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WALTER OF CHATILLON'S PROSIMETRON
IN DOMINO CONFIDO (W.3):
WHERE AND WHEN WAS IT PERFORMED?*

INTRODUCTION

Walter of Châtillon was one of the most gifted Latin poets of the Middle Ages. His epic poem *Alexandreis* is his best-known work but he is almost equally well known as the author of some of the best satirical verse in Medieval Latin. Despite his fame, however, little is known about his life. We have to depend for the most part on a number of brief biographical sketches or *vitae*, whose unreliability is signaled by the mutually contradictory information they provide¹. A brief synopsis based on that evidence follows. Walter was born in or near Lille and received an excellent education at Orleans (or Reims) and Paris. He seems to have taught at Laon and later at Châtillon-sur-Marne, not far from Reims. He went to Bologna to study law and in 1176, when William of the White Hands, brother-in-law of Louis VII, was appointed archbishop of Reims, Walter was drawn into his literary circle and it was to William that Walter dedicated his *Alexandreis*. He was made a canon of Amiens (or Beauvais or Orleans) and he may or may not have died of leprosy. The dates of his birth and death are unknown. Most of his poems cannot be dated. Of those that can, the earliest was written in 1163, the latest ca. 1180.

As his editor, Karl Strecker, has pointed out, Walter's *In Domino confido*, is a puzzling piece². It takes the form of a Menippean satire or prosimetron and purports to be a response to a request from his *magistri* for a sermon about the law³. In the preface, Walter maintains that he has studied neither canon nor civil law and will therefore say *aut nulla aut pauca* about them and concentrate instead on theology⁴. The

*Thanks are due to Giovanni Orlandi, whose penetrating questions following the presentation of an earlier version of this paper at the Santiago conference prompted me to further research and a consequent recasting of this paper.

1. The biographical sketch offered here is based on the Latin *vitae* found in Marvin L. Colker, *Galteri De Castellione Alexandreis*, Padua, 1978, XII-XIII.

2. Karl Strecker, *Moralisch-Satirische Gedichte Walters von Châtillon*, Heidelberg, 1929, 34. The text is printed on pp. 38-52.

3. Preface, 12-18.

4. Preface, 6-8 and 25-27.

theme of the work is the House of Wisdom, which is treated in three parts. The first of these describes the seven liberal arts, which give pleasure but are neither useful nor necessary. The second part focuses on Roman law and, secondarily, on medicine, which are judged useful, though ultimately unnecessary. The third part describes the achievements of theology. This is the true Wisdom, which helps us understand the mystical language of the Bible and, by allowing us to penetrate behind the Letter to the Spirit, leads us back to God.

THE PROBLEM: SETTING AND DATE

Walter suggests (2.4) that the occasion for his sermon is *Laetare* Sunday (the fourth Sunday in Lent) and informs us that he is talking *ante legem dominos et magistros artium* (3.1). Though he gives us no clear indication of the setting, it is natural to infer from the request of the *magistri* and the presence of the *domini legum* that we are to think of Bologna, and indeed this is confirmed by the rubrics in two of the five manuscripts⁵. Strecker accepts Bologna as the setting and dates the work to 1174-76⁶. As we shall see, the date of this work has important ramifications for the dating of the *Alexandreis*. While agreeing that *In Domino confido* probably originated as a sermon delivered in Bologna, I wish to suggest that in the form in which it survives today, it is a revised version intended for an audience in northern France. I will argue that this revised version should be dated to the early 1180s.

THE CASE FOR BOLOGNA

In an important but often overlooked article, Bernhard Bischoff has shown that there was a tradition of poetic performances at the University of Bologna that may have begun around the middle of the twelfth century⁷. One of these, dated ca. 1186, is by the jurist Placentinus⁸. It shares a striking similarity to Walter's piece in that it is a prosimetron. But it is also a vision poem, which incorporates a lively *altercatio* between two personified abstractions, *Ignorantia* and *Legalis Scientia*. A poem of 46 goliardic stanzas by Stephen of Orleans (or Tournai) may well be an earlier example

5. Only three of the manuscripts have these introductory rubrics: P, Paris BN 3245; B, Oxford Bodleianus 603; Dg, Oxford Digby 168. The rubrics run as follows:

P *Galterus de Insulis predicans scholaribus Bon<oniensibus> in reditu suo de Roma.*

B *Sermo recitatus Bononie coram episcopo et scholaribus in dominica Letare ierusalem.*

Dg *Incipit sermo magistri walterii de Castellione apud romam in presentia domini pape.*

These rubrics are quoted and discussed in K. Strecker, *Gedichte*, cit. n. 2, 34-35.

