocabuntur, oremus ut liberemur a malo; ipsa enim liberatio liberos nos faciet, id est filios Dei, ut spiritu adoptionis clamemus: Abba, Pater!³⁴

Wisdom which is contemplation of the Truth brings peace to the whole man and causes him to put on the likeness of God. We therefore pray to be delivered from evil: this delivery makes us free to be sons of God. Augustine has a double play on words, employing to good effect both the related *liberatio* and *liberos*, and the two meanings of *liberos*, the second of which he picks up in *filios*.

Abelard explains why the *pacifici* can be said to hallow the Name of God:

Sicut enim quantum in nobis est, inhonoramus Deum cum eius praecepta contemnimus; ita e contrario nostra eum honorat oboedientia. Nomen itaque eius

³³ *Sermo* XIV (PL 178.493C) quoting Rom.6.12.

³⁴ Augustine *de serm.Dom.*I.3.10.174-176 and II.11.38.862-866 quoting Rom.8.15.

quod in se sanctum est, in nobis etiam sanctificatur, cum sic sub nomine eius vivimus, ut ipse, cuius filii esse dicimur, ex vita nostra glorificetur.³⁵

That we should be peacemakers is a command of God; obedience to His command will glorify His Name. The hymn is strangely different. Here it is the Spirit Himself Who hallows the Name of the Father: *nomen Patris sanctificans* (8./3). This is a refinement of the sermon where it is the peacemakers themselves who glorify God through obedience. It is the Spirit, however, Who bestows the grace of wisdom which makes men peacemakers:

Das tandem sapientiam
per quam fiant pacifici (8./1-2).

Thus it is the Spirit Who hallows the Father's Name by enabling men to be obedient to His will.

By including the word *Patris* in the third line of the stanza, *nomen Patris sanctificans*, Abelard calls to mind the invocation *Pater noster* which precedes the first petition of the Prayer. He comments in the *Sermo*:

Cum dicit: Pater potius quam Domine, nos ei per amorem potius quam per timorem admonet deservire. Timere quippe servorum est, amare filiorum. Unde et Apostolus...aiebat: Non enim subditi estis iterum in timore, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis in quo clamamus: Abba, Pater.³⁶

Thus Abelard and Augustine both reach the conclusion with the same quotation from Romans. Augustine arrives at it through the play on *liberatio* and *liberos*, Abelard through the words *Pater noster* in the Prayer. Abelard's is, I feel, the more effective climax since it comes at the right stage in the sequence, the Prayer being in reverse order in the hymn. Augustine's climax is more contrived, since it is forced to rely on for its effect on a pun.

The question as to why Abelard has chosen to reverse the sequence of the Lord's Prayer is answered to some extent in his realization that the introduction to the Prayer fits more logically with the seventh Beatitude which promises that peacemakers will be called "sons of God".

A second clue lies in two comments he makes in *Sermo XIV* at the start of his exposition on the Lord's Prayer:

³⁵ *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.493B).

³⁶ *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.492B-C) quoting Rom.8.15.

Deinde septem petitiones sequuntur. Tres vero priores ad Deum pertinent, quattuor vero reliquae ad nos; and Post invocationem petitiones adiungit et quia plus gloriam Dei quam utilitatem nostram quaerere nos convenit (hic quippe finis esse debet in omnibus quae agimus, ut glorificetur Deus), tres istae petitiones, ut diximus, priores glorificationem eius postulant.³⁷

Since the purpose of everything we do should be the glorification of God, it is fitting that the petitions which pertain to that glorification should be in the place of honour. In the Prayer that place of honour is at the start, before the four petitions which relate to man's needs. In the hymn, however, the movement is from lowest to highest, from man's poverty of spirit and need for deliverance to his Christlike rôle of peacemaker, glorifying the Father through obedience to His will.

So Abelard extends Augustine's observation that the Beatitudes begin with the more lowly and move upwards, while the gifts of the Spirit descend from the more excellent (*nam ita enumeratio ab excellentioribus coepit, hic vero ab inferioribus*) to the third element, the Lord's Prayer. Just as Augustine reverses the order of the gifts to fit the scheme of the Beatitudes (*Quapropter si gradatim tamquam ascendentes numeremus, primus ibi est timor...septima sapientia*), so Abelard applies the same principle to the Prayer in order that beside the highest of the graces and the highest of the Beatitudes should stand the highest of the petitions.

37 *Sermo XIV* (PL 178.492B).

11.3. 70. *in secundo nocturno*

Argument: Fifty signifies the year of Jubilee and the day of Pentecost. The Spirit is God's love which sets the world on fire. The apostles are marked out by fire as messengers of the new law of love. The old Law worked through fear but its slaves have now become sons of God.

1. Remissionis numerum
lux signat quinquagesima
quo iubilaeus omnium
annus relaxat debita.

*Summa summo regi Deo sit gloria
cuius cuncta subsistunt gratia,
ex quo, per quem, in quo sunt omnia.*

2. Sub hoc dierum numero
remissionis Spiritus
a summi Patris solio
venit, quem misit Filius.

Summa summo regi

3. Divinum quippe Spiritum
amorem eius dicimus,
quo reis hunc propitium,
quo mitem esse novimus.

Summa summo regi

4. Culus amoris hodie
flamma mundus accenditur,
quem venit Christus mittere
in terram ignis mittitur.

Summa summo regi

5. In igneis hunc hodie
linguis super apostolos
demonstrans legis igneae
praesignavit hos nuntios.

Summa summo regi

6. Lex vetus tamquam frigida
servos metu coercuit;
in Christo mater gratia
filios Deo genuit.

Summa summo regi

7. Apostolorum precibus
quos hac in die consecras,
isdem nos charismatibus
confirma, quos regeneras.

Summa summo regi

1. The fiftieth day symbolizes
the number of remission
when the year of jubilee
cancels the debts of all.

*To God the King on high be glory in the highest,
by Whose grace all things subsist,
from Whom, through Whom, in Whom all things exist.*

2. After this number of days
comes the Spirit of remission
from the throne of the Father on high,
sent by the Son.

To God the King on high

3. For we say that the Holy Spirit
is God's love,
by which we know that He
is gracious to sinners and gentle.

To God the King on high

4. Today by the flame of His love
the world is set ablaze;
the fire which Christ came to send
is sent into the world.

To God the King on high

5. Demonstrating this love today
in tongues of fire over the apostles,
He marked them out
as heralds of the law of fire.

To God the King on high

6. The old Law, as if it chilled,
compelled its slaves through fear;
in Christ grace as mother
has borne sons for God.

To God the King on high

7. Through the prayers of the apostles
whom You consecrate today,
with the same gifts strengthen us
whom You bring to new birth.

To God the King on high

O quam abyssus veteris Testamenti abyssum invocat novi! O quam antiquiora recentioribus concinunt! Quinquagesimo die post occisionem agni, et maris transitum Rubri, in Sina monte Moysi decalogus datur. Quinquagesimo post resurrectionem Christi die Spiritus sanctus apostolis mittitur. Quinquagesimus remissionis est annus; dies noster quinquagesimus gratiae est consecratus.¹

So Ratherius expresses the different strands of the typology of Pentecost which are the basis of both this and the following hymn. In the Old Testament Pentecost, the fiftieth day, signified the bestowal of the Commandments, in the New the bestowal of the Spirit; in the Old Testament the fiftieth year was the year of Jubilee, in the New the fiftieth day is the day of grace.

In the central two hymns in this section Abelard employs these patristic motifs for Pentecost, the typology of Sinai/Pentecost and of the year of Jubilee. Unlike most of the Fathers he takes them in reverse order, beginning in this hymn with the Jubilee, moving in the next to Sinai.

The first couplet with the significant words *numerus*, *signat* and *quinquagesima* suggests a typical medieval delight in the symbolism of numbers, well attested in the discussions of the Fathers on the numerical meaning of Pentecost. Abelard does not pursue the symbolism, but concentrates on the etymology. Isidore is brief:

Pentecoste...post quinque decadas paschae colebatur; unde et vocabulum sumpsit. πεντε enim Graece quinque....²

John Beleth is more elaborate:

Dicitur ergo Pentecoste a πεντήκοντα quinquaginta, quod dies haec a resurrectione Domini distat quinquaginta diebus. Hinc πεντηκοστής Latine dicitur quinquagesimus.³

Pentecost, the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks, falls on the fiftieth day after the Passover and it was on that day that the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles.

To the etymology and typology Isidore adds the Old Testament notion of the year of Jubilee. He sees in the remission of debts in the fiftieth year a foreshadowing of the remission of sins granted through the Spirit at Pentecost:

...dierum quidem septimanae generant eandem Pentecosten, in qua fit peccati remissio per Spiritum sanctum, annorum vero septimanae quinquagesimum annum faciunt, qui apud Hebraeos iubilaeus appellatur, in quo similiter terrae fit

1 Ratherius *Sermo* X (PL 136.746C).

2 Isidore *Etym.* VI.18.4.

3 John Beleth *Rat.Div.Offic.* 131 (PL 202.136B).

remissio, et servorum libertas, et possessionum restitutio, quae pretio fuerant comparata.⁴

Remissionis (1./1) introduces this third element. Fifty signifies release or liberation because every fiftieth year is the Jubilee when all debts are cancelled, all slaves set free. The laws governing this year are detailed in Leviticus and summarised in Numbers:...*cum iubilaeus, id est quinquagesimus annus remissionis, advenit...*⁵ It is with this idea that the hymn opens:

Remissionis numerum
lux signat quinquagesima (1./1-2).

The hymn moves in a logical progression. The main arguments are signalled by a series of verbal repetitions. The time is one of release when the Spirit of release comes into the world (*remissionis* 1./1 and 2./2); the Spirit (*Spiritus* 2./2 and *Spiritum* 3./1) Who comes is love (*amorem* 3./2); this love (*amoris* 4./1) is a fire (*ignis* 4./4), symbolically represented by the fiery tongues (*igneis* 5./1) on the heads of the apostles who now become heralds of the law of fire (*igneae* 5./3); the fiery law (*legis* 5./3) is the antithesis of the old Law (*lex* 6./1):

1./1 *remissionis*
2./2 *remissionis*

2./2 *Spiritus*
3./1 *Spiritum*

3./2 *amorem*
4./1 *amor*

4./4 *ignis*
5./1 *igneis*
5./3 *igneae*

5./3 *legis*
6./1 *lex*

That the emphasis of the hymn is on liberation is suggested by the position of *remissionis* as the first word, its repetition in the second stanza and its echo in the verb *relaxat* (1./4). It is restated in the final stanza where slaves under the Law are contrasted with sons of grace. The fact that the motif of the first stanza is re-established

⁴ Isidore *de eccles.offic.*I.34.4 (PL 83.769B-C).

⁵ Num.36.4; cf. Lev.25.10-11.

in the last stanza points to a circular pattern in addition to the progression discussed above. The stanzas are in the chiasmic order ABCCBA:

- A 1. **release** from debts
- B 2. the Son **sends** the Spirit
- C 3. the Spirit is **love**
- C 4. **love** is a fire
- B 5. the Spirit **sends** the apostles
- A 6. **release** from the Law

The year of Jubilee is marked by the cancellation of debts and the release of slaves, but in *annus relaxat debita* (1./4) Abelard focuses on only the first of these aspects. It is this that opens the way for the designation given to the Spirit in the second stanza, *remissionis Spiritus* (2./2). The title occurs nowhere in Scripture but springs from Christ's words to the disciples in John's Gospel: *Accipite Spiritum sanctum; quorum remisistis peccata, remittuntur eis*.⁶

The suggestion that the Spirit releases men from sin adds a new dimension to *debita* in the first stanza. The choice of the word is governed not so much by the idea of release from debts inherent in the Jubilee, but more by the petition in the Lord's Prayer: *Dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*.⁷ This petition is already the subject of the fourth stanza of the preceding hymn.⁸ Rupert of Deutz vocalises the connection between the Jubilee and the Prayer by interpreting *Iubilaus* as *dimittens*, an echo of the first word of the petition *Dimitte*:

Iubilaus, ut supra dictum est, "dimittens" interpretatur. Quid autem profecimus in schola huius sanctae legis, in disciplina legis et Evangelii, si non didicimus dimittere debita fratribus nostris, debita, inquam, id est peccata debitoribus nostris?⁹

The refrain (*Summa summo regi*) bears all the hallmarks of a doxology. In fact, the doxology for the *Hymni Diurni* in *Libellus I* elaborates and explains the sequence we find here:

⁶ John 20.22-23.

⁷ Matt.6.12.

⁸ 69.4./1-4.

⁹ Rupert of Deutz in *Lev.II.41* (PL 167.803C).

ex quo sunt, per quem sunt, in quo sunt omnia:
 ex quo sunt, Pater est; per quem sunt, Filius;
 in quo sunt, Patris et Filii Spiritus.¹⁰

The emphasis in the refrain on the equality of Persons within the Godhead is significant in a series of hymns designed for Pentecost, a Feast, not so much of the Lord, but of the Spirit, and composed specifically for the nuns of the Paraclete.

The Spirit in Whose honour the hymn is written comes from the throne of the Father on high (*a summi Patris solio/ venit* 2./3-4); it is to that same throne that the Son has already ascended (*ad Patris scandens solium*).¹¹ The verbal reminiscence is surely deliberate for it suggests the theological point that Christ had to ascend that the Spirit might descend, a point underlined by Christ Himself: *si enim non abiero, Paracletus non veniet ad vos; si autem abiero, mittam eum ad vos*.¹² This last phrase, *mittam eum ad vos*, is the point of reference for the final line of the stanza, *quem misit Filius* (2./4).

A second doctrine is emphasized here in the twofold relationship of the Spirit, to the Father and to the Son: He comes from the Father and is sent by the Son. Here is the theology of the double procession of the Spirit, a doctrine which sparked off the *Filioque* controversy, and which was much in the minds of contemporary theologians, for it seemed that this was the main area of contention between the Orthodox and Roman Churches.¹³

A further, but related, aspect is hinted at in another echo of Abelard's own ascension hymns where he writes of Christ *a sinu venit patris*: Christ came from the bosom of the Father.¹⁴ Here, in *a summi patris solio* (2./3), the Spirit comes from the throne of the Father. Abelard is concerned to show first that both Son and Spirit come

10 10.6./2-4.

11 62.2./2.

12 John 16.17.

13 The controversy known as *Filioque* arose from the addition by Western Church to the Nicene Creed of the dogmatic formula *Filioque* "and from the Son" after the words "the Holy Ghost... Who proceeded from the Father" to express the double procession of the Spirit. The interpolation was sometime made prior to Third Council of Toledo (589) and met with general approval in the West. It became the chief ground of attack by the Orthodox Church on Rome. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* pp.512-513 and J.G. Sikes, *Peter Abailard* (1932) pp.164-165).

14 63.2./1.

from the Father and second that, since the Son returns to the Father's throne and the Spirit comes from that same throne, sent by the Son, all three are equal. This is the teaching that underlies the refrain. Such a double emphasis on the equality within the Godhead is significant for it was precisely on this point that Abelard was arraigned by Bernard who understood him to teach that the three Persons were not equal.¹⁵

spiritus in the second stanza is restated in *spiritum* in the third. In calling the Spirit the love of God,

divinum quippe spiritum
amorem eius dicimus (3./1-2),

Abelard echoes a multiplicity of comments in his own writings where the special attribute of the Father is Power, that of the Son Wisdom and of the Spirit Goodness or Love. Although Bernard and William of St.Thierry, among Abelard's numerous opponents, held that the ascription of special qualities to each Person of the Trinity created a distinction within the Godhead, Abelard has behind him the authority of Augustine himself.¹⁶ Ambrose, too, along with Gregory the Great suggests that love is the Spirit's special attribute. Ambrose writes:

offunditur etiam caritas Dei per Spiritum...qui divinae arbiter et fons profluus caritatis est,

while Gregory comments:

Spiritus sanctus in electorum cordibus ex se ipso flammam amoris proicit,

where the phrase *ex se ipso* is telling.¹⁷ Abelard follows these lines in his sermons:

Quid autem Spiritus Dei nisi divinae bonitatis amor...intelligitur, and Hac vero die caritas per Spiritum, qui amor Dei dicitur, infusa discipulos consummavit.¹⁸

15 Bernard *Tract.de erroribus Abaelardi* (PL 182.1059D) *Dicit, ut dixi, proprie omnipotentiam pertinere ad Patrem;...Porro Filio, ut iam dictum est, assignat sapientiam, ipsamque non simpliciter quidem potentiam, sed quamdam in Deo potentiam esse definit, id est potentiam tantum discernendi. Forte timet iniuriam facere Patri, si tantum tribuat Filio, quantum et ipsi.*

16 William of St. Thierry *Disputatio adv.Abael.* (PL 180.256C. cf. 259); but see Augustine *De Trin.* XV.29 (CC Ser.Lat.50A) p.504.

