

Novi modulaminis melos: the music of Heloise and Abelard

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ABSTRACT. *Recent developments have uncovered the early correspondence of Heloise and Abelard. This discovery has allowed the identification of a number of 'lost' lyrics by Abelard and has revealed that Heloise, too, was a lyricist of great stature. This article reviews some of their works and touches upon their connection with the 'goliardic' tradition, the Carmina Burana, and their influence upon Walther von der Vogelweide and other poets. The sequences and liturgical dramas of Heloise survive with music of an individual style. The dramas, moreover, are of notable originality: they influenced the later history of the genre (including the Carmina Burana Easter dramas) to a considerable and enduring extent.*¹

Only a heart of stone could fail to be touched by the story of Heloise and Abelard. Many of us with romantic souls have gone further, and have read rather more into the extant documents than can possibly be justified; and there have been lurid films and trashy novels (I do not mean such books as Helen Waddell's *Peter Abelard*) that have gone well beyond the bounds of probability. On the scholarly side, there has been a good deal of caution, not to say scepticism. Some writers, notably John Benton² have been reluctant to accept the correspondence following upon the *Historia Calamitatum* as being a genuine exchange between the two erstwhile lovers. Even the authenticity of the *Historia Calamitatum* itself has been questioned. It is true that the *Historia*, which Abelard couched as a 'letter to a friend' and might be thought to set the matter straight, does nothing of the sort. Yet, although it raises more questions than it answers, some of what he writes can be seen as a deliberate obfuscation of his real feelings and thoughts.

Otherwise, most of the supposed inconsistencies of the correspondence are the inconsistencies of human nature. As both Gilson and Dronke have shown, the

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¹ This article is necessarily a compression of a rather larger body of material. A fuller discussion will be found in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy of Heloise and Abelard*; (hereafter *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*) and *Music from the Paraclete* (hereafter *MP*), both to be published by the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society. Despite the title, *MP* will include all the secular songs that can be ascribed to Heloise and Abelard.

² John F. Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (London, 1991), 417–86, and 487–512.

arguments against authenticity have little to do with textual problems, which are few and explicable; these have more to do with the refusal of critics to countenance that Heloise was a reluctant nun, or to believe her own description of herself as hypocritical and unrepentant of her love for Abelard.³ For his part, Abelard was under no such illusions: in his late poem to their son Astralabe, he quotes 'what she often says to me' about being unrepentant of the 'delight beyond measure, the memory of which brings relief'.⁴ Nor could she accept that his love for her could die, even by the horrible act of Abelard's castration. She was probably right. Much of what Abelard says in the *Historia Calamitatum* does not ring true: his arrogation of blame for the cold seduction of his pupil is hardly fortified by the letters of Heloise; this and various supposed violations seem contrived to build a farrago of supposed guilt which he must expiate by his retreat into monasticism and by distancing himself from his former lover.

In his letters to her, he never flinches from this lofty position, constructing and maintaining an emotional moat between the two of them that he thought for the best. For her part, Heloise never ceased to express passionate feelings; the sensuous imagery of the Song of Songs was something she could not discard. Embracing, it seems, the sentiment that 'many waters cannot quench love', she could not believe that Abelard's had been extinguished. Even though she may successfully have dissembled to the world in general, her true feelings, as expressed in her letters, seem to have been fairly widely known in certain circles.⁵

Lately, the stagnant controversy concerning authenticity has been stirred again by Constant Mews: the startling revelations of his new book have breathed fresh air into the fuddle.⁶ He has shown that another series of letters published in

³ For the earlier controversies see Etienne Gilson, *Héloïse et Abélard* (Paris, 1938, ³1978), English trans. L. K. Shook, *Heloise and Abelard* (Michigan, 1960). On the later controversies, see Peter Dronke, *Abelard and Heloise in Medieval Testimonies* (Glasgow, 1979), reprinted in *Intellectuals and Poets in Medieval Europe* (Rome, 1992), 247–94; see also the articles printed on pp. 295–342 of that volume. The lack of early sources for the letters would hardly surprise a biblical critic: the old adage *posteriores non deteriores* applies as much to medieval texts as to Classical.

⁴ Gilson, *Héloïse et Abélard*, 15 and the Latin text on p. 45. She also mentions libidinous fantasies (*obscenarum voluptatum phantasmata*) that come to her, even in the solemnity of the Mass, in letter IV, the original Latin of which may be found in Eric Hicks, *La vie et les Epistres Pierres Abaelart et Heloys sa fame* (Paris, 1991), 61–9. This publication provides Jean de Meun's translation of the *Historia Calamitatum* and the subsequent letters (according to the traditional ordering with Roman numerals, as used here), as well as Abelard's *Confessio* and Peter the Venerable's letter to Heloise. It also includes parallel Latin texts for all of these items, together with Petrarch's *marginalia*. The letters are available in English translation in Betty Radice, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise* (London, 1974; hereafter Radice). There is a possibility that the Astralabe poem (which exists in several recensions) is not genuine.

⁵ See Michael Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (London, 1997; hereafter Clanchy), 157. This is a magisterial study of the background to the subject.

⁶ Constant J. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard* (New York, 1999; hereafter, LLL). Much of the circumstantial detail – dates and so on – is contained in this volume, as are full references to editions mentioned here in passing. For the *editio princeps* see Ewald Könsgen, *Epistolae duorum amantium. Briefe Abelards und Heloises?* (Leiden, 1974). Könsgen raised the question of authorship. Mews' ascription rests on the distinctively Abelardian vocabulary found in the correspondence. These later letters are identified by arabic numerals in this article, corresponding with the Mews edition.

1974, but which have attracted comparatively little attention, represent an earlier correspondence between Heloise and Abelard, dating from when the two lovers were together in Paris. He has argued convincingly that the *Epistolae duorum amantium*, a series of 113 letters, known through a partial copy made at Clairvaux in the late fifteenth century by Johannes de Vepria, is a genuine record of this correspondence.

Leaving aside the profoundly moving quality of this testimony, several things flow from these letters.⁷ First, it is clear that Heloise's reputation as a literary figure, often thought to be an exaggeration of Peter the Venerable and others, is confirmed. Second, the early Paris letters (c. 1115–16) confirm the genuineness of those written after Abelard's castration; these, the *Historia* series of letters, must date from after c. 1132, Heloise having been abbess at the Paraclete for some three years or so.

Abelard's hymns might date from 1120–35 or thereabouts; the *planctus* may have been slightly later. The compilation of the Paraclete Hymnal is treated elsewhere, as is the question of its rhythms:⁸ in this article the rhythms of all the transcriptions are to be understood as being editorial. In the prefatory letter to his sermons, Abelard refers to a 'book of hymns and sequences' sent to Heloise; despite contrary assumptions, the *libello quodam hymnorum vel sequentiarum a me nuper precibus tui consummato* does not refer to his *planctus*.⁹

A particular feature of Abelard's hymns is his (and Heloise's) concern for the union of words and music, as expressed in the preface to Book I of the Hymnal. The preface uses the second-person singular in such a way that it is clear that Heloise has requested new hymns for various reasons. They both apparently agreed that the hymn repertory was unsatisfactory in many ways, including the manner in which the words of the hymnodists, not least those of Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Prudentius and others, were ill-matched to their tunes, for the 'inequality of the syllables is so great that they scarcely fit the melody of the song'.¹⁰ As discussed in detail elsewhere, the phrase *vix cantici melodiam*

⁷ Johannes, who seems to have had access to copies of the original correspondence, marked several omissions: he undoubtedly cut some passages that he thought of insufficient literary merit, but others he appears to have seen fit to expurgate when they became too explicit. The first of Heloise's later letters (II: Hicks, *La vie et les Epistres*, 58) refers to the many letters that Abelard wrote containing references to *turpes olim voluptates*. Note again that Hicks' numeration (used throughout this article) follows the traditional numbering of the later letters, counting the *Historia Calamitatum* as I. Unfortunately, Radice follows Monfrin and others in numbering Heloise's rejoinder as I.

