Reader interuniversitaire masterclass cultuur en religie: 'Charisma als onderzoeksprobleem', 17-18 september, Gent.

Bijlage 1:
M. Weber en T. Parsons, *The theory of Social and Economic Organization*, New York, 1968, 358-373.

Bijlage 2:
I. F. Silber, *Virtuosity, charisma, and social order. A comparative sociological study of monasticism in Theravada Buddhism and medieval Catholicism*, Cambridge, 1995, 25-38.

Bijlage 3:
M. Münster-Swendsen, "Medieval Virtuosity: Classroom Practice and the Transfer of Charismatic Power in Medieval Scholarly Culture c. 1000-1230", in: *Negotiating heritage. Memories of the Middle Ages*, M.B. Bruun e.a. ed., Turnhout, 2008, 43-64.

Bijlage 4:
L. Jardin, *Erasmus, man of letters: the construction of charisma in print*, Princeton, 1993, 55-83.

Bijlage 5:
D. Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the history and theory of response,* Chicago, 1989, 1-26.

Bijlage 6:
R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200*, New York, 2002, 61-119.

sharp competition between a plurality of patrimonial powers within the same cultural area. Finally, a very special factor is necessary, namely, the participation of urban communes as a financial support in the competition of the patrimonial units.

1. The principal forerunners of the modern, specifically Western form of capitalism are to be found in the organized urban communes of Europe with their particular type of relatively rational administration. Its primary development took place from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries within the framework of the class structure and political organization of Holland and England, which were distinguished by the unusual power and preponderance of the economic interests of the bourgeois classes. The secondary limitations based on fiscal and utilitarian motives, which were introduced into the purely patrimonial or largely feudal states of the Continent, have in common with the Stuart system of monopolistic industry the fact that they do not stand in the main line of continuity with the later autonomous capitalistic development. This is true in spite of the fact that particular measures of agricultural and industrial policy—so far as and because they were oriented to English, Dutch, and later to French, models—played a very important part in creating some of the essential conditions for this later development. All this will be discussed further on.

2. In certain fields the patrimonial states of the Middle Ages developed a type of formally rational administrative staff which consisted especially of persons with legal training both in the civil and the canon law, and which differed fundamentally from the corresponding administrative staffs in political bodies of any other time or place. It will be necessary later to inquire more fully into the sources of this development and into its significance. For the present it is not possible to go beyond the very general observations introduced above.

IV. CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY

10: The Principal Characteristics of Charismatic Authority and Its Relation to Forms of Communal Organization

The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. In primitive circumstances this peculiar kind of deference is paid to prophets, to people with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, to leaders in the hunt, and heroes in war. It is very often thought of as resting on magical powers. How the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical, aesthetic, or other such point of view is naturally entirely indifferent for purposes of definition. What is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his 'followers' or 'disciples.'

For present purposes it will be necessary to treat a variety of different types as being endowed with charisma in this sense. It includes the state of a 'berserker' whose spells of maniac passion have, apparently wrongly, sometimes been attributed to the use of drugs. In Medieval Byzantium a group of people endowed with this type of charismatic war-like passion were maintained as a kind of weapon. It includes the 'shaman,' the kind of magician who in the pure type is subject to epileptoid seizures as a means of falling into trances. Another type is that of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, who, however, cannot be classified in this way with absolute certainty since there is a possibility that he was a very sophisticated type of deliberate swindler. Finally it includes the type of intellectual, such as Kurt Eisner,[36] who is carried away with his own demagogic success. Sociological analysis, which must abstain from value judgments, will treat all these on the same level as the men who, according to conventional judgments, are the 'greatest' heroes, prophets, and saviours.

1. It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma. This is freely given and guaranteed by what is held to be a 'sign' or proof,[37] originally always a miracle, and consists in devotion to the corresponding revelation, hero worship, or absolute trust in the leader. But where charisma is genuine, it is not this which is the basis of the claim to legitimacy. This basis lies rather in the conception that it is the *duty* of those who have been called to a charismatic mission to recognize its quality and to act accordingly. Psychologically this 'recognition' is a matter of complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality, arising out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope.

No prophet has ever regarded his quality as dependent on the attitudes

[36] The leader of the communistic experiment in Bavaria in 1919.—Ed.
[37] *Bewährung.*

of the masses toward him. No elective king or military leader has ever treated those who have resisted him or tried to ignore him otherwise than as delinquent in duty. Failure to take part in a military expedition under such leader, even though recruitment is formally voluntary, has universally been met with disdain.

2. If proof of his charismatic qualification fails him for long, the leader endowed with charisma tends to think his god or his magical or heroic powers have deserted him. If he is for long unsuccessful, above all if his leadership fails to benefit his followers, it is likely that his charismatic authority will disappear. This is the genuine charismatic meaning of the 'gift of grace.'[38]

Even the old Germanic kings were sometimes rejected with scorn. Similar phenomena are very common among so-called 'primitive' peoples. In China the charismatic quality of the monarch, which was transmitted unchanged by heredity, was upheld so rigidly that any misfortune whatever, not only defeats in war, but drought, floods, or astronomical phenomena which were considered unlucky, forced him to do public penance and might even force his abdication. If such things occurred, it was a sign that he did not possess the requisite charismatic virtue, he was thus not a legitimate 'Son of Heaven.'

3. The corporate group which is subject to charismatic authority is based on an emotional form of communal relationship.[39] The administrative staff of a charismatic leader does not consist of 'officials'; at least its members are not technically trained. It is not chosen on the basis of social privilege nor from the point of view of domestic or personal dependency. It is rather chosen in terms of the charismatic qualities of its members. The prophet has his disciples; the war lord his selected henchmen; the leader, generally, his followers. There is no such thing as 'appointment' or 'dismissal,' no career, no promotion. There is only a 'call' at the instance of the leader on the basis of the charismatic qualification of those he summons. There is no hierarchy; the leader merely intervenes in general or in individual cases when he considers the members of his staff inadequate to a task with which they have been entrusted. There is no such thing as a definite sphere of authority and of competence, and no appropriation of official powers on the basis of social privileges. There may, however, be territorial or functional limits to charismatic powers and to the individual's 'mission.' There is no such thing as a salary or a

[38] *Gottesgnadentum.*

[39] Weber uses the term *Gemeinde*, which is not directly translatable.—Ed.

benefice. Disciples or followers tend to live primarily in a communistic relationship with their leader on means which have been provided by voluntary gift. There are no established administrative organs. In their place are agents who have been provided with charismatic authority by their chief or who possess charisma of their own. There is no system of formal rules, of abstract legal principles, and hence no process of judicial decision oriented to them. But equally there is no legal wisdom oriented to judicial precedent. Formally concrete judgments are newly created from case to case and are originally regarded as divine judgments and revelations. From a substantive point of view, every charismatic authority would have to subscribe to the proposition, 'It is written . . . , but I say unto you. . .'[40] The genuine prophet, like the genuine military leader and every true leader in this sense, preaches, creates, or demands *new* obligations. In the pure type of charisma, these are imposed on the authority of revolution by oracles, or of the leader's own will, and are recognized by the members of the religious, military, or party group, because they come from such a source. Recognition is a duty. When such an authority comes into conflict with the competing authority of another who also claims charismatic sanction, the only recourse is to some kind of a contest, by magical means or even an actual physical battle of the leaders. In principle, only one side can be in the right in such a conflict; the other must be guilty of a wrong which has to be expiated.

Charismatic authority is thus specifically outside the realm of everyday routine and the profane sphere.[41] In this respect, it is sharply opposed both to rational, and particularly bureaucratic, authority, and to traditional authority, whether in its patriarchal, patrimonial, or any other form. Both rational and traditional authority are specifically forms of everyday routine control of action; while the charismatic type is the direct antithesis of this. Bureaucratic authority is specifically rational in the sense of being bound to intellectually analysable rules; while charismatic authority is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules. Traditional authority is bound to the precedents handed down from the past and to this extent is also oriented to rules. Within the

[40] Something contrary to what was written, as Jesus said in opposition to the Scribes and Pharisees.—Ed.

[41] Weber used the antithesis of *Charisma* and *Alltag* in two senses. On the one hand, of the extraordinary and temporary as opposed to the everyday and routine; on the other hand, the sacred as opposed to the profane. See the editor's *Structure of Social Action*, ch. xvii.—Ed.

sphere of its claims, charismatic authority repudiates the past, and is in this sense a specifically revolutionary force. It recognizes no appropriation of positions of power by virtue of the possession of property, either on the part of a chief or of socially privileged groups. The only basis of legitimacy for it is personal charisma, so long as it is proved; that is, as long as it receives recognition and is able to satisfy the followers or disciples. But this lasts only so long as the belief in its charismatic inspiration remains.

The above is scarcely in need of further discussion. What has been said applies to the position of authority of such elected monarchs as Napoleon, with his use of the plebiscite. It applies to the 'rule of genius,' which has elevated people of humble origin to thrones and high military commands, just as much as it applies to religious prophets or war heroes.

4. Pure charisma is specifically foreign to economic considerations. Whenever it appears, it constitutes a 'call' in the most emphatic sense of the word, a 'mission' or a 'spiritual duty.' In the pure type, it disdains and repudiates economic exploitation of the gifts of grace as a source of income, though, to be sure, this often remains more an ideal than a fact. It is not that charisma always means the renunciation of property or even of acquisition, as under certain circumstances prophets and their disciples do. The heroic warrior and his followers actively seek 'booty'; the elective ruler or the charismatic party leader requires the material means of power. The former in addition requires a brilliant display of his authority to bolster his prestige. What is despised, so long as the genuinely charismatic type is adhered to, is traditional or rational everyday economizing, the attainment of a regular income by continuous economic activity devoted to this end. Support by gifts, sometimes on a grand scale involving foundations, even by bribery and grand-scale honoraria, or by begging, constitute the strictly voluntary type of support. On the other hand, 'booty,' or coercion, whether by force or by other means, is the other typical form of charismatic provision for needs. From the point of view of rational economic activity, charisma is a typical anti-economic force. It repudiates any sort of involvement in the everyday routine world. It can only tolerate, with an attitude of complete emotional indifference, irregular, unsystematic, acquisitive acts. In that it relieves the recipient of economic concerns, dependence on property income can be the economic basis of a charismatic mode of life for some groups; but that is not usually acceptable for the normal charismatic 'revolutionary.'

The fact that incumbency of church office has been forbidden to the Jesuits is a rationalized application of this principle of discipleship. The fact that all the 'virtuosi' of asceticism, the mendicant orders, and fighters for a faith belong in this category, is quite clear. Almost all prophets have been supported by voluntary gifts. The well-known saying of St. Paul, 'If a man does not work, neither shall he eat,' was directed against the swarm of charismatic missionaries. It obviously has nothing to do with a positive valuation of economic activity for its own sake, but only lays it down as a duty of each individual somehow to provide for his own support. This because he realized that the purely charismatic parable of the lilies of the field was not capable of literal application, but at best 'taking no thought for the morrow' could be hoped for. On the other hand, in such a case as primarily an artistic type of charismatic discipleship, it is conceivable that insulation from economic struggle should mean limitation of those who were really eligible to the 'economically independent'; that is, to persons living on income from property. This has been true of the circle of Stefan George, at least in its primary intentions.

5. In traditionally stereotyped periods, charisma is the greatest revolutionary force. The equally revolutionary force of 'reason' works from without by altering the situations of action, and hence its problems finally in this way changing men's attitudes toward them; or it intellectualizes the individual. Charisma, on the other hand, may involve a subjective or internal reorientation born out of suffering, conflicts, or enthusiasm. It may then result in a radical alteration of the central system of attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the different problems and structures of the 'world.'[42] In prerationalistic periods, tradition and charisma between them have almost exhausted the whole of the orientation of action.

V. THE ROUTINIZATION OF CHARISMA

11: The Routinization of Charisma and Its Consequences

In its pure form charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures. The social relationships directly

[42] Weber here uses *Welt* in quotation marks, indicating that it refers to its meaning in what is primarily a religious context. It is the sphere of 'worldly' things and interests as distinguished from transcendental religious interests.—Ed.

involved are strictly personal, based on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities. If this is not to remain a purely transitory phenomenon, but to take on the character of a permanent relationship forming a stable community of disciples or a band of followers or a party organization or any sort of political or hierocratic organization, it is necessary for the character of charismatic authority to become radically changed. Indeed, in its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only in the process of originating. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both.

The following are the principal motives underlying this transformation: (a) The ideal and also the material interests of the followers in the continuation and the continual reactivation of the community, (b) the still stronger ideal and also stronger material interests of the members of the administrative staff, the disciples or other followers of the charismatic leader in continuing their relationship. Not only this, but they have an interest in continuing it in such a way that both from an ideal and a material point of view, their own status is put on a stable everyday basis. This means, above all, making it possible to participate in normal family relationships or at least to enjoy a secure social position in place of the kind of discipleship which is cut off from ordinary worldly connexions, notably in the family and in economic relationships.

These interests generally become conspicuously evident with the disappearance of the personal charismatic leader and with the problem of succession, which inevitably arises. The way in which this problem is met—if it is met at all and the charismatic group continues to exist—is of crucial importance for the character of the subsequent social relationships. The following are the principal possible types of solution:—

(a) The search for a new charismatic leader on the basis of criteria of the qualities which will fit him for the position of authority. This is to be found in a relatively pure type in the process of choice of a new Dalai Lama. It consists in the search for a child with characteristics which are interpreted to mean that he is a reincarnation of the Buddha. This is very similar to the choice of the new Bull of Apis.

In this case the legitimacy of the new charismatic leader is bound to certain distinguishing characteristics; thus, to rules with respect to which a tradition arises. The result is a process of traditionalization in favour of which the purely personal character of leadership is eliminated.

(b) By revelation manifested in oracles, lots, divine judgments, or other techniques of selection. In this case the legitimacy of the new

leader is dependent on the legitimacy of the technique of his selection. This involves a form of legalization. It is said that at times the *Schofetim* of Israel had this character. Saul is said to have been chosen by the old war oracle.

(c) By the designation on the part of the original charismatic leader of his own successor and his recognition on the part of the followers. This is a very common form. Originally, the Roman magistracies were filled entirely in this way. The system survived most clearly into later times in the appointment of 'dictators' and in the institution of the 'interrex.' In this case legitimacy is acquired through the act of designation.

(d) Designation of a successor by the charismatically qualified administrative staff and his recognition by the community. In its typical form this process should quite definitely not be interpreted as 'election' or 'nomination' or anything of the sort. It is not a matter of free selection, but of one which is strictly bound to objective duty. It is not to be determined merely by majority vote, but is a question of arriving at the correct designation, the designation of the right person who is truly endowed with charisma. It is quite possible that the minority and not the majority should be right in such a case. Unanimity is often required. It is obligatory to acknowledge a mistake and persistence in error is a serious offence. Making a wrong choice is a genuine wrong requiring expiation. Originally it was a magical offence.

Nevertheless, in such a case it is easy for legitimacy to take on the character of an acquired right which is justified by standards of the correctness of the process by which the position was acquired, for the most part, by its having been acquired in accordance with certain formalities, such as coronation. This was the original meaning of the coronation of bishops and kings in the Western World by the clergy or the nobility with the 'consent' of the community. There are numerous analogous phenomena all over the world. The fact that this is the origin of the modern conception of 'election' raises problems which will have to be gone into later.

(e) By the conception that charisma is a quality transmitted by heredity; thus that it is participated in by the kinsmen of its bearer, particularly by his closest relatives. This is the case of hereditary charisma. The order of hereditary succession in such a case need not be the same as that which is in force for appropriated rights, but may differ from it. It is also sometimes necessary to select the proper heir within the kinship

group by some of the methods just spoken of; thus in certain Negro states brothers have had to fight for the succession. In China, succession had to take place in such a way that the relation of the living group to the ancestral spirits was not disturbed. The rule either of seniority or of designation by the followers has been very common in the Orient. Hence, in the house of Osman, it has been obligatory to eliminate all other possible candidates.

Only in Medieval Europe and in Japan universally, elsewhere only sporadically, has the principle of primogeniture, as governing the inheritance of authority, become clearly established. This has greatly facilitated the consolidation of political groups in that it has eliminated struggle between a plurality of candidates from the same charismatic family.

In the case of hereditary charisma, recognition is no longer paid to the charismatic qualities of the individual, but to the legitimacy of the position he has acquired by hereditary succession. This may lead in the direction either of traditionalization or of legalization. The concept of 'divine right' is fundamentally altered and now comes to mean authority by virtue of a personal right which is not dependent on the recognition of those subject to authority. Personal charisma may be totally absent. Hereditary monarchy is a conspicuous illustration. In Asia there have been very numerous hereditary priesthoods; also, frequently, the hereditary charisma of kinship groups has been treated as a criterion of social rank and of eligibility for fiefs and benefices.

(f) The concept that charisma may be transmitted by ritual means from one bearer to another or may be created in a new person. The concept was originally magical. It involves a dissociation of charisma from a particular individual, making it an objective, transferrable entity. In particular, it may become the charisma of office. In this case the belief in legitimacy is no longer directed to the individual, but to the acquired qualities and to the effectiveness of the ritual acts. The most important example is the transmission of priestly charisma by anointing, consecration, or the laying on of hands; and of royal authority, by anointing and by coronation. The *caracter indelibilis* thus acquired means that the charismatic qualities and powers of the office are emancipated from the personal qualities of the priest. For precisely this reason, this has, from the Donatist and the Montanist heresies down to the Puritan revolution, been the subject of continual conflicts. The 'hireling' of the Quakers is the preacher endowed with the charisma of office.

12: The Routinization of Charisma and Its Consequences—(*Continued*)

Comcomitant with the routinization of charisma with a view to insuring adequate succession, go the interests in its routinization on the part of the administrative staff. It is only in the initial stages and so long as the charismatic leader acts in a way which is completely outside everyday social organization, that it is possible for his followers to live communistically in a community of faith and enthusiasm, on gifts, 'booty,' or sporadic acquisition. Only the members of the small group of enthusiastic disciples and followers are prepared to devote their lives purely idealistically to their call. The great majority of disciples and followers will in the long run 'make their living' out of their 'calling' in a material sense as well. Indeed, this must be the case if the movement is not to disintegrate.

Hence, the routinization of charisma also takes the form of the appropriation of powers of control and of economic advantages by the followers or disciples, and of regulation of the recruitment of these groups. This process of tradionalization or of legalization, according to whether rational legislation is involved or not, may take any one of a number of typical forms.

1. The original basis of recruitment is personal charisma. With routinization, the followers or disciples may set up norms for recruitment, in particular involving training or tests of eligibility. Charisma can only be 'awakened' and 'tested'; it cannot be 'learned' or 'taught.' All types of magical asceticism, as practiced by magicians and heroes, and all novitiates, belong in this category. These are means of closing the group which constitutes the administrative staff.[43]

Only the proved novice is allowed to exercise authority. A genuine charismatic leader is in a position to oppose this type of prerequisite for membership. His successor is not, at least if he is chosen by the administrative staff. This type is illustrated by the magical and warrior asceticism of the 'men's house' with initiation ceremonies and age groups. An individual who has not successfully gone through the initiation, remains a 'woman'; that is, is excluded from the charismatic group.

2. It is easy for charismatic norms to be transformed into those defin-

[43] On the charismatic type of education, see chap. iv. (No discussion of this subject is included in the fragment of chap. iv which Weber completed.—Ed.)

ing a traditional social status on a hereditary charismatic basis. If the leader is chosen on a hereditary basis, it is very easy for hereditary charisma to govern the selection of the administrative staff and even, perhaps, those followers without any position of authority. The term 'familistic state'[44] will be applied when a political body is organized strictly and completely in terms of this principle of hereditary charisma. In such a case, all appropriation of governing powers, of fiefs, benefices, and all sorts of economic advantages follow the same pattern. The result is that all powers and advantages of all sorts become traditionalized. The heads of families, who are traditional gerontocrats or patriarchs without personal charismatic legitimacy, regulate the exercise of these powers which cannot be taken away from their family. It is not the type of position he occupies which determines the rank of a man or of his family, but rather the hereditary charismatic rank of his family determines the position he will occupy. Japan, before the development of bureaucracy, was organized in this way. The same was undoubtedly true of China as well where, before the rationalization which took place in the territorial states, authority was in the hands of the 'old families.' Other types of examples are furnished by the caste system in India, and by Russia before the *Mjestnitschestvo* was introduced. Indeed, all hereditary social classes with established privileges belong in the same category.

3. The administrative staff may seek and achieve the creation and appropriation of individual positions and the corresponding economic advantages for its members. In that case, according to whether the tendency is to traditionalization or legalization, there will develop (a) benefices, (b) offices, or (c) fiefs. In the first case a praebendal organization will result; in the second, patrimonialism or bureaucracy; in the third, feudalism. These become appropriated in the place of the type of provision from gifts or booty without settled relation to the everyday economic structure.

Case (a), benefices, may consist in rights to the proceeds of begging, to payments in kind, or to the proceeds of money taxes, or finally, to the proceeds of fees. Any one of these may result from the regulation of provision by free gifts or by 'booty' in terms of a rational organization of finance. Regularized begging is found in Buddhism; benefices in kind, in the Chinese and Japanese 'rice rents'; support by money taxation has been the rule in all the rationalized conquering states. The last case is

[44] *Geschlechterstaat.*

common everywhere, especially on the part of priests and judges and, in India, even the military authorities.

Case (b), the transformation of the charismatic mission into an office, may have more of a patrimonial or more of a bureaucratic character. The former is much the more common; the latter is found principally in Mediterranean Antiquity and in the modern Western World. Elsewhere it is exceptional.

In case (c), only land may be appropriated as a fief, whereas the position as such retains its originally charismatic character. On the other hand, powers and authority may be fully appropriated as fiefs. It is difficult to distinguish the two cases. It is, however, rare that orientation to the charismatic character of the position disappears entirely; it did not do so in the Middle Ages.

12A: The Routinization of Charisma and Its Consequences—(*Continued*)

For charisma to be transformed into a permanent routine structure, it is necessary that its anti-economic character should be altered. It must be adapted to some form of fiscal organization to provide for the needs of the group and hence to the economic conditions necessary for raising taxes and contributions. When a charismatic movement develops in the direction of praebendal provision, the 'laity' become differentiated from the 'clergy';[45] that is, the participating members of the charismatic administrative staff which has now become routinized. These are the priests of the developing 'church.' Correspondingly, in a developing political body the vassals, the holders of benefices, or officials are differentiated from the 'tax payers.' The former, instead of being the 'followers' of the leader, become state officials or appointed party officials. This process is very conspicuous in Buddhism and in the Hindu sects. The same is true in all the states resulting from conquest which have become rationalized to form permanent structures; also of parties and other movements which have originally had a purely charismatic character. With the process of routinization the charismatic group tends to develop into one of the forms of everyday authority, particularly the patrimonial form in its decentralized variant or the bureaucratic. Its original peculiarities are apt to be retained in the charismatic standards of honour attendant on the social status acquired by heredity or the holding of office. This

[45] Derived from κλῆρος, meaning a 'share.' See the Sociology of Religion.

applies to all who participate in the process of appropriation, the chief himself and the members of his staff. It is thus a matter of the type of prestige enjoyed by ruling groups. A hereditary monarch by 'divine right' is not a simple patrimonial chief, patriarch, or sheik; a vassal is not a mere household retainer or official. Further details must be deferred to the analysis of social stratification.

As a rule the process of routinization is not free of conflict. In the early stages personal claims on the charisma of the chief are not easily forgotten and the conflict between the charisma of office or of hereditary status with personal charisma is a typical process in many historical situations.

1. The power of absolution—that is, the power to absolve from mortal sins—was held originally only by personal charismatic martyrs or ascetics, but became transformed into a power of the office of bishop or priest. This process was much slower in the Orient than in the Occident because in the latter case it was influenced by the Roman conception of office. Revolutions under a charismatic leader, directed against hereditary charismatic powers or the powers of office, are to be found in all types of corporate groups, from states to trade unions.[46] The more highly developed the interdependence of different economic units in a monetary economy, the greater the pressure of the everyday needs of the followers of the charismatic movement becomes. The effect of this is to strengthen the tendency to routinization, which is everywhere operative, and as a rule has rapidly won out. Charisma is a phenomenon typical of prophetic religious movements or of expansive political movements in their early stages. But as soon as the position of authority is well established, and above all as soon as control over large masses of people exists, it gives way to the forces of everyday routine.

2. One of the decisive motives underlying all cases of the routinization of charisma is naturally the striving for security. This means legitimization, on the one hand, of positions of authority and social prestige, on the other hand, of the economic advantages enjoyed by the followers and sympathizers of the leader. Another important motive, however, lies in the objective necessity of adaptation of the patterns of order and of the organization of the administrative staff to the normal, everyday needs and conditions of carrying on administration. In this connexion, in particular, there are always points at which traditions of administrative practice and of judicial decision can take hold; since these are needed

[46] This last is particularly conspicuous at the present time (1920).

both by the normal administrative staff and by those subject to its authority. It is further necessary that there should be some definite order introduced into the organization of the administrative staff itself. Finally, as will be discussed in detail below, it is necessary for the administrative staff and all its administrative practices to be adapted to everyday economic conditions. It is not possible for the costs of permanent, routine administration to be met by 'booty,' contributions, gifts, and hospitality, as is typical of the pure type of military and prophetic charisma.

3. The process of routinization is thus not by any means confined to the problem of succession and does not stop when this has been solved. On the contrary, the most fundamental problem is that of making a transition from a charismatic administrative staff, and the corresponding principles of administration, to one which is adapted to everyday conditions. The problem of succession, however, is crucial because through it occurs the routinization of the charismatic focus of the structure. In it, the character of the leader himself and of his claim to legitimacy is altered. This process involves peculiar and characteristic conceptions which are understandable only in this context and do not apply to the problem of transition to traditional or legal patterns of order and types of administrative organization. The most important of the modes of meeting the problem of succession are the charismatic designation of a successor and hereditary charisma.

4. As has already been noted, the most important historical example of designation by the charismatic leader of his own successor is Rome. For the *rex,* this arrangement is attested by tradition; while for the appointment of the 'dictator' and of the co-emperor and successor in the principate, it has existed in historical times. The way in which all the higher magistrates were invested with the *imperium* shows clearly that they also were designated as successors by the military commander, subject to recognition by the citizen army. The fact that candidates were examined by the magistrate in office and that originally they could be excluded on what were obviously arbitrary grounds shows clearly what was the nature of the development.

5. The most important examples of designation of a successor by the charismatic followers of the leader are to be found in the election of bishops, and particularly of the Pope, by the original system of designation by the clergy and recognition by the lay community. The investigations of U. Stutz have made it probable that, though it was later altered, the election of the German emperor was modelled on that of the bishops.

MOR. & MET.

He was designated by a group of qualified princes and recognized by the 'people,' that is, those bearing arms. Similar arrangements are very common.

6. The classical case of the development of hereditary charisma is that of caste in India. All occupational qualifications, and in particular all the qualifications for positions of authority and power, have there come to be regarded as strictly bound to the inheritance of charisma. Eligibility for fiefs, involving governing powers, was limited to members of the royal kinship group, the fiefs being granted by the eldest of the group. All types of religious office, including the extraordinarily important and influential position of *guru,* the *directeur de l'âme,* were treated as bound to hereditary charismatic qualities. The same is true of all sorts of relations to traditional customers and of all positions in the village organization, such as priest, barber, laundryman, watchman, etc. The foundation of a sect always meant the development of a hereditary hierarchy, as was true also of Taoism in China. Also in the Japanese 'feudal' state, before the introduction of a patrimonial officialdom on the Chinese model, which then led to praebends and a new feudalization, social organization was based purely on hereditary charisma.

This kind of hereditary charismatic right to positions of authority has been developed in similar ways all over the world. Qualification by virtue of individual achievement has been replaced by qualification by birth. This is everywhere the basis of the development of hereditary aristocracies, in the Roman nobility, in the concept of the *stirps regia,* which Tacitus describes among the Germans, in the rules of eligibility to tournaments and monasteries in the late Middle Ages, and even in the genealogical research carried on on behalf of the parvenu aristocracy of the United States. Indeed, this is to be found everywhere where a differentiation of hereditary social classes has become established.

The following is the principal relation to economic conditions: The process of routinization of charisma is in very important respects identical with adaptation to the conditions of economic life, since this is one of the principal continually-operating forces in everyday life. Economic conditions in this connexion play a leading role and do not constitute merely a dependent variable. To a very large extent the transition to hereditary charisma or the charisma of office serves in this connexion as a means of legitimizing existing or recently acquired powers of control over economic goods. Along with the ideology of loyalty, which is certainly by no means unimportant, allegiance to hereditary monarchy in

particular is very strongly influenced by the consideration that all inherited property and all that which is legitimately acquired would be endangered if subjective recognition of the sanctity of succession to the throne were eliminated. It is hence by no means fortuitous that hereditary monarchy is more acceptable to the propertied classes than, for instance, to the proletariat.

Beyond this, it is not possible to say anything in general terms, which would at the same time be substantial and valuable, on the relations of the various possible modes of adaptation to the economic order. This must be reserved to a special investigation. The development of a praebendal structure, of feudalism and the appropriation of all sorts of advantages on a hereditary charismatic basis, may in all cases have the same stereotyping effect on the economic order if they develop from charismatic starting points as if they developed from patrimonial or bureaucratic origins. The immediate effect of charisma in economic as in other connexions is usually strongly revolutionary; indeed, often destructive, because it means new modes of orientation. But in case the process of routinization leads in the direction of traditionalism, its ultimate effect may be exactly the reverse.[47]

12B: Feudalism

The case noted above, under sec. 12, § 3—namely that of the Fief—requires separate discussion. This is because a type of structure of authority may develop out of it, which is different both from patrimonialism and from hereditary charisma and which has had very great historical significance; namely, feudalism. The two genuine sub-types which will be distinguished are the feudalism which is based on fiefs and that based on benefices.[48] All other forms in which the use of land is granted in exchange for military services really have a patrimonial character and therefore will not be dealt with separately. The different kinds of benefices will not be distinguished until later, when they can be discussed in detail.

A.—A fief involves the following elements:—

(1) The appropriation of powers and rights of exercising authority. Appropriation as a fief may apply only to powers relevant within the

[47] The economics of charismatic revolutions will have to be discussed separately. It is by no means the same in all cases.

[48] *Lehensfeudalismus* and *Pfründenfeudalismus.*

1 The Weberian legacy

Weber's typological and comparative framework

In Weber's classic statement,[1] "virtuoso" or "heroic" religiosity is primarily defined in opposition to mass religiosity. Human beings vary in their religious capacities and in the special personal attributes – the "charisma"[2] – necessary to attain the highest religious ends. As a result, a status stratification emerges in which the most qualified come to constitute a kind of "spiritual aristocracy" devoted to the methodical pursuit of salvation. This methodical pursuit usually entails the subjugation of natural drives (as defined in each cultural setting) to some form of rigid discipline, and implies a criticism of the more complacent lifestyle of the masses. (Incidentally, Weber does not seem to have attached to the term virtuosity any of the negative connotations nowadays possibly associated with it – virtuosity in the sense of "merely" technical brilliance and superficial, "soulless" artistic performance.)[3]

The virtuosi's superior religious status is not, however, without ambiguities. Their single-minded and methodical pursuit of the highest religious ends appears to engender a whole range of tensions in their relation with society at large. A first and major source of tension is what Weber sees as a basic antagonism between virtuosi and the religious establishment.[4] In the case of Christianity, for example, there is an inevitable tension between the characteristic tendency of virtuosi to seek sanctification on their own, and the Church's institutional monopoly on mediating the bestowal of religious grace. Furthermore, the Church makes salvation universally accessible, through its sacraments, to people with varying degrees of ethical and religious qualification – a leveling that stands in marked contrast to the elitism of the virtuoso. Such tensions have resulted, historically, in many and varied compromises. We-

[1] M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1964), pp. 162–5.
[2] This is only one of his many different uses of the word.
[3] The notion of virtuosity appears to have undergone divergent semantic development in the various European languages. In English, the term was first associated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the pursuit of science and knowledge, and only later with artistic excellence. As reported in German dictionaries of Weber's time, the term mostly applied to the arts in general and to music in particular. Weber's extension of the term to the field of religion brought it closer, in fact, to the Italian usage, which allowed for a much broader semantic scope, first connoting some form of religious and moral excellence, and only second the idea of artistic expertise.
[4] Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, p. 187.

ber especially emphasized the "concessions" that religious virtuosi have made, "adjusting their demands to the possibilities of everyday life religiosity, in order to maintain ideal and material mass patronage."[5]

The precise nature of these concessions determines the virtuosi's actual influence on everyday life. The critical distinction is that between two types of virtuoso religion: the first, "contemplative–orgiastic" in character, best exemplified, in Weber's view, by Buddhism and Jainism; the second, "activist–ascetic," of which Protestantism, and more specifically Calvinism, is taken as the prototype.

In contemplative virtuoso religion, action in the world is perceived as essentially inferior, and an abyss separates the virtuoso's lifestyle from that of the layman. The relation that evolved between them, as Weber sees it, is one of "magical anthropolatry": the layman either worships the virtuoso himself directly, as a saint, or "buys" the virtuoso's blessings or magical powers in order to promote his own mundane interests or religious salvation.[6] The contemplative virtuoso does not exhort the layman to approximate his own way of life. Even when acting as spiritual adviser, his influence lies not in the sphere of ethics, but rather – and in Weber's frame, merely – in that of ritual.[7]

In his discussion of the activist–ascetic model of religious virtuosity, in contrast, Weber does not focus at all on the virtuoso–layman interaction.[8] Instead, his attention is now turned to the virtuoso's orientation to everyday life and the workaday world, and more specifically, to the affinities between activist–ascetic religious virtuosity and economic rationalization, the well-known theme of his thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*[9] There is in fact a striking imbalance in Weber's treatment of what he had defined as two basic, contrasting types of virtuosity. The bulk of his writing on the subject is concerned with inner-worldly asceticism and its far-reaching implications for Western rationalization and modernization. Contemplative or mystically oriented virtuosity, on the other hand, is consistently downplayed, treated much less extensively, and credited with little sociological significance.[10]

The crucial role that Weber attributed to inner-worldly, activist asceticism in the development of Western rationalization and modernity, at

[5] H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (ed. and trans.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 288.

[6] Ibid., p. 289.

[7] On Weber's generally pejorative and (sociologically) insufficient treatment of ritual, see this volume, Introduction, fn. 13.

[8] Gerth and Mills (ed. and trans.), *Max Weber,* pp. 290–1.

[9] M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958).

[10] For a fuller analysis of Weber's relative neglect of mysticism, see W. R. Garret, "Maligned Mysticism: The Maledicted Career of Troeltsch's Third Type," *Sociological Analysis* 36, no. 3 (1975): 205–23; Robertson, "Analysis of Mysticism."

any rate, clearly establishes that virtuosi constituted much more than just an additional category in his typology of religious specialists. Far from being a marginal theme in his work, virtuosity emerges as a leading motif in his conception of the differential historical development of civilizations.[11] The Protestant ethic itself, in his understanding, represented a transformation and extension of medieval monastic virtuosity. It "carried asceticism out of monastic cells into everyday life"; no less crucially, it transferred the demands of inner-worldly asceticism to all members of the religious community, overthrowing the distinction between virtuosi and nonvirtuosi that underlay the virtuoso's position in the Catholic social order.[12]

In some sense, we see here the notion of virtuosity stretched to its limits, since Protestant virtuoso asceticism entails the repudiation of the very idea of a distinction between virtuosi and nonvirtuosi, of the implied contrast with mass religiosity intrinsic to the very notion of virtuosity itself as defined by Weber himself at the beginning of this chapter.[13] Weber's use of the term virtuosity here may simply reflect his overall assessment of Protestant active asceticism as not only a transformation of traditional forms of virtuosity but also as a form of religiosity entailing a most demanding level of religious strain and ascetic rigor – of a kind otherwise expected of religious elites only.

Be that as it may, the story then becomes, in Weber's narrative of the far-reaching implications of this crucial mutation in the history of Christian virtuosity, not one of repeated conflicts and "compromises" with the world, but rather one of unrelenting, rationalized channeling of one's

[11] For the intertwining of the theme of religious virtuosity with other essential aspects of Weber's comparative sociology of religion, see W. Schluchter, "Weltflüchtiges Erlösungsstreben und organische Sozialethik: Uberlegungen zu Max Webers Analysen der indischen Kulturreligionen," in W. Schluchter (ed.), *Max Webers Studie über Hinduismus und Buddhismus: Interpretation und Kritik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkampf, 1984), pp. 11–71. On the centrality of the notions of rationality and rationalization, and their various meanings in Weber's work, see Kalberg, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality"; A. Swidler, "The Concept of Rationality in the Work of Max Weber," *Sociological Enquiry* 43 (1973): 35–42; also directly relevant is W. Schluchter, "The Paradox of Rationalization: On the Relation of Ethics and World," in G. Roth and W. Schluchter, *Max Weber's Vision of History: Ethics and Methods* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 11–64.

[12] "The conception of the calling thus brings out that central dogma of all Protestant denominations which the Catholic division of ethical precepts into *praecepta* and *consilia* discards. The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfillment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world. That was his calling." Weber, *Protestant Ethic,* p. 80; see also pp. 153–4.

[13] Touching upon this issue, see D. Martin, *Pacifism: An Historical and Sociological Study* (New York: Schocken, 1965), p. 163.

personal drives and religious anxieties in an uncompromising attempt to act as the active vessel of the will of God in the world.

In the Catholic framework, in contrast, Weber stresses again the importance of "concessions" and "compromises" in determining not only the virtuosi's relation to the world, but also the world's, and in particular the Church's, ambivalent relation to them. The compromise solution arrived at was to allow the virtuoso, with his higher ethical achievements, to ensure his own salvation and accumulate good works to the credit of the Chruch, which would in turn redistribute them to the nonvirtuosi. This ideological procedure fitted well into medieval Catholicism's "organic" conception of differences in class and position: "The virtuosi of religion, be they of an ascetic or contemplative type, are also assigned their specific responsibility within such an organic order, just as specific functions have been allocated to princes, warriors, judges, artisans and peasants."[14]

The church's ambivalence toward ascetic virtuosi is discussed again and at greater length in Weber's study of "hierocratic domination"[15] and its relation to monastic asceticism. Here again, no direct reference is made to the basic issue of the virtuoso–layman interaction adumbrated in his discussion of "contemplative" Buddhist virtuosity. Instead, his analysis focuses on the political advantages of monasticism for ecclesiastical and secular rulers. At this point, it should be noted that although modern comparative historical sociologists are now bent on emphasizing the economic dynamism of monasticism in medieval Christendom, Weber himself was in fact much more attentive to monasticism's politicobureaucratic than economic implications.[16] Although monastic asceticism originated as a method of individual salvation only indirectly and spiritually meant to benefit the entire Christian collective, it was eventually transformed into a most useful tool serving the temporal interests of the Church. This transformation corresponded to the evolution of monasticism from its initially asocial, individual orientations into an institution purveying a wide range of social goals and services. Asceticism, moreover, made monks outstandingly efficient, a fact that led Weber to see in them the first "professionals" and which "predestined them to serve as the principal tool of bureaucratic centralization and rationalization in the Church."

Significantly, Weber mainly discusses the usefulness of monasticism in a Caesaropapist framework, where it could help support the ruler's legitimacy and domesticate his subjects: "If the political ruler wants to create an apparatus of officials and a counter weight against the nobility . . . he cannot wish for a more reliable support than the influence of the monks on the masses."[17] Although "concessions" and "compromises" are not the key notions here any more, the overall picture emerging is that of a rather conservative (in the sense of contributing to the maintainance of the political status quo) relation between monasticism and social order. Somehow qualifying this heavy stress on the political incorporation of monasticism, Weber recognizes that monasticism could readily establish a strong power base of its own in such a context, and even come to a clash with the temporal authorities to safeguard its religious autonomy. Again, moreover, it should be noted that Weber mostly addresses monasticism within the framework of Caesaropapism, and leaves aside the role of monasticism in the much more decentralized context of Western feudalism, which might have received a fuller analysis had Weber lived to complete his planned study of medieval Catholicism.[18]

This emphasis on the "conservative" political implications of monasticism notwithstanding, Weber was nevertheless bent on giving a part to medieval monasticism in his overall interpretation of the unique development of Western rationalization. After all, he did see monasticism as the ideological matrix from which Protestant inner-worldly ascetic virtuosity fatefully emerged. But he also gave it place of pride in his understanding of the medieval West as a uniquely "restless," check-and-balance type of civilization: "All in all, the specific roots of occidental culture must be sought in the tension and peculiar balance, on the one hand, between office charisma and monasticism, and on the other between the contractual character of the feudal state and the autonomous bureaucratic hierocracy. . . . In the Occident, authority was set against authority, legitimacy against legitimacy, one office charisma against the other."[19]

Again, therefore, we see Weber's insistence on Western asceticism as somehow deeply related to and constitutive of the West's uniquely dynamic pattern on rationalization, an interpretation made only more insistent if situated on the backdrop of his contrastive, "mirror image" interpretation of the nature and role of virtuoso asceticism in non-Western, especially Indian and Buddhist, civilizations.

Weber's understanding and categorization of religious virtuosity is intimately related to and confirmed by other aspects of his sociology of religion. Here I shall mention only the significant connection to his discus-

[14] Weber, *Sociology of Religion,* p. 233.

[15] M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York: Bedminster, 1968), vol. 2, ch. 15.

[16] I have dealt with this issue in greater detail in Silber, "Monasticism and the Protestant Ethic."

[17] Weber, *Economy and Society,* p. 1171.

[18] Revisiting and aiming at reconstructing Weber's (incomplete) interpretation of Western Christendom, see Schluchter (ed.), *Max Webers Sicht des okzidentalen Christentums* (Frankfurt: Suhrkampf, 1988).

[19] Weber, *Economy and Society,* 1192 We may notice once again, in this oft-quoted passage, Weber's loose assimilation of monasticism with charisma.

sion of types of religious prophecy. As Talcott Parsons has summed it up, "exemplary prophecy tends to produce 'elitist' movements of those who achieve superior religious status, and to leave the others in a state of dubious belongingness, apart from the belongingness they derive from their secular statuses. It is on the basis of ethical prophecy and an order binding on whole categories of persons that anything like a firmly organized 'church' can most readily be built up."[20]

For Weber, thus, not only do religions vary in the status they bestow upon virtuosi, but this varying status is itself intrinsically related to religions' varying capacity to incorporate the laity, to create broader frameworks of "belongingness." The social position of virtuosi is understood to be intimately connected with broader features of their religious and social environment, such as the nature of the religious–ideological matrix from which the virtuosi emerged in the first place (the overriding distinction here being that between exemplary vs. ethical prophecies) and the related structures of collective integration.

This more "structural" and "contextual" approach had already appeared in Weber's analysis of the "functional" incorporation of virtuosi into the Catholic and Caesaropapist social orders. But it was also suggested in a more complex sense in the *Protestant Ethic,* where the virtuoso's momentous "rationalizing" impact stems not from a simplistic model of the influence of religious beliefs on economic behavior, but rather from the historical encounter and consonance – the "elective affinities" – between certain Calvinist religious orientations and the emerging structures of a modern capitalistic system, joining in the formation of a full-fledged and unprecedented capitalistic civilization. A similar tendency to situate virtuosi within the context of broader collective structures was also suggested in Weber's insertion of monasticism as part and parcel of his understanding of the medieval West as a whole, as a check-and-balance type of civilization.

In line, perhaps, with his principled resistance to holistic and systemic interpretations, Weber did not develop this type of global, contextual approach much further. Such an avenue of enquiry, however, might lay bare more persistent, structural factors in the tension-ridden interaction between virtuosi and their social surroundings than conjectural alliances, concessions, and compromises – the recurrent terms of his analysis.[21] As the present study tries to show, it is precisely this kind of more

[20] Weber, *Sociology of Religion,* p. xxxvii.

[21] Pierre Bourdieu proposes to systematize this aspect of Weber's sociology of religion dealing with the interactions, tensions, and transactions between the various groups involved in the same religious field: priests, prophets, laity, and sorcerers. See "Une interprétation de la sociologie religieuse de Max Weber," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 12 (1971). Bourdieu, however, does not deal with the position of virtuosi in this structure of interactions; more fundamentally, he does not address the ideological and institutional structures (be they conceived as shaping forces, resources, or constraints) that may variously shape the overall field of interactions.

systematic attention to the broader collective structures from which religious virtuosi emerged, and with which they interacted, that might have modified Weber's relative underassessment of the sociological significance of contemplative virtuoso religion as it developed in the framework of Buddhist civilizations.

Beyond Weber: virtuosity and monasticism

Since Weber's time, there has emerged a wealth of studies (mostly historical) of specific religious figures of various kinds corresponding, by and large, to Weber's definition of virtuosi. Some of these studies are especially helpful in drawing attention to aspects of the interaction between virtuosi and society to which he did not attend. Research on mystics and mysticism,[22] or on sainthood in a variety of cultural settings,[23] in particular, may clarify the sociological implications of the more contemplative and/or individual forms of virtuosity that were systematically underplayed in Weber's approach. Peter Brown's work[24] is one of the most recent and challenging contributions in this respect, and will be referred to at a later point in our discussion. Taken collectively, at any rate, this growing body of literature points to a variability and complexity in virtuosi's ideological orientation and institutional expres-

[22] See, for example, "Church, Sect and Mysticism" in *Sociological Analysis,* 36 (1975); James L. Peacock, "Mystics and Merchants in Fourteenth-Century Germany: A Speculative Reconstruction of their Psychological Bond and its Implications for Social Change," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8 (1969): 47–59.

[23] Works on saints and holy men are too rapidly multiplying to aim here at an inclusive listing. See, for example, J. Wach, *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 357 ff.; J. Mecklin, *The Passing of the Saint: A Study of a Cultural Type* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); S. Czarnowski, *Le Culte des héros et sus conditions sociales: St. Patrick, héros national de l'Irlande,* preface by H. Hubert (Paris: Alcan, 1919); P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); idem, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101; idem, "The Saint as Examplar," *Representations* 1 (1983): 1–25; E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); A. Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen-Age,* (Ecole Française de Rome, 1981); D. Weinstein and R. M. Bell, *Saints and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); J. S. Hawley (ed.), *Saints and Virtues* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

[24] See especially Brown, "Rise and Function of the Holy Man"; idem, "Saint as Examplar"; also, idem, *Cult of the Saints;* idem, "Late Antiquity," in P. Veyne (ed.), *A History of Private Life,* translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 237–312; idem, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

sion that can hardly be subsumed under Weber's overly dichotomic and elementary typological categories.[25]

What is needed, however, is not so much a refinement of these categories but rather a more precise analysis of the essential features of virtuosity per se, and of its propensity to become the nexus of a range of highly distinctive, and largely overlooked, sociological processes. Weber's concern with the sharp contrasts between different types of virtuosity – especially its "activist–ascetic–ethical" and orgiastic–contemplative–exemplary" poles – has in fact tended to obscure the common features that led him to identify them as expressions of one same phenomenon in the first place, and to understate their common sociological implications.