6. K. Strecker, *Gedichte*, cit. n. 2, 37 and 54.

7. B. Bischoff, «Poetisches "Principium" eines Juristen», in his *Anecdota Novissima*, Stuttgart, 1984, 192-203.

8. For text and discussion, see H. Kantorowicz, «The Poetical Sermon of a Mediaeval Jurist», *Journal of the Warburg Institut*, 2, 1938, 22-41.

of the genre⁹. Drawing inspiration from both Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* and Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, it suggests a rather mediocre poetic talent. The piece is nonetheless interesting, and indeed striking, for its pagan setting and ethos, which is mitigated only in the closing stanza. Moreover, it may have served as a model for Walter. The poet announces he has had a vision. Juno has borne a new baby to Jupiter. All the pagan divinities bring gifts to the newborn. They are followed by the Year, the Seasons and the Months. Mother Wisdom then sends the boy off for his education in the seven liberal arts, which are described in considerable detail. After two stanzas devoted to ethics and medicine, Roman law is dismissed as irrelevant to the divine child¹⁰. The poem ends rather abruptly with the wish that the child may grow up to understand the meaning of sacred scripture.

Finally, while solid evidence that Walter actually studied at Bologna has long been lacking, Bischoff has drawn attention to a manuscript of *In Domino confido* – unknown to Strecker – whose text of a crucial passage at the end of section 21 provides important new clues¹¹. Since the text of this manuscript (Lp) is important for several reasons but remains largely unknown to scholars, its version of the last part of section 23 is reproduced here:

Sed circa iuris enucleatorem in eodem negocio aliter scribit .B. aliter .M. non video qualiter hoc possit recipi salvo iure. Ut ergo eos eorum baculo feriamus, si vera est regula iuris que dicit, «Quotiens duo inter se repugnantia in testamento inveniuntur neutrum ratum est», similiter, «quotiens duo sibi reperiuntur contraria, neutri fides est adhibenda». Et hoc dixi salva tamen illius iuris peritissimi consulti Turonensis equivoci.

5

Dg is the only other manuscript to preserve section 23. For the above passage, it has the following:

Set si errore iuris in eodem negotio enucleationem asscripserit B et penitus contrarium senserit M, non video quomodo id possit recipi salvo iure iuris. Ut igitur eos eorum baculo feriamus, si vera est regula iuris que dicit, «Quotiens duo contraria in testamento reperiuntur, neutrum rectum est», similiter, «quotiens duo repugnantia in testimonio sibi concurrunt, neutris fides est adhibenda». Et hoc dixi salva tamen auctoritate illius peritissimi viri beati Turonorum episcopi equivoci, quem dum adviveret in omnibus proposuimus imitari.

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Strecker could not identify the jurists B and M. Having only Dg to work with, he

9. L. Auvray, «Un poème rythmique et une letter d'Étienne de Tournai» in *Mélanges Paul Fabre*, Paris, 1902, 279-91. The rubric tells us that the poem was *compositum et editum* in Bologna.

10. *Quia de civilibus et humano Jure / In caelesti curia non habentur cure, / Nec apertum separat ab occulto fure / Nec vult ut in mutuo veniant usure* (Auvray, «Poème», cit. n. 9, 290).