⁸ See *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 1.

⁹ *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, 217 vols. (Paris, 1843–73; hereafter *PL*), 178:379–80. Peter Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1970), p. 139, follows Giuseppe Vecchi, *Poesia latina medievale* (Parma, 1952, ²1958) in assuming that these *sequentiae* include the *planctus*. The *planctus* are so called in the Vatican manuscript, and numbers 80–83 of the Paraclete Hymnal (see note 10) are cast in sequence form. Thus the reference to *hymnorum vel sequentiarum* is a strictly accurate description of the book (it matters little how the word *vel* be interpreted).

¹⁰ 'tanta est frequenter inequalitas sillabarum, ut vix cantici melodiam recipiant': Preface to Book I of the Paraclete Hymnal. See *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, ed. Clemens Blume, Guido Dreves et al. 55 vols. (Leipzig, 1886–1922), 48:143. See also Chrysogonus Waddell, *Hymn Collections from the*

recipiant appears to hinge especially on the question of cadential accent (about which Abelard was fastidious) and on the use of elision and hiatus (both of which Abelard can be seen to have avoided).¹¹ That the Paraclete hymns were intended to be sung rhythmically is borne out by overwhelming evidence.¹² Moreover, at least one of his hymn cycles (beginning with 'Christiani plaudite') is clearly a series of contrafactions of a current rondel tune with a catchy refrain, which would hardly have been chanted. Indeed, if the Miriam in the second hymn of the cycle were to be pictured as striking her timbrel randomly in a vain attempt to find a rhythm, the image would be wholly ludicrous.

In the light of Abelard's consideration for accent, the distinctive rhythms of many of his hymns can be recovered with some confidence. Another salient feature is his rhyme technique: in the hymns and *planctus* he uses the archaic convention, properly called homoioteleut(i)on, whereby the last syllable of the line rhymes, irrespective of the linguistic accent. Thus *sabbata* may rhyme with *curia*.

His earliest *rithmi*, on the other hand, are rhymed in the more up-to-date manner, the rhymes and cadential accents marching together, at least in regard to penultimate: thus *prâta* rhymes with *hiemâta*. Most of these lyrics, as we shall see, date from the Paris period, when Heloise and Abelard were lovers. She arrived at Notre Dame in 1113, so the short-lived affair between them must have begun in the next year or so. Their early correspondence as lovers dates from 1115 until 1116/17, when their relationship was discovered by her uncle Fulbert, under whose roof they were both living. Events followed rapidly. The clandestine marriage and Heloise's removal to Brittany to have her child; Abelard's castration by the henchmen of Fulbert; his exile; and Heloise's becoming a nun. All appear to have taken place in 1117–18. Heloise took the veil at Argenteuil, where she had been educated as a girl; but she had become a nun against her will, at the insistence of Abelard.¹³

Abelard did not remain long in Paris. Two years later, his wounds barely healed, Abelard was at St Denis, where he took his monastic vows. In 1121 he was condemned by the Council of Soissons and one of his major works burnt; the next year his enemies caused him to flee St Denis, in fear of his life. He escaped to St Ayoul de Provins, much shaken. His consolation was that he had a growing number of pupils following him, and so, in better spirits, he started building an oratory in about 1122 near Nogent-sur-Seine, helped by his band of assorted students. This he called the Paraclete. These events are recorded in the *Historia Calamitatum*, which may have been circulated in about 1132. Abelard mentions his carmina amatoria to the 'friend' to whom the *Historia* was purportedly written, saying that 'a large proportion of these songs, as you know yourself,

Paraclete I, Cistercian Liturgy Series 8 (Trappist, Ky., 1989; hereafter *CLS*), 47–8. On the subject of the Preface, see the discussion by Mews in this issue, p. 27.

¹¹ *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 1.

¹² See David Wulstan, *The Emperor's Old Clothes* (Ottawa, 2001; hereafter *TEOC*).

¹³ For the chronology I rely principally on Mews, *LLL*.

are still familiar to many people and are frequently sung in various places, especially by those who live the kind of life that I led'.¹⁴

In addition to the gaudy jewel of bombast which shows from underneath the sackcloth, this passage gives the impression that the songs belonged to the period before his castration. Yet it seems unlikely that he had abjured them entirely; indeed, his Paraclete students seem to have been unaware of any such thing, and one of them gives the strongest hint that they continued to be sung, and possibly even still composed, in the early Paraclete years. A scabrous lyric entitled *De papa scholastico* by his illustrious pupil Hilary of Orleans speaks of someone with a singular and sweet voice; a formidable teacher much loved by his pupils even though he is strict (*durus*) and beats them; who is feared alike by French and English.¹⁵ Both the soldier and the clerk were acquainted with (*novit*) him, and he invents jolly songs (*papa novit jocunda cantica*). This witty poem, playing on two different roots of *novit* and two meanings of *papa* (Latin 'Pope' and French 'daddy') has a vernacular refrain: *tort a qui ne li dune* ('whoever balks has done him wrong'). The first four stanzas appear to be an affectionate portrait of Abelard (though he is said to be fond of money), but the final two are ribald in the extreme. The refrain itself seems likely to have had its origin in one of Abelard's own songs.

Another of Hilary's songs seems to record the closing of the Paraclete school on various pretexts. This has the refrain 'the Master has done us wrong', *tort a vers nos li mestre*, seemingly a variant of that seen in the *De papa* lyric. Although rowdiness was Abelard's main excuse, the demise of the school in 1126 was probably political. This was certainly true of the expulsion of Heloise's nuns from Argenteuil in 1128; so it was a timely gift in 1129 when Abelard was able to make over the Paraclete for the use of the remainder of Heloise's community. Meanwhile, Abelard was at St Gildas from 1127. In his unhappy sojourn there, he probably completed the Paraclete hymnal. By now, he had abjured the ways of Goliath; indeed, the third of his Easter rondels begins: 'Goliath prostratus est'.¹⁶

At about the time of the circulation of the *Historia Calamitatum*, Abelard departed from St Gildas. He appears to have returned to Paris in 1133 or so. His writing and teaching continued to be rigorous and questioning, his style combative. This was too much for traditionalists such as Bernard of Clairvaux, and it eventually led to his condemnation at the Council of Sens in 1141. A

¹⁴ 'carmina essent amatoria . . . quorum etiam carminum pleraque adhuc in multis, sicut et ipse nostri, frequentantur et decantantur regionibus, ab his maxime quos vita similis oblectat.' See Hicks, *La vie et les Epistres*, 12.

¹⁵ Often called 'the Englishman', he is now considered to have been French. For his works see Walther Bulst and M. L. Bulst-Thiele, *Hilarii Aureliensis, Versus et Ludi* (Leiden, 1989), no. XIV. On Abelard as the subject of this poem, see Therese Latzke, 'Zu dem Gedichte De papa scolastico', *Mittelaltinisches Jahrbuch* 13 (1978), 86–99.

¹⁶ Although the topic is ostensibly the conflict between David and Goliath, the reference to [Goliath] *jugulatus est* later in the stanza, plays on *gula*, one of the jocular etymologies for 'Goliard'. Goliath seems at first to have been a humorous name like Wilde's Bunbury. For references to Abelard as Goliath (discussed in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 2), see P. G. Walsh, "'Goliath" and Goliardic Poetry', *Medium Ævum* 52 (1983), 1–9.

year later, having been befriended by Peter the Venerable of Cluny, he was dead.