Most striking, and not much elaborated upon in Weber's analysis, is the emergence and impressive historical resilience of a specialized virtuoso institution: monasticism. Although many (and perhaps all) human societies have some type of religious specialists – priests, prophets, shamans, diviners, and so forth – not all societies have engendered the phenomenon of religious virtuosity, with the implied split between a virtuoso religiosity and a mass religiosity.[26] Even fewer have engendered the institutionalization of religious virtuosity in the form of monasticism. Weber, as noted, strongly emphasized monasticism's professionallike, rational efficiency and political usefulness. As is shown in the next chapter, however, monasticism is also based on profoundly asocial or even antisocial principles (celibacy, withdrawal from general society) and displays a range of ideological and organizational features that make it into a rather precarious type of social formation. Its emergence and historical persistence in certain civilizational settings only, but not in others, is therefore an issue that calls for greater attention and cannot be taken as self-evident.

Although Weber undoubtedly recognized the historical significance of monasticism and its direct relevance to some of the major themes of his work (such as the development of western "rationalization"),[27] he actually gave it very little conceptual and theoretical attention.[28] It is also a

[25] See Schluchter, "Weltflüchtiges Erlösungstreben," especially pp. 35–43.

[26] Weber never uses the term in contexts other than that of the so-called great traditions.

[27] I have examined this aspect of Weber's work in greater detail, although only with respect to the narrower issue of economic rationalization, in Silber, "Monasticism and the Protestant Ethic."

[28] This is perhaps most conspicuous in contrast to his famed typological elaboration of "church" versus "sect." Beyond these two major types of organizations, his attention, like Troeltsch's, rather focused on mysticism. See the issue "Church, Sect and Mysticism" in *Sociological Analysis* 36, no. 3 (1975). This, in conjunction with the fact that he did not clearly articulate the relationship between virtuosity and charisma, reinforces the feeling that there is here a range of religious phenomena that have not received a full and systematic treatment in the Weberian scheme.

further indication of his failure to tackle the issue of virtuosity in a fully systematic fashion that he did not address the distinction (and mutual relation) between virtuosity in its more organized and corporate, monastic form, and in its less organized, more individual, or withdrawn manifestations. Although aware of the withdrawal from normal social relations that tends to accompany the virtuoso's single-minded pursuit of religious ends,[29] he paid no attention to the more radically individual and/or withdrawn, eremitic forms of virtuosity. Nor did he consider the element of voluntary withdrawal remaining present even in organized, monastic forms of virtuosity, or the part that this may play in the interaction between monasticism and society at large. What monopolized his attention, on the contrary, were monasticism's bureaucratic functions and overall political incorporation.

The virtuoso–layman interaction

The analysis to be advanced here will stress the development of an extensive pattern of material and symbolic exchange between virtuosi and laymen, epitomized in a gift relationship (laymen giving, monks receiving) that developed on a massive scale in both Theravada Buddhism and medieval Catholicism. This will mean drawing systematic comparative attention to an axis of interaction with society that, as mentioned, received unequal treatment in Weber's case studies. Noted in the "Buddhist–Jainist" context – but also quickly dismissed as involving a commercialized relation of "magical anthropolatry" of no serious "ethical" impact – it was not systematically followed up in any of the other civilizational settings that Weber addressed. (This unequal treatment, incidentally, is consonant with the fact that processes of exchange do not receive much theoretical weight in Weberian sociology.)[30]

The pattern of exchange between virtuoso and layman, and its reproduction over centuries, I submit, is of crucial significance in understanding both the resilience of monasticism as a specific and far from self-

[29] See, for example, Weber, *Sociology of Religion,* p. 166.

[30] A similar emphasis on exchange has been recently developed by Bryan Turner, albeit from a different theoretical perspective and with a different appraisal of Weber's sociology of religion. See B. Turner, *Religion and Social Theory: A Materialist Perspective* (London: Heinemann, 1983) ch. 4. I, of course, fully agree that Weber's typological distinction of virtuoso and mass religiosity has been strangely neglected (p. 89). However, I also believe that Turner tends to inflate the presence, in Weber's sociology of religion, of the assumption of an exchange relationship between virtuosi and the mass, especially one entailing "an implicit parallel between economic and religious systems." Whereas Turner sees the relationship geared to the need of the religious elites "to exchange the benefits of charisma for various forms of payment and tribute in order to maintain their separation from labour and the market place," I prefer to develop a less "economic," more Maussian conception of this exchange as gift relationship.

evident social formation, and its different institutional characteristics in the two cases under study.

Moreover, the existence of a gift relationship as understood since Marcel Mauss,[31] is important in that it signals a very special type of interaction and exchange. On the one hand, the gift is supposed to deny reciprocity and situate itself outside the normal range of transactions and exchange (it is in fact an insult under certain circumstances to return a gift, or return it too quickly). On the other hand, the gift also represents an important mechanism of solidarity and reciprocity in the long range. Mauss himself was interested in the functioning of this mechanism of solidarity as a "total phenomenon," that is, as touching upon many levels of social life in different social settings. Here, the gift relationship between monks and laymen will be shown to form an integral aspect of a broader and complex sociological phenomenon, the virtuoso–society syndrome.

Focusing on the virtuoso–layman axis of interaction and exchange also has the important advantage of mitigating the pervasive elitist orientation of Weber's sociology of religion. Consistently investing religious elites, virtuoso or otherwise, with a dominant, shaping impact in the history of civilizations, Weber typically treated "mass religion" as a residual category, often synonymous to "peasant religion," and usually endowed with heavily depreciative connotations of passivity, irrationality, and reliance on magical, "primitive" ritual and symbolic orientations. Although certainly not contradicting Weber's emphasis on the crucial significance of religious elites, I shall at least underline their lasting involvement in, and dependence upon, a relationship of interaction and exchange in which the laity (still massively, if not solely, rural in character throughout most of the period discussed) emerges as a crucial and active partner.

A more systematic comparative emphasis on the relationship with the laity will also enable us to counteract a pervasive slant in Weber's underestimation of the impact of "otherworldly" religious orientations in general, and of Buddhist virtuosity in particular. This bias is clearly rooted in Weber's overriding concern with the varying potential of different civilizations for rationalization and rationalized activity in the world and with the unique development and features of rationality in the West. In his comparative scheme, Puritan Calvinism often provided the fundamental frame of reference, the epitome and prototype of a religiously anchored, rationalized involvement in the world. I shall not so much focus, however, on the already richly discussed issue of whether Buddhism was or was not able to engender orientations furthering economic and political worldly rationalized and dynamism approximating the modern Western model.[32] More central to my purpose is to bring into relief a very distinctive type of

[31] M. Mauss, *The Gift* (New York: Norton, 1976).
[32] See the Introduction, fn. 18.

Buddhist social construction – deriving at least in part from Buddhist otherworldly orientations – whose far-reaching "worldly" significance has to be understood independently of the approximation to a Western model of economic and political dynamism and/or rationality.

In my view, the virtuoso–laity structure of interaction was a principle of no less, and perhaps even greater, social scope and impact in Theravada Southeast Asia than the better-known mechanisms of institution building derived from more worldly or "rational" cultural orientations in the Christian West. The institutional implications of the virtuoso–laity structure of interaction in Theravada Buddhism must be assessed according to different criteria of social significance and vitality than those used by Weber, and compared, not with late-Christian, Protestant developments, but with the earlier, medieval stages in the history of Christian virtuosity.

The significance of the virtuoso–laity axis of interaction can be understood, however, only within the overall field of social relations. Emphasizing the virtuoso–layman interaction, therefore, is not meant to diminish the importance of the other facets of the interaction between virtuosi and society brought out in Weber's work, such as the relations with the religious establishment and the political center.[33] The intent, rather, is to underline the importance of this interaction as an important and overlooked parameter in the operation of macrosocietal structures, no less and at times even more crucial than the more obvious and better-studied interaction between religious and political establishment – of which the Western church-and-state dynamics provide a major prototype. Last but not least, focusing on the virtuoso–layman relation enables us to clarify the relationship between virtuosity and charisma – one of Weber's best-known legacies to the social sciences.

Virtuosity and charisma

Although Weber did occasionally use the word "charisma" in connection with religious virtuosi, he never tried to articulate the analytical or empirical relationship between the two phenomena.[34] (This is noticeable in

[33] On the contrary, this should contribute to the analysis of monasticism as part of a field of interacting as well as competing social groups, including the laity itself. This is in part compatible, once again, with Bourdieu's suggested reading of Weber (see this chapter, fn. 21). Bourdieu, however, emphasizes the competition for power *over* the laity only, in terms of social groups' different capacities to mobilize the laity's resources (material or otherwise). In that specific regard, it seems possible to read Weber as addressing "power" over the laity primarily in terms of ethical impact – albeit also facilitating thereby, in the case of monasticism, a process of "domestication of the masses" ultimately benefiting both ecclesiastical and political rulers.
[34] See, for example, his definition of religious virtuosi at the beginning of this chapter and in fn. 1.

his very definition of religious virtuosi quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and in the later quote, assessing the tense balance of occidental culture, where monasticism is implicitly and loosely credited with charisma.) This relative neglect, moreover, is all the more striking in light of the crucial role attributed to religious virtuosi in his comparative analysis of civilizations in general, and of Western uniqueness in particular.

Religious virtuosi may become, but are not necessarily, charismatic leaders; they are not necessarily connected with especially dramatic, highly emotional movements; and they are not necessarily either especially disruptive or dramatically creative. In short, religious virtuosi are not necessarily a "hot," but rather a cold – or at any rate a cooler – phenomenon. The analogy from the arts and music may be relevant: There the term virtuosity has come to connote an exceptional level of proficiency and technical excellence, not necessarily coincidental with the more "charismatic" notions of artistic creativity or innovative genius. (Weber himself does not develop that contrast, and as already mentioned, does not attach to the term virtuosity any of its possible pejorative contemporary connotations.) Nevertheless, ascetic virtuosi have hardly left society indifferent; their virtuosity, to pursue the artistic metaphor, has not lacked audience. It has had, in fact, a tremendous appeal, and one with an interesting contrast to that usually associated with the idea of genuine charisma – a theme we shall expand upon in Chapter 10. Understanding this appeal, I submit, can add an important and neglected dimension to the general comprehension of cultural–ideological elites and their patterns of impingement upon society at large.

To some extent, admittedly, virtuosity may be understood as anchored in the charismatic impulse in the most extensive sense of that term, pertaining to the quest for a meaningful order and for the sense of a fundamental connection to the realm of ultimate meaning. In that broader sense indeed, as propounded by Edward Shils and S. N. Eisenstadt,[35] religious virtuosity in general and monasticism in particular may be seen as one of the most extreme and most autonomous expressions, both ideologically and institutionally, of the charismatic motif in the history of human civilization. The central concern of virtuoso asceticism, at least in its original impulse, is the single-minded pursuit of ultimate religious ends. It is also that essentially "charismatic" impulse that leads to the effort to systematically pattern the virtuoso's way of life in accordance with these ends, and to the methodical avoidance, through asceticism and withdrawal, of whatever is perceived as apt to

[35] See E. Shils, "Charisma, Order and Status," *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965): 199–213; S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution-Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), especially pp. ix–lvi.

interfere with that end. However, a closer analysis of monasticism, and of the complex pattern of interaction that has tended to develop between monks and laity, discloses a number of features at variance with those associated with either "pure," "routinized," or "institutional" charisma, at least in Weber's original (albeit not always consistent) usage of those terms – as we shall explain in Chapter 10. If there is charisma in regard to religious virtuosity, it is of a sort that clearly indicates the need for a more refined spectrum of categories to account for the many and contradictory expressions of charisma as an essentially multifaceted and protean phenomenon.

Weber's work, in sum, is of seminal importance in suggesting the distinctiveness of religious virtuosity as a sociological phenomenon, and its significance for the comparative sociological study of civilizations. On the other hand, as we have seen, his approach suffered from important biases and limitations. The next chapter highlights aspects of the relation between virtuosi and society that were understated in the Weberian approach, first by further elucidating the distinctive features of monasticism as a virtuoso institution, and second by reviewing and criticizing a number of interpretations that offer, loosely speaking, a Durkheimian or "functionalist" counterpart to the Weberian approach.

Fundamentally, however, this book remains very much in line with Weber's overall enterprise. Not only does it take Weber's notion and analysis of virtuosity as a starting point, but it also applies a combination of ideal-type analysis and comparative historical research, two distinctly Weberian methodological tools. More important, it is also Weberian, I believe, in adopting a multidimensional and nondeterministic style of explanation that gives much weight to religious–cultural orientations and collective structures of meaning, while also emphasizing the need to take into account a whole constellation of sociostructural variables. Where it perhaps both pursues and goes beyond Weber is in the fuller elaboration of virtuosity, the elaboration of new comparative parameters, and a new (if not necessarily opposed) comparative assessment of the social significance of occidental versus Asian forms of religious virtuosity. Finally, this book expands upon Weber's basic concern with the interpretation of meaning, but also enriches it with other and newer forms of symbolic and cultural analysis, by trying, in the final chapter, to better define the precise significance of religious–ideological orientations as they become a necessary ingredient of the interaction between virtuoso elites and society, and a constitutive dimension of the social order at large.

in the creation and maintenance of the Cistercian ethos and, we would say, their collective identity as 'desert dwellers'. Furthermore, I have made investigations into the literary anatomy of various wildernesses in the Cistercian *corpus*. These wildernesses are employed, I argue, as a means of retrieving and revitalizing the memory of a Cistercian golden age. Diverse in type and tenor, each wilderness attests to the endeavour to depict a Cistercian present in chiming with the past; this resonance is brought about through claims that the present is in harmony with the past, but also by representing the past in ways that make it come across as a suitable antecedent for the present.

Medieval 'Virtuosity': Classroom Practice and the Transfer of Charismatic Power in Medieval Scholarly Culture *c.* 1000–1230

Mia Münster-Swendsen

In his teaching manual of rhetoric from the 1220s, the *Parisiana Poetria*, John of Garland stated that 'Just as knowledge is a gift, so virtue will be'.[1] This deceptively simple contention had been commonplace for centuries among writers on education and ethics, and we might easily pass it over because of its apparent topicality. But pondered more closely, it does reveal a central perception of what education involves: a transfer of knowledge and learning, and hence of power and authority, perceived as an exchange of gifts in a relationship based on the principle of reciprocity. Taking this precept as its starting point, the aim of this article is to offer a few insights into the social practices of medieval teaching and learning in the centuries after the Millennium, and to provide some theoretical reflections on how we might assess the ways in which power relations functioned within this particular setting. In relation to this, and to the general theme of this anthology, I intend to show how continuity and coherence were upheld through notions of heritage and genealogy, and how a model based on inheritance presents a problem, especially in a culture marked by charismatic, rather than strictly institutional or bureaucratic, power structures.

[1] 'Prout est sciencia donum, virtus erit': John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, ed. and trans. by Traugott Lawler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 7, line 674, p. 168. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are mine. Parts of this article are based upon chapters from my PhD dissertation of 2004, 'Masters and Paragons: Learning, Power and the Formation of a European Academic Culture *c.* 900–1220', The Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen.

One of the most crucial problems for historians studying the world of education before the advent of the university has been the apparent lack of a number of central institutional elements, in particular a recognizable rite of passage, which would mark the shift of intellectual status from student to master, a ritual through which the power distribution between the two was visibly altered and confirmed anew. Instead, the transmission of authority appears to have occurred gradually as education proceeded and there was no point in time or designated ritual to mark when this transfer was complete. Thus, at the very heart of this pre-institutional educational model lies the problem of succession — a problem which also highlights a central paradox in a culture sustained by charismatic power relations: how is this personal and thoroughly individualized quality transferred to another human being and how can the ostensibly hierarchic relationship between master and disciple survive the eventual and inevitable challenging of the master's unique superiority?

Virtue and Charisma: Theoretical Reflections

It is a central aspect of charismatic power that its actuality is defined by those who perceive, acknowledge, and hence confirm its existence.[2] It craves an audience — a social setting — and as such it is inherently performative; like the sounds of music or the voice of a singer, it only exists in the now and only for as long as the performance endures. Thus, charisma, while being a tremendously powerful driving force, is also extremely volatile and precarious. The German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) is the theorist who, in my opinion, has given the best model description yet of the workings of charismatic authority and come closest towards creating an analytical framework for dealing with the different modes in which power is legitimized.[3] Still, I have found it necessary to make a few alterations to Weber's definitions of charismatic power

[2] Charisma is mainly connected to a face-to-face bodily presence, but it may also be seen to be conveyed (and attempts may be made to preserve it) through written or pictorial signs, though here in an indirect form which calls into remembrance the direct real-life experience. See C. Stephen Jaeger's discussion of 'the charismatic text', in C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe 950–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 190–93.

[3] The analysis of different ideal types of authority (Weber's term is *Herrschaft*) is gradually developed throughout his major, broad-ranging opus *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* published posthumously in 1922. A central part of the work contains a comparative sociological study of the world religions, and, significantly, it is very much in this context that Weber's theory of the legitimization of power appears. In his discussion of different types of power and authority, Weber sees a strong opposition between charisma and bureaucracy as means of legitimization, which also connects to a certain narrative of modernization — or rather, rationalization.

and what it entails. Regarding the term 'charisma' itself, I use it neither in its scriptural meaning as a quality deriving from divine grace,[4] nor as a quality possessed only by the religiously empowered,[5] but in a broader psychological or 'spiritual' sense as designating a certain immanent *force* which is perceived to emanate from certain people endowed with special virtues. Equally, to make use of the concept when analysing intellectual and educational power relations, it is necessary to distinguish between mystical and 'social' charisma: the former remains unattainable by will and unremittable by deliberate action, while the latter type of charisma is actively pursued through interaction with other human beings.[6] Following this distinction, the medieval schoolmen's charisma differs from the genuinely mystic or even magical type insofar as it is a result of deliberate, methodical cultivation. Consequently it is not a gift sent from above, but an offering actively sought by a student who associates himself with a human master, entering into an exchange based on imitation. And contrary to the 'divine gift', it can be manipulated and controlled, altered and even undone by human beings. The *magister* remains the sole provider of charisma, which is activated by his own practice of virtue and learning. A student carries the *potential* of achieving charisma, but it must be actualized by the master's interference. Furthermore, I do not intend to imply any opposition between charisma and reason. Although charismatic force *per se* may ultimately elude rational description, this does not necessarily make it irrational; despite its clearly metaphysical quality, its effects are quite real. Nor do I see the reason for an absolute distinction between charisma and institutionalization, mainly because I do not regard even 'pure' charisma as being *fundamentally* subversive. Weber's ideal type of pure charisma is essentially uncontrollable, anti-systematic, and anti-institutional, and thus, unretainable in a disciplinary system. It is my contention that although it may function as a revolutionary and subversive force, it can also serve to uphold discipline and reinforce authority.

[4] In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul places charismatic gifts in two main categories, one of which includes teaching, administration, and discernment and another encompasses healing, miracles, and speaking in tongues.

[5] Religion in the strictly doctrinal sense, as pertaining to ecclesiastical institutions and dogmas as distinguished from a more fluid 'spirituality'.

[6] I am not aware that Weber ever made a similar distinction, but I find this 'secularization' of the concept crucial for enabling us to discuss charisma outside a metaphysical framework.

With its connection to virtues — or rather because charisma is the emblem of *virtuosity*[7] — we may employ the term coined by Weber to designate a group of people defined by their possession and enactment of virtue: the *virtuosi* (German: *Virtuosen*). Since it appeared in his studies of Indian religions, Weber's use of this category was mainly restricted to encompass Buddhist and Brahmanic religious leaders, in particular those of an ascetic disposition. Yet, I will contend that the category is well suited to our context too; to embrace a group of individuals who, in a similar manner to Weber's spiritual athletes, were perceived to possess a special *virtus*, whose identity was defined by this possession, and who were also seen to embody and thus emanate charisma, that most elusive of powers: the medieval *magistri*.

As a social group, these scholarly *virtuosi* were bound together by a shared sense of elation rooted in their mastery of learning and in the display of their refined moral and spiritual qualities. In relation to the rest of society, the stance of the *virtuosi* was deeply elitist, but the relation between them was marked by a strong sense of equity, solidarity, and 'horizontality' as regards social power. A central trait of the *virtuosi* was their adherence to various forms of asceticism. In the case of the schoolmen, I do not mean an individual, religious *askesis* of the more traditional kind involving world-detachment and more or less extreme degrees of self-denial and self-mortification, but am using the term more generally.[8] Certain practices within medieval education and scholarship may be (re)interpreted as comprising elements of asceticism, such as the painstaking labour of writing, composing, copying, reading by candlelight, reciting by rote, meticulous memorization, meditating and contemplating, or simply being occupied in the schoolroom, whether as teacher or student, from dawn until dusk, day in and day out (except, usually, on Sundays and certain feast-days). Such daily routines tended to occupy the entirety of an individual's time, leaving little room for other pursuits. The frequent textual depictions of the master's pallid appearance and emaciated or lean body should be seen in this context.[9] These are concrete corporeal signs of the hard labour of self-transformation and of the actual physical duress of scholarly labour. It involved sleep-deprivation, constant vigilance over one's behaviour and thoughts; that is, self-control in the highest degree.

Apparently Pernolf, the Würzburg schoolmaster, exhibited precisely such ascetic and *ennobling* qualities, which were praised by a student who described how the master was mortifying himself working day and night for the sake of his own self-education, as well as for that of his students. These practices show the ascetic's triumph over bodily as well as emotional impulses in his search for a perfection of the mind and spirit that designate him as belonging to the elite, the *virtuosi* who have transcended the mundane.

In a similar manner, exile — a common, even quotidian, experience among these intellectuals and schoolmen — could be reconfigured to form part of the ascetic practice aiming at perfection. There is a deliberate quest to be homeless, both in a quite concrete manner and in the spiritual sense, to gain liberation not so much from 'the world' but from 'worldliness'; i.e., what is base, 'rustic', and degrading. To use a Weberian distinction: this is not *Weltflucht* but *Weltablehnung*.[10] It does not signify an attempt at fleeing the world as such, as in the traditional monastic ideal in which one is 'dead to the world', but turning away from worldliness — in particular from clinging to what is ultimately impermanent. It is neither the world as such, nor human society that is rejected, but their superficiality and fickleness. Thus while learned discourse often displays an intense dislike of 'worldly things' (especially pecuniary riches) and while intellectual labour may often be defined in 'other-worldly', spiritual terms, the social role of the educator contains an important ethical dimension. It is not a detached personal struggle for individual salvation; rather, it is directed towards the world, society, and other people, borne as it is by the major virtue of an

[7] Virtuosity in its broad sense as designating excellence achieved through the possession of certain virtues or skills — especially the *display* of such excellence. The term is etymologically — and semantically — connected to the complex concept of *virtus* comprising the sum of all bodily and mental perfection. Among medieval writers the broad concept of *virtus* is often interchangeable with *integritas*, and indeed, 'integrity', rather than 'virtue', might be a more proper modern translation, since it avoids some of the more recent moral connotations (prudishness, for example). Learned writers on education and morals of the period with which we are here concerned (the eleventh and twelfth centuries) tend to stress *magnanimitas* ('greatness of soul') as the chief virtue. The stem of virtus is *vir*, 'man', and thus connects to 'manliness' too.

[8] Equally I do not imply *askesis* in any particularly 'puritan' manner. It is not a total renunciation of all pleasure, but rather a redirection of pleasure and desire towards the sublime. *Askesis* in this sense is a set of techniques and practices involving a high degree of self-control with the ultimate goal of achieving a higher state of selfhood.

[9] In the *Alexandreis*, Walter of Châtillon depicts Aristotle as pale and emaciated, and the thirteenth-century *De disciplina scolarium* (Pseudo-Boethius) repeats the exact passage in the part describing the model *magister*. Similarly, Alan of Lille describes Lady Dialectic as worn out by studying — her whole body 'indicates the working of a never-sleeping mind, proclaims that Minerva is vigilant': Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, III. 1; 'Haec habitu, gestu, macie, pallore, figurat, | Insomnes animi motus, vigilemque Minervam | Praedicat, et secum vigiles vigilasse lucernas': *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century*, ed. by T. Wright, Rolls Series, 59.2 (London: Rolls Series, 1872), p. 310).

[10] On this distinction see especially the 'Zwischenbetrachtung', in Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 3 vols (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), I, 536–73.

all-embracing *caritas*. The teacher teaches not for gain, but 'out of love for his students'. Equally, when moving out on to the political stage, the schoolman as courtier and administrator sees his role as a mediator 'tempering the wrath of kings' and ensuring a little more justice in an unjust post-lapsarian world. Out of love for his fellow human beings he works not for himself, but for the common good, the *res publica*. In both cases, the *literatus* embodies a conjunction of the active and contemplative life, while maintaining a divide between his public and private self.

Teaching Virtue

Resting upon the twin pillars of *litterae* and *mores*,[11] medieval education had a two-fold aim: to ensure both intellectual and personal cultivation. Hence, the goal was not just to impart useful skills, but to transform personalities by completely remodelling individuals mentally, psychologically, and even physically. Let us briefly return to John of Garland's dictum quoted at the beginning. It appears in the context of what the author designates as an *exemplum* regarding the principles of scholarly *magisterium* in which the nexus of knowledge and virtue is explained via an extended organic metaphor of growth and renewal:

> Therefore, if we wish to be formed again in God, exiles as we are, we must be renewed in virtue. Sin turned wisdom into ignorance; knowledge looks to restoration through virtue.
>
> Just as knowledge is a gift, so virtue will be. From virtue it derives and wears away vice, if habit may dispose it to hold itself aloof, still it never demands to be the origin of virtue.
>
> Aroused by study, re-enlivened knowledge thrives verdant like the olive. Sown in boys at the proper time for sowing, it blossoms in adolescents and returns fruit.
>
> Men collect the fruit at the time of ripeness, just like the sower [*auctor*] in integrity of mind, the seedling tastes of[12] the tree, the vine of attractiveness, and the sprout of the root in the renewal of manners.

[11] The topic of the interconnectedness of *litterae* and *mores*, and of the content and social implications of the ideal of *curialitas*, has been penetratingly investigated by C. Stephen Jaeger. For a more detailed account than I can provide on these pages, I refer the reader to C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe 950–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); and Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

[12] The verb *sapio* also denotes 'having the sense of' or simply 'understand'.

> Because the highest state of virtue flourish in that mind that gives generously of all with a special grace; it rains dew on the mouth of the unlearned, in order that he may be verdant with new offshoots of virtue.[13]

According to John, the charismatic quality of *virtus* is not derivative of attaining knowledge; on the contrary, it is necessary for the latter's perfection — a virtuous habitus is required before ascending one can ascend the summit of learning. Hence there can be no real knowledge without virtuosity — and it cannot be reduced to mere intellectual skills. Both are cultivated through a process of rebirth which in itself is infinite and perpetual like the cyclical reappearance of spring — John's metaphor is well chosen to illustrate precisely this point.

The aim of this process is ultimately the transformation of the former self; though without dissolving the self altogether — this sort of *askesis*, unlike certain Oriental counterparts, is not self-abnegating. On the contrary, according to Émile Durkheim in his chapter on medieval schooling, the purpose of education is indeed to make the subject reflect on himself (*réfléchir sur lui-même, prendre conscience de soi*) and through this reflection create an even stronger (and more perfect) sense of selfhood.[14] The transmutation is achieved through the application of meticulous practices and disciplines, which are connected with the notion of *ars*.[15] Like the seven *artes liberales* themselves, it involves method and is consciously regulated by precepts that combine ethics with aesthetics. In the art of rhetoric, for example, the ability to express oneself in correct and beautiful language (*recte scribendi* or *docendi*) is directly connected with the art of living righteously (*recte vivendi*) — there can be no order without beauty and no

[13] 'Ergo si nos uolumus Deo reformari, | Exules uirtutibus decet renouari. | Culpa sapienciam dedit ignorari; | Virtute sciencia petit restaurari. || Prout est sciencia donum, uirtus erit. | Ex uirtute defluit viciumque terit; | Habitu disposita extra si se gerit, | Virtutis originem nullam sibi querit. | Suscitata studio, surgit rediuiua | Et crescit sciencia, uirens ut oliva: | Seritur in pueris hora sementiua, | Floret in iuuenibus fructus redditiua. || Viri fructum colligunt cum maturitate, | Auctori consimiles mentis honestate; | Planta sapit arborem vite uenustate, | Et radicem surculus morum nouitate. || Quia status optimus uirtus floret mentis | Speciali gratia cuncta largientis, | Rore suo compluat os insipientis | Vt uirtutum uireat nouis incrementis': John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 7, lines 670–89, pp. 168. The translation closely follows that given by Traugott Lawler.

[14] Émile Durkheim, *L'Évolution pédagogique en France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. 61.

[15] The medieval term is at least as complicated as the modern term 'art'. Contrary to divine creation, *ars* implies human agency in a world made imperfect by the Fall and the attempt to rectify and beautify it by making it reflect the divine order of things. *Ars* and nature, as well as nature and nurture, are usually seen as opposites in the medieval learned paradigm.

beauty without order, and in this world all the arts aspire to and guarantee the existence of both.

The centrality of this apprehension of *ars* is clearly shown in the chosen metaphor in early and high medieval scholastic didacticism: the *magister* is a craftsman—an *artifex*—who transforms the crude and unformed student material into a work of art. In this process, the student personality is gradually broken down and reassembled, just as the goldsmith or potter create new and more perfect forms. 'Natural' impulses are eradicated and substituted by cultured ones, and while education is frequently brutal when the student is still a child, this physical brutality is replaced by gentler forms of correction in adolescence and beyond. Gradually as education progresses, the task of imposing discipline is transferred from the master to the student's inner self or conscience. Ideally, the student internalizes the master's precepts and, parallel to this, his outward comportment is reshaped to imitate that of the *magister*. Equally, studious practices such as reading and contemplation are thoroughly suffused with moral implications, which undergird the overall process of self-transformation. The act of reading is to be accompanied by introspection, as John of Garland stated in the *Parisiana Poetria*, in which he furthermore stresses the importance of authenticity in regard to the display of virtuosity:

> Read books of morals, read them thoroughly, read and inscribe them in your heart. And read more while actually doing what you do in your imagination when you read—lest your reading find fault with your deeds, your words with your hands, lest your deeds scandalize your voice, lest a human face smile in front and a foul fish behind.[16]

The self-cultivation achieved through such introspection went deeper than a mere social ideal or a code of general morality aimed at making people move more gracefully and smoothly in their everyday surroundings. Since it included the totality of the human being—body and spirit, gestures, speech, acting, and thinking—it became a matter of existential importance. When John of Garland in a later work exhorted students to 'imitate the carved statues that adorn the cathedrals in manner, bearing, and gesture',[17] he clearly implied that the grace of form would mirror the beauty and order of the content, that is, of the soul.

[16] 'Morales libros lege, perlege, corde lecta scribe; | Legas agendo quod facis legendo, | Ne culpet factum tua lectio, ne manus loquela, | Ne scandalizent facta uocis usum, | Ne caput humanum prerideat, ater inde piscis': John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 7, lines 1636–40, p. 206 (transl. by T. Lawler).

[17] My paraphrase of John of Garland, *Morale Scolarium*, cap. 30; 'Templi sculpturas morum dicesse figuras, | Vivas picturas in te gere non perituras': *Morale Scolarium of John of Garland (Johannes Garlandia)*, ed. by Louis J. Paetow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1927), p. 243.

In like manner, his older colleague, Alan of Lille, had stated it thus: 'For our countenance [or face] is a book and a record of the heart, a messenger, a true interpreter, an image of the soul'.[18] Both these schoolmasters taught according to a vision of a harmony of form and content and concordance of exterior display and inner disposition (*habitus*). Contrary to empty or exaggerated mannerisms, a person's behaviour and thus whole being should be authentic yet restrained, modulated yet truthful.

Memory, Genealogy, and Mortality

The emotional elements of desire and longing were crucial in an educational situation based on charismatic attraction and the imitation, and appropriation, of virtue. They gave rise to a language of desire: 'an erotics of instruction' that was not only a side-effect, but the vehicle of education.[19] A telling example of such emotionality can be found in the somewhat mysterious 'secret evening colloquia' conducted by Fulbert of Chartres, during which he created profound effects by his 'weeping'. If we are to judge from the descriptions of these colloquia provided by former Fulbert-students, such as Adelman of Liège and Guitmund of Aversa,[20] his students were amazed and their attraction to the master further enhanced. After Fulbert and many of his earlier students had died, Adelman of Liège composed a versified lament (*planctus*) for the *magister* with a lengthy catalogue of his deceased students.[21] According to this precious prosopographical evidence, Fulbert's students came from almost every corner of Europe, although the majority was from the learned 'heartland' between the Loire and the Rhine, Lotharingia in particular. The plaint saves this whole network for posterity and

[18] 'Nam vultus noster liber est et littera cordis | Nuntius, interpres verax, animique figura': Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, III. 4, p. 319.

[19] For a more in-depth analysis of these affectionate and frequently highly erotic master-student relationships see Mia Münster-Swendsen, 'The Model of Scholastic Mastery in Northern Europe *c.* 970–1200', in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe 1000–1200*, ed. by J. Rubenstein and S. N. Vaughn (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 318–56.

[20] Adelman of Liège, *Tractatus et epistulae*, in *Serta Medievalia: Textus varii saeculorum X–XIII*, ed. by R. B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 171 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) p. 182.

[21] Adelman of Liège, *Armonicae facultatis*, in *Bishop Fulbert and Education at the School of Chartres*, ed. by L. C. MacKinney, Texts and Studies in the History of Mediaeval Education, 6 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1957), Appendix. The poem is extant in two manuscripts (and two versions). In the later version further names are added. The second redaction may well be Adelman's own update of his poem. Adelman himself died in 1061.

recreates the Fulbertian genealogy in textual form. 'With a melting heart', Adelman praises the old master:

> Pride of the city of Chartres, memorable bishop,
> You firstly, father Fulbert, when I endeavour to speak of you,
> words escape me, my heart dissolves; tears break forth anew.
> Indeed I remember many things, each of them calling forth tears,
> Since I was the table companion of the old man, oftentimes clinging to his side,
> Drinking with my ear from the golden fountain of his sweet mouth.
> Alas! With what dignity of moral diligence,
> What seriousness, [and] sweetness of words,
> He explained the highest mysteries of knowledge!
> Through your favour studies in Gaul flourished;
> You improved divine and human learning;
> You never allowed virtue to be oppressed by want.
> Like the deep sea is divided into many-cleft streams,
> Like the fire [or sun] scatters itself in several minor sparks [or rays],
> Thus you spread numerous distinguished men through many lands. [22]

Adelman's lament is a grand tribute to the Fulbertian heritage embodied by his students both dead and living. It seeks not only to secure the memory of this great scholarly 'family', but to invoke the (omni)presence of the master. Although the physical frame of Fulbert has gone for ever, his legacy (and charisma) lives on among his devoted students—and will be perpetuated by these when they themselves become masters. Indeed, the culture of charismatic presence is nowhere more apparent than in the texts that deal with absence or loss. There are numerous extant examples of a student's versified lament for his master and, although they derive from sincere personal grief, such texts are not merely reflections of private ruminations. They also serve a communal function as they dramatize and (re)enact grief in public space by being recited or sung.

A truly elaborate example is found in Gudinus's lament for his teacher Constant of Luxeuil. Since the poem mentions Emperor Henry II as being still alive, it must have been written before 1024. The *planctus* opens with a musical *mise-en-scène* underscoring the performative, public quality of texts such as this. It calls on the performer (the singer) to intone the lament, then invokes the

[22] 'Carnotenae decus urbis, memorande pontifex, | Te primum, pater Fulberte, dum te conor dicere, | Sermo fugit, cor liquiescit, recrudescunt lacrimae. | Deploranda singillatim multa quidem memini | Utpote convictor senis, herens sepe lateri, | Aure bibens oris fontem aureum melliflui. | Eheu! Quanta dignitate moralis industriae, | Quanta rerum gravitate, verborum dulcedine, | Explicabat altioris archana scientiae! | Floruere, te fovente, Galliarum studia; | Tu divina, tu humana excolebas dogmata; | Nunquam passus es urgeri virtutem penuria. | Gurges altus ut in amnes scinditur multifidos, | Ut in plures fundit ignis se minores radios, | Sic insignes propagasti per diversa plurimos.' (Excerpt): Adelman of Liège, *Armonicae facultatis*, p. 49.

presence of the author, and finally asks the audience, which includes the whole world of animate or inanimate objects, to join in:

> Now, chanter, weep in singing for the conscientious *magister*.
> Till now I tuned the lyre of music along the by-ways:
> Now I continue my course towards the precious funerary rite
> That lowers the pitch of the laments of love from a sorrowful string.[23]
> A huge burden, a great grief constrains my former strength.
> How unable I am to complete what I had formerly resolved to do!
> Yet let me speak my heart's distress in simple words:[24]
> Heaven! Stars! Earth! Sea! Men and beasts!
> Strain your ears to the lament of this *rhythmus*,
> And render faithful plaints to the philosopher Constant,
> Whose name I can never speak without a grieving mind,
> Whose face I recall for myself just as it was,
> To whom I cling, to whom I am attached with an ever vigilant heart,
> Whose sorrowful demise besets the whole extent of the earth,
> Throwing the learned men of all realms into public mourning,
> Whereby the great men and peasants are greatly disturbed.
> I never saw, nor will I ever see, so conscientious a philosopher,
> Who, being his disciples' sustenance next to the Lord,
> Provided learning by charm, not by fear.[25]
>
> [...]
>
> O my eloquent Constant, the best part of my mind,
> Indefatigable guardian of my heart and of my study,
> Why do you lie as the prey of death under the lock of your grave?
> You always promised me him whom I miss mournfully.
> Now, miserable and unhappy, I am deprived of you and even of him.
> O pain! While I am alive, why do you not live in the world?
> You, Master of Masters, more learned, most learned,

[23] Or 'heart'. Gudinus deliberately plays on the double meanings of the words in this first part. Many of these are also musical terms.

[24] This marks that Gudinus now relinquishes his use of intricate wording.

[25] 'Ergo plange pium cantor modulando magistrum, | Hactenus tetendi lyram musicae per semitas: | Nunc meum extendam cursum charas ad exsequias, | Quas deprimit lamentando moesti cordis charitas. | Grande pondus, magnum luctus vim constringit pristinam, | Quam non valeo supplere, quod prius decreveram: | Nudis tamen dicam verbis pectoris angustiam. | Coelum, stellae, terra, mare, homines ac bestiae, | Ad lamentum hujus rhythmi auditum extendite, | Et Constantio sophistae fidos planctus reddite. | Cujus nomen nunquam dico sine mente lugubri, | Cujus mihi vultum fingo forma non dissimili, | Quem amplector, cui jungor corde semper vigili. | Cujus exitus deflendus cingit orbis spatium | Sapientibus regnorum immittens justitium, | Quo primates et coloni pertubantur nimium. | Nunquam vidi, nec videbo tam pium philosophum, | Qui cibus discipulorum existens post Dominum, | Blandimentis, non terrore, ministrabat studium': Gudinus of Luxeuil, *Gudini planctus rhythmicus*, *Patrologia Latina*, 151, col. 635A–B (my tentative translation).

From virtue to virtue, he who is your better is supreme.
Right it is that through your merits you became the most Constant. [26]

The whole world bewails the demise of the *magister*: the four winds, King Robert the Pious and Emperor Henry II, all the German prelates, along with several cities and regions (covering Germany, France, Burgundy, and Lombardy)[27] all convene in the pan-European, cosmic choir of mourning. Even Master Constant's own texts shed tears over his passing.[28]

Gudinus perambulates between grandiose panegyric and private displays of his intimate feelings. Again and again he revisits the problem of discontinuity—Constant's name allows for a neat pun—so while the physical presence of the master has been lost, Gudinus finds solace in the thought that *constancy* and continuity are to be found in the teachers' learning and practice of virtue—that is, in a heritage which transcends death as long as the magisterial example lives on in his disciples' re-enactment of it.

Charismatic attraction was an important element in these master-student relationships, yet in the ideal case the disciple does not only want to become *like* his master[29]—he literally wants to become *one* with him. In merging his own, lesser self with that of the hallowed magisterial figure, the student, if this process is taken to the extreme, *loses* his own self, at least for a while. The little spark is swallowed up by the refulgent light of the superior, and the two become one in a way that is not entirely unproblematic. If this is indeed a description of what happens as a consequence of the utmost intimacy in the relationship, it serves to explain the profoundly traumatizing experience which the student

[26] 'O Constanti mi, diserte, summa pars et animi, | Inexhausta cura mei pectoris ac studii, | Quare jaces praeda mortis sub clausura tumuli? | Semper mihi promittebas, quem lugens desidero, | Modo miser et infelix, te vel ipsis careo | Proh dolor! Cur me vivente tu non vivis saeculo! | Tu magister magistrorum, doctior, doctissimus, | De virtute in virtutem melior te optimus, | Jure es ex meritorum factus Constantissimus': Gudinus of Luxeuil, *Gudini planctus rhythmicus*, *Patrologia Latina*, 151, cols 636C–37A.

[27] This topography of mourning may cover the geographical stretch of those communities who signed the *rotulus*: a circulating roll of epigrammatic texts usually in remembrance of deceased members of the larger confraternity of ecclesiastical communities, bearing the news of Constant's death. They are not placed in any apparent order. Gudinus's obituary poem may stand as a sort of 'conclusion' made on the occasion of receiving the *rotulus* when it returned to Luxeuil. But of course, this is just a hypothesis.

[28] 'Lacrymentur ergo mecum codices eximii, | Quos descripsit pulchra manus inclyti Constantii, | Se plangentes negligendos doctore consimili': Gudinus of Luxeuil, *Gudini planctus rhythmicus*, *Patrologia Latina*, 151, col. 635B.

[29] See Luke 6. 39–41: 'Numquid potest caecus caecum ducere? Nonne ambo in foveam cadunt? Non est discipulus super magistrum: perfectus autem omnis erit, si sit sicut magister eius.'

undergoes by the inevitable loss of the master. But, again, the loss may then become the student's moment of liberation, a sort of epiphany in which he himself, by overcoming the greatest emotional obstacle or test—the loss of the paragon—finally ascends the charismatic *cathedra* and attains the full *magisterium*. Furthermore, the demise of the master solves the problem of succession; that is, of course, if there remains someone to succeed him, otherwise, the master's death means the ruin of the school itself, as is clearly seen in the highly discontinuous history of even greatest centres of learning in this period.

The Transfer of Knowledge

Thus, the system of education in the centuries before the rise of universities[30] was founded on the close bond between master and student, a relationship that was hierarchical but at the same time fundamentally reciprocal. Teaching was an exchange of knowledge and power, which did not simply move from top to bottom, but was consciously set in motion and played out reciprocally as a most central pedagogical vehicle. This relationship remained perpetual. Even when the student became a master himself, the relationship, ideally, was not dissolved. He was still his old master's student, while being a master to his own students, and so forth. These relationships were therefore the underlying structure in a whole web of relations, a grand intellectual network of criss-crossing genealogical lines linking generations of scholars and creating systems of affiliation that ultimately transcended spatial as well as temporal borders. By incessantly constructing and rehearsing these more or less direct genealogies, a sense of unbroken intellectual continuity and interconnectedness was created. Ultimately, this meant that even a humble, anonymous schoolman in Lotharingia, through his own master and this master's master might eventually derive his ancestry even from the greatest Carolingian forebears such as Hrabanus Maurus or Alcuin, and through the latter, in a similar manner could stretch his line as far as Bede. Through his intellectual kinship with these scholarly celebrities, albeit distant—and often rather contrived—the single individual was inscribed into a pan-European network of scholarship that would generate and transfer learning and authority while linking the past to the future.

[30] The institutionalization of the world of higher learning that resulted in the creation of the university was a prolonged process stretching roughly from the 1150s and well into the latter part of the thirteenth century. Hence, the old charismatic educational paradigm was not suddenly overthrown by the foundation of the University of Paris in 1200, vestiges of it can even be found still to exist, but many of the social practices associated with it were gradually supplanted by more formal structures.

The individual's relationship to a present master was the sole warrantor for his inclusion in this network, which then again could also function as a social and cultural closure. Entry into the circle required that a subjection to certain disciplinary measures: offering one's self for correction, and entering into an emotional union akin to a spiritual marriage. Thus to get out of or change one's position in the social and intellectual network might become very difficult. The prime examples of such exigencies arose when a master lost face. A master's fall might consequently destroy a student's career and academic status. The relationship itself, as well as the honour of the master, had to be upheld—often at high cost—because the legitimacy of one's education, and the whole nexus of knowledge and power depended on this heritage remaining unbroken and undisputed.

This partly explains the aggressivity and frequent violence of intellectual battles during the period. When a master's position was threatened, much was at stake, especially for his students, as illustrated by a conflict in the eleventh century between the scholars of Worms and Würzburg. A student in Worms published verses that ridiculed Pernolf, the master of Würzburg, initiating a prolonged pen-fight that came to involve the scholars of Mainz too, as they were asked to mediate in the conflict.[31] In turn, the Würzburgerians, who identified Pernolf's person with the school itself, accused the calumniators from Worms of being 'sowers of wrath and destroyers of friendships'.[32] They saw the slander as a serious threat, an affront to the honour of their *familia*. Attacks or criticism were levelled at the person rather than against theses, as the contents of teaching were perceived to be identical to the public persona of the teacher; *he* was, as C. Stephen Jaeger has put it, himself the curriculum, rather than any given set of texts.

Reciprocity

Just as faithful students might share in, and ultimately inherit, the master's honour (or lack thereof), similarly a student's actions or general *habitus* might either glorify or tarnish the teacher's reputation. Fulbert of Chartres, for example, praised his chosen student Hildegar, who had taken up teaching, and claimed

[31] *Die ältere Wormser Briefsammlung*, ed. by W. Bulst, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit, 3 (Weimar: Böhlaus, 1949; repr. Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1981), pp. 119–27.

[32] *Die ältere Wormser Briefsammlung*, p. 122.

Hildegar's good merits as his own.[33] What the master had taught morally and intellectually returned to him through his student. The reciprocity between master and student meant that virtue (as well as vice) could be transferred. Honour and power circulated back and forth between the two in a perpetual exchange of spiritual gift-giving.[34]

Such gifts were not to be exacted as payment but offered freely and were only truly valid as such. Usually, the exchange would commence when the student approached the master, who would either accept or reject him. If the master accepted the student and his 'gift' of docility, he would concurrently place himself in the student's debt. This debt was then paid by teaching the student. Nonetheless, the student's original offering had to be constantly renewed and, since this is a vehicle in education, enhanced, as the master gradually raised the stakes involved. The student in his turn repaid his master by delivering his 'homework', little exercises[35] that often consisted of short poems. The purpose of this part of the exchange is fulfilled by the homework's increasing quality and subtlety. Negligence on the student's part might lead the master to reject him. Conversely, a master's incompetence might cause the student to seek another, a choice which, given the tightness of the intellectual network, was often a source of conflict. In a letter to his former student Walcher, a teacher in Mainz, Gozechin, revisited the theme of gifts old and new—especially the gift of love which was offered freely by Walcher, when he taught him in Liège. After many years out of contact, Walcher sent his former master a transcription of his scholarly work. This gesture placed Gozechin in debt, and his response, replete with praises of the student, is a gesture of repayment: The book renewed their relationship and the exchange of 'gifts' was once again initiated:

> That book has recalled so vividly to mind all those gifts of charity for which I am in your debt that the present moment seems to restore to me in one gift the sum total of all previous ones. Hence, when I first saw your gift, when I first took it into my hands and recognized your writing, or rather you yourself in it, at the same moment my deep affection for you was rekindled as if for the first time.[36]

[33] Epistola 88, in *Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres*, ed. by F. Behrends (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 156.