17 Ambrose *de Spiritu* 1.94 (CSEL 79) p.56; Gregory *Homil.in Ezech.* I.v.8 (PL 76.824B).

18 *Sermones* I and XVII (PL 178.385C and 502A).

It is because the Spirit is love that we can know that God is gracious and kind toward sinners:

quo reis hunc propitium,
quo mitem esse novimus (3./3-4).

propitius occurs frequently in the Old Testament, but rarely in the New. When it does appear it is in connection with God's mercy toward sinners. The publican in the parable cries *Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori*.¹⁹ The writer to the Hebrews echoes God's promise in Jeremiah: *quia propitius ero iniquitatibus eorum, et peccatorum eorum iam non memorabor*.²⁰ He then refers to the precedence of the New Covenant over the Old: *Dicendo autem novum: veteravit prius*. Abelard alludes to this last phrase in the sixth stanza when he contrasts the Mosaic Law (*lex vetus* 6./1) with the new law of grace.

mitis, the second epithet in the description of God in the third stanza, is used by Abelard in his prose writings to describe the dove which symbolizes the descent of the Spirit on Christ at His baptism: *columba mitissima esse creditur*.²¹ The use of the adjective in this hymn deliberately recalls the descent of the Spirit on Christ especially since it is synonymous with the description of the dove in an earlier hymn:

avis blanda, mansueta
Deum monstrat placatum.²²

Through this reminiscence an extra dimension is added to the preceding line, *quo reis hunc propitium* (3./3) for it accords with John the Baptist's words about Christ: *Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi*.²³

The imagery of fire and flame (*flamma, accenditur* 4./2; *ignis* 4./4) derives initially from the account of Pentecost in Acts: *et apparuerunt...linguae tamquam ignis*.²⁴ Szövérfy suggests a second influence which stems from the identification of the Paraclete with love.²⁵ Such imagery is prevalent in the love poetry of both classical and

19 Luke 18.13.

20 Heb.8.12-13 quoting Jer.33.8.

21 36.3./1-2 and *Theol.Christ*.1.34 (CC Cont.Med.12.86).

22 36.5./1-2. See discussion p.94.

23 John 1.29.

24 Acts 2.3.

contemporary poets, in Virgil's striking image (*Dido*) *caeco carpitur igni* and the medieval lyric *ardet amor cordis in antro*.²⁶ Abelard makes use of similar metaphors in the *Historia* to describe his desire for Heloise: *at in hujus itaque adolescentule amorem totus inflammatus...*, and later, when he has been separated from her, *...et negata sui copia amplius amorem accendebat*.²⁷ Heloise too in her first letter to Abelard writes: *Quae coniugata, quae virgo non concupiscebat absentem et non exardebat in praesentem?*²⁸ It is tempting, though purely speculative, to believe that such metaphors had their place in Abelard's lost love-songs. The transference of this imagery from secular love to the love of God is not original to Abelard, for Gregory in a phrase quoted above has *Spiritus sanctus...ex se ipso flammam amoris proicit* and in an early hymn there are the lines

flammescat igne caritas,
accendat ardor proximos.²⁹

The second couplet,

quem venit Christus mittere
in terram ignis mittitur (4./3-4),

paraphrases Christ's words to His disciples *ignem veni mittere in terram*.³⁰ Although the Scriptural context does not immediately suggest a reference to the Spirit, Abelard in *Sermo XVIII* applies the quotation to Pentecost:

De hoc igne dilectionis et flamma charitatis ipse olim Filius dixerat: Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut arderet. Ac si aperte dicat: Omnia quae in mundum veniens egi...ad hunc unum terminum et supremum finem spectabant, ut hoc igne scilicet terram concremarem, hoc est Spiritu sancto, qui divini amoris dicitur ignis, terrena ipsius et frigida corda hominum inflammarem.³¹

26 Virgil *Aeneid* IV.2; *Cambridge Songs* 27 *Iam, dulcis amica, ventito*, quoted in Raby *Secular Latin Poetry* I p.304, H.Waddell *Medieval Latin Lyrics* p.331; cf. Ovid *Met.*IV.64.

27 HC 300 and 386-7.

28 Heloise *Epist.*I ed.Muckle *Medieval Studies* 15 (1953) p.71.

29 See above n.17; Walpole 16.7-8 (p.110).

30 Luke 12.49.

31 *Sermo XVIII* (PL 178.508D).

32 Matt.3.11.

Such an interpretation is due in part to another statement where fire and the Spirit are integrally linked: *ipse vos baptizat in Spiritu sancto et igni*.³²

The image of fire continues into the fifth stanza in the description of the tongues of fire over the heads of the apostles, a description taken from Acts: *et apparuerunt illis dispartitae linguae tamquam ignis supra singulos eorum*.³³ In *Sermo XXII* Abelard comments on the aptness of fire as a revelation of the Spirit's descent. It combines light and heat, symbolizing the illumination wrought by faith and the flame of love:

Ignis itaque, in quo dispartitae apparuerunt linguae, quia ex propria natura tam lucem quam calorem, duas praedictas gratias tam de illuminatione fidei, vel saluberrimis documentis, quam de inflammatione charitatis diligenter exprimit.³⁴

Already in the fourth stanza Abelard has equated fire with love; now in the second couplet of the fifth stanza,

...legis igneae
praesignavit hos nuntios (5./3-4),

he draws in another element discussed in the Pentecost sermon:

Forma vero linguarum, quae dispartitae memorantur, praedicatio est futura, non uno genere linguae, non in una parte per apostolos proferenda, ut non solum sibi, sed omnibus vivant.

The tongues of fire are symbols of the preaching for which the apostles are now marked out since the different tongues point to the different languages in which the Gospel is destined to be proclaimed. The message they have to proclaim is also well symbolized by fire, for it is the message of the law of fire (*legis igneae* 5./3). This striking phrase is found in Deuteronomy:

Dominus de Sina venit...in dextera eius ignea lex. Dilexit populos; omnes sancti in manu illius sunt et qui appropinquant pedibus eius accipient de doctrina illius.³⁵

These words from the blessing of Moses on the children of Israel bring together the concept of the *lex ignea*, the love of God for His people and the teaching they receive

³² Matt.3.11.

³³ Acts 2.3.

³⁴ *Sermo XXII* (PL 178.523B-C).

³⁵ Deut.33.2-3.

from Him. Abelard seems to be taking the latter two elements to be the explanation of the *lex ignea*. As teachers of the law of fire the apostles are heralds of the law of love.

Gregory the Great in his interpretation of the *ignea lex* contrasts the sheep and the goats on the Day of Judgement:

In dextera eius ignea lex. Sinistra quippe reprobi, qui et ad sinistram ponendi sunt; dextera autem Dei appellantur electi. In dextera ergo Dei lex ignea est, quia electi mandata coelestia nequaquam frigido corde audiunt, sed ad haec amores intimi facibus inardescunt.³⁶

Abelard, although writing in a completely different context, the contrast of the Old and New Testaments, is nevertheless influenced by Gregory's phrase *frigido corde*. In Gregory's sermon *frigidus* describes the heart, a normal usage. Abelard's transference of it to suggest the activity of the Law is striking.

The law of fire stands in direct opposition to the old and chilling Law (*lex vetus tamquam frigida* 6./1), the Law of Moses. The epithet *frigida* is admirable and its use as a description of *lex* appears to be original to Abelard who indeed seems to consider it somewhat audacious since he prefixes it with the "apologetic" *tamquam*. It is typical that Abelard should use *lex ignea* which stems from Moses to describe the new Law set up to supersede that of Moses. The rest of the stanza elaborates the antithesis that has thus been established between the Old Covenant and the New, so paving the way for the following hymn (71. *Tradente legem Domino*) where that contrast forms the main theme.

The old Law compelled obedience through fear and thus made men slaves:

lex vetus...
servos metu coercuit (6./1-2).

Abelard has no need to expand the notion of fear, for it is a recurrent motif in the writings of the Fathers. Augustine speaks of the servile effect of coercion through fear of punishment:

Timor poenarum facit hominem operari, sed adhuc serviliter...Timore enim poenae revocaberis, non dilectione iustitiae. Nondum enim de te charitas operabatur.³⁷

And in a sermon on Ps. 143 he writes of grace, fear and love:

36 Gregory the Great *Hom.in Evang.*XXX (PL 76.1223C-D).

37 Augustine *Sermo* 270 (PL 38-39.1241.4).

Non enim erat in illis charitas, quae est per gratiam, sed timor erat. Praecepta Domini poenalia erant illi populo; quia implere non poterant timore... Qui transit ad Christum, transit a timore ad amorem, et incipit amore iam posse quod timore non poterat; et qui trepidat in timore, non trepidat in amore.³⁸

Abelard has dealt once already with this subject, and at greater length, in a Vespers hymn:

Antiquum timor hic possedit populum,
legis pollicitis et minis subditum,
dum lex promitteret haec bona cupidis,
reos efficeret poenis gravissimis,

and in *Sermo V* where he quotes Jerome:

"Timere servorum est, amare filiorum." Sub elementis istis (i.e. the Law) serviunt qui timore poenarum in lege constitutarum,...ad obedientiam coguntur ut servi, non amore ducuntur ut filii.³⁹

Here is the same antithesis of slaves and sons which appears in the hymn,

servos metu coercuit,
in Christo mater gratia
filios Deo genuit (6./2-4):

slavery to fear is contrasted with the sonship conferred by grace. This grace is equivalent to the fiery law, the law of love, of the fifth stanza. Whereas the old Law exerted coercion and made men slaves, grace gives birth to sons. *genuit* is more often associated with the traditional image of *mater ecclesia*, but it is here used in conjunction with a much less common image, that of *mater gratia*. It is a phrase Abelard has used before, again in a stanza where the New Covenant supersedes the Old: *Hic mater gratia sepelit veterem*.⁴⁰

Grace is one of the themes of the refrain, *cuncta subsistunt gratia* (1./5). It is by grace that all things subsist; it is by grace that sons are born for God; by grace that men are regenerated and strengthened against demonic powers.⁴¹ Grace is central to Pentecost: the quotation from Raterius, with which this discussion opened, opposes grace and the Law, as here in the hymn; Maximius says that it is through grace that the

38 Augustine *Sermo 32 in Ps.143* c.8 (PL 38.199-200).

39 21.2./1-4; *Sermo V* (PL 178.418B).

40 25.2./1-2.

41 69.9.3-8 *nos.../...quos regeneras/ illa septiformi,/ quam habes, gratia/ contra septem/ illa daemonta.*

Spirit descends: *Ascendit ergo in coelum novus homo, ut per eius gratiam venire ad terras Spiritus dignaretur.*⁴²

Although the seventh is the final stanza in all the hymns, it is made an integral part of this hymn through the link established between the sixth and seventh stanzas. Grace brings to birth sons for God (*in Christo mater gratia/ filios Deo genuit* 6./3-4) while the Spirit brings about rebirth (*isdem nos charismatibus/ confirma, quos regeneras* 7./3-4). A change is involved here from the objective *filios...genuit* to the personal *nos...quos regeneras*, so bringing the theology and symbolism of the hymn into the practical experience of the singers.

42 Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 49 (PL 57.631D).

11.4. 71. in tertio nocturno

Argument: The giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai is contrasted with the descent of the Spirit on the disciples in the upper room at Pentecost.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Tradente legem Domino
mons tremens metum attulit;
Spiritus in cenaculo
susceptus illum abstulit.
<i>Summa summo regi Deo sit gloria,
cuius cuncta subsistunt gratia,
ex quo, per quem, in quo sunt omnia.</i></p> | <p>1. The Lord gave the Law
and the quaking mountain brought fear;
the Spirit received in the upper room
took that fear away.
<i>To God the King on high be glory in the highest,
by Whose grace all things subsist,
from Whom, through Whom, in Whom all things exist.</i></p> |
| <p>2. Micabant illic fulgura
mons calligabat fumigans;
hic est flamma multifida,
non urens sed illuminans.
<i>Summa summo regi</i></p> | <p>2. Lightning flashed there,
the mountain was dark with smoke;
here is a many-parted flame,
not scorching, but illumining.
<i>To God the King on high</i></p> |
| <p>3. Horrendae sonum buccinae
pavebat illic populus;
verbum intelligentiae
sonus hic fuit Spiritus.
<i>Summa summo regi</i></p> | <p>3. At the sound of the fearful trumpet
the people shuddered there;
the word of understanding
was the sound of the Spirit here.
<i>To God the King on high</i></p> |
| <p>4. Fumus illic caliginem
obscurae signat litterae;
splendentis ignis speciem
clarae signum hic accipe.
<i>Summa summo regi</i></p> | <p>4. There the smoke symbolizes
the darkness of the hidden word;
interpret here the appearance of bright fire
as the symbol of the clear Gospel.
<i>To God the King on high</i></p> |
| <p>5. Terroris ac caliginis
illic plena sunt omnia;
curat hic ex contrariis
Paraclitus contraria.
<i>Summa summo regi</i></p> | <p>5. All was filled there
with dread and darkness;
here the Comforter remedies the hostile elements
through their opposites.
<i>To God the King on high</i></p> |
| <p>6. Omnes aufert molestias
divina consolatio,
cordis exarat tabulas
ut reparetur ratio.
<i>Summa summo regi</i></p> | <p>6. The divine Comfort takes away
all troubles;
He engraves the tablets of the heart
so that the account may be squared.
<i>To God the King on high</i></p> |
| <p>7. Apostolorum precibus
quos hac in die consecras,
isdem nos charismatibus
confirma quos regeneras.
<i>Summa summo regi</i></p> | <p>7. By the prayers of the apostles
whom You consecrate today,
strengthen us with those same gifts
whom You bring to new birth.
<i>To God the King on high</i></p> |

1./2 mons B and C (Waddell): mons B, mens C (Silvestre): mens Dreves and Szövérfy

This hymn, as Szövérfy demonstrates, is built on a series of antitheses in which the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai in the Old Testament is set against the descent of the Spirit in the upper room in the New.¹ The general idea that these two climactic events parallel each other is as old as the New Testament itself, for the writer to the Hebrews uses similar terms to explain that the order obtaining under the New Covenant is the antithesis of that under the Old:

Non enim accessistis ad tractabilem montem, et accensibilem ignem, et turbinem, et caliginem, et procellam, et tubae sonum, et vocem verborum...sed accessistis ad Sion montem, et civitatem Dei viventis, Ierusalem caelestem....²

Each of the stanzas, with the exception of the sixth, which concentrates wholly on the work of the Spirit, is an entity with its own set of oppositions. These contrasts are underscored throughout by the correlatives *illic* and *hic*. Two distinct motifs emerging from the description in Exodus of the Law-giving link the first stanza with the third, the second with the fourth. Fear is the first of these motifs: *mons tremens metum attulit* (1./2) and *pavebat illic populus* (3./2); darkness the second: *mons caligabat fumigans* (2./2) and *Fumus illic caliginem* (4./1). The two motifs are brought together in the opening clause of the fifth stanza, *Terroris ac caliginis/ illic plena sunt omnia* (5./1-2). The pattern is A B A B AB.

The double scene is set in the first stanza with *mons* (1./2) and *in cenaculo* (1./3). There are references in the pages of both Testaments to the awed fear of the Jews as the glory of God came down on the mountain. In Exodus there is the simple statement:

et timuit populus qui erat in castris, and later, cunctus autem populus videbat voces et lampades, et sonitum buccinae, montemque fumantem: et perterriti ac pavore concussi steterunt procul.³

The writer to the Hebrews adds *ita terribile erat quod videbatur. Moyses dixit: Exterritus sum, et tremebundus.*⁴

There is a textual problem in the second line of the hymn. Szövérfy, following Dreves, has *mens tremens*; Waddell reads *mons* in both B and C; Silvestre reads *mons* in B and *mens* in C, but prefers *mons*.⁵ *Mons* certainly seems to make more sense in

¹ Szövérfy I p.94 and II p.154.

