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THE HELOISE OF HISTORY

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Carl J. Kelso, Jr., B. A.

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This thesis seeks to determine the historical role of the twelfth-century abbess Heloise, apart from the frequently cited and disputed letters exchanged between her and Peter Abelard. Independent information exists in the testimony of Heloise's contemporaries, in the rule written for her abbey the Paraclete, and in the liturgy of the Paraclete. This evidence not only substantiates an erudite Heloise in concert with the Heloise of the letters, but serves as testimony to a woman of ability and accomplishment who participated in monastic reform and who sought to bring a positive direction to women's lives in the cloister. From this, it becomes clear that although Heloise may not have written the letters ascribed to her she was certainly capable of writing them.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM OF HELOISE

The recent renewed controversy over Heloise's authorship in the correspondence between her and Abelard may indeed finally answer the question of who wrote Heloise's letters. The problem of the letters, however, is not the problem of Heloise. If Abelard created the letters, he did not create Heloise herself. Where, beyond the romantic characterizations, exactly does Heloise exist, and was she, when all the available evidence is considered, anything like the romantic, humanist Heloise that she has become? In 1904, Henry Adams venerated Heloise as a "Frenchwoman to the last millimetre of her shadow" and "by French standards worth at least a dozen Abelards."¹ Here Adams sets the tone for the many judgements that were to follow. Later historians praised Heloise more succinctly, but no less warmly, in terms of the humanism of the twelfth century, a phenomenon frequently cited from her letters. Sir Richard Southern notes that it was Heloise's self-disclosures which gave the collection its human dignity, replete with classical thought and tragic despair.² To David Knowles what "renders her

¹Henry Adams, Mont Saint Michel and Chartres, intro. Raymond Carney, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 270.

²R. W. Southern, Medieval Humanism and Other Studies (London: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 102.

unique and gives her nobility" was her "unshakable resolve with the most complete and voluntary self-sacrifice--not, indeed, the surrender of her own will and life to God or to any other ethical demand, but the surrender of herself in totality to another."³ Christopher Brooke regards Heloise's letters as a supreme expression of medieval humanism, combining a love of the ancient world and a concern for human emotions and their expression.⁴ For Etienne Gilson, though Abelard and Heloise were not simply renaissance Italians of the fourteenth century misplaced to the twelfth, they did demonstrate some characteristics of the Italian Renaissance. In this view Heloise is an anachronistic proto-type of the Renaissance individual.⁵ Gilson, indeed, goes so far as to argue that Heloise's letters disprove Burckhardt's thesis that Dante was the first writer to reveal the mysteries of an individual's inner life. Citing Nordström, he argues:

....As Nordström rightly says: "If we had only these precious documents to reveal the penetrating and realistic power of auto-analysis in a medieval man, they would be adequate to demonstrate the fundamental error of Burckhardt when he tells us that Dante was the first to reveal frankly the mysteries of his interior life and thus inaugurate a new epoch in the history of the development of the European man." It could not be put better. Only let us add that if Abelard is the fatal

³David Knowles, "The Humanism of the Twelfth Century," The Historian and Character and Other Essays (Cambridge, England: The University of Cambridge), 24.

⁴Christopher Brooke, The Twelfth Century Renaissance (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1969), 50-51.

⁵Etienne Gilson, Heloise and Abelard, trans. L. K. Shook, (London: Hollis & Carter, 1953), 134-143.

error in Burckhardt's thesis, Heloise is in her own right a far more dangerous one, not so much because of the passionate ardor with which she analyzes herself, nor of the defiant air with which she publishes her most intimate secrets, but because of the ideas she expresses and the very content of what she says.⁶

More recently, Peggy Kamuf has examined Heloise from a feminine perspective, extracting an erotic subtext from Heloise's letters and praising the literary grasp of her feminine disclosures.⁷

These romantic and humanist views of Heloise are of course wholly dependent on the assumption that Heloise was the author of the letters that bear her name. Although they noted the controversy surrounding the letters, for Southern, Brooke, Gilson, and Kamuf the text of the letters is the basis of their conclusions, and they claim that sufficient evidence has not yet been produced to disprove the authenticity of the letters.⁸ Yet, their qualified acceptance

⁶Gilson, 134.

⁷Kamuf states her thesis in describing the value of the personal letters of Abelard and Heloise: "Although these letters of direction constitute more than three-quarters of the collection, we will consider only the four personal letters, as they provide the most lucid account of what interests us in Heloise's situation: the attempt to make a space for her erotic experience which does not reduce an unruly otherness--both hers and Abelard's--to a symbolic and ordered identity.," see Peggy Kamuf, Fictions of Feminine Desire (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 8.

⁸Of this group, most notably, Southern has suggested that the letters could have all been written by Heloise herself or a scribe she selected from the Paraclete, see Southern, 104; Brooke suggested, at one time, that Heloise's letters were written by a man, see "'Both Small and Great Beasts': An Introductory Study," Medieval Women, ed. Derek Baker,

of the letters is unsatisfactory. The traditional view is not so much awkwardly sustained, as simply assumed, affording license for the continued endorsement of Heloise's authorship in the absence of anything which will disprove it finally and beyond doubt, as John F. Benton's unpublished work on the Letters of Abelard and Heloise seeks to do. In his view Abelard was the sole author of the entire correspondence: in his analysis the letters of Heloise match those of Abelard so closely in structure and word selection that the possibility of Heloise's authorship is so greatly diminished as to be unsustainable. If this judgement can endure, then we appear to be forced to abandon the notion of Heloise as humanist, and in the traditional view she appears as little else, leaving her in limbo--in but not of the period--and as a genuine historical figure she deserves and requires a genuine historical basis in fact, apart from the disputed much-cited letters. At this point it may be asked where then does 'she' exist--and in what form?

The assumption that the letters were contrived on the part of Abelard does not, however, deprive the entire correspondence of value. The letters are still important in themselves, and are of particular significance when their contents can be substantiated by other evidence. Peter the Venerable and St. Bernard, for example, shared opinions of

(London: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 5, n. However, no evidence has substantiated either theory--yet.

Heloise that are congruent with the information contained in the letters as well as in Abelard's Historia calamitatum. Heloise's own rule written for the Paraclete, Heloise's abbey, details the autonomy and independence she exercised apart from the male monastic community, and echoes and displays the same independence of mind evident in the letters.⁹ In addition, the liturgy of the Paraclete discloses a religious community administered according to a specific concern for monastic reform consonant with that contained in the letters. Thus, the disputed letters can be shown to have a relationship in combination with contemporary correspondence and other independent evidence: Heloise's rule for the Paraclete, and the liturgy of the house may yet provide an objective factual basis for a historical Heloise.

It is in fact extraordinary that Heloise should have acquired such a legendary reputation given the paucity of original sources involving her, and a thin manuscript tradition. For most historians and biographers, the letters and the Historia calamitatum are the most frequently cited sources for Heloise--and in many cases the sole sources. The Historia and the seven personal and religious letters allegedly exchanged between Abelard and Heloise are preserved

⁹McLeod notes that it was Heloise's 'independence of mind' seen in her other works which add to the veracity of the letters, see Enid McLeod, Héloïse (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971).

in a late thirteenth-century/early fourteenth-century collection of manuscripts that has undergone much scrutiny.¹⁰ No contemporary or near contemporary copy of the letters or the Historia survives. The earliest and most complete extant copies are to be found in: Troyes MS 802, fols 1r-102v; Paris BN MS lat. 2923, fols 1r-177r; and Paris BN MS lat. 2544, fols. 5r-25r, all late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century manuscripts, produced one-hundred and fifty years after the letters were written.¹¹ Of these manuscripts Troyes 802, belonged to Robert dei Bardi, chancellor of the University of Paris, and is written in a late thirteenth-century Gothic hand by various scribes and containing numerous works. The Historia is contained in fols 1r-18r, and is followed by five personal letters, Letters 1-5 (fols 18r-42r), the treatise De origine sanctimonialium which is Abelard's Letter 6 to Heloise (fols 42r-59v), the Institutio seu regula sanctimonialium which is Abelard's Letter 7 to Heloise (fols 59v-88v), the Excerpta e Regulis Paracletensis Monasterii which is Heloise's rule for the

¹⁰Some historians, such as Peter Dronke, have included the Historia among the other letters in assigning numbers, making Abelard's "letter to a friend" letter one of eight letters. Others, such as Betty Radice, have treated the Historia separately, making the letters number only seven. It is Radice's treatment that will be followed in the thesis.

¹¹For a full discussion of the manuscript tradition of the letters see, J. T. Muckle, introduction and commentary to the Historia calamitatum, Mediaeval Studies 12 (1950): 163-74.

Paraclete (fols 89r-94r), and finally a second treatise entitled Regula sanctimonialium (fols 94v-102v).¹² Paris 2923 is, according to Muckle, "well-written and gives a fairly good text, but not as good as Troyes 802."¹³ It is of particular interest, however, because four of the initial letters of paragraphs have miniatures of people: fol 1r that of Abelard and Heloise, with the face of Heloise blotted out; fol 51r of Theodoric; and fols 43r and 94r of a monk. Paris 2923 is also of interest because it has textual notes by Petrarch, thus indicating his ownership.¹⁴ Paris 2544 is also notable because it belonged to James Ghent, a master in Paris, and the dates of Abelard and Heloise's deaths are listed at the end of the MS: "*....anno Domini MCMLXIIII Heloysa obiit abbatissa; anno Domini MCXLII obiit Petrus Abaelardi perypateticus.*"¹⁵ In addition to these most noted manuscripts, six other manuscripts exist of later hand and fragmentary nature: Bibliotheque de Rheims, MS 872; Bibliotheque de Douai, MS 797; Oxford, Bodelian MS Additional C. 271; Paris, Bib. Nat. nouv. acq. lat. 1873; Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 2524; and Paris, Bib. Nat. MS nouv acq. lat. 13057.¹⁶ Of all these manuscripts, as Muckle has indicated,

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 165.

¹⁴Ibid., 164.

¹⁵Ibid., 166. The dates are in accord with the traditional dates of Abelard and Heloise's death, thought to be 1143 and 1163 respectively.

¹⁶Ibid., 163-73.

Troyes 802 provides the best text, and Paris BN 2544 and 2923, as well as the other six, appear to derive from it.¹⁷ Yet, between literary critics of these works there is no account for the gap in the letters' transmission, existing from the mid-1130s until their appearance in these early surviving copies, other than the suggestions made by Radice, Southern, and Monfrin that Heloise's personal copies of the letters and Abelard's Historia simply remained at the Paraclete with Heloise's rule and other liturgical documents for some time after her death.¹⁸

In the absence of any explanation for the late copying of these works in Paris at the end of the thirteenth century, and in the absence of any contemporary or near contemporary copies, it must be emphasized that all debate about the authenticity of the letters is based upon texts which may not be identical either in form or time with the originals. There is, so far as I know, no discussion in current scholarly consideration of the letters as to why they should have become of interest to late thirteenth-century Paris,

¹⁷Muckle has determined that Troyes 802's early hand and the variants, omissions and corruptions contained in the other manuscripts point to Troyes 802 as being the most original and the nearest descendant to the original letters, see Muckle, 12: 171-72.

¹⁸This hypothesis assumes that Abelard's personal copies still remain undiscovered, see Betty Radice, introduction and commentary to, The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, trans. Betty Radice, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books., 1974), 45-55.

though it may be that proto-Renaissance scholars found them appealing. Nor has there yet been a definitive study to relate them stylistically or linguistically to early copies of Abelard's works,¹⁹ even though the critical dismissal of Heloise as the author of the letters ascribed to her is founded on textual supposition based on late, though the earliest-surviving, copies of the letters.

From manuscript to publication the Historia and the letters first appeared in Amboesius and Quercetanus in 1616. Two hundred years later, in the nineteenth century three editions were published: by Orelli (1841), Cousin (1849), and Migne (1885).²⁰ Recently J. T. Muckle and T. P. McLaughlin have re-edited the letters in serial form (1950-55): this is now considered the best critical edition of the texts,²¹ and

¹⁹However, Muckle has made a comparison between Abelard's Historia and Theologia Christiana, noting a similarity between citation of outside sources, see Muckle, 12: 171-74. Muckle also cites a similarity in sentence structure, in the use of "tanto....quanto" clauses of comparison and "ut plus subjunctive" construction, between the Historia and his other sermons and works. Yet, Muckle, based on his research, admits that the results only point to similarities and are inconclusive in definitely attributing Abelard's letters to Abelard see Muckle, introduction to The Personal Letters of Abelard and Heloise, Mediaeval Studies 15: 47-67.

²⁰J. C. Orelli, Magistri Petri Abaelardi epistola quae est historia calamitatum suarum ad amicum scripta, Heloissae et Abaelardi epistolae quae feruntur quatuor priores (Turici, 1841); Victor Cousin, Petri Abaelardi Opera, 2 vols., (Paris, 1849); J. P. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina, 178, Petri Abaelardi abbatis Rugensis Opera Omnia (Paris, 1885).

²¹J. T. Muckle and T. P. McLaughlin, Historia calamitatum and The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, Mediaeval Studies 12, 15, 17, 18, (1950), 53, 55, 56.

from it has come the renewed and increased interest in the letters' authenticity.²²

Arguments against Heloise's authorship prior to Muckle and McLaughlin's edition, were, as most historians agree, dismissed by Etienne Gilson's work on Abelard and Heloise.²³ Gilson argued that Ludovic Lalanne, B. Schmeidler, and Charlotte Charrier's suggestion that the letters had been written by a third party were false. Adopting a theory from Lalanne, later modified by Schmeidler, Charrier argued that a contradiction between the Historia and Heloise's Letter 1 was evidence of a forgery:²⁴ Heloise's complaint that she had never received a visit from Abelard was contradictory to his account in the Historia, in which he recalled visiting her.

²²Radice, Southern, and others note that Muckle's edition is the best to date.

²³"In the modern debate about the letters, there was a lull of over a decade. Etienne Gilson, in a famous book, Héloïse et Abélard, was able to show that most--even if not all--of the older arguments against the letters' authenticity were without foundation." see Peter Dronke, Abelard and Heloise in Medieval Testimonies (Glasgow: The University of Glasgow Press, 1976), 8.

²⁴Gilson, 145-66. Lalanne called attention to a contradiction between the Historia and the letters in which Abelard's "Letter to a Friend" recalled that he had met with Heloise and her sister nuns to install them at the Paraclete; yet, Heloise's first two letters to Abelard, which she wrote after receiving a copy of the Historia, admonished him for not writing or visiting her. Gilson pointed out that Heloise's complaint of not seeing Abelard since their conversion had been incorrectly translated by M. Oddoul, to mean that he had actually never visited her. Note: Oddoul's translation, "it has not been given to me either to hear you...or to read you..." versus Gilson's, "it is not given to me either to hear you...or to read you."

Gilson concluded that Lalanne, Schmeidler, and Charrier were working from an incorrect translation and consequently misinterpreted Heloise's complaint. But since Gilson's work more ambitious theories have evolved, and Muckle himself renewed the debate suggesting more forgeries. Muckle wrote:

....It is quite possible and I think probable that someone else toward the end of the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century gathered the letters together, rewrote the first two letters of Heloise and put the Historia calamitatum and the letters both of Abelard and Heloise into circulation. But if that be the case, the redactor was no ordinary mortal. No one but a literary genius could have so depicted frustrated love and so fathomed the depths of the heart of a woman infatuated with a man beyond her reach as is found in these two letters of Heloise which have so intrigued the minds and hearts of men the last three centuries.²⁵

The reason Muckle offered for his conclusion was that Abelard failed to respond in writing to Heloise's "impassioned and carnal outbursts."²⁶ In Letter 1, Heloise, wrote, "God is my witness that if Augustus, Emperor of the whole world, thought fit to honour me with marriage and conferred all the earth on me to possess for ever, it would be dearer and more honourable to me to be called not his Empress but your whore....,"²⁷ In Letter 3, she asked Abelard, "How can it be called repentance for sins, however great the mortification of the flesh, if the mind still retains the will to sin and is on fire with old desires;" and she continued that lewd

²⁵Muckle, 15: 67.

²⁶Ibid., 66.

²⁷Heloise, "Letter 1," Muckle, 15: 61; Letter translations by Radice, 114.

visions of lovemaking with Abelard disturbed her sleep as well as her prayers.²⁸ Muckle argued that one would expect a word of notice and disapproval from Abelard, instead he ignored her pleas, which put the character of Abelard's responses out of context with Heloise's letters.²⁹ As a result, Muckle concluded that the tempestuous passages of Heloise's letters were added well after the letters were written.³⁰ Dronke in his work on the authenticity of the letters dismissed Muckle for subjectivism, finding fault with Muckle's assumption that Abelard "should have" corrected Heloise's errors.³¹ Similar to Muckle's theory, a more recent hypothesis of multiple authorship comes from John F. Benton. In a conference paper given at Cluny in 1972, Benton argued that since Letter 7, Abelard's rule for the Paraclete, did not follow Heloise's conventual practice, Letter 7 was a forgery of multiple authorship, compiled:

....in order to introduce male dominance in the convent and a laxer Rule which would permit the eating of meat. (Forger) A commissioned a second forger (B), perhaps a member of the University of Paris, to add documents which would authenticate his own work. B forged the Historia and personal letters, drawing on a twelfth-century work of fiction based on Abelard's life and written as a literary exercise by another unknown (C)....A may have had help from a more literary D.³²

²⁸Heloise, "Letter 3," Muckle, 15: 80; Radice, 132-33.

²⁹Muckle, 15: 67.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Dronke, 7-9.

³²Benton's theory as cited in Dronke, 12.

As a consequence of the yet unpublished work of Chrysogonus Waddell, Benton retracted his theory in 1980, where he accepted that evidence has not been found to substantiate his hypotheses, the accusation of forgery, however, was not.³³ In recent theory, however, the forger has now become Abelard himself.

An even more intriguing postulate began with the separate work of D. W. Robertson and Peter von Moos, who similarly concluded that the letters construct a conversion story, written by Abelard, in which the character Heloise sees the error of her ways in Letter 5 and finally answers Abelard's pleas to truly become the bride of Christ and address her spiritual responsibilities as an abbess.³⁴ Here Dronke argues that it is very unclear from the tone of Letter 5 whether it was an actual conversion, or not simply an act of submission to Abelard's will, or Heloise's own resolve to turn her thoughts in a different direction.³⁵ Further, in unpublished work, Benton has recently claimed that the stylistic similarities, sentence structure, and word

³³Linda Georgianna notes the refutation of Benton's thesis later expanded in, "Fraud, Fiction and Borrowing in the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise," Pierre Abelard--Pierre le Venerable (Paris: Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique 546, 1975), 469-506, see Linda Georgianna, "Any Corner of Heaven: Heloise's Critique of Monasticism," Mediaeval Studies 49 (1987): 221-53.

³⁴Dronke, 9-11.

³⁵Ibid.

selection, between Abelard's letters, including his earlier works, and Heloise's letters are so close as to suggest beyond a reasonable doubt that Abelard wrote the entire correspondence. The truth of this, as of earlier assertions, has yet to be proved.

The critics, however, have not had it all their own way: powerful and persuasive voices have been raised in defense of the traditional view of the letters. Jean Leclercq, for example, has distinguished in the letters two people so distinct that for Abelard to have written Heloise's letters, he would have had to have been a "genius" of gigantic proportions creating "two vastly different psycho-dynamisms."³⁶ In terms of their past, for example, Heloise described their love as--"sensuous pleasure," "sweet," and "agreeable;" while Abelard remembered it as--"fornications," "turpitudes," and "impurities."³⁷ Leclercq further argued that the level of honesty in Heloise's confessions is higher than Abelard's, adding, "She prefers to tell the truth rather than play a role. She does not hide the element of hypocrisy in her existence; she accepts the humiliation."³⁸ Also discounting Abelard's possible authorship of Heloise's letters and the entire debate over

³⁶Jean Leclercq, "Modern Psychology and the Interpretation of Medieval Text," Speculum 48 (1973): 482-85.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid. The implication is clear. And in considering Abelard's habit of exaggeration, this may be true.

the letters, Linda Georgianna makes the plea that historians must examine the letters of Heloise as a "coherent and imaginative whole, rather than as a disjointed series of documents explicable only in terms of forgery, interpolation, or repression."³⁹ These are sane pleas towards solving the problem of Heloise. Accordingly, if a 'distinct' Abelard and Heloise can be found in the letters, as well as a 'coherent' Heloise, it becomes a matter of urgency and importance to attempt to establish the life, abilities, career and temperament of the real-life Heloise, the 'Heloise of History', independently of this controversial corpus of letters.

In pursuit of the Heloise of history, putting Abelard and Heloise into a genuine historical perspective becomes the first necessary step, as it provides not only a historical background for the couple but better defines the problem of Heloise. In this process, much of the traditional historical writings, based on the letters, have so wedded the concept of Heloise to Abelard that the two appear inseparable. Thus it becomes urgent to establish the point at which Heloise exists beyond Abelard and the letters. From the praise of Adams, Southern, and Knowles, among others, the most likely place to find an independent Heloise would be in the examination of the classical Heloise: there, the most profound differences

³⁹Georgianna, 225.

between her and Abelard emerge. Although this examination must be based on the letters, it remains the most logical place to start, for the classical Heloise was a result of her education and early life, and independent evidence apart from the letters confirms that she was educated and, very possibly, that she surpassed Abelard in classical erudition. The real-life Heloise also emerges in her role as abbess. Examined in terms of her conventionality and originality, Heloise built a large and formidable convent, not unlike the women's houses at Fontevrault and Sempringham. In addition, she was an abbess independent of male monastic houses and their influences, similar to other twelfth-century monastic women like Petronilla, Hersende, and Hildegard of Bingen. A more personal testament of Heloise, however, exists in the liturgy of the Paraclete, in which processions, hymns and sanctoral tributes reflect the humanism and spiritual life she aspired to create at the convent for herself and the nuns. And finally, in view of this new perception of Heloise, the letters re-enter, their contents verified by outside evidence, and thus serve to add to the account of the Heloise of history. It can be shown that as a result of this evidence independent of the letters that the historical Heloise appears not far removed from the romantic and humanist views that historians have had of her. But as Heloise is separated from Abelard, she too must be separated

from the romantic representation, and her conception must not be allowed to fall back into submission under romantic tributes wholly dependent on the disputed letters. This work will strive to display Heloise as a woman of learning and independent accomplishment. At that point, when the real Heloise is placed before the romantic representation, Heloise's place in and for her time will be better understood.

CHAPTER 2

ABELARD AND HELOISE IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE

In describing the individual in medieval society, Jacob Burckhardt argued:

In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness--that which was turned within as that which was turned without--lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation--only through some general category.¹

To historians like Burckhardt the practice of associating the concept of renaissance with the twelfth century is improper; they prefer instead to belittle the achievements of the twelfth century as nonexistent or, at best, inconsequential.² Yet, the twelfth century was, in many areas, an age of achievement and resurgence, not least was this so in philosophy, theology, and the emergent conception of the individual. The increase in philosophical activity with a greater interest in classical learning resulted, in part, from monastic revival, and from the proliferation of a 'new learning' through the cathedral schools. Additionally, a

¹Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of Renaissance Italy, vol. 1, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1958), 143.

²Hollister notes that this Rip Van Winkle perception of the Middle Ages has largely disappeared in present-day historical writing, see C. Warren Hollister, Medieval Europe: A Short History, 5th ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 1.

re-examination of Christian theology occurred in the twelfth century which served as a trumpet for the dissemination of both new ideas in theology and new standards of Christian propriety. Further still, the notion of 'humanism' that has often been associated with this period exhibited an attachment to classical thought, an increased sensitivity towards the concerns of man, and the development of a man-centered Christian ethic. Philosophy, theology, classical thought and humanism all provide a means not only to examine the twelfth century, but to determine whether Abelard and Heloise deserve the reputations as rebels which some have given them.³ Although Abelard is the more visible in the philosophical and theological debates, Heloise as humanist and a daughter of classical thought is indeed compelling. In her letters to Abelard, Heloise's complaint and literary voice come close to justifying Henry Adams' characterization of her being worth a dozen Abelards. Yet, Abelard and Heloise despite their notorious love affair, were as conventional as they were original: they demonstrate the dynamics of the individual and the complexities of the twelfth century.

³Gilson, 134-43; and Knowles regarded Heloise as somewhat of an anachronism: "Nevertheless, the men of the early twelfth century, if they are regarded with attention and sympathy, show themselves as possessed of a rare delicacy of perception and warmth of feeling. It is to the sixteenth century, not to the thirteenth, that one looks for the spiritual kin of Anselm, of John of Salisbury, and of Heloise.," see Knowles, "Humanism of the Twelfth Century," 19.

As Europe entered its new millenium it was to experience many changes. After being hampered by the breakdown of the Carolingian Empire along with a wave of invasions by the Vikings, Hungarians and Saracens, the continent by the mid-eleventh century was allowed to recover on its own enabling the population to increase alongside a revitalized economy.⁴ Undoubtedly a more peaceful Europe helped contribute to the growing influence of the Catholic church. Yet while the Church, increasingly under Papal direction, was extending its sphere of influence as well as reforming its own administration, a cult of exile developed. Eleventh-century hermits emerged dissatisfied with the Church and the secular world. Stephen Harding, one such hermit, was one of those who established Cîteaux in simplicity and austerity in 1098, and Cîteaux was later to become the mother house of the Cistercian order, the most powerful of the twelfth-century orders, encompassing some seven-hundred houses by 1300.⁵ Most important, and paradoxically, the Cistercian houses became centers of learning as they encouraged self-awareness in addition to prayer and manual labor.⁶ However, for those seeking an education in a less ascetic environment, the cathedral schools offered an alternative education stressing dialectic and the study of

⁴Hollister, 148-50.

⁵Brooke, The Twelfth Century Renaissance, 26.

⁶Ibid.

Latin classics, and such schools at Paris, Chartres and Orleans provided that environment.⁷ In summary, the cathedral bodies and the monastic houses provided an environment for the increased philosophical activity of the twelfth century-- and its players.

Philosophy in the twelfth century was inseparable from theology. The twelfth century was an age of faith, thus any understanding of the period must come from its theology and its theologians.⁸ In addition, philosophy and free thought were abundant in the twelfth century, as Charles Haskins asserts; philosophy was free except where it trespassed upon theology.⁹ Yet, theology was not always the starting point as many inadvertently took philosophy as a prerequisite to the study of theology. Abelard studied philosophy and logic before pursuing theology, and Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1089) began with law, letters and dialectic before becoming a monk at Bec.¹⁰ Anselm, one of Lanfranc's students, began his own search to bring some concordance between philosophy and theology.

⁷Leif Grane, Peter Abelard, ed. Frederick and Christine Crowley, bib. and notes Derek Baker, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World., 1970), 22.

⁸Brooke, 19-21.

⁹Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1965), 360.

¹⁰David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962), 98.

St. Anselm (d. 1109) of Bec, later Canterbury, set the tone for many of the philosophical debates in the twelfth century by addressing the issue of faith versus reason, an argument that compelled Abelard and others to mix philosophy and theology and yield a theological system more suited to the needs of human reason. Anselm wanted objectively to form a human conception of God, relying on reason, dialectic (logic) and the human need to understand or define their surroundings.¹¹ What followed was Anselm's "ontological proof" of the existence of God. In summary, the proof relies on the following: first, one must have a conception of God before one can believe God exists; second, once the conception of a God is realized in the mind, it can be proved that everything has a cause, and by the process of elimination of causes all can be referred to single cause--God, the prime mover.¹² Another contribution to the theological debate between faith and reason was Anselm's insistence that belief precedes understanding, Credo ut intelligam, emphasizing that reason serves faith, strengthens belief, and establishes the right order, which is first to believe the deeper things of the Christian faith as taught by

¹¹Haskins, 350.

¹²St. Anselm, Proof of the Existence of God, cited by Brian Tierney, The Middle Ages: Sources of Medieval History, vol. 1, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), p. 164. For summary and commentary see, Knowles, Evolution of Medieval Thought, 102-103.

the Scriptures and the Church, and then proceed to understand them.¹³ In this relationship, reason is a tool to obtain an understanding of the mysteries of faith; however, if reason dictates a solution contrary to faith, then that particular method of reasoning is invalid.¹⁴ Anselm thought that human reason and dialectic were not devices to dissect the traditional doctrines of the church but methods to enhance their validity and bring non-believers to the faith. In addition, Anselm pleaded the case that man has a responsibility not to neglect to understand what he already believes, a sentiment that Peter Abelard shared.¹⁵

As mentioned earlier, Abelard has frequently been regarded as a prototype of the eighteenth-century philosopher, and viewed as a martyr for 'Rationalism' in a 'medieval world'.¹⁶ He has also been associated with the declaration that understanding must precede belief, antithetical to Anselm. However, Abelard like Anselm believed that the purpose of dialectic and reason was to draw truth from contradiction, and thus serve orthodox Christian beliefs.¹⁷ Abelard himself said, "I do not wish to be a philosopher if it means conflicting with Paul, nor be an

¹³Jeffrey Garrett Sikes, with a Preface by A. Nairne, Peter Abailard (London: Cambridge University Press, 1933), xv-xvi.

¹⁴Ibid., 48-54.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 31.

¹⁷Ibid.