[34] spiritual gifts as opposed to material ones.

[35] Significantly, the term for such an exercise is *debitum*.

[36] Gozechin of Mainz, *Gozechini epistola ad Walcherum*, trans. by C. Stephen Jaeger in *The Envy of Angels*, Appendix B, p. 349; 'Qui utique liber ita innovat cuncta quae michi antehac impendisti karitas xenia, ac si ea secum gregatim revehens michi sistat presentia. Hunc ergo diu a te expectatum ut primum vidi, ut in manibus accepi et articulos tuos, immo te ipsum in eo agnovi, totus in novamtui dilectionem penitus exarsi, ac si antehac expertum non dilexissem': Gozechin of Mainz, *Gozechini epistola ad Walcherum*, ed. by

From this, Gozechin returns to the matter of inheritance, noting that in this case it has not been squandered. Walcher's success as scholar and teacher reflects on and comes back to Gozechin: the honour and virtue of the giver are increased by the honour and virtue of the receiver in this mutually binding, truly reciprocal, vertical-yet-horizontal relationship, in which the comportment of the one reflects on the other. Power moves both ways.

The play with reversals of power that occurs so frequently in student–master correspondences, and which serves to enhance the constant arbitration of power-distribution that these reciprocal relationships require, is wholly absent in discourses that involve parents and their natural offspring. In these, hierarchy is manifest. Moreover, compared to letters exchanged between students and masters, those between parents and children (even when they have reached adulthood) are remarkably less affectionate in tone and vocabulary. The master's role is not 'just' that of a spiritual parent; he is also, almost literally, a lover and it is the language of erotic love, whether requited or not, that dominates these intimate discourses in a way that would not be tolerated between individuals who were next of kin. And it is precisely because the affection between teacher and pupil is not an anthropological constant that it needs to be constantly reinvoked throughout these letters, whose main function is often precisely to call it into being, or, as in many cases, to revive an intimacy once lost.

While these close master-student relationships were often enacted through a deeply eroticizing discourse, it is less known that the same culture also generated a sort of counter-discourse, relishing in invective and filthy language. In dialogues that perfectly mirror more normal didactic dialogues, students and masters assail each other with verbal abuse, as in this example from the early eleventh-century school of Winchester attributed to the teacher and scholar, Aelfric Bata, a student of the great homilist Aelfric of Eynsham. In the twenty-fifth colloquy, a student is allowed to berate the master (who has just scolded him severely) in an excessively offensive manner abounding in scatological phrasing:

> [student:] I would like you to be totally beshat and bepissed for all these words of yours. Have shit in your beard! May you always have shit in your beard, and shit and turds in your mouth, three and two times and eight and one, and I none at all ever! Now your words reveal the truth, that you are a buffoon and a fool and a silly blabbermouth. You don't know how to do anything better than to use your stinking stupid words to beshit and befoul those who come to you. I'm not learned yet, or as smart as you. I can in no way use wisdom; I don't know how at all, because my young age is entirely unable to do so.[37]

R. B. C. Huygens, *Apologiae duae*, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 57 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985).

The unending stream of insult is precisely so ludicrous that its literal message cannot really be taken seriously as an affront to the teacher or do any serious damage. This is clearly a game, but one which can only be played by those who know its exact rules and limits. Note that after the student has lavished his preposterous drivel on the master, he ends up making concession to his learning and authority.

On the surface such verbiage appears to challenge the distribution of power, but the texts invariably conclude with a reconfirmation of the original power-distribution in the classroom. And it should be noted that, as with the friendly amorous exchanges, these are almost always initiated by the master—and indeed recorded in writing by him. The abusive student-interlocutor is more often than not a literary creation of his, but it is my contention that the implications of these types of exchange, which re-enact and dramatize the relationship between master and apprentice, go beyond the realm of literature: they are examples of actual and rather subtle pedagogic strategies. This recognition may lead us to an understanding of the many instances of a master's display of self-humiliation. His show of weakness actually works to underscore the firmness of his position; his personal strength becomes apparent in the very moment when he dares to take the humble position because only a sure-footed authority can really allow himself to do that. Eventually, it forces the student to humble himself even more.

In these discourses, the master plays his strongest card, the grand virtue of *magnanimitas*, forcing the student to make a similar display of humility as a performative gesture that shows that he has grasped the tenets of scholastic discipline. It is in fact a test, a part of the teaching of both letters and *mores*, in which the student can never surpass the master in magnanimity precisely because of the hierarchy which exists between the two. It invites an exchange of the aforementioned immaterial gifts. Yet the master's concession to the student, because of his elevated position, will always remain the greatest gift bestowed in

[37] 'Ego uellem, ut totus esses caccatus et minctus pro his omnibus uerbis tuis. Habeto stercus in mento tuo. Habe scibalum in barba tua et in ore tuo stercus et scibalum tria et duo, octo et unum, et ego nullum, habeto semper. Modo uerba tua uerum manifestant, quod unus mimus et unus sottus es et insipiens et fatuus. Nihil melius scis agere, quam omnes, qui ad te peruenerint, turpiter cum tuis caccare et fedare foetidis uerbis et insensatis. Non sum sensatus adhuc, nec tam sapiens sicut tu es. Nullo modo usurpare mihi possum sapientiam nec nullatenus scio, quia mea adolescentia non ualet facere hoc omnino': *Anglo-Saxon Conversations: The Colloquies of Ælfric Bata*, ed. and trans. by David Porter and Scott Gwara (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), p. 138.

the exchange. This quite ingenious pedagogical strategy plays with reversals, momentarily shifts the roles, dramatizes and challenges the distribution of power, only to end up underscoring the original positions of the interlocutors and binding the two even more firmly together. It is my contention that even the most extreme and bizarre of master-student invectives, such as the example quoted above, may fruitfully be interpreted in this light. Whether the tone is friendly or fiendish, these performative stances become the ultimate sign of a master's *magisterium*; they function as a self-conscious display of self-mastery and *largesse* that invites the student into his circle of power and makes him accept (and repay) the discipline imposed.

The ludic nature of these discourses should not of course be glossed over in an attempt to rationalize their meaning and function. Introducing laughter and ridicule into a complex and often conflict-ridden relationship such as that between master and student might simply serve to lessen its burden, reminding the interlocutors that after all, the master, no matter how respected and venerated, was still a human figure. The danger of the charismatic model was precisely that this artisan of souls would turn into a frightening demi-god. This would ruin an education which, as the foremost pedagogical writers of the period stated, should be based on affection rather than fear: ultimately on an *amor perfectus* from which discipline and virtue would proceed naturally; as William of Conches stated: 'we do not seek to imitate those whom we do not love.'[38] The negotiation of the constant tensions arising in these conflict-ridden relationships, love—and not a small portion of facetiousness—remained crucial among the tools of the trade, transforming potentially dangerous emotions into vehicles for a charismatic education.

The Charismatic Paradigm

At the beginning of this article, charisma was defined as a special force that is seen to emanate from an individual who embodies *virtus*, yet a quality that only comes into existence when it is perceived and confirmed *by an audience*. In medieval discourse, this radiant force is usually described in metaphors of luminosity, which represent enlightenment in both the spiritual and educational senses of the term. While it is displayed through the body, facial expressions, tone of

[38] William of Conches, *Dragmaticon philosophiae*; *Guillelmi de Conchis Opera omnia* 1, ed. by I. Ronca, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 152 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 6. 27.3, p. 271. For a more in-depth analysis of these affectionate master-student relationships see Mia Münster-Swendsen, 'The Model of Scholastic Mastery in Northern Europe', pp. 318–56.

voice, and general physical comportment, charisma is not itself *corporeal*; this ennobling power is not 'in the blood'. Differing from the 'biological' perception of 'nobility', it cannot be inherited in an ordinary manner. Charisma is bound to practice, and the only way it can be transferred is through education based on the intimate master-disciple relationship and the ensuing self-transformation through close imitation. Its source is a single individual: the master—the one who enlightens because he is himself enlightened; the radiance moves both inwards and outwards. Charisma cannot be taught directly, as it does not exist in itself, but only as an expression of the possession of certain merits. If the practice of virtue is the formal cause, then charismatic radiance is the result: the direct sign of perfection. There appears to be a tension between the perception of the inherent sinfulness or fallibility of humankind and the inference that 'man can be perfected' and even in his earthly form reach exaltation. The problem is partly solved when acknowledging one's fallibility becomes an integral part of attaining perfection. Consequently, the greatest master, one who possesses the greatest authority and insight, is precisely that one who has the strength and firmness to display his weakness. By humbling himself, he becomes greater, and his magnificence is herewith confirmed. This I believe is the deeper principle working behind those surprising 'power reversals' in the discourse between master and student, where self-humbling postures, but only those displayed by the superior, become a means of self-enhancement.

The earlier statement that among different types of authority the one based on charismatic qualities is especially volatile does not imply that this kind of authority is easily undone or simply dissolves into the air from time to time. Rather, it tends to undergo constant alterations according to the change in context and social settings. One 'model' is not simply vanquished by another. Let us take the rise of the universities as an example: if we presume that the earlier educational paradigms were thoroughly infused with, and even upheld by, the recognition of personal charisma, does the emergence of the institution therefore cause the demise of charismatic forms of power? Not necessarily. But in an institutional setting, charisma does undergo changes when attempts are made to make it not only lasting, but even concrete. In certain cases, it even disappears as the prime means of legitimizing authority. One example might be the procedures for singling out candidates for high positions. In this, the medieval university institution as it developed came to differ from the old system; not only were its dignitaries (the deans, the rector) elected democratically by the members of the community, but in contrast to ecclesiastical offices such as abbots, deacons, or bishops, the candidates were not chosen for life. Not even professorial chairs were permanent. Office and persona are completely separable only when intimate, spiritual, or ethical merits are no longer the prime requisites for power and position. As a consequence, charisma becomes just one among

several different modes of legitimizing authority. Hence, charismatic power as a central factor did *not* disappear from the educational scene, when the 'grand charismatic paradigm' eventually went into abeyance, just as elements of the former system survived in later transformations in the world of scholarship and education.

Academia as a community still retains many of the old charismatic structures, although they have been regulated and solidified by ritual and codification, and institutionalized in rites of passage such as doctoral dissertations and conferment of degrees and titles, special attire, or signs such as the doctoral ring. If one should want to present these developments in the world of education as a narrative of 'modernization', it may come as a surprise that in this case modernization in fact means further and even more elaborate ritualization.

The remarkable lack of academic ritual in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (and indeed before) marks a learned culture in which intellectual authority was displayed and perceived in subtle and hence more elusive ways; where the ultimate adornment, ideally, rested upon the sparkling performance of virtuosity: in the enactment of *habitus* itself. It is no coincidence that the gradual introduction of public ritual that heralded the successive stages of institutionalization occurred simultaneously with general changes in the social power structures—among which we find the entry of a class of intellectual professionals on the public, political stage. The rituals of academia serve to make learned authority visible and recognizable even to those who are not intimate with the cultural code; they create continuity and a higher degree of transparency regarding the structuring of power. The succession problem may well be the prime mover behind the paradigmatic changes in the whole system and structure of Western education which commenced during the thirteenth century. It is my contention that the concurrent processes of institutionalization and professionalization within the world of learning and education were very much the result of attempts to deal with the dilemma of how to solidify charismatic authority and how to make this immanent force concrete and transferable without forfeiting its lustre and otherworldly loftiness in the process.

In his *Vita* of Hugh of Cluny, Hildebert of Lavardin, one of the most widely read and copied authors of the high-medieval period, sought to explain the charismatic qualities of his protagonist as directly inherited from the late master, Odilo of Cluny. Thus 'the master himself was buried, but in the minds of the disciples the merits of the master lived on, unburied'.[39] All genealogies are

[39] 'Ipse quidem magister sepultus est, sed in mentibus discipulorum merita magistri insepulta vivebant': Hildebert of Lavardin, *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, *Patrologia Latina*, 159, col. 862B.

dependent on producing and maintaining offspring. And while love and respect for the master were instilled in students from an early age, the master's position remained precarious in regard to the survival of his name, his teaching, and thus the individual school itself. In the early system of education, the line of transfer might be broken if the fragile reciprocal balance of power between teacher and apprentice were eliminated. Hence, if a master ventured so far as to destroy his students either by excessive punishments or by a love that went beyond the limits of respectability, his branch of the genealogical tree of studies would dry out and remain barren. A master might rebuke a former student for literally having squandered his inheritance if he strayed too far in doctrine or morals, but students maintained the power to cut the lineage by remaining silent, eventually causing a master's name and fame to disappear from the records of history. His legacy and immortality depended on the gratitude of students who would commemorate him after his passing. Such students would create elaborate pieces of literature with the express purpose of perpetuating the memory of bygone masters, securing the continuation of the school by rehearsing and repeating a catalogue of their personal virtues as well as their students. Thus they would seek to render inconstancy constant, by capturing and re-enlivening a long-lost charismatic presence in textual form. The value and validity of an individual's education, as well as the existence of the intellectual network itself, rested on the maintenance of memory and genealogy, on the meticulous struggle to preserve this heritage, which served to create and uphold identity and coherence in an intellectual environment constantly threatened by the spectre of Discontinuity. Compared to the later university system, this educational model was neither arbitrary, nor irrational, and certainly not primitive. On the contrary, it demanded a high degree of social and psychological *Fingerspitzgefühl*—or should we say: *virtuosity*.

9. Medal of Erasmus by Quentin Metsys.

CHAPTER TWO

The In(de)scribable Aura of the Scholar-Saint in His Study: Erasmus's *Life* and *Letters* of Saint Jerome

Intellectual Father-Figures: Which 'German' Sat at the Feet of Guarino?

In my opening chapter we began to see Erasmus shaping his transmitted graphic image for a contemporary audience, constructing a 'meaning' for his self-representation which exploits the multiple resonances available in the images of the Church Fathers, the solitary scholar, and the attentive teacher. In the present chapter I want to pursue that theme further. I start, however, not with Erasmus's own writings (or, at least, not with writings which can be safely identified as coming from his own rather than his admirers' pen), but with the early, formative 'lives' of Erasmus. I begin by drawing attention to a textual preoccupation in the early versions of Erasmus's biography—a recurrent desire to provide Erasmus with a genealogy, an intellectual parentage. Here are three fragments, all ostensibly 'biographical', in which a 'father' is identified, a father who sat at the feet of the great Italian humanist Guarino, and who brought humanistic studies back across the Alps with him to northern Europe:

> [Erasmus's father] Gerardus took himself off to Rome. There he made his living by writing (for at that time there was not yet an art of printing): he had a most elegant hand. He lived in a youthful fashion. Soon he applied himself to worthy study. He was well-versed in Greek and Latin. Moreover in knowledge of law he made more than usual progress. For Rome at that time boasted an extraordinary number of learned men. He heard Guarino. He had transcribed all kinds of authors with his own hand. ('Life' of Erasmus, 1524)[1]

> Alexander Hegius of Westphalia presided over that school of humane learning [at Deventer], a man profoundly skilled in 'bonae litterae', and somewhat skilled in Greek literature, thanks to the teaching of Rudolph Agricola, whose friend he became, shortly after Agricola's return from Italy, where he had heard Guarino Veronese lecture at Ferrara and several others distinguished for their erudition. Erasmus's talent soon made itself apparent, since he understood immediately whatever he was taught, and retained it perfectly, surpassing all his peers. (Beatus Rhenanus, 'Life' of Erasmus, 1540)[2]

> Sent next to Deventer, we heard Alexander Hegius, student of Rudolph Agricola and of Guarino Veronese, a most pious man, both eloquent and learned, and a despiser of worldly glory. I was the equal of my contemporaries or colleagues in following and remembering lectures. ('Erasmus', in Johann Herold's ghosted 'Life', 1542)[3]

In each of these passages, the author is at pains to indicate that Erasmus is legitimate heir to an Italian humanist tradition, via a spiritual, or perhaps a biological, father. Either Erasmus's father, or the headmaster of his school at Deventer, Alexander Hegius, or his head teacher's teacher, the Frisian humanist Rudolph Agricola (whom we will encounter at greater length later), sat at the feet of Guarino Veronese in Ferrara. One of these transmitted the authentically humane learning imbibed there to his 'son', Erasmus.

Rudolph Agricola did study with Battista Guarino, son of Guarino Veronese, in Ferrara, in the midfifteenth century. There he abandoned legal studies, the original purpose of his educational journey to Pavia and Ferrara, and dedicated his life to the *bonae litterae*, becoming an early link-figure between Italy and northern Europe. By the midsixteenth century, Agricola had come regularly to occupy this figuratively transitional position in the story of the emergence of northern humanism, as, for instance, in Omar Talon's commentary on Petrus Ramus's *Dialectica*:

> Rudolph Agricola made this distinction in the first book of his *De inventione dialectica*, and Ramus follows him in this, to the extent that he came to rival Agricola's achievement in this art especially, whom Ramus himself was wont to rank in logical studies immediately after the ancient school of Socratic logic . . . and ahead of all subsequent logicians. And he used to say publicly that thanks to Agricola the true study of genuine [germana] logic had first been established in Germany [Germania], and thence, by way of its disciples and emulators had spread throughout the whole world.[4]

The tale is so familiar that we are under the impression that we have heard it before (even if we have not ourselves heard of Rudolph Agricola, its supposed hero). The story of the itinerant, gifted intellectual who carries the new learning from its birthplace in one culture to be developed in crucially original ways within another is an essential component in the narrative which provides intellectual legitimation for northern humanism—above all, Reformation northern humanism. The spirit of Italy, transplanted northwards and nurtured by an individual of genius, germinates there, grafted onto the sturdy indigenous stock to produce a specifically 'German' intellectual and spiritual tradition. It is a tale of teaching—of transmitting the Word—from inspired master to gifted pupil, a genealogy of the chosen who hear and respond to the new learning's message. Strikingly, this is a narrative in which institutions are not involved. It is the autonomous scholar, unaffiliated to universities, monastic orders, or the households of princes, who is responsible for the transformation of an entire intellectual outlook and the introduction of a revised programme of learning.

The three early, tradition-forming biographies of Erasmus invoke this narrative to suggest that Erasmus is in at the beginning of, and is an active participant in, the building of the intellectual 'bridge' between Italian and northern humanism. The lack of consensus amongst the three versions as to whether it is a natural father or a revered schoolmaster who provides the link between Erasmus and Italy suggests that this is a fiction, or at least a piece of creative rewriting of history. We might prefer to think that the biographers shape Erasmus's early life so as to construct a meaning for his *Vita* (the *Vita Erasmi*), to make Erasmus signify fully in the line of descent from medieval to early modern culture.

The full story of Erasmus's father's trip to Italy, as told in the *Compendium vitae Erasmi*, is not an altogether uplifting one. When Erasmus's mother was pregnant with him (so Erasmus tells us), his father (an ordained priest, or about to become an ordained priest—Erasmus is deliberately vague)[5] fled to Rome, returning only when her family wrote and informed him, falsely, that she had died in childbirth. It is during this ignominious flight that Erasmus represents his father as sitting at the feet of Guarino. The interpolated remarks about Gerardus and Guarino partially recuperate the story. Gerardus may have abandoned his illegitimate son, but he returned with the ultimate legitimating gift—an intellectual heritage, a respectable pedigree for the rest of Erasmus's life. We catch a glimpse here of the ingenuity it took to shape Erasmus's personal history into an exemplary 'Life' (and, perhaps, something of the anxiety behind the effort). The *Vita Erasmi* (autobiography or biography) is the story of leadership and legitimation of an intellectual movement which by the time of his death had spread throughout northern Europe.

From Sanctity to Learning as Model for a Way of Life

Western European culture has customarily preserved and honoured the memory and reputation of its great figures in the verbal oration of praise (the encomium or *laudatio*), in the painted portrait, and the written 'life'.[6] Since it is no longer customary to deliver orations of praise for great men and women on the anniversary of their birth or death, or on their feast day (as, in Renaissance Italy, for example, orations in praise of Saint Jerome were delivered on September 30),[7] these too now preserve the memory of those they celebrate in written form. Here I will combine these with

'lives', as the written memorial (although we shall need to remember that originally the forms were distinct).

The term 'portrait' is conventionally used of both visual and verbal monuments to the famous. Erasmus's letter of 1521 to Justus Jonas, containing the 'lives' of Jean Vitrier and John Colet, offers 'a short life' of Colet, 'a portrait in miniature, as it were'.[8] His celebrated 'life' of Thomas More, contained in a letter of 1519 to Ulrich von Hutten, begins:

> You ask me to draw a picture of More for you at full length, and I wish I were as skilful as you are eager. . . . It is, I suspect, no easier to produce a portrait of More than one of Alexander the Great or Achilles, nor did they deserve their immortality any more than he does. Such a sitter demands the skills of an Apelles, and I fear there is less of Apelles in me than of Fulvius or Rutuba [Roman gladiators]. I will try, however, to do you not so much a picture as an outline sketch of the whole man, based on long-standing and intimate acquaintance, as far as my observation or memory will serve.[9]

Both the painted and the written forms are understood to be creative, to engage the representational and interpretative skills of the artist or writer (as Erasmus here acknowledges). Whilst the figure represented has importantly 'really' existed, the artistic representation moulds, shapes, and colours the original in order to convey something more than the mere physical presence. The portrait may include the sitter's badges of office, or (in the case of a saint) traditional signs and symbols, but it also aims at conveying something of the subject's inner qualities. The 'life' or '*vita*' likewise recounts the events which took place (and may even present and evaluate the evidence for believing these to be true), but shapes the narrative so as to give a sense to that lived life, a purpose (an example) beyond the string of recalled incidents. In both cases, indeed, the subject is generally no longer living, and the canvas or printed page may be intended to 'recall' the subject according to understood conventions: those of genealogy or lineage, communal memory, recognisable anecdote, fable.

For a given community, both the 'life' and the portrait function inspirationally, inviting the disciple or follower to emulate, copy, fashion themselves in the image of the great master.[10] To tell again (or read again) the life of the admired saint is to aspire to tread in his footsteps; to make the saint the subject of a visual reworking (or to commission or buy his image for prominent display) is to contrive a permanent vestigial presence, a reminiscence or model for emulation. Responding to Justus Jonas's request for a '*vita*' of John Colet, Erasmus takes it for granted that this is likely to be the use to which Jonas will put it:

> You beg me earnestly, dear friend, to write you a short life, a portrait in miniature as it were, of John Colet; and I will do so the more readily because I suspect you are seeking some outstanding example of piety which you can use as a model for your own way of life.[11]

And he ends his textual diptych:

> You have before you, dear Justus, not a portrait but such a sketch as fits the narrow limits of a letter, of two men born in our own day who were in my opinion truly and sincerely Christians. It will be for you to choose out of them both what seems to you to help most towards a really religious life. If you now ask me which I prefer, they seem to me to deserve equal credit, when one considers their different surroundings. . . . If you take my advice, dear Jonas, you will not hesitate to add the names of both to the calendar of saints, although no pope may ever write them into the canon.[12]

In this context, the term 'copy' (either as verb or noun) has richer connotations than mere reproduction, imitation, or mimicry in our modern, generally derogatory, sense. The 'original' is a source of inspiration, energy; blessed by fortune, his reputation has survived the destruction of the body; the contingencies of time and space have been given shape and meaning by a discovered ulterior purpose. All of these characteristics of the representation of 'greatness' invite the disciple or follower to identify, in a full sense, with the creatively structured work—to aspire to *become*, through 'copying', as like its original as he can. To copy, in this case, is to attempt to give meaning to the scattered accidents of an individual life, by in some sense claiming the great precursor as progenitor.[13] To copy is to aspire to a meaning which might itself be carried forward, to become, in its own turn, the basis for future emulation.

The '*vita*' elevates the contingency of lived experience into a pattern to be followed. This chapter traces the way in which Erasmus made his own investment in lived meaning for the future, by way of a collection of portraits and 'lives', and made it, as we know, outstandingly successfully (almost five hundred years later both his portrait and his life continue to serve as models in academic and spiritual communities throughout Europe and the United States). My aim here is to show with what brilliance and originality Erasmus 'copied'—crafted or fashioned—a figure for himself full to overflowing with meaning. And this is a stage in my argument as a whole. For as we watch the strategic recuperation for the charismatic man of letters of the aura which had traditionally surrounded the portrait and the 'life' of the holy man of conventional hagiography, we are, I believe, witnessing the transition from 'sacred' to 'learned' as the grounds for personal spiritual salvation.[14] This claim will require all the evidence I assemble in this book to make it convincing. I ask the reader to keep it in mind, however, during the present discussion. For I am anxious if possible to avoid the most literal interpretation one might want to give Eras-

mus's self-portraiture—that what we see here is a striking, early example of the kind of academic entrepreneurism and self-promotion which has become a recognised feature of the practice of twentieth-century humanities. It is no part of this study to endorse such a practice in the name of one of its most distinguished founding fathers. But it is a crucial part of my argument that the strikingly original ways in which Erasmus responded to, and improvised around, the novel demands of a Europe-wide pedagogic movement, and the spectacular possibilities for dissemination of knowledge offered by the printed book, made a major contribution to a sixteenth-century spiritual reformation, whose heirs we contemporary academics are.

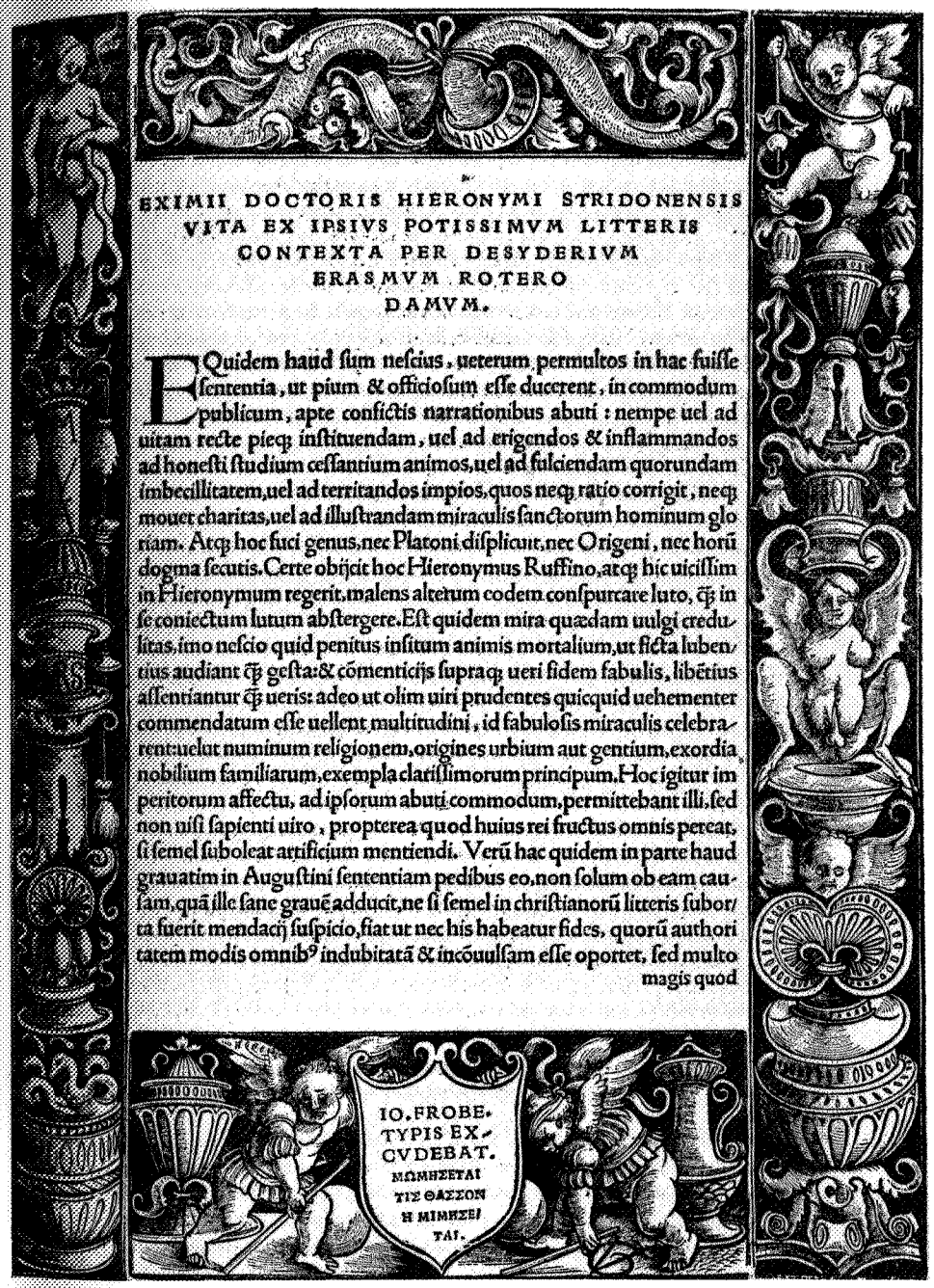
'In vita sua': Erasmus's *Life of Saint Jerome*

In 1516 Erasmus's *Life of Saint Jerome* was published in the first of the four volumes of his edition of Jerome's letters, issued from the Froben press.[15] Its opening words challenge the way in which the traditional saint's life fictionalises in order, ostensibly, to instruct. His own biography, he insists, will show that there is no need for such fabrications and embellishments in order to gain the reader's admiration for Saint Jerome:

> I am well aware that many of the old authors were of this opinion: they esteemed it dutiful and proper to make use of appropriate fictitious narratives for the public good, to encourage them to embark on an upright and pious way of life, or to excite their minds towards the study of honourable things, or to stiffen the sinews against any feebleness, or to frighten the impious, whom neither reason can correct nor love move, or to enhance by miracles the glory of saintly men. . . . I hold that nothing is more correct than to describe the saints in just such a way as they actually were.[16]

'To excite [men's] minds towards the study of worthy things', it is only necessary to offer the example of the life of study and contemplation well lived. In place of superstitious anecdotes and fictions, Erasmus announces, he will narrate Jerome's life as a model of learning and piety, and will do so in a way which persuades the reader that the saint is worthy of veneration and emulation. Erasmus's *Life of Jerome* is acknowledged in the Jerome literature to be the first attempt at a biography of the saint purged of the anecdotal and fabulous accretions it had acquired in the Middle Ages.[17]

As the basis for Jerome's exemplary life, Erasmus prefers the testimony of Jerome's own writings to the collections of orally transmitted, communal memories of medieval *vitae*: 'For who knew Jerome better than Jerome himself?' ('Quis enim rectius nouerit Hieronymum quam ipse Hieronymus?')[18] In place of the miracles and prodigies laid before the credu-



EXIMII DOCTORIS HIERONYMI STRIDONENSIS VITA EX IPSIVS POTISSIMVM LITTERIS CONTEXTA PER DESYDERIVM ERASMVM ROTERODAMVM.

EQuidem haud ſum neſcius, ueterum permultos in hac fuiſſe ſententia, ut pium & officioſum eſſe ducerent, in commodum publicum, apte confictis narrationibus abuti: nempe uel ad uitam recte pieq; inſtituendam, uel ad erigendos & inflammandos ad honeſti ſtudium ceſſantium animos, uel ad fulciendam quorundam imbecillitatem, uel ad territandos impios, quos neq; ratio corrigit, neq; mouet charitas, uel ad illuſtrandam miraculis ſanctorum hominum gloriam. Atq; hoc fuci genus, nec Platoni diſplicuit, nec Origeni, nec horũ dogma ſecutis. Certe obiicit hoc Hieronymus Ruffino, atq; hic uicißim in Hieronymum regerit, malens alterum eodem conſpurcare luto, q̃ in ſe coniectum lutum abſtergere. Eſt quidem mira quædam uulgi credulitas, imo neſcio quid penitus inſitum animis mortalium, ut ficta lubentius audiant q̃ geſta: & cõmenticijs ſupraq; ueri fidem fabulis, libẽtius aſſentiantur q̃ ueris: adeo ut olim uiri prudentes quicquid uehementer commendatum eſſe uellent multitudini, id fabuloſis miraculis celebrarent: uelut numinum religionem, origines urbium aut gentium, exordia nobilium familiarum, exempla clariſſimorum principum. Hoc igitur imperitorum affectu, ad ipſorum abuti commodum, permittebant illi, ſed non niſi ſapienti uiro, propterea quod huius rei fructus omnis pereat, ſi ſemel ſuboleat artificium mentiendi. Verũ hac quidem in parte haud grauatim in Auguſtini ſententiam pedibus eo, non ſolum ob eam cauſam, quã ille ſane grauẽ adducit, ne ſi ſemel in chriſtianorũ litteris ſubortа fuerit mendacij ſuſpicio, fiat ut nec his habeatur fides, quorũ authoritatem modis omnib⁹ indubitatã & incõuulſam eſſe oportet, ſed multo magis quod

IO. FROBEN. TYPIS EXCVDEBAT. ΜΩΜΗΣΕΤΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΘΑΣΣΟΝ Η ΜΙΜΗΣΕΙ ΤΑΙ.

10. Opening page of Erasmus's *Vita Hieronymi* (Basle, 1516).

lous in traditional saints' lives, Erasmus offers the miracle of Jerome's oeuvre, and Jerome's erudition:

> Therefore, having examined all those books, we have restored to narrative order the events it was possible to pick out here and there, without adding anything false, because we are of the view that it is enough of a miracle that Jerome presented himself to us in so many outstanding works. And if there is anyone who cannot be satisfied unless by prodigies and miracles, he should read the books of Jerome, in which there are as many miracles as there are thoughts.[19]

At first sight, this move to present the saint's life so that it is the history of the saint as traced through the pages of his own writings ('Hieronymus ex Hieronymo') is simply the commendable, modernising move made by the textual scholar. In its impulse to rid the narrative of its supernatural and superstitious accretions, it is clearly in tune with humanistic piety, with its emphasis on the life well lived rather than on a series of ordeals punctuated by signs of divine intervention. But the move is one which decisively interrupts a familiar tradition of *Vitae Hieronymi*.[20] The wholly 'factual', intellectual biography was certainly not the form of saint's life which had traditionally lent itself to the kind of ritual recall which I earlier described as one of the cultural functions of the '*vita*'. Instead, Jerome's '*vita*' takes its place alongside the lives of Virgil and Petrarch as examples of the growth and development of a mind towards learned seriousness, to be set before every aspiring humanist struggling with the technical detail of Greek and Latin eloquence, holding out the promise that, pursued with virtuous dedication, *bonae litterae* will transform linguistic competence into a whole way of life.

The most immediately evident shift which this produces in the significance of Jerome as culturally exemplary figure is that the meaning of the life becomes inextricably involved with the works, the sense of the works with the life, so that each has to be scrutinised to clarify the other. Traditionally, the aura surrounding the miracle-punctuated '*vitae*' of the Fathers elevated their patristic texts and translations above the reach of 'mundane' text-critical attention.[21] The book, held by the Saint (Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius), conveys this with iconographical clarity: lovingly represented in all its physical detail (often with visible, and sometimes legible, text), it is held in one hand, facing outwards towards the viewer, 'a customary attribute for those who have from the very first moment proclaimed and preached the message of the Gospel: Evangelists, Apostles, and Church Fathers'.[22] Whether accidentally or by design, by discarding the pseudo-biographies faithfully reprinted with the fifteenth-century editions of Jerome's works, Erasmus severs Jerome's writings from the aura of mystical veneration which traditionally surrounded

them. These works are now 'miraculous', not in the sense that they represent some acknowledged special relationship between their mundane author and God, but simply in the sense that they have been executed with exceptional scholarly skill, accuracy, and judgement.[23]

In the context of the exemplary life—the life possessed of the power to draw the individual believer to live a life as like it as humanly possible—Erasmus's insistence that Jerome's works themselves are miracle enough to sustain the daily practice of the reader blurs the distinction between, in particular, the kind of attention the pious person gives to the text of scripture and patristics and the kind of attention familiarly asked of the student of *bonae litterae*. A saint may be a scholar, but a scholar is not necessarily a saint. And yet Erasmus's 'Jerome' seems irresistibly to press in the direction of sanctity as it sustains the traditional aura, whilst transferring its narrative attention to the dedication of the exegete, a dedication which it self-consciously depicts as ranging with steady and equal commitment over all *litterae*, both pagan and sacred. Indeed, Erasmus's 'Jerome' is exemplary precisely because it proves impossible to separate secular from sacred letters in his oeuvre. Nor, I suggest, is this choice of Jerome as model Father of the Church other than an extremely careful one. The printed remains which surround the four volumes of Erasmus's *Letters* of Jerome amount to a programme for installing Jerome as a vivid and vital figure—scholar-saint/saint-scholar—at the centre of the canvas depicting a spiritual exegesis in which pagan and sacred are fused in the act of textual attention.[24]

If we take the texts which introduce the first volume of the Jerome *Letters* in sequence, the prefatory letter to Archbishop Warham that stands immediately before the *Vita Hieronymi* sets out clearly an editorial programme, in which Jerome's texts are restored to the kind of pristine integrity and Latin *eloquentia* that makes them an appropriate model for humanistic emulation.[25] The liberal arts are to be the foundation for the enduring worth of any culture. Crucially, antiquity is held up as an example for its commitment to the preservation of great texts rather than to embalming the bodies of its great men—its commitment to a heritage of books, not of relics. Dead men tell us nothing, Erasmus affirms; their written works—their books—are enduring monuments:

> So great was the veneration always accorded to literature even by pagans, . . . that they supposed the origins of all the liberal arts should be ascribed to the gods alone as their inventors, and the most powerful and prosperous monarchs thought no concern more becoming of them than to arrange for the translation of works of outstanding authors into various tongues, that more men might enjoy them. This was, they thought, the way to secure the truest and most lasting renown for themselves and a special ornament to their kingdoms, if they

bequeathed to posterity a library equipped with most accurate copies of the very best authors. . . . And so [great princes] thought it far more appropriate to transfer that solicitude to the books of great men, in which they live on for the world at large even after death, and live on in such fashion that they speak to more people and more effectively dead than alive. They converse with us, instruct us, tell us what to do and what not to do, give us advice and encouragement and consolation as loyally and as readily as anyone can. In fact, they then most truly come alive for us when they themselves have ceased to live.[26]

In emulation of pagan culture's dedicated attention to its own preservation for posterity, Erasmus proposes Jerome's restored works as a more reliable basis for a textually authentic Christianity—a *philosophia Christi*—than any saint's cult. Jerome's works are an exemplum, worthy to be 'copied' by the devout individual. Jerome with his aura of sanctity replaces the pagan Cicero as the unique fount of emulable *eloquentia*, and the cultural product of true *eloquentia* is thereby transformed from 'virtue' to 'piety':

If . . . you are looking for brilliance of expression, on that side Jerome leaves all Christian authors so far behind him that one cannot compare with him even those who spent their whole time on nothing but the art of writing; and so impossible is it to find any writer of our faith to compare with him that in my opinion Cicero himself, by universal consent the leading light of Roman eloquence, is surpassed by him in some of the qualities of a good style, as I shall show at greater length in his life. For my part, I have the same experience with Jerome that I used to have with Cicero: if I compare him with any other author, however brilliant, that man suddenly seems as it were to lose his voice, and he whose language has no rival in my admiration, when set alongside Jerome for comparison, seems to become tongue-tied and stammers. If you demand learning, I ask you, whom can Greece produce with all her erudition, so perfect in every department of knowledge, that he might be matched against Jerome? Who ever so successfully united every part of the sum of knowledge in such perfection? Was there ever an individual expert in so many languages? Who ever achieved such familiarity with history, geography, and antiquities? Who ever became so equally and completely at home in all literature, both sacred and profane? If you look to his memory, never was there an author, ancient or modern, who was not at his immediate disposal. Was there a corner of Holy Scripture or anything so recondite or diverse that he could not produce it, as it were, cash down? As for his industry, who ever either read or wrote so many volumes? Who had the whole of Scripture by heart, as he had, drinking it in, digesting it, turning it over and over, pondering upon it? Who expended so much effort in every branch of learning?[27]

Jerome's command of learning transcends sectarianism. 'This man, single-handed, could represent the Latin world, either for holiness of life or for mastery of theology', Erasmus concludes, drawing secular and sacred traditions tightly together.

The letter to Warham is an extravagant celebration of the enduring worth of pagan culture, and of Jerome's unique combination of that pagan cultural heritage with an equally profound commitment to sacred textual studies. It is irresistibly reminiscent of Lorenzo Valla's celebration of such a Jerome in the preface to the fourth book of the *Elegantiae* (to which I will return in a moment). But whereas Valla's encomium sat perfectly properly in a volume dedicated to secular eloquence, Erasmus's insistence on the close similarity between the range and erudition of Jerome and that of Cicero rings oddly as an introduction to a key work of patristics. For at the heart of any life of Jerome must lie some account of 'Jerome's dream'. As Antin puts it, 'The episode is too brilliantly told for Jerome biographers to fail to take it into account'.[28] The dream occurred during a period in which Jerome was immersing himself day and night in the study of pagan literature (especially Cicero and Plautus—or Plato, as a number of manuscripts have it), to the point that he found sacred texts clumsy and uncouth. Jerome recounts how he dreamed he found himself summoned before a heavenly tribunal and asked to identify himself. 'I am a Christian', replied Jerome. 'You lie', returned the presiding divine figure, 'you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'. Jerome's prose is vivid:

I was asked what I was, and I replied that I was a Christian. And he that was seated in judgement replied, 'You lie, you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'. On the instant I was struck dumb, and between lashes—for he had commanded me to be flogged—I was even more greatly tormented by the flame of conscience, reflecting on that verse to myself: 'In the grave, who will give you thanks?' Then I began to cry aloud, and lamenting to say, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy on me'. This cry rang out above the sound of the blows. At length those watching fell on their knees before the one who sat in judgement, and begged him to attribute my crime to my youth and to give me the opportunity to repent of my error, exacting the full penalty if thereafter I should read any kind of secular literary works. I would have promised anything, under that kind of duress; and swearing assent, I called upon his name, saying: 'Lord, if ever again I possess secular books, or read them, I have denied you.'[29]

Humanists before Erasmus had been at pains to explain that Jerome's passionate promise was figurative rather than literal. As Pier Paulo Vergerio put it, in one of his orations on Jerome, '[Classical works] themselves were not condemned, but rather their too enthusiastic study' ('res ipsa [non] damnata est, sed fortassis eius studium uehementius').[30] In the body of the biographical narrative in Erasmus's *Vita Hieronymi*, the episode of the dream is described with almost laconic brevity:

> At that time, as a result of an unrestrained, youthful enthusiasm, and because of a love of the studies of his childhood, he inclined more than he should have in studying and imitating the dialogues of Cicero and of Plato (if I am not mistaken, he was working on these at the time), and he was more intent on imitating them, than emulating the style of the apostles. In a dream sent from God, he was dragged before a divine tribunal, accused of being a Ciceronian rather than a Christian, and then administered a flogging as punishment. After which he awoke, as he himself tells us, in the letter which begins with the words, 'Listen, daughter' [letter 22]. For my own view on this, see what follows, when I come to that point in the narrative.[31]

While in his commentary on the letter to Eustochium itself, in which the account of the dream quoted above occurs, he writes tartly:

> This is the story which everyone recalls, even those who have never read a word that Jerome has written. Jerome was flogged because he read Cicero, they say.[32]

Erasmus reserves his further discussion of the dream till the end of the *Vita Hieronymi*, where he devotes a concluding section to justify both Jerome's indebtedness to pagan culture and the classical *eloquentia* of Jerome's works. The model for that discussion is without a doubt Lorenzo Valla's preface to the fourth book of the *Elegantiae*—as vivid a piece of writing in its own way as Jerome's original account of his dream. 'I know there are some', writes Valla, 'especially those who believe themselves to be especially pious and religious, who will dare to maintain that this work of mine is unworthy of a Christian, because it exhorts the reader to read secular works'. He continues:

> For having been more attentive to them, Jerome confesses that he was beaten before a tribunal of the Almighty, and accused of being Ciceronian and not Christian, as if one could not be at one and the same time faithful and Ciceronian. He solemnly vowed, however, and that accompanied by the most dire and binding of oaths, that he would never thereafter read any secular works.[33]

This story has contributed in no small part to the 'shipwreck of Latin *litterae*', continues Valla.[34] Yet the story makes no sense at all. Which secular works is one not to read, on Jerome's authority? All the orators, all the historians, all the poets, all the philosophers, all the jurists? Or is one only forbidden to read Cicero? If the ban is only on the reading of Cicero, that is a comparatively straightforward matter (but then, why did Jerome renounce *all* pagan works?); if all ancient authors are forbidden, then not only grammarians and rhetoricians, but all contemporary scholars must be indicted for breaking Jerome's solemn undertaking. But of course, says Valla, answering his own rhetorical questions, it is *eloquentia* which is under attack here. And he proceeds to defend eloquence vigorously as an essential component of all learning, and specifically of 'true theology'—'I consider anyone who is ignorant of eloquence to be utterly unworthy to speak of theology'.[35] As for Jerome:

> Who is more eloquent than Jerome? Who a greater orator? Who, even though he may wish to disguise the fact, is more solicitous, more assiduously studious, more carefully observant of the art of speaking well [bene dicendi]?[36]

Both the letter to Warham and the *Vita Hieronymi* repeatedly echo Valla's *Elegantiae* preface.[37] But the most striking influence on the work is, I think, more fundamental than stylistic emulation and verbal echoing. Erasmus closes the *Vita* with a detailed philological discussion of Jerome's latinity, which takes as its starting point a passage in the *Elegantiae* in which Valla challenges Jerome's derivation of the name 'Jovis Stator' in the *Contra Jovinianum*.[38] This discussion firmly relocates the patristic texts within the body of classical Latin texts available for meticulous textual scrutiny and linguistic analysis. Jerome's *eloquentia* and erudition provide the justification for handling his works as if they *were* Cicero's—retrieving them, purging them of corruptions and accretions, reworking them where necessary, so that they are restored as far as possible to their pristine textual state. The integrity of the *textual* activity, Erasmus maintains, will ensure that the *doctrine* too (the content, as opposed to the style) will be similarly revived, polished, and restored.

As an intrinsic part of the text of the *Vita Hieronymi*, the long section justifying Jerome's *eloquentia*, followed by the philological scrutiny of his Latin usage, surely alters the sense in which the reader is asked to use the *Vita* as original, from which he will make his own 'copy', in pursuit of a Christian life. It is now explicitly the 'books of great men', rather than their physical existence, their lived experience, which serve as example and inspiration, 'the relics of the mind'.[39] The 'copy' is a palimpsest, overwriting and rewriting the textual remains of the exemplary devotional figure. Instead of the figure of the self-mortifying penitent, it is Jerome's library, and Jerome's study, which, in Erasmus's version, most fully *embody* the scholar-saint.[40] It follows that the posture in which the individual Christian most fully partakes of Jerome's example is in the study, in the act of full attentiveness to sacred texts and their exegesis, and that that activity has absorbed from Jerome his 'aura of sanctity'.