² Heb.12.18-24.

³ Ex.19.16 and 20.18.

⁴ Heb.12.21.

the context of Exodus, and is supported by the reference to Mount Sinai: *eratque omnis mons terribilis*.⁶ The alliteration and assonance of *mons tremens metum attulit* (1./2) underline the feeling of ineluctable terror.

The opposition is set up in the second couplet:

Spiritus in cenaculo
susceptus illum (metum) abstulit (1./3-4).

Instead of the mountain, there is the upper room; instead of the Law, there is the Spirit (*cum introissent in cenaculum...repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto*);⁷ the fear evoked at Sinai now disappears. The contrast is emphasized by the use of two cognate verbs with opposing meanings, *metum attulit* and *illum abstulit*, while the resulting dissyllabic rhyme, rare in Abelard's poetry, reinforces the reversal.

Here Abelard adds his own interpretation to the story, for there is no mention of fear in the account in Acts. Fear, however, does play a part in a parallel passage which relates one of Jesus' resurrection-appearances to the disciples who were gathered behind closed doors for fear of the Jews:

(Cum) fores essent clausae ubi erant discipuli congregati propter metum
Iudaeorum: venit Iesus et...insufflavit: et dixit eis: Accipite Spiritum sanctum.⁸

Although this does not state precisely that their fear was removed, the inference is present, especially when the words are taken in conjunction with descriptions of the Spirit in the epistles: Paul encourages Timothy *Non enim dedit nobis Deus spiritum timoris, sed virtutis...* and to the Romans he writes *Non enim accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore*.⁹

In *Sermo XVII* Abelard contrasts the different elements in the Old and New Testament episodes. Mount Sinai involves the Law, fear and slavery; the upper room involves the Spirit, liberty and sonship:

5 Szövérfy II p.154; Waddell CLS 9 p.78 and CLS 5 p.171; Silvestre "A propos d'une édition récente de l'*Hymnarius Paraclitensis*" *Scriptorium* 32 (1978) p.98.

6 Ex.19.18.

7 Acts 1.13 and 2.4.

8 John 20.19-22

9 II Tm.1.17; Rom.8.15; cf. I John 4.18 *Timor non est in charitate*; cf. Ps-Augustine *Sermo* 182 (PL38-39.2088).

Lex data in monte Sina timorem incutiens in servitute genuit. Spiritus vero in superioribus coenaculi datus, de quo Apostolus ait: Ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas, servos in filios convertit,

a motif he has already used in the final stanza of the preceding hymn:

Lex vetus tamquam frigida/ servos metu coercuit;
in Christo mater gratia/ filios Deo genuit.¹⁰

This echo suggests a new dimension to the opening couplet: it is precisely because it was the Law that God gave that men grew fearful, for the Law creates slaves and threatens punishment. Thus the ablative absolute *Tradente legem Domino* (1./1) could have causal, rather than temporal, significance: "Because the Lord gave the Law". This, in turn, would tend to support the reading *mens* against *mons*. Nevertheless, I still prefer *mons* on the grounds that the rest of the hymn concentrates on the physical manifestations of God's power.

The second stanza opens with a description of the elemental disturbance at Mount Sinai. The language of the couplet relies heavily on the account in Exodus:

Iam nunc veniam ad te in caligine nubis...et ecce coeperunt audiri tonitrua ac micare fulgura, et nubes densissima operire montem...totus autem mons Sinai fumabat.¹¹

Abelard deliberately makes a connection, not present in Exodus, between the smoke and the darkness when he writes *mons caligabat fumigans* (2./2). This link facilitates the mystical interpretation in the fourth stanza where the smoke is a symbol of the metaphorical darkness of the Law:

Fumus illic caliginem
obscurae signat litterae (4./1-2).

Abelard omits any reference to the thunder for it is his purpose in this stanza to emphasize the contrast of light and dark, and the contrast between different kinds of light. The frightening potential of noise is given a place in the next stanza.

There is light on Sinai, but it is the glancing brilliance of lightning (*micabant...fulgura* 2./1) which serves only to make the surrounding darkness yet darker (*mons caligabat* 2./2); it is a light which causes fire, but a fire which fills the air with blinding smoke (*fumigans* 2./2). At Pentecost, on the other hand, there is a flame

¹⁰ *Sermo XVII* (PL 178.502D); 70.6./1-4.

¹¹ Ex.19.9,16,18.

which illumines but does not scorch (*non urens sed illuminans* 2./4). It gives a bright light, again paving the way for the symbolism of the fourth stanza:

splendentis ignis speciem
clarae signum hic accipe (4./3-4).

Szövérfy cites parallel passages in Zacharias and Hosea but both passages directly oppose *non urens*.¹² The Scriptural influence is rather the description of God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush: (*Moses*) *videbat quod rubus arderet et non combureretur*.¹³ There is, however, a phrase in pseudo-Augustine which is almost the exact match of Abelard's and I suggest that this was his primary source: *Advenit ignis divinus, non comburens, sed illuminans; non consumens, sed lucens*.¹⁴

The motif of fire which does not burn as a sign of the presence of God or of divine blessing or protection is not limited to Scripture. There is the famous picture of Iulus in *Aeneid* II:

ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli
fundere lumen apex, tactoque innoxia mollis
lambere flamma comas et circum tempora pasci.¹⁵

Just as Virgil contrasts the noxious serpents and the beneficent flame through verbal play on *lambere* and *pasci*, so Abelard contrasts the terror of the lightning and the blessing of the Pentecostal flame.¹⁶ There is, of course, no direct link between Virgil and Abelard since the latter's imagery is influenced by Biblical scenes.

The motif of the illumination bestowed by the Spirit appears early in the writings of the Fathers. Ambrose comments: *et Esias significat non solum lucem, sed etiam ignem esse Spiritum sanctum*.¹⁷ Rabanus Maurus extends the idea: *...Spiritus paraclitus... lumine totius scientiae illustrans*.¹⁸ Abelard describes the fire as illuminating the mind:

12 Szövérfy II p.155 citing Zach.13.9 and Hos.13.15.

13 Ex.3.2.

14 Ps-Augustine *Sermo* 186.2 (PL 39.2094).

15 Virgil *Aeneid* II 682-684.

16 For an excellent article on this subject see Bernard M.W.Knox "The Serpent and the Flame" *AJP* 71 (1950) pp.379-400.

17 Ambrose *de Spiritu sancto* I.14.25 (CSEL 79) p.76.

18 Rabanus Maurus *Homil.* XXII (PL 110.44A).

...*Ignis qui et splendet et calet...illuminatio mentis est.*¹⁹ The flame is the fire of love and the light of knowledge and understanding: *Hac vero die, qua intelligentia sunt illuminati, et igne charitatis accensi...*²⁰

In the third stanza the motif of fear, introduced in 1./2, is reiterated (*pavebat illic populus* 3./2), a fear inspired by what they hear rather than what they see. It is the sound of the trumpet that brings dread, an allusion to the accounts of the noise in Exodus: *clangorque buccinae vehementius perstrepebat: timuit populus qui erat in castris...*²¹ This noise is contrasted with the sound of the Spirit at Pentecost, *sonus...Spiritus* (3./4) picking up *sonum buccinae* (3./1). The harshness of *buccinae* set against the more soothing *sonus...Spiritus* is effective.

In contrast to the noise of the trumpets on Sinai, the sound at Pentecost is the *verbum intellegentiae* (3./3), "the word of understanding". In the first hymn for Pentecost the Spirit is addressed in the words *Intellectus es spiritus*, in an evocation of the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah, *et requiescet super eum Spiritus Domini, spiritus...intellectus.*²² Abelard adds to this designation the word *verbum*, partly because the context demands something audible, but rather because he wishes to establish a contrast with the scene on Mount Sinai as it is described in Hebrews: *...et tubae sonum et vocem verborum.*²³ At Pentecost the Spirit bestows the word of understanding in place of the meaningless "voice of words" (*vocem verborum*) of Mount Sinai.

The structure of the fourth stanza is based on both chiasmus and parallelism:

*Fumus illic caliginem/ obscurae signat litterae;
splendentis ignis speciem/ clarae signum hic accipe* (4./1-4).

Fumus...caliginem (4./1) and *splendentis ignis* (4./3) are chiastic, contrasting *fumus* with *ignis*, *caliginem* with *splendentis*; in *obscurae signat* (4./2) and *clarae signum* (4./4) the opposites *obscurae* and *clarae* are balanced, while the cognates *signat* and *signum* lie in parallel.

19 *Sermo XVIII* (PL 178.510D).

20 *Sermo XVII* (PL 178.502B).

21 Ex.19.16.

22 69.7./1 and Is.11.2.

23 Heb.12.19.

Exodus describes the smoke on Mount Sinai: *totus autem mons Sinai fumabat*.²⁴ In the parallel stanza (stanza 2) smoke caused a purely physical darkness (*mons caligabat fumigans* 2./1), but that darkness is also a symbol of another darkness, the darkness of the Law:

*fumus illic caliginem
obscurae signat litterae* (4./1-2).

It is not immediately clear what Abelard means by *litterae*, but he has a lengthy passage in *Sermo V* which speaks to the problem. He is commenting on Galatians 4.3.: *ita et nos cum essemus parvuli sub elementis mundi eramus servientes*. Children, he says, learn the elements of language before they can construct speech. In the spiritual context the "elements of the world" (Gal.4.3 *sub elementis mundi*) are the parts of the Law. The parts in themselves lack meaning. Understanding of the Law was impossible for the Jews because they did not realize that the Law has a spritual and mystical meaning. To overcome this darkness, one needs the gift of *intelligentia*:

Verba itaque legis quasi litterae Iudaei habuerunt quia in eis spiritales et mysticos sensus non intellexerunt in quibus praecipue utilitas consistit intelligentiae.²⁵

The smoke on Mount Sinai symbolizes this darkness in the minds of the Jews as they look at the Law (4./1-2). They see only the letter, not the inner meaning. They have not been granted the gift of understanding, the *verbum intelligentiae* of the third stanza. Abelard continues in the sermon that the Jews were content with the literal sense of the Law (*Qui enim solo litterae sensu contenti sunt*) and that they are slaves to these elements through fear of punishment (*Sub elementis istis serviunt qui timore poenarum in lege constitutarum*). They are forced into obedience like slaves, not led to it like sons (*ad obedientiam coguntur ut servi, non amore ducuntur ut filii*). The Old Testament is the covenant of slavery and fear, the New of liberty and love (*Unde et illud servitutis, hoc Testamentum dicitur libertatis: illud timoris, hoc amoris*). This hymn and the preceding one reflect the themes drawn together in the sermon, the contrast of slavery and freedom, of fear and love.

A slightly odd note is sounded in the second couplet (4./3-4) by the imperative *accipe* since it is the only one in the whole hymn. It certainly seems out of place.

²⁴ Ex.19.18.

²⁵ *Sermo V* (PL 178.417D-418B) on Gal.4.3.

Abelard is addressing the nuns for whom this was written, telling them how to interpret (*accipe* 4./4) the signs. *accipere* is used frequently in patristic texts to introduce allegorical interpretation.²⁶

In a later sermon there is a passage with a clear affinity to the imagery of this stanza. Abelard is speaking of what separates those whom the Spirit fills and those who are in the thrall of Satan:

Quos enim daemonia replent, et torquendo in insaniam vertunt, verba eis tantum, non sensum ministrant, et caliginem fumi potius quam splendorem ignis mentibus eorum immittunt.²⁷

Those who are under Satan's dominion are blinded by him in the same way that those who are in servitude to the Law are blind to its inner meaning. A similar metaphor occurs in one of Abelard's earlier hymns which contrasts the Law and the Gospel in terms of night and day, darkness and dawn:

Advenit veritas, umbra praeterit,
post noctem claritas diei sublit,
ad ortum rutilant superni luminis
legis mysteria plena caliginis.²⁸

The Law is a dark mystery but its meaning shines clear in the light of the truth of the Gospel.

The first and third stanzas of this present hymn evoke the fear of the Israelites at Sinai; the second and fourth the darkness shrouding the giving of the Law. The fifth stanza, the last to set Old Testament against New with *illic* and *hic*, brings these motifs together:

Terroris ac caliginis
illic plena sunt omnia (5./1-2).

The extent of the dread and mystery is emphasized by *plena* and *omnia*.

The language of the second couplet,

curat hic ex contrariis
Paraclitus contraria (5./3-4),

has a philosophical, rather than a theological, ring and there is much in Abelard's philosophical writings on the subject of *contraria*. His main definition occurs in the

²⁶ TLL 1.308 *accipio* I.5.a.

²⁷ *Sermo* XIX (PL 178.514A).

²⁸ 10.1./1-4.

Topica where he simplifies the Aristotelean theory of virtue set out in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.²⁹ Whereas Aristotle holds that a virtue is the mean between two extremes and is the opposite of both those extremes, Abelard says that the extremes themselves are the opposites: *...illa tamen contraria eis sunt quae quam longissime dissident*.³⁰

In the hymn Abelard has just been speaking of fear and darkness (*terroris ac caliginis* 5./1); *ex contrariis*, therefore, indicates the opposites of fear and darkness, namely love and light. Love, not courage, is here the opposite of fear because the context demands that particular opposition: love was a prominent motif in the preceding hymn and in the sermons two verses are frequently quoted which set love against fear:

Non accepistis spiritum timoris...sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, and non est timor in charitate, sed perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem.³¹

Szövérfy asserts that *curat* (5./3)

is explained through the context of the word *contraria* in Coloss.2.14: *delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti quod erat contrarium nobis*" and adds in parenthesis after *chirographum decreti* "the usual reference to Adam's Fall and the subsequent judgement against mankind".³²

That, however, is not the point at issue in the hymn. If Abelard has indeed been influenced in his choice of the word *contraria* by this verse from Colossians, he must be interpreting it differently. The context of the hymn, the giving of the Law on Sinai, suggests that what is written against us is the Law itself.

Although the passage from Colossians may have suggested to Abelard the possibilities of *contraria*, it does not explain *curat*. That metaphor owes more to the *Christus medicus* imagery which occurs not only throughout the writings of the Fathers but Abelard's hymns for the Holy Cross. *curat* is itself used in the lines

Antiqui virus/ serpentis Christus/ suspensus curat.³³

²⁹ Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* II.8.

³⁰ *Dialect. Tract.III.1.de locis* p.374.24-31.

³¹ Rom.8.15 and I John 4.18.

³² Szövérfy II p.156.

³³ 67.2./1-3.

If Abelard is thinking along these lines, then his image of the *Paracletus medicus* is unusual. Hilary comes close to it when, in talking of the Spirit, he writes: *Huius enim dont virtutibus poterant et turbator expelli, et infirma curari*, but this, though near, is not the same, for the healing in Hilary is physical one, in the hymn it is spiritual.³⁴ Abelard is closer to Augustine: *Ecce iterum nova de supernis medicina mittitur*.³⁵ In spite of these parallels, Abelard's use of the image here is striking. So the stanza once again sets up the opposition between the Old Covenant and the New, between the Law and the Gospel. Through the light and love He brings at Pentecost the Spirit remedies the fear and darkness which descended on man at Sinai with the advent of the Law.

Although in earlier stanzas He is *Spiritus*, the designation *Paracletus* (5./4) is deliberately chosen at this point to lead into the sixth stanza where there is a play on the name in the second line, *divina consolatio* (6./2). The Paraclete is the comfort, *consolatio* being a translation of the Greek παράκλητος. Gregory explains the meaning:

Nostis plurimi, fratres mei, quod Graeca locutione paracletus Latina advocatus dicitur vel consolator...Consolator autem idem Spiritus vocatur, quia de peccati perpetratione moerentibus, dum spem veniae praeparat, ab afflictione tristitiae mentem levat.³⁶

The couplet

omnes aufert molestias
divina consolatio (6./1-2)

echoes the closing lines of the first stanza,

Spiritus in cenaculo
susceptus illum abstulit (1./3-4),

where the Spirit took away the fear engendered by the Law. The use in the sixth stanza of the same verb *aufere*, but in the present tense, extends the Spirit's work from the apostles in the upper room to the singers in the church and enlarges the scope of that work through the comprehensive *omnes molestias*: it is not only the terror and darkness of the Law that He removes, but all things which trouble us.