11. B. Bischoff, «Poetisches», cit. n. 7, 193-94, n. 8. The manuscript is Lambeth Palace 398. Its text of *In Domino confido* is published in M. R. James and C. Jenkins, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace*, Cambridge, 1930-32, 549-53.

concluded that the (arch)bishop of Tours mentioned in the last sentence must be Joscius, who died in either 1173 or 1174. This usefully provided a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the poem. Kantorowicz saw that B and M must be the famous rivals at Bologna, Bulgarus and Martinus Gosius¹². Using this information and combining the readings of **Lp** and **Dg**, Bischoff concluded that Walter had indeed studied at Bologna, and that Martinus had been his teacher¹³. While **Lp** has many gross errors and has gone wildly astray in the first sentence above, it is undeniable that its readings are often superior to **Dg**'s: for example, in the above passage, *ratum* (4) rather than *rectum* and *neutri* (5) rather than *neutris*¹⁴. If we weigh the evidence of both manuscripts, it looks as if we should read in the last sentence: *salva tamen auctoritate illius peritissimi iuris consulti Turonensium episcopi equivoci*¹⁵. It was an affectation among legal scholars to avoid naming famous jurists explicitly and to use instead a simple initial or a nickname. Here Walter is referring to Martinus by calling him homonymous with the (most famous) bishop of Tours, St. Martin. This is certainly an attractive solution. If we then add the concluding phrase in **Dg**, *quem dum adviveret, in omnibus proposuimus imitari*, we have a significant new nugget of information about Walter's biography, as Bischoff saw.

Bischoff's discovery has the effect of transforming what was, on the basis of **Dg**'s reading, an obscure reference to a distant archbishop, that seemed completely inappropriate for an Italian audience, into a remark that is eminently suitable for the law faculty at Bologna. It also eliminates Joscius' death (1173-74) as a reference within the poem. Instead, we have a distinctly less useful *terminus post quem*, for Martinus' death occurred in the period 1158-66¹⁶.

The case for a performance of *In Domino confido* at Bologna now seems unassailable. Still, there are a number of passages that raise doubts.

DIFFICULTIES FOR THE BOLOGNA SETTING

1. *The Four Poets*

The first passage that seems inappropriate for a Bologna audience occurs in stanzas 7 and 8, where Walter singles out four contemporary poets for praise:

7. Sub hac chorus militat	metriche scribentium;
inter quos sunt quatuor,	rithmice dictantium
qui super hoc retinent	sibi privilegium.

12. H. Kantorowicz, «Sermon», cit. n. 8, 30 n. 1.

13. Bischoff, «Poetisches», cit. n. 7, 193 and 193-94 n. 8.

14. Elsewhere in section 23, **Lp** has *sonuisse*, where **Dg** omits the infinitive (Strecker line 6) and *significet id est* (Strecker lines 12-13).

15. The scribe of **Lp** simply omitted *auctoritate* and, by haplography, *episcopi*. The scribe of **Dg** appears to have misread *iurisconsulti* as *viri beati*. Reading the *s* of *iuris* with the ligature for *con-* as a *b* perhaps facilitated the misreading.

16. *LexMa* 6, 351.

Stephanus flos scilicet
et Petrus, qui dicitur

Aurelianensium
de castro Blesensium.

8. Istis non inmerito
set nec inter alios
ille, quem Castellio
in cuius opusculis

Berterus adicitur,
quartus pretermittitur
latere non patitur.
Alexander legitur.

Strikingly, all four poets are French. Now it is clear from his poems that Walter was a skilled rhetorician, who was aware of the importance of *captatio benevolentiae*. Thus, in his preface he makes the appropriate show of modesty, bowing to his audience's greater knowledge of law. It is hard to believe that he would then go on to inform a Bologna audience that the only poets worth mentioning are French. Regarding this list, Strecker rightly asks: «welches Interesse konnte dieser in Bologna erwecken?»¹⁷. No satisfactory answer has so far been given¹⁸. I will return to a more detailed discussion of these poets later.

2. *Joking Reference to the Italians*

The second passage that suggests that our work was not intended for an Italian audience is the sixth stanza:

Primus ordo continet scholares grammaticos,
logicos et rhetores atque mathematicos,
quos uno vocabulo secundum Italicos
Garamantes dicimus sive Garamanticos.