The second of Abelard's Easter rondels, 'Da Marie tympanum', represents Miriam beating time for the triumph song at the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15). Here, however, Mary Magdalen seems to be interwoven in this role (as she is in his sermon XIII for Easter):¹⁷ so Miriam's refrain now becomes Mary's *Resurrexit dominus!* When Abelard died in 1142, Peter the Venerable was absent in Spain; thus it was not until 1143 or thereabouts that he was able to write a letter of comfort to Heloise and to tell her of her husband's last years at Cluny and final weeks at St Marcel, Chalon-sur-Saône. Peter praises her learning and wealth of religion, and compares her with many heroines such as the Old Testament Deborah, the Hebrew etymology of whose name he expects her to know. He also sees her as Miriam, telling her that 'you took up the *tympanum* of blessed mortification, so that your skill sent new turns of melody to the very ears of God'. Clearly, he has Abelard's hymn in mind, for he also uses the rare word *tympanistria*.¹⁸ The telling phrase 'new turns of melody', *novi modulaminis melos*, has been overlooked hitherto.

It is rightly argued that the dawn of the universities can be seen in the rigour of Abelard's teaching; yet, if so, Heloise must be acknowledged as sharing his dais. As Michael Clanchy has shown us, she was as much his teacher as his muse in many fields of learning.¹⁹ Hugh Metel, the epistolary Uriah Heap of the twelfth century, fulsomely described Heloise's literary style as 'Dictando, versificando, nova junctura, nota verba novando'.²⁰ This 'refurbishing of familiar words in fresh combinations' is echoed by Peter the Venerable's *novi modulaminis melos*. That phrases such as these were not formal plaudits, but genuine recognition of her learning and her originality as poet and musician are fortified by Constant Mews' recent identification of the *Epistolae duorum amantium* as a record of the early correspondence of Heloise and Abelard: this has left no room to doubt that the letters which followed the *Historia Calamitatum* are indeed genuine. The knowledge that we have *two* authentic series of letters has far-reaching

¹⁷ PL 178:484–9, and Letter VII, Hicks, *La vie et les Epistres*, 117–20. In both passages, Mary of Egypt is added for good measure. For the reading from the patristic Mary of Egypt, see Chrysogonus Waddell, *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary and the Paraclete Breviary* I, CLS 3 (1985), 127, and *idem*, *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary* II, CLS 4 (1983), 31.

¹⁸ 'Cantasti cum Maria, demerso Pharaone, canticum laudis, et beate mortificationis tympanum, ut olim illa pre manibus gerens, novi modulaminis melos usque ad ipsas deitatis aures docta tympanistria transmisisti.' Letter 115 in *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, 2 vols., ed. Giles Constable (Cambridge, Mass, 1967), 304; Radice, 277–84 (at p. 278); Hicks, *La vie et les Epistres*, 156–61 (at p. 157). *Tympanum* does not mean 'timbre!' (although this word, from Coverdale and the KJV, was used earlier in this article). In common with its Hebrew cognate (\sqrt{tp}), it means a drum (Arab. *duff*). Only in Ps. 68:24 (Vulgate numbering) does the form *tympanistria(rum)* occur in the Latin Bible.

¹⁹ Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life*, 169–70 etc. It should be pointed out that although Clanchy accepted the authenticity of the later correspondence, penetrated its psychological problems, and saw the influence of Heloise's learning upon Abelard, his book was written before it was realised that the early letters were by Heloise and Abelard.

²⁰ See Constant Mews, p. 26 of this issue.

effects. In addition to showing us that Heloise and Abelard sharpened each other's intellect and that their styles developed in symbiosis, the letters allow the identification of several of their lyrics.

The particular vocabulary used by Abelard in his books and sermons that establishes the authorship of the early letters shows in turn that several well-known anonymous lyrics must be ascribed either to Heloise or to Abelard. **Metrical poems abound in their early correspondence**; clearly both lovers were adept metricians. These *metra* often rhyme, but in the archaistic manner, properly called homoioteleuton, to which, as already noted, Abelard recrudesced in his hymns, sequences and *planctus*. Generally, Heloise also affects this variety of rhyme in her lyric works, so from this point of view their styles are nearly indistinguishable. Nevertheless, Abelard's secular songs use the true rhyme (at least when there is a penultimate accent) of his contemporaries.

I have suggested the possibility (no more than that) that Abelard may have written **Li Lai des Puceles** in addition to his *Planctus Virginum*, which is closely related.²¹ More certainly, there are two lyrics in the *Carmina Burana* which some scholars have long supposed to be by Abelard. As Mews showed, the lyric **'Hebet sidus'** in the *Carmina Burana*²² has a parallel in letter 20 of the love letters:

Stella polum variat,	et noctem luna colorat
sed michi sydus hebet	quod me conducere debet.

This is a metrical piece of the type to which Heloise alludes in the later letters. But she also mentions *rithmi*, and 'Hebet sidus' must have been one of these:

Hebet sidus	leti visus	cordis nubilo,	
tepet oris	mei risus	carens iubilo;	jure mereo,
occultatur	nam propinqua,		
cordis vigor	floret in qua;		totus hereo.

There are no neums given for this lyric in the *Carmina Burana*, but a stanza from Walther von der Vogelweide's 'Muget ir shouwen' is appended to it. Significantly, another stanza from the same Walther lyric is appended to another *Carmina Burana* item (**CB 151**), where this time neums are present.

Gennrich rightly saw that these neums fitted Gaultier d'Espinal's song **'Quant je vois l'erbe menue'**, known from the *Chansonier Cagé*.²³ **CB 151** is 'Virent prata hiemata', another lyric which has long been suspected of being Abelard's (on the grounds of its supposed allusion Phoebus = Helios = Heloise); it is also in the same metre as 'Hebet sidus'. Irène Rosier-Catach has shown that the

²¹ *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 2.

²² *Carmina Burana* (hereafter *CB*), 169. Items are cited from the edition of Alfons Hilka, Otto Schumann and Bernhard Bischoff (Heidelberg, 1933–70), 1:parts 1–3.

²³ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 20050, fol. 54–54v; see Friedrich Gennrich, 'Melodien Walthers von der Vogelweide', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 79 (1942), 47; and his *Die Contrafaktur im Liedschaffen des Mittelalters* (Langen bei Frankfurt, 1965), 196. The interrelationships of all of these lyrics are detailed in *MP*.

phrase 'prata rident' is first attested in Abelard's works on logic dating from 1118–21.²⁴ There is little doubt that the Carmina Burana lyric is by him (see Ex. 1).

Various further suppositions seem either fairly certain, likely or possible. 'Hebet sidus' was written for Heloise in 1116 or so, during the period of the early correspondence, which dates from c. 1115 to 1116/17. Soon, he composed a more complex lyric, 'Virent prata', to the same tune. This latter was known both to Gautier d' Espinal (or Espinau), who wrote an imitation of it more than a century later and also to Walther von der Vogelweide at some time around 1200, when he might have visited the Tyrol, where the Carmina Burana were copied.²⁵ This manuscript not only contains lyrics by Abelard but also some by Heloise and by pupils at the Paraclete School. These may have been transmitted thither by someone connected with Hilary of Orleans, who had been at the Paraclete before finally fetching up at Angers. As to the tune seen in the above example, it is not clear whether it was merely adapted by Abelard or was his own.

The image shows a musical score for the Carmina Burana lyric 'Virent prata'. It consists of three staves of music in a single system, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across lines. A small 'e' is written above the final note of the first staff. Brackets are used to group certain words in the German translation.

Vi - rent pra - ta hi - e - ma - ta ter - sa ra - bi - e
 flo - rum da - ta mun - do gra - ta ri - dent fa - ci - e:
 So wol dir mei - e wie du schei - dest al - lez a - ne haz
 wie wol du die bou - me clei dest un - de die hei - de baz!

so - lis ra - di - o ni - tent, al - bent, ru - bent, can - dent,
 diu hat var - we me du bist chur - çer ih pin lan - ger

ve - ris ri - tus ju - ra pan - dent or - tu va - ri - o.
 al - so stri - ten si uf dem an - ger blû - men un - de chle.