34 Hilary *Comm.in Matt.X* (PL 9.967A).

35 Augustine *Sermo* 182 (PL 38-39.2088).

36 Gregory the Great *Homil.in Evang.II.30* (PL 76.1221C-D).

The third line *cordis exarat tabulas* (6./3) illustrates the various levels of Scriptural allusion in which Abelard delights. Jeremiah uses the verb *exarare* in a complaint against the sin engraved on the heart of Judah:

peccatum Iuda scriptum est stilo ferreo in ungue adamantino; exaratum super latitudinem cordis eorum.³⁷

Although this is the opposite of the hymn, where it is not sin that is engraved on the heart, Abelard echoes *exaratum* in *exarat* not only because the metaphor is vivid in itself, but because it brings to mind the contrary situation obtaining under the old dispensation. Moreover, *cordis tabulas* explicitly echoes both Old and New Testaments, making the necessary bridge between the two: in Proverbs Wisdom declares

mandata mea...et legem...scribe illam in tabulis cordis tui, while Paul writes manifestati quoniam epistula estis Christi ministrata a nobis et scripta non atramento, sed Spiritu Dei vivi, non in tabulis lapideis, sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus.³⁸

The contrast suggested by Paul is the one on which the hymn rests, the contrast between the giving of the Law and the bestowal of the Spirit, for the Law was written on tablets of stone:

dixit autem Dominus ad Moysen:...daboque tibi tabulas lapideas et legem ac mandata quae scripsi ut doceas eos.³⁹

Abelard adds in *Sermo XVII* that Christ promised the apostles that a new Law of love would be written in their hearts in place of the old Law of fear:

quibus (apostolis) per Spiritum sanctum (Christus)...legem amoris potius quam timoris imprimendam cordibus eorum promiserat.⁴⁰

Through these different allusions Abelard draws together the various strands in the hymn: the Law contrasted with the Spirit, the outer contrasted with the inner, the letter with the meaning. That this is traditional teaching is clear from Hugh of St. Victor:

Lex scripta est digito Dei in lapideis tabulis, gratia scribitur per Spiritum sanctum in cordibus humanis.⁴¹

37 Jer.17.1.

38 Prov.7.3 and II Cor.3.3.

39 Ex.24.12.

40 *Sermo XVII* (PL 178.505A).

41 Hugh of St. Victor *Serm. LXX* (PL 177.1122A-B).

Abelard's originality lies in the brevity of his summary which through the multiplicity of echoes carries a wealth of meaning.

The hymn closes with a metaphor from the world of accounting: *ut reparetur ratio* (6./4). The image is suggested by the preceding line, *cordis exarat tabulas* (6./3), which, although it has a Scriptural context, calls to mind, in its use of *tabulas*, the wax tablets of bankers. What was written against man under the Law is erased and a new account established, as Paul writes to the Colossians: *delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti*.⁴² Abelard employs a similar image in his first hymn for the Cross: Christ climbs the tree of the Cross

ut fructu tui/ letalis pomi/ restauret damna.⁴³

There the image is one of profit and loss. The profit gained on the Cross cancels out the loss caused by the Fall. In both hymns man's account with God is squared, in the earlier one by Christ's death, in this by the action of the Spirit. The two are interlinked: it is because of Christ's death that the Spirit is able to engrave a new account on the heart of man. In both hymns what is restored is the situation which obtained before the Fall.

The final prayer which forms part of the doxology for all the Pentecost hymns focuses on the Spirit's work today:

isdem nos charismatibus
confirma quos regeneras (7./3-4).

It is integrated into the main part of the hymn through the final image of the new account engraved on the heart which is equivalent to the metaphor of new birth with which the hymn closes.

⁴² Col.2.14.

⁴³ 66.9./1-3; see discussion p.337.

11.5. 72. *ad laudes*

Argument: The language divided at Babel becomes one at Pentecost. Joel's prophecy is fulfilled. Pentecost is the crown of Feasts, the Spirit the crown of Christ's promises.

1. Apostolorum pectora
divinus replens Spiritus
corda ditat scientia,
linguas loquelis omnibus
*Summa summo regi Deo sit gloria,
cuius cuncta subsistunt gratia,
ex quo, per quem, in quo sunt omnia.*

2. Ut superbos disperserat
linguae quondam divisio,
sic humiles nunc aggregat
diversarum collectio.
Summa summo regi

3. Laudari linguis omnibus
et praedicari debuit
in cunctis mundi partibus
qui has, qui cuncta condidit.
Summa summo regi

4. Ioelis testimonium
completum esse novimus,
Petrus calumniantium
quod opponit latibus.
Summa summo regi

5. Divinorum completio
festorum haec festivitas,
divini consummatio
promissi fit haec largitas.
Summa summo regi

6. Qui verum omne doceat
promissus hic est Spiritus,
hic est qui cuncta suggerat
quae suis dixit Filius.
Summa summo regi

7. Apostolorum precibus
quos hac in die consecras,
isdem nos charismatibus
confirma, quos regeneras.
Summa summo regi

1. The Holy Spirit
filling the breasts of the apostles,
enriches their hearts with knowledge,
their tongues with all languages.
*To God the King on high be glory in the highest,
by Whose grace all things subsist,
from Whom, through Whom, in Whom all things exist.*

2. As the dividing of language
in times past had scattered the proud,
so now the gathering of the divided tongues
brings together the humble.
To God the King on high

3. He was to be praised in all tongues
and proclaimed
in all lands of the earth,
He Who created these tongues, and all things.
To God the King on high

4. We know that Joel's prophecy
has been fulfilled,
which Peter spoke
against the barkings of his vilifiers.
To God the King on high

5. This feast is the fulfilment
of the Feasts of the Lord,
this bounty the consummation
of the promise of the Lord.
To God the King on high

6. This is the Spirit promised
to teach all truth,
this is He Who brings to remembrance
all that the Son spoke to His own.
To God the King on high

7. By the prayers of the apostles
whom You consecrate today,
strengthen us with those same gifts
whom You bring to new birth.
To God the King on high

1./3 scientia C: sententia B

2./4 diversarum collectio B: divisarum collatio C

Like the previous two hymns, this has an internal structure based on word repetition. The first three stanzas are held together by *lingua* (*linguas* 1./4, *linguae* 2./2, *linguis* 3./1), stanzas 4 and 5 by the cognates *completum* (4./2) and *completio* (5./1), stanzas 5 and 6 by *promissus* (5./4) and *promissus* (6./2). There is a break between the two halves of the hymn since there is no verbal link connecting the third and fourth stanzas.

The first three stanzas centre on the gift of tongues, the most outward sign of the Spirit's activity at Pentecost as it is related in Acts: *et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto et coeperunt loqui linguis prout Spiritus sanctus dabat eloqui eis*.¹ The first stanza makes specific verbal references to the passage in the words *replens*, *Spiritus*, *linguas* and *loquellis*. Just as the scene on Sinai was set in the opening lines of the last hymn, so here there is the upper room where the apostles were gathered.²

The opening stanza contains a variety of references both to passages of Scripture and to earlier hymns. The Spirit is *divinus...spiritus*, rather than the more usual *Spiritus sanctus*, not only for the sake of *variatio*, but to form a link between this and the preceding hymn where, in the final stanza, the Paraclete is *divina consolatio*.³ The stanza perhaps owes something, too, to the influence of the popular hymn *Veni, creator Spiritus* where the Spirit is asked to fill hearts (*pectora*) and to enrich (*ditas*) with the gift of tongues:

imple superna gratia/ quae tu creasti pectora...
tu rite promisso Patris/ sermone ditas guttura.⁴

There are two readings in the MSS for the third line of the stanza: B, followed by Dreves and Szövérfy, has *sententia*; C, favoured by Waddell, *scientia*.⁵ *scientia* is to be preferred for three reasons: *scientia* is one of the seven gifts of the Spirit and, as Burnett points out, "the natural word for acquiring knowledge of strange languages";⁶

1 Acts 2.4.

2 71.1./1-2.

3 71.6./2.

4 Walpole 118.3-4 and 11-12 (pp.374-6).

5 Szövérfy II p.157; Waddell CLS 9 p.79.; cf. Amalarius *de ord.antiph.* 57 ...ut demonstret *scientiam* vocis diversarum linguarum... (PL 105.1301C).

6 Burnett "Notes on the Tradition of the Text of the *Hymnarius Parclitensis*" *Scriptorium* 38 (1984) p.298. Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 51 (PL 57.636C) uses *scientia* in this context: *dum apostolis variarum linguarum scientiam tribuit*. Burnett adds that Szövérfy's translation of *sententia* (II p.157) <<inspiration, or divine knowledge>> has no justification.

secondly, Abelard writes in *Sermo XVII* that the Spirit filled the apostles with love and knowledge: *cum eos Spiritus sanctus amore tanto scientiaque repleverit*;⁷ finally, Paul says *quia in omnibus divites facti estis in illo, in omni verbo et in omni scientia*.⁸ Here is the same combination of enrichment, speech and knowledge that is evident in the hymn. Abelard has reversed the order of Paul's *in omni verbo et in omni scientia* so that the gift of languages can bring the stanza to a climax in the last line, for it is on this gift that the next two stanzas focus.

The two couplets which make up the second stanza balance each other, with one variation, by means of parallelism and antithesis. The first line corresponds to and contrasts with the third, the second with the fourth:

ut superbos disperserat (2./1)	linguae divisio (2./2)
sic humiles aggregat (2./3)	diversarum collectio (2./4).

The variation comes in *quondam* and *nunc* which, although set against each other, do not occupy the same position in their respective couplets. The structure of the stanza reflects the contrast it presents, that Pentecost is the reversal of Babel.

Since parallels between Babel and Pentecost are traditional, Abelard has no need to spell out the association. He makes no mention of the tower or the name of the place, but evokes the episode by referring to the *superbi* and to the *linguae divisio*. It is the multiplicity of languages listed in Acts (*Parthi et Medi et Elamitae et qui habitant Mesopotamiam et Iudaeam...*) which gives rise in the minds of the Fathers to the memory of Babel, that incident in the Old Testament whence sprang the division of language as a punishment for the sin of hubris:

(Dominus dixit) Venite igitur descendamus et confundamus ibi linguam eorum ut non audiat unusquisque vocem proximi sui; atque ita divisit eos Dominus ex illo loco in universas terras...et inde dispersit eos Dominus super faciem cunctarum regionum.⁹

The first couplet contains two obvious verbal references to this passage, *disperserat* (2./1) echoing *dispersit*, and *divisio* (2./2) *divisit*.

Although the story in Genesis makes no explicit reference to pride, the inference is obvious that this is the cause of the punishment. Discussion of the effects of the sin of

7 *Sermo XVII* (PL 178.503B).

8 I Cor.1.5.

9 Acts 2.9-11; Gen.11.1-9.

arrogance and its opposite, the virtue of humility, occurs early in the patristic writings. Augustine attributes the division of languages to pride, whereas the humility of the apostles resulted in the gift of tongues:

hinc facta est origo linguarum multarum...Per superbos homines divisae sunt linguae, per humiles apostolos congregatae sunt linguae: spiritus superbiae dispersit linguas, Spiritus sanctus congregavit linguas.¹⁰

This antithesis of pride and humility contains a striking allusion to a seemingly unconnected passage, the Magnificat: *dispersit superbos mente cordis sui...et exaltavit humiles*.¹¹ The link lies in the fact that the New Testament has superseded the Old and that ^{the} new dispensation is ushered in by the Magnificat.

The final line in B is *diversarum collectio*; Waddell prefers the reading of C, *divisarum collatio* and translates

Just as in times past the division of speech had scattered the proud (=the Babel episode), so now the bestowal of the divided (tongues) gathers together the humble.¹²

While *divisarum collatio* (C) would echo *divisio* in the second line, the reading *collectio diversarum* (B) is to be preferred. *collectio* is the direct opposite of *divisio*, which *collatio* is not. Both *collectio* and *diversarum* are supported by Augustine:

sic humilis fidelium pietas earum linguarum diversitatem Ecclesiae contulit; ut quod discordia dissipaverat, colligeret charitas.¹³

The gift of tongues is the theme of the third stanza where it is associated with praise and preaching. The first couplet sums up the activity of the apostles as described in Acts for, after being filled with the Spirit, they both praise and preach: *audivimus loquentes eos nostris linguis magnalia Dei*, praise, and *stans autem Petrus cum undecim levavit vocem suam et locutus est eis...*, preaching.¹⁴ Maximus comments that without

¹⁰ Augustine *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.11 (CC Ser.Lat.39) p.665; cf. Ps-Ambrose *Sermo* XXXVI (PL17.697C).

¹¹ Luke 1.51-52; cf. I Pet.5.5 ...*quia Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam*.

¹² Waddell CLS 5 p.ccxiv. He adds "No matter how one translates it, Dreves' *diversarum collectio* hardly serves as a subject for *aggregat...*" I disagree: it means "the gathering together of the diverse tongues brings together the humble".

¹³ Augustine *Sermo* 271 (PL 38-39.1245-6). cf. Amalarius (see above n.5):...*ut demonstret scientiam vocis diversarum linguarum...*

¹⁴ Acts 2.11 and 14.

the gift of tongues the Gospel could not have been preached to the peoples gathered in Jerusalem:

...nisi Spiritus sancti dono, dum apostolis variarum linguarum scientiam tribuit,
Dominica passio ad universarum gentium notitiam pervenisset...Nationes
propriis apud Iudaeam audiunt linguis Dei magnalia, et vitae suae remedia
praedicari.¹⁵

The stanza opens with two reminiscences, one of the summons in the Psalms to praise the Lord:

Laudate Dominum omnes gentes; laudate eum omnes populi.¹⁶

The other is an allusion to Christ's command to His disciples to preach:

et sic oportebat...praedicari in nomine eius poenitentiam et remissionem
peccatorum in omnes gentes.¹⁷

In these two references is the basis of the first three lines of the stanza, the duty to praise and proclaim, and the stress on the universality of the message. Abelard speaks of this universality in terms of all tongues, *linguis omnibus* (3./1) rather than all peoples, because the theme of the hymn is the Spirit's gift of tongues. There is, however, Scriptural warrant for the phrase in the context of preaching in the great commission:

Euntes in mundum universum praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae...Signa
autem eos qui crediderint, haec sequentur: in nomine meo daemonia elicient,
linguis loquentur novis...¹⁸

Preaching the Gospel will be accompanied by miraculous signs, among which is speaking in new languages.

God is the Creator of the languages as He is Creator of all things: *qui has (linguas), qui cuncta condidit* (3./4). The first of these phrases has a double reference: God created the languages of the nations when He scattered the peoples at Babel and confounded their tongues, but He has also created the languages in the mouths of the apostles through the gift of the Spirit. The addition of the words *qui cuncta condidit* lends to the line a doxological style, especially when it is immediately followed by the refrain. The whole stanza and refrain have a close parallel in the doxology for the *Hymni Nocturnales* where the verb *tubilent* is equivalent to *laudant* of 3./1:

¹⁵ Maximus Taurinensis *Sermo* 51 (PL 57.636C).

¹⁶ Ps.116.1; cf. Ps.66.4-5.

¹⁷ Luke 24.27.

¹⁸ Mark 16.15.

Sit perpes Deo gloria,
 ex quo sunt, quae sunt, omnia;
 ipsum cuncta, per quem sunt, praedicent,
 ipsi semper, in quo sunt, lubilent.¹⁹

With its doxological tone, the final line of the third stanza makes a fitting end to the first section of the hymn.

The fourth stanza forms a bridge between the first and second halves of the hymn. Abelard refers to Peter's answer to those who attributed the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit to the influence of alcohol:

Alii autem irridentes dicebant: Quia musto pleni sunt. Stans autem Petrus...et locutus est eis:...hoc est quod dictum est per prophetam Joel: Et erit novissimis diebus (dicit Dominus), effundam de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem: et prophetabunt filii vestri et filiae vestrae...²⁰

The prophecy of Joel naturally appears in hymns devoted to Pentecost: an early hymn has the lines

...et docet Petrus/ falsa profari perfidas/ Iohel teste conprobans.²¹

The personal note introduced in *novitnus* (4./1) ranges the singers alongside Peter and the apostles against their detractors. It suggests an inner confidence that we, the heirs of the apostles, recognize with them the work of the Spirit, though others may be blind.

