

dieses Kongresses einen neuen Stellenwert. Der Abstieg Gottes in die Schöpfung bis in das Reich des Todes zwingt uns in Praxis und Theorie zu Bescheidenheit. "Wenn ihr alles getan habt, was euch befohlen wurde, sollt ihr sagen: Wir sind unnütze Sklaven; wir haben nur unsere Schuldigkeit getan." (Lk 17,10) Die wahrnehmbare Ausstrahlung eines Klosters steht nicht unbedingt in einem kausalen Zusammenhang zu seinem wahren Wert. Eine Gemeinschaft kann im Lichte der Offenbarung mehr oder auch weniger sein als die Summe ihrer Glieder oder das Niveau der Tradition und der Gesetzgebung eines Ordens. Der Herr warnt uns vor jeder Diskriminierung aufgrund falscher Wert-Hierarchien (z.B. im Sinne bekannter Aussagen: Wir beten, die anderen arbeiten; wir sind das Herz der Kirche; numquam deformata ... usw.), wenn er uns bei der Heilung des Blindgeborenen ein Gottesbild vor Augen stellt, das uns revoltiert angesichts so vieler menschlicher Tragik: "Weder er noch seine Eltern haben gesündigt, sondern das Wirken Gottes soll an ihm offenbar werden." (Joh 9,3).

Wir danken Ihnen allen, vor allem den Organisatoren und Referenten des Kongresses, für Ihre Arbeit und Ihre Verbundenheit mit uns und grüßen Sie mit der Bitte um Gemeinschaft im Gebet.

fr. Janez Hollenstein, Prior,
und Mitbrüder
Kartuzija Pleterje

DENYS OF RYCKEL'S DEBT TO BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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Denys of Ryckel, better known as Denys the Carthusian (1402-71), was perhaps one of the best-read religious of the fifteenth century. He read virtually everything, from classical writers to the spiritual writers of his own age.¹ In studying him, we gain access to a person who, like ourselves, could look back upon the entire tradition of medieval theology and religion and had room for both high theology and popular tradition. Denys at one point cited popular verses about the devil, while at another he quoted from the writings of a distinguished professor under whom he had studied at Cologne in the early 1420s.² To Denys the revelations of Bridget of Vadstena could be just as important an authority on a theological question as the statements of Thomas Aquinas.³

For Denys as for so many other later medieval authorities on spirituality and theology, the life and writings of Bernard of Clairvaux were of prime im-

¹See Anselme Stoelen's helpful article "Denys Le Chartreux" in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 3:430-49 (Beauchesne: Paris 1957). Also Kent Emery, Jr., "Twofold wisdom and contemplation in Denys of Ryckel (Dionysius Cartusianus, 1402-1471)", *JMRS. The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 18 (1988) 99-134. I am much indebted to Professor Emery for many inspiring talks at the University of Notre Dame, where he introduced me to his work on Denys.

For an interesting study on one aspect of Denys's work, see Hans-Günter Gruber, *Christliches Eheverständnis im 15. Jahrhundert. Eine moralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Ehelehre Dionysius' des Kartäusers* (Verlag Friedrich Pustet, Regensburg 1989).

²See the verses Denys quotes about Tivivillus, who is also known from late medieval frescoes in Danish village churches, where he is depicted writing down the words of gossiping women, while Denys sees him at work with all the words that are dropped in choir song:

Syncopa vitetur, versus non anticipetur,
Donec finitus omnino sit bene primus.

Fragmina verborum Tivivillus colligit horum...

Contra detestabilem cordis inordinationem in dei laudibus horisque canonis vel laus cartusiana, which is contained in vol. 40 of the *Opera Omnia* of Denys (Tournai 1911), p. 246. In what follows, Denys will be quoted according to volume and page in this collection.

For Denys's reference to one of his teachers at the University of Cologne and his treatise on whether monks could have property, see 38:235: "Super materia hac legi tractatum cujusdam doctoris in theologia, quem novi, eoque tempore quo in Colonia studui, fuit cancellarius Universitatis illius."