Example 1

²⁴ Irène Rosier-Catach, 'Prata rident', in *Langages et Philosophie, Mélanges offerts à Jean Jolivet*. Etudes de Philosophie médiévale 74, ed. Alain de Libera et al. (Paris, 1997), 155–76. I am grateful to Constant Mews for drawing my attention to this article. The way the words are used in 'Virent prata' is what Ugaritic scholars would call the 'break-up of stereotyped phrases'.

²⁵ On the date of CB, see Peter Dronke, 'A Critical note on Schumann's dating of the Codex Buranus', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 84 (1962), 173–83. On its probable Bressanone provenance, see Georg Steer, "'Carmina Burana" im Südtirol', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 112 (1983) 1–37. See also Olive Sayce, *Plurilingualism in the Carmina Burana: a study of the linguistic and literary influences upon the Codex*, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 556 (Göppingen, 1992). As noted in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 2, Gautier appears to have known both 'Virent prata' and 'Hebet sidus', elements of both being seen in his lyric.

A possible trace of another lost lyric (perhaps written for Heloise by Abelard) is to be seen in the French refrain, 'my lady has done me wrong':

Tort a vers mei ma dama.

Something like it has already been seen in two poems by Hilary; another, which probably quotes the original refrain, was copied into the *Carmina Burana*, though alas, without its tune.²⁶ The main rhythmic pattern of these songs, the 'Goliardic decasyllabic', was to become a hallmark of the compositions of both Heloise and Abelard.

During the years of Abelard's Paraclete school (c. 1122–26), Heloise was at Argenteuil. There, I think she wrote one or two *rhythmi* of her own, notably 'Jam dudum estivalia', a poem which was later copied into the *Carmina Burana*.²⁷ Its ascription to Der Marner dates only from the fifteenth century. Far from being an imitation of a poem by Walther von der Vogelweide, it was actually written by Heloise, and became one of the models for Walther's 'Diu welt, was gelf'.

As mentioned earlier, several *metra* by Heloise adorn the early letters. She continued to write metrical poetry at Argenteuil, as Mews has shown,²⁸ but had branched out into the rhythmic style of 'Jam dudum'. I think that it was here that she composed a liturgical drama on the subject of the mistaking of the risen Christ as the Gardener, which was copied in the later twelfth-century into a manuscript at Vic in Catalunya with no hint as to its author. Although the drama is not entirely satisfactory (not least because its music is incomplete), it has a strikingly original beginning in which Mary Magdalen brings precious ointments to anoint the body of Christ, the dead Bridegroom. Heloise had doubtless arrogated this role to herself, singing 'Rex in accubitum', a rhythmic lyric whose imagery derives from the Song of Songs.²⁹

The reasons for ascribing this drama to Heloise are complex. They will be set forth in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*. Here, it is sufficient to mention the use of homoioteleuton, and that the identification of Christ as the Bridegroom, often played upon by Abelard in the later letters, is unique to this play and its companion at Vic (also to be attributed to Heloise). At first sight, therefore,

²⁶ CB 95.

²⁷ CB 3*, though the *ma* was omitted by the scribe. This series of poems by the Paraclete students is discussed in more detail in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*.

²⁸ Mews, *LLL*, 162.

²⁹ The Song of Songs (1:11 Latin) has 'while the king was in his bed' (*dum esset rex in accubitu suo*) tactfully translated in the KJV (1:12, = Hebrew) as 'while the king sitteth at his table'; but the context of the Hebrew (as indeed the Latin of later verses) makes clear that 'while the king lies down [beside me]: my nard gives forth its perfume'—*וְעַד־שִׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בְּמִטְבוֹ נָרְדִי נֵתַן רִיחוֹ*; (the *qtllqal* forms have no temporal force). Heloise may have been aware of the original meaning, if we are to trust Peter the Venerable's reference to her knowledge of Hebrew in his letter to her (115 – see footnote 19) and Abelard's similar remarks. On the other hand, these references may simply reflect a second-hand knowledge of Hebrew through the writings of Origen and Jerome, mentioned in several letters of the later correspondence. On the medieval knowledge of Hebrew, see Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1952, ³1983), 78–81.

Abelard himself seems a possible author; the alternative is someone very near him.

After the sensual introduction of this drama, heavy with the cloying scent of spikenard, Mary Magdalen comes upon him whom she first supposes to be the Gardener, but who later reveals himself as the risen Lord. This continuation is expressed in a seemingly conventional way, incorporating an apparently biblical text, together with an excerpt from 'Dic nobis Maria' (part of the sequence 'Victime paschali'), a usage seen in many later liturgical dramas.

This appears to be the earliest liturgical drama in which the fusion of this sequence with the Resurrection scene occurs, the latter being distinctively handled. This is the very beginning of a trend. Other details are also remarkable. We have the first, and comparatively rare, instance where the Gardener (*ortolanus*) is named as one of the *dramatis personae*. Although later plays take up the Johannine theme and use the 'Maria-Rabboni' dialogue that attends the eventual recognition of Jesus, the mistaken Ortolanus was perhaps implied, but not specified. It is notable, too, that Heloise's Magdalen says 'Rabboni! Rabboni! Magister!', a unique reading whose allusion to Master Peter could hardly be more plain.³⁰

What the later plays did not imitate, however, was the identification of the crucified Christ as the dead Bridegroom, a feature unique to her plays. Her Gardener play was so remarkable that the Vic scribe seems to have had considerable difficulty in understanding it. He inserted a nonsensical 'Non est hic surrexit' in the middle of the 'Dic nobis Maria' segments, and tried to turn the piece into a Peregrinus drama for Easter Monday. Hence his title, *Versus de pelegri[nis]*, which was unlikely to be Heloise's. Her drama was very likely called Ortolanus: it would have ended either with the *Te Deum* (as in most 'Dic nobis' dramas) or with the *Magnificat*, if it took place at Vespers. The latter possibility is suggested by one or two instances, notably the Beauvais Peregrinus drama of about the same date;³¹ the Vic scribe's attempt to locate the drama at Lauds is eccentric.

As to the spelling *ortolanus*, it is one of the clues to the lineage of the various dramas that include the Gardener as a character in the play. The dropped aitches of the Vic text may not be due to the scribe: they occur in at least two dramas that appear to be descended from Heloise's. More tellingly, the unscriptural spelling of *ortulanus* with a Greek *o* rather than the Latin *u* is found in virtually all of these dependent dramas;³² This curiosity seems to stem from Heloise herself.

The Gardener play was, I think, her first essay as a liturgical dramatist. A second one followed, as we shall see. Both were copied into the Vic manuscript, though

³⁰ The threefold iteration of *Maria!*, the addition of *quem queris?* to the first *quid ploras?*, and possibly the spelling *Rabboni* are among various details that appear to be traceable to Heloise. See *MP*.

³¹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France n.a. lat. 1064, fol. 8, with the rubric *in secunda feria pasche ad vespas*.

³² Fleury, Coutances and Barking – see *MP* – the exception is Klosterneuburg, which corrects the spelling, though a marginal note to the Resurrection drama *CB* *15 does not.

(i) Vic

(a) Rex, in ac - cu - bi - tum jam se con - tu - le - rat
 (b) Per noc - tem i - gi - tur hunc que - rens ex - e - o

(ii) le Puy
 (iii) Nev

5

(a) et me - a re - do - lens nar - dus spi ra - ve - rat
 (b) Vic huc il - luc tran - si - ens nus - quam re pe - ri - o
 (b) Ep hunc il - luc an - xi - a que - ren - do cur - si - to

6

10

(a) in or - tum ve - ne - ram in quem des - cen - de - rat
 (b) oc - cu - runt vi - gi - les ar - den - ti stu - di - o

9

in or - tum ve - ne - ram

15

(a) at il - le tran - si - ens jam dec - li - na - ve - rat.
 (b) quos cum tran - si - e - rim spon - sum in ve - ni - o.