Secundum Italicos, as Strecker himself points out, is an odd phrase to choose for a poet addressing an Italian audience¹⁹. Its significance is clearly bound up with the pun which involves *gram(m)aticos*, *Garamantes* and *Garamanticos* but whose exact point is not immediately apparent. The *Garamantes* were a remote Saharan tribe often cited as a symbol of barbarism and licentiousness. Pliny the Elder says that they did not recognize the institution of marriage and coupled indiscriminately²⁰. In the twelfth century *Garamantes* seems to have become popular as a term of abuse, imply-

17. K. Strecker, *Gedichte*, cit. n. 2, 34.

18. Recently, A. C. Dionisotti, «Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks», in *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition*, edd. Peter Godman and Oswyn Murray, Oxford, 1990, 93 n. 22, has tentatively made the ingenious suggestion that the list «makes much better sense as a list of precedents (French poets addressing the university of Bologna) than as a list of famous poets in general; indeed I wonder whether the rather obscure line “qui super hoc retinent sibi privilegium” should not be translated “who in addition can claim this privilege”, viz. of having addressed the law faculty at Bologna». Apart from the difficulty of extracting this meaning from the line, the separation of *hoc* from its noun is not in keeping with the straightforward style of Walter's Latin in the verse passages.

19. It seems to imply a «they», whereas the context requires a «you».

20. Pliny, nat. hist. 5, 8: *Garamantes matrimoniorum exsortes, passim cum feminis degunt*.

ing sexual promiscuity²¹. Perhaps because of its similarity to *grammatici*, *Garamantes* came to be used as a disparaging way of referring to teachers – a usage that no doubt originated among students²².

If we return now to Walter's passage, we see that the last line is clearly a punch line. The punch must lie in *Garamantici*, the adjectival form (here used as a noun) of *Garamantes*, which is even more suggestive of *grammaticos* than *Garamantes* itself. Perhaps the humor lies in the fact that this derogatory use of *Garamantes* was a phenomenon of northern Europe²³. *Garamantici*, though a legitimate enough formation, seems not to have been so used, but an Italian scholar, wanting to sound *au courant*, might well have assumed that it was. This explanation, though admittedly speculative, at least makes good sense of the opposition between *Italicos* and the *nos* of *dicimus*, an opposition that seems to imply that Walter is speaking to a French audience²⁴.

3. *Walter and the Study of Law*

In his preface Walter shows a lack of confidence in facing the task before him. So too does Placentinus at the beginning of his *sermo*. This is the pose of modesty expected in an author's preface. Placentinus is not confident about his *legum peritia* or his *mentis sollertia*²⁵. Walter, however, informs his audience that he has not studied law at all: *non enim labra prolui decretorum fonte nectareo nec Iustiniani thoris accubitans legum pabulo sum refectus*. While this might be regarded as an extreme example of the pose of modesty and quite acceptable as such even to audiences who knew that it was not strictly true, it was surely not the thing to say to the teachers at whose feet he had come to study.

It is difficult to imagine that the jurists would be pleased with Walter's decision to disregard their request and to say *aut nulla aut pauca de legibus*, concentrating instead on theology. Again, how would the scholars of Roman law react to Walter's dismissal of their efforts at 15.5 *as vel impensas utiles vel non necessarias* («both useful and unnecessary»)? While there are flashes of humor and poking fun in the prosimetron, the work as a whole is serious and there can be little doubt of Walter's sincerity about the superiority of theology to other professional pursuits. Though this might go down well with an audience of theologians, it is hardly a tactful message to present to the legal scholars of Bologna.

21. Thus Richard of Devizes, Chron. Rich. I, 39v (Appleby): (*in Londonia sunt*) *glabriones, Garamantes, palpones, pusiones*.

22. A clear example is found in J. Salisbury, *Entheticus Maior* 127-30 (Laarhoven):

Et quamvis tueatur eam numerus Garamantum,
quos audere monet fasque nefasque furor,
quos gula, quos fastus captos servire coegit,
quos transire Venus in sua castra facit . . .