³For Denys's use of Thomas, see Stoelen (note 1 above) col. 446-7. Also Emery, pp. 120-27. For a reference in Denys to the Revelations of Saint Bridget of Vadstena, see 38:67: "... in Revelationibus S. Brigittae legitur vir quidam graviter terribiliterque damnatus, non propter adulterium, sed quia ad suam uxorem nimis carnaliter afficiebatur et carnem ejus nimis carnaliter diligebat" (*De laudabili vita conjugatorum*).

portance.⁴ Bernard combined experience and authority in a rare blend. The statements Bernard made about monastic life or church reform reflected his own experience. At the same time he was considered a source of orthodoxy and sobriety in theological discussions. He also was widely respected as a man whose visions and spiritual insight brought him close to God. For Dante as for so many other later medieval readers, Bernard offered a way to the vision of God without stepping aside into dangerous territory of trinitarian speculation or pantheistic imaginings.

Denys read Bernard from his youth.⁵ He referred to him as one of his major authorities and quoted from him at length. Like Bernard, Denys spent his life seeking to combine intellectual understanding with affective knowledge. But unlike Bernard, Denys at an early point chose an eremitical way of life that cut him off from most contacts with other men. Denys could have little sense of how important it was for Bernard to be together with friends and to talk to them about what mattered to him. So Denys saw Bernard not as monk-friend and abbot-father but as visionary and reformer in the church of his day. This was probably a common approach to Bernard in the later Middle Ages, and Denys drew on a vision of Bernard we already find in Dante. Bernard became for Denys a great ascetic, oblivious to the world around him, lost in his thoughts and his contemplative life, emerging from them only in order to deal with the ills of his time, and then gladly withdrawing again. Denys chose from Bernard the aspects of his life and writings that coincided with his own concerns and his vocation as a Carthusian who was involved in the world through his writings. As we shall see, Denys practically made Bernard into an honorary Carthusian.

It is not as if Denys denied Bernard's position as abbot and friend. He simply ignored these parts of Bernard's life in order to approach him as monastic ascetic and theological authority. Thus the word "cistercian" hardly

⁴The twelfth-century biography of Saint Bernard, known as the *Vita Prima*, is still only available in J.P. Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 185, col. 225-368. It will be referred to as VP, according to book and chapter. For Bernard's writings, I have used Jean Leclercq and Henri Rochais's *Opera Sancti Bernardi* 1-8 (Editiones Cistercienses. Rome 1957-77), which unfortunately does not contain any indices and so makes it difficult to locate passages according to key words. To be referred to as SBO according to volume and page. Brother Chrysogonus Waddell of the Abbey of Gethsemani, Trappist, Kentucky, kindly sent me a copy of the privately printed, "Index des citations scripturaires dans les oeuvres de Saint Bernard" (Bernardus-Konkordans, Administratief Centrum, Burcht 6, NL 5570 Bergeyk Postbus 60. Nederland). This index enables one to find quotations from Bernard if they happen to contain scriptural citations. The Brepols *Thesaurus sancti Bernardi Claraevallensis* has not been available to me in Denmark.

⁵See his *Protestatio* (41:625-26), quoted by Emery (note 1 above) p. 102, where Bernard is one of the authors Denys singled out.

ever appears in Denys's writing.⁶ Denys moved Bernard outside his institutional and even chronological context and made him into a perennial figure, to whom he as an advocate of contemplation and church reform could frequently return.