14

e

Example 2

their order was reversed, according to the scribe's conception of their place in the liturgical calendar. The ascription of these plays to Heloise rests on several further pieces of evidence, one concerning **'Rex in accubitus', the opening of the Gardener drama**. This is written in the prosodic pattern of Abelard's 'O quanta qualia' and the rest of his *triduum* hymns. Although it by no means originated with him, it was certainly a hallmark rhythm. In Example 2, the Vic reading is to be seen in the first line of each system; the second lines show the readings of the **le Puy** and **Nevers** manuscripts.

- (i) Vic, Bib. Episc., MS 105, fol. 58v (where the third word is spelt *acubitum*).
 (ii) le Puy, Bibl. du grand Séminaire, 'Prosolarium Anicensis' (no number) and Grenoble Bibliothèque municipale, MS 4413 (for the purposes of this article these two manuscripts are treated as one, though there are some differences between them)
 (iii) Nevers manuscript: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS n.a. lat. 3126, fol. 91

The Vic reading probably represents Heloise's first thoughts for the tune: it will be noted that it is in the C-tone. Versions (ii) and (iii) are taken from the sequence *Epithalamica*, into which this section was later incorporated. As may be seen, the tone of the le Puy melody is congruent with that of (i), although it has been transposed. The relevant section of the Nevers manuscript (iii) is very close in date to the time of Heloise,³³ nevertheless, its scribe or exemplar has already seen fit to 'modalize' the passage (and, by implication, the whole sequence). This, perhaps a 'Cistercianization', means that this secular-sounding melody is brought into the ecclesiastical embrace of the d-mode.

The sixteenth-century le Puy source is clearly based on a much older antecedent. As Arlt has argued,³⁴ it almost certainly derives from a thirteenth-century exemplar. The versions that it provides for various pieces in earlier manuscripts – as for instance 'In hoc anni circulo', 'Congaudeat ecclesia', 'Annus novus', 'Alto consilio', 'Resonemus hoc natali', and several others that are all represented in a twelfth-century Limoges manuscript³⁵ show that its readings are on a par with those of manuscripts copied three or more centuries earlier. Accordingly, the testimony of le Puy in regard to Heloise's 'Epithalamica' should be taken seriously. Granted that there are a few possible errors (the small-note versions given above endeavour to correct putative instances), comparison with the Nevers version seems to indicate that the 'Rex in accubitum' section of the sequence was a revision of her first effort, which formed the opening of the Ortolanus drama.

Musically, her predilection for repeated notes, somewhat insistent in her earlier play, is tempered in the later sequence (see bars 3–4 = 11–12). Textually, the (b) repetition of bars 5–8, 'huc illuc transiens ...', was changed to 'hunc illuc anxia ...'.³⁶ Elsewhere in the sequence, the le Puy scribe or his exemplar took it upon himself to alter the order of some of the phrases, and to add an otiose 'Hec dies' section at the end; here, the Nevers readings are patently correct. Thus, the musical testimony of le Puy is not necessarily unimpeachable, but neither is that of Nevers, which has several demonstrable garblings in both music and texts, as will be discussed below. As must be obvious, Heloise's intentions are not always entirely clear to us.

'Epithalamica' has been ascribed to Abelard by Father Chrysogonus Waddell.³⁷

³³ Michel Huglo, 'Un nouveau prosaire nivernais', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 62 (1957), 3–30.

³⁴ Wulf Arlt, 'The Office for the Feast of the Circumcision from le Puy', in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography*, ed. Margot Fassler and Rebecca Baltzer (Oxford, 2000), 324–43.

³⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 1139.

³⁶ There are also lines of dialogue in the play that interrupt the text as seen in the sequence.

³⁷ Chrysogonus Waddell, 'Epithalamica: An Easter Sequence by Peter Abelard', *Musical Quarterly* 55 (1986), 239–71. The final section 'Hec dies', which he has borrowed from the later le Puy version, is entirely spurious; it is not found in the Nevers manuscript.

The Nevers manuscript in which it is found also contains an authentic *planctus* by Abelard, 'Dolorum solatium'. This also survives in a source now in Oxford, so the *campo aperto* neums of the Vatican manuscript, which includes all of his *planctus*, can be deciphered in this instance.³⁸ This is true also for the *Planctus Virginum*,³⁹ whose musical link with **Li Lais des Puceles** makes a transcription possible. **His other *planctus*, alas, are untranscribable,** unless imagination is to have free rein. As to his hymns, I have conjectured that the 'Christiani plaudite' group of hymns in Abelard's Paraclete Hymnal might have been sung to a rondel tune known in a so-called Notre Dame source, the well-known Florence manuscript.⁴⁰

Otherwise, one of his most celebrated hymns, 'O quanta qualia', has a tune that was discovered by Vecchi, and this has often been printed as one of the precious survivors of Abelard's melody.⁴¹ There is little doubt that the tune as given in the later sources represents the general outlines of the melody sung at the Paraclete in Heloise's time. Nevertheless, it is not Abelard's own, nor does it emerge unscathed from the time when he adapted it to his *triduum* cycle.

It turns out that the tune was from the popular register, one of several that were adapted to 'Sanctorum meritis', a hymn in a similar metre to that of the *triduum* cycle. The song form of the tune and, more particularly its tonality, mark it off as part of the secular repertory from which, in my view, Abelard independently adapted it. Sources of this 'Sanctorum meritis' tune make clear that the original was in the C-tone.

This ungodly tonality of 'Sanctorum meritis' was disguised at Sarum by writing the tune as though in the G-tone (as Heloise's 'Epithalamica' was also rendered in the le Puy manuscript). The Worcester version, however, is blatantly in the C-tone. From this, it is evident that in common with that of 'Epithalamica', the melody adapted by Abelard was brought within the purview of the d-mode by the Cistercians (in whose books it is later found), and the frivolities of the C-mode expunged. The 'Sanctorum meritis' tune is printed elsewhere, as is the 'O quanta qualia' melody in its d-mode form;⁴² here, 'O quanta' is restored to its original tonality (Ex. 3).

We know something about the Cistercian revision of the chant, which can be dated between 1142 and 1147, before Heloise's death, and before the compilation of the section of the Nevers manuscript that contains her 'Epithalamica'.⁴³

The rhythm of 'O quanta qualia' and 'Rex in accubitum' is what I have termed

³⁸ *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 1.

³⁹ See *TEOC*, 269–72, for formulaic parallels with other Lais, the Hymn to St Magnus, etc.

⁴⁰ *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 1.

⁴¹ Giuseppe Vecchi, *Poesia latina medievale* (Parma, 1952, ²1958).

⁴² *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, chapter 1.

⁴³ *Epistola S. Bernardi*, ed. Francis J. Guenter, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 24 (American Institute of Musicology, 1974), especially p. 11. The reference to the 'Cistercianization' of the 'Epithalamica' melody in an earlier paragraph assumes that the Nevers source relied upon a Cistercian exemplar or hyparchetype for this item. On the other hand, the 'modalization' of the sequence might have been independent of Cistercian influence.

O quan - ta qua - li - a sunt il - - la sab - ba - ta, que sem - per ce - le - brat su - per - - na cu - ri - a que fes - sis re - qui - es, que mer - ces for - ti - bus, cum er - it om - ni - a de - us in om - ni - - bus.

Example 3

the ‘Goliardic hexasyllabic’, a pattern at least as early as the ninth century, and evident in such lyrics as ‘O Roma nobilis’ of the Cambridge Songs, in liturgical dramas, and so on.⁴⁴

The extent to which Abelard might have contributed to the popularity of this rhythm is clouded by the modern fame of ‘O quanta qualia’. The pattern seems not to have been particularly prevalent in the (northern) French vernacular register, but its presence in the goliardic repertory is notable: it is seen for instance in compositions that were adapted into the liturgy (particularly those of Aquitaine), and also in the liturgical drama. Heloise seems to have met with this rhythm in a composition from Jumièges; but her ‘Rex in accubitum’ is not indebted to this source, so the origins of the espousal of this pattern by Heloise, Abelard and the ‘Paraclete School’ cannot easily be determined.