Laying Claim to a River of Gold: Wordly Recompense for the Labours of Hercules

At the end of the dedicatory letter to Warham, Erasmus makes an unexpected transition, and claims Jerome not simply as his model, but as his own:

I have followed the example of those who would rather raise a fresh loan than go to prison for non-payment, and have borrowed from Jerome the wherewithal to repay you. Though why should it any longer look like something borrowed rather than my own?—real estate often passes from one ownership to another by occupation or prescriptive right. In any case, in this line of business Jerome himself has laid down a principle for me in his preface to the books of Kings, repeatedly calling that work his, because anything that we have made our own by correcting, reading, constant devotion, we can fairly claim as ours. On this principle why should not I myself claim a proprietary right in the works of Jerome? For centuries they had been treated as abandoned goods; I entered upon them as something ownerless, and by incalculable efforts reclaimed them for all devotees of the true theology.

It is a river of gold, a well stocked library, that a man acquires who possesses Jerome and nothing else.[41]

By painstakingly restoring and correcting, the textual exegete claims the right to the 'work' as his own, as return on the investment of labour (the 'river of gold' is how Cicero described Aristotle's literary legacy). His own efforts elide with those of his original; the two tasks become inseparable in their arduousness and difficulty, and materially indistinguishable. Elsewhere Erasmus discards these wholeheartedly mercantile metaphors for a version of the image of the phoenix; Jerome is reborn in Erasmus, as the scholar is extinguished in the act of restoring the saint's letters:[42]

I have borne in this such a burden of toil that one could almost say I have killed myself in my efforts to give Jerome a new lease of life. One thing I could even swear without hesitation: it cost Jerome less to write his works than it has cost me to restore and explain them.[43]

In either of these two formulations, Erasmus takes on Jerome's role in relation to the exegesis of sacred texts, and becomes his revived physical embodiment. Not, of course, in order to make any claim for himself, but in order to participate in the continuous process of reception and transmission of scripture.[44]

Within the text of the *Vita Hieronymi* there are several points at which the attentive reader might judge that Erasmus is claiming Jerome 'as his own'. The one which Erasmus scholars have found most striking is probably Erasmus's account of Jerome's retreat into the Syrian desert, in which this act of penitence preparatory to the Christian life is reconstructed as an intensive period of humanistic study, following a strikingly Erasmian programme:

He divided his time between study and prayer, devoting a good portion of the night also to these activities. He made the smallest possible provision of time for sleep, even less for food, none at all for leisure. He refreshed himself after the exhaustion of study with a prayer or a hymn; returning instantly refreshed to his interrupted reading. He reread his entire library, he refreshed his memory of all his old studies, he learned the Sacred Scriptures by heart. He meditated on the prophets, paying the closest attention to resolving apparent mysteries in the divine pronouncements. He gathered together the philosophy of Christ [philosophia Christi] from the purest sources—the writings of the evangelists and apostles. For the first step to piety is to know the fundamental tenets of the founders of your beliefs [autores]. He read the other commentators with pleasure and judiciously, he neglected no author whatsoever from whom he could derive something useful, not even pagans and heretics. For he knew, as a man of the greatest discernment, how to collect gold from a dung-heap. . . . Whatever he read, he digested it into 'places' [loci], grouping them under systematic headings according to their similarities and differences, to facilitate the recall of information, and to make it more readily available for use. It is extraordinary how much attention he was prepared to give to all outstanding ability, especially when it was also commended by the endowment of eloquence, to the extent that if it had been possible he would gladly have heaped praise even on heretics, and have forgiven a lapse of faith where there was real erudition (as he did in the case of Origen, whom he called 'his own', and from whom he translated certain homilies in his youth).[45]

It is this passage, I think, which leads both Rice and Olin irresistibly to identify the solitary, intensively studious Jerome of the *Vita* with Erasmus himself (and indeed, with the Metsys panel portrait, the Holbein painting, and the Dürer woodcut). Two other moments in Erasmus's narrative, however, can be more precisely related to his own self-conscious self-formation alongside the scholar-saint. At the very end of the *Vita* Erasmus describes the way in which the revival and restoration via the *bonae litterae* of Jerome's works will result in all Europe's claiming him as their own:

From then on, when humane learning [bonae litterae] had been reborn throughout the whole Christian world, and many discerning people of good faith had begun to reawaken themselves to the ancient and pure theology, everyone embraced Jerome as reborn for our universal studies. Everyone claimed him as their own. Once upon a time seven cities claimed Homer as their own. In the case of Jerome, Dalmatia, Pannonia and Italy all claimed the right of proximity. Stridon congratulated itself on having produced such an shining light. Italy rejoiced on three counts: firstly, because she had educated him; then because through baptism she had produced his rebirth in Christ; and finally she was the repository of the pledge of his sacred remains. France claimed him as hers, because he had travelled there extensively, as he attested expressly in so many of his works. The Spanish laid claim to him, whom he distinguished by certain letters he sent to them. Germany embraced him passionately, even

> though he taught them and made them known in only a single book. Greece claimed him by double title: firstly, because of his knowledge of her language, and then because she in turn had been of service for his writings as mistress of the world. Egypt embraced him, which made that most learned man more learned. The Arabs and Saracens loved him, who were made famous by his proximity. The Hebrews cherished him whose language and letters he acquired with so much toil. Even Syria claimed him as her own, as the place where he spent most of his life.[46]

Here Erasmus shows an interestingly acute awareness that through the revival of *bonae litterae* it might be possible for the man of letters, though born in comparative geographical obscurity, to find international fame. Because of his writings (in particular, his letters) the man from Stridon is claimed by the nations of Europe and beyond. It hardly needs to be pointed out that this passage—an elaborate forward projection in the case of the reputation which Jerome may retrieve through this edition of his works—is already an appropriate description of Erasmus's own reputation.

One further passage seems directly to touch on Erasmus's own '*vita*'. Erasmus's discussion of Jerome's early education and teachers includes a digression on whether Nazianzenus and Didimus had actually, as he claimed, been his teachers. These sorts of questions are ridiculous, Erasmus comments. When a gifted person claims a respected figure as his teacher, it is of no interest how long he studied with him:

> He called Gregory Nazianzenus his master, and claimed to have learned sacred letters under his guidance. But where or for how much time he studied with him I cannot ascertain. . . . He moved to Alexandria when he was already middle-aged, to perfect the study of sacred texts by studying with Didimus, whom, because he was deprived of sight since boyhood, he called 'the seeing one'. Although Ruffinus accuses Jerome of not having frequented Didimus's circle for more than a single month, that is plainly ridiculous, even if it is the literal truth. For it is of no importance how much time is spent with a teacher, but rather, how much one learned from him.[47]

Erasmus himself consistently maintained that he had had as his teacher Alexander Hegius, and implied that Rudolph Agricola had also taught him.[48] The significance of the latter lay in his having been reputedly the first northern humanist to study at Ferrara, thus being the origin for a genealogy of Italian-influenced northern men of letters. Like Jerome's, these claims do not bear close scrutiny: Hegius taught the top class at Erasmus's school when Erasmus was in the lowest class, and Agricola may once have visited there. Nevertheless, Erasmus is maintaining, even such relatively inconsequential contact may amount to an 'influence'—a model for emulation, an inspirational example.

A year before the publication of the Jerome *Letters*, with their introductory *Vita*, the first of Erasmus's letters ever to be published appeared in a volume in honour of Giovanni de' Medici, Pope Leo X, published by Froben at Basle.[49] Three of these letters relate directly to the anticipated publication of the Jerome edition.[50] Erasmus critics have had some difficulty with these letters, which apparently publicly promise dedication of the Jerome to Leo X; in the end, Erasmus dedicated the *Novum Instrumentum* (his annotated, revised New Testament) to Pope Leo, and the Jerome (as we have seen) to Archbishop Warham.

The letters to Raffaele Riaro (cardinal of San Giorgio), Domenico Grimani, and Pope Leo X in the *Damiani elegeia* volume rework a single central theme—the extraordinary effort which Erasmus is currently expending on extensive enlargement and revisions for the new edition of his *Adagia*, and on the preparation of his Jerome *Letters*, both of which are to be published imminently by Froben. The rhetoric of who should receive the dedication of the Jerome *Letters* is closely bound up with this stress of the arduousness and extent of the task. In all three letters Erasmus conveys vividly his sense that he has earned the right, through his labours, to commercial ownership of the Jerome, and therefore the right to negotiate the profit which might accrue from its publication. The issue of the work's dedication undoubtedly falls within the scope of such a negotiation. Erasmus put the matter frankly when it came to the dedication to Archbishop Warham which eventually prefaced the work:

> Jerome, recalled to the light from some sort of nether region, I prefer to dedicate to you alone, either because I owe you without exception everything I have, or because you always have a special concern for Jerome's reputation. . . . I have one anxiety, that my limited powers may fail to do justice to Jerome's importance or to your eminent position; for nowhere do I feel more clearly how small my talent is than when I am striving to make some sort of response to your exalted virtues and your unbounded goodness to me. But what was I to do, bound to you as I am by so many and such great obligations that if I sold myself into slavery I should not be in a position to repay any part of my debt?[51]

The three letters published in advance of the Jerome *Letters*, by the same publisher who was to issue both them and the revised *Adagia*, provide elaborate advanced publicity—a publishers' marketing blurb which specifies precisely the form which the Jerome volumes will take. The expressed intention to dedicate the Jerome to Leo X, repeated in each of the letters, and culminating in the letter to Leo himself, *is*, therefore, a dedication. It allows Erasmus, in fact, to 'market' the dedication twice, as befits a work (he might say) which had cost him so dearly in terms of effort in the making. The prepublication compilation of letters markets the Jerome as worthy of the pope ('No name is better known than Jerome's, no person more universally acceptable; and yet I see a way to add to his renown,

to give more weight to his authority'), and the pope's fame is enhanced by association with the Jerome ('Pope Leo's fame is as glorious as it could be; and yet, if I mistake not, it might be not a little increased').[52] Each of the three letters develops slightly differently the basic theme, each one proposing Leo X as the most suitable recipient of the Jerome, whilst at the same time indicating Erasmus's material indebtedness to Warham (one of his few providers of regular financial support).

Indeed, if we set the *four* letters side by side (the three in the *Damiani elegeia* and the official dedication to Warham), they make up a series of rhetorical variations around a single theme, worked examples of the kind of exercise in *copia* proposed in Erasmus's most popular and well-known work, the pedagogic textbook *De copia*. As an advertising strategy, the impact is considerably stronger than that of the single prefatory letter. Any reader who gives attention to *copia* here is bound thoroughly to absorb the key points around which the embellishments are constructed: the comparative constructions of balanced compliment directed simultaneously to England and Warham, and to Italy and Pope Leo fix both dedicatees' names firmly in the mind; the amplifications on the theme of the arduousness of the Jerome undertaking (and the associated *Adagia* volume) create a convincing atmosphere of expectation for the reader around the promised work. Finally, both powerful patrons gain the satisfaction of the elaborately eloquent exercise—Leo's ensured by the fact that the *Damiani elegeia* is a volume entirely devoted to his celebration; Warham by being the genuine recipient of the volume. There seems no reason to suggest that Erasmus had any change of heart over the dedication of the Jerome. It is simply successfully dedicated twice over, as befits so grandiose a work.[53]

Each of the letters in the *Damiani elegeia* plays a rhetorical variation on the theme of 'the proverbial Hercules', under whose heading Erasmus had also advertised the forthcoming Jerome volume in the 1515 Froben edition of the *Adagia*.[54] In his dedicatory letter to Warham, in the Jerome itself, Erasmus once more compares the effort expended on the saint's writings—effort which is entirely invisible to the reader, who 'never gives a thought to the time and tedium it has cost [Erasmus] to battle with the thorns and briars'—to the labours of Hercules:

> And so I despised all the difficulties, and like a modern Hercules I set out on my most laborious but most glorious campaign, taking the field almost unaided against all the monsters of error. I cannot think that Hercules consumed as much energy in taming a few monsters as I did in abolishing so many thousand blunders. And I conceive that not a little more advantage will accrue to the world from my work than from his labours which are on the lips of all men.[55]

Here the emphasis is still on the superhuman labour undertaken in the Jerome edition; but in contrast to the *Adagia* passage which I quoted in

the first chapter, there is also a strong suggestion of the heroic warrior about this scholar-exegete—Erasmus as *miles christianus* (the Christian soldier). This suggestion is taken up again in an extravagently complimentary letter to Erasmus, written in November 1516, and first published in the *Epistolae elegantes* (Martens, Louvain, 1517), by Budé's close friend and collaborator, Francois Deloynes. This letter repeats the conjunction of the Jerome edition and the labours of Hercules, but includes the much earlier *Enchiridion militis christiani*:

> Your *Adagiorum chiliades*, your *Moriae encomium*, your *Miles christianus*, your *Novum instrumentum*, and other things of the same kind launched under such happy auspices from your workshop and received with such applause on their arrival here—all these, as far as my leisure permitted, I have read and re-read. I have in my hands the works of Jerome, a formidable task indeed, and too much for the strength of any but our modern Hercules whose name is Erasmus, in which I fancy I see Jerome himself thanks to your care and diligence and unstinting labour returning to the light of day and forestalling in some sort the day of resurrection foretold in Holy Scripture; for now that the corruptions which abounded everywhere have been cleared away, you have dressed him as it were in a new garment of immortality and restored him to his original and native glory.[56]

In this public statement,[57] Deloynes and Budé (and Bérault, who adds his name at the end of the letter) pledge themselves to support Erasmus's *philosophia Christi*, as represented by the Jerome project. And they add their confirmation to that carefully constructed self-image of Erasmus as scholar-exegete of heroic stature—to that very particular conjunction of piety, scholarship, physical stamina, heroic tenacity, and commercial acumen which emerges, I suggest, in this cultural and historical moment, via Erasmus's self-conscious imaging of himself. Erasmus/Jerome substitutes scholar for saint ('When I read treatises of this sort, on these kinds of men, I can barely restrain myself from saying, "Saint Socrates, pray for us"') as the exemplary European Man of Letters.

Legible Texts: Erasmus's Portraits and the Echo of Jerome

Rice and Olin have both drawn attention to the fact that the portrait of Jerome in the *Vita Hieronymi* is 'disconcertingly' a self-portrait of Erasmus himself.[58] Neither author finds this surprising:

> Erasmus does show his subject 'as a living man, dictating, writing, arguing, consoling and instructing'; at the same time, his portrait of Jerome is a self-portrait, that of a Christian scholar attractively but disconcertingly Erasmian in attitude and personality. This can hardly surprise us. We revive a figure from

> the past because he meets a present need, suggests a present strategy, can be used to beat a present enemy and further a present cause, makes legitimate a present call for change and reform. The author of the fourteenth-century pseudographs had emphasized Jerome's devotion to poverty in order to attack contemporary trimmers, his austerities to press for radical monastic reform, his evangelical piety and pastoral concern to show up the wickedness and irresponsibility of contemporary theologians and prelates. What Erasmus admired was not always the same; his tactic was.[59]

What we have now seen, however, is that there is an Erasmian agenda, as it were, which sees to it that the life of the paradigm Christian textual editor and exegete conforms to the expectations of a sixteenth-century humanistic audience. In other words, it is the agenda, rather than any desire on Erasmus's own part to be seen as 'like' Jerome, which draws Jerome's life away from hagiography and towards that cluster of exemplary sacred/secular activities best represented for Erasmus by the combination of Lorenzo Valla's annotations on the New Testament and his *Elegantiae*.

What I am suggesting here is that the Escher-like flicker-effect which Rice and Olin comment upon (as did Ferguson before them, in his edition of the *Vita Hieronymi*)—from biography to autobiography, and from portrait to self-portrait—is neither a side issue nor an accident in Erasmus's treatment of Jerome. At the heart of the Jerome edition—the opus Erasmus produced at the zenith of his international career, and on the threshold of his self-formation as an icon of scholar-piety—is the fusion, or perhaps confusion, of secular and sacred attention. That deliberate redirecting of readerly attention at the text itself, simultaneously *as* text and as true object of pious devotion, is the source of a real critical confusion, to which I think we ought to give serious attention. What is legible in the restored text of Jerome, so Erasmus claims, is the quintessence of piety, that availability for profound and attentive reading by means of which reading transcends mechanical absorption and becomes spiritual education, the very enactment of the *philosophia Christi*.

Because the emphasis here is entirely upon the act of reading, and its relationship to the production of text by the *magister*, somewhere in the recasting of the *Vita Hieronymi*, the lives of Jerome and of Erasmus became subtly intertwined. In the course of the transformation required to reconcile the sanctity of the early Father of the Church with the piety of the northern educator, the aura of the saint modulated into that of the exemplary scholar-translator. If we now turn our attention once more to the fashioned portraits of Erasmus of the last chapter, some of that programme of refashioning saint into scholar can be seen vividly in the iconography of those commissioned and widely circulated graphic images.

Metsys's 1517 portrait of Erasmus is at one level (the one most readily responded to by the modern viewer) a realistic representation 'from the life' of the scholar-translator-commentator in his study. The anecdote with which Erasmus regales More, about the sitting postponed after illness, depends upon an agreed idea of the immediacy, and physical exactness, of the artist's rendering (the impossibility of continuing the portrait when the sitter's illness had supposedly altered his appearance). Yet that letter itself is highly contrived—we shall see in a moment how artfully Erasmus wielded the *epistola familiaris* (familiar letter), as an image-making medium. In other words, a considerable amount of self-consciousness on Erasmus's part is involved in presenting his own 'life' as at once 'realistic' (historically and geographically specific) and as significantly related to other great 'lives' from the classical past (secular and sacred), with their richly accumulated symbolic reference beyond the merely mundane.

When we look more closely at its 'realism', the composition of the Metsys portrait of Erasmus gives prominence to objects and attributes which seem to invite a nonrealist 'reading'—an interpretation which includes their iconographical or symbolic significance: the reed pen, the inkwell, the small lectern, the untidily piled books, the scissors (or wick-trimmer), the signet ring on Erasmus's right-hand index finger, the hand-written page, the capacious, metal-clasped pouch at his waist.[60] We might add the sand-shaker, from the Gilles portrait, which, whilst figuring in the Gilles panel, is reunited iconographically with Erasmus when the two panels are juxtaposed.[61] I propose to respond for a moment to that implied bid for the reader's interpretative attention, and to look at the portrait more closely.

The most striking 'real' item in the portrait, whose symbolic currency we readily overlook, is the scissors which hang from the bookshelves behind Erasmus. A little attention reveals these to be not scissors at all, but wick-trimmers.[62] The candle snuffer/trimmer (with or without an accompanying candle) appears in many late fifteenth and early sixteenth century paintings of Saint Jerome, but its presence in the Erasmus portrait is never commented upon.[63] In her discussion of Carpaccio's *Saint Augustine in Jerome's Study*, Helen Roberts has suggested that 'the scissors, so prominently placed on the saint's writing table, may have a special significance, symbolic of the interpretation of the Scriptures by the Doctors of the Church'.[64] A candlestick is certainly also a regular feature of Jerome paintings, and the scissors/trimmers may rest against or alongside it.[65] Trimming the wick of scriptures so that their light shines out strongly and brightly seems irresistibly to apply to Erasmus's scholarly efforts in his publications around 1517 (the *Novum Instrumentum*, the *Letters* of Jerome, the first of the *Paraphrases*).[66]

If the scissors/wick-trimmers alert us (as I believe they should) to a symbolic function in the 'realistic' study in which Erasmus is seated, then we may need to reconsider the jumble of books on the shelf behind him. Here again, there is a steady iconographic tradition to refer to. In 1456 Bartolomeo Fazio, pupil of Guarino Veronese, wrote a short treatise, *De viris illustribus*, which included a chapter 'De pictoribus' (On painters).[67] In it, he expressed admiration for Jan van Eyck, 'judged to be the leading painter of our time'. And amongst van Eyck's specific achievements, Fazio singled out the representation of books in his painting of *Saint Jerome in His Study*:

> His is a remarkable picture . . . [of] Jerome like a living being in a library done with rare art: for if you move away from it a little it seems that it recedes inwards and that it has complete books laid open in it, while if you go near, it is evident that just their fore-edges are there.[68]

Baxandall (and following Baxandall, Rice and Ridderbos) have identified the painting Fazio refers to as the *Saint Jerome in His Study* of which a copy survives in Detroit.[69] In any case, the Detroit Jerome provides a fine example of virtuoso representation of piled books on the upper of two deep shelves in a recess, partially concealed by a curtain. The books are lovingly and meticulously depicted so as to convey solidity, bulk, and weight, as well as variety of surfaces, textures, types of leather and paper, metal clasps, and cloth ties.[70] The convincing nature of the illusion of depth is enhanced by the comparative flatness of the emblematic objects on the lower shelf (although the stoppered crystal vase stands out for its three-dimensionality). It is not surprising, then, to find later Low Countries painters self-consciously imitating Jan van Eyck's piled books in their own Jerome paintings.[71]

But virtuoso representation of books in the context of learned Fathers of the Church is also to be found in Italian paintings of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In Carpaccio's *Visit of Saint Jerome's Soul to Saint Augustine*, books are scattered all around the seated Father. Codices lie heaped on a shelf to his right, and books lie open on a revolving book wheel in the alcove behind him. There are books, closed and open, on his desk, and at his feet are four separate book-based depictions, so meticulously painted that the writing on the open book must originally have been legible, as the sheets of secular and sacred music still are.[72] The books on the pedestal at Augustine's feet, in particular, seem to mediate between the sacred work with which Augustine is occupied (he is writing a letter to Jerome, inquiring on a point of scripture) and the secular world. This mediating role of books can also be seen in Carpaccio's *Disputation of Saint Stephen*, in which precisely similar compositions of

books on the pedestal at Saint Stephen's feet mediates between his learning and that of the Jewish elders.[73]

The figure with the precious and lovingly depicted book is a feature of the increasingly convincingly illusionistic portraiture of the beginning of the sixteenth century.[74] I suggest that because of its overload of cultural meaning, the book, in these graphic representations, is ambiguously 'precious'. From the representations of a meditative Virgin and donor portraits of van Eyck onwards, the care with which binding, text, page, illumination, and jewelled bookmark (enhancing their rarity) are depicted focuses the viewer's attention upon them.[75] In the age of print, the book becomes simply part of the scholar's equipment. At the same time, the care taken with the book's depiction means that it retains the freight of 'worth' in excess of any use value, which Natalie Davis has argued is in any case a feature of early attitudes to the printed book.[76]

What the converging Italian and northern traditions give us, I suggest, is a consistent presence of meticulously rendered, scattered or randomly piled books in paintings symbolising the saint-scholar's bringing to bear of the wealth of his pagan-based learning on sacred texts.[77] Incunabula or lavishly bound and ornamented printed books conveniently conserve an aura carried over from the precious manuscript. This aura, visible in the combination of painstaking realism and symbolic lavishness in the volume cradled in the hand of Virgin, saint, or donor in northern paintings from van Eyck onwards, is confused but not lost in 'study' paintings, in which the books are both symbol and tool of the scholar's trade. And as Fazio notes in the case of the van Eyck Jerome, the technical virtuosity makes the shelves of books an object of attention; the viewer's eye passes from the saint's rapt face to the book he studies, then up to the echoed books above him, via the assembled symbols of purity, scriptural exegesis, learning, and devotion on the table alongside the lectern and book and on the lower shelf.

As a number of scholars have noted, the composition of the Metsys Erasmus panel has a number of resemblances with the van Eyck Jerome, foremost amongst which is the arrangement of shelves, and the piled, jumbled books.[78] In the case of Erasmus, the inscriptions on the books themselves identify these works as certainly a mixture of Christian and pagan (edited or translated by Erasmus himself); the scholar works on a paraphrase of scripture, sustained by the presence of this combined cultural heritage.[79] If we are in any doubt as to the relevance to the task in hand (the *Paraphrase of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans*), we might compare the Erasmus composition with another Metsys work from the same period, the *Banker and His Wife* (1514), now in the Louvre.[80] In this painting also, the two figures are seated at a table before two shelves in an

alcove, on which books and other objects are carefully arranged. Here rather more obviously the objects provide a gloss on the action at the table: the banker's wife turns a leaf of a devotional book (in which a colour plate of the Virgin and child is clearly visible), but her attention is drawn away from spiritual matters to the material objects her husband handles. Behind them are arrayed symbols of the spiritual purity from which she threatens to be distracted, including a a crystal vase, a rosary, books, and rolled papers. These objects recall the van Eyck, as does the convex mirror on the table, reflecting a figure outside the depiction of the painting (as the mirror shows the artist himself in van Eyck's Arnofino marriage painting).[81]

As one might expect, the point is more clearly made in the Holbein portrait of Erasmus presented to Archbishop Warham, in which, as we saw in the last chapter, the Herculean labours of the edition of Jerome's *Letters* is the overt subject of the composition. Behind Erasmus, in this painting, is a curtain, partly drawn. Behind the curtain, above Erasmus's left shoulder, can be seen a shelf, on which rest carelessly piled books and a transparent crystal vase (possibly closed with a paper cover). In front of the curtain, to Erasmus's right, stands an Italianate Renaissance pilaster.[82] Erasmus's hands rest proprietorially, and with an air of satisfaction, on the closed Jerome, inscribed 'The Labours of Hercules'.

The shelf with books and vase are readily identifiable as elements of the iconography of Saint Jerome, partially veiled by the curtain. Probably the most compelling comparison would be Joos van de Cleve's *Saint Jerome in His Study* (ca. 1525), where shelf, books, and vase are remarkably similarly arranged, but the classic reference would be the Detroit Jerome, after Jan van Eyck.[83] In front of the partially obscured Jerome (cut off by the curtain), with Italian Renaissance culture at his right hand, Erasmus appropriates the great Father of the Church and establisher of the definitive text of scripture through his own Herculean labours:

> I doubt if Jerome himself expended so much effort on the writing of his works as they will cost me in the correction. At least I have thrown myself into this task so zealously that one could almost say that I had worked myself to death that Jerome might live again.[84]

On Erasmus's right, the pilaster frames the painting on the left side, as the curtained alcove frames the right. The pilaster refers us to the Italian Renaissance, proudly claimed by Erasmus as the inspiration for his own scholarly activities. There is possibly a suggestion of Erasmus (and Jerome) as 'pillar of the Church', as in Valla's 'Et certi soli eloquentes . . . columnae ecclesiae sunt' (preface to the fourth book of *Elegantiae*). Perhaps, too, it echoes the Herculean theme of the adage—the columns or pillars of Hercules, with their 'terminus' message, *plus ultra*, familiar as

Charles V's chosen emblem.[85] The binding on the book, one might add, is recognisably northern European. Here is the physical presence of the carefully exemplary scholar-editor, strategically located between the old scholarship and the new, the old world of learning and the new, almost to the point of paradox: solitary, but not penitent; pensive, yet looking the onlooker steadily in the eye; sober, yet prosperously dressed; in his study, yet richly housed.[86]

Since we have dwelt so determinedly on the 'Jeromeness' of Erasmus in the Metsys diptych, let us close with a significant difference. Jerome, who gave up all wordly pursuits for the pursuit of godly learning, is consistently represented as modestly attired—the simplicity of his garments ranging from simple, unadorned monastic garb to undress and near nakedness (a tradition which named him 'cardinal' sometimes allows him cardinal's red, but the simplicity is sustained). Although discreetly sober, as befits a scholar, Erasmus, by contrast, is decidedly prosperously dressed. He wears burgher's heavy cloth, elaborate sleeves, and fur.[87] Furthermore, he wears a deep pouch at his waist, so placed that it is difficult not to make it a feature of the painting.[88] The pouch rests in Erasmus's lap, occupying a central space between his head and his book; it connotes both prosperity/profit and mobility.[89] This scholar-exegete occupies a northern mercantile world, the world of business and affairs.[90]

The deceptively 'realistic' portraits, then, are heavy with symbolic significance—heavy, but not steady. The portraits offer layered meanings, retrievable either from the separate panels or from the panels together. Those meanings are sustained and enriched again by the accompanying correspondence, a correspondence which both materially complements the paintings and replicates the contents of the portraits themselves, which contain letters and printed texts as already part of their meaning. The individual, Erasmus, inhabits a visual world dense with meaning, legible beyond the charisma of the mere man. If, as Svetlana Alpers has suggested for the Low Countries of a century later, Erasmus's is a 'visual culture', then here is a thickened meaning for the man of letters, which our intensely text-orientated culture has all but lost.[91]

Erasmus in Saint Jerome's Study

Amongst the northern European (or northern European influenced) paintings whose treatment of the scholar in his study the Erasmus portraits recall, there is one type which seems particularly close, thematically, to the kinds of issue I have been discussing. These are those in which a recognisable contemporary figure is represented as 'Jerome' or 'Augustine', at scholarly work in that saint's study.[92] The van Eyck *Jerome in His Study* (Detroit), generally taken to be the Low Countries prototype

for the whole tradition of Jerome-style scholar-portraits, has itself been identified as a portrait of the fifteenth-century cardinal Nicholas Albergati.[93] Antonella da Messina's remarkable *Jerome in His Study*, in the National Gallery, is claimed as a portrait of Nicholas of Cusa.[94] In both cases, the scholarly literature has produced cogent reasons why a formal link between the sitter for the portrait and the saint licensed the portrayal of the one in the guise of the other.

In itself this provides a fascinating insight into contemporary understanding of scholarly 'identity' in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The fact that Nicholas Albergati had been prior of a monastery dedicated to Jerome, and was himself a zealous scholar of the sacred texts, makes it appropriate for the painter to depict him *as* Jerome, or, rather, as Albergati as Jerome. On Albergati/Jerome's table lies a letter with the inscription:

> Reuerendissimo in Christo patri et domino, domino Ieronimo, tituli Sancte Crucis in Iherusalem presbytero cardinali.
>
> [To the Most Reverend Father and Master in Christ, Master Jerome, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem.][95]

It is Albergati who is cardinal of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, not the historical Jerome. The ancient scholar has become the 'type' for the contemporary cardinal; in the graphic representation, Albergati inhabits the persona of the great scriptural exegete, and is thus both captured as a personality himself and formally complimented with the likeness.

If such portraits in disguise fascinate us, how much more compellingly 'strange' or 'other' in the conceptual frame they uncover for us are paintings of a type first clearly identified by Helen Roberts in 1959, in a classic article on Carpaccio's well-known painting of an ecclesiastical scholar in an oratory or study.[96] Roberts identified Carpaccio's source for this painting as a spurious letter from Saint Augustine to Saint Cyril, which probably originated in the thirteenth century, and was much reprinted in the fifteenth.[97] In the letter, 'Augustine' describes a miraculous visitation by the spirit of Jerome. Reaching an impasse in his thinking whilst in the process of composing a treatise on the nature of eternal bliss in paradise, 'Augustine' decided to write to his contemporary, Jerome, for expert help. Unbeknown to him, however, Jerome had died at that very instant; 'Augustine' 's study was suddenly flooded with light and 'an ineffable fragrance'. At the same moment, the voice of Saint Jerome counselled 'Augustine' not to put his whole trust in human intellect in order to understand Christian mysteries; he then gave Augustine the help he needed, from his new vantage point as a heavenly soul himself. The spurious letter provides a 'tale', in other words, in which inspiration is authoritatively

valued above rational exploration of spiritual truths.[98] Since Roberts's discovery, Martin Kemp has drawn attention to the fact that Botticelli's great *Vision of Saint Augustine* in Florence illustrates the same incident.[99]

In these two great paintings, the scholar-saint sits at work in his study, surrounded by the paraphernalia of learning, intellectual exploration of the heavens (astronomy), and scholarly textual activity, all rendered with compelling meticulousness.[100] The scholar pauses and looks up from these activities, and is painted in the posture of rapt attention, concentrating instead on the 'ineffable' inspirational presence of that other great scholar's insubstantial spiritual presence.

Botticelli's 1480 masterpiece was commissioned together with a companion painting by Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Saint Jerome in His Study*. The paintings remain together in the Chiesa d'Ognissanti in Florence, for which they were produced. Ghirlandaio's painting is fully in the northern, van Eyckian tradition. Behind the saint, seated at his desk, and as if pausing in the act of writing, is an elaborate clutter of books, manuscripts, letters (in the three classical languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew), his cardinal's hat, a stoppered crystal flask, a rosary; on his desk are more books and papers, an inkwell, spectacles, an unlit candle and wick-trimmer. The alcove in which he sits is curtained, the curtain half drawn to reveal a two-shelved alcove containing his library.[101] Recently, the original inscription above this painting has been recovered. It reads: '[R]edde nos claros lampas radio[sa] / sine qua terra tota est umbrosa' (Make us bright, radiant light, without which the whole earth is in darkness).[102] In this case, the contrast between scholarly rationality and inspiration apparently lies in the figure of Jerome himself. His direct gaze, out of the painting, at the spectator, figures the transmission of sacred knowledge from one mind to another, mediated by the texts he produces. These texts—in particular, of course, the Vulgate text of the Bible—are the point of exchange of spiritual understanding between past scholar and present reader.

I offer this necessarily curtailed and outline account of this particular genre of scholar paintings to indicate the possible complexity of the figuring of Jerome, or Erasmus as Jerome, which I have begun to uncover. For I want to argue that Saint Jerome is a presence for Erasmus in some more complicated and elusive sense than a mere 'disguise' the scholar might adopt to give himself presence and authority. Erasmus was himself an Augustinian monk; his greatest works of textual exegesis and editing were his own version of the New Testament (for which he claimed the precedent of Jerome) and his edition of the works of Jerome himself.[103] The Metsys Erasmus panel irresistibly asks for comparison with the Ghirlandaio *Saint Jerome*. Equally, the Botticelli *Vision of Saint Augustine* provides an attractive model for the *idea* of one great scholar

miraculously inspired by another: Jerome in Augustine; Jerome in Erasmus. And these graphic representations, which somehow make these complex interactions between spirituality, inspiration, and rationality vivid and graspable, in turn offer us a series of footholds into the confusing proliferation of Erasmus's printed works.[104]

'Mors ultima linea rerum': Reprise

On August 1, 1528, in a letter to Charles V's secretary, Alfonso Valdès, Erasmus attempted to justify his choice of the motto *Concedo nulli* (I make way for nobody), as it appeared on the reverse of the Metsys medallion. He explained that the words were supposed to attach to Terminus, not to himself. And he went on:

> For death is a boundary or limit, which makes way for no one. Nevertheless, the medal is inscribed in Greek, 'hora telos makrou biou', which means, 'do not lose sight of the end of a long life', and in Latin, 'mors ultima linea rerum' [death is the ultimate limit of things]. Someone will object, 'Then you might just as well have had a skull engraved . . .'[105]

Erasmus has been accused of personal vanity, on account of the *concedo nulli* motto.[106] On the contrary, he explains, the obverse of the Metsys medallion carries a *vanitas* motif—it dwells on the inevitability of death, in the midst of life. And for that reason, the Terminus bust might perfectly well be replaced by a death's head, the more conventional *vanitas* emblem.

It may have been Dürer who was responsible for introducing the skull, emblem of the transitoriness of all worldly achievement, into Saint Jerome's study, in northern Renaissance representations of the saint at work.[107] Be this as it may, of all the objects which surround the saint in early sixteenth century versions, the one most obviously missing from the Erasmus portraits is the skull.[108] Erasmus's remark on the interchangeability of Terminus and skull suggests that this *vanitas* motif is indeed pendant to the Metsys Erasmus panel—a reference from one to the other, one more element in the accumulation around the scholar-exegete of the distinctive paraphernalia of the archetypal saint-exegete, Jerome.

CHAPTER THREE

Inventing Rudolph Agricola: Recovery and Transmission of the *De inventione dialectica*

This chapter takes the form of a scholarly detective story. As I indicated in my Introduction, I first noticed many years ago that the fortunes of Agricola's manual of humanist logic, the *De inventione dialectica*, were historically and textually curious, and in some way tied in with Erasmus and Erasmian pedagogy.[1] The pursuit of the story of the recovery and transmission of that work uncovered a sometimes bizarre tale, in which Erasmus and his circle turned out indeed to be crucially involved. The story of Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* turns out to be the story of a carefully constructed northern European intellectual genealogy, and the emergence of a peculiarly northern curriculum and pedagogy—the construction of pedagogic charisma in print.

Rudolph Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* was the higher-education manual of *argumentatio* (argumentation) most widely specified, bought, and used in schools and universities throughout Protestant Europe, between the early decades of the sixteenth century and the midseventeenth century (when attitudes towards logic/dialectic in the curriculum altered so as to render it irrelevant).[2] The first printed edition appeared in 1515; it was published in Louvain and carried the name of the distinguished theologian Martin Dorp on the title page. Between 1515 and 1600 it went through more than seventy (known) editions (including epitomes).[3]

Not surprisingly, therefore, Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* has been the the object of a considerable amount of attention from intellectual historians (particularly historians of logic), and from historians of education. One might cite three key works as initiating Agricola as a focus for interest: W. J. Ong's extremely readable and influential *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958); W. S. Howell's much-cited *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (New York, 1961); and C. Vasoli's monumental and highly regarded *La dialettica e la retorica dell'umanesimo* (Milan, 1968).[4] I stress the readability and monumental nature of such work in order to indicate that although this was specialist work, it had a considerable impact beyond the histories of logic and 'method', so that Agricola's name crops up (with these bibliographical items attached) quite widely in Renaissance intellectual history and in histories of humanism.

1

The Power of Images: Response and Repression

*

Curves are too emotional
PIET MONDRIAN

*

Wir sehen es, aber
das tut
uns nicht weh.
ABY WARBURG

*

People are sexually aroused by pictures and sculptures; they break pictures and sculptures; they mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journeys to them; they are calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt. They give thanks by means of them, expect to be elevated by them, and are moved to the highest levels of empathy and fear. They have always responded in these ways; they still do. They do so in societies we call primitive and in modern societies; in East and West, in Africa, America, Asia, and Europe. These are the kinds of response that form the subject of this book, not the intellectual constructions of critic and scholar, or the literate sensitivity of the generally cultured. My concern is with those responses that are subject to repression because they are too embarrassing, too blatant, too rude, and too uncultured; because they make us aware of our kinship with the unlettered, the coarse, the primitive, the undeveloped; and because they have psychological roots that we prefer not to acknowledge.

When we read in one Italian writer of 1584 that a painting

> will cause the beholder to wonder when it wondreth, to desire a beautifull young woman for his wife when he seeth her painted naked; to have a fellow-feeling when it is afflicted; to have an appetite when he seeth it eating of dainties; to fall asleepe at the sight of a sweete sleepinge picture; to be mooved and waxe furious when he beholdeth a battel most lively described; and to be stirred with disdaine and wrath, at the sight of shameful and dishonest actions

or in another of 1587 that

> since the eye is the most perfect among the exterior senses, it moves the minds to hatred, love and fear, more than all the other senses . . .; and when the beholders see very grave tortures present and apparently real . . . they are moved to true piety, and thereby drawn to devotion and reverence—all of which are remedies and excellent means for their salvation,

two chief questions arise.[1] Are these both no more than the commonplace repetition of the old idea of the greater susceptibility of the eyes than the other senses? And are they simply to be seen in the context of late-sixteenth-century Italian art theory? Let us begin with some improbable examples.

I

The charming third-century Greek romance by Heliodorus known as the *Aethiopian Tale about Theagenes and Charicleia* has the following account of the birth of its protagonist, Charicleia. Her mother, Persina (who is queen of Ethiopia) writes to her about the palace bedroom, which was "garnished with pictures containing the loves of Perseus and Andromeda."

> After Hydaspes had been married to me ten years, and we had never a child, we happened to rest after midday in the summer . . . at which time your father had to do with me . . . and I by and by perceived myself with child. All the time after, until I was delivered, was kept holy, and sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered to the Gods, for that the King hoped to have one now to succeed him in his kingdom. But thou wert born white, which colour is strange among the Ethiopians. I knew the reason, because while my husband had to do with me I looked upon the picture of Andromeda naked . . . and so by mishap engendered presently a thing like to her.[2]

A similar role is ascribed to pictures in another quite different context. In the course of an argument about divine creation in his polemic against the emperor Julian, Saint Augustine cites the medical writer Soranus, who tells of the tyrant Dionysius who,

> because he was deformed, did not wish to have children like himself. In sleeping with his wife he used to place a beautiful picture before her, so that by desiring its beauty and in some manner taking it in, she might effectively transmit it to the offspring she conceived.[3]

We may be inclined to regard all this as little more than fictional reworkings of an old notion that goes back to Aristotle and crops up naturally enough in writers like Galen and Pliny: namely, that the child one gives

birth to is somehow impressed with the marks of the parents' imaginings at the moment of conception, but clearly there is more to the notion than just that.[4] We need to examine the role of pictures and sculptures more closely.

At almost exactly the same time as the passage from Augustine was excerpted in Simon Majolus's 1614 encyclopedia, Giulio Mancini was composing his splendid compendium of information about painters and painting, the *Considerazioni sulla pittura*. At the end of a fairly technical discussion of the appropriate locations for pictures, he has this to say about the adornment of bedrooms:

> Lascivious things are to be placed in private rooms, and the father of the family is to keep them covered, and only uncover them when he goes there with his wife, or an intimate who is not too fastidious. And similar lascivious pictures are appropriate for the rooms where one has to do with one's spouse; because once seen they serve to arouse one and to make beautiful, healthy, and charming children . . . not because the imagination imprints itself on the fetus, which is of different material to the mother and father, but because each parent, through seeing the picture, imprints in their seed a similar constitution which has been seen in the object or figure. . . . And so the sight of similar objects and figures, well-made and of the right temper, represented in colour, is of much help on these occasions; but they must nevertheless not be seen by children and old maids, nor by strangers and fastidious people.[5]

For all the attempt to provide a scientific, causal explanation for this belief in the efficacy of pictures (derived from Mancini's own reading of writers like Solinus), to us both the explanation offered and the belief itself seem improbable—if not completely fantastic. But when we encounter the Counter-Reformation view that one should certainly not have pictures in one's bedroom of those of whom one cannot possess the original, we begin to sense that the matter may not be so fantastic after all. If we cannot yet quite share the belief in efficacy, we can at least understand the fear and concern that lies at its basis in writers like Paleotti and Molanus (and there are many like them in the immediate wake of the Council of Trent).

But are these passages no more than testimonies to the repeated use of a commonplace, whose meaning has been drained from it by centuries of hackneyed and unthinking reproduction? For example: are we to dismiss the passages on the grounds that the Counter-Reformation critics of art were simply motivated by a prurient censoriousness; that Heliodorus was writing a pretty romance; that the quotation from Saint Augustine was merely an illustrative aside to a serious theological argument (though its seventeenth-century excerpter used it quite specifically in the context of females and generation); and that Mancini's account cannot be construed as anything

but the incredible repetition of a particular cliché about the power of art? It is worth considering the possibility not only that every one of these writers actually believed such notions, but also that we should take them seriously too.[6]

II

Let us move from the bedroom to the nursery. Part 4 of Giovanni Dominici's *Rule for the Management of Family Care,* written in 1403, is concerned with the upbringing of children. In order for one's offspring to be brought up "for God," the first of Dominici's recommendations is that one should have

> paintings in the house, of holy boys, or young virgins, in which your child when still in swaddling clothes may delight as being like himself, and may be seized upon by the like thing, with actions and signs attractive to infancy. And as I say for paintings, so I say of sculptures. The Virgin Mary is good to have, with the child on her arm and the little bird, or the pomegranate in his fist. A good figure would be Jesus suckling, Jesus sleeping on his mother's lap, Jesus standing politely before her, Jesus making a hem and the mother sewing that hem. In the same way he may mirror himself in the holy Baptist, dressed in camel skin, a small boy entering the desert, playing with birds, sucking on the sweet leaves, sleeping on the ground. It would not harm if he saw Jesus and the Baptist . . . and the murdered innocents, so that the fear of arms and armed men would come over him. And so too little girls should be brought up in the sight of the eleven thousand virgins, discussing, fighting and praying. I would like them to see Agnes with the fat lamb, Cecilia crowned with roses; Elizabeth with many roses, Catherine on the wheel, with other figures that would give them love of virginity with their mother's milk, desire for Christ, hatred of sins, disgust at vanity, shrinking from bad companions, and a beginning through considering the saints, of contemplating the supreme Saint of saints.[7]

How much pictures (and sculptures) could achieve! And what a range of edifying functions they had! This edification was, in fact, one of the three functions explicitly attributed to all religious images throughout the Middle Ages (and for a considerable time after); but the candid faith in what images could do or bring about is very striking in this passage, and it calls out for comment. In what sense did they really have the effects attributed to them here? A view so strongly and attractively asserted must, one supposes, have had some grounding in firm belief, rather than in the straightforward repetition of a topos or of a notion commonly held.

There are several other noteworthy elements within this passage. The enumeration of so charming and various a list of subjects is unusual; and it provides remarkable literary corroboration of the kind of images available at the turn of the fifteenth century. Many of these kinds of pictures, it is true, we already know from our experience of museums; but here is as clear a contemporary description as one could wish of at least one set of functions. It is also a telling and straightforward reminder of the need to consider all possible uses of images, and all possible images, from high use and high art to low use and low art. But in the context of our discussion it has an evidential status that transcends such purely antiquarian and functional issues. Its importance lies in the overall assumption of the effectiveness of images—to the extent that they have the potential to affect even (or perhaps especially) the youngest of viewers, and affect them not just emotionally, but in ways that have long-term behavioral consequences. It is hard to know what to make of the best modern commentator's view that Dominici (who illuminated manuscripts himself) "did not rank painting very high, considering it useful for small children's religious education."[8] We may well ask ourselves on just what basis the commentator *would* have Dominici rank pictures high? Or in what sense the education of small children rates as a baser criterion of status than any other?

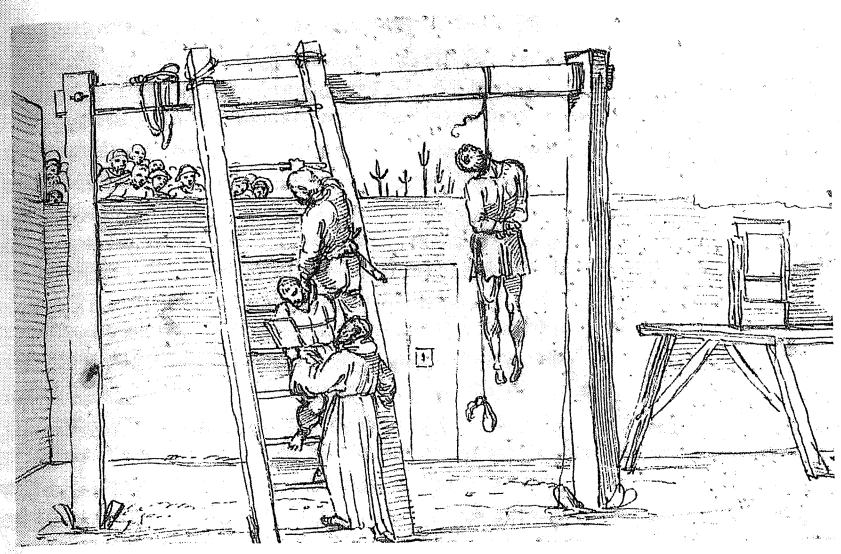
Be that as it may, Dominici appears to assume that effectiveness proceeds from a kind of identification between beholder and what is represented by the image. The child delights in the pictures, because they are "*like himself*"; and so he will be seized upon by the like thing, with actions and signs attractive to infancy. He "*mirrors himself* in the Holy Baptist," while girls will acquire girlish virtues by seeing the same qualities exemplified by the appearance and action of female saints. In addition to the problem of identification, two more issues should be noted here: first, the unproblematic equation of painting with sculpture (at any rate with regard to effectiveness); and, second, the apparent belief that contemplation leads first to imitation and then to spiritual ascent. We will return to them, but first let us move from conception and childhood to death and consider responses to pictures not at the beginning of lives but at the end.