23. Besides the passage in John of Salisbury, K. Strecker, *Gedichte*, cit. n. 2, 53, cites instances in Matthew of Vendôme and Gillebert (the Belgian monk). For more detail, see K. Strecker, «Walter von Châtillon und seine Schule II», *ZfdA*, N.F. 53, 1927, 162-63.

24. Other scenarios are, of course, possible but less likely.

25. H. Kantorowicz, «Sermon», cit. n. 8, 36.

THE FOUR POETS AGAIN

Let us now return to the four poets that Walter singles out for special mention in the passage quoted above. All four are, as we have seen, French. More particularly, all four are closely associated with William of the White Hands²⁶.

Stephen of Orleans (or Tournai)

Stephen of Orleans studied canon and civil law at Bologna and wrote a commentary on Gratian²⁷. He served as abbot of St. Euverte in Orleans from 1167 until 1176, when he became abbot of Ste. Geneviève in Paris. He is the author of the interesting poem about the seven liberal arts discussed above²⁸. He was a close associate of William of the White Hands, to whom 50 of his 300 extant letters are addressed²⁹. In 1192, William, as archbishop of Reims, disregarding the choice of the local chapter, had Stephen appointed bishop of Tournai³⁰. Strecker infers from Walter's appellation of Stephen as *flos Aurelianensium* (7.6) that *In Domino confido* must have been written before Stephen's transfer to Ste. Geneviève in 1176. The inference is unjustified. Stephen was born in Orleans and therefore could always be identified with the adjective *Aurelianensis*, just as Peter of Pavia remained *Petrus Papiensis*, even after becoming bishop of Tusculum³¹. In fact, as Kantorowicz points out, there is clear manuscript evidence that Stephen did continue to be called *Aurelianensis* after being made bishop of Tournai³².

Berterus

There seems no good reason to doubt, as some do, that Berterus is Berter of Orleans, the author of the poem *Iuxta threnos*³³. As Williams points out, Berter is an unusual name³⁴. A scandalous anecdote links Magister Berter and Walter sexually with Archbishop William, and while the colorful details are certainly suspect, the anecdote provides solid evidence that a Berter belonged to William's curia³⁵. Almost cer-

26. All four are discussed in John Williams's important article, «William of the White Hands and Men of Letters» in (*Haskins Anniversary Essays in Medieval History*, ed. Charles H. Taylor and J. L. La Monte, Cambridge (Mass.), 1929, 365-387.

27. On Stephen's life and work, see G. Lepointe, «Étienne de Tournai» in *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, 5, 487-92.

28. L. Auvray, «Poème», cit. n. 9, 279-91.

29. J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26, 367.

30. G. Lepointe, «Étienne», cit. n. 27, 488.

31. See H. Delehaye, «Pierre de Pavie, Légat du pape Alexandre III en France», *Revue des Questions Historiques*, 25e année, N.S. 5, 1891, 8-9.

32. H. Kantorowicz, «Sermon», cit. n. 8, 29-30 n. 7. The rubric in a Vatican manuscript at the head of a collection of Stephen's letters reads: *Incipiunt epistole magistri Stephani Aurelianensis, Tornacensis episcopi*; see Auvray, «Poème», cit. n. 9, 280.

33. For text and brief notes on Berter's spirited call to join the Third Crusade, see F. J. E. Raby, *The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse*, Oxford, 1959, 297-300 and 489.

34. J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26, 374.

35. For the Latin text of the anecdote, see M. Colker, *Alexandreis*, cit. n. 1, xv-xvi, and for English translation, see David Townsend, *The Alexandreis of Walter of Chatillon*, Philadelphia, 1996, XIII-XIV.

tainly, he is the figure appearing as Magister Bertheer among Archbishop William's retinue in an Amiens charter dated 1180. The relevant section of the charter reads:

De sociis domini archiepiscopi, Alexander cancellarius, Ramaldus thesaurarius, magister petrus de blois, Magister Bertheers, Magister mellor, Garnerius de triagnet, rogerus capellanus, Radulfus socius eius, Johannes biturensis, Johannes parisiensis³⁶.