Aristotle if it cuts me off from Christ."¹⁸ Therefore, if Anselm represented the standard of more progressive theological thought in the twelfth century, Abelard did not stray far from that precept. Again like Anselm, Abelard believed reason is the characteristic in man that directly links him to the image of God; and reason is not meant to be the basis of faith, but a key to the mysteries of faith, mysteries his critics would later argue did not exist.¹⁹ Moreover, Abelard argued that since few people have had direct experiences of divine revelation, as Abraham had, we must reach, or better understand, our faith through human teaching, instruction that must have some basis in reason.²⁰ Like Anselm, Abelard viewed the goal of understanding faith as a responsibility, evident when he commented on "...the presumptuous credulity of those who indiscriminately and hastily accept any doctrine whatsoever before considering its merits."²¹ Abelard and Anselm believed in the primacy of faith over reason. To them, faith is an existimatio, a spiritual apprehension of truth, assisted by the human mind which cannot fully comprehend the totality of truth; in other words, man cannot see the world as God sees it, and at best

¹⁸Peter Abelard, "Confession of Faith," The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, Radice, 270.

¹⁹Sikes, 48-54.

²⁰Ibid., 31-36.

²¹Fredrick B. Artz, The Mind of the Middle Ages (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 257-58.

man can only have a partial conception (understanding) of the world.²² Most importantly, Abelard and Anselm represented a progressive trend in twelfth-century theological thought, a trend that placed faith and reason in harmony instead of conflict. Thus Abelard's views on faith and reason are in fact more representative of the twelfth century, and not of a misplaced eighteenth-century rationalist than some modern opinion argues. This leads to the question of why was he considered a radical.

Not all theologians in the twelfth century believed that reason complemented faith as Anselm and Abelard did, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) is just such an exception. As a product of the new monastic revival of the later eleventh century, Bernard, a Cistercian monk and abbot at Clairvaux, was a mystic opposed to the more dialectically-inspired theology, and some would conclude this was sufficient reason for his persecution of Abelard. In sharp contrast to Abelard, Bernard believed that the mysteries of the Christian faith should be venerated, not dialectically disassembled.²³ For Bernard ascetic practices, meditation and mystical union with God were the means by which man sought to know the mysteries of God. On a more progressive note, Bernard was a strong advocate of self-awareness as a means for seeking a union with God, but

²²Sikes, 31-36.

²³Ibid., 219-21.

this self-enlightenment was attained through the denial of carnal pleasures and self-love, emphasizing "spiritual perfection free from selfish and limited aims."²⁴ Clearly, there were differences between Bernard and Abelard, and those led Bernard to denounce not simply Abelard himself but his rationale. Abelard, he said:

....is trying to make void the merit of the Christian faith when he deems himself able by Human reason to comprehend God altogether. The man is great in his own eyes. He sees nothing as an enigma, nothing as in a glass darkly, but looks on everything face to face.²⁵

In this, it is not so much Abelard's theological thought but his method which is at issue. As a result, the new theological thought of the twelfth century and monastic reform, as represented by Bernard, were in opposition.

In addition to the debate concerning faith and reason, theologians in the twelfth century were preoccupied with the question of individual moral formation and the need for the individual to know his moral self. To this debate Abelard contributed his ethics.²⁶ In his formulation of ethical principles, Abelard placed most emphasis on the definition of sin, through establishing the inherent faultlessness of the mind. Drawing from St. Augustine (d. 430), Abelard first distinguished between the temptation to do evil and the act

²⁴R. W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959), 229-30.

²⁵St. Bernard of Clairvaux, as cited by Artz, 258.

²⁶D. E. Luscombe, introduction to Peter Abelard's Ethics (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), xv.

itself. God, he believed, does not think of what is actually done so much as what is done in the mind.²⁷ As a result, sin has a basis in the mind, as well as the intention. Abelard argued that ignorance, not knowing that an act is wrong, lessened the gravity of sin; in other words, a sinner must know the will of God before his acts are judged to be sinful, thus establishing what may be referred to as a 'relative standard'.²⁸ Abelard supported the innovation of private individual confession which occurred in the twelfth century, because it was directed to the individual sinner or penitent.²⁹ Abelard's views become startling when traditional beliefs are examined. Anselm of Laon and William of Champeaux described men as creatures of ignorance, sensually disordered, ravaged by sin, and in need of grace. St. Anselm thought that man could not distinguish between good and evil, and believed that man should instead learn to recognize and obey the laws of God. St. Bernard felt God is always present in our good conscience, and all of our actions are selected or omitted in the direct presence of our divine judge.³⁰ Abelard in fact was no moral relativist, though in the eyes of his critics he might appear so, but in his Ethics the

²⁷Ibid., xxx-xxxv.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰For Anselm of Laon, William of Champeaux, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard see, Luscombe, xvi-xviii.

complexity of the individual action and motivation were brought to the forefront of the argument.

This summary of some areas of philosophical activity in the twelfth century helps to determine Abelard's place in the twelfth century world of thought and belief. He does not appear radical. His opinions on the role of reason in theological questions resemble the progressive views of St. Anselm, and while his ethical treatises are more original, they hardly warrant the severe criticism he received from Bernard and others. In the second half of this survey, the reappearance of classical thought in the twelfth century and the phenomenon of twelfth-century humanism will be examined as Heloise becomes a central character and the antagonism towards Abelard becomes clearer.

Though an education in the classics, strictly constructed and limited, had long been the foundation of western intellectual life, classical sources became an essential ingredient in the new theological thought of the twelfth century, and in the evolution of humanism--present in monasteries, the cathedral schools and in the minds of many philosophers. Even in Allan of Lille's protestation this is apparent: "...how can the natural virtues described by philosophers such as Cicero and Macrobius relate to the higher Pauline or Catholic virtues of faith, hope and charity. Can their secular virtues become Catholic virtues?"

Abelard, like Allan of Lille or John of Salisbury, who heavily relied on Cicero in his Policraticus, held pagan philosophers in high regard using them in virtually in all his works. In Abelard's Dialogue a Christian, a Jew, and a Philosopher were engaged in debate, the Philosopher speaks for a classical world content with natural law, while the Christian and Jew have the Scriptures. In the end, the Christian gained command of the argument and defined the relationship between Christian morality and paganism, and some synthesis is formed.³¹ Perhaps, it is from Abelard's attachment to the classical world that he derived a surer sense of originality in his ethical thought, further separating himself from the monastic sphere.

Abelard was not alone in his devotion to the classics. Their general popularity rose in the twelfth century. Haskins noted that from the fall of the Roman Empire until modern times, the study of the Latin classics furnished the best barometer of the culture in Western Europe, rising and falling in relation to educational and intellectual activity. In the twelfth century, Ovid's Metamorphoses were popular, as were Cicero's Letters and Orations, in monastic and cathedral schools, and for philosophers, classical works were the literary and linguistic foundation to theological debates. The story of the troubled St. Jerome being rebuked in a dream

³¹For Allan of Lille and Abelard, see Luscombe, xvi-xxii, xxiv-xxvii, xxx.

by an angel for being a Cicero instead of a Christian was well-known, but many centuries later, Gratian in his Concordance of Discordant Canons asked, "Shall priests be acquainted with profane literature or no?," and answered affirmatively.³² In the works of John of Salisbury the classics were no longer viewed as mere training for theology, but worthy of study in themselves, and essential. Quoting Cicero he put forth: "Poets, historians, orators, mathematicians should be read, especially since without these men cannot be lettered? For those who are ignorant of these writers must be called illiterate...."³³ Abelard used pre-Christian thinkers who taught typically Christian beliefs to support orthodox theology, and to buttress his own arguments. He showed that men with similiar, but pre-Christian beliefs in God, reached their conclusions through pure reason. In his Theologia Christiana, Abelard noted that Moses believed in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; that the 'soul' was mentioned in the Aeneid; that Pythagoras described a soul; and that Virgil predicted the coming of Christ in his Fourth Eclogue. Further, in his Dialogue, according to Jeffrey Sikes, Abelard gave honor to

³²Haskins discusses the influx of the classics into twelfth century medieval culture, see The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, 93-111.

³³John of Salisbury, Policraticus 7: 9

what the classical philosopher represented--a world searching for a higher order.³⁴

Thus, here too Abelard remains representative of his age, relying on the classical authors in pedagogical context. St. Bernard, himself a distinguished stylist, was familiar with classical works before he became a monk, and Gilson comments that the evidence of his work indicated that "He (Bernard) could not prevent Cicero from slipping in through the monastery gate with him."³⁵ In conclusion, the study of the classics was in full bloom in the twelfth century, and as will be later be examined, the Latin classics were an important aspect in the emergence of that humanism so evident in the lament of Heloise.

In determining a definition of humanism, Southern argued that before 1050 A.D. order and dignity were to be closely associated with the supernatural world, and distinguished from the natural world which appeared to yield chaos. After this period, there was more interest in God and the natural world, but particularly in man's relationship to them both. Southern continues that this human influence or 'humanism' was limited with a strong sense of the dignity of human nature, in which man, the noblest of God's creatures, could turn his nobility into an instrument for redemption.

³⁴Sikes, 60-75.

³⁵Etienne Gilson, as cited by Grane, 115.

Furthermore, the whole universe and the nature of man was seen as intelligible and accessible to human reason:

A man raises his eyes in vain to see God who has not yet succeeded in seeing himself before he presumes to stretch out to the invisible things of God...for unless you can understand yourself, how can you try to understand those things which are above yourself.

The words are those of Richard of St. Victor, and they speak for his world. Thus, human understanding was an integral part to the traditional definition of humanism. For example, Aelred of Rievaulx exemplified human worth without negating the love of God. Aelred believed friendship, Amicitia, was wisdom and God was friendship, illustrating the close relationship between God and human friendship. "Nature," he said, "makes man desire friendship, experience fortifies it, reason regulates it, and religious life perfects it."³⁶

In any discussion of twelfth-century humanism, Abelard of course re-enters. As a humanist, he stressed, according to Brooke, that the God of love had wished to save all men, even though the Fall frustrated Him, and since God made man in his image, he was deeply concerned with human emotions and human values.³⁷ Furthermore, and following St. Anselm, he revised the idea of the Redemption and placed a heavy emphasis not upon God's son paying a ransom to the Devil for

³⁶For Richard of St. Victor, Aelred of Rievaulx and Southern himself, see Medieval Humanism and Other Studies, 32-35.

³⁷Brooke, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, 50.

the release of mankind, but upon the wisdom of God who seeks love, and inspires men to love him.³⁸

Abelard, however, was not the first to describe a man-centered view of salvation. In Anselm's Cur Deus Homo, the view of man's salvation was no longer played out between the bi-polar good and evil powers. As Southern comments this long-held view was "dissolving before a new romanticism," and the devil slipped out of the argument, in which Christ was no longer a 'gamepiece', and "the incarnation on the cross was seen with a new clarity to be that of man, thus leaving God and man face to face."³⁹

This brief survey of the twelfth century and its dynamics has moved from theology to classical thought to humanism. In it, neither Abelard nor his work appear eccentric. However, Abelard was persecuted, and it is pertinent to ask whether this was on theological, intellectual or personal grounds--particularly as a result of his liaison with Heloise, and her humanism.

D.E. Luscombe notes that Abelard, "in a world of wandering and sometimes protesting students, became a wandering and frequently protesting master," while most reputable masters and monks led settled lives.⁴⁰ Abelard's eventful life characterized him as rebellious in nature; from

³⁸Luscombe, xiv.

³⁹Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages, 234-36.

⁴⁰Luscombe, xiii.

his birth in Brittany until his retirement at Cluny--genius, sharp-wit and a fickle character accompanied him everywhere he ventured.⁴¹ Peter Abelard was born in the year 1079 in Brittany. His father, Berengar, and his mother, Lucia, were of moderate means and of the noble class, holding a fief in Brittany. Berengar was insistent that his sons study letters before entering knighthood.⁴² Abelard's first known master is Roscelin, the famous nominalist logician, who Abelard later criticized in his de Unitate et Trinitate Divina; after this tutelage he traveled to Paris to attend classes of William of Champeaux. It was at this point that Abelard's autobiography, Historia calamitatum, began, as he recounted his persecution by William (ca 1100). In 1108, Abelard after amassing a large following of students set up his own school at Melun. Possibly as a result of an illness which caused him to return to Brittany for several years, and some influence by his mother Lucia who had already taken religious vows, Abelard decided to return to France and study theology under Anselm of Laon and his brother, Ralph. Once again he was persecuted, this time by Anselm of Laon. Abelard notes in the Historia:

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²For early biographical information regarding Abelard, see Sikes, 1-10. The Historia follows the events of his life from the time of his tutelage under William to his installation of Heloise at the Paraclete.

When this (attack against Abelard) reached the ears of students, their indignation knew no bounds--this was an act of sheer spite and calumny, such as had never been directed at anyone before; but the more open it was, the more it brought me renown, and through persecution my fame increased.⁴³

As a result, of the persecution, Abelard left Laon and returned to Paris receiving a teaching position at the cathedral school. He was able to enjoy a peace and prosperity which gave rise to complacency, and became convinced that he was the only supreme philosopher living.

In the Historia, Abelard continued:

But success always puffs up fools with pride, and worldly security weakens the spirit's resolution and easily destroys it through carnal temptations. I began to think myself the only philosopher in the world, with nothing to fear from anyone, and so I yielded to the lusts of the flesh. Hitherto I had been entirely continent, but now the further I advanced in philosophy and theology, the further I fell behind the philosophers and holy Fathers in the impurity of my life.⁴⁴

It was in Paris that he met Heloise.

⁴³"Quod cum ad aures scholarium pervenisset, maxima commoti sunt indignatione super tam manifesta livoris calumnia quae nemini unquam ulterius acciderat. Quae, quanto manifestior, tanto mihi honorabilior exstitit et persequendo gloriosiore effecit.," Abelard, Historia calamitatum, Muckle, 12: 181; Radice, 64.

⁴⁴"Sed quoniam prosperitas stultos semper inflat, et mundana tranquillitas vigorem enervat animi, et per carnales illecebras facile resolvit, cum iam me solum in mundo superesse philosophum aestimarem, nec ullam ulterius inquietationem formidarem, frena libidini coepi laxare qui antea continentissime. Et, quo amplius in philosophia vel sacra lectione profeceram, amplius a philosophis et divinis immunditia vitae recedebam.," Abelard, Historia, Muckle, 12: 181-82; Radice, 65.

The affair between Abelard and Heloise lasted from 1114 to 1118, he would have been thirty-five at their meeting while she would have been thirteen or fourteen. According to Abelard's autobiography, Heloise, niece of Canon Fulbert of Notre Dame, was left a "penniless orphan". Her uncle had her educated in letters, and this combined with her physical charms won her, "renown throughout the realm". Abelard claimed that he soon persuaded Fulbert to allow him to tutor Heloise and subsequently move into the canon's home. The two abandoned themselves to love, "...Her studies allowed us to withdraw in private, as love desired, and then with our books open before us, more words of love than of our reading passed between us, and more kissing than teaching." In order to avoid suspicion, Abelard would administer beatings according to Fulbert's instruction, however, "..., blows were prompted by love and tender feeling rather than anger and irritation, and were sweeter than any balm could be."⁴⁵ Abelard no longer gave new lectures to his students but relied on old ones, his new writings, as Heloise later remembered, were of love that, "...put your Heloise on everyone's lips, so that every street and house echoed my name."⁴⁶

⁴⁵For the early life of Heloise and the description of the affair she had with Abelard, see Abelard, Historia, Radice, 66-77.

⁴⁶Heloise recalls the love songs that Abelard wrote for her, see Heloise, "Letter 1," Radice, 117. The love songs have never been found.

Not an unusual result from such affairs: Heloise became pregnant, and Abelard abducted his lover and took her to his sister's house in Brittany where she bore a son named Astrolabe, who was later raised by Abelard's sister, Denise. In Brittany, Abelard, according to the Historia, proposed marriage to Heloise, but she refused. Lief Grane argues that in favoring marriage Abelard had opened his life to a concept greater than himself, the love of Heloise, which "disrupted the undisturbed harmony of Abelard's self-absorption."⁴⁷ As a theologian, and possibly harboring future ecclesiastical ambitions, marriage was out of the question. Clerical marriage was illegal, besides constituting a personal "loss of glory" for Abelard.⁴⁸ Heloise argued that marriage would not lessen a severe reaction from Fulbert and would shame Abelard. She also cited St. Jerome that marriage and children are discordant with philosophy. Abelard appealed to Fulbert, and they both agreed that a marriage would take place under the condition of secrecy, so as not to ruin Abelard's reputation. But the marriage was divulged, and Heloise and Abelard denied the marriage to others which angered Fulbert. Abelard claimed in his autobiography that it was as a result of Fulbert's hostility towards his niece that he decided to place Heloise at the convent at Argenteuil, but it has been suggested that the disclosure of

⁴⁷Grane, 69.

⁴⁸Gilson, viii.

the marriage awoke Abelard from his love-induced "intoxication" and forced him to choose between philosophy and Heloise.⁴⁹

Abelard probably chose Argenteuil because it was closer to Paris, allowing him to make those visits which were later recorded in their correspondence.⁵⁰ However, the conflict between carnal love and Abelard's theological pursuits was resolved in an unexpected manner. After learning of his niece's forced entry into a convent Fulbert arranged to have Abelard castrated. One can infer, as did Kamuf, that after the dismemberment, Abelard was freed from worldly preoccupations and carnal desire, and placed into a set of relationships void of sexual dimensions.⁵¹ Abelard offered his own commentary, "....I admit that it was shame and confusion in my remorse and misery rather than any devout wish for conversion which brought me to seek shelter in a monastery cloister."⁵² Time demonstrated that Abelard would adjust to the reason that placed him in the monastery, as he accepted it as the cruel form of expiation which God had imposed upon him. Yet, Abelard's problems would not end at the monastery.

⁴⁹Kamuf, 3.

⁵⁰An interesting suggestion from Grane considering impropriety was the charge that resulted in the nuns' eviction from Argenteuil, see Grane, 64, and Chapter 3 of this thesis.

⁵¹Kamuf, 7.

⁵²Abelard, Historia, Radice, 76.

The Historia continues several years later at the Council of Soissons in 1121 where Abelard found himself again a victim. At the request of his students, Abelard had published de Unitate et Trinitate in 1120, a guide that illustrated the doctrine of the Trinity through philosophy and reason: the work also disputed the methods of Anselm of Laon. This drew criticism, and Alberic and Lotulph launched an attack on behalf of their former masters, Anselm of Laon and William of Champeaux. The council condemned Abelard for not receiving papal or church permission to teach the Trinity and ordered the book burned. After spending time at St. Denis, and generating animosity there, Abelard asked the bishop of Melun to obtain permission for him to live the monastic life in whatever place he might choose. Once arranged, he went to the territory of Troyes and was given some land. Soon students arrived and built a stone oratory and dedicated it to the Paraclete, and he began to teach. Fearing a papal reprisal as a result of his teaching, Abelard agreed to become the abbot of the Breton house of St. Gildas in 1125. In 1129, the nuns at Argenteuil were evicted by St. Denis resulting from a property dispute, and in sympathy Abelard granted the nuns the Paraclete and installed Heloise as their abbess. Meanwhile, Abelard, after imposing reform on the monks at St. Gildas, had his life threatened. It was at this point, around 1132, that Abelard composed the

Historia, that asked for solace from an old, but nameless, friend.⁵³

It was after she had received a copy of the Historia, that Heloise, apparently, sent a letter to Abelard and began the famous correspondence between the two. The letters show that Heloise was still in love with Abelard, and that she was unsure of her vow. However, the tone of Letter 5 departed from personal concerns and requested that Abelard provide religious instruction for herself and the Paraclete. After Abelard left St. Gildas in 1131 little is known of his life, and he wrote little. Southern speculates that it was during this period, until about 1135, that Abelard acted as a spiritual director of the nuns at the Paraclete.⁵⁴

It was on the Mont Ste Geneviève at Paris that Abelard reemerged as a teacher. These were his final years of literary activity in which he published his Theologia Christiana and Introductio.⁵⁵ These works, however, were to fall into the hands of William of St. Thierry and St. Bernard as new controversy erupted. At the Council of Sens in 1140, Abelard's opinions, among them his conception of original sin, the atonement, the Trinity and the eucharist, were

⁵³This final portion of the Historia traces Abelard's first years as a monk, illuding persecution and discussing his theology. The autobiography unfortunately ends before Abelard's writing career resumes and his final persecution and retreat, see Radice, 77-106.

⁵⁴Southern, Medieval Humanism, 91.

⁵⁵Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought, 119.

attacked by Bernard.⁵⁶ In the absence of any coherent defense by Abelard himself, and his refusal to withdraw his views, he was excommunicated and his books were burnt.⁵⁷ Abelard retired to Cluny, was later reconciled with Bernard, and wrote nothing more except, apparently, his "Confession of Faith" to Heloise.⁵⁸

Abelard's life was eventful but not wholly eccentric. At points, his actions resemble the movement of a renaissance with the exposition of his theology, the display of dialectical methods which angered many, and a somewhat unconventional lifestyle, for a theologian, moving from monastery to monastery. Yet, perhaps his final acquiescence to the conservative elements of the time resembles the complex nature of any renaissance that has to deal with conservative reactions. For instance, Knowles remarks that Abelard was constantly rewriting and reconsidering his works, and that his opinions grew more orthodox and more carefully expressed with time.⁵⁹ If his works progressed to form a more orthodox viewpoint, did the person of Abelard follow the example? Southern comments that Abelard saw himself as a modern St. Jerome: a man whose past irregularities had been

⁵⁶For a complete polemic of Bernard's charges against Abelard, see Letters #236-249 in The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, trans. Bruno Scott James, (Chicago: Henry Regnry Company, 1953), 314-28.

⁵⁷Sikes, 220-47.

⁵⁸Abelard, "Confession of Faith," Radice, 270-71.

⁵⁹Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought, 120.

corrected by Christian philosophy, an inheritor of both pagan and Christian learning, and a wanderer pursued by the affection of his students.⁶⁰ This seems to indicate that Abelard's life exhibited conversion as well as persecution and calamity. There is a pilgrim's as well as rake's progress in Abelard's life--from pursuance of theology over philosophy in 1113, via castration and acceptance of that punishment in 1118, withdrawal into inactivity after leaving St. Gildas in 1131, his resignation after the Council of Sens in 1140, to the greater tranquility of his final years. Like Abelard, Heloise is representative of her time, but she never reached the level of tranquility ultimately achieved by Abelard.

The traditional information available on Heloise largely exists in Abelard's Historia and the disputed letters, a correspondence occurring twelve to thirteen years after they met in Paris. The letters are a bounty, full of remembrances, poignant questions and religious instruction, all open to numerous interpretations--from the erotic to the repentant to the redemption of a brief marriage. Among the many issues which arise from the letters, the most prominent is Heloise's struggle with her marriage to Abelard and her religious vow to God. In the Historia, the issue of Heloise is reduced to one--carnal lust, in which he does not offer

⁶⁰Southern, Medieval Humanism, 91.

her romance, sympathy or regret in his references to her;⁶¹ whereas Heloise's letters analyze the conflict between herself, Abelard and God in an intensely personal manner. The letters emphasize Abelard's responsibility for supplying religious instruction to enable her to lead the Paraclete, as well as reshape her own life. In essence, Heloise asked, as Southern argues, "give me something more than my passions to believe in."⁶² Both the passion of the letters and her attachment to the classics make of Heloise a humanist.

When Heloise argued against marriage she often cited classical sources as justification. In her letters she praised the virtue of Cicero's "disinterested love" as being the only worthy expression of friendship.⁶³ She added that the words friend, concubine or whore pleased her more than the word wife, even if it was the wife of Augustus.⁶⁴ Emerging from her distaste for marriage is the conflict between her love for Abelard and her prescribed responsibilities as an abbess. The Abelard-centered nature of Heloise is evident in the letters from the beginning to the end. She noted that her entry into the convent was out of the love of Abelard not God, "...at your bidding I changed my clothing along with my mind, in order to prove to you the

⁶¹Ibid., 91.

⁶²Ibid., 91, 95, 101.

⁶³Grane, 58.

⁶⁴Heloise, "Letter 1," Radice, 114.

sole possessor of my body and will alike...;"⁶⁵ hence, Abelard, not God, appears to possess the soul of Heloise. As she entered the monastery she recalled the words of Lucan's Cornelia:

O noble husband,
Too great for me to wed, was it my fate
To bend that lofty head? What prompted me
To marry you and bring about your fall?
Now claim your due, and see me gladly pay....⁶⁶

From this the devotion of Heloise is clear. Further expressing her complicated emotions, resulting from Abelard's castration which blocked the "erotic disruption" that troubled him, Heloise interpreted his lack of attention and love for her as confirming the rumors that he had only lusted after her.⁶⁷ She, however, had not ceased to love him; further, she was frustrated by his attitude that his castration and her religious vows were just punishment from God, she wrote, "How can it be called repentance for sins, however great the mortification of the of the flesh, if the mind still retains the will to sin and is on fire with its old desires?"⁶⁸ Abelard proposed the solution offering Heloise the hand of Christ to replace him as her husband and said, "To Him, I beseech you, not to me, should be directed all your devotion, all your compassion, all your remorse."⁶⁹

⁶⁵Ibid., 113.

⁶⁶Abelard, *Historia*, Radice, 76.

⁶⁷Kamuf, 18-19.

⁶⁸Heloise, "Letter 3," Radice, 132.

⁶⁹Abelard, "Letter 4," Radice, 153.

If this was to be the solution, then Heloise wanted from Abelard religious instruction, as the Church Fathers had once written for illustrious virgins and widows. As a result, in his last letter she received her instruction, so that her community could become an extension of Abelard--remaining Abelard-centered.⁷⁰ Southern comments that if Heloise's self-disclosure gives the collection its human dignity, it was this final conservative instruction and edification of the monastic life that ensured their survival.⁷¹ As a result, the Heloise of the letters who recited Lucan out of tragic despair, not Christian faith, as Brooke argues, symbolized the complex entanglements of the twelfth century, a period in which classical thought could merge with Christian doctrine with only partial success.

As for Abelard, he too represented the "complex entanglements" of the Twelfth Century Renaissance. He characterized the new theology of the twelfth century, with its new views on faith, reason and ethics, and in combination with his participation in the Latin revival, he exemplified the notions of humanism and renaissance. It would have been difficult for anyone to remain active in all of these movements without inciting criticism from the conservative thinkers who resisted change, much less Abelard. Moreover,

⁷⁰Letters 5, 6 and 7 comprise the letters of direction for the Paraclete nuns.

⁷¹Southern, Medieval Humanism, 102.

in view of Burckhardt, it becomes apparent that neither Abelard, Heloise, nor their contemporaries laid asleep or half-awake beneath a common veil of illusion--they were fully conscious and, like Richard of St. Victor, were intent on understanding themselves and their world.

History, however, has been fairer to Abelard than Heloise in giving a larger, if not clearer, picture of Abelard--a fairness found in the abundance of historical sources from the twelfth century that concern Abelard: he appears credibly and fully to us. With fewer sources, and many of these disputed, Heloise is mysterious, a woman about whom there are more questions than answers. What was the real extent of her background and education? Was she the commanding and spiritually resolute abbess that her contemporaries recalled? Did her human perception really come before her religious aspirations, if, as Southern argued, she was controlled by her passions instead of religious continence? The image is incomplete and there is a danger that Heloise will remain a mere 'romantic' enigma if the letters are not hers. Historians have been magnanimous in preserving the romantic conception of Heloise, but a great injustice threatens Heloise if this tradition should prove to have no historical basis apart from the tradition of the letters. The historical Heloise will have to emerge from

different, and scanty, sources from those which we recreate
Abelard.

CHAPTER 3

THE CLASSICAL HELOISE

Since the earliest of the Fathers, churchmen and scholars had been trained in classical laws and brought up on a diet of pagan and Christian thought and literature. Though some sat uneasily with men like Cicero, Virgil, and Plato: in most part it was easily consumed without discomfort, and neither Abelard nor Heloise were exceptions in this manner. In Abelard's works, ranging from his Ethics to the Historia calamitatum, classical authors such as Ovid and Cicero were used to complement biblical teaching, and the Church Fathers, Jerome and Augustine, were employed to express his own emotions. For instance, in the Theologia Christiana, Abelard indicated that Virgil and Plato both believed in a soul.¹ In the Historia Abelard recalled his struggle with "carnal desires" and the memories of Heloise, and in order to find company in his misery he quoted Jerome: "The only fault found in me is my sex, and that only when Paula comes to

¹Consider, "We find, then, that Plato speaks of the whole world as a single being. He expresses in this way the great concord of the universal works of God, as it were of the diverse limbs in one body in which one world-soul is supreme and operates as one and the same in the diverse parts," see Abelard, Theologia Christiana, in Abelard's Christian Theology, trans. J. Ramsay McCallum, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948), 54.

Jerusalem."² Heloise, like Abelard, either through explicit reference in the Historia or through her citations of Ovid, Cicero, Jerome, and Augustine in the letters has earned from historians the reputation as being a daughter of the classical world. However, quite differently from Abelard, her reputation for classical learning and erudition has been placed in doubt pending the outcome of the letters' authenticity.

Yet, aside from the disputed letters, there is information which independently suggests the existence of a classical Heloise. First, Heloise's early life and education, as documented by Abelard, and her rapid rise to the position of prioress indicate that her abilities were exceptional. Second, in regard to her reputation, she indeed had, as Abelard insisted in the Historia, a rare "gift for letters,"³ for Heloise's contemporaries testified to her learning; for example, both Peter the Venerable and Guillaume Godel could not mention her name without reference to her advanced scholarship. The evidence may not compare in profundity with the classical citations of the letters, but it indicates that she was capable of writing them.