III

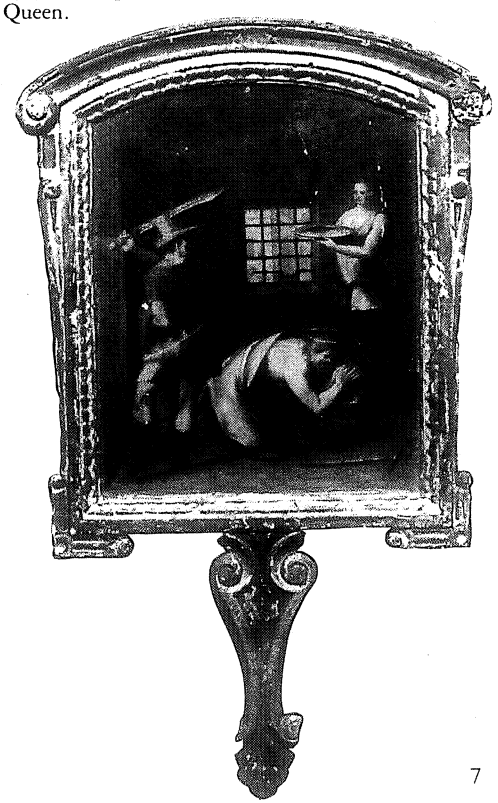
What comfort could anyone conceivably offer to a man condemned to death, in the moments prior to his execution? Any word or action would seem futile, and it would be as nought beside the inner resources or human weakness of the condemned person. But in Italy between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, brotherhoods were set up to offer a kind of solace; and the instruments of consolation were small painted images.[9] A fair

number of these *tavoluccie,* or *tavolette,* as they were alternatively called, survive, and their use is attested by a considerable amount of supplementary visual evidence (cf. figs. 1 and 2). Each *tavoletta* was painted on both sides. On one side was a scene from the Passion of Christ; on the other side, a martyrdom that was more or less relevant to the punishment to be meted out to the prisoner (figs. 3 and 4). This martyrdom the brothers would "relate in some inspirational way to the actual plight of the prisoner as they comforted him in his cell or prison chapel during the night before his morning execution."[10] On the next day, two members of the brotherhood would hold one of the pictures before the condemned man's face all the way to the place of execution. Then, as described in the surviving *Istruzioni* for the Florentine Compagnia di Santa Maria della Croce al Tempio:[11]

1. Brother of the Archconfraternity of San Giovanni Decollato in Rome holding a *tavoletta* (from Corrado Ricci, *Beatrice Cenci* [Milan, 1923]).



2. Annibale Carracci, *A Hanging* (drawing; ca. 1599). Windsor Castle, Royal Library. Reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.



3. *Above: Tavoletta* showing the Lamentation; a Crucifixion on the obverse (seventeenth century). Rome, Archconfraternity of San Giovanni Decollato.

4. *Right: Tavoletta* showing the beheading of Saint John the Baptist (seventeenth century). Rome, Archconfraternity of San Giovanni Decollato.

> As soon as the *afflitto* arrives at the place of execution, the comforter will permit but not exhort him to say something edifying . . . and when the push is given to him by the executioner, the comforter will pass to the other side of the ladder [see fig. 2]. And keeping always a hand attached to the ladder for security, will maintain the *tavoletta* before the face of the suspended *afflitto* as long as he thinks he has not departed this life.[12]

More edifying words will pass; there will be opportunity for confession; absolution will be given; and the man expires.

Not much benefit would arise from arguing whether words or images were of greater consequence on such an occasion; and one might well feel that the whole business was ineffectual. Certainly one would be justified in maintaining that the practice was clearly institutionalized, and that its roots lay in conventional views of death which were out of touch with its psychological reality—in short, that it served the living better than the imminently dead. One might furthermore insist that the practice is to be seen specifically in the context of the distinctive functions and status of images in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy; but even if that context is narrowly specified, one is still left the problem of effectiveness—even if only imputed.

This is an eyewitness account of the execution of Pietro Pagolo Boscoli, who was condemned to death on 22 February 1512 for his participation in an anti-Medicean plot:

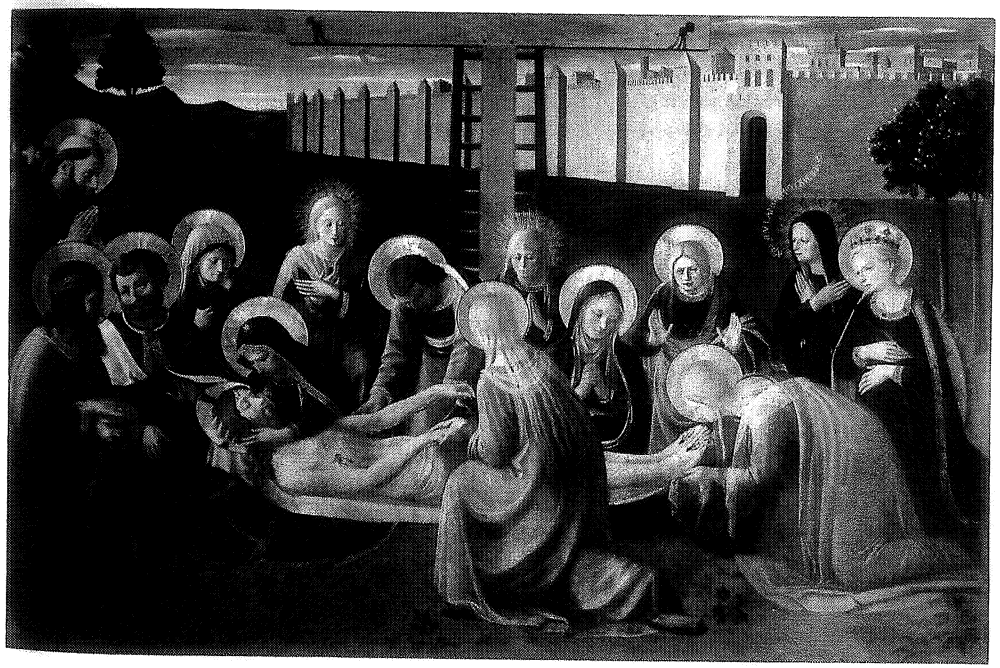
> And as he ascended the stair he kept his eyes on the *tavoletta,* and with most loving accent said: Lord thou art my love; I give thee my heart . . . here I am, Lord; I come willingly. . . . And this he said with such tenderness that all who heard him were in tears. . . . And halfway down the stairs he met the Crucifix, and said: What ought I to do? And the friar replied: This is your captain who comes to arm you. Salute Him, honour Him and pray that He gives you strength. . . . And while descending the second flight of stairs, he continued praying, saying: *In manus tua, Domine.*[13]

Could an image really do all this, could it be that affecting and so consoling? Perhaps it is all in the report. One might feel, reading this, that Pago was unusually courageous and stoical in the face of death; that he was clearly an educated and quite learned man; and that the eyewitness may somehow have wished to glamorize his end. But this is not the point. The question is this: Why was it felt that images rather than just words could serve such a function, that they could in any way be effective under such conditions? For the condemned man they may or may not have achieved their supposed purpose, but the institution as a whole was based on a judgment about the efficacy of images that was predicated upon a belief in their inevitable power. And that social belief cannot merely be regarded as ostensible; it appears to reflect a cognitive reality.

Say we recall the fact that one could receive a papal indulgence for kissing the *tavoletta* (a *Kusstafel* in German); but still we would not have resolved the question: why kiss an image at all? Even if it is a matter of relevant decorum, of a ritualized act, we would persist in wondering about the historical and the nonhistorical origins of such a practice. We still need to know about the fundamental impulses that are institutionalized in these ways. That is the issue at stake—the analysis of the deep end of such practices, not the superficial, ostensible level.

It is worth remembering that a variety of other images may be associated with the kind of function served by the *tavolette,* from Fra Angelico's *Lamentation* (fig. 5), which hung in the little chapel of Santa Maria della Croce al Tempio in Florence (where the condemned man heard his last mass), to the paintings by Benozzo Gozzoli—a *Deposition*—and by several sixteenth-century artists at his last stops before his execution.[14] From the condemned cell, all along the route, and then finally on the scaffold itself, images were provided in the hope that the *afflitto* would—at the very least—be provided with lessons and with solace and comfort. Of course later the provision of such images became habitual; but we cannot simply allow the problem—just as with pictures in bedrooms—to rest there.

5. Fra Angelico, *Lamentation* (ca. 1440). Florence, Museo San Marco. Photo Alinari.



IV

It is obvious that paintings and sculptures do not and cannot do as much for us now. Or can they? Perhaps we repress such things. But did they ever? Perhaps the cases I have cited are no more than some rather conventional ideas dressed up as empirical reports. If the first answer is correct, then we must examine the matter of repression more closely. If the second answer is correct, then we should consider the relations between convention and belief with greater precision (since most reporters presumably believed what they were reporting).

There is abundant historical and ethnographic evidence for the efficacy of images. But how are we to evaluate the material? What status are we to attach to the reports? Let us say that the evidence for efficacy can only be articulated in terms of cliché and convention, and that we are increasingly ignorant of those clichés and conventions. Some we retain, like the belief that the eyes of a good portrait follow one round the room; others we lose, like the belief that a picture of a fair and naked person in the bedroom will somehow improve the offspring we conceive. This raises another issue: that of the relation between convention and belief, and then behavior. Does a convention become naturalized in a culture, so that clichés about images may actually provoke behavior that meets the terms of the cliché? Repeat an idea often enough, and it can (but need not) form the basis for an action. But how do conventions become naturalized? And what do we mean when we say that they do?

Perhaps images no longer work in the ways I have begun by reporting precisely because contexts are so different. How, then, is one to describe the extent to which context conditions response? If it does, always and wholly, then we must leave behavior and emotion outside the realm of cognition; but before we do so, consider the other side of the coin.

The great iconoclastic movements of the eighth and ninth century in Byzantium, of Reformation Europe, of the French Revolution and of the Russian Revolution have been much studied. From the time of the Old Testament, rulers and public have attempted to do away with images and have assaulted specific paintings and sculptures. Everyone can produce an example of an attacked image; everyone knows of at least one historical period in which iconoclasm was either spontaneous or legitimized. People have smashed images for political reasons and for theological ones; they have destroyed works which have roused their ire or their shame; they have done so spontaneously or because they have been directed to do so. The motives for such acts have been and continue to be endlessly discussed, naturally enough; but in every case we must assume that it is the image—

whether to a greater or lesser degree—that arouses the iconoclast to such ire. This much we can claim, even if we argue that it is because the image is a symbol of something else that it is assailed, smashed, pulled down, destroyed.

Historians of art and of images have been strikingly apprehensive and diffident about assessing the implications for their study of the great iconoclastic movements; and they have been even more reluctant to acknowledge the strain of antagonism that manifests itself on more apparently neurotic levels, as in the increasingly abundant assaults on pictures and statues in museums and public places—to say nothing of the private, unknown act. The response to any inquiry about motive is likely to be one of great caution, even fear, and then to categorize out the motive of the assailant: "The assailant and his motives are wholly uninteresting to us; for one cannot apply normal criteria to the motivations of someone who is mentally disturbed." This is what the director of public relations claims when an object, major or minor, is attacked in his museum.[15]

We easily concur; we do not vent our anger in this way on images in public places. The image—or what is represented on it—may rouse our shame, hostility, or fury; but it would certainly not cause us to wreak violence upon it; and we certainly would not break it. Or would we? No one can answer the question with complete confidence. For whatever reasons—whether directly related to the image or not, to the way it looks, to what it represents, or to the general emotional state in which we may or may not be—we recognize the potential for such a lapse in ourselves. We can all acknowledge the narrowness of the border between the kinds of behavior manifested by the iconoclast and "normal," more restrained, behavior. And although for the most part we absolutely prefer to isolate such deeds, to put them well beyond the psychological pale, still we recognize the dim stirrings of antipathy and involvement that outleaps control in the iconoclast. The issue that presents itself to us is one of repression.

V

Let us briefly return to Giovanni Dominici. The passage in which he insists on the beneficial inculcatory effects of pictures and sculptures concludes—to us a little surprisingly—in a way that speaks to one of the fundamental fears of all art and, indeed, of imagemaking. This takes us one step further, from belief in the power of images to actual response:

> I warn you, if you have paintings in your house for this purpose, beware of frames of gold and silver, lest they [your children] become more idolatrous than faithful, since, if they see more candles lit and more

hats removed and more kneeling to figures that are gilded and adorned with precious stones than to the old smoky ones, they will only learn to revere gold and jewels, and not the figures, or rather the truths represented by those figures.[16]

Here is the old fear of idolatry, but here too is the neat sociological evidence of history. The fear of idolatry (theoretically outlined over endless centuries) may well not have persisted as acutely as it did if Dominici, like so many others, had not observed the lit candles, the hats removed, the kneeling to figures. To what an endless variety of behavior do images arouse and provoke one! But in Dominici's passage, too, are the rudiments—as elsewhere in the Middle Ages and after—of a strict semiotics of visual signs. Here is the most explicit insistence that one should not focus on the materiality of the sign—the gold and jewels—but on the "figures," or (better still) on "the truths represented by those figures": *alle figure ovvero verità per quelle figure rappresentate.*[17] There could be no clearer way, then as today, of talking about the power of images than by making those necessary distinctions, now codified in the simple Saussurean terms of sign, signifier, and signified. In his avowal of the possibility of the allegorical, Dominici has a clear sense of something that is still beyond (or behind) the signified, and distinguished from it.

For Cardinal Dominici the beneficence of images accrued from the belief that the exemplary beauty and actions of what was represented on them would somehow help assure like qualities in the living young beholder: "If you do not wish to or cannot make your house into a sort of temple, if you have a nurse, have them taken often to church, at a time when there is no crowd, nor any services being said."[18] For writers like Molanus and Cardinal Paleotti, the potential danger of images arose from a similar belief. Have a picture of someone in the bedroom, and you might want to possess that person (adults presumably being more capable of moving from the desire to imitate the admirable to the desire to possess the admirable): that is why it was recommended not to have pictures in one's bedroom of those of whom one could not possess the original. What joins all such writers in their views of the effectiveness (good and bad) of images is the tacit belief that the bodies represented on or in them somehow have the status of living bodies. The issue is absolutely not one of mere reminding (the images do not just remind one—in exemplary or dangerous fashion—of loved or admired figures), for if it were, the paintings or sculptures would not have the effectiveness they do.

It is perhaps in this area more than any other that we may examine the issue of repression most clearly. We fear the body in the image, we refuse to acknowledge our engagement with it, and we deny recognition of those aspects of our own sexuality that it may seem to threaten or reveal. For

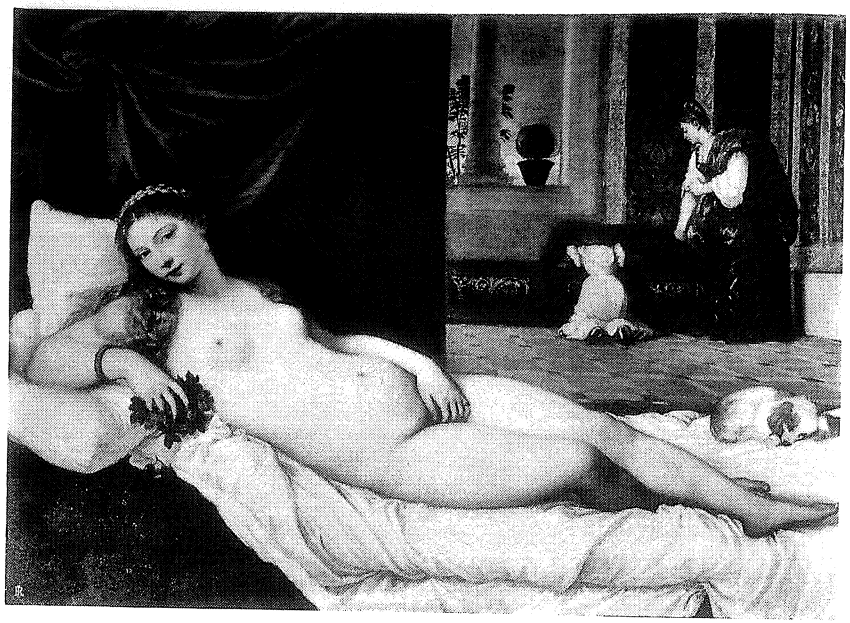
example: in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, both in Italy and Northern Europe, hundreds of images were produced which showed the infant Christ's genitalia at the center of the composition, or with significant attention focused on them. There are paintings where Christ's legs seem deliberately splayed to reveal his pudenda, where his Mother (or in a few cases Saint Anne) touches them, and where the adoring Magi focus their gaze on his groin (cf. figs. 6 and 7). But as Leo Steinberg has recently and compellingly pointed out (in a discussion of the theological underpinnings of such pictorial emphases), historians have resolutely failed to notice just this aspect of what such pictures show. When he did point out what now seems obvious, the noise of disapproval was very loud, and accusations of frivolity were widely leveled. Either the pictorial facts were blatantly denied, or they were explained away in such contorted and embarrassed ways that the more or less impartial observer could be left in doubt of the extent of the repression.[19]

But this moves some distance from questions of effect and efficacy. It also may seem to demonstrate little more than straight prudishness. With the paintings adduced by Steinberg, it might be claimed, we deal with pictures whose substance touches on too intimate a part of ourselves ever to be dealt with without embarrassment; and so the repression is not so complicated. But the lessons of such pictures (and Steinberg's analysis) go far beyond the simple demonstration of the response that is prudish. It is not only the generations who have failed to notice; it is the attitude of the reviewers who reveal the extent of what they cannot bring themselves to acknowledge.

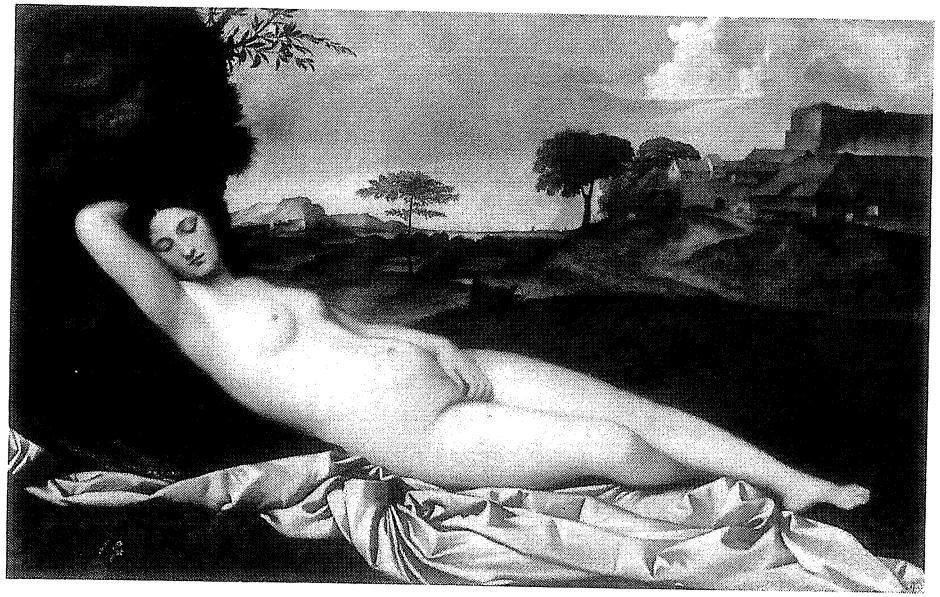
The same might be said—to take only one further example—of any number of discussions of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (fig. 8). Either they dwell on the classical beauty of the nude (or some other such ideal standard) or they overextend themselves in complex iconographic interpretations.[20] Twenty-five years ago, it was argued that despite her clearly individualized features this was no particular woman; she was Venus herself. Nor was she the common sensual Venus of classical mythology; she was the celestial—the cosmic—Venus, typifying and celebrating the joys of marital fidelity and domesticity.[21] Some of these interpretations may even have some truth in them, but it is only in recent years that scholars have begun to suggest—or to revive a much older idea—that at least one kind of response (and possibly even the raison d'être of the picture) had to do with male sexual interest in the beautiful female nude that is Titian's Venus, or say, Giorgione's Dresden Venus (fig. 9).[22] It is true that there are sumptuous colors and ravishing paintwork in Titian's picture; there are charming elements like the richly attired lady in the corner and the girl crouching over the chest, the urn, the landscape, and the little dog delightfully curled up at the foot of the bed. We may indeed be charmed by these things, as we may assume many people once were too. But it would be wrong not to admit to

6. Hans Baldung Grien, *Holy Family with Saint Anne* (1511; Geisberg, 59).

7. Paolo Veronese, *Holy Family with Saint Barbara and the Infant Saint John* (ca. 1562–65). Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi. Photo Alinari.



8. Titian, *Venus of Urbino* (1538). Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi. Photo Alinari.



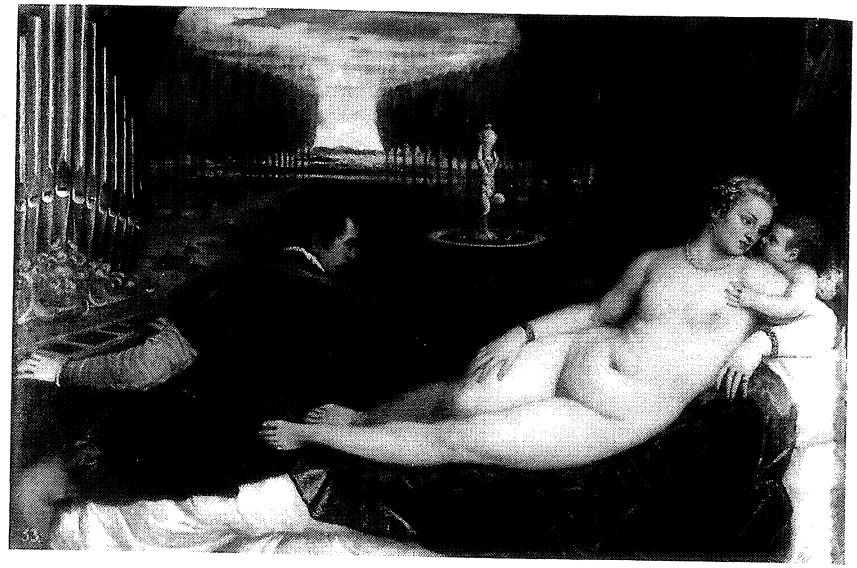
9. Giorgione, *Venus* (ca. 1510). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie. Photo Alinari.

the possibility of the response that has to do with sexuality, with the love of looking, and with the projection of desire.

A male description of what appears to be the main object of the picture, of what by any reckoning any describer would count as the main focus of attention and (one might suppose) the main focus intended by the painter, could run as follows: a naked young woman looks frankly at the beholder; her chestnut tresses fall over her naked shoulders; her nipples are erect; with her left hand she only half covers her pudenda—she almost toys with them—while the shadow around them suggests (if it does not actually indicate) her pubic hair. She is completely naked except for the ring on her little finger and the bracelet around her wrist. The sensuality of the representation would have been plain to many and may well continue to be so. But not many will admit to this—at least not if they are well schooled. The texts and monographs mostly avoid acknowledging the overt sexuality of such paintings; the obfuscations are extraordinary. Dense iconographic readings and sensitively aesthetic evaluation of form, colors, handling, and composition are the convenient categories of description for pictures like these; but they obscure the analysis of response. They also enable the repression of feelings that pictures such as these may still evoke.

Of course the matter is more complicated than simply evading what some people might conclude to be the "sexual invitation" of pictures like the *Venus of Urbino* or the many versions (e.g., fig. 10) of Venus with a lutenist or organist (usually taken to be Neo-Platonic allegories).[23] It is hard to be sure, in the first place, of the precise nature of the painter's intention—it may, after all, have been mixed. Perhaps he wanted to paint an erotic picture, but he may also have wanted to do the colors well and lusciously. Second, while the sexual element in these pictures can hardly be denied, there may well have been other factors that determined their purchase and that still arouse our appreciative or negative response—such as the artist's skills in making a good painting. But there is a great deal more that we tend to forget, evade, deny, or repress. These are relations that will be hard to define.

All this may be laboring the obvious. It will be held that we have, after all, become increasingly candid about sexual representation and its production and consumption. Perhaps there are very few left who care about or are taken in by the plodding and bookish evasion of meanings and import. But a sufficiently significant number remain, and the cases cited here are extreme examples of a general tendency. We go into a picture gallery, and we have been so schooled in a particular form of aesthetic criticism that we suppress acknowledgment of the basic elements of cognition and appetite, or admit them only with difficulty. Sometimes, it is true, we are so moved that we may be on the verge of tears; but for the rest, when we see a painting we speak of it in terms of color, composition, expression, and the



10. Titian, *Venus with an Organist* (ca. 1545–48). Madrid, Museo del Prado. Photo Mas.

means of conveying things like space and movement. It is the cultured layman or intellectual who most readily articulates this kind of response even though occasionally there may be a sneaking feeling that it has deeper psychological roots, which we prefer to keep buried or simply cannot exhume. We refuse, or refuse to admit, those elements of response that are more openly evinced by people who are less schooled. In such cases we are either being psychologically unanalytic, or discomfort with ruder feelings prevents their articulation.

VI

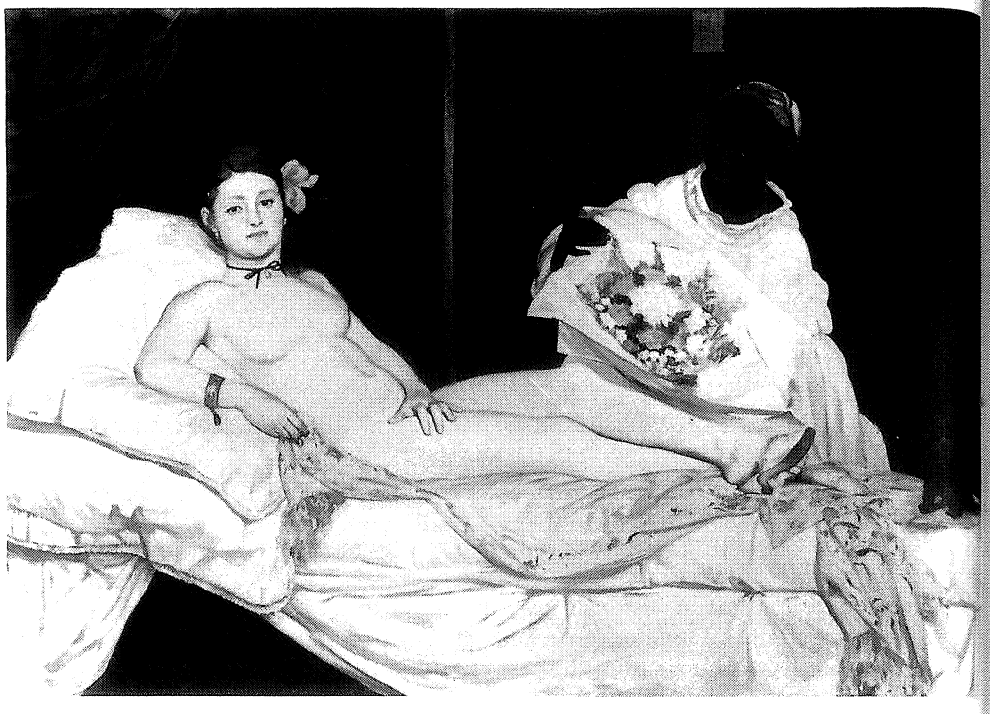
But how do we test these claims—however obvious—about responses to pictures such as the Venuses of Giorgione and Titian, and how do we refine our conclusions? For whatever the seductive pleasures of these images, no one would claim that the modern beholder's response is likely to be the same—or as strong—as that of the sixteenth-century viewer. Let us deal with immediate possibilities first, and then explore others.

We can claim that the very obviousness of the matter provides sufficient evidence—it is a picture of a naked woman and so the male sexual response comes to the fore; it is a beautiful picture of a beautiful naked woman, and so the male sexual response, given male conditioning, is primary. This is to elevate assumptions we automatically make (once freed of repression) to the

status of the evidential; and in some courts that would not be misleading—especially in those courts that must decide on the possibilities of retrieving what is fundamental in the matter of response. Second, we grant a similar status to intuition. We intuit the plausibility of the sexual reading, so do others whom we know, and we accord the judgment intersubjective validity. Third, we collect data from actual beholders and conduct a sociological survey. This is just the course that those skeptical of my claims so far are likely to advocate (the claims are too apodictic; they have a certain air of plausibility; but they are unproven). But for such evidence to be used, one would still need models of psychological and cultural conditioning, of how to take account of varieties of schooling, of differences in the far and obscure corners of one culture, and of the awe that one feels when one enters a museum and sees a picture in an elaborate gilt frame behind the neatly draped scarlet rope (to say nothing of bulletproof glass).

The fourth possibility for testing is continuous with the methodological and ideological predicates of this book. We consider powerful responses and discernable patterns of behavior that we know from people around us or within ourselves. That may mean looking at more everyday forms of imagery or clear forms of historical use (of a kind that sometimes, but not generally, pertains to high or canonical art). Then we seek equivalent models or equivalent contexts from the past or within the realms of art, and we strive to avoid circularity.

Let us return to the case of the *Venus of Urbino*. The picture is plainly erotic, even though *our* perception of its sensuality may be comparatively muted. It is both a truism and a commonplace that the expansion of methods of reproduction—above all of photography—has frequently had the result of turning the shock of first sight into the near-indifference of familiarity. In any case, since 1538 people have become used to still more candid pictures, like Manet's *Olympia*, or the centerfolds of a wide range of magazines (cf. figs. 11 and 163). It is precisely responses to these that one should not neglect in considering images like Titian's Venus. Even now, with a picture like this, we must repress a great deal to avoid admitting to the consequences of scopophilia and the desirous act of looking. It is not extravagantly hypothetical to imagine how much more direct an appeal such a picture must have made to the sexual responses of some sixteenth-century beholders, before Manet, before *Playboy*, before the plenitude of reproductive processes from printmaking to photography. The reason that it is not extravagantly hypothetical will emerge from the abundance of historical evidence I will bring forward. None of this, however, is to claim that modern beholders respond in the same way to sixteenth-century pictures as sixteenth-century beholders did, or that Indian erotic sculptures arouse the same responses in Westerners as in Indians. The aim is to plot responses, and then to consider why images elicit, provoke, or arouse the



11. Édouard Manet, *Olympia* (1863). Paris, Musée du Louvre.

responses they do; the issue is why behavior that reveals itself in such apparently similar and recurrent ways is awakened by dead form.

But let us not be too guarded in our awareness of the changes of context, both visual and historical. Of course it is possible for a male to gaze upon the revelation of naked female form without being sexually aroused, but even with a picture as ancient as Titian's we count the fact that this is no casual unveiling. Once such forms are presented as paintings, the spectator is invited to dote on the body in the picture and to engage those feelings of possession and fetishism from which, as long as he looks at the picture, he chooses not to escape.

But analysis is complex and difficult. If we are to understand the relations between sixteenth-century paintings such as the *Venus of Urbino* and the sexual feelings of men and women, we have to begin by setting them in the context of a wide variety of related material. Apart from, or in the absence of, written documents, the phenomenological evidence is primary; but a necessary refinement must ensue, and that pertains to the selection of images. We may take the image in the centerfold (the closer in composition and color to the problematic case the better) and consider the phenomenology of scopophilia and arousal; but to this procedure we must join the

historical and contextual one, as we ponder the kinds of response that other forms of apparently erotic imagery may have been capable of arousing. For the sixteenth century, for example, we might take prints such as the *Modi* after Giulio Romano and the *Lascivie* of Agostino Carracci (see figs. 168 and 164 below); but then we are presented with a combination of erotic naked form and strong sexual suggestiveness (or even the sexual act itself). With German nudes of the first part of the sixteenth century the problem is similar. In considering paintings such as those of the Cranachs, we should also turn to the extraordinary erotic prints of Sebald Beham and his circle, where the genital orientation is possibly even more blatant than in the Italian prints, and where the male gaze is even more directly implicated.

Thus we confront the initial complexities of analysis. There are more. Some problems disappear; others persist. Perhaps it might be argued that these prints are not art, but that is hardly the issue: whether or not they are art, they evoke responses that we must take into account when we consider works that *are* regarded as art. Perhaps it will be objected that the prints are reproductive images, on paper, in black and white, lacking the delicious modulations of color of Giorgione and Titian; but then we must ask these questions: What are the consequences of reproduction for the aura of the image? Do we respond more strongly—violently, demonstrably—to the painted picture hung in a public place or to a small print such as one by Sebald Beham, which we can keep with us and produce when we like, doting on it privately? Which gives the greater frisson? It might also be desirable to establish a distinction between the erotic and the pornographic, or at least to devise a sliding scale, beginning with a work that presents the nude cold, as it were, then passing to something that more blatantly suggests sexuality, and terminating with the representation of the sexual act itself. But here we stop ourselves and pause as we recognize the further difficulties that arise from analytic refinement.

For example: The erotic-pornographic distinction may only be semantically real (and intersubjectively variable); we may not need the distinction at all in our analysis of response. After all, it is not uncommon to find that the suggestive turns out to be more provocative than the blatantly descriptive. But with images from the distant past, it may well help to establish the limits of the publicly acceptable and the borderline between that which rouses shame and that which does not.[24] Modern beholders may no longer find the *Venus of Urbino* especially arousing, not only because they have seen so many reproductions of it and many others like it, but because sexual imagery can now go so much further. One has only to consider the vastly greater sexual expressiveness and exposure in popular imagery—from billboards to pornographic magazines—over the past few decades. But even with regard to the sixteenth century, one will still need to know how far Giorgione and Titian pushed beyond the normal conventions of represent-

ing the nude figure. Did they transgress the conventions just sufficiently to arouse the prurient, or much more, or not at all?

VII

Such are the multiplicity of models and controls that inevitably present themselves to the analyst of the history and theory of response. Some questions can only be answered by more historical research, others by more sophisticated phenomenological and psychological techniques. But all are predicated on the examination of as wide a range of imagery as possible, both high and low, both canonical and everyday. Without popular imagery, we can say little about the likely effects of the possible response to other forms of imagery. Here, if anywhere, historians of art acting as historians of images can come into their own, for here they utilize their old skills in assessing the comparative styles of different forms of art and imagery. They see differences and distinction where others may not, and then they may proceed to judge the role of style in engendering particular responses and particular behavior. In doing so they renounce the primacy of the traditional concerns of the history of art: speculation about the genesis of individual works of art, the attempted retrieval of historical-aesthetic categories, the assessment of the status of both creator and object (particularly when it is conceived of as high art), and in general the privileging of the upper end of the scale at the expense of the lower. The ethnography and everyday history that form the subject of this book have, it is true, been raided for the provision of illustrative and comparative material for many of these traditional concerns; but on the whole this kind of material has seemed too complex, too diffuse, and, at the same time, too embarrassingly trenchant to merit any kind of comprehensive analysis or overview.

The obstacles in the way of assessing past responses, indeed of reclaiming them from history, are clear, and I have already alluded to many of them. It will be held that response is dulled as a result of familiarity or reproduction; that the schemata and limits of representation vary and were not the same in the past as they are now; and that the very fact that a work is displayed in a museum, that it is acknowledged and recognized as canonical or as a masterpiece, powerfully conditions response. All this is true, and it may well be the case that in the domain of high art the spontaneous response is indeed the intellectualizing one. Nevertheless, I proceed in the belief that however much we intellectualize, even if that motion is spontaneous, there still remains a basic level of reaction that cuts across historical, social, and other contextual boundaries. It is at precisely this level—which pertains to our psychological, biological, and neurological status as members of the same species—that our cognition of images is allied with that

of all men and women, and it is this still point which we seek. No claim is to be made here that twentieth-century beholders respond to sixteenth-century images in the way sixteenth-century beholders might have (although we well may). But if we attend to our own responses to, say, the centerfold, we may be in a better position to understand contemporary responses to the nudes of Giorgione and Titian (or for that matter of Giulio Romano); and we cannot begin to understand either the motivations for or the effectiveness of, say, the images of traitors painted by Andrea del Sarto on the walls of the Palazzo Vecchio or the fourteenth-century frescoes of the banishment of the duke of Athens before we recall the posters produced by the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the spring and summer of 1968.

How, then, should we proceed? The first task must be to proceed as ethnographers and record as much as possible of all sections of society; we must then act as cultural anthropologists, attending to as wide a range of societies as practical. This is not to deny that different classes respond differently and that social and cultural contexts condition response; nor is it to deny that images are encoded in such a way as to communicate specific things to specific cultures or groups (the cultures or groups from which they emerge). But our concern is not primarily with interaction at this level. It is to mine what lies below the overlays of schooling, of class consciousness and conditioning, right down to the reflections and symptoms of cognition.

The scope of this investigation—as I have already insisted—covers all visual imagery, not just art. In order to understand our responses to "high" art we need the general and specific evidence supplied by responses to "low" images.[25] The history of art is thus subsumed by the history of images. There is and always has been a place for the history of what is and has been regarded as art, but that is not the present domain. The history of images takes its own place as a central discipline in the study of men and women; the history of art stands, now a little forlornly, as a subdivision of the history of cultures.

VIII

In the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" to his youthful *The Origins of German Tragic Drama,* Walter Benjamin recommended an ascetic apprenticeship, whereby the philosophical explorer eschews both the inductive and the deductive approach and immerses himself in the most minute details of subject matter: "The relationship between the minute precision of the work and the proportions of the sculptural or intellectual whole demonstrates that truth content is only to be grasped through immersion in the most minute details of subject matter." This was the only way to save the phe-

nomena, Benjamin platonically insisted. Thus he directed himself to a vigorous attack on induction: "The attempt to define ideas inductively—according to their range—on the basis of popular linguistic usage, in order then to proceed to the investigation of essence can lead nowhere." The attack on induction led him to single out R. M. Meyer for criticism:

> Thus the inductive method of aesthetic investigation reveals its customary murky colouring here too, for the view in question is not the view of the object resolved in the idea, but that of the subjective states of the recipient projected into the work; that is what the empathy which R. M. Meyer regards as the keystone of his method amounts to. This method, which is the opposite of the one to be used in the course of the current investigation, "sees the art-form of the drama, the forms of tragedy or comedy or character of situation, as given facts with which it has to reckon. And its aim is to abstract by means of a comparison of the outstanding representatives of each genre, rules and laws with which to judge the individual product. And by means of a comparison of the genres it seeks to discover general principles which apply to every work of art."[26]

Now this is very astringent, and much of it may seem to apply to the present endeavour. But let it not be thought that this is an "aesthetic investigation." Let no one think that I will seek general principles to apply to every work of art (nor even to "art" in general). I will certainly not seek to abstract genres, however pressing the issue of genre and conventional form may or may not turn out to be. Nevertheless, the process of investigation will indeed be inductive. While I am concerned with fragments and proceed by minutely examining them, as Benjamin recommended, I view the whole of human relations with figured imagery in order to lay out certain aspects of behavior and response that may usefully be seen to be universally and transculturally markable.

There are, of course, plenty of other places where the inductive method is laid to waste. But Benjamin's argument is especially interesting because it is avowedly concerned with the relations between science and art in the analysis of art. This book, it will be seen, is not to be concerned with art above all. It will, however, be concerned with aesthetic issues (but not with issues in the realm of philosophical aesthetics). The enterprise is wholly different from that of Meyer assailed by Benjamin. It is not, to begin with, predicated on the hypostasis of any aesthetic category; indeed it is vigorously opposed to that. A naive assumption may be that it hypostasizes response or particular kinds of responses, but nothing could be farther from the case. It does not set out to determine what responses are or are not, nor, indeed, what response is or is not. It is concerned with the modes of talking about behavior that beholders themselves can recognize, and about behavior

and interaction that cannot take place without the presence of the figured object. It will, of course, also have to concern itself with the "subjective states of the recipient projected onto [if not into] the work." And empathy, as in Meyer, is also at work; but it is a rigorously phenomenological empathy, which may or may not repeat the examples of historical and ethnographic empathy recorded in these pages, and which we will explore philosophically and historically in a number of later chapters.

But have I not, in the outline of examples of efficacy and potential efficacy, and of possible arousal, mixed issues of emotion and cognition? I may seem to have allowed one explicit and one implicit category to overlap too easily (since there has been no claim that this book will deal with the vagaries of emotion.) Athough much in these pages will rouse the disagreement of the author of *Languages of Art,* and although the task is wholly different from his, Nelson Goodman's statements, as he nears the end of that book, may stand for one of the mottoes of this one:

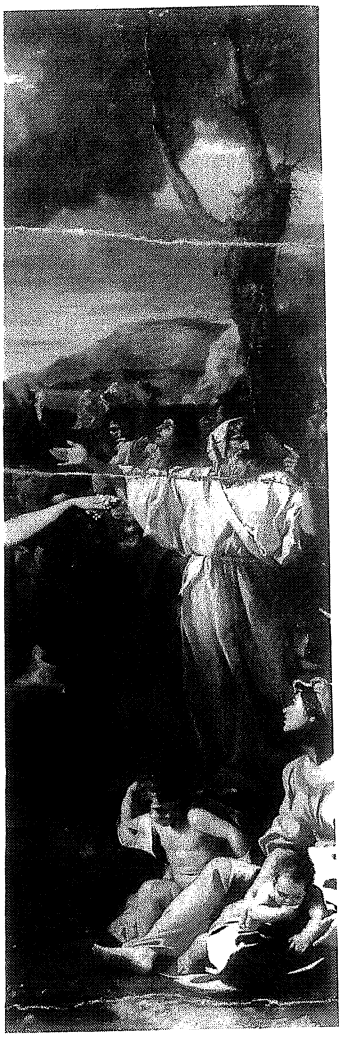
> Most of the troubles that have been plaguing us can, I have suggested, be blamed on the domineering dichotomy between the cognitive and the emotive. On the one side we put sensation, perception, inference, conjecture, all nerveless inspection and investigation, fact and truth; on the other, pleasure, pain, interest, satisfaction, disappointment, all brainless response, liking and loathing. This pretty effectively keeps us from seeing that in aesthetic experience *the emotions function cognitively.* The work of art is apprehended through the feelings as well as through the senses. (Goodman's emphasis)[27]

The only differences are that we might replace the category of "aesthetic experience" with something much broader (say, the apprehension of real images), and that our scope extends beyond "the work of art" to all images. But in his final emphasis, Goodman makes at least one concession in this direction, and the general statement holds. It comes after the claim that "symbolization [i.e., in the broad Goodmanian sense of referring to all images] is to be judged fundamentally by how well it serves the cognitive purpose," and after some diversion down the byway of "aesthetic excellence"

> this subsumption of aesthetic under cognitive excellence calls for one more reminder that the cognitive, while contrasted with both the practical and the passive, does not exclude the sensory or the emotive, that what we know through art is felt in our bones and nerves and muscles as well as grasped by our minds, that all the sensitivity and responsiveness of the organism participates in the interpretation of symbols.[28]

I mean "the interpretation of symbols" in the broader sense; this will not be a book about hermeneutics.

When we think again of the initial examples, we are still left with these problems: What credibility can be attached to such apparently incredible tales? In what senses can images have the effectiveness attributed to them there, and in what ways can we talk about that effectiveness? What are the links between the bedroom tales and the case of responses to imagery seen as erotic; or between the powerfully consoling image and the refinement of emotional sensitivity through concentration? The links have to do with the possibility of arousal and ascent by picture (and by sculpture too, but that, as we shall see, is a slightly different case). Following arousal and ascent, a whole variety of peculiarly symptomatic effects ensue. Why? How? And in what sense that we can still understand? Of course it is not just a matter of sexual arousal or meditative ascent. In the following chapters, I will consider instances of arousal to tears, to militant action, to follow causes, to make long journeys, to make other images like the one that has deeply moved us, to destroy that which disturbs us, as if we acknowledge, in that very act, its power. Without embarking on theories of representation, we must also consider how images are made to work in these ways. But I have begun with specific examples because they pose the following questions most acutely of all: Why do we ignore the evidence for the effectiveness and provocativeness of images? How may we speak about such matters? Why are we aroused by the body in the lifeless image and what do we postulate in its absence? These are the questions to which we must now turn.



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David Freedberg

THE POWER OF IMAGES

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CHAPTER TWO

Apocalypse, Reform, and the Suffering Savior

Popule meus, quid feci tibi? aut in quo contristavi te? responde mihi.
Quia eduxi te de terra Ægypti: parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.
Quia eduxi per desertum quadraginta annis, et manna cibavi te, et introduxi in terram satis optimam: parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.
Quid ultra debui facere tibi, et non feci? Ego quidem plantavi te vineam meam speciosissimam: et tu facta es mihi nimis amara: aceto namque sitim meam potasti: et lancea perforasti latus Salvatori tuo.[1]

—"Improperia," Good Friday Liturgy (late ninth or tenth century)

Unlike the doctrine of the real presence of Christ's historical body in the Eucharist, which, in its origins, if not in its full development, has long been attributed to Paschasius and the work that he did for the novices at Corvey, the corollary devotion to Christ in his suffering, historical humanity and to his mother in her compassion has never been traced to a single point of origin, whether to an individual or to a community, or even to a generation, although it is generally agreed that it made its appearance sometime in the course of the eleventh century, more particularly in the Benedictine monasteries of northwestern Europe, and that it reached its first peak of expression toward the end of the century in the prayers and meditations of Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109).[2] Why it should have developed in just this context at just this time, however, scholars have generally been somewhat unwilling to speculate, preferring rather simply to emphasize its swift burgeoning and breadth and its dependence upon the techniques of contemplation and prayer as fostered in the monastic *lectio divina,* before moving on to its further articulation in the sermons and Song of Songs commentaries of the Cistercians and, from the thirteenth century, in the imitative mysticism and mendicant life of the friars, particularly that of the Franciscans.[3] To be sure, other formative elements, along with other figures than Anselm (typically, Peter Damian, Lanfranc of Bec, and John of Fécamp for the eleventh century, and Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx for the twelfth), are sometimes cited in addition to the specifically monastic focus on prayerful, meditative reading. New developments in the theology of the Incarnation (here again, Anselm is the principal figure of note); new emphases on the importance of the individual and his or her natural human emotions (especially love); new developments in the artistic representation of the crucified Christ (the most important monument in this context being the magnificent late-tenth-century "Gero Cross," in which Christ appears not only in his full humanity, but with eyes closed and,

therefore, dead [see plate 1]); new liturgical developments, including both the reassertion of the Paschasian emphasis on the presence of the *historical* body of Christ on the altar and the introduction of the "Improperia" and other penitential elements to the observances for Good Friday; the contemporary reforms of the Church instituted from such monastic centers as Cluny and, later in the century, from Rome itself; the Crusades; the new social and religious significance of women; the growth of towns and, therefore, of a laity interested in participating more actively than hitherto in the life of Christian devotion—all have been invoked at one time or another as contributing to the emergence of what R. W. Southern famously described as "this surge of pious devotion" for the "sufferings and helplessness of the Saviour . . . which had a new birth in the monasteries of the eleventh century" and to which "every century since then has paid tribute . . . by some new development of the theme."[4]

And yet (and this is the real problem, as I see it), at no point in the current scholarly discussion is it, in fact, made clear what the historical *catalysts* may have been for this "surge of pious devotion," only the prevailing conditions for that change (monastic tradition, growth of towns, reform of the Church, the status of the laity or of women), some of which themselves were contingent upon that change (new liturgical practices, new artistic representations of Christ and his mother, new theological arguments, the Crusades). But why, after all, did the image of Christ change *at just this time* in the history of Christian devotion, and why did it change *in the way that it did?* Moreover, when, exactly, did that change take place? The usual timing given by the current scholarship is frustratingly vague—"the eleventh and twelfth centuries"—as are the mechanisms of the change: "The initial point of departure for the history of late medieval devotion to Christ's humanity and passion in the West is the change of tone, or sensibility, that is discernable in the spirituality of the late tenth and eleventh centuries."[5] "The movement towards a more inward and compassionate devotion, in which the individual strove imaginatively to share in the pain of his Lord, became really strong in the eleventh century, and in the twelfth it governed much of the thought about the passion."[6] "The ideal of imitating Christ in all respects deepened in the eleventh century into a passionate devotion to His humanity, which increasingly excluded other models and established Christ as the supreme exemplar for devout Christians."[7] "The ultimate causes of these changes [in feeling about the Savior] are complex and mysterious; at present one can only sketch the major phases."[8] "These changes are hard to define and their connexions can more readily be felt than explained. Indeed, in a strict sense, these changes defy definition, and the connexion between them cannot be explained—it can only be exemplified in the lives of individuals."[9] "But let us not claim to set forth a definitive solution to such a delicate subject and leave it to others to search out the causes. Let us be content to study the moral climate in which our works of art came into being."[10] And so forth.