In common with most of ‘Epithalamica’, the rhythm of ‘Rex in accubitum’ is that of ‘O quanta qualia’; yet the sentiments of both the Gardener play and of ‘Epithalamica’ are far from those seen in Abelard’s works. Constant Mews has pointed to the stylistic similarity between this sequence and passages in the letter 24 of the early series, where something similar to the cascade rhymes noted earlier occur.⁴⁵ If ‘Epithalamica’ be by Abelard, however, what is an extract from it doing in a Catalan play? It is more credible that the play was a first attempt by Heloise, and the Sequence a later reworking of part of it (Ex. 4).

Her point of departure appears to have been an earlier sequence (tenth- or eleventh-century) from Jumièges. Coincidentally, this was couched in the rhythm

⁴⁴ *TEOC*, 223ff.

⁴⁵ *LLL*, 172.

(a) E - pi - tha - la - mi - ca__ dic__ spon - sa, can - ti - ca;
 (b) In - tus que con - spi - cis__ dic__ fo - ris gau - di - a,
 (c) Et__ nos le - ti - fi - cans__ de__ spon - so nun - ti - a,
 (d) Cu - jus te__ re - fo - vet__ sem - per__ pre - sen - ci - a!

Example 4

that she had already employed in 'Rex in accubitum', and was also a gloss upon the Song of Songs. Indeed, it begins with the words 'Epithalamia, decantans dulcia' (Ex. 5).⁴⁶

(a) E - pi - tha - la - mi - a de - can - tans dul - ci - a.
 (b) Cho - ras hic can - ti - cis as - sit in__ mu - si - cis.

Example 5

Although both Heloise and the earlier sequence use phraseology from the Song of Songs and in the same order, the selection of ideas can hardly be coincidental. Heloise's 'In montibus' section echoes phrases of the prototype, where the clinching evidence is in her refrain,

*Amica, surge, propera
 columba nitens, avola!*

which refashions the earlier

*Columba mea nitida
 amica mea splendida.*

nitens is not paralleled in the Bible, nor are the adjectives *nitida* and *splendida*.

This section was imitated in one of Abelard's hymns ('In montibus'), employing the same rhythm, the Goliardic decasyllabic. This hymn, however, removes the heat of passion from Heloise's interpretation of the Song of Songs, and it emphasizes the 'Brides of Christ' gloss upon the Canticle, this being the burden of several of Abelard's later letters.⁴⁷

As already suggested, Heloise made use of 'Rex in accubitum', which has no parallel in the Jumièges sequence. She probably wrote 'Epithalamica', headily scented with the sensuous perfume of the Song of Songs, soon after taking over

⁴⁶ For the complete sequence, see Bryan Gillingham, *Secular Medieval Latin Song: an Anthology* (Ottawa, 1993). This sequence is in an eleventh-century manuscript. (Its letter notation probably places the piece in the early part of that century, or even earlier.)

⁴⁷ E.g., his letters III and VIII. Many other compositions on the Sponsus theme exist, of course, e.g., the *Speculum virginum* of Conrad of Hirsau in the early twelfth century (though the metre and tune of 'Audi filia' included in it have nothing to do with 'Epithalamica'). The scale of Bernard of Clairvaux' sermons on the Song of Songs dwarfed those of Abelard and became highly influential.

the Paraclete. The later correspondence frequently shows Abelard trying to dissuade Heloise from thinking of their past love life. Although their earlier letters often used the Song of Songs as a literary love-filtre, he now tries to use the traditional Christian interpretation as a cure for love. Patently, he is not successful: in common with another of Heloise's sequences, there is the crossfire of *agape* and *eros*, and ecstatic assertions of carnal love thinly disguised as celestial.

Abelard's own *planctus* appear to have been lyric compositions of a deeply personal kind:⁴⁸ they do not seem to have been intended for paraliturgical use, nor are they mentioned in any of the extant documents relating to the Paraclete. Although of an equally personal nature, Heloise's sequences, on the other hand, were used by the nuns. 'Epithalamica' was used at the main Mass of Easter Day, allowing her once more to celebrate her absent bridegroom in a manner that would have been disavowed by the post-*Calamitatum* Abelard. Indeed, his letter III may have been a riposte to Heloise's elative use of the Song of Songs in this sequence. He attempts to use the 'nigra sum sed formosa' theme in a manner intended to damp down her ardour, an endeavour manifestly doomed to failure.

As already mentioned, the Nevers version of 'Epithalamica', though providing the better text, appears to have been tampered with musically. Although le Puy is textually less satisfactory, it probably comes nearer to Heloise's musical intentions, as is shown by the 'Rex in accubitu' preserved at Vic.

At le Puy, however, and doubtless earlier in the history of this transmission, the order of lines had been changed. One of these alterations (the interchange of *risi mane, flevi nocte* to *nocte flevi, mane risi*) may have been made under the influence of 'weeping may endure for a night: but joy cometh in the morning' from the Psalms. Nevertheless, the shifting of the present-tense verbs in the phrases *Jam video quod optaveram* and *jam teneo quod amaveram* is telling: the reversal of the sentiments to 'I now *hold* what I had hoped for; I now *behold* what I had loved', play down the amatory tone of the original.

To return to the matter of the plays. It seems likely that Heloise was conscious that her Ortolanus drama was unsatisfactory. Accordingly, she left it alone (apart from using its opening as part of her 'Epithalamica'), but came afresh to the genre with her **Three Marys drama**, a work of notable originality, the first of the two copied at Vic. In this play, besides the frequent use of 'dolor', often found in her early and late letters, a telling hallmark is the phrase 'dilecto magno federe', seen in the stanzas beginning 'Tanta sorores gaudia'. Her use of 'dilecto' in the sense of 'darling' in the early letters (e.g., 7 and 62) is paralleled by its use in the later series; and the love-compact, 'f[o]edus', is a significant word seen in letters 60 and 88 of the early series, where 'dilectio' also occurs; 'fedus', moreover, is seen in the second letter of the later series. Again, this play identifies the entombed Christ as the dead Bridegroom, and it, too, uses Mary Magdalen as the chief protagonist. Peter the Venerable's letter to her after Abelard's death

⁴⁸ See Juanita Ruys' article, p. 37-44 of this issue.

implies the Magdalen connection with Heloise. It will be recalled that it is in this passage that he tells her that ‘your skill sent new turns of melody to the very ears of God’.⁴⁹

The Three Marys drama begins with the proposal (presumably by the Magdalen) to buy spices in order to embalm the body. The three Marys then address the spice-merchant, who agrees to sell them a costly unguent. The Magdalen’s opening stanza of this section begins as in Example 6.

Om - ni - po - tens pa - ter al - tis - si - me
an - ge - lo - rum rec - tor mi - tis - si - me

quid fa - ci - ent is - te mi - se - ri - me?

He - u, quan - tus est nos - ter do - lor!

Example 6

The significance of this rhythm, found in lyrics emanating from Abelard’s Paraclete School, has already been hinted at. This succession of decasyllabic stanzas beginning ‘Omnipotens pater’ was imitated in dramas from Tours and elsewhere, notably Origny, where it was greatly amplified and turned into French for the use of its aristocratic nuns. More remarkably, this scene became the kernel of a drama found in the *Carmina Burana*. In the Tyrol, the identity of Heloise as the Magdalen, traditionally conflated with the ‘woman who was a sinner’, is taken even further and the scene transposed to the house of Simon the Pharisee. In the ‘Greater’ *Carmina Burana* Passion play she is first a tart going ‘on the town’; her approach to the spice-merchant is for cosmetics; only after several interventions by an angel does she repent and buy ointments for the washing of Christ’s feet.