The knowledge of Heloise's early life and formal education appears largely dependent on the Historia

²Abelard, Historia, Radice, 98.

³Ibid., 66.

calamitatum, Abelard's "Letter of Consolation to a Friend."⁴ The Historia has escaped much of the scrutiny that the letters have had to endure, and thus almost establishes itself independently of the disputed letters. Although the Historia appears in the same manuscripts alongside the letters, the authenticity of the Historia in Troyes, MS 802, fols 1r-18r, has never been called into question.⁵ In 1950, Muckle said the Historia was undoubtedly by the pen of Abelard, but offered no definitive proof, other than demonstrating that the Historia stylistically resembles the Theologia Christiana.⁶ It is possible that an anonymous author writing in the late thirteenth century familiar with Abelard's writing could have composed the Historia, and for that matter the letters, modeling them after Abelard's Theologia or Sic et non. Yet, this hypothesis poses the question of why a writer would produce such forgeries. The

⁴The title Muckle ascribed to the work, since the Troyes 802 was titled as such, see Muckle, Mediaeval Studies, 12: 163. Most have concluded that Abelard's "friend" was most likely a rhetorical convention employed, or rather a premise to issue a 'public autobiography', see commentary by Radice, 57, n.

⁵Muckle, 12: 173. And has never been questioned since 1950.

⁶Muckle draws a comparison in Abelard's argument with Heloise concerning marriage, showing how his sources match those used in the Theologia Christiana, creating, as he called it, "a mosaic of references and quotations which are found in other works of Abelard," see Muckle, 12: 174. J. Monfrin's work on the Historia cites the problem that since no original manuscript exists the correspondence is ultimately of questionable nature, but evidence has not arisen in relation to the Historia that doubts Abelard's authorship, see J. Monfrin introduction to Historia calamitatum (Paris: Librarie Philosophic J. Vrin, 1959), 7-61.

most likely and profitable motive would have been to create a controversial picture of Abelard and Heloise different from the opinion of the times. If this was the forger's motive, it was never realized for the Historia reflects Abelard's theology, as noted by Muckle, and appears to be accurate from what we know of Abelard and Heloise. Thus, such a forgery would appear futile, no matter how conceivable. And the veracity of the Historia, for our purposes, is not critical since it tells little of Heloise, and what it does tell of her education is echoed by other witnesses of the time.

Born in 1100 or 1101, Heloise was sent to the convent of Argenteuil as a child to receive instruction at the request of her maternal uncle Fulbert, Canon of Notre Dame.⁷ Ste Marie at Argenteuil had become by the twelfth century a wealthy institution.⁸ The original charter for the abbey dates back to the early seventh century, founded by Hermenricus and his wife Numma. And it was the original

⁷There is no evidence confirming the date of the abbess's birth or death. Tradition has held that Heloise died at the same age as Abelard, sixty three, and equally supposed that she died in 1163 or 1164. The figures would seem probable: since we know that Abelard returned to Paris to assume a chair at Notre Dame in 1114, and we know with some certainty, that Heloise was a young girl at the time of their meeting in Paris in 1114, hence it seems highly probable that she was born around 1100--neither confirming or denying the tradition.

⁸The history of Argenteuil is noted in Mcleod using: Gallia Christiana, vol 7, (Paris: Ex Typographia Regia, 1744), Instrumenta, cols., 8, 9; and M. Félibien, Histoire de l'Abbaye Royale de Saint-Denys en France (Paris, 1706), Pièces justificatives, 95.

founders who presented it to St. Denis, a monastery across the Seine. In the ninth century, Argenteuil was separated from St. Denis when Charlemagne presented it to his daughter Theodrada, providing after her death that the abbey would revert back to its original owners. However, civil war and Norman invasions followed Charlemagne's death which ravaged the French countryside and left Argenteuil in ruins. Yet, in the tenth century it was restored by Queen Adelaide who endowed the land with churches, manors and fields, fishponds, forests and vineyards. One can safely assume that it was Fulbert's influence which gained Heloise entry into this affluent convent.

In 1114 Heloise returned to Paris to live with her uncle and later met Abelard, as he remembered:

There was in Paris at the time a young girl named Heloise, the niece of Fulbert, one of the canons, and so much loved by him that he had done everything in his power to advance her education in letters. In looks she did not rank lowest, while in the extent of her learning she stood supreme. A gift so rare in women that it added greatly to her charm and had won her renown throughout the realm.⁹

⁹"*Erat quippe in ipsa civitate Parisiensi adolescentula quaedam nomine Heloisa, neptis canonici cuiusdam qui Fulbertus vocabatur, qui eam, quanto amplius diligebat, tanto diligentius in omnem qua poterat scientiam litterarum promoveri studuerat. Quae, cum per faciem non esset infima, per abundantiam litterarum erat suprema. Nam, quo bonum hoc, litteratoriae scilicet scientiae, in mulieribus est rarius, eo amplius puellam commendabat et in toto regno nominatissimam fecerat.*" see Abelard, *Historia*, Muckle, 12: 182-83; Radice, 66. All *Historia* translations by Radice.

Little can be added to Abelard's account of Heloise's childhood except that Heloise included the name of her mother, Hersinde, in the Paraclete necrology.¹⁰ In regard to her father, some historians have speculated that Fulbert may have been Heloise's father.¹¹ Enid McLeod notes, however, that Heloise was most likely of illegitimate birth with father unknown, as Heloise herself seems to acknowledge, when she admits that she is of a lower social status than Abelard.¹² After leaving Argenteuil in 1114, Heloise went to live with her uncle in Paris. Wishing to further her education, Fulbert employed Abelard as her tutor. Abelard recalled:

All on fire with desire for this girl I sought an opportunity of getting to know her through private daily meetings and so more easily winning her over; and with this end in view I came to an arrangement with her uncle, with the help of some of his friends, whereby he should take me into his house, which was very near my school, for whatever sum he liked to ask....Fulbert dearly loved money, and was moreover always ambitious to further his niece's education in letters, two weaknesses which made it easy for me to gain his consent and obtain my desire:¹³

¹⁰Under December 1st it is entered: *Hersindis, mater domine Heloise, abbatisse nostre*, see, Boutillier du Retail and Piétrisson de Saint-Aubin, Recueil des historiens de la France, Obituaries de la province de Sens, IV, Diocèses de Meaux et de Troyes (Paris: Victor Palme, 1877), 428.

¹¹Fulbert is listed as her maternal uncle, *maternal avunculus*, in the Paraclete necrology, see McLeod, 9.

¹²*Ibid.*; Such theories that Fulbert was her father along with the theory she was of noble parentage lack credence since Heloise wrote, "Has Fortune ever set any great or noble woman above me or made her my equal,....", see Heloise, "Letter 3," Radice, 129.

¹³"*In huius itaque adolescentulae amorem totus inflammatus occasionem quaesivi qua eam mihi domestica et quotidiana*

Although Abelard notes in his Historia that he encouraged the arrangement out of desire for Heloise, such an engagement of a noteworthy scholar as Abelard to teach a fourteen year old girl, suggests that Fulbert was, as Abelard said, "always ambitious to further his niece's education." By the age of fourteen, for a girl to receive an education beyond the grammar curriculum would have been unusual, for even young ladies of the nobility received little education beyond adolescence, except for domestic skills,¹⁴ although, this is not to say that Heloise was the only learned woman of the period. Exactly what works Abelard and Heloise studied is unknown. Abelard did, however, note in the Historia that she was familiar with St. Augustine's De civitate dei, the works of St. Jerome and Josephus, and Abelard later recalled

conversatione familiarem efficerem et facilius ad consensum traherem. Quod quidem ut fieret, egi cum praedicto puellae avunculo, quibusdam ipsius amicis intervenientibus, quatenus me in domum suam quae scholis nostris proxima erat sub quocumque procurationis pretio susciperet,...Erat autem cupidus ille valde, atque erga neptim suam ut amplius semper in doctrinam proficeret litteratoriam plurimum studiosus. Quibus quidem duobus facile eius assensum assecutus sum, et quod optabam obtinui, cum ille videlicet et ad pecuniam totus inhiaret et neptim suam ex doctrina nostra aliquid percepturam crederet.," see Abelard, Historia, Muckle, 12: 183; Radice, 66-67.

¹⁴By the twelfth century educating children was more common, but it was not until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the urban schools and village schools for children developed. The monastery was still the only formal place for educating children outside of the home, see more in Hollister, 169-70.

Heloise reciting Lucan as she re-entered Argenteuil.¹⁵ As for languages, Abelard noted that she knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In a letter addressed to the Virgins of the Paraclete, Abelard commended her languages:

You have in your mother sufficient guidance in all things, both as a pattern of virtues, and for the instruction of letters; for she is not unfamiliar not only with Latin but also with Greek and Hebrew literature, and appears to be the only woman now living who has attained that knowledge of the three languages which is extolled above all things by St. Jerome as a matchless grace.¹⁶

Heloise, however, left no proof that she knew these languages, and there must be some doubt that she actually did. Greek, according to Haskins was very rare in western Europe in the twelfth century.¹⁷ As for Hebrew, Heloise would have had to have contact with Jewish Scholars in the schools, and this was not a possibility. Abelard's letter to the Virgins of the Paraclete was the last time he wrote of Heloise's exceptional learning. From Abelard's remembrances

¹⁵ Heloise's familiarity with these works was noted by Abelard while recalling her invective against marriage, Historia, Radice, 76.

¹⁶ *"Magisterium habetis in matre, quod ad omnia vobis sufficere, tam ad exemplum scilicet virtutum, quam ad doctrinam litterarum potest: quae non solum latinae, verum etiam tam haebraice quam graecae non expers litteraturae, sola hoc tempore illam trium linguarum adepta peritiam videtur, quae ab omnibus in beato Hieronymo, tanquam singularis gratia, praedicatur, et ab ipso in supradictis venerabilibus feminis maxime commendatur."* see Abelard, "Epistola Ad Virgines Paraclitenses," Cousin, 232-233, translated in McLeod, 182.

¹⁷ Charles Haskins, "The Greek Element in the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century," Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science, 148-50.

of Heloise, we know with some reasonable assurance that she was sufficiently educated for Abelard to defend her reputation in writing.

According to the Historia after the birth of Abelard's and Heloise's son, Astrolabe, the exposure of their marriage to Fulbert, and Abelard's subsequent dismemberment, a defeated Abelard in 1119 returned Heloise to her childhood home of Argenteuil:

I admit that it was shame and confusion in my remorse and misery rather than any devout wish for conversion which brought me to seek shelter in a monastery cloister. Heloise had already agreed to take the veil in obedience to my wishes and entered a convent. So we both put on our habit, I in the Abbey of St. Denis, and she in the convent of Argenteuil which I spoke of before. There were many people, I remember, who in pity for her youth tried to dissuade her from submitting to the yoke of monastic rule as penance too hard to bear, but all in vain; she broke out as best she could through tears and sobs into Cornelia's famous lament:

O noble husband,
Too great for me to wed, was it my fate
To bend that lofty head? What prompted me
To marry you and bring about your fall?
Now claim your due, and see me gladly pay...

So saying she hurried to the altar, quickly took up the veil blessed by the bishop, and publicly bound herself to the religious life.¹⁸

¹⁸"In tam misera me contritione positum confusio, faeteor, pudoris potius quam devotio conversionis ad monasticorum latibula claustrorum compulit; illa tamen prius ad imperium nostrum sponte velata et monasterium ingressa. Ambo itaque simul sacrum habitum suscepimus, ego quidem in abbazia sancti Dionysii, illa in monasterio Argenteoli supradicto. Quae quidem, memini, cum eius adolescentiam a iugo monasticae regulae, tamquam intolerabili poena, plurimi frustra deterrent ei compatiens, in illam Corneliae querimoniam inter lacrymas et singultus, prout poterat, prorumpens ait.

If we are to believe Abelard's account, then this passage can speak for itself, and historians in general have used this single event as convincing evidence for a classically profound Heloise, one more profound, perhaps, than Abelard himself. Brooke saw in her citation of Cornelia inspiration borne of tragic despair not Christian faith,¹⁹ a spontaneous reference to personal circumstance. Cornelia was the famed wife of Pompey, who offered herself to the Gods after her husband's defeat at Pharsalus--a clear parallel. Heloise took Cornelia's situation for her own and offered herself as sacrifice for Abelard's defeat.²⁰ However, Cornelia was not, as Southern notes, in fact forced to pay the penalty of being cast out to sea, whereas Heloise was immured in her convent.²¹

.O maxime conjunx!
 O thalamis indigne meis! hoc iuris habebat
 In tantum fortuna caput? cur impia nupsi,
 Si miserum factura fui? Nunc accipe poenas,
 Sed quas sponte luam.

Atque in his verbis ad altare mox properat, et confestim ab
 episcopo

benedictum velum ab altari tulit, et se professioni
 monasticae coram omnibus alligavit," see Abelard, Historia,
 Muckle, 12: 190-91; Radice, 76-77.

¹⁹Brooke, The Twelfth Century Renaissance, 51.

²⁰Lucan, Pharsalia, trans. J. D. Duff, (London: William
 Heinemann, 1928), 8: 87-108.

²¹"Long before Abelard had seen himself as the modern Jerome, Heloise had seen herself as the modern Cornelia. Indeed, she was more than Cornelia; for Pompey did not after all slay Cornelia and scatter her ashes on the waves; but Abelard killed Heloise and she willingly made the sacrifice of her life.," see Southern, Medieval Humanism, 93-94.

In further testimony to Heloise's learning, the last pages of Abelard's autobiography recalled Heloise and her sister nuns' eviction from Argenteuil at the hands of the abbot of St. Denis:

It happened that my abbot of St. Denis by some means took possession of the Abbey of Argenteuil where Heloise--now my sister in Christ rather than my wife--had taken the veil. He claimed that it belonged to his monastery by ancient right, and forcibly expelled the community of nuns, of which she was prioress, so that they were now scattered as exiles in various places.²²

Argenteuil according to the original seventh-century charter indeed belonged to St. Denis. Yet the abbey that Hermenricus and Numma founded and Charlemagne improved was destroyed, and considering the restoration by Queen Adelaide, the nuns would have had a justifiable reason to retain the property. Abbot Suger, however, may have charged that the nuns were behaving immorally, possibly to insure that Pope Honorius would expedite the nuns' expulsion.²³ For a 360 year old charter to

²²"Accidit namque ut abbas noster sancti sic. Dionysii praedictam illam Argenteoli abbatiam, in qua religionis habitum nostra illa iam in Christo soror potius quam uxor Heloisa susceperat, tamquam ad ius monasterii sui antiquitus pertinentem quocumque modo acquireret, et conventum inde sanctimonialium, ubi illa comes nostra prioratum habebat, violenter expellerat.," see Abelard, *Historia*, Muckle, 12: 205; Radice, 96-97.

²³McLeod notes that there is no real evidence to support the charges. Neither Abelard nor Heloise ever mentioned them which could infer guilt; although it is possible the nuns were unaware of the charges since the expulsion was handled above their heads. McLeod notes that it would seem strange that Abbot Suger would make such charges considering he was venerated in such high honor before and after his death; thus some truth to the charges may exist in her opinion, see McLeod, 93-116.

have been enforced considering Argenteuil had become so prosperous, charges of immorality or a greater cause must have been needed to justify the eviction not only to Honorius but to the monastic community. But the documents do not reveal such a plot. The immorality was rumored,²⁴ of which Honorius almost seems to concede when he confers to St. Denis Argenteuil, an abbey "in which certain women were leading evil lives, so it was said".²⁵

Returning to Abelard's passage in the Historia, an important element exists in Abelard's brief mention that Heloise had become prioress. No precise indication as to when this occurred has been found; but since Heloise was at the Paraclete in 1129, after the eviction, it can be firmly established that she became prioress of Argenteuil sometime before 1129--well before she was twenty-nine. Traditionally, the prioress, second in command to the abbess, administered

²⁴No evidence has been uncovered to substantiate the charges other than rumor, see during an assembly of ecclesiastics held at St. Germain-des-Pres in Paris, "there was a sudden outcry in the hearing of everyone against the irregularity and evil repute of a certain monastery of nuns called Argenteuil, in which a few nuns living in manifold infamy, to the dishonour of their order, had by their impure and disgraceful ways for long defiled the whole neighborhood of that place." See "Charta Matthaei episcopi Albanensis & sedis apost. legati pro coenobio beatae Mariae de Argentolio Sandioyfrancis monachis restituendo.," Gallia Christiana, vol. 7, Instrumenta. no. 63, see appendix III. Translation by McLeod.

²⁵In 1129 Pope Honorius issued a bull restoring Argenteuil to St. Denis, see Félibien, Pièces justificatives, 127, see appendix IV.

any educational program at place in the abbey and handled most business affairs. For Heloise at twenty-nine, or younger, to achieve this role is an indication of an exceptional degree of learning and of administrative skills, unless she was the only learned and lettered woman at Argenteuil.²⁶ Both the nuns of Argenteuil and Abelard would seem to have similar opinions of Heloise's abilities.

Irrespective of Abelard's Historia, contemporaries held the same opinion of her scholarship. Guillaume Godel, a monk of St. Martial of Limoges and chronicler of the twelfth century, noted:

Quibus Sanctimonialibus quondam uxorem suam religiosam foeminam, et litteris tam hebraicis quam latinis adprime eruditam, nomine Heluisam prae fecit Abbatissam, quae vere ipsius amica magnam ei post mortem in assiduis precibus fidem conservavit. ²⁷

In addition, the same comment on Heloise's learning was repeated in three later chronicles of the thirteenth century, by Robert, monk of St. Marien of Auxerre;²⁸ St. Martin of

²⁶Based on a Latin elegy contained in a death scroll for Vital, Abbot of Savigny in 1123, Enid McLeod believes the document is attributable to Heloise, because it bears "amateurish arrangement" and un-ornamental printing which suggests it was not written by a scribe, but written by the author, a nun well-versed in Latin. McLeod also infers that Heloise could have been prioress as early as 1123, since the prioress was usually given the job of writing any tribute for the deceased, see McLeod, 86-92.

²⁷"Ex chronico Willelmi Godelli manachi S. Martialis Lemovicencis," Receuil des historiens de la France, vol. 13, 675.

²⁸McLeod attributes the appearance of the same phrase to copying, which some chroniclers practiced, "Ex chronico

Tours;²⁹ and Guillaume de Nangis, monk of St. Denis.³⁰ And in a letter to Heloise in 1143, Peter the Venerable remarked on her mastery of secular learning and pursuit of the arts:

I had yet not quite passed the bounds of youth and reached early manhood when I knew of your name and reputation, not yet for religion but for your praiseworthy studies. I used to hear at that time of the woman who although still caught-up in the obligations of the world, devoted all her application to knowledge of letters, something which is very rare, and to the pursuit of secular learning, and that not even the pleasures of the world, with its frivolities and delights, could distract her from this worthy determination to study the arts.³¹

Such praise from such a noteworthy abbot is striking, and it confirms Abelard's testimony to Heloise's erudition. Abelard described Heloise's gift for letters as, "so rare in women."³² Similarly, Peter the Venerable described Heloise's knowledge of letters as "rare." Further still, Heloise's higher plateau of scholarship, Peter the Venerable remarked, was not

Roberti Monachi S. Mariani Autissiodorensis, "Receuil des historiens de la France, vol. 12, 294.

²⁹Chronicon turonense magnum (Berlin, Preussische Staatsbibliothek MS. Phill. 1852, fol 204v-205v.)

³⁰H. Geraud, Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis, I, (Paris, 1843), 32.

³¹"*Necdum plene metas adolescentiae excesseram, necdum in iuueniles annos euaseram, quando nomen non quidem adhuc religionis tuae, sed honestorum tamen et laudabilium studiorum tuorum, michi fama innotuit. Audiebam tunc temporis, mulierem licet necdum saeculi nexibus expeditam, litteratoriae scientiae quod perrarum est, et studio licet saecularis sapientiae, summam operam dare, nec mundi uoluptatibus, nugis, uel deliciis, ab hoc utili discendarum artium proposito retrahi posse.*" see Peter the Venerable, "EP 115," The Letters of Peter the Venerable, ed. Giles Constable, vol. 1, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 303-4. Translation by Radice, 277.

³²Abelard, Historia, Radice, 66.

distrurbed by, "the pleasures of the world, with its frivolities and delights," which suggests that fourteen year old Heloise was ascetic in her study.³³ These authors independently substantiate Heloise's classical learning. It is also clear from Abelard's contemporaries that she was well-educated, certainly to a much higher degree than most women of her day; of that, Abelard's own, perhaps self-justifying, remark that it was her intelligence and beauty which exercised such a fatal attraction on him may be taken as simply confirmation.

This picture of the classical Heloise, however, remains incomplete. The Abelard who has a corpus of writing to his name full of classical references overshadows an Heloise who has, simultaneously, been given and denied her letters. The biography of Heloise's early life present in the Historia is witness to her learning, and coupled with the testimony of others her reputation would seem undeniable. The classical Heloise, however, needs to be sought in other areas. For instance, what specific classical authors and Church Fathers did she favor? How did she incorporate classical writers into the liturgy of the Paraclete? Without that evidence it

³³Peter the Venerable most likely speaks of a very young Heloise. Peter being born in 1092 or 1094 would have "not quite passed the bounds of youth and reached early manhood" no later than 1115, his early twenties, making Heloise fourteen or fifteen, see chronology to The Letters of Peter the Venerable, vol. 2, 257-69.

will be possible only to say that she could have written the letters, and that is scarcely a sufficient basis of assessment for the historical Heloise. For that we must look to her role as an abbess, her place among contemporary religious women, and her contribution to the liturgy of the Paraclete.

CHAPTER 4

HELOISE THE ABBESS: FROM THE ACADEMY TO THE CLOISTER

In a letter to Heloise, Peter the Venerable praised Heloise for her new direction in life:

....you turned your zeal for learning in a far better direction and as a woman wholly dedicated to philosophy in the true sense, you left logic for the Gospel, Plato for Christ, the academy for the cloister.¹

Heloise's journey to the "cloister", as we remember, had been neither easy nor congenial. After her forced return to the abbey of Argenteuil in 1119, Heloise arose to become prioress, assuming challenging responsibilities. Later under the guidance of Abelard, she founded an abbey at what once was Abelard's stone oratory, the Paraclete, and turned it into a prosperous house, acquiring large estates and establishing daughter-houses. Up to now it has been rarely asked how Heloise acquired her reputation for religion, much less her skill as an abbess. Although the letters show some insight into the question as they describe Heloise's slow conversion from a nun to an abbess, showing doubts of herself and of the religious life; the outside evidence shows a more

¹"Mox uero iuxta uerba apostoli, 'ut complacuit ei, qui te segregauit ab utero matris tuae, uocare te per gratiam suam,' longe in melius disciplinarum studia commutasti, et pro logica aeuangelium, pro phisica apostolum, pro Platone Christum, pro academia claustrum, tota iam et uere philosophica mulier elegisti.," see Peter the Venerable, "Letter 115," Constable, 304. Translation by Radice, 278.

substantial picture of Heloise's monastic career. Her following at Argenteuil and the large numbers of postulants she attracted at the Paraclete, give some idea of the charisma and power behind her leadership. As the Paraclete grew from a small oratory to encompass vast lands, Heloise amended Abelard's instruction and the Benedictine Rule to establish practical reform that would allow the abbey and its daughter houses to prosper, thereby reflecting her administrative and leadership skills. If Heloise was an exceptional abbess, she was not alone, for the twelfth century was a remarkable period for monastic women. Women such as Hersende, Petronilla and Hildegard exercised much autonomy within the male monastic community. And like the Paraclete, monastic houses for women like Fontevrault and Sempringham were remarkable examples of growth and reform. Thus, apart from the dramatic Heloise of the letters, the following examination of Paraclete documents and the comparison of Heloise and other twelfth century monastic women will attempt to present Heloise the abbess, whose intellectual quality and questioning of conventional authority did not entirely forsake the academy.

Prior to the Paraclete, Heloise's years spent at Argenteuil were a foundation for her success as an abbess. Although evidence is not available concerning her election or her specific duties, she as prioress undoubtedly shared the

responsibility of educating the nuns and managing the convent's business concerns. This is significant, for the abbey after its restoration in the tenth century by Queen Adelaide became richly endowed, making the management of its lands an undoubtedly formidable task, and much-needed experience for Heloise since the Paraclete itself was to be a large enterprise. Although little else is known of Heloise's time at Argenteuil, it appears that Heloise's education as a monastic leader began at an early date. More evidence suggesting Heloise's leadership skills emerges from the nuns' eviction from Argenteuil. Some of the nuns were absorbed by other monasteries, for example some went to the Abbey of Ste Marie de Footel;² whereas, Heloise and a number of her companions, for whatever reason, did not follow. It is possible that there had been a power struggle which split the nuns, or that Heloise was waiting for a better opportunity, or that there was no room for them at nearby convents. It is even possible Abelard had planned with Heloise for some time to relocate some of the nuns at the Paraclete; and this is entirely conceivable since McLeod suggests that Suger began to seek eviction in 1127.³ In 1129 Abelard travelled from St.

²Gervaise notes that thirty of the sisters went to Ste Marie; as to the others there is no mention, see, Dom Gervaise, La Vie de Pierre Abeillard, abbé de Saint Gildas de Ruys...et celle d'Héloïse, son épouse, 2. vols. (Paris, 1728), 273, as cited in McLeod, 105.

³McLeod, 98.

Gildas and met Heloise for the first time in ten years. He offered the nuns his former stone oratory the Paraclete provided that Heloise be made the first abbess.⁴ In the event, a select few nuns chose to stay with Heloise after the Argenteuil eviction, and with this Heloise the religious leader emerges, as Abelard recalled in the Historia:

And such favor in the eyes of all did God bestow on that sister of mine who was in charge of the other nuns, that bishops loved her as a daughter, abbots as a sister, the laity as a mother; while all alike admired her piety and wisdom and her unequalled gentleness in every situation.⁵

At the Paraclete the experienced convent leader would begin to form her role as abbess, commanding an enterprise later so large that doubts of her leadership or dependence on Abelard would pale compared to her achievements.

In the begining, the Paraclete was as Abelard had left it, consisting of a chapel and a few primitive cells. Under Heloise's administration the convent grew to encompass six daughter-houses and large tracts of land, extending into the modern French departments of Aube, Yonne, Marne, and Seine-et-Marne.⁶ In the expansion of the Paraclete, Heloise

⁴Abelard, Historia calamitatum, Radice, 96-97.

⁵"*Tantam autem gratiam in oculis omnium illi sorori nostrae, quae ceteris praeerat, Dominus annuit ut eam episcopi quasi filiam, abbates quasi sororem, laici quasi matrem diligerent, et omnes pariter eius religionem, prudentiam et in omnibus in comparabilem patientiae mansuetudinem admirabantur.*," see Abelard, Historia, Muckle, 12: 205-6. Translation by Radice, 96-97.

⁶The papal bull of Eugenius III in 1147 contains a full list of the Paraclete's holdings, including the names of the

demonstrated potential and skill as a leader. The convent was endowed with much property and praise, and the Paraclete grew and gathered many postulants.

Undoubtedly, legal instruments gave the Paraclete some freedom to expand. Following the official recognition of the convent in 1131 by Pope Innocent II, Heloise received a royal charter from Louis VI, granting to her community perpetual exemption from the payment of duty on what they bought and sold anywhere in the kingdom.⁷ Further, Louis VII issued a decree stressing the loyalty and devotion of the king and his successors to the Paraclete.⁸ Most importantly, a full series of papal bulls beginning with Lucius II in 1144 and ending with Alexander III in 1163 all ratified the assurances of previous popes, confirming the rights to lands previously held and any newly acquired properties.⁹ By 1147 the papal bull of Eugenius III documented the Paraclete as holding houses, lands, forests, vineyards, streams and mills in north-central France.¹⁰

donors, see Paraclete cartulary, appendix II: E, as contained in Cousin, 719-26.

⁷See appendix II: A; royal charters and documents are contained in C. Lalore, Cartulaire de L'Abbaye du Paraclete vol. 2, Collection des principaux cartulaires du diocèse de Troyes (Paris, 1875-90).

⁸Ibid.

⁹These documents seem to indicate a special loyalty to Heloise since the last bull dated 1163 is the year of Heloise's death, see appendix II: K.

¹⁰Again Eugenius' papal bull of 1147 serves as evidence, see appendix II: E.

In many cases, as indicated in medieval cartularies, convents received property through personal benefactions of widows aspiring to become part of monastic life or through the estates of deceased admirers. Such was the case with the Paraclete. McLeod notes that the Paraclete's reputation for saintliness, which Pope Adrian IV after 1157 called, "the good odour of its way of life", had spread throughout the country.¹¹ As a result, many wealthy patrons, according to McLeod, would want to be included in the nuns' prayers, as lords and "ecclesiastics of the district" acted as Heloise's counsellors and mediators hoping to be associated with such a revered house.¹² In addition, Adrian IV granted the nuns permission to bury in their burial-grounds those who had bestowed gifts on the Paraclete.¹³ In regard to aspiring nuns, the cartulary records a certain Raoul Jaiacus giving tithes to the Paraclete on behalf of his niece who had taken the veil at the Paraclete.¹⁴ Further still, property was gained from the practice of widows entering monasteries and subsequently endowing the house with their fortunes.