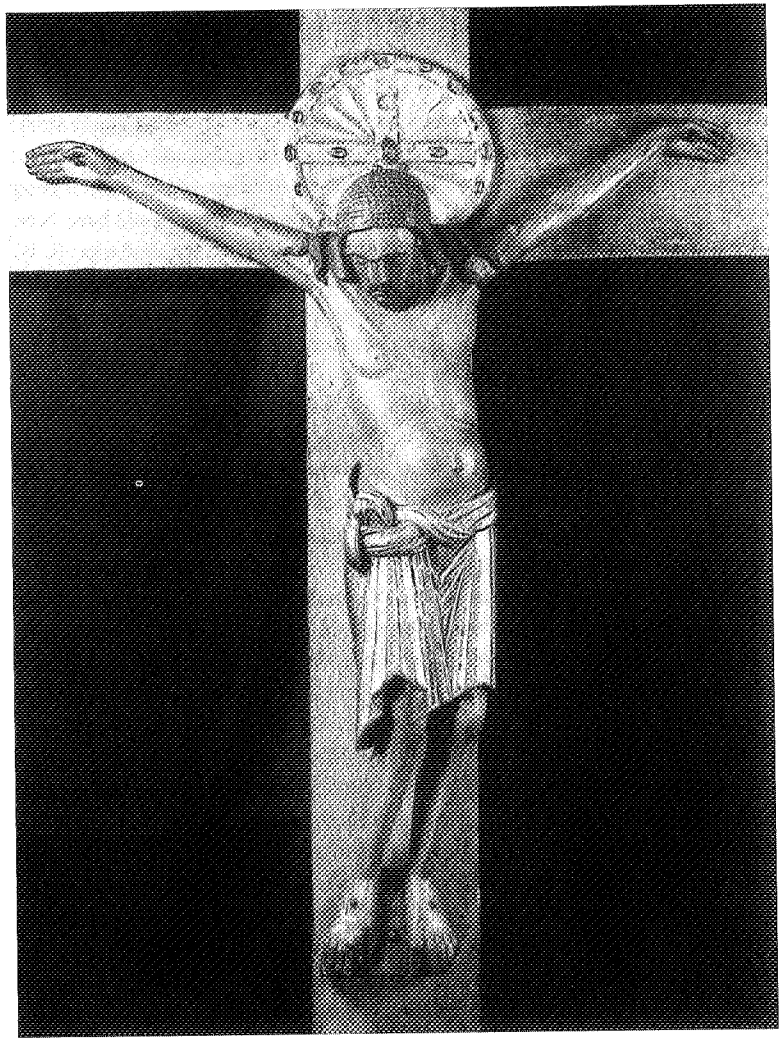

PLATE 1
The Gero Crucifix (circa 975–999), Cologne Cathedral.
Courtesy of Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln

It will be objected that sentimental or devotional changes such as those with which we are concerned here *cannot* be localized temporally, for they occur at different times in different places at different rates for many complex reasons, but this is simply to say that it is difficult to determine the chronology and the progression of such changes, likewise the possible interconnections and coincidences of change (who may have spoken to whom and when, who may have visited what places and in whose company, when may certain liturgies have reached certain communities and from where, and so forth). It is not, however, an argument for dismissing the utility of tracing this chronology and progression as carefully as possible within the limitations of the available evidence. Nor is it an argument for dismissing the necessity of a catalyst (or catalysts): changes, even in something apparently so mercurial as states of mind or cultural forms, do not occur without causes, nor do they (and here I must be momentarily polemical) simply "emerge," "appear," or "evolve" from the fertile ground, as it were, of historical potential.[11] Rather, such changes, at least insofar as they are changes that occurred within the interior of human beings (that is, in their thoughts, and thus in the artifactual forms that they gave to those thoughts in works of literature, liturgy, and art), must be located within human beings, not in "climates," "atmospheres," or "environments" (thus my emphasis throughout this book on individuals, rather than cultures or "mentalities"), and these human beings, in their turn, must be imagined as *agents* as well as *patients* of change, not simply as channels or conduits for surging ideas or feelings.[12]

The first chapter of this book raised the question "What happens when a person changes his or her mind?" The question at the core of this chapter is "Why do people change their minds in the first place, particularly when there is no apparent external, coercive force (such as, for example, other human beings—missionaries, teachers, parents, or warriors) attempting to compel them to?" In the case of widespread change (such as, for example, the change in the image of Christ that occurred in the early centuries of the last Christocentric millennium), either, I am convinced, something in the natural environment must change (as, for example, a geological disaster, a plague, or the appearance of a new star in the night sky) or something in the shared conceptual environment must be available to trigger that change (if it is not, in fact, triggered by an individual, or a small group of individuals, as, for example, the spread of Christianity itself). My argument in this chapter is that, in the particular case of the great eleventh- and twelfth-century change in the devotional attitude toward Christ and Mary, which scholars have typically ascribed to a "change in sensibility," the "strengthening of a movement," or the "deepening of an ideal," that catalytic "something" was in fact the calendar—more precisely, the calendar according to which the year in which Charlemagne had been crowned emperor "governing the Romans" was reckoned as *annus Domini DCCC*, and the year in which Anselm of Canterbury was born to Gundulf and

Ermenberga was reckoned as *annus Domini MXXXIII,* the latter exactly (or so it was then calculated) one thousand years after the death of Christ on the Cross in Jerusalem at "thirty-two years and three months" of age.[13]

The first task of this chapter is to demonstrate why—despite a venerable historiographic tradition to the contrary—it is plausible to believe that that date, *as a date* (A.D. 1033, with its corollary A.D. 1000), would have been especially significant to contemporaries in the early decades of the eleventh century, particularly in respect to the devotion to Christ as the crucified Savior who (as we have just seen in our reading of Paschasius) had been long expected to come in his glory at the End of time to judge both the living and the dead.[14] The task of the remainder of this chapter and of the whole of the following will be to explore that date's effects on the life and thought of some of the most prominent (and influential) reformers and intellectuals of the century: Peter Damian (circa 1007–1072), Berengar of Tours (circa 1000–1088), Lanfranc of Bec (circa 1005–1089), John of Fécamp (abbot, 1028–1078), and Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109). As we shall see, the emphasis they placed on, for example, the celibacy of the clergy or the action effected in the sacrament, was itself intricately bound up with their expectations of judgment. To understand the development of the devotion to Christ in his suffering humanity of which these reforms were a part, we must first understand what was at stake in that devotion: the placation—and repayment—of the all-powerful, all-seeing crucified Judge.

Waiting for the Apocalypse

The early decades of the eleventh century were, by the frustratingly few accounts we have, eventful ones, some years rather more so than others.

One night in that *annus terribilis* A.D. 1010, a young monk staying with his uncle, "the famous Roger," at the Aquitanian monastery of Saint-Martial of Limoges was rapt by an awesome and stupefying vision:

> The monk . . . awakened in the dead of night and looked outside at the stars. High against the southern sky he saw a great crucifix, as if planted in the heavens, and the figure of the Lord, hanging on the cross, weeping forth a great river of tears. He who saw this, struck with terror, could do nothing but pour forth tears from his eyes. He saw this cross and the image of the Crucified One, the color of fire and deep blood for half a full night hour, until the sky closed itself. And what he saw he sealed in his heart until he wrote this [in 1028]; and the Lord is his witness that he saw these things.[15]

The vision, according to its author Ademar of Chabannes (989–1034), came to him in a year beleaguered with apocalyptic prodigies: droughts, floods, plagues,

famines, eclipses of the sun and moon, the desiccation of the river Vienne "for two miles around Limoges for three nights." The vision itself was followed soon thereafter in Limoges by a month-long learned debate between the bishop, his clerics, and the Jews of the city; all those who refused to convert to Christianity were expelled. The culmination of these signs in Ademar's reckoning was even more terrible: the same year (actually 1009) "the sepulcher of the Lord at Jerusalem was destroyed by the pagans [Jews and Saracens]."[16] According to Ademar's contemporary and fellow historian Rodulfus Glaber (d. circa 1046), the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher triggered widespread violence against the Jews, who were accused of sending secret letters to Cairo inciting the caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (996–1021) to this attack on the site of Christ's tomb; many were driven from their homes, others massacred, and some even ended by killing themselves, "so it was that after this very proper vengeance had been taken, very few of them were to be found in the Roman world."[17]

Some years later, in A.D. 1022 at Orléans, King Robert the Pious of France ordered the execution by burning of some dozen[18] or so clerics accused of heresy. The heretics, the majority of them canons at the cathedral church of the Holy Cross (Sainte-Croix), purportedly denied the validity of ordination, penance, baptism, and the Eucharist. According to Rodulfus, they believed that heaven and earth were uncreated and eternal, and they explicitly rejected the authority of Scripture. The most extensive report of their beliefs, written by Paul, a monk at Saint-Peter-in-the-Valley of Chartres, and preserved in the cartulary of the monastery, indicates that the canons condemned as illusory not only the efficacy of the sacraments administered by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but likewise belief in the reality of the historically incarnate Christ (his birth from a virgin, his suffering, death, and resurrection): "We were not there, neither can we believe these things to be true," they said.[19] Orléans was not the only community disturbed at this time by reports of anti-ecclesiastical dissidence, but the canons' heresy and their manner of execution (the earliest judicial burning for heresy in Europe for which there is firm evidence) were the more remarkable, or so another story recounted by Rodulfus suggests, because the city itself had been the site of a terrible portent akin to Ademar's celestial vision of the weeping Christ:

> In the year of the incarnation 888 [999][20] a portent both memorable and awful occurred in Gaul in the city of Orléans. In this city there is a monastery of ancient foundation dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles, and since it had originally been given over to a community of nuns devoted to Almighty God, it was called "The Abbey of the Virgins" [Saint-Pierre-le-Puellier]. In the middle of this abbey there was a venerable icon of the holy cross (*crucis uexillum*), bearing upon it the image of the Saviour suffering death for the salvation of men. For a period of some days a river of tears

flowed continuously from the eyes of this image. There are plenty of witnesses to this, for a great crowd of people came to see the terrible spectacle. Many, when they saw it, believed that it was a divine portent of some calamity which was about to overtake that city. . . . The following year the whole city with all its houses and even its churches was burnt down.[21]

The rebuilding of the cathedral church of the Holy Cross was assured when the masons preparing to lay the new foundations found a hoard of gold buried on the site. The funds were sufficient to rebuild not only the cathedral but also the other churches "dedicated to every saint" that had been destroyed, and "in a very short time the city was filled with new buildings, and the people, saved from their sins by the aid of the love of God, recovered the more quickly in that they understood that their calamity had been sent to punish vice." Similar construction projects "throughout the whole world, but most especially in Italy and Gaul," followed soon thereafter, as "just before the third year after the millennium . . . men began to reconstruct churches, although for the most part the existing ones were properly built and not in the least unworthy. . . . It was as if the whole world were shaking itself free, shrugging off the burden of the past, and cladding itself everywhere in a white mantle of churches."[22]

In A.D. 1026 Richard, abbot of Saint-Vanne of Verdun, set out for Jerusalem with the financial backing of Richard II, duke of Normandy (996–1026), and in the company of some seven hundred fellow pilgrims, including two counts (Odo of Déols and William of Angoulême), two other abbots, three future abbots, and various lords—each accompanied by his own entourage of retainers, advisors, and fellow monks.[23] Following the route open to "nobles and commoners" alike by the millennial conversion of the Hungarian king Stephen (alias Vajk, anointed Christmas Day, A.D. 1000), the pilgrims journeyed overland to Constantinople and thence through Muslim territory to the Holy Land.[24] They entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and there "in the place where the feet of the Lord last stood," Richard realized his lifelong desire "to suffer for Christ, to abide with Him, and to be buried [with Him] that he might be granted through Christ to rise again in glory with Him."[25] Richard's site-by-site *imitatio Christi* was accompanied by great floods of tears:

> It is not for me [his biographer demurred] to describe how [Richard] arrived in the venerable place of his desire after so protracted a journey, how he passed thirsting through all these places, how he watered all of the places that he passed with fountains of tears, rather it is for the reader or listener to meditate upon these things with great sweetness of heart. For when he looked at the pillar of Pilate in the praetorium and went over in his mind the binding of the Saviour and the scourging; when he reflected with pious affect on the spitting, the smiting, the mocking, the crown of thorns; or when, on the place of Calvary, he called to mind the Saviour crucified, pierced with the lance, given vinegar to drink, reviled by those that passed by, crying out with a loud voice and yielding up his spirit—when he reviewed these scenes, what pain of heart, what founts of tears do you imagine followed the pangs of pious reflection?[26]

Richard returned home with his companions by way of Antioch, satisfied that he had seen "all of the places of Christ's humanity."[27]

In A.D. 1033, "the millennium of the Lord's Passion," bishops and abbots throughout France "summoned great councils of the whole people, to which were borne the bodies of many saints and innumerable caskets of holy relics." The purpose of these councils, according to Rodulfus Glaber, was "for re-establishing peace and consolidating the holy faith." So moved were the people, "great, middling, and poor," by the carnage and famine to which they had so recently been subject, that they came to the councils "rejoicing and ready, one and all, to obey the commands of the clergy no less than if they had been given by a voice from heaven speaking to men on earth."[28] Similar councils had first met in the Auvergne, Aquitaine, and Burgundy in the 970s and 980s, but the original movement had tailed off after the mid-990s.[29] The councils of 1033 (Arles, Lyon, Limoges, Vic, Auxerre, and Amiens) came at the crest of a new wave that had been building since the early 1020s. Like the councils held in the decades preceding the millennium of Christ's Nativity, these councils of the 1020s and 1030s were marked by vast popular participation—the first such mass religious movement in the history of the Christian West.[30] So great were the numbers of participants that the councils met not in the churches or even in the towns, but rather in meadows and fields outside the walls. Monks and canons from neighboring communities processed thither with their saints, whose golden reliquaries they placed in tents and pavilions arrayed about the field as if for battle; many sick people were cured in the presence of these relics.[31] According to Rodulfus, such was the popular enthusiasm at these rallies that when "the bishops raised their crosiers toward heaven, all present stretched their palms to God, shouting with one voice 'Peace! Peace! Peace!': this was the sign of their perpetual covenant (*signum perpetui pacti*) which they had vowed between themselves and God."[32]

The same year, A.D. 1033, "an innumerable multitude of people from the whole world, greater than any man before could have hoped to see, began to travel to the Sepulcher of the Saviour at Jerusalem."[33] As in 1026, the pilgrims included members of the ecclesiastical and secular nobility (*reges et comites, marchiones ac presules*), the most notable among them being Odolric, bishop of Orléans (1021–1035), and Robert the Magnificent, duke of Normandy (1027–1035). But what most impressed Rodulfus Glaber were the great numbers of those of lesser and middling estate (*ordo inferioris plebis, deinde uero mediocres*), not to mention the numerous

women, both noble and poor (*nobiles cum pauperioribus*), who undertook the journey. Their purpose was likewise remarkable, for, as Rodulfus explained, "many wished to die [in Jerusalem] before they returned to their own lands." One man's hope was the exemplum for many:

> A certain Burgundian called Lethbald, from the region of Autun, went on this journey in the company of others. When he had seen these most holy of places, he went to the Mount of Olives from where the Saviour, before many credible witnesses, ascended into heaven, with the promise that he would return to judge both the quick and the dead. Our pilgrim threw himself to the ground, his arms extended in the form of a cross, and with many tears he exulted in the Lord with indescribable joy. Repeatedly he stood up, raising his body with all his might, extending his arms to heaven and in a loud voice revealing the desires of his heart: "Lord Jesus, who for us and our salvation didst deign to come down from the seat of thy majesty to earth, and who, from this place which I now behold, didst return, still clad in the flesh, to heaven whence thou camest, I beseech thee by the plenitude of thy goodness, if this year is to be my last, let me not return to my own land but let it come to be accomplished in the sight of this, the place of thy Ascension. I believe that, just as I have followed thee in the body to come to this place, so my soul, unharmed and rejoicing, will follow after thee into heaven."[34]

He died that very evening.

There are, to be sure, a number of ways that the historian might plot these events, but in the grand narrative of transition from Carolingian restructuring to Gregorian reform within which historians have typically situated the new devotion to the suffering Christ, they have tended to be read neither as beginnings nor as endings but, rather, as middles, commonplace instances of the persistence of traditional religion and religious response throughout Europe's so-called "First Feudal Age."[35] Within more specialized narratives (of visionary experience, anti-Jewish violence, Jerusalem pilgrimages, the Crusades, heresy, social and ecclesiastical reform, feudal disorder), they are typically cited as antecedents to events on the still-distant horizon, themselves remarkable less as proper beginnings than as foreshadowings. To wit: Ademar's vision of the weeping crucifix and the apparently coincidental prodigy witnessed by the people of Orléans are practically never mentioned in the context of the development of the devotion to Christ in his suffering humanity, and even Richard Landes, in his perceptive (and provocative) biography of Ademar, distinguishes simply between the "horrifying . . . gripping and intolerable" millennial image of the weeping Christ and the "more properly historical figure" of the suffering Christ popularized by Anselm of Canterbury.[36] In contrast, the massacres of the Jews in 1010 appear in the historiography

more often than not solely as portentous preludes to the great Rhineland massacres of 1096, and the pilgrimages of 1026–1027 and 1033 typically feature simply as footnotes to the mounting of the First Crusade under Pope Urban II. In reflecting on these events, it has even been possible for historians to mention the eleventh-century transformation of Jerusalem from "symbol for heaven" to "symbol of Jesus' empirical death and resurrection" without alluding to the effect that the very empirical destruction of the most potent and concrete site of his death and resurrection must have had on contemporaries.[37] (The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was, in fact, rebuilt by 1048, some decades before the first crusaders arrived).[38]

Furthermore, for some time now, a number of prominent historians have been arguing forcefully for a more positive reassessment of the importance of the Peace movement, not only for the people of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries but also for the subsequent development of Europe as a whole (its demographic growth, agricultural and commercial resurgence, institutional reforms, and militarized expansion); nevertheless, for the better part of the twentieth century, the Peace of God has figured in the historiography more as a marker of failure than innovation, as symptomatic of the need for social and ecclesiastical reform in the midst of violence and corruption, rather than as the immediate impetus for reform itself.[39] Only rarely have historians drawn attention to the coincidence of the movement's dates with the decades immediately preceding the millennial anniversaries of the Incarnation and the Passion.[40] And despite the fact that the clerical heretics of Orléans explicitly rejected precisely those elements of doctrine and practice that require a focus on those same historical events (the Virgin Birth, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the institution of the Eucharist), historians have preferred to read the canons' heresy more nebulously, as an instance of an early-eleventh-century "crisis in theodicy," as an incipient "spiritualism," as an early challenge to established ecclesiastical and interpretive authorities, as indicative of "a more general awakening of lay piety," as an upshot of political intrigue, as an "expression of material deprivation on the part of the unprivileged."[41] This is not to say that the canons' dissent did not participate in some or all of these developments, only to say that attributing its impetus to a general "awakening" or "crisis" is insupportably vague.

Contemporaries evaluated these experiences somewhat more urgently.[42] For Ademar, the vision of the weeping crucifix was so terrifying that he did not write (or speak?) of it for almost twenty years. In his memory (or so he told it in his *Historia*), it became a portent of the unsuccessful attempt to convert the Jews and the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher, but at the time, who is to say that the young Ademar did not expect a more cataclysmic conclusion?[43] After all, the prodigies that occurred in the same year (1009–1010) pointed to one. Others, including Rodulfus, were less restrained. Rodulfus relates that when the people of Orléans

saw the weeping crucifix, they "believed that it was a divine portent of some calamity. . . . For the Saviour is said to have wept for Jerusalem when He foresaw its imminent destruction."[44] In Rodulfus's account, the prodigy at Orléans not only makes of Orléans a "New Jerusalem" over which Christ weeps in figure "through the icon representing Him," it also situates the city within the events of Christ's Passion, for it was during his triumphal entry into the old Jerusalem that Christ wept over its doom (Luke 19:41–44). Similarly, Rodulfus explicitly juxtaposes the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher (bk. 3, chap. 7) with the discovery and execution of the heretics at Orléans (bk. 3, chap. 8). Not incidentally, the Jews who (according to Rodulfus) bribed a runaway serf to carry their letters to the prince of Cairo were purportedly inhabitants of the same city. All of these events are carefully dated by Rodulfus in relation to the millennium of the Incarnation, itself a year marked by "many events" occurring with "unusual frequency." The coincidence of these "many events" with the millennium made each, according to Rodulfus, especially worthy of record.[45] Moreover, according to Rodulfus, unprecedented outbreaks of heresy, not only in France but also in Italy, Sardinia, and Spain preceded the year 1000. "All this accords," he noted, "with the prophecy of St. John, who said that the Devil would be freed after a thousand years [Apocalypse 20:2–3, 7]; but we shall treat of this at greater length in our third book."[46] As A.D. 1000, so A.D. 1033: "After the many prodigies which had broken upon the world before, after, and around the millennium of the Lord Christ, there were plenty of able men of penetrating intellect who foretold others, just as great, at the approach of the millennium of the Lord's Passion, and such wonders were soon manifest."[47] The pilgrimage of 1033 in particular made many wonder at its significance, for "when some consulted the more watchful of the age as to what was meant by so many people, in numbers unheard-of in earlier ages, going to Jerusalem, some replied cautiously enough that it could portend nothing other than the advent of the accursed Anti-Christ, who, according to divine testimony, is expected to appear at the End of the world."[48]

In the account of his vision, Ademar explicitly associates the date of the year with the caliph's attack on the Holy Sepulcher, thereby postdating the destruction itself by a year, without, however, providing any interpretive explanation for why this cluster of events should have occurred around that date in particular. In contrast, Rodulfus refers repeatedly to the chronological significance of the events he narrates, alluding throughout his history to the proximity of the millennia of the Incarnation and the Passion and suggesting, albeit sometimes rather obliquely, that the coincidence of their occurrence with these same events was in itself worthy of attention.[49] It should be noted that both historians were writing some years after the events in question took place (Ademar in 1028, Rodulfus in the 1040s) and that both were, therefore, well aware that nothing so momentous as, for example, the advent of the Antichrist or the End of the world had occurred in either 1010 or

1033. And yet, Rodulfus still considered it pertinent to remark that many "able men of penetrating intellect" had foretold prodigies with the approach of the millennium not only of the Incarnation but also of the Passion. And in that latter year, 1033, Ademar himself laid down his pen for the last time and set out, along with the other pilgrims, to Jerusalem. He died there the next year, at age forty-five.

Why? Why was Rodulfus, otherwise a somewhat disorganized and anecdotal chronicler, so chronologically precise in his focus on the twin Christological millennia? Why was the young monk Ademar visited with a harrowing vision of Christ on the Cross in the same year that all Europe learned of the destruction of the sanctuary over Christ's tomb? Why were the people of late-tenth-century Orléans witness to the terrible spectacle of their crucifix weeping, a prodigy disturbing as it was unique and paralleled, to the best of my knowledge, only by Ademar's own vision some ten or so years later? Why did the people of Italy and Gaul embark at this time on the widespread reconstruction of their churches? Why for the first time in the West for the better part of two centuries do heretics appear at just this point in the historical record, and why did their attacks take the form not only of challenges to the sacraments administered by the clergy, but also of rejection of all those media devoted to the tangible, historical recollection of Christ and his saints, including both relic cults and the veneration of crucifixes?[50] Why were so many people inspired in those same millennial decades to gather in council with the saints and cry out with one voice, in hope, for peace? Why did so many, including Ademar, take advantage of the opening of the land route to Jerusalem to go on pilgrimage, and why in 1033?

For the skeptical (and there are many such), these are simply coincidences, activities irrelevant to the numerical value of the year in which they occurred, watersheds only insofar as they can be demonstrated to have stimulated or foreshadowed subsequent developments of greater import (for example, the Crusades or the Great Reform). As John France has put it in his introduction to Rodulfus's history:

> There is no hint [in Rodulfus's description of the pilgrimage of 1033] that Glaber had expected the world to end at either of the millennia. He tells us that the great crowd of pilgrims to Jerusalem in the year 1033 inspired men to ask the meaning, and that "the more watchful of the age" suggested that it might portend the coming of Antichrist, but he seems to dissociate himself from these "watchful" people and to report such speculation only to impress on his readers the unique scale of the pilgrimage. . . . The significance of the millennial years to Glaber was not that they presaged the end of the world, though he did believe he was living in the last age before the end, but that in them God offered men a new and special opportunity for salvation, an opportunity inevitably spurned through sin.[51]

Ferdinand Lot, writing in 1947 on the supposed "terrors" of the year 1000 and the efforts of the clergy to convince people to prepare for the end by, for example, making contributions to the church, put it this way:

> Do you remember, you who were of an age to observe in 1903, whether [the apocalyptic encyclical *E Supremi* of Pope Pius X] made the slightest difference in the behavior of your parents or catholic friends? Did the father of the family say: "If the year of the Antichrist is near, why should I trouble myself over the marriage of my daughter, or over the education of my son? I should give up my plans to build a house for my old age. What good would it be to make a will?" And in Rome, did the intrigues for the purple or the tiara themselves abruptly cease? Life was just as hard and its torrent carried just as much apprehension in the twentieth century as in the tenth. . . . How stupid does one suppose that [potential donors] must have been to fail to say to the ecclesiastical establishment, "if the end of the world is coming, what need do you have of my fortune?"[52]

And, less rhetorically, albeit no less skeptically, Bernard McGinn has concurred:

> Like many other scholars, I find it problematic to lean too heavily on [general expressions of fears of the end from 950 to 1050 without any date being given] to prove some "special" terrors experienced toward the end of the first millennium *c.e.* Medieval people lived with enough daily misery and terror to think often of Antichrist without needing a rigidly chronological thousand-year theory. The thousand-year motif was often used as a mere literary device without any real attention to chronology.[53]

And yet, for those attuned to the symbolic resonance of even such arbitrary constructions as dates, the only real coincidence is that these people (Rodulfus, Ademar, Robert the Pious, Richard of Saint-Vanne, the canons of Sainte-Croix, the participants in the Peace councils and Jerusalem pilgrimages) happened to pass the span of their earthly lives in the very decades marking the thousand-year anniversary of their divine Lord's intervention into human history. From this perspective, the most important question historiographically is not whether they would have narrated their lives as mere coincidences, but whether they would have attempted, like all other human beings of which we have knowledge, to situate themselves according to some plot. The latter response, it seems to me, is rather more likely.

What plot would they have chosen? More specifically, given their faith, how would they have situated themselves within the overarching plot of Christian history in the movement from Incarnation to Redemption and Judgment, and what effect, if

any, would the coincidence of their earthly lives with the historical millennia of Christ's birth and death have had on the way in which they constructed this plot? To answer this question in full would clearly require a book in itself, for it would be necessary to consider not only the variations on the Christian narrative that were available to contemporaries from within the tradition of Christian historiography and scriptural exegesis, but also the external social, economic, political, and personal circumstances in which contemporaries found themselves, the prevailing conventions of narrative style with which they would have been familiar, and the assumptions that they would have made about the nature of causality and change—to mention only the most obvious constraints. Such an answer is well beyond the scope of the present study and will not be attempted here. And yet it is still possible to suggest the outline that such an answer might assume, drawing in particular on the insights that scholars have made in recent decades in the study of narrativity itself—in the study, that is, of the way in which human beings create meaning for their lives through story.

It is a commonplace in theoretical studies of narrative and time that human beings need stories, not only fictional stories through which they exercise their pleasure in crafting rhythm and pattern from the potentialities of nature or through which they offer critiques of the world as it is, but also factual stories through which they make sense of the world that they inherit and experience in their everyday lives.[54] The latter objective is, of course, no more than the purpose of history put in its simplest terms. Phenomenologically, however, the crafting of narrative as lived involves more than just the retrospective emplotment of facts or memories and the discovery within this emplotment of origins or beginnings, patterns of development, characteristic structures, symptoms, and the like (that is, the usual project of history). It also involves the prospective emplotment of endings, the projection onto the imagined or remembered beginnings and lived middles of human experience of that Solonic conclusion without which it is deemed impossible to judge the happiness, rectitude, or importance of a human life or community of lives, either relatively, in their historical context, or more absolutely, in their moral or cosmological context.[55] And, indeed, it is this principle of judgment delayed until the human life has been brought to its completion, of origins hermeneutically bound up in endings, upon which the greatest framing narratives that human beings use to plot their lives have traditionally been constructed (including, but not only, the Christian).

In the majority of these narratives (or myths), the pattern of completion takes one of two shapes, either cyclical or linear, in the latter of which completion involves not repetition but cessation, an absolute End to the mundane experience of human consciousness. It is, of course, this latter pattern, resolutely and relentlessly linear, that is dominant in the narrative of Christian history, from the cosmogonic rupture of Genesis to the eschatological relief of Revelation, the dissolu-

tion of creation conceived in its beginnings. In plotting their own lives according to such grand linear narratives (and grand narratives are always more appealing than modest ones), human beings almost invariably cast themselves as arriving not at the beginning or even in the middle, but toward the end, if not in the last days of the narrative, then within a generation or so. Even if they do not imagine that the narrative itself will be brought to completion within their own lifetimes, they are frequently convinced, despite all evidence to the contrary, that it will in fact end soon thereafter, it being somehow cognitively intolerable to imagine that one will die without knowing the ending, that things will carry on much as they did before one arrived in medias res, or worse, that they will change in ways that one has not anticipated. Thus the appeal of prophecy in promising what Frank Kermode has called "the sense of an ending": it allows those who accept the prophecy as authoritative to situate their own lives within the structure of an established whole, to console themselves with a story of their lives that takes its meaning not only from the finitude of their own mortality but also from the finitude of history as a predetermined—or, even better, divinely predetermined—totality.

But this is not the whole story. Narratives and prophecies in which history is brought to an end, time brought to a stop, console not only in that they give shape to the time of one's present existence. They also give shape to the pointlessness of one's mortality, to the pointless and yet inescapable experience of dissolution, change, death, and decay to which all human beings are inexorably subject—in other words, to the pointlessness of evil. In the Christian narrative (with which we are principally concerned here), the end of time as revealed by God through prophecies and signs—the Apocalypse—brings an end not only to the anxious and otherwise formless labors and strivings of humankind but also to their struggle with the evils of earthly existence. More important, it brings these struggles to a just end, to a resolution in which evil is defeated and good recompensed, to a resolution in which judgment simultaneously annuls time and redeems those subject to time. This is not to say, however, that the prospect of judgment, like the prospect of knowing when the End to the narrative will come, is in itself an unambiguous consolation. Just as some prefer to cast themselves toward the end of the narrative but not in the last chapter, so others find the prospect of judgment comforting—"only," as Augustine said, "not yet."[56] These are the "owls" (to borrow a metaphor from Richard Landes), those who imagine that the narrative of history is drawing to a close but who insist that there is as yet no reason to believe that it will end soon.[57] Theirs is a comic version of apocalypse, postponing the end indefinitely and eschewing any attempt to predict the moment of conclusion. There are others, however, whom Landes calls "roosters," who cry out, "The End is near," and when those who have heard them ask, "When?" they are sometimes prepared to do more than just point to the signs. Sometimes they may even go so far as to offer a

specific date. Theirs is a tragic version of apocalypse, in which the end of the narrative is so near that it is inescapable. It will come, if not today or tomorrow, then with a certainty within the lifetime of their audience, "for the simple reason," as Stephen O'Leary has noted, "that people must believe that they will be on hand to see the prediction confirmed or they will lose interest."[58] For the roosters, the prospect of judgment is unsettling only for those who are unprepared; otherwise, the end of history—the end of time—is to be welcomed, for it will bring with it both the elimination and the justification of evil.

There is, of course, a catch in this scenario. Hitherto, those who have adopted a tragic frame for the narrative of human history have been, if not perhaps locally, without fail globally wrong: the world is still with us, and history has not (yet) come to an end. Accordingly, the more exact the tragedians' predictions of when time would stop (and didn't), the more they have been subject to ridicule by those who prefer the comic frame, who, given their tendency to be right, have typically been favored not only by contemporaries but also in the historical record. Occasionally, however, the roosters gain the upper hand—or less figuratively, the larger audience—and whole communities of people may shift their self-emplotment in the grand narrative of their tradition forward, toward the end, situating themselves not only, as is usual, in the last age of a world in progressive decline but, rather, at its climax. The evils of the day are perceived thereafter not merely as normative for the age but as catastrophic, signs of an End that is not only probable but imminent. This is particularly the case for those who plot their lives according to the Christian eschatological narrative, which "ordains that the forces of evil [led by the Anti-Christ] are predestined to reach maximum strength before they can finally be defeated." In this context, as O'Leary has noted, every (observable) increase in "the sum total of human and cosmic evil" may then be invoked as " 'proof' that things have never been worse, and, therefore, that the promised End is just around the corner. . . . Rather than being a series of punishments sent by God to encourage repentance and reformation, the list of ills only serves to prove that the end of history is imminent and unavoidable."[59] And yet, once again, there is a catch. The experience of evil, of suffering at the hands of other human beings or in the face of natural disasters, is rarely in itself sufficient to support this narrative shift. As Bernard McGinn has noted, "There are, after all, crises and crises."[60] Disasters may predispose a community to revise their version of the narrative and to accept a more apocalyptic scenario, but not every war, earthquake, or plague will be accompanied by intensified apocalyptic speculation. On the contrary, such occurrences are viewed as signs of the imminent end only when there is a compelling rhetorical stimulus to interpret them as such, otherwise they will be endured or decried solely as instances of the fallen condition of humankind or of the arbitrariness of divine dispensation: it is, in fact, "only rhetoric [that] can turn any disaster, real or perceived, into a sign of the imminent end."[61]

How was it, then, that Rodulfus or, at the very least, those who "consulted the more watchful of the age" (*quidam de sollititioribus, qui eo tempore habebantur*) were convinced that the great Jerusalem pilgrimage of 1033 "could portend nothing other than the advent of the accursed Anti-Christ," whose coming in turn would proceed nothing less than "the end of the world" (*finem seculi*)? Why, for that matter, did so many set out for Jerusalem in that year, and why did they expect (or hope) not to return home? We return to the problem of historical coincidence and to the question of plot. For the skeptical (the owls), there is little to see here except one instance in a long tradition of Christian pilgrimage, remarkable perhaps for the number of pilgrims (although impossible to verify), but otherwise poorly attested in surviving sources and historically much less significant than the other great Jerusalem pilgrimages of the same century. It is unlikely that even in aggregate the pilgrimage of 1033 was as large, for example, as that massive company that set out from southern Germany in November 1064, numbering by one account more than twelve thousand persons both "rich and poor" and led by a glittering host of bishops, archbishops, and other secular and ecclesiastical lords.[62] Neither, it seems, did the pilgrims of 1033 feel themselves compelled to fight the inhabitants of Jerusalem as did those who set out at the behest of Pope Urban II in 1095. And yet, there were similarities, particularly between the pilgrimage of 1033 and that which began in the autumn of 1064.

It should go without saying that all of these eleventh-century pilgrims shared to some degree the conviction that an arduous and, as the pilgrims of 1064 discovered, potentially extremely dangerous journey through unfamiliar territory lasting many months was worth the risk to their health and sometimes even their lives, and that their goal, so oft-repeated as to lose its force for those who neglect the difficulties of the journey, was none other than "to worship at the sepulcher of the Lord."[63] It must be emphasized that such journeys were not undertaken lightly, however various or compelling the less pious motivations and goals of some participants may have been. There were, after all, numerous shrines in Europe to which those with a yen for travel could direct their attention; from northern or eastern Europe, the journey to the shrine of Saint James at Santiago de Compostela alone could occupy the better part of a year, surely long enough for those who wanted no more from the journey than a change of scenery or an escape from the drudgery of their daily lives. The ardent, of course, could easily embrace the hardships encountered along the route as penitential trials enhancing the spiritual benefits of the exercise, but just as there were few ready to embrace such rigorous discipline at home without some compelling motivation, so there were arguably even fewer willing to risk their lives on such a perilous venture without an equally strong reason.

It may be suggested that the pilgrims of 1033, like those of 1026 and 1064, set out in company precisely so as to minimize the risk, but *pace* the tendency prevalent

especially among historians of the Crusades to argue on the basis of these companies for a great swelling of pilgrimage mounting from the end of the tenth century and culminating in the expeditions of 1095, such great collective pilgrimages were not, in fact, that common.[64] On the contrary, there is firm evidence for only *four* (that of 1026–1027 following Richard of Saint-Vanne, that of 1033, that of 1054 inspired by the appearance of the Crab supernova,[65] and that of 1064–1065), none of which can be accounted for solely on the grounds that the opening of the land route through Hungary made larger expeditions financially more feasible than had the hitherto more restrictive maritime route. Opportunity is not in itself sufficient motivation to risk one's life. There must also be a conviction that other potential benefits or dangers outweigh the risks—typically, in the case of pilgrimage, the anticipation of benefits to one's spiritual or physical well-being, or dangers to one's spiritual well-being lest the journey not be undertaken.

One of the most powerful motivators from this perspective is the conviction that time is limited, that unless one avails oneself of the opportunity *now* there will not be time to do so later, whether because one's own life is limited or because the object of the journey is itself under threat. Such a conviction may strike an individual at any point in his or her life, as when the death of loved ones or other catastrophes bring to mind the ultimate fragility of one's earthly existence, but for the same conviction to strike a whole community with equally compelling force, some larger interpretive framework must be invoked, indicating the fragility not only of individuals but, moreover, of the whole structure of human society of which the individuals are only a part. According to the biographer of one of the participants (Altmann, later bishop of Passau), the pilgrims of 1064 set out with just such a conviction:

> At that time many nobles went to Jerusalem to see the sepulcher of the Lord deceived by a certain vulgar opinion that the day of Judgment was at hand, because in that year [1065] Easter would come on the sixth of the Kalends of April [March 27], [the same day] on which it is written the resurrection of Christ [originally fell]. Moved by this terror not only the commoners, but also the princes of the people . . . and the bishops of diverse cities . . . left their homelands, their loved ones and their riches, and taking the narrow way, they took up the cross and followed Christ [cf. Luke 14:26–27].[66]

Rhetorically speaking, in other words, the pilgrims of 1064–1065 were roosters, who, according to the owls who observed the events of the year in retrospect, deceived themselves into believing a plot in which the End of the world would come within their own lifetimes. Even worse, they deceived themselves into believing that they knew the date (Easter 1065), despite Augustine's oft-reiterated insistence that they could not. (Their calculation depended upon the coincidence of Good Friday with the Annunciation, that is, the coincidence of the anniversary of

Christ's conception with that of his death, a compelling sign, in their view, of the completion of time.[67] Significantly, the dates coincided only twice in the eleventh century—1065 and 1076—and would not again until 1155.[68]) This was their motivation in setting out in such numbers, and this was their hope: to meet Christ at his second coming in the very place from which he himself had first left the world, to die and rise again to judgment in his very presence. The motivation was the same, it seems, for the pilgrims of 1033, who, like the Burgundian Lethbald, prayed that if this year were to be their last, they should die in Jerusalem rather than in their own homes, and indeed, many who stayed home still entertained the idea that they should prepare themselves for the End portended, or so some suggested, by the magnitude of the pilgrimage itself.

The Coming of Christ in Judgment

The "terrors of the year 1033," no less imaginary for being steadfastly ignored by Augustinian "owls" unwilling even to attempt to see that which is hidden from the angels (the End), left their stamp on a whole generation.[69] To be sure, the Apocalypse did not come, even on the heels of the masses of pilgrims (including Ademar) who made their way to Jerusalem in expectation of the millennium of the Passion. And yet, for those who survived, time lost its accustomed edge. Just as in the first century after the crucifixion the authors of the New Testament and their contemporaries had to come to terms with the nonevent of the Parousia, so the generations surviving the millennial anniversaries of Christ's birth and death had to come to terms with the nonevent of the Apocalypse. Those who had spent their youths meditating on the possibility that they might themselves live to see Christ coming in his glory were forced to reassess their expectations, reconceptualize their hopes, and revise the plots through which they had been accustomed since childhood to give meaning to their lives. For some (it would be foolhardy to speculate how many or what percentage of the population this might have been), this process of revision must have been invigorating, as they saw new possibilities open out for them in a world now renewed, "illuminated by a new dawn" and "clothed in a white mantle of churches."[70] For others like Rodulfus, it may have induced nostalgia for a past during which their hopes had not yet been frustrated, a longing for their youth and the great events of the day made all the more poignant by the possibility—now collapsed—that those same events might also figure as the last in human history. For still others (again, it is impossible to say how many), the process must have been profoundly disturbing, occasioned as it was by the obliteration of the very structure of their conceptual reality.

The principal change was a sense of uncertainty—a "sense of loss" (as Peter Cramer has styled it) with respect to the future, and, by extension, with respect

to the past on the basis of which that lost future had hitherto been plotted.[71] Somewhat ironically (as Cramer himself has noted), this sense of loss is perhaps most visible in the monumental efforts of contemporaries to preserve that past now more comprehensively than ever—and to do so, as many scholars have recently observed, in writing.[72] It was, after all, during the eleventh century that medieval Europe began to move "from memory to written record," from the oral culture of the early Middle Ages to a culture more and more dependent than hitherto upon "the scribe, the written word, the literary text."[73] It was the postmillennial generations of the mid-eleventh century that were responsible for initiating the great Domesday survey in the Normans' newly conquered England, for compiling new collections of the canon law of the Church, for reinvigorating the study of theology in the cathedral and monastic schools, and for initially codifying the monastic and liturgical customs developed since the reforms of the tenth century. The problem was that, even in its written form, the past was constantly in danger of slipping away into meaninglessness; there is always, after all, "something fictitious about a written text," something fixed and flat, "having none of the physical substance of the voice, with its moods, registers, tones," that would invalidate it even more so than the voice as a trustworthy vehicle for conveying "what Augustine called the *ictus intelligentiae:* the thought as it leapt from the mind."[74]

There were some who experienced this sense of loss more acutely than others, at times to the extent of denying that the past, even a written past, was truthfully accessible to the living at all. According to Paul of Saint-Peter-in-the-Valley of Chartres, the canons of the Holy Cross at Orléans not only denied the possibility of knowing anything about the evangelical past, on the basis that they could know only that which they had experienced themselves ("We were not there, neither can we believe these things to be true"), they also denied that there was any merit in writing anything down, including the word of God. When their episcopal examiner asked, "Do you not believe that before anything was made through nature God the Father created everything from nothing through the Son?," they replied, "You may spin stories in that way to those who have earthly wisdom and believe the fictions of carnal men, scribbled on animal skins. To us, however, who have the law written upon the heart by the Holy Spirit (and we recognize nothing but what we have learned from God, Creator of all), in vain you spin out superfluities and things inconsistent with the Divinity. For we shall see our King, reigning in heaven, Who will raise us in heavenly joys to everlasting triumphs at His right hand."[75] The canons' reference to their certainty that they would see Christ reigning in heaven at the Resurrection situates their denial of a knowable past within the context of a future known because immediately accessible, having been inscribed not on "animal skins," but on their hearts. The fictive past of the text is rejected in lieu of personal, interior experience.

Of all the modes for the recovery of the past available in the early eleventh century, there were two (in addition to the written text of Scripture) whose efficacy seemed, at least to some, particularly threatened or threatening with the failure of the apocalyptic millennia: the artistic image, and the liturgy—more specifically, the sculpted or painted image of the crucified Christ, and the liturgy of Christ's body and blood. Following Ratramnus and prior to Berengar, the Eucharist had without contest been understood as Paschasius had seen it, as the true historical body and blood (re-)created through the recitation of Christ's own words at the consecration of the bread and wine. Likewise, many late-tenth- and early-eleventh-century crucifixes (most famously, the Gero Cross [see plate 1]) represented Christ not as the living conqueror of death but rather as the dead or dying man, the historical, passible Savior bearing unto death the sins of humanity.[76] Such crucifixes in monumental form were often prominently situated in churches, typically in the center of the nave near an altar dedicated to the Cross, in direct imitation of the holy places as commemorated in Jerusalem.[77] There were also in this period altar crucifixes covered with gold, gems, pearls, and enamels, and processional crucifixes likewise embellished for use before the Sunday high Mass and on Good Friday.[78] In the liturgy for Good Friday, the Cross or crucifix carried to the center of the church would become the ritual focus for the Adoration of the Cross, the artistic image no longer simply an object of commemorative meditation but rather a physical substitute for the Cross upon which Christ had actually died.[79]

With the advent and passing of the millennial anniversaries of Christ's Incarnation and Passion, there were some who (apparently) began to find the claims of these remembrances intolerable. Citing the words of the Psalmist, "the idols of the nations are gold and silver, the work of human hands," they smashed the crucifixes in their churches or declared their use idolatrous, and they denied that the Eucharist was anything more than fragments of blessed bread or, worse, the sole invention of priests.[80] Often their dissent against the material, commemorative rituals of the Church was caught up in a rejection of the institution and its tradition as a whole, and in their attempts to explain these hitherto unprecedented attacks, contemporary observers sometimes gave the dissenters the old label "Manicheans."[81] By their own accounts, at least insofar as their beliefs may be accurately gleaned from contemporary sources, these early-eleventh-century dissenters typically claimed to be living the life of the apostles, through fasting, praying, abstaining from sex and wine, holding all their possessions in common, supporting themselves in manual labor, and limiting the authorities on which they based their practices to Scripture, particularly the Acts of the Apostles.