In what follows I shall concentrate on Denys's tracts on the reform of monastic life, most of which are to be found in volume 38 of the 41 volumes of Denys published at the beginning of this century. Here there are about a hundred references to Bernard. Many of them I have been unable to locate, for Denys only seldom states specifically which work of Bernard he used. The analytical indices made at the end of each volume only bring together the references Denys himself provided, and so one has to turn to the works of Bernard himself and try to find the possible source. I have spent many an hour poring over Bernard's sermons and feeling frustrated that my knowledge of his writings is so limited. But through Denys I have had a chance to see how a late medieval spiritual writer could gain insight and understanding from Bernard of Clairvaux and make the twelfth-century text relevant to his own needs.⁷ My analysis has no firm conclusions, for it would be necessary to look at other writings of Denys to get a fuller picture of his uses of Bernard. There is no doubt in my mind that Denys showed versatility and resourcefulness in his borrowings from Bernard. Seldom, however, did he develop Bernard's thought to make it his own. Bernard served Denys as a convenient authority, and Denys did not consider him in the context of his own writings. So Denys's debt to Bernard remains one-dimensional: the borrowings made by an author eager for confirmation and content with taking over sentences or paragraphs that said what he wanted to convey. Close analysis of Bernard's text or way of thinking is absent: Denys was concerned with getting ahead with the topic at hand. In one instance, when it was a question of authorship, Denys did stop his stream of compilation and made some acute observations. Normally, however, Denys did not allow himself to look at Bernard in an integral as opposed to a compilatory manner. The one exception, as one would expect, appears in Denys's three sermons for the feast of Saint Bernard.

⁶In all of volume 38, which in great part is dedicated to treatises on the monastic life, the analytical index at the end only provides one instance in which Denys used the word "cistercian", at the beginning of the treatise *De obedientia superioribus praestanda*, p. 513, where Denys mentions the subjection of the entire order to the abbot of Citeaux. It is noteworthy that the word "cistercian", so far as I can see in this volume, is never connected with Bernard himself.

⁷I am indebted to Giles Constable's seminal article "The Popularity of Twelfth-Century Spiritual Writers in the Late Middle Ages", *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, edd A. Molho and J. Tedeschi (Northern University Press. DeKalb, Illinois, 1971), 5-28. See however my chapter, "Bernard and the embrace of Christ" in my forthcoming book, *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Legacy* (Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo) for a response to Constable's approach.

DENYS'S USE OF BERNARD'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

Denys's sermons for feast days are today combined into a volume that includes both those meant for lay people and those intended for religious. In fact Denys wrote and compiled the two types of sermons separately.⁸ A comparison between them shows his awareness of different audiences (even though we have to assume that Denys himself, as a Carthusian, did not preach). The one sermon on Bernard for lay people is much less hard-hitting and more general than the two for religious, where Denys used Bernard's life experiences as a point of departure for a commentary on abuses in the monastic life.

The first sermon, entitled "On the virtues and excellences of Saint Bernard" borrows for a great part from episodes to be found in the first book of the standard hagiography of Bernard, the *Vita Prima*. This section was written by William of Saint Thierry. Authorship, however, is not mentioned in Denys at all. He compiled brief summaries of episodes from Bernard's life, in order to illustrate the saint's virtues, starting with the way God revealed Bernard's call. When Bernard's mother was pregnant, she had a vision of a barking puppy within her. When she told a certain holy man, he informed her that she would be the mother of someone whose bark would be heard against the enemies of the faith. "He will be a great preacher and will convert many" (32:334). This is very close to the text in the *Vita Prima*, which states: "He will be an outstanding preacher, and as a good dog, by the grace of his medicinal tongue he will cure souls of many sicknesses" (VP I.2 = PL 185:227-8). Here we see what often is Denys' method, taking a passage from his source, simplifying it, but supplying its essence. He was not interested in rhetorical apparatus, only in the content itself, so the phrase *gratia linguae medicinalis* is dropped completely. Only the idea of the barking dog as preacher remains.

For Bernard's second "excellence", we hear of his virtues as boy and youth, how he maintained virginity in the face of temptation from women. We are told the popular story of how a woman got into bed with him but Bernard resisted her. "When he felt her, he turned himself to the other side of the bed and remained untouched" (32:334). Denys left out here the detail that the girl did her utmost to stimulate him: *palpans et stimulans* (VP I.7 = PL 185:230). A similar removal of physical detail is found in Denys's account of Bernard's vision of Christ on Christmas Eve: "There appeared to him in a vision the boy Jesus, as it were again being born from the Virgin". In the original text, we hear how the youth Bernard saw the baby Jesus, "as it were again being born from the womb of the Virgin". The original version of the vision emphasizes the act of being born, while Denys dropped an anatomical word that would suggest the

⁸See Stoelen (note 1 above) col. 433.

physical fact of birth.