The increase of the size of the Paraclete is indisputable, as evidence shows; however, the exact nature of how this land was ceded to the Paraclete or what magnetism drew such admiration may never be known. What is clear is

¹¹See appendix II: G, H, I.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴McLeod, 214.

Heloise's part in the process, as Peter the Venerable's praise indicates: "...I am drawn to you by what many have told me about your religion. If only our Cluny possessed you,..."¹⁵ Abelard himself noted St. Bernard's visit to the Paraclete,¹⁶ and Bernard later commended Heloise to Pope Eugenius.¹⁷

The establishment of six daughter-houses at the Abbey of La Pommeraye, and at the Priories of Ste Madelaine de Trainel, Laval, Noëfort, St. Flavit, and St. Martin de Boran was a large enterprise.¹⁸ However, the expansion was a necessary, not optional, step to de-centralize the management of Paraclete estates and to find a proper place for the increasing number of women who chose to enter the Paraclete.¹⁹ Acknowledging this problem Heloise began her own rule:

¹⁵Peter the Venerable, "Letter 115", see Radice, 280.

¹⁶As mentioned by Abelard, see Chrysogonus Waddell, Peter Abelard's Letter 10 and Cistercian Liturgical Reform," Studies in Medieval Cistercian History, II, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 76.

¹⁷Bernard gives brief mention of Heloise's petition to the Pope: "As for the petition of the Abbess of the Paraclete, if you so wish you can find out about it from the same man (the messenger, Master G.), and grant it if you see fit.," see Bernard, "Letter 350," The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, James, 428.

¹⁸Exact dates for the establishment of the daughter-houses are not available. Yet, the houses are referred to in various papal bulls: Laval in 1154, Noëfort and St. Flavit in 1157, Boran in 1163, and Ste Madelaine at Trainel in an undated bull of Innocent II (sometime before his death in September 1143), see appendix II: G, K.

¹⁹The cartulary, see Lalore, "Number 83", 99; see McLeod 285, n.

The Lord in his care for us having bestowed upon us certain habitations, we have sent thither some of our members in sufficient number for the divine service. But we are setting down the customs of our good way of life, so that what the mother has unchangeably held, the daughters may uniformly maintain.²⁰

Thus, in considering the tribute paid to Heloise and the notable leadership she established at the Paraclete, the Heloise of the letters who devotedly sought direction from Abelard, perhaps, in actuality possessed a much clearer purpose.

It is in Heloise's rule that the abbess' accomplishments become clearer. We do know that she established daughter houses, as documented in papal bulls of the period. Yet, a greater testament to her role as abbess lies in her rule, in which she placed the business concerns of the abbey in the hands of the nuns, echoing the reforms at St. Gilbert's Sempringham and Robert of Arbrissel's

²⁰*"De convenientia consuetudinum.--Domino super nos prospiciente, et aliqua loca nobis largientia, misimus quasdam ex nostris ad religionem tenendam, numero sufficiente. Annotamus autem boni propositi nostri consuetudines; ut quod tenuit mater incommutabiliter, teneant et filiae uniformiter."* see Heloise, "Excerpta e Regulis Paracletensis Monasterii," see appendix I, as contained in Cousin, 213-24. Translation by McLeod, 220. D'Amboise who first published Abelard's opera attributes this document to Heloise written after the daughter-houses were established, although no firm date can be arrived at, see Cousin's commentary, 213, n.: *"Amboesium.--Imitemini?--Huc usque plerique codices Amboesiani et noster Parisinus 2544; sed in exemplari Paracletensi quod et auctius ubique est, ea quae sequuntur reperiit Amboesius quae haud immerito tribuenda esse Heloissae censuit, et ideo non omittenda. Loca pontificum et conciliorum allata passim invenies in Decreto Gratiani. Nonnulla sunt sub finem quae ad regulam monasteriorum Praemonstratensis ordinis pertinere videntur."*

Fontevrault. Heloise's amendments, although not revolutionary, were a clear mark of her authority at the Paraclete. Heloise's amendments to Abelard's previous rule for the Paraclete contained in Abelard's Letter 7 are brief and only comprise one page. The remainder of the manuscript addresses administrative matters largely composed of extracts from the monastic rule of the Premonstratensian Order.

In regard to clothing and bedding Heloise instructed the nuns to make their habits of lambskin, linen and wool, all made simply and frugally. Likewise, in the rule, Heloise instructed that their habits are to be simple and inexpensive.²¹ Heloise's attitudes towards work reflected a desire to modify the Benedictine Rule, as her rule considers women and the needed interaction with lay workers. Nuns, according to Heloise, should be allowed dispensation from some types of labor normally performed by monks. And in her own rule she stated that the rigors of monastic life conflict with religious duties, thus "conversos and conversas", lay brothers and sisters, are instead recruited as labor.²²

²¹"De habitu.--Habitus noster vilis est et simplex, in aginis pellibus, in lineis et laneis vestibus. In iis emendis vel faciendis non eliguntur pretiosa, sed quod vilius comparari vel haberi potest. Quodcunque sufficere debeat annotandum esset; sed longe sumus a sufficientia.," Cousin, 214.

²²"Unde necessaria proveniant.--Religionis erat de cultu terrarum et labore proprio vivere, si possemus. Sed quia ex debilitate non sufficimus admittimus conversos et conversas, ut quae per nos administratri rigor non permittit religionis, per eos adimpleantur. Recipimus etiam quascunque fedelium eleemosynas, more caeterarum ecclesiarum.," Cousin, 214.

In command of the Paraclete and its properties, Heloise undoubtedly had many business concerns outside the convent. Although little information exists that would indicate whether or not the Paraclete nuns had to leave the convent to attain materials or supplies, the Paraclete did have tenant property that required interaction with the laity, and, her rule permits nuns to conduct Paraclete business affairs with the laity in the public domain.²³ The amendment may have resulted from the fact that obtaining outside monks to act as business agents for the Paraclete and the six daughter-houses was impossible to arrange, much less oversee. Or simply, considering that the nuns of Argenteuil had been accused of immoral acts of an unspecified nature by Abbot Suger of St. Denis, perhaps Heloise was cautious in her dealings with monasteries. Yet, despite these possibly negative considerations, the opening of the Paraclete and its daughter houses to the lay-community was a progressive practice, a reform also present in the reformed liturgy of the Paraclete, as we shall see, which included the surrounding community in its religious services. Above all, the Heloise we see is practical and sensitive to the needs of a her convent.

McLeod interprets "conversos and conversas" to mean lay brothers and sisters--not lay monks, see McLeod, 221.

²³"Quando egredimur.--Statum tenemus, quod nulla velata, causa cujuscunque necessitatis, egrediator ad forensia negotia, et ad custodiam rerum nostrarum, mittimus in domus nostras probatas tam aetate quam vita et moniales et conversas.," Cousin, 214.

The use of the laity in monastic houses and the granting of more authority to abbesses concerning their business affairs by the twelfth century was a common practice. In fact, much of Heloise's amendments to Abelard's rule was conventional practice in some monastic houses, yet original when compared to others. At Fontevrault and Sempringham nuns managed their own business affairs and enlisted the laity and male monks to perform manual and farm labor at the convent; however, at Prémontré the nuns lived and worked strictly separate from the male members of the community, much less the laity. Establishing, however, what was conventional and original practice requires a view into the complexities of the women's monastic movement.

In the twelfth century, the resistance that the male community displayed towards the influx of women into the monastic life left many convents or priories in the category of 'orphan houses'. For the first time since antiquity there was a population shift beginning in the twelfth century in which women began to outnumber the men, not least was this so in the monastic world.²⁴ The Cistercians were for awhile able to respond to the increase;²⁵ yet by 1228, they could no

²⁴It is noted by historians that in the thirteenth century for the first time since antiquity that the female population clearly outnumbered males, see, for example, Hollister, 175-76.

²⁵In 1213 the Cistercians legitimized the nunneries that had aspired to become Cistercian. These nunneries could not increase their numbers or establish new houses without the approval of the general chapter, see Sally Thompson, "The

longer manage the increasing numbers of women seeking the monastic life and ceased to admit any more houses into the order, following the earlier Premonstratensian ban on the admittance of new convents in 1198.²⁶ C. H. Lawrence notes that the sheer numbers of new Cistercian houses for women, official and unofficial, was an administrative burden, and the Cistercian structure buckled under with little avail.²⁷ As a result, many women's houses were forced as early as the twelfth century to manage their own affairs.

As population was a factor in the male communities' inability to manage women's new found interest in the monastic life, a greater affront to female monks existed in the ethos of the ascetic revival itself. Both men and women found the monastic life more appealing after the Gregorian reforms. The appeal of withdrawal and service to the world, coupled with celibacy and ascetic surroundings is evident in

Problem of the Cistercian Nuns in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries," Medieval Women, 238-41.

²⁶By 1228 the Cistercians issued a prohibition stating that they could not prevent nuns from imitating Cistercian practice, but the Cistercians would no longer accept responsibility for the nuns or to attempt to visit them, see Thompson, 238; One reason for nuns seeking admittance into the Cistercian order was that nuns could not find admittance into Premonstratensian houses due to the Premonstratensian ban of 1198, ratified by Pope Innocent III, see C. H. Lawrence, Medieval Monasticism (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1984), 180-81.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 185. The statutes of 1213 called for strict enclosure of the nunneries and instructed the abbots to supervise accordingly.

the increased number of postulants. Yet, some women searching for the monastic life would face greater hardships as the result of their sex, for the revival echoed many of the negative attitudes towards women which were displayed in secular society. Prior to the monastic movement of the tenth and eleventh centuries, women, it is argued, exercised more influence in property rights, royal government, and in the abbey. Women after the tenth century, however, lost property rights due to the rise of primogeniture. The policies of William I in his Anglo-Norman state may be taken to exemplify the forces which seemed to reduce the importance of women in society,²⁸ although women in some areas retained many of their property rights--in particular the aristocratic women of Occitanie.²⁹ In the monastic world the independence of Germanic and Anglo-Saxon women declined and the royal abbesses ceased to rule their convents, and male founders or deputies exercised more control.³⁰ And as the tenth and eleventh centuries was the age of the crusades, anti-female sentiments existed in the vita apostolica, which professed little interest in women. The monastic revival sought a purer life that closely resembled that of apostles, vita apostolica; from this, comments Southern, "No religious body

²⁸Doris Mary Stenton, The English Woman in History (New York: Schocker Books, 1977), 29-30.

²⁹Meg Bogin, The Women Troubadours (Scarborough, England: Paddington Press Ltd., 1976), 24.

³⁰Hollister, 177-78.

was more thoroughly masculine in its temper and discipline than the Cistercians, none that shunned female contact with greater determination or that raised more barriers against the intrusion of women."³¹ For example, the Instituta of 1125 forbid any abbot to bless a nun, nor were monks allowed to imitate the high pitched voices of women in their singing.³² Thus, it is clear that to the Cistercians imitating the life of the apostles was largely dependent on being male. Ironically so, no more earnest group than women of the twelfth century sought to be Cistercian. The resolution of this problem did not come until the middle of the thirteenth century. After forbidding any more nunneries into the order, the Cistercians were forced to rescind the prohibition due to the continuing demand of nuns to enter the order and through the influence of wealthy patrons.³³ Moreover, in 1241 twenty of the seventy-five newly adopted Cistercian statutes involved the needs of nuns, demonstrating that the Cistercian nun was no longer a misnomer.³⁴ By the time of 1241, however, nuns had suffered a long period of disassociation. Houses at Sempringham, Jully, Tart, and Marcigny lived close to the Cistercian rule but could not be considered for admission

³¹R. W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages (London: Harmondsworth, 1970), 314.

³²Thompson, 227-28.

³³Ibid., 228.

³⁴Ibid.

until 1213, and in the case of Sempringham, Gilbert formed his own order, as did Robert of Arbrissel at Fontevrault.³⁵

The Paraclete was among many orphan houses in the twelfth century, and it becomes clearer why Heloise did not ask monks to negotiate the convent's business with the outside world or why monks were hesitant to enter the Paraclete at all. And from this awkward situation between male and female monks, women gained independence or freedom, whether sought for or not. Before, most women's houses were highly dependent on their patrons or canons for funding and protection. In this vein existed the traditional double monastery in which nuns did not possess as much control. St. Hugh of Cluny founded a double monastery at Marcigny in 1055, a Cluniac house primarily for wives and relatives of those who had taken vows at Cluny.³⁶ Postulants were required to bring their own dowries, and, understandably so, aristocratic women comprised a majority.³⁷ Although one of its members the Countess Adela of Blois, daughter of the William I and mother of King Stephen, brought great wealth and power, neither Adela nor any of Marcigny's female members were allowed to take charge of the convent's affairs.³⁸ Not delegating as much authority to his nuns either, Norbert of Xanten's

³⁵Lawrence, 184-86; see also Thompson, 227-252.

³⁶Ibid., 178.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Lawrence citing Marcigny's rigid enclosure for women refers to it as, "Peter the Venerable's jocund prison," see Lawrence, 179.

Prémontr  (c. 1120-1) believed in strict enclosure and separation of nuns from the male canons of the house. The role of the nuns was to complete household tasks--sewing, weaving, laundry.³⁹ And having no access to the choir, the sisters worshipped in private and were only allowed to attend church when liturgical offices were sung.⁴⁰ The house at Pr montr , which became the Premonstratensian order, went through some changes in 1140 (or 1141) when the general chapter of the Order of White Canons elected to divide the house, and the sisters were dispatched to Fontenelle where they became choir nuns.⁴¹ Further still, fueled by the unsavory story of the Nun of Watton, the double monastery fell into ill-repute in the later twelfth century.⁴² As a result, communities would have to be instituted with the primary purpose of serving the sisters.

Robert of Arbrissel founded a community for women in which the abbess yielded a remarkable amount of autonomy from the male monastic community and Robert himself. Thereby drawing parallels with the Paraclete, Fontevrault's father

³⁹Introduction to The Book of St. Gilbert, eds. Raymonde Foreville and Gillian Keir, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), xliv.

⁴⁰Lawrence, 180.

⁴¹Foreville, xliv.

⁴²The story of the Nun of Watton tells of the sexual temptation and resulting tragedy that befalls double monasteries in which monks and nuns don't remain separate as rules require, see Giles Constable, "Aelred of Rievaulx and the Nun of Watton: An Episode in the Early History of the Gilbertine Order," Medieval Women, 205-26.

patron, ceded his authority to the nuns and became like Abelard only an advisor to his daughters. In this manner, Fontevrault and the Paraclete demonstrated a notable degree of self-rule for convents.

In the forest near Craon in north-west France, the hermit Robert of Arbrissel found himself followed by men and a majority of women who wanted to pursue an eremitical life of austerity and piety.⁴³ They lived secluded from the world in primitive huts--under no rule, guidance, or discipline. However, men and women living closely together with little supervision merited admonishments from Marbod, bishop of Rennes, and Geoffrey of Vendôme.⁴⁴ Robert was forced, as a result, to institutionalize and develop a rule for his male and female monks.⁴⁵ Founded in 1100, the establishment of Fontevrault became a house primarily for women. Like Sempringham, males were present at Fontevrault; but later they became servants not guardians of the abbey's interest in the outside world, as the abbesses and nuns took charge of the business themselves.⁴⁶ Women assigned themselves to the silent life of worship in the cloister, while the men

⁴³Jacqueline Smith, "Robert of Arbrissel's Relations With Women," Medieval Women, 175-84.

⁴⁴For Marbod's exhortation of this "association", see Lawrence, 179.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Penny Schine Gold, "Male/Female Cooperation: The Example of Fontevrault," Medieval Religious Women: Distant Echoes, eds. John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 152-55.

completed the work around the convent and in the fields; although, like the Paraclete, in matters of business the nuns were permitted to speak and deal with the laity.⁴⁷ In fact, Robert's rule for the abbey states that the men will remain under the abbess' control after his death and a "converted lay woman" not a "cloistered virgin" should be elected as abbess because of her experience in dealing with the secular world.⁴⁸ Before his death though, the prioresses Hersende and Petronilla ruled the convent entirely, as Robert left to resume his life as a wandering preacher.⁴⁹ In this, Robert almost appears as a romantic figure who arrives to liberate women and later disappears into the sunset. However, Penny Gold, suggests that Robert was not the innovator that historians have claimed, instead he merely revived a tradition established in Anglo-Saxon double monasteries that were ruled by strong abbesses.⁵⁰ The amount of independence his abbesses yielded is also reminiscent of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim and other royal Germanic women of the day. Yet, in terms of the Cistercian vita apostolica, Robert's act was a commendable one, reaffirming that women were among Christ's followers.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Robert said: "A Martha-type woman is needed for an abbess; let Mary gaze longingly at heaven," see Gold, 153.

⁴⁹Smith, 184.

⁵⁰Gold, 155; In a similar vein, Smith concludes that Robert was more concerned in pursuing his goal of solitude than women's interests, returning, instead, to the life of a wandering preacher, see Smith, 184.

St. Gilbert and his house for women at Sempringham, like at Fontevrault, constituted what could be called a second wave of female religious houses in the ascetic revival. Although males were involved in house affairs, the nuns controlled much of the internal affairs and remained duty bound only to Gilbert, their patron. Founded in 1166-7, Sempringham was modelled on the Cistercian life, but Gilbert was forced to form his own order, as the Cistercians would not at the time accept nuns into the order.⁵¹ Houses in the Gilbertine order were organized around small communities of canons with the primary purpose of serving the sacramental needs of the nuns while observing strict separation.⁵² Unlike Marcigny and Prémontr , the men at Sempringham were in a more subservient role in which the nuns outnumbered them two to one.⁵³ Although the canons administered Sempringham's lands, the nuns had exclusive benefit of the profits.⁵⁴ Further power was put into the nuns' hands as they were allowed to

⁵¹Lawrence, 181-84.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³In the fourteen Gilbertine houses there were approximately 930 female religious and 524 male religious. These figures include lay brothers and sisters who did menial tasks at the houses, see Foreville, xxxiii.

⁵⁴Charters and donations to the Gilbertine houses would explicitly state that the gifts were for the sisters and their brothers, clerical and lay. An important exception since nuns in earlier double monasteries were dependent on their brothers for support, which was the more common arrangement, see Lawrence, 181-84.

select a prior to succeed Gilbert, in addition to controlling much of their own affairs.⁵⁵

A similar trust in women existed at the Paraclete. After the Paraclete was established in 1131, Abelard left it to Heloise's control, trusting her judgement. Likewise, Heloise ruled the convent, sent her nuns out into the community to complete business, managed lands, established daughter houses, welcomed the community into the Paraclete for religious services, and kept contact with male monastic communities to a minimum. Compared to the earlier example set by Robert of Arbrissel's Fontevrault or St. Gilbert's Sempringham, the Paraclete and Heloise's subsequent autonomy may not appear unique. Yet, considering Marcigny, Prémontré and others, the Paraclete was exceptional, and being in the company of Fontevrault only strengthens the likelihood that such independence actually existed.

Heloise's conventionality and originality can also be seen in an examination of monastic women of the period. The Fontevrault prioresses Petronilla and Hersende are examples of strong women in the middle ages, abbesses who were able to achieve their standing through a willing patron. On the other hand, Hildegard of Bingen built her power through her reputation and popularity as a mystic and counselor to royalty, in which power was probably a natural outcome.

⁵⁵Ibid.

Heloise stands out from these women; for through her reputation for scholarly studies, she established a large following and maintained friendships with popes, kings, and noted clerics which brought her privilege and recognition within the monastic community.

The records being such as they are at Fontevrault, information concerning Petronilla and Hersende is scarce. Whether these women actively pursued their position at Fontevrault or were chosen by Robert to fill a predetermined role is largely open to conjecture. Evidence from Robert's rule indicates he was in control of setting the limits of the abbatial power at the convent, as the abbess was clearly to rule the convent.⁵⁶ Hersende, the mother-in-law of the lord of Montsoreau, was the first to rule in Robert's absence.⁵⁷ With Hersende in charge of the abbey, Robert resumed the life of an wandering preacher, only returning, on occasion, to preach and offer advice to the sisters.⁵⁸ Petronilla, however, became the more prominent ruler, succeeding Hersende in 1115. Lady Petronilla brought as prioress the attention of the comital family of Anjou, making Fontevrault more of an aristocratic institution,⁵⁹ in which it received many

⁵⁶Gold, 152-55.

⁵⁷Smith, 181-82.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹In 1189 Eleanor of Aquitaine chose Fontevrault as the burial place for Henry II, making it the burial place of the Angevin dynasty, see Lawrence, 132-33.

endowments.⁶⁰ And it was under Petronilla that male monks were reduced to the role of "nuns' servants," a reversal from Norbert's Prémontré, for at Fontevrault the men had, according to Raymonde Foreville, "the same standing as the lepers and the penitent women."⁶¹ Most importantly, the work of J. de la Martinière has indicated that Petronilla was an outspoken defender of Fontevrault's rights.⁶² Jacqueline Smith notes that Petronilla and Robert kept correspondence while he was traveling, indicating a close relationship.⁶³ In fact, Petronilla accompanied Robert on his last trip, and she was responsible for his life story being recorded.⁶⁴ Thus, evidence shows that Petronilla ruled Fontevrault with an iron hand, and set an example for future abbesses.

Bearing more personal ambitions and cultivating supporters beyond a single patron, Hildegard of Bingen probably is one of the best remembered abbesses of the twelfth century. As a mystic she gathered a large following of women, and as an abbess she ruled her convent, conferred with kings, and produced many mystical and theological

⁶⁰Lawrence, 132.

⁶¹"Robert's Rule," indicated that the men would remain at Fontevrault under Petronilla, although it is unclear if it was out of devotion to Robert, Petronilla, or both, see Gold, 152-55; Foreville, liii.

⁶²J. de la Martinière, "Une Falsification de Document au Commencement du XIIe Siècle," Moyen Age, 2 ser 17, (1911), 1-45, as cited in Smith, 183.

⁶³Smith, 184.

⁶⁴Ibid. Robert's Vita was later written by Baudry, in which the prologue is addressed to Petronilla.

writings. Born in 1098 of aristocratic parentage, she entered St. Disibod in 1106 and later took the veil in her teens.⁶⁵ In 1136, she succeeded Jutta as abbess; as abbess her "celebrity" increased so much and attracted so many postulants that she felt compelled to move.⁶⁶ In 1150, Bingen was revealed to her in a vision as the future site of her convent. It was at Bingen, Barbara Newman argues, that Hildegard "began her struggle for independence from the monks."⁶⁷ She soon secured property rights for the convent from Kuno, abbot of St. Disibod and attained protection from Heinrich of Mainz.⁶⁸ A notable protector was Frederick Barbarossa who granted Hildegard's community "imperial protection of perpetuity."⁶⁹ And like Fontevrault and the Paraclete, the popularity of Hildegard and her convent caused her to establish a daughter house nearby at Eibingen.⁷⁰

Hildegard's celebrity was in part based on her mystical writings. Admitting her lower status as a woman, she considered herself: "wretched and more wretched in the name of woman."⁷¹ Yet, Hildegard balanced that view, so much so as

⁶⁵Barbara Newman, Sister of Wisdom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 1-41.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid. This is similar to the arrangement that Heloise had with Louis VI.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

to propel women to enter her convent. Consider her vision of Ecclesia:

I saw the image of a woman as tall as a great city, radiant from heaven to earth: her head was crowned with a marvelous diadem, and her arms were draped with splendor as with sleeves....Standing before the altar in the sight of God, she embraced it with outspread arms; and her eyes pierced keenly throughout all heaven. But I could not perceive any of her garments, except that she was all aglow with luminous brightness, and clothed in great splendor. In her breast appeared the dawn.⁷²

The passage contains many interpretations, yet to Hildegard, the abbess, perhaps Ecclesia represented the life possible for her nuns and all Christian women; thus, if not correcting the inferior status of women in the world, Hildegard's vision could at least show women's positive elements. As a clairvoyant, she further increased her influence in the secular world--evident in her dealings with Frederick. Although Frederick and Hildegard were "friends", she having visited the palace on four occasions,⁷³ Frederick's meddling in episcopal affairs caused her to launch an attack.

Recounting another vision, a voice transmitted:

O daughter of Sion, the crown will tumble from your head, the far-flung pallium of your riches will be drawn in and confined to a narrow measure, and you will be banished from region to region. Many cities and monasteries shall be dispersed by the powerful. And princes will say: Let us take from them the inequity that turns the whole world upside down among them.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid., 206-207. In medieval iconography, some crosses have Ecclesia, representing Christian people, and Synagoga, representing the unconverted Jews, on each side of Christ.

⁷³Ibid., 11.

⁷⁴Ibid., 28.

The sermon ended calling for the judgement of God to bring wrath on these "virile times" and return the world to a "renaissance of prophesy, learning, and reverence."⁷⁵ Such sermons delivered at Mainz, Wertheim, and Bamberg, clearly place Hildegard in the monastic world as mystic and abbatial power.⁷⁶

As a result, Hildegard derived much of her power from her reputation. Her mystical works lifted her standing in the eyes of women and emperors, and as a reformer she defended the authority of the Church over the state. Yet, Hildegard's mystical visions clearly establish her prominence, as her voice and ambition can be seen to rise above necessity, unlike Petronilla and Hersende. Compared to these women in terms of originality, Heloise was largely conventional: she had, like Hildegard, a reputation for religious pursuits and for promoting the spiritual life; and she and her nuns, like Hersende and Petronilla, were able to manage their convent reasonably free from male control. Yet, regardless of their convention these were all remarkable women in an exceptional age.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Hildegard's influence did not end in her 'visions', as she wrote some six books and various expositions, ranging from liturgical poetry and music, in Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations, to a guide to medicine in Causes and Cures, and an exposition on the Benedictine rule containing questions and answers to thirty-eight theological questions, see Newman, 10-11.

How Heloise acquired her repute for religion may still appear unclear. Yet, Heloise's rule, while not being original in practice, addressed the needs of the Paraclete, and coupled with her successful expansion of the Paraclete the intellectual quality that Peter the Venerable noted in her becomes clear. And although Heloise's achievements may pale compared to Hildegard's vast accomplishments, it is not to say she did nothing to advance the cause for women in the monastic world. For within the male vita apostolica she assured women their place in monastic life, as did her sister abbesses and male patrons. As a result, Heloise, her sisters and brothers, opened the doors of the monastery, not just to the monk, but to those who sought shelter as she had--widows, the laity, and refugees from the academy.

CHAPTER 5

HUMANISM AND REFORM IN THE LITURGY OF THE PARACLETE

An important independent source for Heloise, her views and activity is to be found in the liturgy of the Paraclete. The liturgy is not only a documentation of the Paraclete's religious practices, but it is a testament of Heloise's influence, and a formidable example of her 'humanism' and capabilities as an abbess, a leader whose liturgical practice predated many of the twelfth-century Cistercian reforms. In addition, despite the Abelardian influences present in the work, the liturgy of the Paraclete, its arrangement and themes, was the creation of Heloise and her sister nuns. Heloise designed religious services that went beyond Cistercian practice, and she assembled a hymnody from various sources that influenced later twelfth-century Cistercian reforms. Most notably, however, in the Paraclete's sanctoral cycle Heloise and her nuns added feasts, processions, and hymns to honor Christian figures, in which their personal selection emphasized the relationship between human experience and Christian virtue, along with the importance of women. Aside from the spiritual life the liturgy documents, the liturgy serves as a personal testament, of a once reluctant abbess who rose to become an accomplished and

influential leader, and demonstrates the romantic sentiment so often attributed to her.

The liturgy in its present form is a culmination of transcriptions containing the original twelfth-century manuscript, a fourteenth-century Old French Ordinary, a sixteenth-century "Book of Burials", and notes on the original manuscript attributed to the Paraclete's last chaplain, Dom Charles Cajot (1731-1807). The work of Chrysogonus Waddell has shown that the Paraclete did not experience any major liturgical changes until 1609 when the Roman breviary replaced the monastic one, and since the sixteenth-century version of the liturgy still exists, the original practices of the Paraclete are attainable.¹ Within the liturgy, transcribed from the original medieval Latin, exists the Old French Ordinary, a directory that coordinates the celebrations during the course of a liturgical year, gathered from the various formulae contained in many separate books used in the liturgy. The book of the Paraclete Breviary, the second major manuscript in the liturgy, contains the Paraclete Kalendar and Temporal Cycle, the Sanctoral Cycle, and the Common of Saints, all which serve as

¹Chrysogonus Waddell, introduction and commentary to The Old French Paraclete Ordinary and the Paraclete Breviary, vol. 1, Cistercian Liturgical Series: Number Three (Trappist, Kentucky: Gethsemani Abbey, 1985), xiii-xviii; Waddell has produced this transcription of the liturgy based on: PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale, MS français 14410 = ORD, and CHAUMONT, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 31 = BRE.

a more detailed guide to spiritual practices, including the text of hymns and chants recited in services and processions. Waddell's work does not so much concern itself with the similarities between the liturgy of the Paraclete and the Cistercian counterpart, in which the Paraclete uses the Cistercian formulary.² The study, instead, addresses the exceptions, as the Paraclete differed with the then conventional Cistercian practice; for example examining hymns the Paraclete substituted for the Cistercian ones. Most importantly, for our purposes, the differences between the liturgy of the Paraclete and the Cistercian liturgy are indicative of the unique spiritual life that Heloise brought to the Paraclete.