The striking metaphor *latratibus* (4./4), the accusations of unbelievers, is similar to Lauretus' description of detractors and heretics, cited by Szövérfy: *latrant etiam velut canes invidi et detrectatores et...haeretici*.²² It is, however, possible that the image occurred to Abelard independently, arising from Rabanus Maurus' comment on Phil.3.2: *Per canes, detrectatores, ut in Paulo "Videte canes", ne intuemini detrectatores*.²³ Through the metaphor Abelard mocks the mockers: their derision is

19 1.8./1-4.

20 Acts 2.6-17 referring to Joel 2.28.

21 Walpole 116.30-32 (p.371).

22 Szövérfy II p.158 quoting Lauretus Silva p.607.

23 Rabanus Maurus *Alleg.* (PL 112.883).

only so much barking. The choice of *latratibus* is well conceived to mark the distinction between the words of the detractors and those of the apostles: *latratibus* is set against *linguis* in the preceding stanza, so that the praise of God is to be uttered in all the tongues which He has made, but mockery of His servants is characterized by mere animal sounds. Although there is no verbal link between the two stanzas, they are thus connected by antithesis.

The fulfilment of prophecy (*completum esse* 4./2) leads on to the concept of Pentecost as the fulfilment of all the Feasts for which this book of hymns, the *Hymni Festorum*, was written. The Fathers are unanimous in counting Pentecost among the most important Feasts. Leo the Great begins one sermon: *Hodiernam solemnitatem, dilectissimi, in praecipuis festis esse venerandum...*²⁴ Abelard develops the concept, emphasizing that it is the consummation of all Feasts:

Ac si (Filius) aperte dicat: Omnia quae in mundum veniens egi tam nascendo quam praedicando, tam moriendo quam resurgendo, seu etiam ascendendo, ad hunc unum terminum et supremum finem spectabant, ut hoc igne scilicet terram concremarem, hoc est Spiritu sancto.²⁵

He sees Pentecost as the crown of the Feasts and, in the same way, the plan of redemption reaches its fulfilment in the outpouring of the Spirit:

divini consummatio/ promissi fit haec largitas (5./3-4).

As in the second stanza which occupies the same position in the first half of the hymn that this does in the second, so here the two couplets balance each other, again with one variation:

Divinorum completio / festorum haec festivitas (5./1-2)
divini consummatio / promissi fit haec largitas. (5./3-4).

The variation comes in the second couplet where there is the addition of the verb *fit* which serves both clauses. The repetition of *divinorum/ divini* suggests a deliberate emphasis rather than a simple desire for balance. These are the hymns for the Feasts of the Lord, not those for everyday use or for the saints. This is the crowning Feast of the Lord just as the beneficence of the Spirit is the fulfilment of the Lord's promise that the Paraclete would come.

²⁴ Leo the Great *Sermo* LXXV (PL 54.400C); cf pseudo-Augustine *Sermo* 186.1 (PL 39.2094).

²⁵ *Sermo* XVIII (PL 178.508D).

haec largitas could be simply a reference to the gift of tongues, the theme of the first three stanzas, but, given the emphasis in the first hymn for Pentecost on the seven gifts of the Spirit, Abelard is unlikely to consider tongues the most important of the gifts. *largitas* itself contains within it a possible allusion to the traditional hymn *Beata mihi gaudia*:

inlapsa nobis caelitus/ largire dona Spiritus,

which supports the inference that Abelard means the seven gifts.²⁶

The abundance of the Spirit's bounty is the fulfilment of the Lord's promise (*divini.../ promissi* 5./3-4) and the Spirit is the One Whom Christ promised would teach the disciples all truth: *cum autem venerit ille Spiritus veritatis, docebit vos in omnem veritatem*.²⁷ The first couplet of the sixth stanza,

Qui verum omne doceat/ ...est Spiritus (6./1-2),

is closely modelled on John's Gospel. So too is the second couplet

hic est qui cuncta suggerat/ quae suis dixit Filius (6./3-4)

which follows Christ's words *ille...suggeret vobis omnia quaecumque dixerō vobis*.²⁸

With its emphasis on the comprehensiveness of the Spirit's teaching the sixth stanza balances the third which stresses the universality of the Spirit's activity. God is to be praised and proclaimed in all tongues (*linguis omnibus* 3./1) and the Spirit teaches all truth (*verum omne* 6./1); God has created all things (*cuncta condidit* 3./4) and the Spirit brings to mind all things (*cuncta suggerat* 6./3) which the Son has spoken. Thus the first half of the hymn closes on the work of the Spirit and the Father, the second on the work of the Son and the Spirit. This is as it should be in the last of the hymns for the Feast of Pentecost.

²⁶ Walpole 115.19-20 (p.367).

²⁷ John 16.13.

²⁸ John 14.26.

12.1. *in dedicatione ecclesiae* - foreword

Certain aspects of these hymns suggest why Abelard has included them in *Libellus* II, although the Feast of Church Dedication, when a church celebrates its foundation, is not properly a Feast of the Lord. The first Pentecost hymn opens with the prayer that God may consecrate the altar of our hearts with His Spirit. These hymns for the Dedication rehearse the consecration of the church, but include a prayer that the Lord may consecrate our heart's temple to Himself. It is the inner reality of faith which matters more than the external ritual.

The first hymn (73) introduces this relation of external symbol to inner reality. The external symbols form the subject of 74 and 75 which together describe the ceremony of dedication from its beginning to the Mass. The hymns make no attempt to explain the symbolism, perhaps because it was already well-known.

There is a movement through the hymns from the church as an unconsecrated building to the church as the House of the Lord. The first hymn sets the the dedication in its historical context, adducing as an Old Testament *exemplum* the *encaenia*, the Feast of the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. The dedication of Solomon's Temple in the Old Testament is linked with the New Testament Feast which Christ attended and both are integrated with the present dedication through the prayer that Christ may be present here too. In 73 He is asked to be the true Lord of this very House of the Lord. In 74 and 75 the rites are performed which consecrate the building. 76 opens with the exclamation *Ecce, domus Domini* (76.1./1): the church has now become the House of the Lord; the prayer of the first hymn has been answered. The significance of the ceremony ending with the Mass (75.9./4) is that Christ is present in the elements and, therefore, present in the church.

12.2. 73. in 1. nocturno

Argument: As the Lord was present at the dedication of the Temple, so may He be present today at the consecration of this church and in our hearts. The external act is a symbol of an inner reality.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Sacra Ierosolymis
facta sunt encaenia,
cum lux esset celebris
Domini praesentia.</p> | <p>1. The holy Feast of dedication
was held in Jerusalem,
when the light was intense
through the presence of the Lord.</p> |
| <p>2. Ipse nostris hodie
festis adsit, quaesumus,
praesentis basilicae
basileon propius.</p> | <p>2. That He be present today
at our celebration we pray,
the true Lord
of this very house of the Lord.</p> |
| <p>3. Nostri templum pectoris
ipse sibi consecret
et signis extrinsecis
res internas aggreget.</p> | <p>3. May He consecrate to Himself
the temple of our heart
and may He add to the external symbols
inner reality.</p> |
| <p>4. Quae fiunt exterius,
intus ipse compleat,
mundi penetralibus
qui cordis inhabitat.</p> | <p>4. May He fulfil within us
the signs which are external,
He Who inhabits the secret places
of a pure heart.</p> |
| <p>5. Deo Patri gloria,
par sit honor Filio,
compar sit Spiritui
gratiarum actio. Amen.</p> | <p>5. Let there be glory to God the Father,
equal honour to the Son,
let there be equal thanksgiving
to the Spirit. Amen.</p> |

Of the four hymns for the Feast of Dedication this is the most accessible. The first stanza provides the Scriptural warrant for church dedication by adducing the *exemplum* of the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. *encaenia*, the festival which celebrates that dedication, is linked in John's Gospel with Christ:

Facta sunt autem encaenia in Ierosolymis; et hiems erat. Et ambulabat Iesus in templo, in porticu Salomonis.¹

Abelard refers to this in *Sermo VIII* and to this alone that Szövérfy believes the hymn alludes.²

cum lux esset celebris/ Domini praesentia (1./3-4) with its stress on the intensity of light, has no parallel in the quotation from John nor in Abelard's sermon. Dreves sees an allusion to the dedication of the Temple by Solomon:

...et maiestas Domini implevit domum. Nec poterant sacerdotes ingredi templum Domini eo quod impleisset maiestas Domini templum Domini. Sed et omnes filii Israel videbant descendentem ignem et gloriam Domini super domum.³

lux..celebris (1./3) contains a second allusion: to Christ's statement *Ego sum lux mundi*.⁴ It is for this reason that Abelard has chosen *lux* rather than *gloria*, the word in the Old Testament parallels. Thus there is a fusion of reference typical of Abelard: God was present at the dedication of the Temple in majesty and glory; Christ, the Light incarnate, was present in Jerusalem at the festival which celebrates that dedication. Old and New Testaments are brought together to provide a basis for the dedication of a church, the heir to the Temple.

With the establishment of the Scriptural antecedents, the hymn moves to the prayer that the Lord, Who graced with His presence the dedication of the Temple, may be here today at this ceremony of consecration:

Ipsa nostris hodie
festis assit, quiescimus (2./1-2).

The transposition from past to present is underlined in the words *nostris*, *hodie*, *praesentis* and in the change of tense from the perfect *facta sunt* (1./2) to the present *assit* (2./2).

1 John 10.22.

2 *Sermo VIII* (PL 178.437B); Szövérfy (II p.160) dismisses Dreves suggestion (see below n.4).

3 Dreves p.189 *Haec ad ea alludunt, quae 2.Par.7 narrantur*.

4 John 8.12.

It is only here that Abelard uses the title *basileon* of Christ.⁵ His choice is actuated by his desire for a word which will connect Christ with the church about to be dedicated to Him. So he chooses two Greek words, *basilica*, the church, and *basileon*, the king, and, by juxtaposing them, emphasizes their etymological relationship. Christ is the true King of the King's dwelling. Isidore writes:

Basilicae prius vocabuntur regum habitacula, unde et nomen habent; nam
rex et basilicae regiae habitationes.⁶

This word-play is not simply for its own sake, but to underline the meaning of the consecration ceremony: it is fitting that the Lord's house be dedicated to its true Lord (*basileon proprius* 2./4).

The hymn opens with the dedication of the Temple, moves first to the church to be consecrated, then from the church building to the Christians within that building whose hearts must also be consecrated to the Lord. The link is made through the image, derived from Paul, of the heart as the temple of the Spirit.⁷

Nostri templum pectoris/ ipse sibi consecret (3./1-2)

affords a parallel to the opening lines of Abelard's Pentecost hymn

Adventu sancti Spiritus/ nostri cordis altari
ornans, Deus, virtutibus/ tu tibi dedica

where *tu tibi templa dedica* provides a close parallel to *templum...ipsi sibi consecret* (3./1-2).⁸

In the final lines of the third stanza Abelard introduces a theme which is later recapitulated in the fourth stanza and which becomes the leitmotiv of the following two hymns, that the external is but a symbol of an inner reality:

et signis extrinsecis
res internas aggreget (3./3-4).

The theme is anticipated in the movement of the hymn: from an event, the *encaenia*, which is completely outwith the experience of the Christians singing the hymn, to the

5 *basileon* is odd: the *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List* (ed. R.E.Latham, Oxford 1965) p.45 gives *basileus* and *basileos*. Abelard uses the ending *-on* again in 76.5./1 *ad superbum zabulon*, but there it is accusative.

6 Isidore *Etym.*XV.iv.11.

7 cf. I Cor.3.16, 6.19; Eph.2.21-22.

8 69.1./1-4.

event which the hymn celebrates, the dedication of the church within which the Christians are worshipping, thence to the consecration of the temple of the heart of those same Christians. So the hymn moves from the entirely external in the first stanza to the entirely internal in the third where the intensely personal aspect is emphasized by the position of *nostri* (3./1). By introducing the motif first through the structure of the hymn and then in words through the medium of a prayer, Abelard stresses the importance of the inner reality over the outer. The theme is picked up and clarified in the opening lines of the following hymn:

Spiritalis signum est/ templum hoc visibile,
et in illo totum est/ quod in hoc fit mystice.⁹

The consecration of the church is significant only insofar as it symbolizes the consecration of our lives to God; without that consecration, the symbol is void.

The fourth stanza appears as the penultimate stanza of the first three hymns for the Dedication. In *Sermo XXVIII* Abelard gives a prose parallel:

Quod in semet nobis sic complere concedat, ut quod visibilibus sacramentis
exterius actum est, in corporali templo ipse invisibiliter in nobis operando
templum nos verius efficere dignetur.¹⁰

As in the hymn, so here are brought together the two themes of the presence of the Lord and of symbol/reality. The prayer with which the stanza opens,

Quae fiunt exterius
intus ipse compleat (4./1-2),

is a recapitulation of the last couplet of the third stanza (*et signis extrinsecis/ res internas aggreget* 3./3-4) and asks again for the symbol of the church dedication to become the reality of our own spiritual consecration. The final couplet,

mundi penetralibus
qui cordis inhabitat (4./3-4),

brings to a close the theme of the Lord's presence, in the Temple (1./3-4), in the church (2./1-2) and now in pure hearts.

It is here too that the architectural imagery of the hymn and the internal/ external theme are blended. Architectural images, *basilicae*, *templum*, *aggreget*, *penetralibus*, are natural in a hymn which celebrates the dedication of a building. The internal/external

⁹ 74.1./1-4.

¹⁰ *Sermo XXVIII* (PL 178.554D-555A) cited by Szövérfy II p.161.

theme permeates the hymn in *signis extrinsecis, res internas, extertius, intus, penetralibus*. The fusion occurs in *penetralibus* which links delicately the two motifs through its meaning "the innermost part of a temple".

The doxology, apparently traditional in form and content, has seemingly little to do with the occasion on which it is being sung. Since, however, the doxologies in Abelard's hymns, especially those in this second book, are generally integral to the festival, whether overtly or allusively, this must be examined more thoroughly. The first two ascriptions of glory and honour to the Father and the Son are, of course, well-worn motifs. Departure from the norm comes in the final ascription to the Spirit:

Compar sit Spiritu
gratiarum actio (5./3-4).

It is rare in Abelard's hymns to find two lines in the doxology given to the Spirit and only one to each of the other Persons of the Trinity. The motif of thanksgiving to the Spirit is itself unusual. The reason for the novelty is twofold. In the first place, the clue to understanding how this doxology is appropriate to the context of church dedication lies in the flow of the hymn. Glory is given to God the Father Who overshadowed with His glory the Temple at its dedication; honour to the Son Who, having attended the festival celebrating that dedication, is invited to grace with His presence the church which is being consecrated to Him; but it is the Spirit Who dwells in our hearts to make them temples of God and so our thanks are His due in equal measure with the glory and honour ascribed to the Father and the Son.

The second and most important reason is that this hymn has been written for the dedication of the church at the Convent of the Paraclete. It is the festival of the church named after the Spirit Himself. The thanksgiving accorded Him in the doxology is the poetic form of Abelard's gratitude for the protection given him by the Holy Spirit when he was being hounded by enemies which led him to dedicate the oratory at Troyes to the Paraclete:

...quia tamen ibi profugus ac jam desperatus divine gratia consolationis
aliquantulum respirassem, in memoriam hujus beneficii ipsum Paraclitum
nominaui.¹¹

¹¹ HC 1121-1124; see **Introduction** p.9.