Peter of Blois

As can be seen, the same Amiens charter lists a Magister Petrus de Blois in the entourage of Archbishop William. This is not the famous letter-writer, who at this time was in the employ of the archbishop of Canterbury, but rather Peter of Blois, author of a treatise on canon law³⁷. This second Peter dedicated his *Speculum iuris canonici*, which Southern dates between 1175 and 1190, to none other than William, archbishop of Reims³⁸. Both Peters of Blois were accomplished poets but it appears that the canonist was the more outstanding. This emerges from two letters written by his namesake³⁹. Peter of Blois, letter-writer, disapproved of the risqué nature of many of the canonist's lyrics but nonetheless could not hide his admiration for his poetic skill: *Porro omnia, quae scribis, mirabili artificio et exquisitissima sententiarum verborumque venustate componis. Sed damnat Apostolus ea, quae . . . non aedificant ad salutem*⁴⁰. Contrary to the prevailing view, it now seems clear that the Peter of Blois of Walter's list must be the second Peter, the canonist⁴¹. Besides the letter-writer's implicit acknowledgement of his namesake's superior poetic talents, we now have the evidence of Walter's list of distinguished poets. The poets named are all members of William's literary circle. Peter of Blois, canonist, was a member of that circle; the letter-writer was not.

SETTING

While Walter probably delivered the original version of *In Domino confido* before the faculty of law at Bologna, what we have today seems to be a revised version, in-

36. See J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26, 368 n. 20 for a fuller text of the Amiens charter and 372-374 for a discussion of Berter's career.

37. On the two Peters of Blois, see *LexMa*, 6, 1963-64 and the literature cited there. The two figures have often been fused, as in P. Dronke, «Peter of Blois and Poetry at the Court of Henry II», *Mediaeval Studies*, 28, 1976, 185-235. For a convincing exposition of the case for two Peters, see R. Southern, «The Necessity for Two Peters of Blois» in *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Margaret Gibson*, edd. Lesley Smith and Benedicta Ward, London and Rio Grande (Ohio), 103-118. Unfortunately, C. Wollin, *Petri Blesensis Carmina*, *CCBr Cont. Med.* 128, Turnhout, 1998, 19-20, although acknowledging that there were indeed two Peters of Blois and that the second wrote love poetry, pointedly excludes the second Peter (the canonist) from his purview.

38. R. Southern, «Two Peters», cit. n. 37, 110 n. 12.

39. The two letters are nos. 76 and 77, in Migne, *PL* 207, 231-39.

40. Migne, *PL* 207, 234-35.

41. R. Southern, «Two Peters», cit. n. 37, 114, remarks: «Unfortunately, no one seems to have considered the possibility that the Peter of Blois to whom Walter of Châtillon was referring may have been the recipient of *Epp.* 76 and 77 rather than the letter-writer».

tended for presentation to the curia of William of the White Hands⁴². Among the audience, it is reasonable to suppose, there would have been, besides William himself, the three poets listed by Walter – Stephen of Orleans, Peter of Blois, canonist, and Berter of Orleans – and several of the other figures in William's literary circle⁴³. Such an audience could be counted on to be pleased with Walter's list of the best rhythmical poets. Even the joke about the Italians could be seen as teasing of Master Melior of Pisa, who was closely associated with William for a number of years. He appears as «Magister mellor» in the Amiens charter quoted above. Stephen of Orleans and Peter of Blois could certainly be called *domini legum* and this is probably also true for Melior of Pisa, whose later career, as Williams points out, suggests considerable expertise in canon law⁴⁴. By virtue of his position and experience, Archbishop William himself could be called a *dominus legum*⁴⁵. Accordingly, an address given before William's literary circle, many of whom were *magistri artium*, could be said, without exaggeration, to be performed *ante legum dominos et magistros artium*.

Walter's attitude to Roman law, that it is useful but not really necessary and certainly of less importance than theology, reflects the views that Stephen expresses about these subjects at the end of his poem about the seven liberal arts. In his legal writings too, modern scholars find, Stephen is «plus théologien que juriste»⁴⁶. As far as we can tell, William's own views about theology and law were similar to Stephen's⁴⁷. It appears therefore that these views about the relative value of theology and Roman law, which would frankly be surprising in a speech delivered before the law faculty at Bologna, harmonize well with the opinions of William and Stephen, Walter's patron and his patron's close and most influential friend.