One of the most significant exceptions demonstrating the spiritual life at the abbey was the Paraclete's version of the "Lord's Prayer", which exemplified the Abelardian flair to the liturgy. The Paraclete's version of the "Lord's Prayer" was the pretext to Letter 10, Epistola V, written to St. Bernard from Abelard, a letter that Waddell argues reflected many of the twelfth-century Cistercian hymnody and sanctoral reforms. While visiting the Paraclete, Bernard was disturbed over hearing the nuns substitute the words

²Waddell noted for his grasp of the Cistercian liturgy, concludes throughout his commentary that the Breviary and its calendar is the Cistercian form, see Waddell, "Rules of the Edition," The Paraclete Breviary, vol. 3A, CLS: Number Five, xi-xiii.

"supersubstantial bread" for "daily bread" in the "Lord's Prayer", following St. Matthew's version of the "Lord's Prayer" instead of St. Luke's customary version. Although Bernard did not admonish the nuns for this, Heloise, according to Abelard, wrote of this awkward incident in a letter to Abelard. After hearing of this visit, Abelard issued a response in Letter 10 and argued that the Matthaean version came from the words of Christ in the "Sermon on the Mount"; whereas Luke's version originated indirectly from St. Paul. The thrust of Abelard's argument was that custom must yield to the necessities of reason and truth, a belief held in his Sic et Non. Moreover, as Letter 10 was the source of other liturgical disputes, Waddell remarks that Abelard reproached Bernard for other "novelties" that the Cistercians had adopted, such as a repetitious hymn selection, and the reduction of processions, and the simplification of sanctoral offices--all novelties the Cistercians would address in their reforms of 1147 and 1152.³ So it is clear from Letter 10, if Abelard were to have any influence, that the liturgy of the

³*Panem nostrum supersubstantial* was substituted for *panem nostrum quotidianum*, see Waddell, "Peter Abelard's Letter 10 and Cistercian Liturgical Reform," 75-86; Waddell notes that 'supersubstantial' only occurs in the Greek text of Mt 6:11, but Abelard failed to realize in his defense that the Greek text of Lukan version also refers to 'supersubstantial'; The Cistercians reformed their liturgy in the twelfth century regularly, hymnal reform in 1140 and 1147, and calendar reform in 1152 and 1175, however the 1147 and 1152 reforms reflected the Paraclete's practices.

Paraclete would differ from Cistercian practice where reason and truth intervened.

Letter 10 was written between 1131 and 1135, soon after the Paraclete was founded by Heloise and during which most of the original liturgy was being developed--it no doubt had influence.⁴ Letter 10 is not meant to be taken as evidence of the liturgy or Paraclete life, but it serves as an introduction to them. And in any discussion of the liturgy, the exceptions that the nuns adopted are reflected in part, although not entirely, in Letter 10. Therefore if Letter 10 is Abelard's, we can not exclude the possibility that she may have acted on his advice. And either following Abelard's beliefs contained in Letter 10 or his explicit instruction as noted by the liturgical scribes,⁵ Heloise and her nuns designed some ninety-two processional masses for the Paraclete, increasing the number of processions during Easter week and giving saints their own processional tributes. At the time, most Cistercian houses had special masses and processions for only Candelmas, Palm Sunday, and Ascension Day.⁶ Seeing a lack in Cistercian processions, Abelard in

⁴Ibid., 75-76, Letter 10 like the Historia has been transmitted along with the disputed letters, yet both works have not been disputed, from that they can be taken as independent from the letters.

⁵CLS: Number Five, Bre IIIA, 122-40.

⁶Waddell, Studies in Medieval Cistercian History, 75-86, and CLS: Number Three, 337.

Letter 10 called for a greater number of processions.⁷ He requested that processions occur only on Sundays; as a result, sanctoral processions were rotated on a yearly basis depending on the saint's feast day and its relative proximity to a Sunday. The most notable services and processions occur during Easter week, with a Palm Sunday procession, and Good Friday mass, in which Abelard places a strong emphasis on the role of women in the story of Jesus and the laity are allowed to participate in the service.⁸ Hence, the Abelardian influence is abundant, especially in the hymnody and in the construction of the processions and masses. However, as Waddell is concerned primarily with the exceptions present in the Paraclete liturgy, we are concerned with Heloise's contributions to the liturgy. What is attributable to Heloise is the construction of a hymnody and of a sanctoral cycle and kalendar adopted after Abelard's death in 1143. And in some cases, Heloise's influences become more apparent in the religious services themselves.

The Low Sunday service is notable for its more unusual direction and for being more Heloise's creation than Abelard's. The Low Sunday procession was a procession "for

⁷Ibid.

⁸In the Good Friday mass, Waddell notes, that the laity participated in the service, although it is unclear whether it was Abelard or Heloise who began the practice. See further on these two masses, Waddell commentary to Ord 23': 9-24; Ord': 1-11, CLS: Number Three, 87-96; Ord 26': 10-22: 16; Ord 28': 17-29; Ord 29': 3-4, CLS: Number Three, 108-16.

the dead" and was, as Waddell argues, without parallel in other customaries, for it coincided with the anniversary of Abelard's death on April 21, 1142 during Easter week. As a tribute, it would seem, Heloise and her nuns composed a procession that began with Terce chanted not in the oratory of the abbey but in the "Petit Moustier"--the original burial place of Abelard, and later of Heloise. Although the religious services and processions were later revised in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to include the larger structure of the Paraclete constructed by Heloise's successor Melissende (1172-1202), the original oratory of the abbey, the Petit Moustier, remained the center of the Low Sunday procession and other prominent services, as final processional chants were often begun at the chapel, Christmas and Easter day processions serving as examples.⁹ The procession later moved to the cemetery and the "new monastery". Additionally, on Low Sunday sanctoral commemorations were forbidden, a significant exclusion considering there were many commemorations and only a limited number of Sundays.¹⁰ A special service for the founder of an abbey was not unusual, yet one delivered on Low Sunday in the form of a procession was, since in the Cistercian liturgy

⁹Waddell notes that a larger chapel was constructed in 1202, see Waddell commentary, CLS: Number Three, 278.

¹⁰Waddell, commentary to Ord 33':6-34, CLS: Number Three, 132-38.

processions were reserved for the holiest days or the most important saints. Undoubtedly, this service demonstrated the nuns' loyalty and dedication to the "father founder", buried at the Petit Moustier, yet for Abelard, and later Heloise, to receive the tribute normally reserved to a saintified martyr underscores Abelard's importance to the community and Heloise's dedication to him, tributes that went far beyond the normal exigencies of a liturgy.

It can be concluded that the majority of services and processions of the Paraclete were the work of Abelard, as scribal notes concur.¹¹ Yet, aside from Abelard's authorship of the processions, it was Heloise who originally led the nuns to the chapel after Abelard's death, invoking a saintly tribute to a man the Church would never beatify. In some degree Heloise deserves credit for preserving these processions that allowed nuns outside the cloister for religious service, and she deserves recognition for admitting the laity into the abbey for worship, although it is unclear whether she or Abelard began this practice.

As processions required the intonation of chants, a varied number of hymns were needed to support the processional services and offices of the Paraclete. Heloise

¹¹In addition, Waddell notes that most of the services were adopted in 1132, see CLS: Number Three, 87, This coincides with the period of 1131-1135 which is generally accepted as the time when Abelard worked with the Paraclete, see Southern, Medieval Humanism and Other Studies, 92.

assembled a hymnody drawing from several sources: the Milano-Cistercian hymnal, traditional Gallican sources, and Abelard's tripartite hymnal.¹² Abelard's Paraclete hymnal is certain evidence of his influence, but his hymns were only part of the collection. Further, there has been speculation concerning his authorship. Joseph Szövérfy notes that a "shade of doubt" exists concerning the 133 hymns, citing John Benton's suggestion that what is called Abelard's hymnal was in fact a composite work of "several correctors", deriving possibly, from a contested election of the abess of the Paraclete in 1289.¹³ Szövérfy finds this hypothesis interesting simply because the letters, the Historia, and other works of Abelard arrived in Paris in the late thirteenth century.¹⁴ Yet, G. M. Dreves, who was the first to compile all 133 hymns in a modern edition, argues that Abelard's hymns are in concordance with his secular prose,

¹²Waddell, commentary on the hymns of the Paraclete, CLS: Number Three, 357; Heloise drew from the pre-Bernandine hymnal dating from before 1140.

¹³J. F. Benton, "Fraud, Fiction, and Borrowing in the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise" (read at Colloque internationale Pierre Abélard-Pierre le Venerable, Abbey of Cluny, 1972) and "The Style of the Historia Calamitatum: A Preliminary Test of Authenticity..." (read at the Medieval Studies Conference at Kalamazoo, Mich., 1974) in Joseph Szövérfy, introduction and commentary to Peter Abelard's Hymnarius Paraclitensis, vol. 1, (Albany, N. Y.: Classical Folia Editions, 1975), 15-16.

¹⁴Ibid., see also the introduction to this thesis.

and therefore the hymns are Abelard's; Szövérfy concurs.¹⁵ Considering that the liturgy of the Paraclete, and its varied transcriptions, is the only source for the hymns, the question of authorship deserves more work. And certainly if Abelard, according to Waddell, was the creator behind the processions and masses, composing most of the responsories and antiphons, could not his liturgical contributions have been as easily falsified? Whether or not the hymns were doctored, it is yet to be proven and for now the hymns were contained in the liturgy of the Paraclete, assumedly gathered under Heloise's direction. In addition, the preface to Abelard's hymnal clearly suggests that case: "At the urging of your request Eloise, my sister, dear one in the world and now dearer in Christ, I have composed what are called hymns in Greek and tehillim in Hebrew."¹⁶ Moreover, the resultant hymnody eliminated the deficit that Abelard criticized in the Cistercian repertory. In Letter 10 Abelard admonished Bernard for the sparse Cistercian hymnody because it did not provide an adequate number of melodies and verse to accomodate all of the offices; yet the less elaborate Cistercian offices, as Abelard neglected to mention, did not

¹⁵Szövérfy, 18-19. This is similar to the argument pursued by Muckle in 1950 that said Abelard's Historia is similiar in style to his Theologia. Szövérfy, 18-19.

¹⁶Peter Abelard, The Hymns of Abelard in English Verse, trans. Sister Jane Patricia (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1986), 31.

require a large hymnody.¹⁷ In addition to providing a greater number of hymns, Abelard's selection marked his personal praise of women.

In the Common of the Apostles (#85-88), Abelard's work brought together hymns and expressed in verse that the virtue of martyrs and confessors comes from God, not through human effort.¹⁸ Likewise female saints and Christian women gathered similar praise, as Abelard commended their strength, loyalty and divine beauty. In the Good Friday compline hymn (#51), Abelard wrote:

Woman whose guard at the tomb first began
Yields not at all to the yielding of man.
Fearless she looks on the might of the ban,
Facing the threatening swords in the van.

For us the shepherd has suffered the blow,
Losing the rams in his own overthrow;
Love moderates what the sheep (i.e. women) undergo,
Casting out fear and absorbing its woe....

Lord, make us worthy to share in your pain¹⁹

¹⁷Waddell, Studies in Medieval Cistercian History, 75-86.

¹⁸Abelard, "Common of the Apostles," Patricia, 102-3.

¹⁹The original text for the following hymns comes from Szövérfy and the translations contained in the above text come from Patricia: Szövérfy, 117-18; Patricia, 72.

*Pias vigilias agendo feminae
Viris cedentibus non norunt cedere,
Custodes positos vident intrepidae,
Minantes gladios cerunt tutissime.*

*Facta percussio, quam pastor tulerat,
Gregis arietes metu disperserat;
Oves intrepidas amor servaverat,
Et foras caritas timorem miserat.*

In the Feasts of Martyrs (#99), Abelard continued to praise the strength of women as they fight the "prince of evil":

....As the strong man, so the tender
 Woman fights and triumphs further.
 Thus they rank in heaven's royal battle line,
 Amazons whose place with heroes we assign.
 Though with mortal body weak and senses fine,
 They prevail with grace less human than divine....²⁰

The virtue of woman in some cases prevails over that of man, and so began the Common of Virgins (#120):

Two oblations (maid and martyr) meet but rarely in a man.
 Fruitful woman bears more sorrow than he can.
 More the wonder, since her strength has shorter span;...²¹

Thus, women in the liturgy do have a prominent place, as Abelard's verse demonstrates. But, why is the next question.

Sister Jane Patricia argues that Abelard's interest in women Christian figures possibly comes from the greater dependence on women, and subsequent increased interest in women, or 'courtly love', resulting from the depletion of the

Tu tibi compati.

²⁰Szövérfy, 206-7; Patricia, 111.

*Sicut fortis sic infirmus
 Pugnat et triumphat sexus,
 Ut haberent summi regis acies
 Suas quoque cum viris amazones,
 Quae, quo magis natura sunt debiles,
 Palmae harum magis sunt mirabiles.*

²¹Szövérfy, 244-46; Patricia, 120.

*Haec in viris duplex palma rarior
 Eminent in feminis uberior
 Ut quo sexus harum est infirmior*

male population in the eleventh century during the crusades.²² There are hymns and better explanations, however, that suggest more personal reasoning.²³ In the hymns written for the Holy Women, Abelard focused on the virtues of the prostitute and fallen women. He evoked sentiments in these passages not dissimilar to his own personal suffering. In the Feasts of Holy Women, the hymnody recalls holy women such as Queen Esther, Anna, and Jephthah's daughter, but in addition to these holy women he wrote (#124):

After all of these, regard the prostitute;
 Magdalen and she of Egypt bore the fruit.
 Where the blame at first was plainly evident,
 Virtue's holy flowers were luxuriant.
 His the beauty, his the majesty
 Who created so amazingly.²⁴

²²Ibid., 8.

²³One explanation is that in Abelard's Letter 6 he praised many religious women for their loyalty to Christ and importance in the Christian story, Radice, 180-82.

²⁴Szövérfy, 254-57; Patricia, 131.

*Post has omnes si scorta respiciam
 Magdalenae iungens Aegyptiacam,
 Ubi culpa prius abundaverat
 Cerno, quia virtus post exuberat
 Ipsi decus, ipsi gloria,
 Qui tot facit mirabilia.*

Abelard later wrote a tribute to the Magdelene (#129), that contains more subjective dynamics:

Sharp correction of the church's discipline,
Lengthy practices of penitence for sin,
These consume the flesh in watching and in fast
These devour the sinner for the sins long past.
Shame confounds in humble misery
Him the church rejected ruthlessly.

Nothing done in such disorder comes from God.
Man knows him as kinder than the judge's rod.
King and Justice both, he mitigates the laws,
Nor will he who justly judges every cause
Wait so long a time of law's delay,
As the size of penalties men pay....²⁵

Perhaps, Abelard felt sympathy with Mary Magdelene who was not allowed to enter the house with Jesus, because the Pharisee saw her only as a prostitute. Abelard too was dealt with severely by the Church, chastised by the Pharisee, having been condemned at the Council of Soissons in 1121.²⁶ Aside from any depletion of men or emergence of courtly love,

²⁵Szövérfy, 266-69; Patricia, 135.

*Poenitentum severa correptio
Et eorum longa satisfactio
Crebris carnem edomant ieiuniis
Asperisque cruciant cilciis,
Et eiectos ab ecclesia
Cunfundit erubescencia.*

*In hac nihil actum est hoc ordine,
Mitiolem sensit Deum homine,
Rex et iudex idem legem temperat
Nec attendit, qui cor vere iudicat,
Tam temporis longitudinem
Quam doloris magnitudinem*

²⁶Szövérfy suggests that Abelard may have been in sympathy with Mary Magdelene since they both felt the stern hand of the institutional church, see Szövérfy, vol.2, 266, n.

it appears that women played a psychological role in Abelard's hymnology. Did Abelard write of women because he was composing hymns for a convent, or did Abelard recognize in his hymns the devotion and loyalty that women had always paid him? For example, his sister, Denise, raised Astrolabe, Heloise remained devoted to him despite her forced entry into a convent, and the nuns of the Paraclete remained devoted to him despite his condemnation and further persecution at the Council of Sens in 1140. In a manner, these women remained at Abelard's cross as Mary Magdalene remained at Jesus'. As a result, the praise of women in Abelard's hymn collection allowed Heloise and her abbey to find their own spiritual identity in female form.

Although the Paraclete nuns assembled a hymnody from the traditional Cistercian and Gallican sources, Abelard's contribution appears most characteristic of the Paraclete. Within Abelard's hymns, assuming they are his, individuals, in particular women, were defined in terms of their human situation. Abelard described women who are viewed as weaker than men but spiritually their equal. The prostitute was not merely described as having converted and repented; she is instead viewed, as in the case of Mary Magdalene, as the victim of the Pharisee's ill-reproach. The Magdalene and Mary of Egypt are regarded as worthy among all holy women. Perhaps, the nuns of the Paraclete could identify with these

women, as they were aware of their own subjugation under men in the secular world--and in the monastic world considering their eviction from Argenteuil by the monks of St. Denis.

Here again we have the problem of finding Heloise apart from Abelard's influence. It would have seemed futile to utilize only Abelard's hymns in the liturgy, as the Paraclete offices required more.²⁷ And realizing this need, Heloise and the nuns found the Cistercian hymnal useful. The early version of the Milano-Cistercian hymnal consisted of thirty-four hymn texts and only nineteen melodies. It is not explicit why these hymn texts were chosen, but it is possible the nuns saw a tradition in this repetitious hymnody, one that was abandoned in the 1140/1147 Bernardine revisions. As for the Gallican sources, it provided hymns for Advent, Passiontide, Lent, the feast of Peter and Paul, and the dedication of the church. From this we see Heloise's conventionality, an abbess who recognized tradition and who possibly herself desired a more varied hymnal, if Abelard's preface to his hymns--written at her request--has any truth. As a result, the Paraclete possessed not only a hymnody with themes women could identify with; but the hymnody echoed the sentiments of Abelard, from Letter 10, as well as others who

²⁷Forthcoming in CLS 8 and 9 is a complete edition and commentary to the Paraclete hymnal. Waddell notes that Abelard's hymnal contains nothing for Advent, Lent or Passiontide, see CLS: Number Three, 358.

criticized the limited Cistercian hymnal. Waddell notes that in 1147 at the request of Cistercian monks, and perhaps as a result of Abelard's criticism, the Cistercians increased their own repertory by adding more melodies to their hymns.²⁸

The sanctoral cycle of the Paraclete pre-dated the 1152 Cistercian liturgical reforms of the twelfth century, establishing offices that the Paraclete nuns believed were more traditional in monastic practice, differing from twelfth-century Cistercian practice which then commemorated fewer saints in a less elaborate manner.²⁹ Yet in response to criticism from Cistercian monks, the Cistercians, in 1152, introduced a daily commemoration of Our Lady at both Lauds and Vespers, and later some 104 saints received commemorations on their memorial days, all following in time the Paraclete's adoption of their sanctoral kalendar between 1147 and 1150.³⁰ The date of 1147 is especially significant

²⁸Waddell notes that in 1147 Cistercians re-wrote the Milanese hymn-tunes and composed a "large body" of Cistercian melodies, see Waddell Studies in Medieval Cistercian History, 75-86.

²⁹Ibid, Bernard claims to have followed the Rule of St. Benedict instead of the preliminary acts of the First Synod of Aachen (816), the then standard of monastic practice, concluding that Benedict preferred alleluia-antiphons at Vigils and doxologies for most offices, thus eliminating other antiphons, versicles, and collects used in sanctoral offices.

³⁰Ibid.; Waddell claims the adoption date of the Paraclete calendar falls between 1147 and 1150 based on the evidence that the Paraclete calendar had retained some of the pre-1147 Cistercian practices, for the 1147 reforms of the Cistercians eliminated all "non-Gregorian" saints that the Paraclete

for it is after Abelard's death in 1143, suggesting that Heloise had more bearing on the final form of the kalendar than Abelard. In addition, before, the only traceable influence Abelard had on the kalendar was his previous letters to Heloise indicating the importance of women martyrs, similarly corresponding to his hymnody and Letter 10 to Bernard; whereas, more importantly, Heloise and her nuns actually put these women into the kalendar along with couple martyrs, men and women who had devoted themselves to the Christian life.³¹ Further still, apart from Abelard's influence, the Paraclete's prominent selection of female saints and couple martyrs not only thematically dominated the kalendar but possibly suggests Heloise's personal influence.³²

Although the Paraclete sanctoral kalendar was the Cistercian one, the difference exists in the saint's individual Office or exactly how the saint is commemorated. In the Cistercian kalendar, few saints had significant offices, usually receiving a simple commemoration in mass. For instance, Our Lady, the Holy Cross, St. Benedict, and Sts Peter and Paul had no antiphons, versicles and collects. The

retained, further depleting the already small number of sanctoral commemorations, see CLS: Number Three, 333.

³¹Abelard, "Letter 6," Radice, 180-82.

³²Examining Abelard's letters and hymns to Heloise, Mary of Egypt, Eustacia and Mary Magdelene were suggestions that were later contained in the calendar; whereas Heloise added five couple martyrs and an additional seven female martyrs to the calendar, see CLS: Number Three, 320-32.

Paraclete, however, selected certain saints and raised them from a simple commemoration to a twelve-lesson feast rank, in which they were celebrated with antiphons, versicles and responses, collects, and some processions.³³ Most notable among the group were female saints and martyrs who were either married or partners in a Christian mission.

Amongst those representing feminine sanctity were well-known and obscure figures. In keeping with the hymnody, Mary Magdelene is held in high honor, with her office drawing from the "Strong Woman" passage in Proverbs 31:10-31, as she was regarded more precious than rubies.³⁴ Mary of Egypt has no actual commemoration, but she begins a new cycle of readings before Compline.³⁵ The more obscure St. Scholastica, St. Benedict's twin sister, was raised to feast day rank, and she was honored in her lessons as having won a "battle" with her brother, calling on God to intervene and force Benedict to remain in her company.³⁶ Having been a founding sister of the monastery of Maubeuge, St. Aldegundis is given a feast;

³³Waddell, CLS: Number Three, 5-6, 320-36.

³⁴"*Capitulum. Accint fortitudine lumbos suos et roboravit brachium suum. gustavit et vidit quia bona est negotiato eius: non extinguetur in nocte lucerna illius.*" see Bre 277, 8-10, and Ord 64':22-65':15, CLS: Number Three, 223-25; Sanctoral offices are referenced by Ord number, followed by page number, in the introductory and commentary to the Paraclete liturgy, which contains a summary collation of the offices; Additional information on saint's lives is from: John Coulson, ed., The Saints (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1958).

³⁵Ord 31':18-19, 127-28.

³⁶Ord 55':3-12, 198-99.

and St. Radegund the foundress of the Holy Cross at Poitiers is similarly honored.³⁷ St. Anastasia enters into the Christmas Office receiving a commemoration in the dawn mass. Escaping the romantic attentions of the emperor Justinian, she fled to the desert community of Abbot Daniel, where she lived for twenty-eight years in disguise as a monk known as Anastasia the Eunuch.³⁸ St. Eugenia was also commemorated in the Christmas Office, for she too lived disguised as a monk, a monk who had to reveal herself as a woman in order to escape charges of adultery with another woman.³⁹ A woman's strength in faith, equaling that of man, is a theme that would have appealed to the nuns of the Paraclete, in which Anastasia and Eugenia found refuge in monastic life and in which Scholastica could reckon strength from God to match her brother's. Further still, the nuns of the Paraclete could have found strength in Agnes. St. Agnes (c. 304) was denounced as a Christian to the prefect of Rome after having refused a proposal of marriage. She was taken to a brothel, but divine intervention preserved her purity.⁴⁰ Although the circumstances for the nuns were most likely different, the practice of forced marriage at the hands of a woman's family

³⁷"Aldegundis Virginis," The Paraclete Brievary, vol. 3B, Cistercian Liturgical Studies: Number Six, ed. Waddell, 230; Ord 70':4, 235-36.

³⁸Ord 7':14-18, 28-29.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ord 52':4-15, 193-94.

or suitor was a reality in the middle ages and for some time to come.

The more personal selection of saints is evident in the category of couple martyrs. Another obscure saint, St. Quirace, gains special attention receiving a twelve-lesson vesper. Benton believes that Quirace refers to the Roman female martyr Cyriaca of the St. Lawrence legend. She shared in his ministry to the poor and infirm, she was a partner in a Christian mission, which can perhaps be taken to symbolize the relationship between Abelard and Heloise.⁴¹ The hunter St. Eustace, also receives high honor. The story of Placidus, which was Eustace's pre-baptismal name, involves the tale of his conversion along with his wife. They are then painfully separated, but later reunited in martyrdom--roasted in a bronze bull.⁴² St. Thibaut receives a twelve-lesson feast, (Waddell believes that the name "Thibaut" written in the liturgy refers to St. Thierry.) Thibaut, or Thierry, as a young married man, left his wife, whom he tried unsuccessfully to send to a convent. At Rheims, he entered into a partnership with an abbess named Suzanne: and the two of them, with the encouragement of St. Remi, founded the monastery of St. Thierry.⁴³ Finally, St. Brice was given a notable twelve-lesson feast, again higher

⁴¹Ord 75':7-30, 246-50.

⁴²Ord 43':18-44':10, 170-72.

⁴³Ord 62':24-27, 217-19.

than the Cistercian commemoration. St. Brice shared a special friendship with St. Martin. St. Martin once foretold that Brice would be his successor; Brice, however, was preoccupied with the secular world; yet through patience and prayer Martin led Brice to an exemplary conversion to become his successor.⁴⁴ The letters tell of the similar conversion of Heloise; however, apart from the letters, Heloise continued or succeeded Abelard in the monastic world, putting in place many of his liturgical reforms. The selection of these martyrs joined in Christian partnership is testimony to the individual nature of Heloise. There can be little doubt that she found comfort in knowing she was not alone in her situation. The emphasis placed on women she could relate to, and whose sufferings mirrored hers, indicate both her need and strength. In addition, the marriage between her and Abelard that he preferred to forget, she preserved in martyrdom.

Waddell maintains that the inclusion of saints' lives makes a 'real' liturgy possible creating an authentic Christian experience, allowing the mystery of Christ to find a human form.⁴⁵ Exemplifying Waddell's belief, the nuns of the Paraclete formed a Sanctoral cycle, more independent of

⁴⁴Ord 103':7-26, 304-5.

⁴⁵Chrysogonus Waddell, "Origin and Early Evolution of the Cistercian Antiphonary," The Cistercian Spirit, ed. M. Basil Pennington (Shannon, 1970), 20.

Abelard compared to his prominent influence in developing the processions and hymnody. The kalendar told of the troubled lives of saints which were resolved in martyrdom and sacrifice, possibly patterning the sisters' own experiences. Moreover, as a personal testament, Heloise was surrounded in her abbey with lives she could identify with reflecting her own personal Christian experience as portrayed in the Historia and the letters: as a reluctant St. Brice was led to become St. Martin's successor, a reluctant Heloise became Abelard's; as Agnes resisted marriage, so did she; and as Eustace was reunited with his wife in martyrdom, perhaps Heloise envisioned the same with Abelard. The Paraclete, however, was not alone in lifting more women saints to full commemoration. The anchoress Christina of Markyate gave Sts Juliana, Milburga, Faith, Etheldrith, Frideswide, Hilda, and Felicity a more prominent office in her priory's kalendar.⁴⁶ And like Heloise, these saints shared much in common with Christina who fled the marital advances of Ralph Flambard to live as an exile with Roger the hermit at Markyate, as Sts Milburga, Faith, Ethelrith, Frideswide, and Felicity all rejected their suitor.⁴⁷ Most importantly, the Paraclete nuns' sanctoral cycle, and Christina's as well, was testament

⁴⁶C. H. Talbot, introduction to The Life of Christina of Markyate, ed. and trans. Talbot, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 1-33.

⁴⁷Ibid.

to Southern's definition of twelfth-century humanism, as the incarnation of the cross was seen with a new clarity to be that of Man. Christ's suffering was no longer an elusive experience, but one men and women could ally with.⁴⁸

It is here that the letters of Abelard and Heloise come back into the question of Heloise: although she can exist without them, the full image of Heloise can not be achieved in their absence. For instance, it could be argued by some that Heloise had little to do with forming the liturgy, only following Abelard's beliefs as put forth in Letter 10 or from some still undiscovered record of his instruction. However this argument would seem implausible. Why would an Heloise revered for her education and piety take such a minor role in the formation of the liturgy. Yet an important case for Heloise's involvement in the construction of the liturgy may exist in the letters themselves: in which the tragic Heloise who entered Argenteuil, as described in the letters, corrected, in the liturgy, the subjection she suffered--and allowed dignity to the monastic women she served. If this rings true, the liturgy of the Paraclete could not only serve as evidence of Heloise's involvement in the liturgy but, at the same time, serve to strengthen Caroline Bynum's thesis that in the convent women could be socialized by women in order to develop positive images of their religious role

⁴⁸Southern, Making of the Middle Ages, 234-36.

despite the prevalent theological conception of their gender as naturally inferior.⁴⁹ Thus, perhaps the more "positive image" was Heloise's intent in realizing her faith.

⁴⁹Caroline Walker Bynum, Jesus As Mother (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1982), 258-59.