12.3. 74. *in secundo nocturno*

Argument: The ritual of the dedication ceremony is a symbol of an inner reality. The ritual is described.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. <i>Spiritualis signum est
templum hoc visibile
et in illo totum est
quod in hoc fit mystice.</i></p> | <p>1. This visible temple is a symbol
of the spiritual temple,
and in the spiritual temple is the fulfilment
of the mystical acts in the visible.</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Aqua benedicitur,
sallis fit commixtio;
templum his conspergitur
circumvectis tertio.</i></p> | <p>2. The water is blessed,
salt is mingled with it;
three times is the temple sprinkled
with these as they are carried around.</p> |
| <p>3. <i>Accenduntur interim
intus luminaria
numero duodecim
in gyro disposita.</i></p> | <p>3. Meanwhile inside
lamps are lit,
twelve in number
set in a circle.</p> |
| <p>4. <i>Aspergendo circuit
templum ter episcopus;
portae frontem percutit
virga ter superius.</i></p> | <p>4. Three times the bishop circles the temple
asperging it;
three times with his staff he strikes
the door at the front.</p> |
| <p>5. <i>Aperiri praecipit
ut rex intret gloriae;
quod cum ter expleverit,
patefiunt ianuae.</i></p> | <p>5. He bids it be open
that the King of Glory may enter;
when he has done this three times,
the doors open wide.</p> |
| <p>6. <i>Ingressus basilicam
preces offert Domino,
pro se primum hostiam,
deinde pro populo.</i></p> | <p>6. Entering the Lord's house
he offers prayers to the Lord;
he makes the offering, first for himself
then for the people.</p> |
| <p>7. <i>Alphabeti duplicis
dum figuras exprimit,
cancellatis lineis
crucis signum imprimit.</i></p> | <p>7. As he traces the letters
of the two alphabets
with the lines running cross-wise
he makes the sign of the cross.</p> |
| <p>8. <i>Quae fiunt exterius,
intus ipse compleat,
mundi penetralibus
qui cordis inhabitat.</i></p> | <p>8. May He fulfil within us
the signs which are external,
He Who inhabits the secret places
of a pure heart.</p> |
| <p>9. <i>Deo Patri gloria,
par sit honor Filio,
compar sit Spiritui
gratiarum actio. Amen.</i></p> | <p>9. Let there be glory to God the Father,
equal honour to the Son,
let there be equal thanksgiving
to the Spirit. Amen.</p> |

The hymn opens with a recapitulation of the central motif in 73, the relationship between the external and the internal, the symbol and the reality.¹ Here the motif appears in the balance of spiritual and material, visible and symbolic, the visible temple or church a symbol of the spiritual church:

Spiritalis signum est
templum hoc visibile (1./1-2).

Consequently, all that is done in the visible church finds its fulfilment in the spiritual. Since in 73 the spiritual temple is the temple of the heart (*Nostri templum pectoris*) it would be natural to assume that it is to this that Abelard refers here.² The two hymns 74 and 75, however, lack any elaboration of this motif of symbolism and fulfilment, suggesting only in the penultimate stanza of each that this kind of spiritual church is meant. Abelard's prose works are, in this instance, of no assistance. Other commentators on the liturgy, both prior to him and his contemporaries, tend more towards a symbolism wider in scope than that indicated by Abelard and on only a few occasions do they shed light on his probable intention.³

In a work attributed to Hugh of St.Victor there are parallels to Abelard's first stanza which suggest we would be correct in taking it as a reference to the temple of the heart:

Quae autem hic fiunt visibiliter, omnia in anima per invisibilem virtutem Deus operatur quae verum templum Dei est... Domus dedicanda est anima sanctificanda.⁴

Hugh is not, however, consistent in his approach, at times referring the liturgical symbolism to the individual soul, but more often following earlier liturgists who explain the rites in the wider context of the whole Church.

Using the *Pontificale Romanum* Szövérfy has shown that Abelard's hymns 74 and 75 follow the sequence of the liturgy with little deviation.⁵ He points out some differences and what appear to him to be some important omissions, but in general there is fairly precise agreement between the two. It is puzzling that both Dreves and

1 73.3./3-4 and 4./1-2.

2 73.3./1.

3 Remigius of Auxerre (9th.cent.), Honorius "Augustodunensis" (12th.cent.) and the *Speculum de mysteriis ecclesiae* attributed to Hugh of St.Victor (12th.cent.)

4 Hugh of St.Victor *Spec.de myst.eccl.* (Pl 177.339A-B).

5 Szövérfy II pp.162-5; *Le Pontifical Romain au moyen-âge I* (ed. M.Andrieu, Studi e Testi 86) pp.176-194.

Szövérfy have dismissed these hymns as either "interesting liturgical documents, less interesting from a poetic point of view" or "...*satis leiuna rituum enumeratio*" without seeking a reason for their composition and inclusion in the *Hymnarius*.⁶ This is a question to which we shall return later.

The *Pontificale* treats first of the preparations of the elements required for the dedication ceremony.⁷ It goes on to the lighting of the twelve candles inside the church:

Et illuminentur duodecim candelae intrinsecus per circuitum ecclesiae et, electis cunctis ecclesiae, solus diaconus recludatur in ea. Et episcopus ante fores benedicat aquam cum caeteris ordinibus.⁸

Abelard suggests by the words *interim* and *intus* (3./1-2) that all, except the one deacon, are already outside the church. It is impossible to tell whether this deviation lies in a local performance of the rite or in poetic licence which allows the hymnist to give an impression of simultaneous activity both within the church and outside. The fourth stanza,

Aspergendo circuit/ templum ter episcopus (4./1-2),

glances back to the end of the second, paralleling and reiterating

templum his conspergitur/ circumvectis tertio (2./3-4).

The couplet

Aqua benedicatur
salis fit commixtio (2./1-2)

summarizes the ritual exorcism of salt and water, the blessing and the mixing. The prescribed prayers clarify something of the symbolism. The prophet Elijah was ordered by God to place salt in water to cleanse it; here, in the same way, the salt will be for the healing of the faithful and, because of its presence, the Devil and all his works will flee.⁹ Commenting on the symbolism of the sprinkling, Hugh says succinctly: *aqua*,

6 Szövérfy II p.161; Dreves p.190.

7 Andrieu p.176.1. *In primis erunt praeparata in ecclesia quaeque necessaria, id est ysopum, vas cum aqua, virum sal et cinis.*

8 Andrieu pp.177-8. The liturgists agree that the twelve candles symbolize the twelve apostles who spread the light of the Gospel: Remigius (PL 131.845A-846A); Hugh (PL 177.339B); Honorius (Pl 172.590D-591A).

9 Andrieu p.177.3. *Ex orcizo te, creatura salis...per Deum qui te per Helyseum prophetam in aquam mitti iussit ut...effugiat atque discedat ab eo loco, quo aspersus fueris, omnis fantasia et nequitia, vel versutia diabolicae fraudis, omnisque spiritus immundus adiuratus.*

poenitentia; sal, sapientia; trina aspersio, trina immersio baptizandi.¹⁰ The unconsecrated church is likened to a people ignorant of God (*Domus non consecrata est gentilitas Dei ignara*).¹¹ As the individual soul requires baptism to enter into the Church, so the church building requires its own baptism in order to be a habitation fit for the Lord.

In the fourth and fifth stanzas Abelard gives a linear treatment to rites which, according to the *Pontificale*, are arranged in recurrent pairs. The *Pontificale* instructs the bishop to circle the church once, sprinkling it, approach the door, demand entrance. This is repeated three times until the door is opened by the deacon left inside for the purpose.¹² Abelard, on the other hand, appears to say that the bishop goes round the church three times, then approaches the door and beats on it thrice, demanding entrance. Is Abelard used to a practice different from that of the *Pontificale* or is he again indulging in poetic licence, this time to avoid a triple repetition of one rite, a repetition vital in a manual of instruction but hardly acceptable in a hymn and, moreover, unnecessary if the object of the hymn is the symbolism of the rite? It is impossible to be certain but it is interesting that, although the liturgists all agree on the rite as it appears in the *Pontificale*, the *Liber Sacramentorum* of Gregory the Great reads: *Et cum venerint ad ostium ecclesiae, percutiat pontifex ter superliminare de cambutta sua*.¹³

There are close verbal echoes in these stanzas of the *Pontificale*. Where the latter has *percutiens* and *superliminare*, Abelard is careful to include in his description *percutit...superius* (4./3-4). The bishop's demand for entrance, couched in the words of Psalm 23, gives rise to the line *ut rex gloriae intret* (5./2). The bishop demands that the doors of the church be opened in phrases more commonly used of Christ because here he symbolizes Christ Himself.¹⁴

10 Hugh (PL 177.339B); cf. Honorius (PL 172.593B).

11 Honorius (PL 172.590D).

12 Andrieu pp.178-180.10-16. *Tunc accedat pontifex ad ostium et percutiens <semel> limen cum cambuta sua superliminare dicat: Tollite portas...et introibit rex gloriae. Et diaconus de intus respondit: Quis est iste rex gloriae? E contra pontifex: Dominus fortis et potens...Et recedens ab ostio, iterum circueat ipsam ecclesiam...Tunc iterum veniens ad ostium...Deinde tertio circueat ecclesiam...Tunc aperto ostio, intrans ecclesiam...*

13 Gregory the Great *Lib.Sacr.* (PL 78.153A).

In the sixth stanza the bishop enters the church. Abelard has so far in this hymn referred to the building as *templum* (1./2, 2./3, 4./2). Here it is *basilica*, a reminiscence of the pun in the previous hymn,

praesentis basilicae/ basileon proprius,

emphasizing that Christ is the true King of the King's dwelling.¹⁵ Its function in this present hymn is to show that Christ in the *persona* of the bishop, by entering what is merely a religious building (*templum*), transforms it into His own house. It is a powerful image and apparently original to Abelard.

Abelard and Hugh of St.Victor agree that the bishop offers prayers first on his own behalf and then for the people (stanza 6). Other liturgists say that he prays first for the sanctification of the Church as Christ prayed for His disciples.¹⁶ Neither the *Pontificale* nor the *Liber Sacramentorum* contains the words of this prayer. The reason for Abelard's choice is found in Hebrews where the priest makes the offering first for himself, then for the people:....*quemadmodum sacerdotes prius pro suis delictis hostias offerre, deinde pro populo*.¹⁷ This explains too the sacrificial language of *offert* and *hostiam*.

The alphabets are traced in ash scattered on the floor of the church (stanza 7).¹⁸ What is important is that the two alphabets together form a cross. Waddell reverses the order of *exprimit* and *imprimit* (7./2-4) because "the imprinting of the alphabet in two crossed lines is meant to express the sign of the cross".¹⁹ Although this is persuasive, I prefer to retain the order of the MS because *exprimit* and *imprimit* allude to the motif of external symbol and inner reality: the significance of the rite lies in the cross, not in the letters. The verbs also lead into the penultimate stanza where the prepositional prefixes are echoed in *exterius* and *intus* (8./1-2) and the symbol/reality *topos* achieves a wider dimension.

14 Remigius (PL 131.847C-849A); Hugh (PL 177.339B); Honorius (PL 172.591A).

15 73.2./3-4.

16 Hugh (PL 177.339C); cf. Remigius (PL 131.849C) and Honorius (PL 172.591C).

17 Heb.7.27.

18 Andrieu p.180.18. *Interim unus e ministris aspergat cinerem per pavementum ecclesiae in modum crucis.*

19 Waddell CLS 8 p.ccxix.

12.4. 75. *in tertio nocturno*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Ad altare pontifex
sacrandum se praeparat,
aquae salem, cinerem
atque humum sociat.</p> <p>2. Bis, intincto digito,
per altaris cornua
signum crucis imprimit
consecrantis dextera.</p> <p>3. De hysopo deinde
tenens aspersorium
in altare septies
aspergit circumdatum.</p> <p>4. Rigatis ter deinceps
intus parietibus
orat ut exaudiat
ibi quosque Dominus.</p> <p>5. Ad altare praesul his
peractis convertitur,
psalmus cum antiphona
praeunte dicitur.</p> <p>6. Ad altaris funditur
basim aquae reliquum;
quo extergi debeat
mundum adest linteum.</p> <p>7. Tus antistes adolet
super ipsum Domino;
tam ipsum quam anguli
consignantur oleo.</p> <p>8. Unctione chrismatis
altare perfunditur,
et simul antiphona
decantanda sumitur.</p> <p>9. Cruces hinc duodecim
chrismantur parietum,
altare contegitur
et fit sacrificium.</p> <p>10 and 11 as for 74.8 and 9.</p> | <p>1. The bishop prepares himself
to consecrate the altar:
in the water he mixes salt
and ash and earth.</p> <p>2. When he has dipped his finger in,
twice in the act of consecration
the bishop marks the sign of the cross
on the horns of the altar with his right hand.¹</p> <p>3. Then, holding the sprinkler
of hyssop,
seven times he circles the altar
sprinkling it with the hyssop.</p> <p>4. After bedewing three times
the walls inside,
he prays that the Lord may hear
those who are present there.</p> <p>5. Once this has been done,
the bishop turns to the altar,
the psalm is sung,
with the antiphon before.</p> <p>6. At the foot of the altar
the rest of the water is poured out;
clean linen is at hand
to wipe it dry.</p> <p>7. The bishop burns incense
on the altar to the Lord;
as the altar is signed with oil,
so are its corners.</p> <p>8. The altar is drenched
with the oil of anointing,
and at the same time the antiphon,
which must be sung, is raised.</p> <p>9. Twelve crosses are then
marked on the walls,
the altar is covered
and the sacrifice made.</p> |
|---|---|

¹ 2./3-4 literally: "the right hand of the one consecrating marks the sign of the cross..."

Although 75 is of a piece with 74, continuing the catalogue of liturgical rites, the break at this point is no arbitrary one. Honorius explains that the rites already described are only an introduction to true consecration which symbolizes Christ's passion and the outpouring of the Spirit.²

The bishop turns to the most important part of the ceremony, the consecration of the altar. Immediately we are confronted with a problem: where all the manuals, all the liturgists agree, Abelard differs. The mixture of water, salt, ash and wine becomes in Abelard's hymn water, salt, ash and earth.³ The liturgists expound the symbolism of these elements in remarkably similar terms: the water is the people, the salt, the teaching of the Gospel or the Word Himself, the ash, Christ's passion, the wine and water together, His divine and human nature.⁴ There is a possibility that the difference is due to a corruption in the text, *virum* and *humum* being somewhat similar in form, but this explanation is unlikely. To move from the ordinary to the extraordinary transgresses the "laws" of textual corruption: *difficilior lectio potior*. It is remarkable that Dreves nor Szövérfy nor Waddell has commented on the reading.

If, on the other hand, this is an example of divergence between the *Pontificale* and the rite to which Abelard was accustomed, then it is different in kind from those which we have noted previously. There, in the ceremonies involving the lighting of the candles and the knocking at the door of the church, the difference has no ultimate significance for the interpretation of the rite. Here, however, the replacement of wine by earth is of very real significance since it is improbable that wine and earth symbolize the same. So there are two explanations, both of which are implausible. In the absence of a more probable solution, we must opt for the lesser evil, the textual corruption.

The second stanza also appears to differ from the *Pontificale*. Where it reads

Tunc ingrediens episcopus ad altare, primum cum pollice suo de ipsa aqua sancta faciat crucem in medio altaris...Deinde in dextera parte et tunc in sinistra per quatuor cornua altaris....

2 Honorius *hucusque totum quod praecessit, quasi prooemium consecrationis fuit. Abhinc dedicatio ecclesiae incipit, et ideo per hoc, quod nunc sequitur, Christi passio et Spiritus sancti effusio innuitur, per quae Ecclesia catholica consecratur* (PL 172.592C).

3 Andrieu p.182.27 and 29 *Tunc misceatur sal et cinis...Deinde ponat virum in ipsam aquam; cf. Gregory Lib.Sacr.* (PL 78.155C and 156A).

4 Remigius (PL 131.853B-D); Hugh (PL 177.339D-340A); Honorius (PL 172.593B).

Abelard mentions only the second stage of the rite.⁵ It seems likely, however, that the word *bis* (2./1) is intended to indicate the two instructions. Abelard again uses the verb *imprimit* of making the sign of the Cross.⁶ Since there is general agreement that the altar symbolizes the Church and the four horns the four corners of the earth which must be saved by the Cross, the implication of *imprimit* is again the reality of inner sanctification.⁷

There is wide divergence in the conduct of the rite mentioned in the third and fourth stanzas. Abelard says that the altar was sprinkled with hyssop seven times, the inner walls of the church three; Remigius agrees; the *Pontificale* instructs that altar and walls all be sprinkled three times; according to Honorius, the altar is first sprinkled seven times, then a further three, and the walls only once.⁸ It is odd that it is the *Pontificale* which differs from the rest in the number of times the altar is sprinkled, three as opposed to seven. One would expect that some, at least, of the liturgists would conform to the manual of instruction. They are all, however, agreed on the symbolism of the seven, the gift of the Spirit to the church.⁹ There is, of course, the possibility that there are two distinct traditions. This would go some way to explain the statement peculiar to Honorius that the altar is sprinkled seven times, then a further three: he may have amalgamated two traditions.