In the original drama, after the stanzas which follow the negotiations with the spice-merchant, the Magdalen sings ‘Tanta sorores, gaudia’, initiating a fresh series of stanzas in which an angel appears to her (apparently in a vision that is not witnessed by the other Marys). Although this and the following section of the play have no counterpart in later dramas, the remarkable poetic innovation of ‘Tanta sorores, gaudia’ was influential. In common with her ‘Jam dudum’, the technical *tour de force* of ‘Tanta sorores’ is its five-vowel rhyme-scheme. Walther von der Vogelweide used this rhythmical structure and rhyme-scheme in his ‘Diu welt was gelf’, some of whose sentiments echo those of ‘Jam dudum’.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Further on the Magdalen connection, see Mews, pp. 32–4 of this issue.

⁵⁰ As in Gaultier d’Espinal’s apparent contrafaction of elements of two Abelard lyrics (see note 25), Walther’s poem seems to have relied on two Heloisian models. ‘Tanta sorores’ was not used in

He may have known this lyric, together with 'Tanta sorores' and its tune, from his sojourn in the Tyrol, perhaps at Klosterneuburg. All of these have an opening stanza rhyming in *-a*, the second in *-e*, and so on, running through the five vowels. Walther's stanzas (bold type, in Ex. 7) exactly fit 'Tanta sorores, gaudia' (unemboldened).

After these visionary stanzas, in which the angel appears to the Magdalen alone, the other sisters resume their progress to the tomb. They find the stone rolled away, and take part in a version of the traditional 'Quem queritis' dialogue, finishing with the *Te Deum*. As in the Ortolanus play, however, the music is not quite like that found in comparable dramas. This seems to indicate a propensity on the part of Heloise for refurbishing the chant, paralleling her treatment of biblical texts.

It is my contention that these two plays were written at Argenteuil, and that their dissemination was partly consequent upon the nuns' ejection from there, when many of the sisters dispersed to various other nunneries. Although there is no evidence that the plays were performed at the Paraclete by the nuns that followed Heloise to their new home, there are passages in the later correspondence between Abelard and Heloise that might be construed as references to one or other of these plays. The Three Marys, at least, might have been performed there. Moreover, it seems very likely that, in the hey-day of the Paraclete before it was closed down and given over to Heloise, Abelard's students knew both of her plays that had been brought there from Argenteuil. The route of transmission of The Three Marys to the Carmina Burana was presumably the same as that proposed for the lyrics mentioned earlier.

The significant decasyllabic rhythm of 'Omnipotens, pater altissime' is also

Tan - ta, so - ro - res, gau - di - a de - flo - rent in__ tris - ti - ci - a
 cum in - no - cens op - ro - bri - a fert et__ cru - cis__ sus - pen - di - a
Diu welt was gelf, rô un - de blâ, **gruene in__ dem walde und an - ders - wâ,**
die clei - ne vo - gel sun - gen dâ, **nû schriet at ber__ diu ne - bel - crâ.**

Ju - de - o - rum__ in - vi - di - a et prin - ci - pum per - fi - di - a
phligt sî iht an - der var - we? Ja! sist wor - den bleich und ü - ber - grâ

quid an - ge - mus, et qua - li - a!
des rim - phet sich vil me - nich brâ.

Example 7

the Carmina Burana play, but, as argued in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*, this and other items are likely to have been known at Klosterneuburg.

seen in the well-known macaronic Sponsus drama from Limoges which Heloise might have known. Its subject (the bridegroom, identified as Christ, not to mention the idea of a *mercator*) might have had a particular bearing on the composition of her Three Marys drama.⁵¹ If so, she took up its predominant rhythm, which already held distinctive associations for her. This rhythm, in turn, influenced a whole tranche of Easter dramas, as traced by Meyer,⁵² who was unaware, however, that this was one of the many innovations due to Heloise.

The use of the Goliardic decasyllabic, common to Heloise in her Three Marys drama and to Abelard in his hymns and sequences, is unlikely to have been coincidental: the rhythm obviously had personal associations for both of them. The same must be true for the Goliardic hexasyllabic, one of Abelard's most characteristic rhythms, with which Heloise opened her Ortolanus drama. Not only was its rhythm significant, but the text of 'Rex in accubitum' could not fail to remind Abelard of the passion of their love affair, only lightly sublimated in the imagery of the Song of Songs.

This imagery is even more blatant in 'Virgines caste'. Although its rhyming technique corresponds to that of Abelard, Dronke could not countenance the ascription of this sequence to him because of this very eroticism.⁵³ It is, however, all of a piece with 'Epithalamica' and with Heloise's other lyrics and plays. Nevertheless, there appears to have been some development in Heloise's musical style between the writing of 'Epithalamica' and of 'Virgines caste'.

'Epithalamica' seems not to place much reliance on the stock clichés of the repertory. It does, however, display the insistent quality particularly obvious in the almost recitative-like technique of the 'Rex in accubitum' section. As observed earlier, the repeated notes of the melody, as Heloise appears to have written it for the Ortolanus drama, were modified, but only to a limited degree, in the later 'Epithalamica' version.

In 'Virgines caste' these qualities are tempered somewhat. There is also a different rhythmical make-up to this sequence. 'Epithalamica' opens and closes with the Goliardic hexasyllabic, which is also the rhythm of its middle section, 'Rex in accubitum'. The intervening sections are partly in Goliardic decasyllabics, and partly in a somewhat different metre. None of these sections appears to make use of the common stock of Lay motives prevalent in the goliardic tradition. 'Virgines caste' has clear affinities with this motivic vocabulary (see Ex. 8).⁵⁴ The

⁵¹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 1139, fol. 53.

⁵² Wilhelm Meyer, *Fragmenta Burana* (Berlin, 1901).

⁵³ Peter Dronke, 'Virgines caste' (1981), reprinted in *Latin and Vernacular Poets of the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1991), 93–117. The additional note on page 3 at the end of the volume emphasizes the Abelardian technique of the piece. Dronke nevertheless rejects Waddell's claim for Abelard's authorship, calling attention to 'the differences in poetic language and conception' which are 'enormous, and make such an attribution implausible'. It is this very language and conception that argues, together with the rhyme technique, for Heloise's authorship, a possibility not considered by either scholar.

⁵⁴ 'Virgines caste' is found on fol. 84v of the Nevers manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS n. a. lat. 3126.

VIII (a) Hic ec-cle-si-as-ti-ci flos est il-le ger-mi-nis, tam ro-sis quam li-li-is,
 (b) Or-na-te tam bis-si-na ves-te quam pur-pu-re-a le-va-ten-ent li-li-a,

(a) mul-ti-plex in-nu-me-ris, quo-rum est fra-gran-ci-is a-ger spon-si no-bi-lis
 (b) ro-sas ha-bent dex-te-ra, et co-ro-na ge-mi-na re-di-mi-te ca-pi-ta

(a) na-ri-bus et o-cu-lis e-que de-lec-ta-bi-lis.
 (b) ag-ni si-ne ma-cu-la per-cur-runt i-tin-e-ra.

Example 8

music of the concluding cola can also be recognized in various items in the Beauvais Play of Daniel.⁵⁵

As is well known, Abelard's pupil Hilary also wrote a Play of Daniel. This, together with the Beauvais Daniel and possibly two skits in the *Carmina Burana*, depend upon an unknown version of Daniel that must have been current at the time. Yet the musical congruence already noted relates merely to a stock motive, as is shown by its use in different numbers of the Beauvais Play of Daniel. The use of this cliché by Heloise does not, therefore, imply dependence on any specific piece. Indeed, she uses it as a cadential motive in several *cursus* of her sequence. What is more, the passage in the section 'Holocaustum domino' that precedes this cadence has more than a passing resemblance to another motive seen in the Beauvais Daniel. But again, this has to do with the cell-technique of the Lay rather than with specific imitation.

Another example of this technique occurs later in 'Virgines caste' with its reminiscences of phrases heard in the Beauvais Daniel. There are also several repeated notes, so it would seem that Heloise's repetitious style derives from a common fount derived from other compositions of this general type (see Ex. 9).