CHAPTER 6

THE LETTERS REASSESSED

As a result of evidence independent of Abelard and Heloise's letters the historical Heloise has emerged from both the overshadowing image of Abelard and the disputed letters; although, aside from her classical learning, she appears conventional as an abbess, and the liturgy of the Paraclete poses no great controversy in content. To some, this less romantic view of Heloise pales compared to the Heloise of the letters. Yet the romantic Heloise may not have to be abandoned, as still another case for Heloise and the letters exists in the letters themselves. Emerging from the letters is testimony to two distinct individuals, arguably perhaps the creation of Abelard or an unknown author, but more likely not. For example, the use of classical authors between Abelard and Heloise in the letters appears dissimilar, suggesting that Heloise had a distinct foundation in the classics apart from Abelard. For she selected authors to express her emotion, unlike Abelard's pedagogical use; and from this the Heloise of the letters reinforces her reputation as learned and lessens the possibility of Abelard forging the letters ascribed to her. In addition, Letter 5 suggests, as Linda Georgiana argues, that there was an inherent intellectual quality in Heloise;

but, we may add, it also testified to the differences between Abelard and Heloise, differences documented in Heloise's rule for the Paraclete. In Letter 5 she questioned the monastic diet and work habits for nuns, issues that Abelard addressed in Letter 7; yet Heloise modified his instruction, in which her rule mirrored her original opinion held in Letter 5, thus increasing the possibility that she wrote Letter 5. It should be emphasized that since there is no extant original manuscript of the correspondence these postulations will attempt only to narrow the possibility of forgery.

A simple analysis of the citations in the letters confirms the general observation that Heloise used the works of classical authors and the church fathers with greater frequency than Abelard; in addition to the different manner Heloise employed, as I will later turn to. In Letters 1 through 7, Abelard's correspondence the total of 115 pages of text includes only thirty-six citations, or one citation every 3.3 pages; whereas Heloise's thirty-eight pages of text include twenty citations, or one citation every two pages. Of this, Heloise employed classical authors, as opposed to the Church Fathers, fifty percent of the time, whereas Abelard used classical authors only twenty-two percent.

Table 1.--Classical Citations in
The Letters of Abelard and Heloise

Writer	N Text	N Citations	Classical Authors (%)	Church Fathers (%)
Abelard	115	36	22.2 (8)	77.7 (28)
Heloise	38	20	50 (10)	50 (10)

Note: Figures in the parentheses are Ns for the adjacent percentages. The results are based on a numerical analysis of the letters in which authors cited by Abelard and Heloise are compiled and classified as either a classical work or a work of a Church Father (Sts Jerome, Augustine and Ambrose.)

These figures may only indicate a small and insignificant disparity, but the statistics underscore the fundamental difference in the actual manner in which Abelard and Heloise rely on past authorities, as Heloise turns to the classical authors frequently and resolutely.

Throughout Heloise's letters classical authors are used to strengthen her argument and express her feelings. For instance, in Letter 5 she used Ovid to illustrate the evils of too much wine when men and women mix:

When wine has sprinkled Cupid's thirsty wings
 He stays and stands weighed down in his chosen place...
 Then laughter comes, then even the poor find plenty,
 Then sorrow and cares and wrinkles leave the brow...

That is the time when girls bewitch men's hearts,
And Venus in the wine adds fire to fire.¹

A conventional use, no doubt, as the classics were often used in theological polemics.² Yet in previous letters she used Seneca, Lucan, and Cicero to express personal sentiments as well. Heloise quoted Seneca to illustrate her need for Abelard's presence in writing:

Letters from absent friends are welcome indeed, as Seneca himself shows us by his own example when he writes these words in a passage of a letter to his friend Lucilius:

Thank you for writing me often, the one way in which you can make your presence felt, for I never have a letter from you without the immediate feeling that we are together. If pictures of absent friends give us pleasure, renewing our memories and reliving the pain of separation even if they cheat us with empty comfort, how much welcome is a letter which comes to us in the very handwriting of an absent friend.

Thank God that here at least is a way of restoring your presence to us which no malice can prevent, nor any obstacle hinder; then do not, I beseech you, allow any negligence to hold you back.³

¹ *"Vinaque cum bibulas sparsere Cupidinis alas
permanet et <capto> stat gravis ille loco...
Tunc veniunt risus tunc pauper cornua sumit:
Tunc dolor et curae rugaque frontis abiit...
Illic saepe animos iuvenum rapuere puellae
Et venus in vinis ignis in igne fuit."*

See Heloise, "Letter 5," Muckle, 17: 242; Radice, 161; Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 1: 233-34, 239-40, 243-44.

² See Charles Homer Haskins work concerning the post-Carolingian revival of the Latin classics, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 93-126.

³ *"Quam iucundae vero sint absentium litterae amicorum ipse nos exemplo proprio Seneca docet ad amicum Lucilium loco sic scribens:*

Quod frequenter mihi scribis gratias ago. Nam quo uno modo potes te mihi ostendis. Numquam epistolam tuam accipio quin protinus una simus. Si imagines nobis

In fearing Abelard's death, she refrains from forecasts of the future and cites Lucan's preface to Book 2 in Pharsalia:

Whatever has to come to us bringing with it total grief we must hope will come suddenly, without torturing us far in advance with useless apprehension which no foresight can relieve. This is what the poet has in mind when he prays to God:

May it be sudden, whatever you plan for us; may man's mind be blind to the future. Let him hope on in his fears.⁴

In an argument against marriage and people who marry for the wrong reasons she noted Aeschines Socraticus:

For a man's worth does not rest on his wealth or power; these depend on fortune, but worth on his merits. And a woman should realize that if she marries a rich man more readily than a poor one, and desires her husband more for his possessions than for himself, she is offering herself for sale. Certainly any woman who comes to marry through desires of this kind deserves wages, not gratitude, for clearly her mind is on the man's property, not himself,

amicorum absentium iocundae sunt quae memoriam renovant et desiderium absentiae falso atque inani solatio levant quanto iocundiores sunt litterae quae amici absentis veras notas afferunt?

Deo autem gratias quod hoc saltem modo praesentiam tuam nobis reddere nulla invidia prohiberis, nulla difficultate praepediris, nulla, obsecro, negligentia retarderis."
Heloise, "Letter 1," Muckle, 15: 68-69; Radice, 110; Seneca, Epistulae ad Lucilium, 40: 1.

⁴"Omne inevitabile, quod, cum acciderit, moerorem maximum secum inferet, ut subito veniat, optandum est ne timore inutili diu ante cruciet, cui nulla succuri providentia potest. Quod et poeta bene considerans Deum deprecatur, dicens:

*Sit subitum quodcumque paras; sit caeca futuri
Mens hominum fati: liceat sperare timenti."*

Heloise, "Letter 3," Muckle, 15: 79; Radice, 129; Lucan, Pharsalia, 2: 14-15.

and she would be ready to prostitute herself to a richer man, if she could. This is evident from the argument put forward in the dialogue of Aeschines Socraticus by the learned Aspasia to Xenophon and his wife. When she had expounded it in an effort to bring about a reconciliation between them, she ended with these words:

Unless you come to believe that there is no better man nor worthier woman on earth you will always still be looking for what you judge the best thing of all --to be the husband of the best wives and the wife of the best of husbands.⁵

Here Heloise quoted the learned woman Aspasia from a Greek work; thus possibly verifying Abelard's remarks that she knew Greek, even though she could have known the passage from Cicero. Aspasia, like Cornelia, was also a woman of letters, and it could be taken that Heloise's recognition of learned women, to whom she possibly compared herself, amplified her personal attachment to the classical world. For Heloise to use any authority from the classics was not enough to clarify her point, but to find expression in a woman's voice, one as

⁵*"Non enim quo quisque ditior sive potentior ideo et melior, fortunae illud est, hoc virtutis. Nec se minime venalem aestimet esse quae libentius ditiori quam pauperi nubit et plus in marito sua quam ipsum concupiscit. Certe quamcumque ad nuptas haec concupiscentia ducit, merces ei potius quam gratia debetur. Certum quippe est eam res ipsas non hominem insequi et se, si posset, velle prostituere ditiori sicut inductio illa Aspasiae philosopha ad reconciliandos invicem illos proposuisset tali fine ipsam conclusit:*

Quare nisi hoc peregeritis ut neque vir melior neque femina in terris electior sit, profecto semper id quod optimum putabitis esse multo maxime requiretis ut et tu maritus sis quam optimae et haec quam optimo viro nupta sit."

Heloise, "Letter 1," Muckle, 15: 71; Radice, 114; Radice notes that this passage was well known from Cicero, *De inventione*, 1: 31, 52.

learned as her own, perhaps reinforced Heloise own perception of herself as educated and worthy. After having asked in Letters 1 and 3 for some type of solace from Abelard, Heloise would turn her interest to more practical matters in Letter 5, the monastic life for women, but before this turn she offered an explanation using Aristotle, St. Matthew and Cicero to express the uncontrollable nature of her heart's emotions:

And so when its impulses move us, none of us can stop their sudden promptings from easily breaking out, and even more easily overflowing into words which are ever-ready indications of the heart's emotions:⁶ as it is written, 'A man's words are spoken from the overflowing of the heart.'⁷ I will therefore hold my hand from writing words which I cannot restrain my tongue from speaking; would that a grieving heart would be as ready to obey as a writer's hand! And yet you have it in your power to remedy my grief, even if you can not entirely remove it. As one nail drives out another hammered in,⁸ a new thought expels an old, when the mind is intent on

⁶"Unde et cum nos eius affectiones stimulant, nemo earum subitos impulsus ita repulerit ut non in effecta facile prorumpant, et se per verba facilius effluant quae promptiores animi passionum sunt notae, secundum quod scriptum est: 'Ex abundantia enim cordis os loquitur.' Revocabo itaque manum a scripto in quibus linguam a verbis temperare non valeo. Utinam sic animus dolentis parere promptus sit quemadmodum dextra scribentis. Aliquod tamen dolori remedium vales conferre si non hunc omnia possis auferre. Ut enim insertum clavum alius expellit, sic cogitatio nova priorem excludit cum alias intentus animus priorum memoriam dimittere cogitur aut intermittere. Tanto vero amplius cogitatio quaelibet animum occupat, et ab aliis deducit, quanto quod cogitatur honestius aestimatur, et quo intendimus animum magis videtur necessarium.", Heloise, "Letter 5," Muckle, 17: 241-42; Radice, 159; Aristotle by way of Boethius's translation of Cicero's De interpretatione, 159, n.

⁷Ibid.; Matthew 12:34.

⁸Ibid.; Cicero, Tusculanae disputationes, 4: 35, 75.

other things and forced to dismiss or interrupt its recollection of the past. But the more fully any thought occupies the mind and distracts it from other things, the more worthy should be the subject of such a thought and the more important it is where we direct our minds.

From this passage the grasp of classical thought is exceptional. She exhibits a remarkable synthesis of classical prose and her own emotions: moving from her own words to Aristotle, Matthew, Cicero, and back to her own words, Heloise created an accord between her own words and those of the poet that testify to what Brooke called her genuine attachment to the classical world.

Abelard, however, in his letters to Heloise, used the classics to reproach Heloise, not console her. Abelard more often used the classics to shape his arguments and defend Christian authority. Yet perchance, believing the classics were a method to reach a seemingly inconsolable Heloise,⁹ Abelard rebuked Heloise for over-indulging in the past, and quoted Lucan:

Mourn for your Savior and Redeemer, not for the seducer who defiled you, for the Master who died for you, not for the servant who lives and, indeed, for the first time is truly freed from death. I beg you, beware lest Pompey's reproach to weeping Cornelia is applied to you, to your shame:

The battle ended, Pompey the Great
Lives, but his fortune died.

⁹In his attempt to console Heloise in "Letter 2," Abelard did not use classical authors. Considering Heloise still remained confused and forlorn in "Letter 3," it seems entirely conceivable that Abelard saw the use of classical authors as an alternative way to reach Heloise, especially if she was, as he described her, genuinely inspired by classical verse.

It is this you now mourn
And loved.¹⁰

Further, in warning Heloise not to shun praise, that modesty may be misconstrued as desiring attention, the words of Virgil are offered:

Such artfulness Virgil describes in wanton Galatea, who sought what she wanted by flight, and by feigning rejection led on her lover more surely towards her:

She flees to the willows and wishes first to be seen.

Before she hides she wants to be seen fleeing, so that the very flight whereby she appears to reject the youth's company ensures that she obtains it.¹¹

Taking the more conventional use of the classics, Cicero and Lucan appeared in Abelard's Letter 7 to emphasize a point as Abelard constructed a religious rule for Heloise and her nuns. To explain how he will form his rule for the Paraclete, scripture is mixed with Cicero:

¹⁰"Plange tuum reparatorem, non corruptorem, redemptorem, non scortatorem, pro te mortuum Dominum, non viventem servum, immo nunc primum de morte vere liberatum. Cave, obsecro, ne quod dixit Pompeius maerenti Corneliae tibi impropere turpissime:

Vivit post proelia Magnus!
Sed fortuna perit. Quod defles, illud amasti."

Abelard, "Letter 4," Muckle, 15: 92; Radice, 153; Lucan, Pharsalia, 8: 84-85.

¹¹"Talem et lascivae calliditatem Galateae Virgilius describit, quae quod volebat fugiendo appetebat et, simulatione reulsae, amplius in se amantem incitabat:

Et fugit ad salices, inquit, et se cupit ante videri.

Antequam lateat cupit se fugientem videri, ut ipsa fuga qua reprobare consortium iuvenis videtur amplius acquirat.," Ibid., 87; Radice, 144; Virgil, Eclogues, 3: 65.

Relying, therefore, partly on good practices and partly on the testimony of the Scriptures with the support of reason, I have decided to put all of these together, in order to adorn the spiritual temple of God which you are¹² by embellishing it with certain choice pictures, and from several imperfect elements to create as far as I can a single, complete work. In this I intend to imitate the painter Zeuxis, and work on the spiritual temple as he planned his achievement on a material one. For, as Tully records in his Rhetoric, the people of Crotona appointed him to decorate with the best possible pictures a certain temple for which they had the highest veneration. So he might do so more surely he chose from the people the five most beautiful maidens and looked at them as they sat by him while he worked, so that he could copy their beauty in his painting.¹³

In proscribing the actual rule, Abelard stressed the importance that one authority, the abbess, should command the convent; and again he offered scripture and the poet to illustrate his point:

No community of people nor even a small household in a single house can continue as a whole unless unity is preserved in it, and complete control rests in the authority of a single person. And so the Ark, as model for the Church, was many cubits long and wide but rose to a single point. It is written in Proverbs that 'For its

¹²"Nos itaque partim consuetudinibus bonis, partim scripturarum testimoniis vel rationum nitentes fulcimentis, haec omnia in unum conferre decrevimus ut spiritale dei templum quod estis vos his decorare quasi quibusdam egregiis exornare picturis valeamus et ex pluribus imperfectis quoad possumus unum opusculum consummare. In quo quidem opere Zeuxim pictorem imitantes ita facere instituimus in templo spiritali sicut ille disposuit faciendum in corporali. Hunc enim ut in Rhetorica sua Tullius meminit Crotoniatae asciverunt ad quoddam templum quod religiosissime colebant excellentissimis picturis decorandum. Quod ut diligentius faceret quinque sibi virgines pulcherrimas de populo illo elegit quas sibi pingenti assistentes intuens earum pulchritudinem pingendo imitaretur." Abelard, "Letter 7," McLaughlin, 18: 242; Radice, 183; Corinthians 6: 16.

¹³Ibid.; Cicero, De inventione rhetorica, 2: 1.

sins a land has many rulers,¹⁴ and on the death of Alexander, when kings were multiplied, evils were multiplied too. Rome could not maintain concord when authority was shared amongst many rulers. Lucan reminds us in his first book:

You, Rome, have been the cause of your own ills,
Shared in three masters' hands; the pacts spell death
Of power that never should devolve on many.

A little later he says:

So long as earth supports the sea and is itself
Poised in the air, the sun rolls on its course,
Night follows day throughout the zodiac's signs,
No trust binds fellow-rulers, every power
Rejects a partner....¹⁵

Hence, Abelard's use of the classics in writing to Heloise appears limited to theological discussion, or admonishment.

¹⁴"Nulla quippe hominum congregation vel quantulacumque domus unius familia consistere poteset incolumis nisi unitas in ea conservetur ut videlicet totum ejus regnum in unius personae magisterio consistat. Unde et archatypum ecclesiae gerens cum multos tam in longo quam in lato cubitos haberet in uno consummata est. Et in Proverbiis scriptum est: 'Propter peccata terrae multi principes ejus.' Unde etiam Alexandro mortuo, multiplicatis regibus, mala quoque multiplicata sunt. Et Roma pluribus communicata rectoribus concordiam tenere non potuit. Unde Lucanus in primo sic meminit:

Tu causa malorum
Facta tribus dominis communis, Roma, nec umquam
In turbam missi feralia foedera regni.

Et post pauca:

Dum terra fretum terramque levabit
Aer et longi volvent Titana labores
Noxque diem caelo totidem per signa sequetur,
Nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas
Impatiens consortis erit."

Ibid., 251; Radice, 197; Proverbs 28: 2.

¹⁵Ibid.; Lucan, Pharsalia, 1: 84-86, 89-93.

Remembering his own past, Abelard, in his Historia, used Ovid to describe the predicaments of his fame-seeking past:

I then returned to Melun and set up a school there as before; and the more his jealousy (William of Champeaux's) pursued me, the more widely my reputation spread, for, as the poet says:

Envy seeks the heights, the winds sweep the summits.¹⁶

And much later in Paris, Abelard recalls the affair with Heloise and draws a personal comparison with Mars and Venus:

Separation drew our hearts still closer while frustration inflamed our passion even more; then we became more abandoned as we lost all sense of shame and, indeed, shame diminished as we found more opportunities for love making. And so we were caught in the act as the poet says happened to Mars and Venus. Soon afterwards the girl found that she was pregnant, and immediately wrote me a letter full of rejoicing of what I thought she should do.¹⁷

¹⁶"Tunc ego Melidunum reversus scholas ibi nostras sicut antea constitui et, quanto manifestius eius me persequabatur invidia, tanto mihi auctoritatis amplius conferebat iuxta illud poeticum:

Summa petit livor, perflant altissima venti."

Abelard, Historia, Muckle, 12: 179; Radice, 61; Ovid, De remedio amoris, 1: 369.

¹⁷"Separatio autem haec corporum maxima erat copulatio animorum et negata sui copia amplius amorem accendebat, et verecundiae transecta iam passio inverecundiores reddebat; tantoque verecundiae minor exstiterat passio, quanto convenientior videbatur actio. Actum itaque in nobis est quod in Marte et Venere deprehensis poetica narrat fabula. Non multo autem post, puella se concepisse comperit, et cum summa exultatione mihi super hoc illico scripsit, consulens quid de hoc ipse faciendum deliberarem." Ibid, 184. Vulcan had found his bride and Mars together in bed, it is assumed from this passage that someone caught them, although Abelard does not say who.

It is unclear why Abelard did not employ such poignant remembrance of his past while writing to Heloise. What is clear is that Abelard does not indulge her in similar allusions. He instead only used the classics to strengthen his argument, perhaps reflecting a conversion after his entry into monastic life and the conservative posture he took in his later writings.¹⁸ Considering the Historia is believed to be written only a short time before the letters, it would seem logical that if Abelard had any change in attitude towards pagan writers it would have been apparent in the Historia. Instead the two distinct usages of pagan writers in Abelard's letters and the Historia suggest that while writing to Heloise he could not bear to remember and address her in the words of the poet other than in a reprimand. The affective means of expression and remembrance that Heloise found the classical authors provided, Abelard appeared to cast aside--much in the same way he left Heloise on the steps of Argenteuil.

In the letters, Abelard and Heloise's use of the Church Fathers is not too dissimilar, although it merits examination. In discussing monastic life and the development of a rule for religious women, both Abelard and Heloise use the writings of Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory in conjunction with biblical writings to address theological

¹⁸Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought, 120.

issues and add clarity to their arguments; yet subtle differences persist in how the Church Fathers are used. As previously noted, Abelard did utilize the Church Fathers more frequently, compared to Heloise's greater reliance on classical authors, though Abelard was, as the bulk of his correspondence shows, primarily concerned with composing a religious rule and thus predisposed to rely more on the Church Fathers.¹⁹ Most significant, however, Abelard used Jerome almost exclusively in his composition of a religious rule for the Paraclete, citing Jerome eighteen times and Augustine only four. Not giving as much attention to Jerome, Heloise cited him five times and used Augustine on three occasions.²⁰ Heloise cited Jerome's works in Letter 5 to illustrate the ill-nature of women, consider:

Surely nothing is so conducive to a woman's seduction as a woman's flattery, nor does a woman pass on the foulness of a corrupted mind so readily to any but another woman; which is why St. Jerome particularly exhorts women of sacred calling to avoid contact with women of the world.²¹

And again:

¹⁹See "Table 1." Eighty-six out of one-hundred and fifteen pages of text was addressed to Abelard's religious rule for women, Letter 7.

²⁰Based on numerical analysis of "Letter 5" and "Letter 7," regarding theological issues.

²¹"*Certe in seducenda muliere nullum est aequae facile ut lenocium muliebre. Nec corruptae mentis turpitudinem ita prompte cuiquam mulier committit sicut mulieri. Unde et praedictus Hieronymus maxime saecularium accessus feminarum vitare propositi sancti feminas adhortatur.*" Heloise, "Letter 5," Muckle, 17: 242-43; Radice, 161; Jerome, *Epistulae*, 22: 16.

St. Jerome also believes this (Timothy's advice that women remarry) to be salutary advice, and tells Eustochium of the rash vows taken by women in these words: 'But if those who are virgins are still not saved, because of other faults, what will become of those who have prostituted the members of Christ and turned the temple of the Holy Spirit into a brothel? It were better for a man to have entered matrimony and walked on the level than to strain after the heights and fall into the depths of hell.'²²

Heloise, it should be emphasized, did not extend the authority of Jerome beyond these rather negative characterizations of women.²³ Abelard, on the other hand, used Jerome as an authority for all matters ranging from women, work, clothing, food, and bedding. And in some instances, rules that Abelard formed, based, in part, on Jerome's theology, are later modified by Heloise. For example, in commanding the Paraclete to remain separate from the outer world, Abelard recalled Jerome telling Heliodorus:

Solitude is indeed all the more necessary for your woman's frailty, inasmuch as for our part we are less attacked by the conflicts of carnal temptations and less likely to stray towards bodily things through the senses. Hence St. Antony says: 'Whoever sits in solitude and is at peace is rescued from three wars, that is, wars of hearing, speech, and sight; he shall have only one thing

²²"*Quod et beatus Hieronymus saluberrimum esse considerans Eustochio de improvisis feminarum votis consulit his verbis: 'Si autem et illae quae virgines sunt, ob alias tamen culpas non salvantur quid fiet illis quae prostituerunt membra Christi, et mutaverunt templum Spiritus Sancti in lupanar? Rectius fuerat homini subisse coniugium ambulasse per plana quam per altiora tendentem in profundum inferni cadere.,'*" Ibid.

²³After Heloise's discussion of women Jerome does not reappear in "Letter 5." The rather unflattering discussion of women could be in reference to the problems she anticipated in working with the nuns, although whether or not her fears were realized is uncertain.

to fight against, the heart.'²⁴ These and all other advantages of the desert the famous Doctor of the Church Jerome has particularly in mind in giving urgent counsel to the monk Heliodorus: 'O desert rejoicing in the presence of God! What are you doing in the world, brother, when you are greater than the world?'²⁵

The liturgy of the Paraclete and Heloise's own rule for the Paraclete indicate that the Paraclete was not entirely removed from the world to the degree that Abelard favored in Letter 7. Further, he instructs Heloise that the feast day should be kept spiritually and avoid the abundance of food, again citing Jerome:

And so the feast-day should rather be kept spiritually, as St. Jerome, Gregory's disciple, says in his letter about accepting gifts, where there is this passage: 'Thus we must take special care to celebrate the day festival with exultation of spirit rather than the abundance of food, for it is palpably absurd to honour by over-indulgence a martyr whom we know to have pleased God by his fasting.'²⁶

²⁴"*Vestrae vero infirmitati tanto magis est solitudo necessaria, quanto carnalium tentationum bellis minus hic infestamur et minus ad corporalia per sensus evagamur. Unde et beatus Antonius: 'Qui sedet, inquit, in solitudine et quiescit, a tribus bellis eripitur, id est auditus, locutionis et visus, et contra unum habebit tantummodo pugnam, id est cordis.'* Has quidem vel ceteras eremi commoditates insignis ecclesiae doctor Hieronymus diligenter attendens et ad eas Heliodorum monachum vehementer adhortans, exclamat dicens: 'O eremus familiaris Deo gaudens! Quid agis, frater, in saeculo, qui major es mundo?'," Abelard, "Letter 7," McLaughlin, 18: 250; Radice, 196; *Vitae patrum*, 5: 2-3.

²⁵Ibid.; Jerome, *Epistulae*, 4: 10.

²⁶"*Idcirco autem spiritaliter magis est agenda solemnitas quam et beatus Hieronymus ejus discipulus secutus in epistola sua de acceptis muneribus ita quodam loco meminit: 'Unde nobis sollicitius providendum ut solemnem diem, non tam ciborum abundantia quam spiritus exultatione celebremus. Quia valde absurdum est nimia saturitate honorare velle martyrem quem sciamus Deo placuisse jejuniis.'*" Ibid., 280; Radice, 247; *Epistulae*, 31. Jerome's implication that monks fast is

Perhaps, in keeping with Jerome's feelings, the nuns of the Paraclete had no inclination to 'over-indulgence' in celebrating St. Jerome's feast day: he received a minor role in the liturgy of the Paraclete.

Chrysogonus Waddell's recent edition of the liturgy of the Paraclete clearly indicates that Jerome did not have an elaborate office, receiving, instead, a rather small formulary.²⁷ Although he received the customary twelve-lesson feast observed by other Cistercian houses, Jerome's hours of observances contain neither first nor second vespers nor any invitatory or special chants in the night office.²⁸ The small formulary is explained in the Paraclete Ordinary, in which Jerome is described: "....Il est simples confessor."²⁹ Considering the devotion that Abelard clearly had for Jerome this is surprising. But in view of the possibility that Heloise in Letter 5 did not share the same high opinion, the slight suffered by Jerome becomes much clearer. St. Augustine, however, held a higher position, receiving the customary twelve-lesson feast, along with invitatory hymns in compline and prime hours, and an "ample" Mass Ordinary.

largely ignored by Heloise, for in her rule there is no mention of fasts and in her own letter to Abelard she advocates fasting only in the matter of vices other than food, see Heloise, "Letter 5," Muckle, vol. 17, 252.

²⁷Chrysogonus Waddell, introduction and commentary to The Old French Paraclete Ordinary and the Paraclete Breviary, vol. 1, Cistercian Liturgical Series: Number Three, 275.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

Augustine is also regarded as: "....one of the confessor teachers of the Church."³⁰ It is possible that Jerome received his small position as a result of his rather negative views of women, possible opinions that Heloise shared in writing Letter 5, but could have later changed during her years at Argenteuil. Despite the speculative explanations accounting for the deviations existing between Abelard's and Heloise's use of Jerome, there appears to exist two different opinions of Jerome which further suggests that Letter 5 and Letter 7 were not of the same author.

Another area which adds to the possibility that Heloise wrote Letter 5 is a comparison of the letter itself and her rule for the Paraclete, which showed a similarity of concerns that Heloise held towards the monastic life. And when compared to Abelard's Letter 7, both Letter 5 and Heloise's rule underscore areas in which Heloise disagreed with Abelard's rule for the convent. For instance, Heloise's attitudes towards work were a departure from the direct influence of Abelard. Abelard acknowledged Heloise's request from Letter 5 that the Benedictine Rule be modified to consider the weaker nature of women; in which nuns, according to Heloise, should be allowed dispensation from some types of labor normally performed by monks. She asked:

For if in certain respects he (St. Benedict) is obliged to modify the strictness of the Rule for the young, the

³⁰Ibid., 327.

old and weak, according to their natural frailty or infirmity, what would he provide for the weaker sex whose frailty and infirmity is generally known?³¹

She later requested that Abelard provide in his rule provisions so that the sisters may obtain outside labor. In Letter 7, Abelard replied that "monks and lay monks" from nearby monastic houses will perform the duties that call for outside assistance. Heloise, however, in her own rule stated that the rigors of the monastic life conflict with religious duties, thus conversos and conversas, lay brothers and sisters, were instead recruited as labor.³² As a result, Heloise differed from Abelard's instruction, and lay brothers and sisters instead of monks were used, although it may have been the result of necessity as monks were unattainable. A greater and more significant divergence from Abelard's instruction lies in the dietary observances at the Paraclete.

Heloise's questions concerning food in Letter 5 mark a significant point of departure from Abelard's influence--a separation made more definite considering the provision in her own rule which advocated a more liberal attitude toward the monastic diet. Heloise appears to demonstrate a more progressive theology in regard to food similar to that of the thirteenth-century women mystics; whereas Abelard takes the

³¹"Si enim in quibusdam regulae rigorem pueris, sensibus et debilibus pro ipsa naturae debilitate vel infirmitate temperare cogitur, quid de fragili sexu provideret cuius maxime debilis et infirma natura cognoscitur?" Heloise, "Letter 5," Muckle, 17: 244; Radice, 163.

³²Heloise, "Excerpta e Regulis Paracletensis Monasterii," Cousin, 214. See also appendix, I.

more conventional approach stressing the stricter Benedictine diet. Although Heloise was not a mystic in the conventional sense, to consider her, for the moment, in terms of a mystic allows Heloise to be viewed as a possessor of her own theology.