The importance of hyssop in the ritual of consecration is suggested by its prominent place in the opening line of the third stanza:

De hysopo deinde/ tenens aspersorium (3./1-2).

hysopo and *aspersorium* are deliberately reminiscent of the antiphon sung at this stage *Asperges me ysopo et mundabor*.¹⁰

5 Andrieu p.182.32-33.

6 74.7./4 *Alphabeti duplicis/ dum figuras imprimit*.

7 Honorius (PL 172.593D) *Quatuor cornua altaris signavit dum quatuor partes mundi cruce salvavit; cf. Remigius (PL 131.854C-D).*

8 Remigius (PL 131.855A); Andrieu p.182.33; Honorius (PL 172.593D-594A).

9 Remigius (Pl 131.855A); Honorius (PL 172.593D); Hugh (PL 177.386C).

10 Abelard (*Sermo III*) gives the Old Testament precedent for the use of hyssop: *ecclesiarum quoque delationes, vel altarium consecrationes, in tantum ex antiquitate suscepimus, ut in his peragendis nihil fere nisi Veteri Testamento cantetur vel recitetur: ubi et ad antiquae aspersionis exemplum hyssopum et cinerem adhibemus* (PL 178.407A).

The two lines (*Rigatis ter deinceps/ intus parietibus* 4./1-2) summarize the lengthy rite involving the sprinkling of the inner walls with the sanctified water, each of the three times being accompanied by an antiphon.¹¹ Hugh of St.Victor's elucidation of the symbolism accords well with Abelard's emphasis on inner reality:

Quae aspersio templi non manufacti emundationem significat interiorem quae quotidie fit per veram paenitentiam, and Unde altare et ecclesia interius aspergitur, ut intus, sicut extra, spiritualis Ecclesia sanctificanda ostendatur.¹²

In the couplet *Orat ut exaudiat/ ibi quosque Dominus* (4./3-4) there is a specific allusion to two of the prayers which follow in the ceremony:

Deus...exaudi preces servorum tuorum... and Adesto precibus nostris...ut quotiescumque in hac domo nomen sanctum tuum fuerit invocatum, eorum qui te invocaverint a te pio Domino preces exaudiantur.¹³

A new stage in the ceremony is now indicated by *his/ peractis* (5./1-2). The same construction occurs in the *Pontificale* (*hac expleta*), in the *Liber Sacramentorum* (*ipsa expleta*) and in Hugh of St.Victor (*his factis* and *completa oratione*).¹⁴ The bishop goes to the altar; the Psalm and antiphon are sung (5./1-4). Psalms and antiphons are sung at regular intervals throughout the ceremony but this is the first time that Abelard makes mention of them. This alone suggests that these have more significance. The antiphon *Introibo ad altare Dei* (Ps.42) foreshadows the theme of the Psalm in which the central section is a confession of the Psalmist's delight in the Lord's house and his realization that nothing unclean can enter therein:

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas, et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine; ut audiam vocem laudis et enarrem universa mirabilia tua. Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae et locum habitationis gloriae tuae.¹⁵

The church, cleansed both outside and in, is now a fit habitation for the Lord.

The sixth stanza relates to the *Pontificale*, but there is a marked divergence. The *Pontificale* reads

11 Andrieu p.183.35 *Deinde circueat ipsam ecclesiam <de intus> aquam spargendo...Et <interim> cantetur antiphona...Iterum autem similiter ...Tertio similiter...*

12 Hugh *de officiis* and *Spec.Eccl.* (PL 177.386D and 340A).

13 Andrieu pp.183-4.38 and 39.

14 Andrieu p.184; Gregory (Pl 78.157A); Hugh *Spec.Eccl.* and *de offic.* (PL 177.340B and 387A).

15 Ps.25.6-8.

Et fundat de ipsa aqua ad basim altaris et, de ea quae remansit, faciat maltam cum calce et tegula et aqua benedicta.¹⁶

Abelard not only omits any mention of cement, but says that all the remaining water is poured out at the foot of the altar. This refutes Szövérfy's suggestion that because

Abelard's hymn ignores most of the ritual concerning the relics...we may assume that between stanzas 6 and 7 a part of the hymn is missing.¹⁷

Abelard's hymn does not ignore "most of the ritual", it ignores it all. Any missing verses would have to mention the seal for the altar-stone but that seal is unavailable in Abelard's treatment since all the water has been poured away. Moreover, the hiatus would occur not only between stanzas 6 and 7, but between the two couplets of stanza 6. Here Abelard is in agreement with the liturgists who say that all the water is poured out at the foot of the altar, symbolizing the committal unto God of all that lies outside the realm of human capability.¹⁸

The altar is wiped dry with a clean linen cloth (*Quo extergi debeat/ mundum adest linteam* 6./3-4). The hymn shows verbal parallels with the instruction in the *Pontificale*: *extergatur mensa mundo linteo*.¹⁹ At this point the hymn abandons the *Pontificale* which in 41-53 deals with the subject of relics. *Postea*, half-way through 54, marks the beginning of a new part of the ceremony and it is here that the hymn picks up the rite:

Tus antistes adolet/ super ipsum Domino (7./1-2),

following the instruction *Postea deferatur incensum...super altare*.²⁰ It is clear from this that *super ipsum* (7./2) refers not to *mundum linteam* (6./4) as Szövérfy rightly rejects, nor to his suggestion of *feretrum*, but to the altar itself.²¹

Szövérfy suggests too that *ipsum* (7./8) is "once again *feretrum* or even more likely *altare*" in agreement with the *Pontificale*: *Tunc oleo sancto...faciat crucem in medio et per*

16 Andrieu p.184.40.

17 Szövérfy II p.164.

18 Remigius (PL 131.856D); Hugh (PL 177.340B).

19 Andrieu P.184.40. Hugh comments briefly: *Altare Christus est, linteam caro eius tunsionibus passionis ad candorem et gloriam immortalitatis perducta* (PL 177.340B); cf. Remigius (PL 131.857C) and Honorius (PL 172.594A).

20 Andrieu p.188.54.

21 Szövérfy II pp.164-5.

*quatuor angulos ipsius mensae.*²² This again counters the idea of a *lacuna* in the text: since it is improbable, although not, of course, impossible for the same pronoun to be used in two consecutive lines to mean different nouns, it seems more likely that both refer to *altare*. The correlation between the hymn and the *Pontificale* at this point suggests that there is no *lacuna*, but rather that Abelard deliberately omits any reference to relics.

In the *Pontificale* the altar is anointed twice with oil and once with the chrism. Szövérfy connects the eighth stanza with the instruction:

et ungat eam totam...de oleo sanctificato...Et cantet hanc antiphonam: Exiit
Iacob lapidem.²³

The link is not, however, here but with a later instruction which refers to the chrism itself, not the holy oil:

Deinde sumat chrisma [et] ex eo similiter sicut prius de oleo crucem faciat in
medio et per angulos mensae et perungat eam totam, cantando antiphonam:
Ecce odor filii mei sicut odor agri pleni...²⁴

The *Liber Sacramentorum* adds *Item antiphonam: Unxit te Dominus.*²⁵ This antiphon alone is cited for this part of the ceremony by Hugh of St. Victor:

Ungitur ergo altare et cantatur antiphona: Unxit te Dominus oleo laetitiae prae
consortibus tuis.²⁶

It seems likely that Abelard is following this tradition in which the antiphon contains a verbal link with the rite: *ungitur...unxit* echoed in the hymn in *unctione* 8./1.

Immediately after the antiphon the bishop makes the sign of the Cross with the chrism on the inner walls of the church in twelve places (9./1-2).²⁷ Szövérfy's comment that "this passage, too, may support the assumption of a *lacuna* in our hymn

22 Szövérfy II p.165 citing Andrieu pp.188.55. Hugh says that the incense was burned on the altar (PL 177.340B).

23 Szövérfy II p.165 citing Andrieu pp.188-9.55.

24 Andrieu p.189.57.

25 Gregory the Great *Lib.Sacr.* (PL 78.157B).

26 Hugh (PL 177.388A).

27 Andrieu p.189.58. *Deinde in circuitu ecclesiae eat episcopus et faciat crucem cum pollice suo de ipso chrismate in duodecim locis...; cf. Hugh (PL 177.340B) and Honorius (PL 172.594D).*

as it really refers to a passage preceding the benediction of the altar" is odd.²⁸ In both the *Pontificale* and the liturgists the marking of the walls occurs at precisely this point in the ceremony.²⁹ What Abelard does omit lies between the marking of the walls and the covering of the altar (9./3), that part of the rite which involves the prayer for the blessing of the altar and the consecration of the vestments and vessels.³⁰ Neither this omission nor the one which occurs between the rites mentioned in the last two lines of the ninth stanza supports the suggestion of *lacunae* in the hymn:³¹ the main part of the ritual of consecrating the altar has been dealt with in stanzas 5-8, so that any addition now would be otiose; and the rites which Abelard passes over are void of symbol and are also generally omitted by the liturgists.

The altar is covered, a symbol of the immortal bodies with which the faithful will be clothed.³² It is an obvious progression from this to the Mass (*et fit sacrificium* 9./4) which unites the risen and incorruptible body of Christ with the Church on earth. It is because Abelard wishes to link these two parts of the ceremony that he omits the symbolically less important sections which should properly come between, the details of the prayers and readings to be said before the Mass.

Although the tenth, and penultimate, stanza is shared by the first three hymns for the Dedication, it has here a special place because it echoes part of the benediction of the people after the Mass:

Concedatque mente et corpore sanctificatum fieri sibi templum proprium et
habitaculum sancti Spiritus sempiternum.³³

Thus it brings to the fore once again the double consecration (the building and the individual) introduced in the first hymn and stated explicitly in the opening lines of 74.

Spiritalis signum est/ templum hoc visibile,
et in illo totum est/ quod in hoc fit mystice (74.1./1-4).

28 Szövérfy II p.165.

29 Andrieu pp.190-192.59-67.

30 Andrieu pp.192-3.69-77 details the prayers and readings to be said before the Mass.

31 Abelard's second omission is the instruction ...*Deinde diaconi vestiant altare* (Andrieu p.192.68).

32 Honorius (Pl 172.595D).

33 Andrieu p.194.79.

So we return to the question: why did Abelard write these two hymns (74 and 75). The explanation, I think, lies in the fact that the convent of the Paraclete was not an entirely new foundation. Abelard had established it as an oratory in 1123 and had dedicated it to the Holy Spirit. There is thus the probability that some of the nuns would never have witnessed the dedication of a church. He has, therefore, taken the opportunity of the anniversary festival to instruct them in the rituals involved. To attempt to expound the symbolism in addition would be beyond the bounds of four hymns and it is probably for this reason that he contents himself with a suggestion of the symbols rather than a full explication.

12.5. 76. *ad laudes*

Argument: As this is the Lord's house, so may He protect it from evil. May He command His angels to watch over it and to care for its people. Angels should always be present since they know what pleases the King. May the people offer Christ's own prayers and may those prayers be heard. Let heretics be cast out since they pollute the Church.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ecce domus Domini,
en fidelis populus
psalmis, hymnis, canticis
vacans spiritalibus. | 1. Behold the house of the Lord,
see a faithful people
devoting itself to psalms
hymns and spiritual songs. |
| 2. Christus, cuius domus est,
ipsam sibi protegat
et ovile proprii
gregis pastor muniat. | 2. May Christ, Whose house this is,
guard it for Himself
and may the Shepherd defend
the sheepfold of His own flock. |
| 3. Canum spiritalium
tutelam adhibeat;
lupos invisibiles
super illos arceat. | 3. May He apply the protection
of the spiritual dogs;
may He ward off the invisible wolves
in the air above them. |
| 4. Angelorum praesidens
semper hic custodia
ad fideles populi
vigilet praesidia. | 4. May the protecting band of angels
ever here
keep protective vigil
over the faithful people. |
| 5. Ad superbum zabulon
conterendum Michael,
ad medendum saucis
dirigatur Raphael. | 5. May Michael be directed
to bruise the Devil in his pride,
may Raphael be ordered
to heal the wounded. |
| 6. Corda titubantium
Gabriel corroboret
et perseverantia
stantes idem adjuvet. | 6. May Gabriel make strong
the hearts of those who totter
and help with perseverance
those who stand firm. |

4./2 hic B: in Dreves, followed by Szövérfy

4./3 fideles B: fidelis Dreves, followed by Szövérfy

7. Nunquam, cum sit regis hoc
coelestis palatium,
ministris coelestibus
debet esse vacuum.

7. Since this is the palace
of the heavenly King,
it is fitting that it never be empty
of heavenly servants.

8. Horum ministerio
disponantur omnia,
qui norunt quae Domino
sint vel non sint placita.

8. May all things be arranged
by their ministry,
since they know what delights the Lord
and what displeases Him.

9. Christi vota populi
ipsi preces offerant,
et, quid ipse voveat,
quid precetur, doceant.

9. May the people offer the vows of Christ
as their prayers,
and teach what He vows,
what He prays.

10. Nihil cassis precibus,
nihil votis irritis
hic fideles postulent
vel sibi vel aliis.

10. May the faithful ask for nothing
here with vain prayers,
nothing with futile vows.
for themselves or others.

11. Quisquis hic fidelium
preces Deo fuderit
impetrasse gaudeat
se quicquid petierit.

11. Whoever of the faithful here
pours out prayers to God,
may he rejoice that he has received
whatever he requests.

12. Giezi nullus hic,
nullus Simoniacus
corrumpat haereticis
gregem Christi pestibus.

12. Let there be no Giezi here,
no man like Simon
to pollute the flock of Christ
with the plagues of heresy.

13. Quos a domo propria
per semet expulerit,
iram eius sentiat
quisquis hos reduxerit.

13. Let any man who brings back
those whom Christ expels through His own agency
from the home that is His,
feel His anger.

14. Deo Patri gloria,
par sit honor Filio,
compar sit Spiritui
gratiarum actio. Amen.

14. Let there be glory to God the Father,
equal honour to the Son,
let there be equal thanksgiving
to the Spirit. Amen.

7./1 nunquam B: nusquam Dreves, followed by Szövérfy

13./1 domo B: dono Szövérfy (clearly a misprint)

The exclamatory *ecce* and *en* with which the first two lines of the hymn open create an atmosphere much different from that of the preceding two hymns and more like that of the first hymn in the section. In 73 *Sacra Ierosolymis* the note is one of assured hope. The Lord is asked to be present at a celebration:

Ipse nostris hodie/ festis assit, quaesumus.¹

This is the hope. The assurance comes from the remembrance that in the past He graced with His presence the dedication of the Temple.

The emphasis in 74 and 75 is on the solemn ritual of the consecration ceremony and the result is a somewhat dry catalogue of rites in which emotion is conspicuous by its absence. *Ecce*, in contrast, is a shout of joy; the reason for that joy, the house of the Lord (*domus Domini* 1./1). The church, which at the start of the ceremony was an ordinary building, has become the dwelling of God Himself. The phrase *domus Domini* occurs regularly in the Psalms as a description of the Temple.² Just as the Psalmist speaks of the blessedness of those who dwell in the house of the Lord (*Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine*), so Abelard immediately moves to the people within the house, *en, fidelis populus* (1./2).³ The consecration is complete; the followers of Christ have shown themselves to be faithful in the execution of the proper rites and in their obedience to Paul's command:

verbum Christi habitet in vobis abundanter... psalmis, hymnis et canticis
spiritualibus in gratia cantantes in cordibus vestris Deo.⁴

The marriage of Old and New Testament images through quotation underlines the relationship between the Temple and the church earlier adumbrated in the first hymn for the Dedication.⁵

The prayer that Christ may guard for Himself what has been dedicated to Him,

Christus.../ipsam sibi protegat (2./1-2),

is a natural progression from the first stanza. The people, having done their duty, can look with assurance for Christ's protection. Again there is harmony between Old

¹ 73.2./1-2.