Historians have interpreted this insistence on a (return to a) life of apostolic purity in a number of ways: as a purposeful challenge to the economic and social dominance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy (not, it should be noted, a view encountered in much recent scholarship); as a response to an increasing instability, uncertainty, mobility, and competition in the structure of society; as a consequence of an increasing consciousness of self with its corollary emphasis on individual intention and accountability; as the popular obverse of the concern to establish the authority of the text in a newly literate culture; and as a result of the Church's own attempt to extend and secure its doctrinal and institutional authority.[82] Less often remarked and yet arguably no less significant was the historical challenge that the dissenters presented to contemporaries. In seeking to recreate the apostolic past, the dissenters, whether intentionally or not, effectively denied the authenticity of the Catholic present, with its hierarchies of class, culture, and ordo, its dependence upon the cult of relics for access to saints long dead, its use of such historically charged aids to prayer as the crucifix, and its involution in a centuries-long tradition of interpretation and ritual.

But this was not all. In their insistence that it was they alone who understood the mysteries of salvation and, therefore, they alone who held correctly to its scriptural precepts, the dissenters did more than simply found communities modeled on those described in Acts. They did so despite the prevailing challenge of the new millennium, despite the thousand years separating their members from the community of the earliest Christians. Two factors suggest that their dissent was the product of an anxiety induced by more than just prevailing social, economic, or political circumstances (although all of these unquestionably played a part): on the one hand, its social and intellectual diversity (the dissenters were drawn from all social classes, from the clergy in Orléans [1022], the townspeople in Arras [1025], the local nobility at Montefort d'Alba [circa 1027–1034], and the peasantry in Châlons-sur-Marne [circa 1043–1048]); and on the other, its initial appearance in the first third of the eleventh century, particularly in the decade immediately preceding the millennium of the Passion. If we leave the Eucharist for the moment to one side (to be taken up again in our discussion of Peter Damian and the Gregorian reform), the particular puzzle with which we will be concerned is why contemporary anxieties with the use of images—if in fact they were stimulated, as I have just suggested, by apocalyptic expectations or disappointments—should have focused on the crucifix rather than, for example, on the images of Christ in majesty more commonly associated in modern scholarship with representations of the Last Judgment.[83]

What did heretics like the *plebeius* Leutard of the village of Vertus in Châlons see in crucifixes that they did not see in other images, often likewise embellished with gold and silver? Heinrich Fichtenau suggests that Leutard—who one day suffered a dream in which a swarm of bees ordered him to do certain "things impossible for human kind"—attacked a crucifix *rather than* the local saint because it was the saint, and not the crucifix, that was the "actual focus of worship in a village church," and he tentatively associates Leutard's iconoclasm with a possible

infiltration of Docetist beliefs from the Balkans. (In this view, Christ "had not suffered on the cross, and possessed only the semblance of a body, since all matter was either evil in and of itself or derived from the devil.")[84] In contrast, Richard Landes explicitly links Leutard's attack on the crucifix with attacks on the cults of the saints (and, presumably, their images, although there is to my knowledge no explicit mention of such iconoclasm in our extant sources).[85] Landes notes the correspondence between such Christian iconoclasm and its origin in the Jewish rejection of images, in order to suggest that the heretics may have been inspired not only by the second commandment of the Decalogue but also by contemporary violence against living Jews, with whom the heretics may have identified in their popular rejection of the political and ecclesiastical hierarchy.[86]

What did contemporaries think of these attacks? Reports are limited, and those that do survive do not admit transparent answers. According to Rodulfus Glaber, upon whom we depend entirely for our knowledge of Leutard's attack on the crucifix in his local church, the villagers who witnessed the attack interpreted it as a sign of madness (not, as Fichtenau implies, a mild iconoclasm executed in deference to the local saint).[87] Until recently, however, Rodulfus himself has more often than not been the target of similarly derogatory labels ("gyrovague," "gossip-monger," "psychopath"), leading scholars to question the veracity of many of his accounts, not only in their details but also, as noted above in his reference to the pilgrimage of 1033, in the interpretations that they put on contemporary events.[88] In the "Letter" of Heribert, the heretics' refusal to worship the Cross or the image of the Lord (*vultum domini*) is associated with attacks on the church's (or, rather, monastery's) right to receive alms (Leutard also claimed that it was "folly" to pay tithes) and on the divine service performed in the monasteries—in other words, on the very economic and spiritual bases for the existence of such communities. And yet, in the estimation of its most recent editor, this letter is a forgery, a tortuous polemic intended by its author as a defense against contemporary threats to the property and practices of Cluniac monasticism and not (necessarily) an account of an actual group of heretics.[89] What, then, should we make of such reports? How skeptical should we as historians be?

It should go without saying that every extant historical source needs careful decoding before it is possible to argue how, if at all, its surface meaning bears any relation to historical reality. All sources (not just "forgeries") are inevitably coded according to present ideological concerns, and they must be read as such, as rhetorical vehicles intended to advance particular agendas, not as "positivist" transcriptions of historical events. Even chroniclers make use of literary motifs in detailing their descriptions of past events, and no author writes without a specific audience in mind. As historians, we are obliged to recognize the hermeneutic contingency of such accounts. And yet, it is equally important that we do not become so skeptical in our evaluation of our sources that we obliterate the very possibility of

knowing anything about the past, however nuanced it must necessarily be through its extant artifacts. Whether or not we can be certain that there were heretics afoot in Châlons (where Leutard gained his following) or Périgord (the object of Heribert's alleged concern) who were smashing and lamenting over images of the crucified Lord, we do know that there was in the early decades of the eleventh century a very real fear that someone might; otherwise, references to such iconoclasm would not have had the rhetorical impact on contemporary readers that we may assume their authors intended them to have, either, in Rodulfus's case, as one instance of the prodigies associated with the year 1000 or, in Heribert's, as a grievous instance of attack on the very bedrock of the institutional and social order of contemporary monasticism. Whether or not such attacks actually occurred, many clerics were convinced that the threat to the images was real, and they imputed such attacks to heretics who may or may not have overtly rejected the use of images in Christian worship.

What was the catalyst for this crystallization of concern around the use of crucifixes in the early decades of the eleventh century, whether among the laity, as Leutard's example suggests, or among the clergy, as demonstrated by their apparent need to defend these images? Was it the novelty of the images, either in size or liturgical prominence, or in affect? Or was there in the very production of such representations as that of the Gero Crucifix a deeper concern—with the meaning of the crucifixion itself, perhaps even with the possibility of an imminent apocalypse? To answer these questions, we must turn to a third witness: a sermon preached by Bishop Gerard I (1013–1048) of the twin diocese of Arras and Cambrai before a synod convened in Arras in January 1025 to investigate a community of heretics whom he had discovered resident in that city.[90] Like the reports of Rodulfus and Heribert, this sermon too requires careful interpretation before it will present us with a useful picture of the concerns of the day, and yet if read correctly, it is undoubtedly our best witness to the way in which contemporary clerics such as Gerard understood the significance of crucifixes in the larger context of Christian doctrine and practice. It is also our first clue to the reason that apocalyptic hopes or disappointments focused on the coming of Christ in judgment may have triggered the attacks on such crucifixes, if in fact they did occur.

Gerard's defense of the use of images in Christian worship comes toward the end of a lengthy disquisition on the legitimacy of a number of practices associated in his mind, if not in fact in those of the heretics, with the principal challenge that they had made to the tradition of the Church, namely, their rejection of the necessity, utility, and efficacy of the sacrament of baptism. Although accused in various reports of more wide-ranging errors, when formally interrogated before the synod, the heretics insisted only that the law and doctrine by which their teacher, an Italian named Gundulfus, had taught them to live was in no way contrary either

to the precepts of the gospels or to the sanctions of the apostles, "for it is of this sort: to abandon the world, to restrain our flesh from carnal longings, to earn our bread by the labor of our hands, to wish harm to none, to show loving-kindness to all who are gripped by zeal for our way of life." If, they argued, "this way of righteousness (*justitia*) be observed, there is no need of baptism; if it be transgressed, baptism does not avail for salvation. This is the whole of our justification to which the practice of baptism can add nothing more, for within its bounds are included every evangelical and apostolic precept."[91] In Gerard's view, the heretics' most egregious error was not so much their specific rejection of baptism but, rather, their more general contention that justice consists in observing the uninterpreted letter of the law and in eschewing practices such as baptism that are supported not only by the law (if correctly interpreted) but also by the tradition of the Church as handed down by Justice himself to the apostles. True justice, according to Gerard, lies not in "holy thoughts," "pious counsels," or "good motives" but in the recognition of our human need for grace: "In the disobedience of the first man we lost our innocence and natural potential; and no one can lift himself up from the depths of his ruin through free will unless he is also raised up by merciful grace."[92] As Christ said to his disciples, "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Where, then, does grace come from? Neither from the forces of nature nor legal precepts, but only through the illumination of the heart and the freely given gift of divine will.[93]

According to Gerard, to reject the possibility of grace and to rely solely on the strength of one's own will, as did the heretics, was not to embrace justice; rather, it was, as Paul said, to reject God's justice, "for being ignorant of the justice of God and trying to set up your own, you do not subject yourself to the justice of God" (Romans 10:3). This is the justice that the apostles received from the mouth of Truth, that the holy Church received from blessed Peter and the other apostles, that was handed down by the prince of the apostles to the church of Rome, and that has been preserved up to the present free from contaminating additions that have neither authority nor precedent in their support.[94] Everything else—the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, the construction of churches as buildings specific to worship, the use of altars, incense, and bells, the ordination of priests, burial in consecrated ground, penance, prayers for the dead, marriage, confession, psalmody in churches, the veneration of the Cross, and the use of holy images—is part and parcel of God's justice as revealed in the scriptures and handed down by the apostles; everything else is a gift of grace through which God has seen fit to prepare human beings for judgment.

How, then, do images such as the crucifix participate in God's justice? Gerard's answer is twofold: on the one hand, there is an analogy to be drawn from Scripture; on the other, there is an argument from experiential utility. The first involves an exegetical similitude, a likening of objects noted by Truth himself,

Christ on the Cross prefigured in the brazen serpent that Moses lifted up in the desert so that all who saw it might immediately be healed (Numbers 21:8–9; cf. John 3:14–15):[95]

> For it happened that the people of Israel traveling through the desert were now and then wounded unto death by the bites of poisonous serpents. When consulted about this, the Lord ordered that a brazen serpent be made and lifted up on a tall pole, seeing which all those who had been struck down would be swiftly healed. And we, traveling from the Egypt of carnal conversation through the desert of earthly exile to the land of celestial promise, are rid from our hearts of the venom of the ancient enemy through the sight (*respectum*) of the Mediator hanging on the cross. For whoever will have gazed (*conspexerit*) upon Christ through the image and passion of the son of God (*per imaginem filii Dei ac passionem*), that one will be able to evade the venom of the ancient enemy.[96]

This is a remarkable defense of the salvific utility of images, depending as it does upon an almost sacramental conception of the power of the gaze. Here, it seems, seeing itself becomes a vehicle of grace, and healing is effected in a glance. There is apparently no interior response required on the part of the viewer, simply his or her attention to the image. To be sure, this attention accomplishes not a physical but rather a spiritual healing; nevertheless, as Gerard words it, the emphasis is placed squarely on the exterior experience of seeing and not, as in the gospel, on the interior experience of faith.[97]

Nevertheless, Gerard's reasoning, although perhaps startling in nuance, more than likely did not strike his audience as particularly novel, familiar as at least the clerics must have been with the prayers said kneeling before the material, visible cross during the *Adoratio crucis* on the afternoon of Good Friday. According to the *Ordo romanus antiquus* incorporated into the Ottonian *Pontificale romano-germanicum* (circa 950–962, a copy of which had been at Cambrai since as early as 956), on the second of three genuflections, the clerics would have intoned the following request:

> God, you who ordered your servant Moses to lift up a brazen serpent along the parched way of the wilderness in the midst of the multitude of people, for the purpose of delivering those souls (*animas*) infected by lethal venom, so that whoever there was who had been afflicted by a death-bringing wound, might look to it, and evade that deadly venom, and gain the life of longed for health: signifying you yourself far in the future, when for the health of your creature, you would be lifted up on the gibbet of the cross: so that he whom the devil will have captured with the weapons of envy, your desirable suffering (*passio*) might recall to his homeland, grant

> as to me miserable and a sinner, so to all whom you purchased with your blood, who today as suppliants venerate (*venerantur*) your holy passion, and adore (*adorant*) the tree of life, that we may escape with your help the snares of the devil, and merit to be participants in eternal life. Who with the father.[98]

Although the prayer itself speaks only of escape aided by Christ, as Gerard interprets it, the image of the Christ-serpent hanging in the air, which the clergy and people adore on Good Friday, brings not simply health but salvation, life in the land of celestial promise and escape from the poison of sin. From this perspective, the crucifix is itself an instrument of salvation because, like the sacrament of baptism administered on Holy Saturday, it prepares the viewer for the Resurrection and the reception of God's grace. It is also, implicitly, an instrument of justice, since those who refuse to look upon such images may be said to deny themselves the very possibility of grace.[99]

Gerard's second *ratio* is no less striking, although on the surface apparently somewhat more familiar:

> There is truly another reason for [there to be images of Christ in the churches]: for in fact the less educated (*simpliciores*) and the illiterate (*illiterati*) in the church, who cannot look upon these things through the Scriptures, may contemplate them through the lineaments of a certain picture, that is, Christ in that humility according to which he willed to suffer and die for us. While they [the less educated and illiterate] venerate this form, Christ ascending on the cross, Christ suffering on the cross, Christ alone dying on the cross, they do not adore the work of human hands. For the wooden stock is not to be adored, but the mind of the inner man is to be aroused through that visible image, on which the passion and death of Christ [which he] assumed for us is inscribed as if on the membrane of the heart, so that everyone might recognize in himself how much he owes his Redeemer; since according to the saying of the Savior, the image of Caesar demands those things that should be rendered unto Caesar, and that of God, [those that should be rendered] unto God.[100]

Here Gerard alludes to an oft-cited letter of Pope Gregory I (590–604) to Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, wherein Gregory assured the episcopal iconoclast that "it is one thing to adore a picture, another to learn from the story of a picture what should be adored. For what scripture is to those who can read, a picture makes present to the illiterate who look at it, for in it the ignorant see what they ought to follow, and those who do not understand writing read from it; whence, and especially for the common people (*gentibus*), painting is the equivalent of (*pro*) reading."[101]

But Gerard does not simply end with this familiar didactic defense; rather, he goes on to conflate Gregory's famous dictum on pictures as the "books of the illiterate" with another dictum, likewise attributed to Gregory, according to which it is appropriate to look for images on which to concentrate one's devotion, not so as to worship (*colere*) them as if they were themselves God, but only so as "to be warmed again by the recollection of the son of God in his love, whose image you long to see. And indeed we should not prostrate ourselves before [his image] as if before a divinity, but adore him whom we recall through [that] image either as having been born or having suffered or sitting on a throne."[102] Even so, there is a difference. Whereas for Gregory, images of the Savior inflame the viewer with "the recollection of the son of God in his love," for Gerard, they recall above all God's justice. The crucifix, in Gerard's view, demands of the viewer more than memory, more than love; it demands that the viewer recognize in himself or herself the debt incurred by Christ's Passion. Just as the emperor's image on his coins marked them as payment owed in taxes to the emperor (Matthew 22:20–21), so Christ's image inscribed on the parchment of the heart marks everyone who gazes upon a crucifix as indebted to Christ for his or her salvation. If the heretics claimed that in venerating Christ in his Passion Christians abandoned themselves to idolatry, to the worship of the work of human hands, then, Gerard implied, the heretics themselves denied the very justice of Christ's sacrifice. They refused to acknowledge their debt.

Here, then, is our answer to the heretics' (purported) iconoclasm: the crucifix as Gerard and his contemporaries saw it was an image not of pathos but of justice. This was the image of the suffering Savior that confronted Christians at the turn of the millennia of his Incarnation and his Passion, this the image on which they concentrated their devotions, this the image that some, like Leutard and the heretics of Périgueux and Arras (possibly), found so disturbing that they either broke its physical representations into pieces or proclaimed them idolatrous. This is the crucified Christ of the end of history—not the suffering Christ of Francis with whom the faithful might long to identify in his humanity, not the triumphant, royal, impassive Christ of the Romanesque *Majestas* whom they might hope to see coming in his glory,[103] but the terrible, weeping, bloody Christ of Judgment envisioned by the poet of the *Christ III* and by Caesarius of Arles, whom they could do naught but dread, his suffering a reproach to all who refused to look upon it and repent, his wounds a judgment against all who refused to acknowledge their debt and render unto God what was due. This was the Christ envisioned by Paschasius in his insistence on the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the bread and wine on the altar, and this was the Christ to whom the children of the millennium prayed as they looked, like Ademar, to the skies, wondering whether and when he would come, and demand: "Answer me."

There were a number of possible responses.

Signed with the Cross

Terrorized despair at the thought of the enormity of one's sinfulness was undoubtedly one. Skepticism was another. After all, even in the early eleventh century there were those who were Christians in name but "whose every act," as Bernard of Angers lamented,

> identifies them as opponents of Christ and enemies of truth. As things are now these men undergo no punishment, so they haven't the least dread of divine vengeance; on the contrary, they don't anticipate that it will ever come. They have no belief in the future judgment because they always succeed in their evil-doing, and after they get what they want they escape unharmed and unpunished. No trace of divine vengeance can be seen in their lives, and therefore they think that what they hear about Christ's return as avenger in the future is false.[104]

Another possible response was to reject the claims imposed by the image of Christ on the Cross, to deny the reproaches of the historical Christ by denying the historical existence of Christ (as did the heretics of Orléans) or to deny the need for help (as did the heretics of Arras). Another was to attempt to establish peace in earthly society so as to prepare the whole community for the advent of the heavenly kingdom (as with the Peace councils). Still another was to confront Christ's challenge directly, to go to Jerusalem to invite his judgment, to pray to meet him as he arrived on the clouds in his power and glory, and to risk taking upon oneself the vision of his wounds, a vision that, once achieved, would on the instant mark oneself forever as one of the damned. And yet another (and herein above all lay the potential for that mimetic identification with Christ that would characterize the Christocentric piety of the later Middle Ages) was to embrace one's own sinfulness through that very same vision, to meditate, like Abbot Richard of Saint-Vanne and the others who accompanied him to Jerusalem, in pious affect and with many tears on the historical actuality of Christ's pain. This last response was, of course, the ideal to which preachers had encouraged their flocks and to which devout laypeople and religious had aspired for centuries: penitence stimulated by meditation on Christ's suffering and realized as individual and social reform.[105]

And yet, as we have seen, with the turn of the millennial anniversary of that suffering, its recollection began to take on a new valence. The history into which the catechumen incorporated himself or herself at baptism and which the faithful confessed through their participation in the liturgy became at once more immediate and yet more fleeting, as the judgment to which it tended became at once (at least for the moment) more remote and yet individually (or so it seemed to the devout) increasingly imminent.[106] The paradox is characteristic of the transformation of eleventh-century Christianity as a whole, in itself a process wholly dependent upon the tradition of the preceding millennium, and yet for all that, distinct in the emphases that began to be placed on the role of the Church in Christian society and on the role of the individual Christian, both within that society and within the history of salvation.[107] If, in the Old English *Christ III* and the sermons of Caesarius of Arles, the sufferings of Christ may be read as indicative of the debt that Christ incurred against humankind as a whole, the prayers and meditations of the individual meditant, especially Peter Damian, John of Fécamp, and Anselm of Canterbury, begin to point more to a desire to share in Christ's sufferings, to take upon oneself the pain that Christ bore in his human, historical body. As we have seen, this movement from gratitude to mimesis began in the early decades of the eleventh century with meditation on the Cross, but it was in the middle decades of the century, following the millennium of the Passion, that it took on a notable urgency, coincident with the collapse of the formal Peace movement and the beginnings of the papal reform.

As one of the earliest and most eloquent witnesses to this transformation, Peter Damian (circa 1007–1072) was himself caught up (vigorously, albeit not without protest) in that institutional reform, serving in his capacity as cardinal bishop of Ostia as a "somewhat reluctant warhorse for the reform party in the Roman curia" for the last fifteen years of his life.[108] Nevertheless, it was as a reformer of the contemplative life that he initially attracted the attention of contemporaries, when first as a hermit-monk, then later as prior of the Camaldolese community at Fonte Avellana (founded circa 1000 in the Apennines of central Italy), he ardently promoted a stringent asceticism, requiring his monks to observe an almost perpetual fast and to go barefoot in both winter and summer, and his hermits, living high up on the slopes in huts and caves, to spend their lives in solitary recitation of the Psalter and the Divine Office, their regimen of prayer relieved only by silence, manual labor, and reading. Indeed, so strict was the observance of the community that even the servants (*famuli*) were to fast three days out of every week, and four during the two Lenten seasons; many even went so far as to rise early with the monks to attend the chanting of the night office.[109] The purpose of this life of penance, as Peter explained in a letter to Abbot Mainard of Pomposa (his so-called *De perfectione monachorum*), was twofold: on the one hand, to restrain the body and the will so as to free the mind for contemplation and the soul for union with God; and on the other, to prepare the soul for judgment by atoning for one's past and present sins.[110] The model for this life of self-mortification was, of course, Christ's own, as Benedict himself had pointed out in his *Rule* and as monks had argued for centuries; nevertheless, like the heretics who claimed to be living the purified Christo-mimetic life of the apostles, Peter and his fellow hermits challenged the traditional Benedictine interpretation of this model as one best realized in the cenobitic life of the monastery. Unlike the heretics, however, the hermits did

so not by rejecting the life of institutional obedience outright but, rather, by intensifying it in the life of the hermitage. In their view, it was only in solitude, silence, and stability that true mimesis could occur; it was only in solitude that the soul could hope to achieve even momentary perfection in its contemplation of God and its restoration to the image of its Creator.[111]

This emphasis on the ascetic striving of the individual soul was by no means unprecedented, going back as it did in the Christian tradition to the lives of the desert fathers, but it was given new force in the early eleventh century, particularly in northern France and central Italy, owing in no small part to Peter's own example and preaching. Recent scholars have tended to account for Peter's popularity and the relative appeal of the eremitic movement in one of two ways, adverting either to the growing economic affluence of medieval society and its corollary response, the ideal of voluntary poverty, or to the burden of communal responsibility placed on the individual monk by the increasingly elaborate ritual followed in the old-style Benedictine houses such as Cluny and its corollary, the desire for a more personal relationship with God.[112] In Peter's own writings, however, there is evident an even more pressing concern: a fear of impending and implacable judgment that might be averted only at the absolute cost of one's physical, social, and economic well-being. It was this fear, as I read it, that lay at the heart of his eremitic imitation of Christ and his unquenchable desire to participate in Christ's suffering. To understand why, it will be necessary to consider Peter's fear of judgment both in the context of the life of discipline that he advocated for his monks and hermits, and in the context of his own spiritual development. If the life of the hermit was, in fact, a life modeled on Christ's retreat into the wilderness prior to his testing by Satan, then it was a life not only of testing but also of judgment: it was a life intended to prepare the hermit for judgment in such a way that there would be nothing left for Christ to judge. The hermit would have already judged himself, and by the most rigorous standard available: that of Christ himself, who in suffering on the Cross offered himself as a sacrifice for humankind's sinfulness and who would come in judgment bearing his wounds as a reproach against all those who would presume to share in his glory without having shared in his nakedness and degradation.

On the one hand, the contemporary rise of a market economy and the dissonance that this development occasioned in attitudes toward the practice of gift-giving (and thus in attitudes toward Christ's gift of himself on the Cross) and, on the other hand, crises and tensions in Peter's own personal life (his orphanhood, his later education at the expense of his brother Damian, his success in a secular teaching career at a time when there was no spiritually acceptable model for such success) exacerbated, it may be argued, Peter's own sensitivity to the impossibility of satisfying one's debt to Christ for his sacrifice. But it is the form of ascetic discipline that Peter embraced and idealized that I would argue is most telling of his anxieties over the certainty of impending judgment, a form that in its novelty contemporaries viewed as often with disgust as with approbation but that would nevertheless become in later centuries stereotypical of the desire to imitate Christ in his physical agony. The form was, as is well-known, self-flagellation, and the popularity that it enjoyed in Peter's own day, not only among his own hermits but also, as he claimed in his most famous letter in defense of the practice, among layfolk of both town and countryside, was owing largely to Peter's own defense of the practice.[113] As we shall see, self-flagellation was for Peter and, presumably, for those among his contemporaries who accepted his defense of this novelty more than just an imitation of Christ as the crucified Savior. It was an imitation of Christ as Judge. It was the answer bar none to the reproaches that Christ delivered on Good Friday from the Cross, for in wounding oneself, one did more than simply share in Christ's pain. One also shared in his judgment—a judgment, moreover, for which there was precious little time to prepare.

"In every struggle with titillating pleasure," Peter advised Stephen, a fellow monk who had recently assumed the life of a hermit, "try always to evoke the memory of the grave. . . . For as you are aware that you will surely die, you will show the vices that assail you that you are now just as good as dead."[114] "How can it profit a man if today he is decked out in gold and gems and purple attire, frequently surrounded by massed troops," Peter asked the margrave Boniface of Tuscany, "if tomorrow perchance he be dragged naked, guilty and deprived of all consolation to the punishment of hell?"[115] "Who is not terrified, who is not shaken to his very roots," Peter exhorted the judge Bonushomo of Cesena, "by that statement of the Lord himself in the Gospel: 'Like lightning flashes from the east as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.' "[116] Christ's judgment—Peter emphasized in letter after letter, to monks, hermits, nuns, bishops, margraves, and judges—will be certain and swift. "Here we should note," Peter explained, commenting on Zephaniah 1:14–16 in a letter to the former Countess Blanche who had taken vows as a nun in Milan, "how close the prophet considers the day of terrible judgment to be and how swiftly it is approaching and [how] to indicate this speed with greater emphasis he piles up words that express acceleration."[117] And again to the judge Bonushomo, on the same passage: "Nor should you think that this day will be long in coming, since the prophet proclaimed it to be already at hand for an age long before ours, as if it were already at the door: 'The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and comes with speed. . . .' "[118] And what would happen once that day arrived? There would be no escape:

> Now then, when we arrive at that last judgment to be hauled before the bench of the judge who cannot be deceived by the concealment of crimes, nor corrupted by some bribe to win impunity; when he begins to reveal all secrets and display not only our deeds and our words, but also our very thoughts, what will we do in the presence of the majesty of such a judge?

> What excuse can we offer? With what kind of defense can we clear ourselves? What sort of repentance can assist us, since when we were still in the flesh we held repentance in contempt? Which good works will protect us, since there were none in this life that we performed? To which apostles or to which other saints can we turn for protection, whose words and examples we despised? Perhaps some bodily weakness will excuse them. But the example of all the saints will cry out against such an excuse, who while alive conquered the weakness of the flesh, demonstrating that what they did we also could do, especially since it was not by their own strength that they resisted sin, but by the help of a merciful God. . . . What answer will they give if the Lord should say to them: "If you were able, why did you not resist the allurements of sin? If you were not able, why did you not seek my help against sin? Or, when you were wounded, why did you not use the remedy for your wound by doing penance?" Will they not be silent at these objections? Whatever excuse they may give, he will say to those who are found wanting: "Bind them hand and foot; turn them out into the dark, the place of wailing and grinding of teeth" [Matthew 22:13].[119]

In short, Peter was, as F. J. E. Raby somewhat hyperbolically observed, oppressed by "the terror of Judgement . . . the flames of the last day seemed to be already kindled against a world of sinners. . . . He lived in a world of phantasms, where the natural order did not exist, where the devil went forth as a raging lion, and the wickedness of men was ripe for judgement."[120] Our immediate concern here is why.

Delicately invoked, one approach that immediately suggests itself is to appeal to psychology—in other words, to the circumstances of Peter's own life, particularly his childhood. The certainty of doom and the need to answer for one's sinfulness hung over Peter from the very moment of his birth, or so at least he (apparently) recalled in later life in conversations with his close friend, devoted disciple and fellow hermit John of Lodi (d. 1105).[121] This is Peter's story as John tells it in the vita that he wrote of his saintly master soon after his death. At his birth, one of Peter's brothers had berated his mother, "For shame! Look, there are already so many of us that the house is scarcely able to hold us, and see, how badly matched are the crowd of heirs and the straitened inheritance!" This outburst so enraged Peter's mother that, "inflamed by a fit of feminine malice" (possibly a post-partum depression, possibly a determined attempt at infanticide), she refused to feed the infant and, wringing her hands, declared herself unfit to live. Thus disinherited from the maternal breast that was then his only possession (*et quod possidere solum posset, a possessione materni pectoris exhaeredet*), the baby was on the verge of wasting away with hunger and cold when one of the serving women (ironically, given Peter's later career, the wife of a priest[122]) intervened and, rebuking his mother for risking her soul with the sin of infanticide, coaxed her into caring for him by nursing the baby herself. Thereafter, Peter's mother, restored to her maternal self, cared for the child lovingly, until her own death and that of his father left Peter at the mercy of his siblings.

Orphaned almost as soon as he was weaned, Peter was grudgingly raised by one of his brothers (apparently the same one who had been so angered by his birth) and that brother's wife, who fed him with slops, clothed him with rags, kicked him and beat him, and eventually turned him out as a swineherd to live with the pigs. Peter's foster parents likewise seem to have raised him with the story of his unfortunate birth, thus reinforcing the sense of unworthiness and debt with which he would remember his childhood. He was rescued from this life of involuntary austerity at age twelve when he was placed in the care of another of his brothers, Damian, who lavished upon him such affection "that it seemed to exceed a father's love." This brother provided generously for his education in the best schools of the day, thus launching Peter on a promising secular career as a master of rhetoric. Owing to the excellence of his teaching, Peter soon attracted many students and earned from their fees an abundance of money (*divitiarum copia*).[123] And yet he could not, it seems, shake the conviction that he was unworthy of the life of elegance and comfort that he now enjoyed, nor the certainty that judgment was near. We should note that, given the probable chronology of Peter's education and teaching career, he was by this point age twenty-eight or thereabouts, the year of the Incarnation 1035.[124]

"Why," he then asked himself, "do I delight in the things of the present, as the flesh suggests and the age demands? Rather than clinging to these perishable things, would it not be better for me to renounce them and look forward to better things?" Whereupon he began, little by little, to remove himself from the study of worldly matters and to think more upon the goods of eternity, all the while subjecting himself to fasts and other austerities by which he might further remove himself from the pleasures of the present day. One day, while still undecided as to the course he should take in leaving the world (and how to do so without the interference of his friends and family), Peter was visited by two hermits from the community of the Holy Cross at Fonte Avellana. Impressed by their conversation and by the holy reputation of their abbot, he wanted to send a gift back with them, and he offered them a silver cup (*scyphum*), which they refused, saying that it was too heavy to carry and that they would rather take back something lighter (that is, his promise to enter their order). Hearing which, Peter was astonished, asking himself: "Who are these men who, while they seem poor and destitute, nevertheless so look down upon the things of this world that they contemn even the minimal labor of carrying an optimal vase (*vas*)? Should I not say that they are truly free and truly blessed, who are distinguished by such strength of ambition to have excused the yoke from their necks, and by such excellence of mind to have trodden under foot the vain pomp of the world?"[125] He converted on the spot, spending the next forty days in a cell and entering Fonte Avellana immediately thereafter.

At the risk of a certain degree of oversimplification, it seems reasonable to suggest that Peter's childhood left him with a lingering sense of personal distress that may have manifested itself in later years in a concern to make amends for living a life that he felt, at some level, he did not deserve. The generosity of his brother Damian only exacerbated the feeling, as, we may imagine, Peter strove all the harder to deserve this generosity by applying himself diligently to his studies. In the end, however, the pressure was too great: having been first loved by his parents, then orphaned and abused, by the time he was taken up by Damian it seems the damage had been done. He could not in good conscience accept even the gift of his livelihood from his students. When the hermits from Fonte Avellana refused his gift, he was not offended but liberated: he needed no longer to be grateful for his success. Given the limitations of the evidence, it would be imprudent to push this psychological hypothesis too far; nevertheless, coupled with the fact that Peter grew to maturity during the very decades leading up to the millennium of Christ's Passion, the miserable conditions of his childhood (as he remembered them) may have inclined him at this time more so even than his older contemporaries (like, for example, Rodulfus Glaber) to meditations on the possibility of an impending End, meditations that would ultimately convince him that the only safety lay in absolute retreat from the world and the only freedom in absolute poverty.

Another possible approach to Peter's concern with judgment is to look to the social and economic conditions in which he lived and from which he attempted to escape through his embrace of the life of the hermitage. Here we are on somewhat firmer ground, owing above all to the now classic work of Lester Little on the problem of religious poverty and the rise of the profit economy in eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe. To be sure, it is now almost obligatory (and not always to the purpose) to invoke the economy and the marketplace in discussions of the mechanics of medieval religiosity; nevertheless, it is still valuable to recall that in Peter's lifetime, the significance and the lived experience of such metaphors were undergoing an important transformation. For many like Peter, the traditional early-medieval economy of gifts made in money, precious objects, or land to those admired for their religious vocation (monks and nuns), similarly the obligation that these gifts placed upon the religious for the souls of the givers, now seemed less a commendable support for the life of prayer, more the greatest obstacle thereto.[126] These men (and women?) perceived money in particular as a terrible distraction binding the soul to this world rather than to Christ; but all gifts, even those exchanged between clerics, were now suspect as bribes (recall that it was this generation that launched the attack on, as Peter put it in one of his earliest letters, "the dragon of simony").[127] Little associates this pecuniary anxiety with the contemporary rise of the marketplace and the emergence of a profit economy, and he points by example to Peter's own encounter with the marketplace in the years before his conversion, during which Peter worked in Ravenna as a teacher of rhet-

oric.[128] In Little's view, Peter's conversion to the religious life "turned on an immediate, cultural issue, . . . namely that of monetary payment for teachers": although there survived in the urban schools of northern Italy an ideal of secular learning, there was available at the time "no ethical justification for paying money to teachers," the standard model of instruction being that of the monastery, where "an elder monk [was] charged with imparting a traditional literary corpus to novices and younger monks," not that of the city, where students intent on a secular life might learn the arts and skills that would enable them to profit more in this world than in the next.[129]

For Peter (and presumably, for others like him), the financial success now available in the guise of profit only increased the tension between the life of the mind and the life of the world; as noted above, even before his conversion, master Peter was so wracked by guilt that he preferred a life of austerity to the life of (relative) elegance and comfort he was able to afford. A story related by John of Lodi foreshadows the anxiety that Peter would later feel over the possession and use of money, either earned or acquired accidentally through inheritance or gift. One day while working with the pigs, Peter by chance found a gold coin (*nummus*). Suddenly rich, he spent a long time thinking over all the pleasurable things that he might buy with it; in the end, however, he was divinely inspired to forsake transitory delights for a measure of eternity, and he gave the coin to a priest to say a Mass for his father.[130] In proper hagiographic form, the boy is depicted here as the father of the saint, thinking more of the future than the present, of the eternal than the ephemeral, and yet, Little argues, the story has the ring of truth: Peter never resolved the tension that he felt between his deserts as a child and the accidents of fortune. As an adult, when given the gift of a silver vase (*vasculum*) on one of his journeys as legate for Pope Nicholas II (1058–1061), even when the abbot who pressed it upon him insisted that it was not a bribe, only a gift made in friendship, and that it could be used to help support two new monasteries that Peter had recently established, Peter found himself unable to live with having accepted the vase. "I was so confused," he told Dominic and his brothers at the hermitage of Suavicinum, "by the cloud that hung over me because of this gift, which, like a mass of worms, never ceased gnawing at my innards, that in all conscience I would have preferred to be struck down with leprosy than bear the wound inflicted by this present."[131]

Gifts, from this perspective, bound the recipient to the giver in a way that Peter found intolerable, precisely because they could never be adequately repaid. Gifts were always already bribes, attempts to buy either favor or affection, and for Peter in particular such exchanges could end only in disappointment. His gift of the coin for the soul of his father did not bring back his father; his brother Damian's gift of an education could not offset the loneliness that Peter had experienced while growing up; neither could Peter ever recompense Damian for his rescue

from the pigs (except, it seems, by honoring him through the adoption of his name). But for Peter and his contemporaries, it was not only gifts of money or precious metals that provoked distress; it was gifts of all kinds, including the gift of salvation that God had given to humankind. From this perspective, Christ's sacrifice of his own life on the Cross could no longer simply be accepted as a gift made in love for which he expected only gratitude; it was now perceived as a loan due to be repaid. This transformation from gift to profit, from treasure to price, would reach its crisis point in Anselm of Canterbury's reformulation of the doctrine of the atonement (the debt owed by humankind to God being so great, only a God-man could satisfy it), but for Peter and his contemporaries the only hope seemed to lie in finding some way to make good on the price for one's salvation, the fear being that once one was called to judgment, there would be no way of answering the debt.

How, then, was one to satisfy God, the creator of all things visible and invisible? With what coin could one possibly pay? Clearly, in nothing that would pass away with this world, only in what one could carry on one's person after death. And what would one bring to the tribunal of the Judge at the Resurrection, other than one's soul? Only the body, now raised and ensouled, that same body in which one had lived in this world. It followed, therefore, that the only acceptable coin was the body in which one had been born, the only true possession in this life the flesh, the only possible recompense the sacrifice of one's physical self. If Christ had paid the price for humankind's salvation in the coin of his body, how much more ought the sinner to repay his or her benefactor in the coin of his or her own? As Bishop Gerard had explained to the heretics at Arras, the sight of the crucifix stamped Christians with the image of their Redeemer so that they might recall how much they owed. If, then, Peter lived in terror of the coming judgment, he did so as a debtor whose only coin was his own person, made in the image of his Creator. The problem, as he saw it, was how best to purify it so that the Judge would recognize it as his own, rendered unto God in payment for God's gift.

Embracing a life of cenobitic—or even better, eremitic—retreat was a good beginning. It was here, according to Peter, in the hermit's cell, that "wondrous workshop of spiritual effort," that the human soul would be able to "[restore] within itself the image of its creator and [regain] its original purity," from here that a man would be caused "to return to his origins," called back "from the depths of his exile to the heights of his former dignity."

> O cell [Peter apostrophized in a letter written some decade or so after his entry into the eremitic life], storehouse of heavenly merchants, where all those wares are found for which we gain possession of the land of the living. O happy exchange, where earthly wares are bartered for heavenly ones, passing things for those that are eternal. Blessed indeed the fair where one can buy eternal life, for whose purchase even the little that we have is a fair price; where a short span of bodily affliction can buy the heavenly banquet. . . . O eremitic life, you are the bath of souls, the death of sin, and the purgatory of all that is foul. You purify the hidden places of the soul, you wash away the squalor of sin, and cause men's souls to shine with angelic brightness.[132]

According to Peter, it was in the hermit's cell that one might most profitably (metaphor intended) pursue the contemplative life, keeping one's mind at all times wholly focused, "pierced through by the continual dread of this event [the Judgment]," never "to delight in the enticements of the flesh," and maintaining always "the steady pace of an arduous way of life." In this way, Peter assured the hermit Adam, "as you prudently examine yourself in your own judgment, you may appear before the tribunal of the eternal Judge, not to be judged anew, but as one already judged and purified in the process; and that because through confession you have stood in the presence of the Judge, you may not be compelled to undergo the severe examination of the Judgment, but with the judges and the senators of the land, as a judge yourself you may joyfully be conducted into glory."[133]

Nevertheless, even in the monastery and the hermit's cell there were temptations to be overcome, enticements of the flesh to resist (particularly "gluttony"), and sins for which even the most rigorous ascetic must atone.[134] The hermit might indeed be "as good as dead," his cell a tomb "set apart from the troubles and vexations of this life,"[135] but as long as he sojourned in this life of the flesh, the certainty of his favorable judgment, of his being able to cover his debt, would be at risk. Thus even in solitude, silence, and stability there was room for improvement, room for further perfection of one's self-examination and judgment, room for further purification of the coin of one's body and soul. To the minimum of fasting and the psalmody of the canonical hours, therefore, the stronger and "more perfect" brothers of Peter's own community were accustomed to add other spiritual exercises: wearing iron corselets or bands next to their flesh, praying with arms extended in the form of a cross, genuflecting and beating the ground with their hands, and, most notoriously, beating themselves with scourges, sometimes one in each hand, timing their discipline through the recitation of multiple psalters.[136]

Peter, it seems, was not the only one of his contemporaries oppressed by the need to do extraordinary penance—by the fear of judgment and the certainty of impending doom. There was one hermit in particular whom Peter especially admired for the rigor of his self-mortification and whose practices he cited frequently, praising them as an edifying example, "his life . . . a better tool for edification when he preaches in living deeds, than some sterile language that foolishly weighs each word in the neat balance of classical usage." This man, Dominic (d. 1060), nicknamed Loricatus for the *lorica,* or iron corselet, that he wore "like a hairshirt or like a woolen garment" next to his flesh—in addition to the four and

then later eight iron bands (*circuli ferrei*) that he bound about his hips, shoulders, and legs—was given daily, even in old age, to reciting two psalters while standing and taking the discipline, "never once sitting down nor resting for a moment from flogging himself in an unbelievably fervent mood." Sometimes he even added to the scourge a hundred genuflections (*metanea*) for every fifteen psalms, all the while bearing his multiple burden of iron.

One evening, according to Peter, Dominic came to him after Vespers and said, "Master [Dominic being a member of Peter's community at this time], today I did something I do not remember doing up to now: I completed eight psalters in the usual way during the course of a day and a night." And indeed, "his whole appearance seemed to be so beaten with scourges and so covered with livid welts, as if he had been bruised like barley in a mortar." Dominic explained that he was able to accomplish this feat because he did not recite the psalms verbatim but, rather, ran vigorously through their meaning "mentally."[137] On another occasion, when Dominic learned that Peter had written about his habitually completing nine psalters in this fashion, Dominic was conscience-stricken lest he be praised for something he did not know whether he could in fact bring off: "Therefore, on Wednesday I took off my clothes, and with a switch in both hands, stayed up the whole night and did not stop chanting and whipping myself until on the following day, after finishing twelve psalters in this fashion, I slowly dragged myself through the thirteenth up to the psalm, 'Blessed are they' [Psalm 31]."[138] As a consequence of this perpetual discipline, Dominic's body was so "emaciated from fasting and so worn by the weight of the rough corselet, that it seemed to have taken on the dark complection of an Ethiopian," and even in death it remained "whole and incorrupt" for nine days while buried in the ground in his cell, until, when Peter arrived at the hermitage where Dominic had spent his last years, he had the body reburied in the chapter room, "as was only proper."[139]

Contemporaries were not necessarily favorably impressed. Indeed, some were downright horrified, especially those familiar with the particular austerities practiced by the members of Peter's community (including, above all, Pope Stephen IX, who as Frederick of Lorraine had served as abbot of Monte Cassino and who, as pope, appointed Peter to the cardinalate), and they condemned the discipline as a "foreign teaching," a "novel practice of penance never heard of before in all the ages past."[140] Flagellation per se was not the issue. After all, Benedict himself had prescribed the use of the rod as a punishment for monks who had proven themselves intractable to other forms of correction.[141] The laws of the Church likewise provided for the use of flogging.[142] And there were precedents in the administration of penance, both as a form of direct penalty (as, for example, in an old Irish penitential of circa 800 that prescribed the punishment for lying as "a hundred blows with a thong on the hand" if unintentional, seven hundred blows if deliberate) and as an acceptable substitute for more prolonged remedies (as, for example,

in an early-eighth-century penitential attributed to Bede that equated "fifty strokes or fifty psalms" to one day on bread and water, "that is, in winter"; "in autumn and spring, one hundred strokes or a hundred psalms; [and] in summer, one hundred and fifty psalms or strokes" were to be reckoned as the equivalent of a day).[143] Nor was penitential discipline as such in question. There had always been in the monastic tradition a certain degree of pessimism about the monks' ability to do battle unarmed against the wiles of the devil, and for centuries, saints in the tradition of Martin of Tours (d. 397), Germanus of Auxerre (d. 446), Benedict of Nursia (d. 547), and Benedict of Aniane (d. 821) had believed it necessary to subject themselves to the austerities of fasting, sleep deprivation, minimal clothing, manual labor, silence, meditation, and perpetual prayer so as to strengthen their wills against the temptations of this life and thereby to avoid falling into sin.[144]

Nevertheless, the novel, external, and active, albeit voluntary (and Peter was always careful to stress that it was indeed wholly voluntary and in no way required by his *Rule*), self-mortification of hermits like Dominic went, or so contemporaries caustically (and correctly) argued, well beyond these traditional, internal, and comparatively passive afflictions of the physical self—beyond mortification as hitherto practiced by medieval saints (with the exception of certain holy men in Ireland); beyond abstract, meditative imitation of Christ's suffering as enjoined on the faithful since antiquity; beyond the need to curb the corporeal appetites so as to free the mind for contemplation of God; beyond the willingness of the early medieval saints to mortify the flesh so as to harden the body in anticipation of the grave; beyond the willingness of the martyrs to die rather than renounce their faith in Christ.[145] Unsurprisingly, self-torture as advocated by Peter thus seemed, at least to its contemporary clerical opponents, at best excessive, at worst spiritually and institutionally catastrophic, and they sought, like the clerics of Florence and the monk Peter Cerebrosus, to wipe it out: "If this thing is once allowed," they argued, "if it is sanctioned and observed, all the sacred canons will surely be destroyed, the precepts of the ancient fathers will disappear, and, as the Jew said, the traditions of our fathers will be reduced to nothing."[146]

In his defense of Dominic's and his fellow hermits' practices, Peter responded in kind. Far from being a novelty hitherto unknown to the tradition, he averred, flagellation was part and parcel of the evangelical, apostolic, and catholic past. According to Peter, those men like Dominic who had the strength to embrace a life of unrelieved penitential discipline were heroes, nay martyrs, their austerities sanctioned not only by the law of the Church but also, and more important, by the example of Christ, the apostles, and the early martyrs, "[for] according to the gospel, did not our Redeemer undergo scourging? Did not Paul five times receive forty lashes less one? Were not all the apostles beaten? Did not the holy martyrs experience abuse and scourging?" To the objection that the hermits' self-discipline was unprecedented, "something novel, and hence something reprehensible," Peter held up the example

of the lives of the holy fathers, some of whom did "penance for their sins by standing in thornbushes for one and two weeks, others by rigidly extending their arms in the air from sunup to sundown, and others by constantly hiding in empty caves."[147] To the objection that the saints did not flog themselves but were flogged by others, Peter held up the absence of persecutors in his own day: "If I should wish to suffer martyrdom for Christ and do not have the opportunity because the time of battle is over, by afflicting myself with blows, I at least show my heart's fervent desire."[148] And to the objection that the hermits' self-discipline was unnecessary (and this point is particularly telling), Peter held up the custom then prevalent among priests of fixing certain amounts of money as a substitute for the years of fasting prescribed for certain sins by the penitentials: "if this should be allowed for laymen so that they might redeem their sins by almsgiving, lest in the case of sudden death . . . they depart this life without receiving absolution for their sins, what should be prescribed for the monk who has perhaps received a long penance required by his sins, and who long ago renounced the money by which he might commute it?"[149] He chided the monk Peter Cerebrosus (who had spoken out against self-inflicted discipline with, as Damian said, "biting hatred") for condoning the discipline administered in chapter of up to as many as fifty blows even for slight offenses, and yet condemning the multiplication of such blows up to a thousand "and beyond" in the service of devotion: "For it is really absurd to freely accept a minimal part of a thing and to condemn a greater measure."[150] Just as we sin both in body and in mind, Peter argued, such devout practices punish both the flesh and the spirit, cleansing the flesh of the filth that it has contracted through sin and purifying the mind of the thoughts that have led us into sin. Such practices, Peter concluded, should not be mocked as foolish and stupid but rather held in honor, just as they do honor to God who was willing to suffer similar indignities for the sake of humanity.