As the number of convents increased during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so too did the testimony of women's religious experiences. Caroline Bynum has focused on the theme of food and has determined its significance to monastic women of the later middle ages. In their writing, Bynum has observed the use of food as serving as a link to Christ, creating a mystical union with God in which food often became "God", and the "tasting of God" became, for the nun, another form of piety.³³ The women mystics, who were prominent in this unusual disclosure, wrote of this experience in a "sensual language".³⁴ The Flemish mystic Hadewijch wrote of such a union with God:

....love's most intimate union
Is through eating, tasting and seeing interiorly.
He eats us; we think we eat him,
And we do eat him, of this we can be certain
.....
But because he remains so undevoured,
And so untouched, and so undesired,
Each of us remains uneaten by him
And separated so far from each other.
But let him who is held captive from these chains

³³Caroline Walker Bynum, Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987), 1-9.

³⁴Ibid., 151.

Not cease to eat his fill,
 If he wishes to know and taste beyond his dreams
 The Godhead and the Manhood.³⁵

Hadewijch, along with other women mystics, found "food" an uniquely female experience. For it was Mary who first fed Christ, as it was the mother who first fed their children. Most importantly, if Bynum is correct in that women of the time were considered "theologically inferior", the use of food and its link with Christ, was perhaps a positive distinction from men and an exclusive link to God.³⁶

Despite that Heloise has no apparent sensual or ecstatic writings on the issue of food; she instead employed an intellectual defense of food, emphasizing its unique relationship with Christ and stressing its importance to monastic life. In Letter 5, Heloise relied heavily on biblical authority to point out to Abelard the spiritual significance of food. She began her argument:

On the question of meat: where, I ask you, has this ever been condemned by God or forbidden by monks? Look, pray, and mark how of necessity St Benedict modifies the Rule on this point too (though it is more dangerous for monks and he knew it was not for them), because in his day it was impossible to persuade monks to abstain from meat. I would like to see the same dispensation granted in our own times, with a similar modification regarding matters which fall between good and evil and are called indifferent, so that vows would not compel what cannot be gained by persuasion. If concession were made without

³⁵Ibid., 156, as contained in Hadewijch, "Loves Seven Names," Hadewijch: The Complete Works, trans. Columba Hart, vol. 2, (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 353.

³⁶Bynum's earlier work suggests that women of the period were viewed as theologically inferior, thus women and nuns sought ways to correct that imbalance, see Jesus As Mother, 258-59.

scandal on neutral points, it would be enough to forbid what is sinful. Thus the same dispensations could be made for food as for clothing, so that provision could be made of what can be purchased more cheaply, and, in everything, necessity not superfluity could be our consideration.³⁷

Heloise's realistic request to consider the limitations of food, however, evolved into an exposition of biblical principles, in which the authority of the Apostle Paul permits a less restrictive diet:

The Apostle also allows Christians to eat all kinds of food and distinguishes from it those things which count as righteous. 'The Kingdom of God,' he says, 'is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit...Everything is pure in itself, but anything is bad for the man who gives offence by his eating. It is a good thing not to eat meat and not to drink wine, nor to do anything which may offend or scandalize or weaken your brother.' In this passage there is no eating or food forbidden, only the giving of offence by eating, because certain converted Jews were scandalized when they saw things being eaten which the Law had forbidden.³⁸

³⁷"*Ubi umquam, quaeso, carnes a Deo damnate sunt vel monachis interdictae? Vide, obsecro, et attende qua necessitate Regulam temperet in eo etiam quod periculosius est monachis, et quod eorum non esse noverit, quia videlicet huius abstinentia temporibus suis monachis iam persuaderi non poterat. Utinam eadem dispensatione et in hoc tempore ageretur ut videlicet in his quae media boni et mali atque indifferentia dicuntur, tale temperamentum fieret ut quod iam persuaderi non valet, professio non exigeret, mediisque omnibus sine scandalo concessis, sola interdici peccata sufficeret, et sic quoque in cibis sicut in vestimentis dispensaretur, ut, quod vilis comparari posset, ministraretur, et per omnia necessitati, non superfluitati, consuleretur.*" Heloise, "Letter 5," Muckle, 17: 248; Radice, 170.

³⁸"*Idem etiam omnium ciborum esum Christianus indulgens, et ab his ea quae iustificat distinguens: 'Non est, inquit, regnum Dei esca et potus, sed iustitia et pax et gaudium in Spiritu sancto....Omnia quidem munda sunt; sed malum est homini qui per offendiculum manducat. Bonum est non manducare carnem, et non bibere vinum, neque in quo frater tuus offendatur aut scandalizetur aut infirmetur.'* Non enim hoc loco ulla cibi

In quoting the apostle Paul, she cited, "Certainly food does not commend us to God," but, "You may eat anything sold in the market...The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it."³⁹ Heloise further noted Paul as saying that the restrictions of diet, what man shall and shall not eat, is a worldly concern, not a part of "Christ's own" who no longer owe anything to such "carnal observances".⁴⁰ Referring to the work of Christ, she added that as the apostles went out to preach he encouraged them to eat as local custom prescribed.⁴¹ Thus, in a Christian mission a strict diet is an expendable concern. Paul, as Heloise argued, saw the importance of this rule and wrote to Timothy that God created everything to be good and food "enjoyed with Thanksgiving", taken with the inner knowledge of truth, cannot be rejected.⁴² Finally, Heloise

comestio interdicitur, sed comestionis offensio qua videlicet quidam ex conversis Iudaeis scandalizabantur, cum viderent ea quoque comedi quae lex interdixerat." Ibid., 248-49; Radice, 171; Romans 14: 12, 20-21.

³⁹"*Esca autem nos non commendat Deo.*" Et rursum : *'Omne quod in macello venit manducate....Domini est terra et plentitudo.'*" Ibid., 1 Corinthians 8: 10, 25-26.

⁴⁰"*Si mortui estis cum Christo ab elementis huius mundi, quid adhuc tamquam viventes in mundo decernitis? Ne tetigeritis neque gustaveritis, neque contrectaveritis, quae sunt omnia in interitu ipso usu secundum praeceptum et doctrinas hominum.*" Ibid., 249; Radice, 171-72; Collosians 2: 16; 20: 22

⁴¹"And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house....And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you," Heloise only refered to the passage by number, see Muckle, 17: 249; Radice, 172; Luke 10: 7-8.

⁴²"*Spiritus autem manifeste dicit quia in novissimis temporibus discedent quidam a fide attendentes spiritibus erroris et doctrinis daemoniorum in hypocrisi loquentium*

ended her argument referring to the work of St. Augustine, as he addressed the issue of continence and virtue:

Continence is a virtue not of the body but of the soul. But the virtues of the spirit are displayed sometimes in works, sometimes in natural habit, as when the virtue of martyrs has been seen in their endurance of suffering. Also, patience was already in Job; the Lord knew this and gave proof of knowing it, but he made it known to men through the ordeal of Job's testing.⁴³

Adding to Augustine's belief that virtue is a matter of the heart and not outward gestures, Heloise noted Christ's teaching:

We read that the apostles themselves were so simple and almost rough in their manner even when in the company of the Lord, that they were apparently forgetful of respect and propriety, and when walking through the cornfields were not ashamed to pick the ears of corn and strip and eat them like children. Nor were they careful about washing their hands before taking food; but when they were rebuked by some for what was thought an unclean habit, the Lord made excuses for them, saying that, 'To eat without first washing his hands does not defile a man.' He then added the general ruling that the soul is not defiled by any outward thing but only by what proceeds from the heart.⁴⁴

mendacium...prohibetium nubere, abstinere a cibis quos Deus creavit ad percipiendum cum gratiarum actione fidelibus, et his qui cognoverunt veritatem, quia omnis creatura Dei bona est et nihil reiciendum quod cum gratiarum actione percipitur; sanctificatur enim per verbum Dei et orationem. Haec proponens fratribus, bonus eris minister Christi Iesu, enutritus verbis fidei et bonae doctrinae quam adsecutus es.'" Ibid.; 1 Timothy 4: 1-6.

⁴³"'Continentia, non corporis, sed animae virtus est. Virtutes autem animi aliquando in opere manifestantur, aliquando in habitu latent, sicut martyrum virtus apparuit in tolerando passiones. Item: Iam enim erat in Iob patientia quam noverat Dominus, et cui testimonium perhibebat, sed hominibus innotuit temptationis examine.'" Ibid., 250; Radice, 173; Augustine, On the Good of Marriage.

⁴⁴"Unde et ipsos legimus apostolos ita rusticamente et velut inhonestatis in ipso etiam Domini comitatu se habuisse ut,

Hence from the argument in Letter 5, it is apparent that Heloise believed with Christ and the Apostles, that the actual substance of food is secondary to the spirit in which it is eaten. In addition, she distinguishes food from vice asking Abelard, "which Christians hold to be abstinent from vices rather than from food."⁴⁵ Therefore, like the women mystics of the thirteenth century, the abbess also saw food as a link to God, believing as Paul that everything that God created is good.⁴⁶

In Abelard's answer concerning Heloise's question of food, he dealt with the matter in a more conventional manner, composing a limited monastic diet. Although Abelard uses many of the same theological sources as Heloise, his eventual instruction differed from the more liberal attitude that Heloise advocated in Letter 5. Whereas, Abelard did not forbid the eating of meat, he instead restricted it, limiting the inclusion of meat in the diet. Following the instruction

velut omnis reverentiae atque honestatis obliti, cum per sata transirent spicas vellere, fricare et comedere more puerorum non erubescunt, nec de ipsa etiam manuum ablutione, cum cibos essent accepturi, sollicitos esse. Qui cum a nonnullis quasi de immunditia arguerentur, eos Dominus excusans. 'Non lotis,' inquit, 'manibus manducare, non coinquinat hominem.' Ubi et statim generaliter adiecit ex nullis exterioribus animam inquinari, sed ex his tantum quae de corde prodeunt, quae sunt, inquit, 'cogitationes, adulteria homicidia,' etc.," Ibid., 250-51; Matthew 15: 19-20; 5: 28; 1 John 3: 15.

⁴⁵"De absentia quoque ieiuniorum quam magis vitiorum quam ciborum Christiani appetunt, si quid Ecclesia institutioni superaddi decreveris, deliberandum est, et quod nobis expedit instituendum.," Ibid., 252; Radice, 178.

⁴⁶Ibid., 249; Radice, 172; 1 Timothy 4: 1-6.

of Paul, Abelard advised Heloise to forbid "nothing in food except dissipation and drunkenness" and moderate in everything that can be taken to excess.⁴⁷ Further he commanded that wheat flour be blended with a coarser grain and that bread never be enjoyed hot directly from the oven.⁴⁸ In regard to meat, he permitted that meat be eaten in a variety that would include fish and other wildlife.⁴⁹ Abelard, however, said meat was not to be eaten more than once a day or eaten more than three times a week, basing his view on the conventional authorities of Gregory of Nazianus, Jerome, Gregory, and Benedict.⁵⁰ Even though Abelard permitted the use of meat in the diet of the Paraclete, a fundamental conflict does exist. Lacking in Abelard's argument was the divine correlation of food; we do not see, as in Heloise's argument, the apostle casually eating corn while walking with Christ. Abelard

⁴⁷"Et nos igitur cum Timotheo hanc Apostoli insecuti doctrinam et juxta Dominicam sententiam nihil in cibis nisi crapulam et ebrietatem vitantes, sic omnia temperemus ut ex omnibus infirmam naturam sustentemus, non vitia nutriamus.," Abelard, "Letter 7," McLaughlin, 18: 276; Radice, 242.

⁴⁸"Triticeae quoque medullae similaginem omnino prohibemus, sed semper cum habuerint triticum, tertia pars ad minus grossioris annonae misceatur. Nec calidis umquam oblectentur panibus, sed qui ad minus uno die ante cocti fuerint.," Ibid., 277; Radice, 243.

⁴⁹"....docemur indifferenter tam carnum quam piscium esum non esse respuendum,..." Ibid.

⁵⁰"Igitur ipsum quoque carnum esum ita temperari volumus ut non amplius quam semel in die sumant, nec diversa inde fercula eidem personae parentur, nec seorsum aliqua superaddantur pulmenta, nec ullatenus ei vesci liceat plusquam ter in hebdomada, prima videlicet feria, tertia et quinta feria, quantaecumque etiam festivitates intercurrent.," Ibid., 279; Radice, 244.

instead considers food and its gluttonous nature as a potential evil. From Gregory's Morals, Abelard quoted:

Gregory too, in the thirtieth book of his Morals, when teaching that in forming men's character we should pay attention to the quality of our minds, not our food, and distinguishing between the temptations on the plate, said: 'One moment it seeks more delicate food, another it desires its chosen dishes to be more scrupulously prepared.' Yet often what it craves is quite humble but it sins more by the very heat of its immense desire.⁵¹

Admitting that it is not the food that is sinful but the desire, Abelard reminded Heloise of Esau who lost the birthright of his firstborn because he craved a dish of lentils, and he pointed out that the first man, Adam, had been tempted by a mere apple.⁵² Thus, Abelard echoed the conventional attitude that food was a possible vice.

In considering the divergence of theology, Heloise's skilled use of biblical teaching shows her as a champion of Abelard's belief that custom should never be set above reason and the authority of scripture, for in Letter 5 she clearly relies on her reason not a dependence on convention.⁵³ But

⁵¹"Unde et Gregorius *Moralium libro XXX cum in ipsis hominum moribus non tam ciborum quam animorum qualitatem attendendam esse doceret ac gulae tentationes distingueret*" 'Aliquando, inquit, cibos lautiores quaerit; aliquando quaelibet sumenda praeparari accuratius appetit.' Nonnumquam vero et abjectius est quod desiderat et tamen ipsi aestu immensi desiderii deterius peccat.," Ibid., 278.

⁵²"Et primogenitorum gloriam Esau amisit quia magno aestu desiderii vilem cibum, id est lenticulam concupivit, quam dum vendendis etiam primogenitis praetulit quo in illam appetitu anhelaret indicavit.," and, "Hinc est quod plerumque Adam culpa committitur etiam cum abjecta et vilia sumuntur.," Ibid.

⁵³Abelard makes his argument for reason over authority in "Letter 7", as well as in "Letter 10" in which he rebukes St.

most important the case for Heloise as a possessor of her own theology, as seen in Letter 5, is made even stronger by her own rule which confirms the difference in their philosophies. Although Abelard forbade pure wheaten bread, Heloise declared, "We eat every kind of bread; wheaten, if there is wheat; if not, bread of every grain."⁵⁴ In regards to meat, Heloise's rule does not state whether they obeyed Abelard's command that meat not be eaten more than three times a week; significantly though, fish was served when it was given to the nuns, suggesting that they ate meat only according to its availability.⁵⁵ Despite the slight deviation from Abelard's instruction that Heloise's rule poses, Heloise's rule taken as verification of her almost mystical theology in Letter 5 establishes her as a precursor of a greater trend. Bynum's

Bernard for his adherence to custom and "Cistercian innovations"; "*Omnino enim prohibemus ut numquam consuetudo rationi praeponatur, nec umquam aliquid defendatur quia sit consuetudo, sed quia ratio, nec quia sit usitatum, sed quia bonum, et tanto libentius excipiat quanto melius apparebit.*" Abelard, "Letter 7," McLaughlin, 18: 265-66; Radice, 224; and the preceding chapter concerning the liturgy of the Paraclete.

⁵⁴"*De cibis.--Pane quolibet vescimur; si fuerit triticum, triticeo; si defuerit, pane cujuslibet annonae. In refectorio nostro cibi sine carnibus sunt legumina, et ea quae nutrit hortus. Lac, ova, et caseus rarius apponuntur, et pisces, si dati fuerint. Vinum mixtum sit aqua. Duo pulmenta in prima refectioe habentur. In coena vero herbae, vel fructus, vel aliquid tale, si haberi poterit. Horum quoque deficientiam sine murmure portamus.*" Cousin, 214., Translation by McLeod, 221.

⁵⁵Ibid. In a most interesting observation, the substantial increase in the population of women during the High Middle Ages has been attributed to an increased diet of iron-rich foods such as meat, beans, and other green vegetables--all items that Heloise's diet proscribed, see Hollister, 175-76.

work concludes that as a result of the alienation religious women felt from the church in the twelfth and thirteenth century, women sought a unique spiritual role for themselves in mystical union with God, one that would compensate for the inferiority they experienced under the church. And it is possible Heloise sought a balance in small measure through the eucharist. Whereas, food taken as a symbol of woman's unique relationship to God, Heloise could, as the mystics, create a greater spiritual role for her nuns independent from male dominion.

Aside from the more reserved tone of Letter 5, it has the best chance of all the letters of eventually being confirmed as authentic, for its themes and questions can be corroborated by Heloise's own rule. In Heloise's rule, policies regarding work duties, fulfilling business obligations, and food reflect an independent and intellectual quality separate from Abelard's influence. Her views may not challenge convention to a great degree, but if Letter 5 can shown to be authentic, it appears that Heloise pursued a path of reform, looking for an 'open door' in biblical authority that would permit a more liberal diet in monastic life. Moreover, Heloise's rule verifies the presence of an experienced and capable abbess present in Letter 5, a quality that has long escaped the consideration of those characterizing the Heloise of the letters.

If Letter 5 has the best chance of being proven authentic, what of the other letters? What do they tell about Heloise that can be reasonably judged true? As a personal testament of Heloise, the letters tell of a woman profoundly attached to the classics. She used Lucan, Seneca, and Cicero as an affective means of expressing her emotions and attachment to the past, unlike Abelard who in writing to Heloise preferred not to dwell on recollections of the past. Admittedly, this observation is not unique, but it deserves re-examination; because when placed beside the Heloise of history, the classical Heloise becomes more coherent. Abelard, Peter the Venerable, Guillaume Godel, and other chroniclers mentioned her classical learning and education, and though it is not wholly extraordinary that the Heloise of the letters quoted Cicero, Lucan, Ovid, and associated herself with women like Cornelia and Aspasia, a strong argument for the traditional Heloise of the letters, and for the letters being Heloise's, emerges from her treatment of Jerome. Jerome was not in Heloise's favor, neither in the letters nor in the liturgy of the Paraclete. This goes far to substantiate Heloise's authorship of Letter 5. In addition, the conflicting theology of diet exchanged between Abelard and Heloise in the letters--confirmed by Heloise's rule--further enhances the argument that two distinct personalities exist in the letters, which diminishes

Abelard's alleged role in forgery. However, in the light of the surviving manuscripts, if a mystery author in the twelfth century had possessed a copy of the liturgy, a clever mind, and had the desire to create an Heloise in accordance with her reputation outside of the letters, the correspondence could have been forged. Thus, what the letters tell us about Heloise may never be wholly certain, and until an original manuscript of the correspondence can be found, historians will have to content themselves with the probability. Forgery remains a possibility, but the probability is that the letters, perhaps edited in the thirteenth century, or earlier, are genuine, the product of two authors, and that Abelard himself was no forger.

CHAPTER 7

THE LEGACY OF HELOISE

As if addressed to both Abelard and God, Heloise spoke the words of Cornelia before taking her vows:

O noble husband,
Too great for me to wed, was it my fate
To bend that lofty head? What prompted me
To marry you and bring about your fall?
Now claim your due, and see me gladly pay....¹

Not suprisingly, the complaint of Cornelia has begun and ended many works concerning Heloise. Usually accepted as an ultimate expression of medieval humanism, historians were never moved to look much further for evidence of Heloise's humanism. It was a testament to her classical learning, as well as an expression of her love for Abelard that took precedence over God's demands. However, Heloise's recitation of Cornelia serves another purpose, as from it the legacy of Heloise unfolds. The complaint is not just evidence of classical erudition or obedience to Abelard, but it, in itself, is evidence of an Heloise that existed apart from the letters. From that initial admission, Heloise turned her resolve to build, I believe, a more positive conception of women, a resolve given reality at the Paraclete and

¹Abelard, Historia, Radice, 76.

substantiated in the liturgy and in her rule for the community she ruled.

We do know from the outside evidence that Heloise was indeed educated. Abelard, Peter the Venerable, Guillaume Godel and other contemporaries all praised her learning, and from that alone there would be little reason to believe otherwise. As an abbess she also gathered praise from both Abelard and Peter the Venerable, not to mention Pope Adrian IV; yet other evidence substantiates that she was an accomplished leader, as she and her nuns built a convent and established six-daughter houses from what was originally only a stone oratory built by Abelard's students. Apart from the personal Heloise, the legacy of Heloise, how she improved monastic life for women, comes into view when examining the rule and the liturgy of the Paraclete. In both a conventional and exceptional manner, the nuns were allowed to manage their own affairs and deal with the laity with little interference from the male monastic community. Although nuns were given similar authority at Fontevrault and later at Sempringham, this does not deny or reduce Heloise's major role in this reform movement. Reform can also be seen in the liturgy of the Paraclete. Although Abelard's contribution to the liturgy is prominent in providing a hymnal and in forming processions, it was Heloise who created a sanctoral cycle which preceded the Cistercian liturgical reforms: it was in

1152 that the Cistercians raised 104 saints to commemoration.² Though here too Heloise is not unique, as women saints began in the twelfth century to receive more elaborate and significant commemorations in other monasteries,³ her role is significant, influential, and important. Under Heloise, the Paraclete sought innovation and followed reform which made religious life for women a more positive experience, for some, like Christina of Markyate, a refuge, for others like Heloise exile, refuge and opportunity all in one.

Heloise can be seen in the context of the thirteenth-century women's movement which Lawrence and Bynum have described. Heloise not only improved religious life for women, but she contributed to the female language or 'female sensibility' that evolved in the middle ages. Women such as Gertrude of Hefta and Mechtild of Hackeborn were aware of their relatively low position in society compared to man, yet they sought prominence. At times they realized their need

²Waddell notes that the Paraclete liturgy of 1147-1150 precedes the Cistercian revisions of 1152 that began to include more female saints, CLS: Number Three, 333; The Paraclete hymnody pre-dated the Cistercian reforms by fifteen years, see Waddell, "Peter Abelard's Letter 10 and Cistercian Liturgical Reform," 75-86.

³Talbot, 24-26. Weinstein and Bell note this larger trend when in the thirteenth century the percentage of women saints nearly doubled: in the eleventh century only one in twelve saints was a woman (11 of 128), rising to only 11.8 percent (18 of 153) in the twelfth century; yet, in the thirteenth century 22.6 percent of all saints were women or (36 of 159), see Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, Saints and Society: Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 220-21.

for importance in theology, and discovered that in the concept of God they could find a unique relationship with God. Heloise demonstrated these qualities in her life, her activity, and in her letters. This coherence amongst disparate evidence creates an evidential convergence towards the Heloise of history. This is so marked that to consider Abelard the author of Heloise's letters would not simply portray the "genius," of Leclercq's evocation,⁴ but would make of him a sexual chameleon, capable of capturing what it is to be uniquely female.

The positive distinction given to the female sex is undeniable in the writings of the female troubadour. The woman becomes more noble, as the writer clearly marks the unique relationship woman has to God. Gertrude of Hefta (d. 1291) was aware of her sex, yet she bypasses any male subjection and reaches directly to God, describing her vision of Christ:

....You are the delicate taste of intimate sweetness
 Oh most delicate caresser
 Gentlest passion
 Most ardent lover
 Sweetest spouse
 Most pure pursuer....⁵

In this, Gertrude experiences the enlightenment of knowing Christ through ecstasy, and takes Christ as her lover and

⁴Jean Leclercq, "Modern Psychology and the Interpretation of Medieval Texts," 482-85.

⁵Bynum, Jesus As Mother, 188.

pursuer making the experience one unique to women. Now, the sexual and the erotic become part of prayer instead of the interruption of prayer which Heloise experienced:

In my case, the pleasures of lovers which we shared have been too sweet--they can never displease me, and can scarcely be banished from my thoughts. Wherever I turn they are always there before my eyes, bringing with them awakened longings and fantasies which will not even let me sleep. Even during the celebration of Mass, when our prayers should be purer, lewd visions of those pleasures take such a hold of my unhappy soul that my thoughts are on wantonness instead of prayers.⁶

Abelard's response and consolation to Heloise's carnal interruptions followed:

It was he (Christ) who truly loved you, not I. My love, which brought us both to sin, should be called lust, not love. I took fill of my wretched pleasures in you, and this was the sum total of my love. You say I suffered for you, and perhaps that is true, but it was really through you and even this, unwillingly; not for love of you but under compulsion, and to bring you not salvation but sorrow. But he suffered truly for your salvation, on your behalf of his own free will, and by his suffering he cures all sickness and removes all suffering. To him, I beseech you, not me, should be directed all your devotion, all your compassion, all your remorse.⁷

⁶"In tantum vero illae, quas pariter exercuimus, amantium voluptates dulces mihi fuerunt ut nec displicere mihi, nec vix a memoria labi possint. Quocumque loco me vertam, semper se oculis meis cum suis ingerunt desideriiis. Nec etiam dormienti suis illusionibus parcunt. Inter ipsa missarum solemnia, ubi purior esse debet oratio, obscena earum voluptatum phantasmata ita sibi penitus miserrimam captivant animam ut turpitudinibus illis magis quam orationi vacem.," Heloise, "Letter 3," Muckle, 15: 80-81; Radice, 133.

⁷"Amabat te ille veraciter, non ego. Amor meus, qui utrumque nostrum peccatis involvebat, concupiscentia, non amor dicendus est. Miseras in te meas voluptates implebam, et hoc erat totum quod amabam. Pro te, inquis, passus sum, et fortassis verum est, sed magis per te, et hoc ipsum invitatus, non amore tui, sed coactione mei, nec ad tuam salutem, sed ad dolorem. Ille vero salubriter, ille pro te sponte passus est

It is not certain if in fact Heloise did turn her sole devotion to Christ, for in Letter 5 she abandoned discussion of her troubles and addressed her attention to a monastic rule for women.⁸ The importance of this passage is that Heloise remembered her carnal past with Abelard as sweet and worthy of distracting her spiritual-self; whereas Abelard described his love for her as lust and felt his passion to be wretched and sinful. Thus, although their objects of devotion differed, both Heloise and Gertude appeared to possess a female language found in ecstatic experience.

The notion of female prominence is also evident in Heloise's work apart from the letters. In the sanctoral cycle, Heloise and the nuns of the Paraclete found comfort in other women saints who suffered, perhaps as they did. Eugenia, Anastasia, Aldegundis, and Radegund were Christian women who either fled suitors, established monasteries or became martyrs. The anchoress Christina of Markyate is also witness to this phenomenon, as she too adopted more female saints into her priory's liturgy. As a result, female saints as Christian symbols legitimized the Christian life to those who had exhausted every method of conversion: postulants could at least find comfort in a shared suffering. It is not

qui passione sua omnem curat languorem, omnem removet passionem. In hoc, obsecro, non in me tua tota sit devotio, tota compassio, tota compunctio.," Abelard, "Letter 4, " Muckle, 15: 92; Radice, 153.

⁸See Chapter 6, "As one nail drives out another hammered in,."

difficult to imagine the importance of these women saints to twelfth-century women and their significance in daily services. Perhaps the abbess described by Mechtild of Hackeborn also spoke of female saints in her stories to nuns and the laity:

The sisters gathered around her as around a preacher to hear the word of God. She was the refuge and consoler of all and by a singular gift had the ability to make others open to her in trust the secret of their hearts; how many not only in the monastery but also from outside, religious and seculars, came from afar and were rescued by her from their troubles; and they said that they had discovered such consolation nowhere except with her. She dictated and taught so many prayers that if they were all collected together they would surpass the number of psalter....She merits a place with (the thrones and principalities) because, like the prince of an army, she with her sister the abbess governed the monastery well and with good order in both interior and exterior things....⁹

It is clear that female clerics in the thirteenth century ruled their convents as strongly as Heloise and the abbesses at Fontevrault did in the twelfth century, opening the doors to the laity and establishing their own autonomy. But the passage also shows women telling the simple Christian story--story telling in which through ecstatic poetry, mystical food theology, or accounts of female saints a better conception of Christian femininity could be attained.

Thus, a distinct female language developed in the High Middle Ages; and therein lies the final defense of the

⁹From Mechtild of Hackeborn's Book of Special Grace, Bynum, Jesus as Mother, 225.

Heloise's letters. In 1973, Jean Leclerq argued that the disputed letters can be shown to be the work of two distinct individuals with two different "psycho-dynamisms."¹⁰ It is Heloise who is still disturbed with erotic fantasies during prayer; while Abelard abandons such thoughts. She blames God for her forced separation from Abelard; whereas Abelard only offers sin as the cause for their punishment. It is possible Abelard could have contrived the differences, but in Leclerq's context it would have been a difficult feat, thus lessening the possibility of forgery. Secondly, two distinct individuals emerge not only from the letters but also elsewhere. Outside evidence confirms the differences between Abelard and Heloise evident to Leclerq in the letters: the rule of Heloise differs from Abelard's commands, allowing for greater interaction with the laity and providing for a more liberal monastic diet; Heloise's undeniable reputation for classical learning is given basis in a more classically profound Heloise who cited classical authors more frequently than Abelard, and differently; and finally, the abundance of female figures in the liturgy of the Paraclete confirms that Heloise possessed a female sensibility which was not of Abelard's creation.