THE DATING OF *IN DOMINO CONFIDO* AND THE *ALEXANDREIS*

The date of completion of the *Alexandreis* is disputed but the range of possibilities

42. E. Herkenrath, in his review of Strecker's *Moralisch-Satirische Gedichte in Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, N.F. 26, 1931, 856–57, suggests that the list of poets might have been a later addition.

43. J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26, lists some fifteen to twenty figures in William's literary circle. It is hard to assess exactly which of them might actually have been in attendance.

44. On Melior, who became a cardinal in 1183, see J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26, 368. If as seems likely, Berter is to be identified with the Berter who in the 1190s served as archdeacon of Cambrai and had close ties to Archbishop William, he too would probably have had some expertise in canon law; see Williams, 374.

45. In the preface to his *Speculum Iuris Canonici*, Peter of Blois praises William's knowledge of law as follows: *sane huius summam correctionem Vestre Excellentie destinavi, quam in canonico civileque iure plenius eruditiv lectionis assiduitas et ingenii incomprehensa capacitas et experientia causarum, quae cottidiano conflictu in Vestra presentia ventilantur*. While much of this can be dismissed as flattery of a patron, there can be no doubt of William's general intelligence, his interest in law, and his practical experience of administering it.

46. G. Lepointe, «Étienne», cit. 27, 491.

47. See the thoughtful synthesis of William's interests by J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26, 386–87, a portion of which is quoted at the end of this article.

is limited⁴⁸. It must fall after William's promotion to Archbishop of Reims (1176) and before the publication of Jean de Hauville's *Architrenius* 1184, for Walter mentions the former and the *Architrenius* contains clear echoes of the *Alexandreis*⁴⁹. Walter tells us that it took him five years to write. The traditional completion date, put forward a century ago by H. Christensen, is 1178-81⁵⁰. When Strecker edited *In Domino confido*, he noted Walter's apparent reference to the *Alexandreis* as his claim to fame in *in cuius opusculis Alexander legitur* (8.4), but because he thought that the *Alexandreis* could not have been completed until the late 1170s and he believed that *In Domino confido* had been composed between 1174 and 1176, he concluded that the reference must be to an earlier treatment of Alexander that has not come down to us.

More recently, Dionisotti, convinced that the reference in 8.4 is to the *Alexandreis*, has argued that the *Alexandreis* must have been completed by 1176⁵¹. In the course of her argument, Dionisotti shows convincingly that the excerpt from the *Alexandreis* that is found in section 14 of *In Domino confido* must be a later, not an earlier, version of these lines. She has also pointed out that a completion date for the *Alexandreis* after November 1179, when the young Philip August was crowned king of France, is out of the question. She cites the pessimism of lines at the end of Book 5, where Walter laments France's lack of a strong monarch, arguing that this could only be perceived as an insult after the young king's coronation⁵². While largely agreeing with Dionisotti's arguments, Giovanni Orlandi wonders if, published as early as 1176, the same lines would not be seen as an insult to King Louis VII, who was then only 55⁵³. In the autumn of 1177, after all, Louis and Henry II of England solemnly swore to embark on a crusade. After a careful study of the historical background, he concludes that the circumstances of the period from late 1177 till the summer of 1179 best suit the political situation implied by the poem. In this period, there is much talk of a new crusade, Louis has become quite frail and Philip is a boy of thirteen. Orlandi, however, also accepts Strecker's dating of *In Domino confido* to 1174-76 and so concludes that *Alexander* in 8.4 refers not to the *Alexandreis* but to a poem in the go-liardic meter, which he, following up on a suggestion by Bernhard Bischoff, seeks to attribute to Walter⁵⁴.

48. For a quick overview of the key elements, see D. Townsend, *Alexandreis*, cit. n. 35, XIV-XV or Maura Lafferty, *Walter of Châtillon's Alexandreis*, Toronto-Turnhout, 1998, 183-89.