It may be helpful to pause here and ask the inevitable question: Was it Peter, in his praise of self-mortification, or his opponent Peter Cerebrosus who was, as Damian put it, "speaking and writing . . . madness emerging from an unsound brain, and fury [against the flesh] from a mind deprived of reason"?[151] In answer, we may as historians concur with Patricia McNulty, who holds that "it is not our task to assess the relative merits of the arguments for and against this practice," only to deal with Peter's justification of it, but even in this scholarly refusal to judge, there is a certain degree of censure. It is difficult for most modern readers to shake the conviction that self-mortification practiced to the extremes described by Peter is at root anything other than pathological, that it can have no justification outside of spiritual and psychological disorder, that it is indeed "madness."[152] At this point it is almost impossible not to recall the scathing attacks on medieval asceticism current since the Protestant Reformation and reiterated almost up to the present day even by scholars so sympathetic as William James—with, of course, the caveat that many in Peter's own day viewed Dominic's self-discipline

with much the same loathing.[153] In mitigation, scholars like Owen Blum have pointed to Peter's own insistence that no monk or hermit should take upon himself more than he was able to bear. Peter himself had succumbed early in his religious life to illness and severe headaches brought on by his extraordinary fasting, and he repeatedly cautioned his own monks and hermits that they should be wary of giving themselves over to superfluity in their use of the discipline; moderation was to be preferred to unlimited fervor.[154]

More assertively, many recent scholars have argued that self-torture as practiced by Dominic and praised by Peter should be read not as hitherto, as a morbid or unbalanced masochism disconnected from true spiritual concerns, but, rather, as a potentially positive response to the physical self and to the capacity of the human body to function as a site of spiritual realization. These scholars, Caroline Walker Bynum most prominent among them, have tended to view medieval ascetic discipline (even in its extremes) on the whole charitably, less as an expression of a dualistic hatred of body and more as an exploration of boundaries between body and person, person and God.[155] It is this latter evaluation with which medievalists are at present most familiar: ascetic suffering, even excruciatingly painful suffering, was for its practitioners an expression of love for the God-man who himself willingly suffered to the limits of human endurance; self-inflicted suffering was none other than the expression of a desire to suffer with Christ, to fuse with him through the experience of physical pain, and to share with him the humiliation and agony that he embraced so as to eradicate the inevitable consequences of human sin. Indeed, from this latter perspective, Damian was no exception. As he told the former countess, now nun Blanche, "whoever constantly embraces Christ in the secret recesses of the heart, whoever continually meditates on the mystery of his passion with the purpose of imitating him, for such a one Christ surely becomes a sachet of myrrh and, according to the words of sacred Scripture, Christ resides between her breasts" [Song of Songs 1:12].[156] Nevertheless, we do well not to dismiss too rapidly the contemporary objections raised against meditative practices that went beyond the relatively gentle—or as Giles Constable has put it, warm and tender—recollection of Christ's suffering that Peter enjoined upon the nuns of Milan.[157] Blanche (and here we may reflect briefly upon the different expectations Damian placed on persons of the female sex in their imitation of Christ) bore Christ as Bridegroom, set like a seal upon her heart, glowing "internally with the fire of his love," and upon her arm, "so that it earnestly persist in good works."[158] Dominic bore Christ as the crucified Judge, his body so tortured that it bore "the stigmata of Jesus," for he had "fixed the sign (*vexillum*) of the cross not only on his forehead [at his baptism], but printed it on every part of his body." Indeed, "[his] whole life was for him a Good Friday crucifixion, but now [and this was the purpose of his self-affliction] with festive splendor he celebrates the eternal glory of the resurrection."[159]

Constable comments that here, in Dominic's vita, we encounter "the first known reference to what may have been the reproduction of Christ's stigmata on a living person," although it is hard to know how descriptively Peter intended the allusion to Paul's stigmata (Galatians 6:17).[160] What is clear is that Dominic's self-mortification left him marked head to toe with wounds, wounds that Peter perceived as directly analogous to Christ's. More important, it was these same wounds that, according to Peter, had assured Dominic's entry into heavenly glory: "Now he sparkles amid the stones that flash like fire in the heavenly Jerusalem, now he lives in triumph with eternal praise adorned with the badge (*titulus*) of his victory, and exults in happy union with the blessed."[161] To the traditional ascetic paradox of strengthening the will against sin by weakening the body, therefore, Peter added the imperative of time,[162] and he encouraged his monks and hermits through the example of athletes such as Dominic to be mindful of how very little time they had remaining in which to prepare themselves for death and judgment. From this perspective, austerity in itself might not be enough, particularly if the monk or hermit found himself bound by sins committed before conversion to a lengthy penance that he might not, in this life, have time to complete.[163] (We may recall here that Peter himself entered the religious life not as an oblate but as a convert at age twenty-eight or thereabouts.) Galvanized by the fear of impending and yet uncertain death, the members of Peter's community voluntarily compressed their penances with Masses (if they were priests), psalters, or "blows of the discipline," it being reckoned that they could satisfy one year of penance by saying twenty-five Masses or chanting twenty-five psalters, or by inflicting upon themselves three thousand blows.[164] By combining blows with psalters, they could compress lived years of penance even further: it was Dominic's custom during Lent to perform a hundred years of penance in six days by chanting twenty psalters while taking the discipline, each ten psalms counting for a thousand blows. One Lent he even asked Peter for permission to take on a thousand years of penance, "and completed nearly all of them before the season of fast was over."[165]

Although Peter insisted in his regulations for the community that the brothers were not obliged to engage in prostrations, the use of the discipline, hand-slaps (*palmatae*), praying with arms extended, or other such practices "of holy fervor," there was one exception. On the death of a brother, they were all required to undertake a seven-day fast, during which they would each take the discipline seven times, each time for a thousand blows; perform seven hundred genuflections (*metanea*), and recite thirty psalters "in the usual way," while the priests each celebrated seven Masses privately, in addition to the thirty Masses celebrated by the community: "No one is allowed to alter this regulation in our hermitage, and this custom regarding the dead shall be forever maintained strictly and inviolably." Moreover, if the brothers discovered that the deceased had died without completing a penance, they would immediately divide it among themselves and "no matter how large it [might] be, gladly finish it in a short time, using various methods of mortification." In this way, Peter explained, the suffering of others might be commuted into payment for the debt still owed by the dead, "the balance (*libra*) [being] paid from the abundance of fraternal charity."[166] Pain was currency, money for sins. The anxiety was clearly whether it could ever be enough.

For Peter, this was the real source of the discipline's consummate appeal: not (only) love for Christ but (even more urgently) fear of the judgment of Christ. Insofar as the flagellants bore upon their bodies the Cross of Christ, so they would discharge their debt to their Redeemer, a debt that might otherwise remain forever unpaid. Having lived their whole lives, like Dominic, as a crucifixion, they would be marked by the Cross as Christ's own, their bodies stamped through with the image of their Creator and Savior. "This," Peter told his brothers in a sermon for the Invention of the Cross, "is the Cross which we must imprint on all our actions, all our behavior. This is the Cross which we are commanded to bear after the Lord daily. He who carries it truly shares in the passion of his Redeemer. This emblem (*signum*) will separate the sheep from the goats in the last judgement. And the judge, who knows not the wicked, will recognize the mark as his own."[167]

But there was more. Not only did flagellation enable the sinner to discharge the balance of his debts, it also enabled him to act as judge against himself prior to the judgment, thus removing the need for Christ to judge him at all. For Peter, flagellation and its attendant practices were more than simply extreme forms of penance; they were judgment itself, and in taking them upon his body, the hermit did more than just prepare himself for judgment by expiating his present guilt. He became one with Christ as his Judge, his own body offered as the very price of his redemption:

> O what a delightful, what a wonderful sight, when the celestial Judge looks forth from heaven, and man punishes (sacrifices) himself below for his sins! There the accused himself, presiding over the tribunal of his inmost being, holds a three-fold office: in his heart he constitutes himself the judge, in his body the accused, and with his hands he rejoices to hold forth as executioner, as if the holy penitent were saying to God: "There is no need, Lord, for you to order your officer to punish me, nor is it necessary for you to strike me with the fear of the vengeance of a just trial. I have laid hands upon myself, I have taken up my own defence, and I have offered myself in place of my sins." . . . This is the victim (*hostia*) which is sacrificed while still alive, born away by the angels and offered to God; thus the victim (*victima*) of the human body is invisibly commingled with that unique sacrifice that was offered on the altar of the cross. And thus every sacrifice is stowed away in one treasure, namely both that which each and every member and that which the head of all the elect has offered [to God].[168]

To refuse to take this judgment on oneself was to do worse than sin. It was to mock Christ himself in his nakedness and degradation:

> Say therefore whoever you are [Peter chided the monks at Monte Cassino], you who in your pride mock at the passion of Christ, you who in disdaining to be stripped naked and scourged with him deride his nakedness and all his torments as trifles and vanities and the absurdities of dreams, what will you do when you see him who was stripped in public and hung on the cross come shining in the glory of his majesty, surrounded on all sides by the angelic hosts, encompassed by the immensity of his incomparable splendor, ineffably more glorious than all things visible or invisible? What, I say, will you do when you behold him whose ignominy you now despise sitting on the fiery throne of the highest tribunal, and judging terribly the whole human race with the proper weighing of justice? Then the sun will be obscured, the moon will be wrapped up in shadows, the stars will fall from the heaven, the foundations of the mountains will tremble, the heavens will flash with mournful rays, the earth and air will burn up together in flames raging on high, and all the elements will be confounded together. And you, adorned, softly and becomingly clad, what will you do amidst these [terrible things]? With what effrontery, with what boldness of presumption will you hope to share in his glory whose disgrace and dishonor you disdained to bear?[169]

Once again, as with the heretics who refused to look upon the crucifixes, the sight of Christ in his suffering becomes a prerequisite of judgment. For Peter, to refuse in one's mistaken—indeed, diabolical—modesty to appear naked before one's fellows and to suffer Christ's ignominy and pain was to refuse to look upon Christ himself. Adam and Eve appeared naked in the garden; human beings were created naked and lived so until they hearkened to the serpent. To be veiled before God was, therefore, according to Peter, to refuse to bear the *improperia* of Christ; more important, it was to delude oneself (as Bernard of Angers had suggested many did) that Judgment would not come.

This was Peter's response to the Good Friday reproaches: to gaze without flinching upon Christ in his nakedness, to become one without hesitation with Christ in his humiliation and his pain, and to bear on one's body without shame the wounds that Christ bore so as to appear at the Judgment with Christ, having become one with him in suffering, now to become one with him in glory. Thus Peter prayed, prostrate on Good Friday before the Cross of his Judge and Lord:

> Lord Jesus Christ, mediator between God and humankind, you who assumed true flesh from the chaste viscera of blessed Mary, and who for our salvation offered the lamb of your immaculate body to God the Father on the altar of the cross in the odor of sweetness, and who made of yourself medicine for the human race so that it might vomit forth the poison of the ancient transgression; absolve me exceedingly unhappy and miserable, bound by innumerable chains of sins. Behold, Lord, I have prostrated myself before the banner (*vexillum*) of your vivifying cross, and as a suppliant I adore the new and unheard of triumph of your victory. For you are the priest and the sacrifice (*hostia*); you are the redeemer [the one who releases the debtor from his debt by paying his creditor] and the price with which the debt is paid (*pretium*). Grant, most pious Lord, as if at the very moment of your passion that I might see you hanging in the torment of the cross. Grant that I might receive the blood of highest price (*pretiosissimum*) dripping in my mouth. O blessed sacrifice (*hostia*) that breaks asunder the walls of hell, and opens the door of the heavenly kingdom to the faithful! O weight of our price (*pretium*) weighed on the balance of the cross, on account of which the ancient exactor weeps over the chirograph of our debt now cut to pieces! I see you with my internal eyes, my Redeemer, affixed with the nails of the cross. I see you wounded with new wounds. I hear you saying to the thief in a clear voice: "Today you will be with me in paradise" [Luke 23:43]. And thus I implore [you], by that mystery of your health-bringing passion and death; I beg [you], I say, with tears, by this sacrament of our redemption, do not cut me off, as I deserve, from the society of your elect, but constitute me in the glory of paradise with that same blessed thief. Lord, sign my soul with the impression of this holy cross, purify me with this virtue. Thus through this [sign] deliver me wholly and entirely from your justice, so that there may be found in me no share whatsoever in the adversary, and so that when you are coming in judgment, when this distinguished [sign] of divine virtue will be shining brightly in heaven, I shall be found signed with this mark (*stigma*), so that having been configured to the Crucified in punishment, I shall deserve to be the companion of the Arisen in glory, you who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.[170]

Here the fear of judgment has been transmuted into a willingness to look upon Christ at the very moment of his agony—and more, a willingness to be gazed upon in one's own wounds configured to Christ at his death. Whereas, for Caesarius or the poet of the *Christ III*, Christ's pain is offered to the viewer as a sign of damnation, as a rebuke to the sinner who has through his or her sin only inflicted more pain on the Savior, in Peter's prayer pain becomes the vehicle for identification with Christ. Christ cannot, Peter implies, condemn him for the pain that Christ suffered on his account because Peter, the sinner, has willingly taken it upon himself. He bears the sign of Christ's own wounds (*stigmata*) on his body; thus at the Judgment he will merit to rise again with Christ in glory. To Christ's demand from

the cross, "Answer me," Peter responds with his body, in pain: "I have paid my debt to you, my Redeemer; see, here are the wounds upon my body; see, I bear your cross upon my soul. I have sacrificed myself in return for the sacrifice that you made of yourself. I have judged myself, you need not judge me. Let me enter into your kingdom." Thus the child of the millennium begs to be restored to his inheritance, to the security that he lost with the death of his parents, to the future that he lost when the Judgment did not come.

The only problem now, at least for Peter, was not whether but how Christ himself would respond.

A Priesthood Apart

Christ at the historical millennium of his passion was imagined above all as an awesome Judge, his suffering imitable but ultimately inaccessible—or so it seems Peter Damian and Dominic *Loricatus* discovered in the extremities of their repetitious and self-inflicted pain. Their pain was like Christ's pain, but it was not identical with his pain, and thus, there was always a lingering doubt as to whether their pain could ever be enough, whether their suffering could ever be sufficient to counterbalance the debt they owed to Christ for his being willing to suffer humiliation and execution on their behalf. The nonevent of the Apocalypse occasioned and exacerbated this sense of loss, of resolution deferred and meaning suspended: having grown to maturity with the expectation that such an event was possible within their lifetime, the men and women of the mid-eleventh century were oppressed (as well as energized) by a nagging dread. As noted earlier, even at this time there were those who happily ignored any such meditations, who never for a moment believed that judgment had been or ever would be imminent; nevertheless, for many, including a number of the most prominent ecclesiastics of the day, the passing of the millennium of Christ's Nativity and especially that of his Passion marked a crisis in the imaginative emplotment of their lives. To the responses of denial and retreat, therefore, we may add aggressive engagement with the world, particularly through the reform of its political and legal institutions. Like Peter Damian, the monk Hildebrand (b. circa 1020/25), known to history as Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085), had imbibed the fervor of the times, and like Peter, Gregory was much given to apocalyptic rhetoric in his pursuit of the practical and structural reform of the church of Rome. He labeled his opponents, if not antichrists themselves, then precursors, heralds, members, or limbs of the Antichrist; and if his imagery itself was not particularly novel, his profuse invocations of it, like the vigor of his reform efforts, most certainly were.[171]

The issues and the chronology of the so-called Gregorian, or Great, Reform are well known, albeit rarely associated even in narrative with the turn of the Chris-

tological millennium. In December 1046, at synods held in Sutri and Rome at the instigation of Henry III (b. 1017), king of Germany since 1028 and emperor-elect since 1039, who was traveling to Rome for his imperial coronation with his wife, Agnes of Poitou, three popes were deposed in rapid succession for having obtained their exalted office through the traditional channels of patronage and gift-giving, practices newly condemned as nepotism and bribery.[172] Whatever the source of Henry's zeal (whether the millennial Peace movement of Burgundy and Aquitaine, or the contemporary example of Italian reforming communities like Vallombrosa, Camaldoli, and Fonte Avellana), it spread throughout the Roman curia, and over the next three decades or so a group of idealistic and dedicated men, including most notably Peter Damian, Hildebrand, and Humbert of Silva Candida (circa 1000–1061), embarked upon a revolutionary overhaul of the papacy and its dependent offices.

Their inspiration, as has often been argued, was the life of monastic obedience; their ideal was the reform of the Church on the model of the monastic (or eremitic) reform of self: *reformatio,* or rather *renovatio* as a return to the primitive purity of the apostolic community mediated through a purified tradition going back to the Fathers and councils of the early Church—centered, however, on the primacy of Peter and his papal successors. Somewhat paradoxically, therefore, in addition to the unity of the Church under the Petrine principate, the reformers exercised themselves above all in defending the legal and sacramental privileges of the priest, now envisioned as the exclusive terrestrial conduit for the mediation of salvation to the community of the faithful. As a consequence of this sacerdotal exclusivity, it was now considered imperative that the person and office of the priest be kept clean of all worldly pollution, whether in the form of secular tenure, money, or sex. Those aspects of the tradition that, in the reformers' view, did not accord with this purity were singled out as abuses, evils to be eradicated from the body of the Church, now more than ever apostrophized as a woman—or more precisely, as a mother or a virginal bride. Three practices in particular excited special concern: simony, or the granting and receiving of spiritual gifts, including the sacraments, in return for material payments or favors, more specifically, the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices; "nicolaitism," as Cardinal Humbert put it, or clerical marriage and concubinage; and lay investiture, or the investing of Church officers with the symbols of their tenure by secular rulers. The institutional, political, legal, and economic consequences of this program of clerical isolation were manifold, igniting conflicts that were to shape European history for centuries and provoking resistance that perdures to the present day. Spiritually, however, it was arguably the elevation of the priest in his performance of the sacraments to a Christo-mimetic status hitherto reserved for the martyrs and saints that was to have the greatest effect on the development of the high- and late-medieval devotion to Christ and Mary, and it is, therefore, to the priest—and

specifically, the Eucharist—that we shall turn here, leaving aside the narrativizing effects of the reformers' vision on the expectation of the Apocalypse.[173]

Once again it is Peter Damian—that "reluctant warhorse" of the reforming curia, cardinal bishop of Ostia, friend of Archdeacon Hildebrand, advisor and friend to Popes Leo IX (1049–1054), Stephen IX (1057–1058), Nicholas II (1058–1061), and Alexander II (1061–1073), and almost certainly author of the foundational papal election decree of 1059—who provides our best witness to this concern for cultic and physical purity on the part of the priest. Although a moderate regarding the implementation of antisimoniac reforms and doctrinally anti-Donatist in his defense of the efficacy of the sacrament even when performed by married or simoniac priests, rhetorically Peter was adamant. As he warned those who would offer the sacrifice of the altar so as to amass "filthy profit for themselves and their kin,"

> No mortal man, as I see it, performs greater deeds in relation to God's sacraments than these very men who are secular priests. . . . No one, therefore, is guilty of sinning more gravely than a priest who, either by lack of knowledge or by his evil life . . . defiles the sacrament of the life-giving sacrifice by his unworthy service. . . . The people of Israel often involved themselves in numerous crimes, but never did they so hardheartedly pollute themselves as when they crucified the Lord. Certainly, he who has no fear of taking the Lord's Body into his polluted hands is guilty of being partner to those who crucified Jesus. Such men should indeed be terrified by the verdict of the Apostle when he says, "For when men have once been enlightened, when they have had a taste of the heavenly gift and a share in the Holy Spirit, when they have experienced the goodness of God's word and the spiritual energies of the age to come, and after all this have fallen away, it is impossible to bring them again to repentance; for with their own hands they are again crucifying the Son of God and making a mockery of his death" [Hebrews 6:4–6].[174]

Money, to be sure, was not the only source of priestly pollution. Sex—whether with women or with men—was (possibly) even worse.[175] "What business have you," Peter demanded of those who were not only priests, but bishops,

> to handle the body of Christ, when by wallowing in the allurements of the flesh you have become a member of antichrist? . . . Are you unaware that the Son of God was so dedicated to the purity of the flesh that he was not born of conjugal chastity, but rather from the womb of a virgin? And if that were not enough, that only a virgin should be his mother, it is the belief of the Church that his foster father also was a virgin. . . . If he wished to be fondled by hands that were unsullied as he lay in the crib, with what purity does he now wish to surround his body as he reigns on high in the glory of the Father's majesty? . . . Therefore, if you commit incest with your spiritual daughter, how in good conscience do you dare perform the mystery of the Lord's body?[176]

Peter's reproaches did not end with the men who thus defiled the sacrament with the satisfaction of their physical lust. In an oft-cited letter of 1064 addressed to Bishop Cunibert of Turin, whose clergy Peter had found to be living openly and unapologetically with their wives, he reprimanded the women:

> And now, let me speak to you, you charmers of clerics, tasty tidbits of the devil, expulsion from paradise, venom of the mind, sword that kills souls, poison in the drink, toxin in the food, source of sinning, and occasion of damnation. I am talking to you, you female branch of the ancient enemy, hoopoes, screech owls, nighthawks, she-wolves, leeches . . . nymphs, sirens, witches . . . vile tigresses whose cruel jaws can be sated only on human blood . . . harpies flying about the sacrifice of the Lord to snatch those who are offered to God and cruelly devour them . . . lionesses . . . Sirens . . . furious vipers [who] by the ardor of your impatient lust . . . dismember your lovers by cutting them off from Christ who is the head of the clergy.

You women, Peter insisted, are as fully to blame as the men who have taken you into their households, for it is you who, "by the lure of your charms and your pretty faces," have torn those "unfaithful men from the service of the holy altar in which they are engaged. . . . [Just as] Adam [not, interestingly, Eve] from among all the fruit in paradise sought only that which God had forbidden, so from the total mass of humanity you chose only those [men] who were prohibited from having any familiar association with women." "How dare you," he accused them, "not be horrified at touching the hands of priests that were anointed with holy oil and chrism, and are now accustomed to the Gospels and apostolic writings?" Through their sin, the priests' wives—or rather concubines, because they could not legally be true wives—become handmaidens of the devil, who at their enticement and to their delight "grinds the sanctified members of the Church with his molars, and with [their] assistance converts them into his very being."[177]

This is strong language, as difficult to read now as it must have been for its original audience, particularly the last cited letter in which Peter lets loose his attack on those good women who had served the priesthood for centuries as companions, housekeepers, lovers, and mothers (including the woman who, as John of Lodi tells it, rescued Peter himself from his own mother's depressive abandonment). And indeed, some modern scholars have preferred simply to dismiss Peter as a "hysterical misogynist"—no more able to contain his lust than his anger, obsessed by his own renunciation of the pleasures and responsibilities of the sex-

ually active adult, habitually inclined to lash out at all women for their very existence—than to ask why he used such scurrilous language in the first place.[178] Recently, and rather more subtly (although still with an emphasis on Peter's misogyny), Dyan Elliott has suggested that the priest's wife represented for Peter not simply the twin threats of the feminization and female domination of the clergy but, more important, the singularly unthinkable threat of sacramental inefficacy: with woman present—or, rather, with woman to blame—there was a reason if there was no mystery accomplished at the altar. The woman who touched the priest could be blamed for the failure of the sacrament because, left to her own devices, she would cannibalistically consume not only her sacerdotal lover but also the benefits from the sacrament intended to accrue to the whole Christian community. For Elliott, Peter's explicitly and frequently reiterated anti-Donatist defense of the efficacy of the sacrament is, therefore, symptomatic not of certainty but rather of anxiety—of a repressed fear that when the priest invokes the words of consecration over the eucharistic elements there will be "no change, no grace." From this perspective, the priest's wife provided a convenient scapegoat, for it was she, "now cast in the role of devil's colleague and concubine," who had "metaphorically raped and plundered the altar and made off with the Host."[179]

This reading is compelling on many levels (particularly the insight that adamant assertions of faith may arise as much from unconsciously repressed fears as from consciously acknowledged conviction); nevertheless, there is great need for caution here. Before we dismiss Peter once again as an incorrigible (if repressed) woman-hater, it is important to recall one obvious but often underemphasized fact: Peter was wholly concerned with the purity of the *priesthood.* In contrast, he was relatively indifferent to the purity of the laity, sexual or otherwise, and indeed, in a companion piece to the letter he sent to the bishop of Turin, he reassured Adelaide, duchess of that same territory, that she need not fear that her multiple marriages would exclude her from the kingdom of heaven, all the while urging her (as I read it, without necessarily any irony) to use every weapon in her arsenal against the "forces of impurity that [were] attacking Christ," namely, the married clergy in the lands under her jurisdiction, "since as a woman you are as strong as a man, and [even] more richly endowed with good will than with earthly power."[180] In Elliott's view, it was precisely this removal of the priest from the secular—or, rather, sexual—life permitted the laity that was, for Peter, the "sine qua non of sacerdotal holiness."[181]

But was it? It would be pointless to argue that sexual purity does not loom large in Peter's attacks on his contemporaries in the priesthood (much the reverse), but sexual purity was hardly his only, or even necessarily his principal, cause for excoriating himself and his fellow clergymen. As we have seen, money was as great a trial in his own life as sex (if not more so): he entered into a life of eremitic solitude as much to escape the responsibilities and obligations laid upon him by property and gifts as he did to escape the enticements of women. Likewise, food was for Peter an omnipresent occasion for torment, and he lambasted his contemporaries for their gluttony (admittedly a relative term, given the severity of Peter's own fasting) no less vociferously than he chided them for their sexual proclivities.[182] As Elliott herself notes (albeit to a different purpose), something of this latter obsession emerges even as Peter describes the women who have taken priests for their lovers: they are gluttons, tigers, harpies, vipers,[183] feeding upon the men whom they love carnally as well as spiritually. They themselves are "tasty tidbits" (*pulpamenta*) upon whom the devil feasts "as on delicious fare," growing "fat on [their] overflowing lust"; appropriately, their pursuit of priests is likened to Adam's feasting upon the forbidden fruit in paradise. They compel their lovers, who are marked with the sign of the Cross, to worship instead the beast of the Apocalypse, and as they suck their lovers' blood and fill them with poison, they prepare them as delicacies to be devoured in turn by the devil.[184]

Peter's sermonizing on sex was, at least rhetorically, largely of a piece with his sermonizing on money and food. Lust, greed, and gluttony—these, he explained to Pope Alexander II during Lent in 1063, were the evils par excellence besetting the world in their day, and Peter condemned them all in one and the same scurrilous breath:

> In a few words the apostle John explained it all, when he said, "Everything this world affords is lust of the flesh, enticement for the eyes, and the pride of life" [1 John 2:16]. Lust of the flesh refers to bodily pleasure, enticement for the eyes involves the beauty of visible things, and the pride of life includes the heights of worldly honor and prestige. . . . Thus in our day the whole world is nothing but gluttony, avarice and sex. And as once the world was divided into three parts, so that together it was subject to three rulers, so now, sad to say, the human race like slaves bends its neck to these three vices, and willingly obeys the laws of the same number of tyrants. "For all," as Scripture says, "high and low, are out to practice avarice" [Jeremiah 6:13]. And what shall I say of gluttony, since the rich never know hunger, never expect to experience need? Unless they frequently vent their fat bellies at both ends, they must fear the embarrassment of noisily breaking wind, and so good health consists in having an unobstructed bowel. They guzzle till their faces are fiery red and, if good taste did not forbid, one would say that they do not eat, but rather lick up their food.[185]

Here it is useful to note that, at least in respect to his verbal abilities, Peter was hardly a guileless novice. He had been trained as a master of rhetoric in the best schools of northern Italy, and even in his later life as a hermit, he continued to pride himself above all on his eloquence and ready wit.[186] Although admittedly

not always as restrained in his hortatory harangues as he might have been, he was nevertheless acutely alert to the potential effects—negative as well as positive—that such language would have on its intended recipients. As he confessed toward the end of his life in a letter to his beloved elder brother Damian, among all his manifold failings, he had always been overly prone to the vice of scurrility (*scurrilitas*), by which he meant the tendency to indulge in unbridled speech provoking ribald and jeering laughter. Elsewhere, he describes writing (by which he typically means dictation to his scribes) as a leash for his "wandering and lascivious mind," as an antidote to "the confusion of attacking thoughts and the importuning of creeping melancholy."[187]

Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that his scurrility occasionally survives in his letters, nor that he sometimes allowed his fervor for purity to get the better of his pastoral charity, a failing of which he seems to have been intermittently, if not in fact consistently, aware. Before we label him an incorrigible misogynist, therefore, we should note the conclusion to his invective against the priests' wives in Turin. As he drew breath to continue his dictation, he seems suddenly to have realized that (at least this time) he had gone too far, and he apologized: "But while trying to avoid being longwinded in my writing, from my great outburst of wrath I am, as it were, hardly producing a trace of warming south wind for the cattle." He concluded by urging the women on their part to beware the priests who would promise them marriage, pledging themselves with rings, oaths, and documents of espousal that they could never honor in law: "Repel these crafty liars [that is, the lecherous priests] as if they were poisonous serpents, and be quick to free yourselves, as you would from the cruel jaws of a lion."[188] In Peter's view, both the wives and their erstwhile lovers were serpents and lions, but even he recognized that sometimes it was the women, not the men, who had been led astray by fine promises and other costly gifts, and he amended his invective accordingly.

What was it about the gluttons, the simoniacs, and the married priests and their wives that made Peter so angry as to forgo his laboriously cultivated self-restraint and abandon himself, as he put it, to that "ancient darkness . . . spewed forth with the venom of the ancient dragon, and [which] like a deadly poison ravages the heart of every madman"?[189] Money, sex, food: all three, he explained to Pope Alexander, were more than simply occasions for sin. They were "heaps of heavy stones," weighing down the soul in its attempt to rise to the heights of contemplation, "muddy water" soaking the shoe leather of the soul with the moisture of worldly cares and thus preventing the absorption of the oil of interior grace. In Peter's words, only the soul boiled dry of vice is fit to receive the gift of heavenly grace, for "a heart that is dry produces a clear and harmonious sound, but one that is moist lacks resonance. . . . Thus the moisture of carnal pleasure must be extracted from a man's soul if its prayers are to resound in the ears of almighty God."[190] More important, and more personally, Peter had found that the more he

became involved in secular affairs, however necessary for the pastoral care of the community, the more he grew "lukewarm in [his] love of God" and began "to feel the deadly cold of a languid spirit." "I stand in horror," he confessed to Pope Nicholas II, "when I hear my many words that were not conducive to leading anyone to Christ—all the nonsense and trifling worldly speech that I uttered, like the barking of a dog or the bite of a serpent." Only in contemplation, in the solitude of his cell, did "the fire of heavenly desire . . . cause [his] yearning to melt away," only then did he find his face bathed in floods of tears as, "in a most existential insight," he recalled, "I beheld Christ pierced with nails, hanging on the cross, and with my mouth I eagerly tried to catch the dripping blood."[191]

Here, I would insist, is the key to Peter's obsession with sacerdotal purity, as well as to his occasional outbreaks of intemperate scurrility. For Peter, Christ—who had become incarnate from the womb of a virgin, who had sacrificed himself on the altar of the Cross, whose most precious blood had dripped from his immaculate body as he hung in torment on that Cross, who would come at any moment bearing the wounds that he suffered for the redemption of humankind and on the basis of which he would judge both the quick and the dead—Christ, insofar as his incarnation had made him accessible to the apprehension of this world, was the only reality; everything else was merely dross and distraction. To be sure, there were practical, prosaic reasons for the clergy to restrain their financial and familial attachments to the secular world, not the least of which were the claims that their children and other dependents would make on their property, affection, and time—resources better spent, Peter often argued, as they were intended to be, namely, on the care of the community as a whole.[192] Nevertheless, at least for Peter if not necessarily for the more prosaic among his fellow reformers, the horror at the thought that those same hands that held the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist at the altar might, in the bedchamber, caress flesh that would one day dissolve into dust and ashes, food for worms, filth and intolerable stench, or might, in the counting house, caress treasure that would bind them more to this world than the next (cf. Matthew 6:21) was visceral far more than it was practical: everything that was not of God, of Christ, was impure, soiled, and unacceptable and could not be offered to God as God. The sacrifice of the body and blood offered at the Mass could—or rather, should—no more be confected from moldy bread or offered and preserved on filthy linens than it should be touched by hands soiled with the contagion of genitalia or bribes.[193]

Unlike his contemporary Berengar of Tours (ironically, as we shall see, also befriended, or rather manipulated, by Archdeacon Hildebrand), Peter did not question the reality of Christ's presence, whether on the Cross or in the Eucharist.[194] As Peter explained in an oft-cited passage from a sermon for the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, "It is indeed that same body of Christ which the most blessed Virgin bore, which she cherished in her bosom (*gremio*), which she bound with

swaddling clothes, which she nourished with maternal care, that body, I say without any doubt, and no other, that now we receive from the sacred altar, and his blood that we drink in the sacrament of our redemption."[195] It was to this presence that Peter had dedicated his life and his body, this presence without which his fasting, self-discipline, and constant psalmody would have been not only ridiculous but vain. Excessive skepticism at this point is, I believe, unwarranted. Yes, Peter was afraid: it is psychologically unlikely that anyone would subject himself to such rigorous asceticism without some such motivating emotion, and fear seems a likelier candidate in Peter's case than love or ambition. But he was not afraid of women or sex, any more than he was afraid of money or food. No, as we have seen, Peter was afraid, not of women, or money, or food as such, but of hell. Above all (and whatever the psychological root of his fear), he was afraid of Christ and his Judgment—a judgment against which the soul's only refuge was the sacrifice of the Church, against which its only protection was lips made ruby by the blood dripping from the Cross. Peter judged priests harshly because he expected himself to be judged harshly: he was oppressed, as it were, by the omnipresence of the Judge. And if Christ were to be feared coming in Judgment, he should no less be feared in the Mass, when once again he would be present on the altar in body, bearing the very wounds with which he had purchased the redemption of humanity.

Accordingly, in every attack that Peter made on the wives, greed, and gluttony of the clergy, he invoked the horror of hell in support of his position. Simoniacs, Peter warned, should enjoy the fruits of their avarice now, because on the day of Judgment they would truly learn "how much the bitter purchase of [their] negotiated honor was worth." As he told them in the *Liber gratissimus* (1052),

> at that moment [when you will have been dismissed from the presence of the Judge and handed over to the torturers] the infinitely wide jaws of hell will be forced to swallow you, the cruel cauldrons of gehenna to receive you. Then will the crackling, hissing flames feed on your bones, dripping their fatty marrow, then will the ravenous fire, like that belching from a furnace, never cease discharging steam through your mouth, your eyes, your ears, your nose. Then, indeed, will it be your lot to share the fate of your leader, Simon, the prince of heretics; and to those for whom paradise, freely promised by Christ, did not suffice, let hell, bought with money by the devil, be given as their reward.[196]

Once again, as with the flagellants, it is with the coin of their own bodies that sinners are called to discharge their debts to the Savior, but in the case of the simoniacs, they have done worse than fail to recognize their debt: they have compounded it by trying to purchase grace with money. Worse than failing to take upon themselves the same punishment that Christ bore for their sake, they, like the Jews, have

sold their Redeemer to his executioners, thus mocking his death even as they celebrate it with their polluted hands. Their punishment, appropriately, is to be consumed by hell, their bodies transformed from coin into food for the hissing flames.

Likewise, Peter warned the sexually incontinent among his episcopal brethren who were burning with "passionate desire" and yet were still so bold as to dare to approach the sacred altar:

> The day will come, and that certainly, or rather the night, when this impurity of yours will be turned to pitch on which the everlasting fire will feed, never to be extinguished in your very being; and with never-ending flames this fire will devour you, flesh and bones. . . . Do you not know that Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, were destroyed by fire from heaven because they dared to present illicit fire before the Lord? The altars of the Lord will not accept illicit fire, but only that of divine love. Therefore, if one should be inflamed with the fire of carnal passion and does not fear to participate in the sacred mysteries, he will surely be devoured even now by the fire of God's vengeance, of which Scripture says, "And now fire consumes his enemies" [Hebrews 10:27]. And as even now he is wasted by the flames of burning passion, so later he must broil in the dreadful and never-ending fires of hell.[197]

And he wrote to Bishop Cunibert of Turin (in the same letter in which he chastised the priests' wives so memorably):

> Since all the holy Fathers, who with the aid of the Holy Spirit fashioned the canons, without dissent unanimously concur that clerical chastity must be observed, what will await those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit by satisfying their own carnal desires? Because of a flux of momentary passion, they earn the reward of burning in eternal fire that cannot be quenched. Now they wallow in the filth of impurity, but later, given over to the avenging flames, they will be rolled about in a flood of pitch and sulphur. . . . O, unhappy and pitiful men! By observing the law of their putrid flesh which awaits devouring worms, they despise the laws of him who came down from heaven and reigns over the angels. . . . They . . . prefer their body to God, who by despising the rule of divine law, obey the pleasures of their own desires. . . . They ignore the fact that for every fleeting enjoyment of intercourse they prepare a thousand years in hell, and those who now ignite the flame of lust, will then be consumed in avenging fire. But for those who wallow in the filth of wanton pleasure, how can they dare in their pernicious security to participate in the sacrament of the saving Eucharist, since through Moses the Lord said to his priests, "Any man of your descent who while unclean approaches the holy gifts which the Israelites hallow to the Lord shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord" [Leviticus 22:3].[198]

Fire and blood—polluting fire and purifying blood, purifying fire and polluting blood. These are the recurrent images in Peter's evocation of the power—and the danger—inherent in the Eucharist, at the performance of which the sullied priest risks both his body and soul if he presumes to officiate: blood dripping from the lips of the communicating priest as he burns with the fire of heavenly desire; blood distilled on the tongue like wild honey and milk and at the sight of which "the adversary trembles" and at once slinks away, recognizing on the red lips of the Christian "the mark of his damnation," "for that which [we] receive under the visible appearance of bread and wine, he perceives in truth, whether he will or not, to be the body and blood of the Lord"; blood marking the right ear, hand, and foot of the bishop so that he bears upon his body the "stigmata of Christ's blood," just as the priests of the Old Law were marked on those same members with the blood of a slaughtered ram (Leviticus 8:23).[199] How, Peter demanded, could one so marked dare even to be present at the altar when he had but recently been inflamed by the fire of hellish lust (*tartareae libidinis estus*)? How, when his hands had been marked for the preparation of a feast at which even the angels assisted with trembling, could he then dare leave their company for the noxious and obscene embrace of a mortal woman? Did he not realize that, at the moment of consecration, "the heavens open, the highest and the lowest things rush together in one, . . . the divine power descends into the hands of those making the offering, the gift of the Holy Spirit flows in, and that priest whom the angels adore balks not at the sacrifice of his own body and blood"?[200]

The priest's hands—as vessels, as surrogate wombs for the body and blood of God—were invested by Peter with an almost existential distance from the life of this world. They could touch nothing that would not survive the fire of the End, nothing except that which would be preserved at the Judgment, for they were consecrated to hold flesh and blood that in rising again to life would return to judge, and having been eaten, to be judged. Even the saliva in the priest's mouth had to be kept absolutely virginal and pure, lest he bring to the altar not that "flame of divine love . . . which the Spirit of God pours into our being by invisible grace," but rather the "flames of impurity or of any other vice, to ignite the victims that bring salvation."[201] In the end, this was, for Peter, the incontestable, immovable, and absolute justification for the priest's alienation from the secular life of sex, food, and money: not the life of the flesh per se, but rather, by analogy with the exclusive selection of priests under the Old Law, the very fact of the Christian priest's consecration to God:

> As almighty God formerly chose Levites from all the tribes that they might lead the people of Israel in the ceremonies prescribed by the Law, so in the New Testament he selected clerics as members of his family, to whom he entrusted the authority of his Church. . . . Therefore, what more need be said, but that they who had already been offered as a sacrifice to God, should be free from the servile works of this world, and should be dedicated only to tasks that pertain to divine service? Why should they be set apart from the people and become a special gift to God, unless they were to observe a lifestyle different from that of the people, and constantly be engaged in carrying out the ceremonies prescribed in the Law of the Lord?[202]

Like the priests of the Old Law who offered sacrifice to God in blood and fire, so now the Christian priest should approach the altar—his thoughts, his speech, his actions, his body, and his life set apart, wholly and completely, for God.[203]

With the support of his fellow reformers among the bishops, cardinal bishops, and popes of the day, Peter's idealized vision of a priesthood set apart became, and remains, the official discipline of the Roman Church, at least insofar as the clergy are still required to renounce the possibility of having children or enjoying sexual intimacy with other human beings. It should go without saying that there was at the time, as there has been for centuries, sometimes violent, perhaps more often than not simply surreptitious resistance to this ideal. In 1059 the priests of Milan, already beleaguered by the popular (and, ironically, heretical) Patarene attack on their simony and incontinence, met Peter and his fellow legate Anselm of Lucca with the threat of a riot. "Everything," Peter told Hildebrand in his official report on the legation, "seemed to point to my death and, as my friends frequently advised me, some of these people were thirsting for my blood."[204] Peter met similar resistance, no less threatening, at Lodi and soon thereafter in 1064 at Turin; nor was the reform of the clergy fully accomplished at his death—far from it.[205] And yet, Peter and his fellow reformers were convinced that they were right to insist on this removal of the priest from the sexual and economic life of the laity, having, they firmly believed, not only the tradition of canon law in their favor but also the image of Christ—virgin priest born of a virgin who paid the debt of our redemption not in gold, silver, or any money whatsoever but who "became at once priest and sacrifice, redeemer and price," and in so doing "handed over his very self, poured out the priceless blood of his body, and gave his own soul for ours."

"What," the psalmist asked, "shall I give God in return for everything which he has given me?" (Psalm 115:12). Peter, the reformer, answered in the words of Peter, the apostle: "You were redeemed from the vain ways of ancestral tradition not with corruptible silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish [1 Peter 1:18–19]."[206] Accordingly, Peter the reformer argued, it was only with body and blood thus pure that the priest—having made of himself, in imitation of Christ, a sacrifice to God without blemish or defect of any kind—should offer the Mass at the altar of God in payment for his own sins and the sins of the community. It was this payment and no other that would sat-

isfy the Judge to whom the priest and his community were in debt for their salvation, this payment and no other that would successfully avert their otherwise (almost) certain damnation.

"The Whole Church Believes"

The personal, ritual, and institutional purity of the priesthood was not, of course, the only item on the reformers' agenda in the mid-eleventh century. Even prior to the contest with Emperor Henry IV that would erupt during the pontificate of Hildebrand (Gregory VII), there was more than enough to keep the papal curia occupied in the construction of an autonomous and authoritative ecclesiastical hierarchy: reorganizing the Roman cardinalate into an electoral and advisory college, compiling new collections of the canon law, controlling the appointment of bishops, extending the papacy's judicial authority over the whole of Latin Christendom, dispatching legates, and overseeing councils and synods in northern Italy, Germany, and France—not to mention contending with the invading Normans for control over southern and central Italy and with the local nobility for control over the city of Rome.[207] There was even at this time a concerted attempt to reassert the unity of the Church in Rome with that in Constantinople—a failure on almost all practical counts, especially following Cardinal Humbert's flamboyant excommunication of Patriarch Michael Cerularius in the summer of 1054. Perhaps necessarily, questions of doctrine played a relatively small role in this already ambitious agenda, generally attracting the reformers' attention only insofar as they impinged directly upon the authority and validity of the clerical offices that it was the reformers' program to defend. It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that not one but three popes (Leo IX, Nicholas II, and Gregory VII) took an active interest in a doctrinal quarrel that had ignited toward the middle of the century among certain monks and scholars then living in northern France, specifically between the *scholasticus* Berengar of Tours (circa 1000–1088) and his onetime student Lanfranc (circa 1005–1089), at that time abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Bec. The first of its kind in the history of the western Church, it was a debate that was to occupy both the curia and some of the best minds of Europe for the better part of a generation, not to mention shaping the course of theological inquiry about the sacraments for the better part of the next several centuries.

In brief, the debate concerned the way in which the historical body and blood of Christ should be understood to be present following the consecration of the bread and wine of the Eucharist—in many ways a doctrine at the very heart of the reformers' program of sacerdotal segregation, for it was, after and above all, the presence of that historical body on the altar that was held to necessitate the setting apart of the priest from worldly society in the first place. As Peter Damian

explained, those hands that, at the altar, held the very same body that had been incarnate from the womb of a virgin should themselves be the hands of a virgin, unpolluted by the sins of incontinence and greed. It is noteworthy, therefore, that the debate itself originated not with those active in the reform at Rome but, rather, farther north, in the newly vibrant milieu of the cathedral schools and the reformed monasteries of Normandy, and that it turned, at least initially, not on the action or the person of the priest at all but on the grammatical parsing of a single sentence: "*Hoc est corpus meum.*" Nevertheless, the questions th contemporary wrote to Pope Gregory VII, "so filled the world th and monks, whose job it is to watch over such matters, but eve about it among themselves in the streets."[208] It is important to b evaluating the importance of the eleventh-century eucharisti prominent scholar of the Great Reform has observed, the debate i gar "had no effects on the great contemporary events within the he means the realization of papal primacy and its attendant conflicts The question of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was to become impor tant for quite different reasons, but only after the validity of the ordination of simoniacs and schismatics had been called into question."[209] And yet, its effects on the development of devotion to Christ in his humanity can hardly be exaggerated, not only for the questions that it raised but, even more important, for the response that it provoked—if not on the part of the papal curia, then most certainly on the part of the abbot of the great Norman monastery of Caen, Lanfranc of Bec.

I have suggested earlier that there was prevalent in the mid-eleventh century an anxiety over the loss of a defining narrative, over the loss of a future to which the past no longer seemed to point; here I would argue further that this loss was most acutely felt in that moment par excellence of historical reenactment, that moment during which, according to Paschasius Radbertus, the priest spoke the words of Christ and brought forth a miracle—the transformation of bread and wine into the true—that is, historical—body and blood of Christ. For some two centuries prior to Berengar, Latin theologians (with the exception of Ratramnus) seem to have been more or less content with Paschasius's formulation of miraculous recreation, of recovery through miracle of the body and blood otherwise lost in time. There was during these centuries apparently little sustained discussion of the miracle outside of a few isolated monasteries, and although monks and clerics copied Paschasius's treatise and added to his collection of miracle stories and patristic authorities, they do not seem to have questioned the reality of the transformation nor the reality of their access, through the miracle, to the incarnate, historical Christ.[210] Within decades of the millennium of Christ's Passion, all this would change. The certainty that it was the spoken word of the priest that effected the miracle would be replaced with an argument focused less on *how* the change occurred and more on *what* change, if any, could occur in a substance when visi-