From all of this evidence, a clear conception of the Heloise of history can be gained, and no recourse to the

¹⁰Leclerq, 482-84.

letters is necessary. Her classical influences, her education and accomplishments as an abbess combined create a substantive historical role for an abbess of learning, ability, and sensitivity, in an age of remarkable women. The humanism evident in Heloise's desire to reform monastic life to fit the needs of women, and in the creation of a liturgy which contained a more obviously human, a humane, element was given subtle, but nonetheless passionate expression. Whatever the debate about her letters may finally conclude the Heloise of history is there to be seen and assessed quite independently of them. She was a woman of learning, influenced by classical writers, a practiced and successful participant in monastic reform with a voice and mind of her own, and the friend particularly of Peter the Venerable, but also of Bernard. We should regard her, then, first as a woman of great accomplishment and personality, and then, and only then as the legendary lover of Abelard. When the Heloise of history takes precedence of her romantic representation, this latter-day Cornelia's place in and for her time can be better understood, and the debate over the authenticity of the letters can be seen for what it is--a perplexed debate of marginal academic interest. It is doubtful if it can ever finally be proved that Heloise did--or did not--write the letters ascribed to her, but what is clear is that she could have done so, and that the Heloise

of the letters is consonant with the larger Heloise of real life. Any historian bent on disproving Heloise's authorship, or proving Abelard's, faces a formidable adversary in the Heloise of history, and even if such an endeavor was carried to a successful conclusion it would leave the stature of the Heloise of history undiminished, and her humanism unimpaired. She remains one of the most remarkable representatives of the greatest of medieval centuries.

APPENDIX
DOCUMENTS

I.--EXCERPTA E REGULIS PARACLETENSIS MONASTERII.¹

De convenientia consuetudinum.--Domino super nos prospiciente, et aliqua loca nobis largiente, misimus quasdam ex nostris ad religionem tenendam, numero sufficiente. Annotamus autem boni propositi nostri consuetudines; ut quod tenuit mater incommutabiliter, teneant et filiae uniformiter.

De habitu.--Habitus noster vilis est et simplex, in agninis pellibus, in lineis et laneis vestibus. In iis emendis vel faciendis non eliguntur pretiosa, sed quod vilius comparari vel haberi potest. Quodcunque sufficere debeat annotandum esset; sed longe sumus a sufficientia.

De lectis.--In lectulis nostris habemus culcitrae, et pulvinaria, et lintea lineae, sicut dividitur. Si non recipiant singulae quod sufficiat, paupertati adscribitur.

De cibis.--Pane quolibet vescimur; si fuerit triticum; si defuerit, pane cujuslibet annonae. In refectorio nostro cibi sine carnibus sunt legumina, et ea quae nutrit hortus. Lac, ova, et caseus rarius apponuntur, et pisces, si dati fuerint. Vinum mixtum sit aqua. Duo pulmenta in prima refectione habentur. In coena vero herbae, vel fructus, vel aliquid tale, si haberi poterit. Horum quoque deficientiam sine murmure portamus.

De obedientia.--Soli abbatissae et priorissae debitum exhibetur obedientiae. Nulla praesumit claustra monasterii egredi sine harum licentia, nulla loqui, nulla nulla dare aliquid vel recipere, retinere, nisi quod permissum fuerit. De caetero, nobis invicem obedimus affectu charitatis.

Unde necessaria proveniant.--Religionis erat de cultu terrarum et labore proprio vivere, si possemus. Sed quia debilitate non sufficimus, admittimus conversos et conversas, ut quae per nos administrari rigor non permittit religionis, per eos adimpleantur. Recipimus etiam quascunque fidelium eleemosynas, more caeterarum ecclesiarum.

Quando egredimur.--Statutum tenemus, quod nulla velata, causa cujuscunque necessitatis, egrediatur ad forensia negotia, vel ingrediatur domum cujuslibet secularis. Ad familiaria vero negotia, et ad custodiam rerum nostrarum, mittimus in domos nostras probatas tam aetate quam vita et moniales et conversas.

De longinquo venientibus.--Supervenientem nobiscum diu manere non permittimus; sed si remanere voluerit, et eam ratio suscipi permiserit, primo septem dies, aut profiteatur, aut discedat.

¹Cousin, 213-34. The monastic rule for the Praemonstratensian order follows after Heloise's rule.

Quando sit conversa monialis.--Si ad nos aliqua conversa veniens in conversatione laicarum suscepta fuerit, nullatenus postea moniales efficietur, sed in ea vocatione, in qua vocata, est, permaneat.

II.--LITTERAE, SEU DIPLOMATA SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM, AD
HELOISSAM PARACLITI ABBATISSAM.²

A. *Innocentius episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae priorissae, caeterisque sororibus in oratorio Sanctae Trinitatis, quod in pago Trecensi, in parrochia Quinceii, supra fluvium Arduconem situm est, divino famulatui mancipatis tam praesentibus quam futuris in perpetuum. Quoties illud a nobis petitur quod rationi cognoscitur convenire, animo nos decet libenti concedere, et petentium desideriis congruum impertiri suffragium. Proinde dilectae in Domino filiae, vestris justis postulationibus assensum praebentes, monasterium Sanctae Trinitatis, in quo divino vacatis servitio sub apostolicae sedis protectione suscipimus, et praesentis scripti pagina communimus, statuentes ut quascunque possessiones, quaecunque bona in praesentiarum juste et legitime possidetis, aut in futurum concessione pontificum, liberalitate regum vel principum. oblatione fidelium seu aliis justis modis praestante Domino poteritis adipisci, firma vobis in perpetuum et illibata permaneant. Sane laborum vestrorum decimas quas propriis excolitis sumptibus, seu annualium absque contradictione aliqua vobis concedimus possidendas. Nulli ergo hominum fas sit praefatum monasterium temere perturbare, aut ejus possessiones auferre, vel ablatas retinere, minuere, aut aliquibus vexationibus fatigare, sed haec omnia integra conserventur, vestris usibus perpetuo profutura. Ad indicium autem perceptae hujus a romana Ecclesia libertatis, sex nummos quotannis Lateranensi palatio persolveretis. Si qua igitur in futurum ecclesiastica secularisve persona hanc nostrae constitutionis paginam sciens, contra eam temere venire tentaverit, secundo tertioque commonita, si non satisfactione congrua emendaverit, potestatis honorisque sui dignitate careat, et a sacratissimo corpore ac sanguine Dei et Domini redemptoris nostri Jesu Christi aliena fiat, atque in extremo examine districtae ultioni subjaceat. Conservantes autem, intervenientibus beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli meritis, gratiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi et aeternae felicitatis praemia consequantur. Amen. Ego Innocentius catholicae Ecclesiae episcopus. Datum Autissiodori, per manum Aldierici sanctae romanae Ecclesiae diacone cardinalis et cancellarii, IV cal. decembris, ind. X, incarnationis Dominicae anno MCXXXI, pontificatus vero domini Innocentii papae II, anno II.

B. *Innocentius episcopus*, servus servorum Deis, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae, caeterisque sororibus in oratorio sanctae Trinitatis, quod in pago Trecensi, in

²Ibid, 719-26.

parochia Quinceii supra fluvium Arduconem situm est, divino famulatu mancipatis tam praesentibus quam futuris in perpetuum. Quotiens illud, etc. [*Ut in proequenti litt.*] Ad haec adjicientes statuimus, ne propter benedictionem et consecrationem percipiendam de monasterio exire cogamini. Nec pro electione abbatissae, aut alia qualibet occasione episcopus, vel alia qualibet persona, ullum vobis gravamen vel molestiam inferre praesumat. Nulli ergo omnino, etc. Ad iudicium autem perceptae hujus a romana Ecclesia libertatis unum obolum aureum quotannis Lateranensi palatio persolvitis. Si qua igitur, etc. Data Lisis, per manum Almerici sanctae romanae Ecclesiae diaconi cardinalis et cancellarii, XV cal. julii, ind. XIII, incarnationes Dominicae anno MCXXXVI, pontificatus domini Innocentii papae II, anno VI.

C. *Innocentius episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae et sanctimonialibus Paraclitensis coenobii salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Religiosis desideriis dignum est facilem praebere consensum, ut fidelis devotio celerem sortiatur effectum. Quanto itaque femineus sexus exstat fragilior, tanto magis erga vos paternam curam atque sollicitudinem volumus exhibere, et in quibus secundum Deum possumus quiete et utilitati vestrae salubriter providere. Locum itaque suum cum omnibus ad ipsum pertinentibus, quem Gundricus sacerdos in paterno praedio constructum religiosorum precibus et consilio rationabiliter vobis concessit, auctoritate vobis apostolica confirmamus, et concessionem ipsam praesentis scripti pagina roboramus. Si quis autem hujus nostrae constitutionis paginam sciens contra eam temere temptaverit, secundo tertiove commonitus, si non reatum suum congrua satisfactione correxerit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei, ei beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum ejus se noverit incursurum. Datum Laterani, III cal. januarii.

D. *Lucius episcopus* servus servorum Dei dilectis in Domino filiabus Heloissae abbatissae, caeterisque sororibus in oratorio Sanctae Trinitatis divino famulatu mancipatis, etc. [*ut in I Innocentii Epist.*]. Datum Laterani, per manum Barrocii capellani et scriptoris, id. martii, ind. VII, incarnationis Dominicae anno MCXLII, pontificatus vero domini Lucii II papae anno I.

E. *Eugenius* servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae Sancti Spiritus ejusque sororibus tam praesentibus quam futuris regularem vitam professis. Ad hoc nobis a provisorum omnium bonorum Deo pastoralis officii cura commissa est, ut beneplacentem Deo religionem laboremus statuere, et stabilitam exacta diligentia conservare. Ea propter, dilectae in Domino filiae, vestris justis postulationibus clementer annuimus, et praefatum monasterium, in quo divino mancipatae estis

obsequio, sub beati Petri et nostra protectione suscipimus, et praesentis scripti privilegio communimus, statuentes ut quascunque possessiones, quaecunque bona in agris, vineis, pratis, silvis, molendinis, aquis, decimis, seu aliis idem monasterium in praesentiarum juste et canonice possidet, aut in futurum concessione pontificum, largitione regum vel principum, oblatione fidelium, seu aliis justis modis Deo propitio poterit adipisci, firma vobis, eisque quae post vos successerint, et illibata permaneant, in quibus haec specialiter duximus annotanda. Terram videlicet, in qua ipsum monasterium constructum est. Culturas in monte Limarsum. Quicquid habetis ex venditione seu donatione Milonis. Duo jugera terrae ante ipsum monasterium. Aliam terram in eodem loco. Culturam de fonte Aman. Totam terram quam Rainaldus habedat in parrochia de Quinceio, ex utraque parte fluvioli Arducionis. Molendinum de Brufleto, culturam et quasdam alias terras, quas Hilduinus Decanus, et Seguinus frater ejus, et cognati eorum monasterio vestro dederunt. Medietatem furni de Quinceio, et vineam Baboel de Calestra. Quicquid Arpinus de Mariaco tenebat de feodo Milonis, ex illa parte Sequanae in qua monasterium est. Terram de Busseto, terras quas habetis apud Fontanetum Petrosus, et apud Bociam Vagonis, et in valle Faiel. Quatuor ochas de terra apud Ferroum, medietatem totius nemoris et terrae de Furvellis. Decem jugera terrae apud Bocennaium. Tertiam partem molendi molentis et sextam terentis, et totam piscationem quam Maria de Balbusia habebat apud Pontes, et terram apud Pomerulos. Modium frumenti singulis annis ab illustri comite Theobaldo vobis donatum, et totam piscationem in molendinis suis apud Pontes. Vineam quam dedit vobis Berfridus de Calestra, et duodecim denarios census apud sanctum Ferreolum, vineam apud Calestram, censum quinque solidorum in eodem loco. Apud Montem Portarum censum trium solidorum. Terram de Croisum. Totam terram, quam Rainaldus, filius Milonis, habebat in Murgeoris, usus nemorum de Gurgiuolt et de Poiseo, de Maceilliaco, de Charmeio et omnium nemorum Anselii de Triagnell tam ad pasturam pecorum quam ad aedificia, seu alia necessaria. Censum quinque solidorum in ponte de Baldimento, et sex solidos in molendino de Canturanae, et quinque solidos in Oscha Theold, apud Gurgiuolt, et vineam de fonte Beton, et quicquid Willelmus habebat in prato Gandleu; vineam de Saldon. Ex dono Gauterii de Curtemaim duos sextarios siliginis singulis annis. Terram de Tilliaco. Quicquid legitime habetis ex dono Hervulfi de Insula apud Summum-Fontem, et apud Trembleium. Molendinum de Barsam. Medietatem molendini de fonte Amau. Partem molendini pagani de Frou. Quicquid habetis apud Planteiz. Censum sex denariorum ab Uberto de Tranqueil. Quicquid Thelhellinus habebat in eodem loco praeter homines. Tetram Amici militis de Summo-Fonte. Quicquid Ermengardius Postellus habebat in molendinis canonicorum Villae Maurorum, et in hortis ultra

pontem Vanae. Partem piscationis, quam Felix habebat in aqua
 Bucennaii, et partem quam habebat in terra Scrobium, et
 census duorum solidorum ab eodem. Terram, in qua granchia
 vestra est, et oscham in eodem loco. Terram quam dederunt
 Amaldricus et Hilduimus. Prata de Vergeron. Terras quas
 habetis apud Quinceium. Quartam partem prati de Orella.
 Quatuor arpennos prati apud Tilleium. Medietatem molendini
 de Quinceio. Totum tenementum Gaufridi. Dimidium arpennum
 vineae Ponstingiatus. Ex dono Hugonis Capri vineam de
 Montearpon, et domum in qua ipse manebat, et cellarium.
 Tenementum Guarni apud Sanceium. Vineam apud Sesanam.
 Terram inter Pisiacum et Aizium. Molendinum de Bretenniaco.
 Molendinum, terram et pratum apud Marcilliacum. Octavam
 partem nemoris de Pisiaco, aliam partem in eodem nemore. Ex
 dono Gualterii Rungifer, quatuor arpennos prati, et
 quadraginta solidos census. Ex dono Heloissae de Villari,
 terram, vineam et domum. Quicquid Rodolphus Gaius habebat in
 bosco Fraxineti, ex dono praefati comitis Theobaldi.
 Sexdecim sextarios annonae in molendino de Stagno.
 Molendinum de Changeio. Quindecim sextarios annonae in
 molendino de Planca. Molendinum de Justigniaco. Medietatem
 molendini de Crevecuer et vineam. Medietatem furni
 Vicecomitissae. Medietatem prati subter ecclesiam Sancti
 Nicolai. Vineas Paulae et Emmellinae, tenementum Petri de
 Valle, et tres denarios census de Ponne. Vineas Galcherii
 Cementarii. Arpennum vineae, et quatuordecim denarios census
 a Frodemundo Peregrino. Vineam Hugonis Butarii. Vineam
 Rahaldis. Septem jugera terrae a Petro de Ponne. Quatuor
 jugera ab Alburge de Ponne. Duo jugera et aream a praedicto
 Gaulcherio. Septem jugera ab Ada de Altomuro. Arpennum
 prati, et dimidium, et medietatem domus ab Emmelina Rebursta.
 Arpennum prati et dimidium a Bonade Prouvino. Pratum
 Teodorici. Domum Ascranae et plateam. Domos Richeldis,
 Paulae, Hugonis Butarii, Loberii, Adan, Joannis Tyranni et
 dimidiam domum Sunbardi. Domum Bonelli Uvaure, et medietatem
 alter domus. Tres cameras et vineam ejusdem. Modium avenae
 et viginti gallinas a Margareta vicecomitissa de Marrolis.
 Molendinum de Roschas. Quartam partem domus ab Andrea. Sex
 jugera terrae in Campo levato, et decem et octo jugera
 desuper montem Hanepon. Quartam partem terrae de Villa-Cren.
 Dimidium plantae de Fuliniaco. Ab Evrado, vineam et duodecim
 denarios census. Tenementum uxoris Pagani sellarii, et tres
 solidos census apud Lisinas, et domum ejusdem Pagani apud
 Pruvinum. Terram Radulphi canonici apud Lizinniam.
 Medietatem domus in atrio Sancti Nicolai. Septem solidos
 census apud Calestram. Viginti solidos apud Pruvinum.
 Viginti solidos apud Lisinnias. Septem et dimidium a Tescia
 Majorissa. Decem et septem de monte Henepon. Quatuor
 solidos et duos denarios de Buath. Duos solidos a Godefrido
 Monetario. Viginti solidos in terris Couleti. Terram
 Greviarum. Ex dono praeterea Hatonis Trecensis episcopi

medietatem omnis decimae de sancto Albino, et medietatem candelarum in purificatione sanctae Mariae. Totam decimam de Aneuz. Quidquid Petrus sanctus habebat in oblatione Ecclesiae de Tranqueil, et partem decimae ejusdem loci. Tertiam partem praefatae oblationis, et censum atrii, et majorem partem decimae de Parigniaco. Quidquid habetis in decimis de Balbusia, et apud sanctum Parrum in decimis de Quinceio, et apud Ulmellos duas partes decimae de Gurgiuolt. Quidquid habetis in decima de Villagruis. Tertiam partem decimae de Nogennio. Decimam quam habetis apud Aurigniacum, apud Occe, et Malpigniacum, et sanctum Flavitum. Quidquid habetis apud Marigniacum in decimis et oblatione, et apud utramque ecclesiam de Bocennay, apud Ferroum, apud Capellam, et apud Codes, apud Calestram, apud Maferial, apud Bernerias. Quidquid etiam Petrus sacerdos de Parrigniaco vobis donnavit in domibus, vineis, seu aliis. De dono Henrici Senonensis archiepiscopi, decimam de Lisignis, et partem decimae de Cuchermeyo. Loco vero de Triagnello et Pomario, quemadmodum vobis rationabiliter concessa sunt, cum universis appendiciis suis auctoritate vobis apostolica confirmamus, et in vestra subjectione manere decernimus, juxta videlicet dispositionem Paraclitensis abbatissae suarumque sororum priorissae statuatur et mutentur. Decernimus autem ne propter consecrationem vel benedictionem percipiendam de monasterio exire cogamini, nec pro electione abbatissae, aut alia qualibet occasione episcopus vel alius gravamen vobis vel molestiam inferat. De laboribus etiam vestris seu annualibus nullus a vobis decimas exigit. Ad indicium itaque perceptae hujus a romana Ecclesia libertatis, unum obolum aureum singulis annis nobis nostrique successoribus persolvete. Nulli ergo hominum liceat praefatum monasterium temere perturbare, aut ejus possessiones auferre, vel ablatas retinere, minuere, aut aliquibus molestiis fatigare; sed omnia integra conserventur eorum; pro quarum sustentatione et gubernatione concessa sunt, usibus profutura. Salva sedis apostolicae auctoritate. Si qua igitur, etc. [*ut in I Innocentii Epist.*]. Datum Catalauni, per manum Guidonis sanctae religionis Ecclesiae diaconi cardinalis et cancellarii, cal. novembris, ind. XI, incarnationis Dominicae anno MCXLVII, pontificatus vero domini Eugenii III papae anno III.

F. *Anastasius episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae, caeterisque sororibus in oratorio Sancti Spiritus, quod in pago Trecensi, in parrochia Quinceii supra fluvium Arduconem situm est, divino famulatui mancipatis tam praesentibus quam futuris, etc. [*ut in praecedenti Eugenii Epist.*]. Ex dono Gauterii Rungifer, quatuor arpennos prati et quatuor arpennos terrae, quadraginta solidos census et corveas, etc. A Godefrido monetario, decem solidos census, a Fulcherio Pentecoste, et

quicquid habebat in furno alodii. Quinquaginta solidos census a defuncto Stephano vicario et Andrea nepote suo. Quinque solidos census a defuncta Aalis. Decem solidos census a Petro de Porta. Quicquid habetis apud Sulimatum et apud Pontem. Ab uxore Gualterii de Fontineto, viginti solidos census in terris Corileti. Loca vero de Triagnello, et Pomario, et Leavalle, quemadmodum vobis rationabiliter concessa sunt, etc. Datum Laterani, per manum Rolandi sanctae romanae Ecclesiae presbyteri cardinalis et cancellarii, VII cal. februarii, ind. II, incarnationis Dominicae anno MCLIII, pontificatus vero domini Anastasii IV papae....

G. *Adrianus episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae, caeterisque in oratione Sancti Spiritus, quod in pago Trecensi situm est, divino famulatui mancipatis, etc. [ut in superiori Eugenii Epist.]. Loca vero de Pomario, Triagnello, Leavalle, Neforto, Sancti Flaviti, quemadmodum vobis rationabiliter concessa sunt, auctoritate vobis apostolica confirmamus, etc. Datum Laterani, per manum Alberti sancti Adriani diaconi cardinalis, vicem domini Rollandi sanctae romanae Ecclesiae prebyteri cardinalis et cancellarii gerentis, cal. decembris, ind. XI, incarnationis Dominicae anno MCLVII, pontificatus vero domini Adriani papae IV, anno III.

H. *Adrianus episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae, caeterisque sororibus Paracliti, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Et injuncti nobis a Deo apostolatus officium nos impellit, et bonae vestrae conversationis odor horatur justis postulationibus vestris benignum impertiri consensum, et quae ad utilitatem et quietem vestram pertinent libenti animo adimplere. Ea propter, dilectae in Domino filiae, laboribus vestris providere volentes, sepeliendi apud abbatiam vestram tum fratres vestros proprium non habentes, liberam vobis, et iis quae post vos successerint, licentiam auctoritate apostolica indulgemus. Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrae constitutionis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contra ire. Si quis autem hoc attemptare praesumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei, et beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum ejus se noverit incursurum. Datum Beneventi, id. februarii.

I. *Adrianus episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus, Heloissae abbatissae monasterii de Paraclito ejusque sororibus, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Quotiens religiosae personae a nobis talia postulant, quae a rationis tramite non discordant, ad concedendum quod petitur non debemus difficiles inveniri. Ea propter, dilectae in Domino filiae, vestri justis

postulationibus gratum impertientes assensum, auctoritate vobis apostolica concedimus, ut eos qui de facultatibus suis Ecclesiae vestrae grata conferunt solatia charitatis, si forte non proprio reatu, sed pro alienis sunt excessibus interdicti, liceat vobis ad sepulturam recipere, et ipsos in cimiterio vestro cum aliis fidelibus tumulare. Datum Laterani, VII cal. decembris.

J. *Alexander episcopus*, servus servorum Dei, dilectis in Christo filiabus Heloissae abbatissae, caeterisque sororibus in oratorio Sancti Spiritus, quod in pago Trecensi situm est, divino famulatui mancipatis, etc. [*ut in praecedenti Eugenii Epist.*]. Loca vero de Triagnello, Leavalle, Neoforto, Sancti Flaviti, quemadmodum vobis rationabiliter concessa sunt, cum universis appendiciis suis auctoritate vobis apostolica confirmamus, etc. Datum Parisius, per manum Hermannii sanctae romanae Ecclesiae subdiaconi et notarii, VIII id. aprilis, ind. X, incarnationis Dominicae anno MCLXIII, pontificatus vero domini Alexandri papae III anno IV.

K. *Ego Hugo*, Dei gratia Senonensis archiepiscopus, notum omnibus fieri volo praesentibus et futuris, quod Heloissa Paraclitensis abbatissa interventu religiosorum virorum concessit Blesensi comitissae, laude et voluntate totius capituli sui, locum Pomerii ad construendam abbatiam, statutis inter se quibusdam conventionibus, quas duximus annotandas. Statutum itaque fuit et divisum, quod haec prima abbatissa Pomerii, quae nunc est, constituta domina Gertrude nobili et honesta femina, quae canonice electa fuit apud Paraclitum de dominabus ejusdem Ecclesiae; caeterae, quae post ipsam primam substituentur in eodem loco, canonice eligentur secundum aliarum consuetudinem ecclesiarum, et assumuntur de ipsa Ecclesia, si in ea potuerint inveniri. Sin autem, transibunt ad Ecclesiam Paracliti, et de ea sibi assument abbatissam, et ad aliam per electionem non licebit eis pertransire Ecclesiam, quoniam alium ordinem nisi Paraclitensem non licebit eis observare. Abbatissa vero Paracliti semel in anno ibit Pomerium, et sedens in capitulo emendabit si quid fuerit emendandum de ordine, vel de aliqua re ad ordinem pertinente. Pro concessione sane praedicti loci dedit comitissa ecclesiae Paracliti ters modios frumenti per singulos annos in molendino suo Pruvini sub Crevecor, laude quidem filiorum suorum comitum Henrici, Theobaldi et Stephani, promisitque rem juste garantire. Et hoc fuit ad voluntatem abbatissae Paraclitensis et totius capituli sui. Promisit et abbatissa Paracliti, promisit et comitissae, quod nec per dominum papam nec per alium aliquem quod factum fuerat aliquo modo immutaretur: sed et condiciones inter utramque Ecclesiam superius designatae a neutra parte abolerentur. Harum conventionum mediatorem me posuerunt et abbatissa et comitissa, atque benigna ultriusque partis postulatione in manu accepi rem, sicuti fuerat simpliciter ac devote celebrata, opitulante Domino in finem permanere. Ut autem et modernis et successurae posteritati firmum et ratum habeatur, auctoritate sigilli nostri muniri fecimus chirographi divisione.

III.--CHARTA MATTHAEI EPISCOPI ALBANENSIS & SEDIS APOST.
LEGATI PRO COENOBIO BEATE MARIAE DE ARGENTOLIO
SANDIONYSRANCIS MONACHIS RESTITUENDO.³

In nomine summi Dei, & salvatoris nostri J. C. Matthaeus divinae gratia dispositione Albanensis episcopus, & apostolicae sedis legatus. Quoniam ad nostrae dignitatis potestatem pertinere constat circa ecclesiasticae cultum religionis summa sollicitudine fideliter elaborare, immunda cuncta eliminare, utilia quoque studiose sublantare, ideo summopere nobis injuncto officio oportet invigilare. Eapropter cum nuper in praesentia domini serenissimi regis Francorum Hludovici, cum fratribus nostris episcopis, Remensi scilicet archiepiscopo R. Parisiensi episcopo Stephano, Carnotensi episcopo G. Suessionensi episcopo G. aliisque quam plurimis de sacri ordinis reformatione per diversa Galliarum, in quibus tepuerat, monasteria, Parisius ageremus, subito in communi audientia conclamatum est super enormitate & infamia cujusdam monasterii fanctimonialium, quod dicitur Argentolium, in quo paucae moniales multiplici infamia ad ignominiam sui ordinis degentes multo tempore spurca & infami conversatione omnem ejusdem loci affinitatem foedaverant; cumque omnes qui aderant...illarum expulsionem insistens abbas fancti Dionysii Suggestus emunitatibus suis apostolorum confirmatione certissimis in medium ostensis, praefatum monasterium ad jus ecclesiae suae pertinere satis evidenter ostendit; unde nos cum fratribus nostris praenominatis participato consilio, & quia illud venerabile B. Dionysii coenobium potissimum in suis temporibus inter alia Galliae totius monasteria Dei misericordia, & sanctorum martyrum intercessione omni religione irradiatum vidimus, hanc ei injunximus obedientiam, ut illis in religiosis locatis monasteriis, ibidem monachos suos, qui Deo religiose deserviant, substitueret. Et ut haec nostrae constitutionis concessio, tam sibi, quam posteris, firmissima habeatur in perpetuum, ei apostolica auctoritate, nostrique sigilli corroboracione firmavimus, hoc idem Parisiensi episcopo, in cujus parochia est, primum faciente & confirmante.

³Gallia Christiana, vol. 7, Instrumenta 53.

IV.--Bulle du Pape Honore II⁴

Honorius Episcopus servus servorum Dei, dilecto in Christo filio Suggestio Abbati sancti Dionysii salutem & Apostolicam benedictionem. Tunc religionis amor & caritatis unitas in sui status perfectione servatur, si quod a membris ecclesiae rationabili dispositione constituitur, a capite roboratur. Nos igitur in Sede beati Petri Apostoli, cui Christus ecclesiarum omnium contulit principatum, licet indigni a Domino constituti, unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis conservare volumus, & quae a fratribus nostris constituta sunt propensiori studio auctoritate Apostolica confirmamus. Venerabilis siquidem frater noster Stephanus Parisiensis Episcopus, sicut ex suarum literarum inspectione cognovimus, monasterium Argentolium, in quo quaedam malae, prout dicebatur, vitae mulieres vivebant, quod etiam ex antiquis Regum praeceptis cognoscitur jure monasterio sancti Dionysii pertinere, in praesentia venerabilium fratrum nostrorum Matthaei Albanensis Episcopi Apostolicae sedis Legati, Rainaldi Remensis Archiepiscopi, Gaufridi Carnotensis, Gosleni Suessionensis Episcoporum, hortatu etiam charissimi filii nostri Ludovici illustris & gloriosi Regis Francorum, dilecte in Domino sibi Suggestio Abbas, intuitu religionis sibi & monasterio sancti Dionysii (salvo jure Parisiensis ecclesiae) concessit, ita tamen ut mulieribus in religiosis locis ubi animas possint salvare, provideas. Quod ergo pro reformandae religionis amore de praefato monasterio a praedicto Stephano Parisiensis Episcopo statutum est, auctoritate nostra firmamus, & firmum volumus futuris temporibus permanere. Tuae igitur dilectioni mandamus, ut ad religionem & monasticum ordinem in praefato loco statuendum diligenti vigilantia studeas, & ne praedictarum mulierum aliqua in tua culpa depereat in locis religiosis sollicita cura provideas. Datum Laterani, nono Kal. Maii.

⁴Felibien, *Pieces justificatives*, no. 127., as taken from the Cartulary of St. Denys, tom. 2: 281.

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