49. For the date of the *Architrenius* and Jean's indebtedness to the *Alexandreis*, see Johannes de Hauvilla, *Architrenius*, ed. and tr. Winthrop Wetherbee, Cambridge, 1994, X-XI and XXV respectively.

50. H. Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied Walters von Châtillon*, Halle, 1905, 4-13.

51. A. Dionisotti, «Greeks», cit. n. 18, 90-96.

52. Si gemitu commota pio votisque suorum
flebilibus divina daret clementia talem

Francorum regem, toto radiaret in orbe . . . (5.510-12).

Dionisotti, «Greeks», cit. n. 18, 92, astutely argues that the subjunctives imply that divine clemency has not given them such a king.

53. G. Orlandi, «San Brendano, Galtiero di Châtillon e Bernhard Bischoff», *Rendiconti del Istituto Lombardo: Classe di Lettere e Scienze Morali e Storiche*, 128, 1994, 436.

54. G. Orlandi, «San Brendano», cit. n. 53, 439-40. The poem begins and ends with an address to Pope Alexander III, the dedicatee of the poem.

Since Bischoff's discovery of *Lp* with its important new reading at the end of section 21, Joscius has been banished from the poem and with him Strecker's *terminus post quem*. Strecker's argument that *flos Aurelianensium* gives us a *terminus ante quem* was refuted by Kantorowicz in 1938⁵⁵. It follows that the *Alexandreis* gives us the only reliable means of dating *In Domino confido*. Dionisotti has shown that the *Alexandreis* is the earlier work⁵⁶. Orlandi's careful analysis of the historical background indicates that the period late 1177 to mid-1179 best suits the political situation presumed by the poem. Accordingly, I would suggest that period, and, in all probability, specifically the year 1178, for the publication of the *Alexandreis*.

Dating *In Domino confido* is much harder. Walter may well have accompanied William to the Lateran Council of March 1179. Perhaps, as the rubric in *P* indicates, it was *in reditu suo de Roma* that he stopped in Bologna and delivered the original version of *In Domino confido*, a version, one hopes, that would have been more tactful towards the professional interests of the law faculty there. It would have been natural for William to ask Walter to deliver his Bologna speech to his literary circle once he was back in Reims. It would have been equally natural for Walter to recast his speech to suit the interests of his new audience. At this point, we can presume, the list of poets and the large section on theology were added and also the hostile remarks about Roman law.

CONCLUSION

The version of *In Domino confido* that we have today was probably delivered in Reims before the curia of William of the White Hands on *Laetare* Sunday, probably in 1180 or at any rate in the early 1180s. It represents a reworking of an earlier performance Walter gave in Bologna, possibly in 1179 on his way back from Rome. Seen in this light, *In Domino confido* throws welcome light on the cultural and literary interests of what was certainly the most sophisticated archiepiscopal curia in twelfth-century France. The most exhaustive study to date of that curia concludes with the following picture of William of the White Hands:

Yet the austerity connoted by William's bias for canon law and theology was somewhat counterbalanced by more liberal and cultural interests. As we should perhaps expect of a former bishop of Chartres, William was fond of Latin poetry. Otherwise his elevation to Rheims would not have been celebrated by the verses of Peter <of Riga>, nor could Walter of Châtillon have woven him so integrally into his epic. Poets and canon lawyers rubbed elbows in Archbishop William's curia and vied with theologians for his favors, which ordinarily seem to have taken the form of ecclesiastical preferment. Perhaps other prelates and princes were as liberal in their treatment of men of letters as he, and certainly many patrons excelled William in the variety of interest represented in the clientele. Yet few indeed have been associated with

55. See note 32 above.

56. Incidentally, this makes it extremely unlikely that the *Alexander* in 8.4 can refer to any work other than the *Alexandreis*.

so goodly a number of distinguished scholars, or have had their names celebrated in the dedication of works which have proved so influential. Aside from official documents he has left us nothing of his own. Nevertheless he is justly assigned a position of significance in the intellectual history of his age⁵⁷.

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57. J. Williams, «William», cit. n. 26 , 387.