The musical phrase at *ager sponsi nobilis* corresponds to part of the Beauvais 'Congaudentes', and to part of the sequence 'Mane prima sabbatum'.⁵⁶ The phrase has countless relatives elsewhere. The originality which Peter the Venerable praised in Heloise does not seem to be 'new melody' in the sense that we would understand that phrase today, and it would not be contested as being 'original' in these days of copyright legislation.

'Virgines caste' has a sexual tone which is even more thinly disguised than that of 'Epithalamica'. It seems likely that it was written in response to one of Abelard's 'Brides of Christ' diatribes, possibly that of letter VIII, which stresses

⁵⁵ Discussed in *TEOC*, chapter 6 (see especially pp. 211 and 238).

⁵⁶ For these parallels, see *The Poetic and Musical Legacy*.

I (a) Vir - gi - nes cas - te, vir - gi - nes sum - me de - cus pre - ci - nen - tes,
 (b) Ce - te - ras quo - que con - dig - nas lau - de post hanc ve - ne - ran - tes;

II (a) Psalm - is et hym - nis can - ti - cis dig - nis si - bi col - lo - quen - tes;
 (b) Sol - vant in is - tis de - bi - te lau - dis hos - ti - as sol - lemp - nes.

Example 9

chastity. The imagery of ‘he makes his bed between the breasts of virgins; he lies upon their bosoms at midday;’ is blatant (and also reminds us of the picture of Heloise in the *Metamorphosis Golye*, where she is portrayed as having nurtured Abelard at her breast):⁵⁷

- X (a) Inter mammas virginum Between the breasts of virgins
 collocat cubiculum he makes his bed;
 (b) in earum pectore on their bosoms
 cubat in meridie. he rests at noonday.

This is the original order of clauses, as seen in Nevers: it is reversed in the St Gall manuscript and elsewhere.⁵⁸ Indeed, the two clauses have been exchanged in all the later manuscripts that I have seen: only Nevers preserves the correct order. This rearrangement is an obvious attempt to tone down the sentiments. These, and much else of the erotic language of ‘*Virgines caste*’, are a riposte to Abelard’s retreat into the Christian allegory of the *Song of Songs*, an attempt to distance himself from its true significance in which they had exulted so many times earlier when they were lovers. It may be recalled that a similar exchange of clauses was undertaken by the le Puy redactor of ‘*Epithalamica*’, and for similar reasons.⁵⁹

‘*Virgines caste*’ was used on many occasions at Heloise’s Paraclete; it also became very popular elsewhere, to judge by the number of sources in which it is still found. Her last sequence, ‘*De Profundis*’, is also extant in several manuscripts. At the Paraclete, it was used on All Souls’ Day and on the Day of Commemoration for Parents: note the phraseology seen in Example 10 (‘*Fletu Petri, sua negatio*’ and ‘*vere paraclite*’). There are many other significant references in later sections, including ‘the imprecations of the church, not a single one warranted’,⁶⁰ to the Bride and Bridegroom, and so on. These leave little doubt that this is one of two elegies on Abelard’s death.

⁵⁷ On which see Walsh ‘“*Golias*”’ (n. 16).

⁵⁸ For details of the manuscripts, see *MP*.

⁵⁹ See p. 16 above

⁶⁰ A reference to Abelard’s condemnation at the Council of Sens, dated by Mews at 1141.

The other, 'Plange planctu', seems to have been written by a pupil: it is a bitter polemic against the detractors of Master Peter and takes the form of a contrafaction of what was obviously Abelard's most celebrated lament, 'Dolorum solatium'.⁶¹ Neither of these pieces specifically mentions the Master's death. Indeed, to later redactors, 'De profundis' seemed to be a rather general *pro defunctis*, so they added a spurious ending (not in Nevers) referring to the *defuncte*. This word being the feminine plural (in *-[a]e*), the addition was very likely made at the Paraclete, some time after Heloise's own death, when the personal references were apparently no longer understood. 'Plange planctu' seems more exercised with the judgement at Sens than at Abelard's death less than a year later. Yet this obliquity is no different from that of Abelard's own *planctus* whose strong undertows belie the more gentle currents visible on the surface.

Heloise's *planctus*, for thus we may call it, was deeply personal. Although its allusions may be clear to us, they appear to have been veiled enough to deceive her near-contemporaries: the references to motherhood and other personal matters are almost in cipher. 'De profundis' is an accomplished piece, yet the Heloise who inspired a whole series of liturgical dramas, whose verse techniques influenced Walter von der Vogelweide and others, whose verbal originality, blandiloquently commented upon by Hugh Metel, stimulated and even surpassed that of Abelard, and whose musical innovations were praised by Peter the Venerable; this Heloise is silent. Instead, we have the simple plaint of a bereft widow, making use of conventional phrases from the Psalms and elsewhere, albeit with consummate artistry. On the anniversary of Abelard's death on 21 April, she would perhaps have sung this lament for her dead lover in private. When it was sung publicly on All Souls' Day, she would have been thinking of her late husband. On hearing it on Commemoration Day for Parents, she must have remembered the father of her son. It begins in the significant rhythm of the Goliardic decasyllabic (Ex. 10).

The inexorable persistence of the opening motive conjures up a grief-stricken widow, rocking to and fro in her overwhelming sorrow. As may be seen in the first *cursus*, she is compulsively repeating the same phrase. It is a moving work: the plangency of the keening is unbearable, the repetition is as insistent as the tolling of the death-knell. This is the real Heloise who has lost her lover. To most of the world she is a successful abbess, but in her heart (as Peter the Venerable knew, and Abelard tried to deny to himself) she was a reluctant nun to the end.

In 'De profundis' there are phrases and motives from Peter's 'Dolorum solatium' and from the *Planctus Virginum*, and what appear to be fleeting echoes of the Limoges *Sponsus* drama make their appearance. The rhythms, too, are significant echoes of Abelard: the black velvet pall of her *planctus* is discreetly

⁶¹ On 'Plange planctu', see Franz Josef Worstbrock, 'Zu den lateinischen Gedichten der Savignaner Handschrift 45', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 50 (1968), 289–93, and, taking account of the Admont manuscript, 'Ein Planctus auf Petrus Abaelard', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 16 (1981), 166–73. 'Dolorum solatium' is printed alongside 'Plange planctu' in *MP*.

I (a) De pro - fun - dis ad te cla - man - ti - um
 (b) Jhe - su bo - ne com - ple quod di - xc - ris
 (c) Con - so - la - tor, do - len - tis a - ni - me
 (d) Fle - tu Pe - tri su - a ne - ga - ti - o

pi - e De - us ex - au - di ge - mi - tum
 ne sit in te vox cas - sa no - mi - nis
 ac mes - to - rum ve - re pa - ra - cli - te,
 est de - le - ta tam bre - vi spa - ti - o

nec men - su - ram ob - ser - ves cri - mi - num
 te pre - ser - tim cum ip - se dix - e - ris
 quod pro - mit - tis et ex hoc no - mi - ne,
 et la - tro - nis se - ra con - fes - si - o

ut per - fer - ri pos - sint ju - di - ci - um,
 pro sal - van - dis ven - is - se mi - se - ris,
 ne dif - fe - ras com - ple - re, do - mi - ne
 pa - ra - di - si po - ti - ta gau - di - o,

(a) (c) Pi - e De - us.
 (b) (d) Jhe - su bo - ne.

Example 10

studded with the occasional flashes of their former life together. In her grief, her only desire is for the reunion that Peter the Venerable describes: her own Peter, cherished in God's bosom, waits to be restored to her in His Grace.

Thus, in common with Abelard's *planctus*, Heloise's liturgical dramas and sequences have an autobiographical slant. Her Mary Magdalen, her Easter wedding-song and her chaste virgins champing at the bit of continence are personifications of the girl who never renounced the feelings which, despite the attendant calamities and disasters of their lives, she had for her teacher and lover, the father of her child. In her final gesture, 'De profundis', she bids adieu to this lover and resigns herself to await their reunion beyond the grave.