² cf. Ps.22.6; 26.4-5; 83.5.

³ Ps.83.5.

⁴ Col.3.16; cf. Eph.5.19.

⁵ See 73 stanzas 1-3 and discussion p.410.

Testament and New. In one of the Psalms which contains the expression *domus Domini*,⁶ there also appears the idea of protection from evil

...ut inhabitem in domo Domini...; in die malorum protegit me in abscondito tabernaculi sui.⁶

The second couplet repeats the prayer for protection in the metaphor of the Shepherd and the sheepfold:

et ovile proprii/ gregis pastor munit (2./3-4),

a metaphor which derives from the well-known passage in John:

...qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium...ille fur est...Qui autem intrat per ostium, pastor est ovium...Ego sum pastor bonus.⁷

The second stanza flows without a break into the third where a new image is introduced; new but coupled with a metaphor springing from the continuation of the passage quoted above. The new image is that of spiritual sheepdogs, the Biblical metaphor, the wolves. John writes:

Mercenarius autem, et qui non est pastor, cuius non sunt oves propriae, videt lupum venientem et dimittit oves et fugit; et lupus rapit et dispergit oves.⁸

The *lupi* of the hymn are the enemies of the church, here not human enemies, but spiritual. They are the demons in the air above and, as they are invisible, the church needs to be protected by spiritual guardians.

The picture of the sheepdogs is a natural extension of the imagery of the shepherd and the sheep. Sheepdogs occur rarely in Scripture but both Job and Isaiah witness their use.⁹ In European literature the use of sheepdogs is attested as early as Homer.¹⁰ Columella writes at length about their value.¹¹ Augustine, spiritualizing one aspect of

⁶ Ps.26.4-5.

⁷ John 10.1-3 and 11.

⁸ John 10.12.

⁹ Job 30.1; Is.56.10-11.

¹⁰ Homer *Iliad* 12.303 σὺν κυσὶ καὶ δούρεσσι φυλάσσοντάς περὶ μῆλα...
cf. 10.183-185.

¹¹ Columella *de re rustica* 7.

Satan is indeed a dread thief, but a thief now despoiled of his prey.

In Isaiah the image is that of the release of captives, the stealing back of stolen goods from the thief. It is reminiscent of a New Testament passage which has the same underlying image, the parable of the strong man bound.¹⁰ That Abelard had this in mind is suggested by his use of the metaphor of binding in the fifth stanza (*est religata* 5./3). The parable is often used by the Church Fathers to explain Christ's descent into Hell. Origen, for example, describes Christ binding Satan, the strong man, on the cross, then entering Hell in order to remove Satan's possessions, the souls which are there kept in thrall:

Hic enim alligato forti, et in cruce sua triumphato, perrexit etiam in domum eius, in domum mortis, in infernum, et inde vasa eius diripuit, id est animas quas tenebat abstraxit.¹¹

The third stanza depicts the appearance of Hell after Christ descends in triumph to rescue the just. The harrowing of Hell was an immensely popular subject in vernacular drama and in art. In the mystery cycles of England it is by turns theatrical, majestic and farcical.¹² It lends itself to pictorial representation and occurs in both Byzantine and Western art.¹³ The imagery derives in the main from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, part of which is a vivid depiction of the confrontation between Christ and the powers of darkness:

Et dixit Inferus ad sua impla officia: "Claudite portas crudeles aereas et vectes ferreos subponite..." Haec audiens omnis multitudo sanctorum cum voce increpationis dixit ad Inferum: "Aperi portas tuas ut intret Rex Gloriarum." Et exclamavit David dicens: "Nonne cum essem vivus in terris praedixi vobis, "...quia contrivit portas aereas et vectes ferreos confregit."¹⁴

So ends the first theme, the triumph of the Cross, the despoiler spoiled, the powers of Hell vanquished.

¹⁰ Matt.12.29; cf. Mark 3.27.

¹¹ Origen *Comm.in Rom.V*, trans. Rufinus (PG 14.1052).

¹² See V.A.Kolve *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford 1966) pp.192-97; for the farcical element, R.D.S.Jack *Patterns of Divine Comedy* (Edinburgh 1990) pp.53-54.

¹³ For illustrations see G.Schiller *Ikongraphie der Christlichen Kunst* Band 3 (Gütersloh 1971) pp.352-53 Plates 112, 115, 116.

¹⁴ *Gospel of Nicodemus* XXI (ed. H.C Kim Toronto Med.Lat.Texts 1973) pp.40-41, quoting Ps.23.7 and Ps.106.16.

Et factum est praelium magnum in caelo: Michael et angeli eius praeliabantur cum dracone; et draco pugnabat et angeli eius.¹³

Scripture is echoed again in *conterendum*: God prophesies to the serpent in Genesis:

Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum...¹⁴

Christ, through Michael, fulfils the prophecy in relation to His flock.

The arrogance of the Devil (*superbum zabulon* 5./1) is a traditional concept and here reflects the sixth reading for the Feast of St Michael the Archangel, taken from the Sermons of Gregory the Great and including a quotation from Isaiah:

Unde et ille antiquus hostis qui Deo esse per superbiam similis concupivit, dicens "In coelum conscendam, super astra coeli exaltabo solium meum, similis ero Altissimo;" dum in fine mundi in sua virtute relinquetur extremo supplicio perimendus, cum Michael archangelo proellaturus esse perhibetur...¹⁵

The Feast of St. Michael the Archangel is very old, dating from at least the fifth century.

Raphael is mentioned in the Apocryphal books of Tobit and Enoch, in both of which he comes as a healer, as his name is interpreted by Isidore:

Raphael interpretatur curatio vel medicina dei. Ubicumque enim curandi et medendi opus necessarium est, hic archangelus a Deo mittitur; et inde medicina Dei vocatur.¹⁶

Gabriel appears, like Michael, in both Old and Testaments. Again like Michael, his first appearance is in the vision of Daniel:

Cumque (Gabriel) loqueretur ad me, collapsus sum pronus in terram; et tetigit me et statuit me in gradu meo.¹⁷

He announces the births of John the Baptist and of Christ Himself.¹⁸ He is the messenger of divine strengthening; since his touch sets on their feet again those who have fallen, he is best able to aid those who have become weak and weary in the battle. He is also the messenger of divine hope and comfort, bringing both to Elisabeth and to

¹³ Dan.10.13; Apoc.12.7 (cf. Dan.12.1).

¹⁴ Gen.3.15.

¹⁵ Brev.Rom. in dedic.S. Michaelis, Arch., lectio vi. Gregory the Great Hom.in Evang.34.

¹⁶ Isidore Etym.VII.5; cf. Tobit 12.14-15 and Enoch 10.7.

¹⁷ Dan.8.16-18.

¹⁸ Luke 1.13 and 19; Luke 1.26-27 and 31.

Mary who will especially need them in face of the trials which will inevitably beset her. Thus the gift of perseverance is his to bestow.

I am troubled by Szövérfy's suggestion that the *ministri coelestes*^{of the}/seventh stanza (7./3) refer to the saints whose relics were located in the church.¹⁹ The hiatus caused by the unheralded leap from angels to relics is foreign to Abelard's style and the structure of the hymn is too logical to allow such a change in direction. It would be more natural to interpret them as the angels of the preceding stanzas. For what are angels but heavenly servants? And who is more likely to be within the palace of the heavenly King but these very angels? This interpretation is supported by the prayer for Vespers on the Feast of St. Michael ...*ut a quibus tibi ministrantibus in coelo assistitur, ab his in terra vita nostra munitur*, and in the versicle *Millia millium ministrabant et et decies centena assistebant et*.²⁰

horum (8./1) points forward to *qui...placita* (8./3-4) and back to *ministris coelestibus* (7./3), so that both stanzas are speaking of angels. The link is underlined in the echo of *ministris* by *ministerio* (8./1). Because angels are *ministri coelestes* who are constantly in the presence of God, they know what causes His pleasure, what His displeasure. It is in the Apocalypse that the angels' place in Scripture is paramount. John writes:

...et audiui vocem angelorum in circuitu throni, et animalium et seniorum; et erat numerus eorum millia millium, dicentium voce magna: Dignus est Agnus...²¹

Their worship in Heaven is regarded as the prototype of the Church's worship on earth. The angels not only have guard over the church but are examples to the church. So the seventh and eighth stanzas form a transition from the theme of angels back to that of the church. Since the angels know all that delights God, they are asked to arrange all things in the church so that the people may understand how to please Him.

Anchored to the idea of God's pleasure is the new motif of prayer introduced in the ninth stanza. The connection lies in the invitation to the Mass at the end of the dedication ceremony:

*Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur, dicit Dominus; in ea omnis qui petit accipit, et qui quaerit invenit, et pulsanti aperietur.*²²

¹⁹ Szövérfy II p.167.

²⁰ Brev.Rom. First Nocturn *Lectio* I.

²¹ Apoc.5.11ff.

This is the house of the Lord (*Ecce, domus Domini* 1./1); this is a faithful people (*en, fidelis populus* 1./2) who not only devote themselves to worship (*psalmis, hymnis, canticis/ vacans spiritalibus* 1./3-4), but also to prayer. Their prayers are to be the prayers of Christ (9./1-2) in accordance with His express command *sic ergo vos orabit: Pater noster, qui es in caelis...*²³ Thus the house of the Lord, *domus Domini*, will become, as He intended, a house of prayer, *domus orationis*.

With regard to the ninth stanza Szövérfy asks the curious question:

Could this be interpreted as an allusion to the offerings to be encouraged (according to the *Pontificale*) by the bishop in his sermon?²⁴

But this again would imply an improbable leap in the argument.

The theme of prayer continues through stanzas 10 and 11 which invoke Christ's promises. The first echo has been referred to above:

*Petite et dabitur vobis; quaerite et invenietis; pulsate et aperietur vobis.*²⁵

The eleventh stanza echoes the prayer for the anniversary of the dedication in the *Liber Sacramentorum*:

*exaudi preces populi tui, et praesta ut quisquis hoc templum beneficia petiturus ingreditur cuncta se impetrasse laetetur.*²⁶

This stanza is not merely a repetition of the preceding one although it has much the same theme. There the request is couched in negative terms: may the prayers not be in vain (*cassis precibus...votis irritis*); here the effect is of positive faith: the Christian is to rejoice that his prayers have already been granted (*impetrasse gaudeat/ se, quidquid petierit*).

Similarity and contrast link together the section on prayer and the two stanzas which immediately precede the doxology. The similarity appears in their form: like most of the stanzas in the hymn, 12 and 13 are prayers. The contrast is created by the antithesis of *fideles* (10./3) and *fidelium* (11./1) with *Giezi* (12./1), *Simoniacus* (12./2) and *haeretici...pestibus* (12./3-4). As the hymn has just spoken of the power of prayer

22 Andrieu *Le Pontifical Romain du haut-moyen âge* p.193, quoting Is.56.7 and Matt.21.13.

23 Matt.7.8.

24 Szövérfy II p.167.

25 Matt.21.13.

26 Gregory the Great *Liber Sacramentorum* (PL 78.161D-162A).

and the willingness of God to grant what the faithful ask of Him, so it now puts into practice what it has been teaching. The twelfth stanza gives examples of heretics who could pollute the church. Since there is no place in the house of the Lord for such people because they will, through their heresies, bring destruction on those who are faithful, Abelard prays for the church's deliverance from them. The imagery of disease in the words *corrumpat* and *pestibus* is particularly appropriate to the first of the heretics, Giezi, the servant of the prophet Elisha. Unwilling to see the gift offered by Namaan rejected by his master, he received money from him under false pretences. As a punishment, he succumbed to the leprosy from which Namaan had been cured.²⁷ Abelard connects this story with that of Simon Magus who offered money to Peter that he might grant him the power to bestow the Holy Spirit:

...Petrus autem dixit ad eum: Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem, quoniam donum Dei existimasti pecunia possideri.²⁸

Thomas Aquinas comments:

Videtur quod simonia non sit "studiosa voluntas emendi vel vendendi aliquid spirituale vel spirituali annexum". Simonia enim est haeresis quaedam.²⁹

Abelard is entirely orthodox in his denunciation of simoniacs as heretics and the strength of his attack stems from the widespread abuse of privilege throughout the Church.

By calling the faithful *gregem Christi* (12./4) Abelard reverts to the imagery prevalent in the early part of the hymn, especially in the second stanza,

et ovile proprii/ gregis pastor muniat (2./3-4).

Thus Christ the Good Shepherd is again evoked and the way is opened for the reminder in the last stanza of the Shepherd's duty to protect His flock against evil. Just as the invisible wolves, the demons who attack from outside, must be kept from entering, so

²⁷ IV Reg.5.20-27.

²⁸ Acts 8.18-20.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* II-II, 100 Art.1. Simony equates spiritual with temporal goods. Spiritual goods which can be bought and sold include grace, the sacraments, prayer, indulgences. Things annexed to the spiritual include church benefices and relics. The worst period of simony lasted from the ninth to the eleventh century when it was prevalent throughout the monasteries, the lower clergy, the episcopacy and the papacy. The most common form was the buying and selling of Holy Orders. The phrase used to describe this practice, especially in the eleventh century, was *simoniaca haeresis*, echoed in Abelard's hymn *nullus Simoniacus/ corrumpat/ gregem Christi pestibus* (13./2-4).

must heretics who would infect the church from inside, be driven out. The phrase *domo propria* also refers back to the opening stanzas, to *Ecce, domus Domini* (1./1) and *Christus, cuius domus est* (2./1). Again, the emphasis is on Christ's duty to guard what is His own.

In the final couplet,

iram eius sentiat,
quisquis hos reduxerit (13./3-4),

Abelard advocates the excommunication of heretics. Moreover, he equates those who have the audacity to allow them re-entry with the heretics themselves and prays that they may feel the wrath of Christ, the Shepherd Who has banished the evil. It is here that we see Abelard's concern for the holiness of the Church at large and in particular for the people of the newly consecrated church. Although it seems a harsh note on which to end a hymn whose tenor has generally been of celebration and hope, it is a necessary one if the doxology is to have any meaning. True glory can only be given to God by a people that is holy and devoted^{to} its Lord.

death on the cross. This financial metaphor is similar to that in Abelard's third hymn for Pentecost: *cordis exarat tabulas/ ut reparetur ratio*.⁴¹

The tree which the King of the Song of Songs climbs is a palm: *Ascendam in palmam...* The palm is identified in the hymn with the Tree of Life (*Tu lignum vitae/ in qua rex ipse/ conscendit, palma* 8./1-3). In his sermon Abelard concludes his exegesis on the work of *Christus medicus* on the cross:

Quid enim per palmam, qua victoria designatur, nisi crux Dominica significatur
qua ipse diabolus triumphavit?⁴²

He identifies the Tree of Life and the cross with the palm which is a potent symbol of victory common to both the Romans and the Jews. Isidore writes

Palma dicta quia manus victricis ornatus est... Est enim arbor insigne
victoriae.⁴³

It recurs throughout Christian literature and art in connection with victory, a prominent symbol on sarcophagi representing the promise of eternal life.

The final pair of stanzas turns from the cross as the Tree of Life to the cross as the Ship of Life. The transition may seem abrupt and the links between the two images somewhat tenuous; not so to the medieval consciousness imbued with a sense of what the Greeks referred to as *πυρρίπιον τοῦ ξύλου*, the Latins as *sacramentum ligni*.⁴⁴ The sailor (the Christian) is to sail on the tree of the cross as if it were a ship (*qua quasi nave* 10./2).

The ship is a common Christian symbol which has a twofold derivation. In classical works, both Greek and Latin, sailing is regarded as dicing with death. Juvenal writes:

...dolato
confusus ligno, digitis a morte remotus
quattuor aut septem, si sit latissima taeda.⁴⁵

⁴¹ 71.6./3-4.

⁴² See above n.37.

⁴³ Isidore *Etym.*17.7.1.

⁴⁴ Augustine *de catech.rud.*20 (34) p.86 *Nec ibi defuit ligni sacramentum*. For a full discussion and bibliography see Rahner pp.61ff.

⁴⁵ Juvenal *Sat.*XII.57-59. For detailed references see Rahner "Das Meer der Welt" *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 66 (1942) p.91ff.; "Das Schiff aus Holz" *ibid.* p.206ff. and 67 (1943) p.2ff.

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