Bernard's third excellence, according to Denis in the sermon meant for lay people, was his distancing of self from the external world. For a long time, when he entered and left the church, he thought there was only one window in the upper story, where there were three (32:335. VP I.20 = PL 185:238). He stayed awake, beyond human means, and complained that time spent on sleep was lost. As for food and drink, he went to them, "as it were to jail" and was so intent on spiritual matters that he drank oil, thinking it to be beer, and did not taste the difference. Similarly he once for a period ate raw blood instead of butter. Here Denys combined two episodes from different parts of the *Vita Prima*, one from the third book, written by Geoffrey of Auxerre (III.2, the oil), the other from William of Saint Thierry (I.33, the blood). If we look at the late thirteenth century *Golden Legend* account of Bernard's life, we find that the same two episodes were conflated here. It seems likely to me that Denys was acquainted with the *Golden Legend's* extracts from the *Vita Prima* and repeated some of them.⁹ But at the same time I think he had access to the original source itself and made use of it.

Bernard's fourth excellence was his complete understanding of Scripture, again a virtue mentioned in the *Golden Legend*, but originally from the *Vita Prima* (III.7). Not in the *Golden Legend*, however, is a story to illustrate Bernard's fifth excellence, his power of preaching, how when he preached in French in Germany, the Germans who stood around did not understand what he said but still wept copiously (Denys 32:335. Cf. VP III.7 = PL 185:307). Sixthly Bernard is praised in Denys for "the most abundant fruit he made in God's church", which involved bringing "many bishops to better things" and completing an "admirable reformation in the church, so that under him were golden times". Denys remembered Bernard for converting the duke William of Aquitaine, who had lived openly with his brother's wife (VP II.36-7). We see here how Denys compressed a great amount of detail in Bernard's career into a relatively small place. Episodes are mentioned in passing as illustrations, and much of the commentary, such as the remark about church reform, is Denys's own.

In the following sections we hear about Bernard's miracles, his spirit of prophecy, and frequent visions from heaven, including one in which he, though on a trip away from his monastery, managed to come there spiritually. He walked around and inspected and recognised what was going on (32:336). This story does

⁹*Jacobi a Voragine Legende Auvea*, rec. Th. Graesse (1890. reproduced Otto Zeller. Osnabrück 1965), p. 531. See my article, "A Saint's Afterlife: Bernard in the Golden Legend and in other medieval collections", presented at a colloquium on Bernard of Clairvaux at the Herzog-August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, October 1990.

not belong to the *Vita Prima* but to the body of literature that was compiled after the death of Bernard. It can be found both in Herbert of Clairvaux's *Liber Miraculorum* but was probably more widely available in the *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense*.¹⁰ Denys reduced the story to its bare essentials, but it is still recognisable. At the end of his second sermon on Bernard for religious, Denys wrote that his sources were both the *Vita Prima* and the book *De Viris Illustribus Ordinis Cisterciensis* (32:341). We know that in several manuscripts, the *Exordium Magnum* was known by the same title,¹¹ so Denys here indicated that his knowledge of Saint Bernard was not limited to the saint's standard biography. He welcomed other materials.

Another story taken from the *Exordium Magnum* concerns how after Bernard's death, when Clairvaux was being besieged by people seeking miracles from his relics, the abbot of Citeaux ordered the dead Bernard to stop the flow of cures. In the *Exordium Magnum* the story is told in a straight narrative flow, while in Denys there is dialogue: "Brother Bernard, as you living in your body were always a son of obedience, be so also now. Thus I order you to cease from miracles" (32:336. cf EM II.20). Denys's dramatisation of the episode seems to be his own invention.

Denys apparently felt at liberty to provide his own portrait of Bernard. There were many stories about Bernard, he pointed out, which were not included in the standard account of his life: *Et quamvis praeclarissima vita ejusquinque libris diligenter descripta sit, nihilo minus multa et magna de ipso ibi ommissa sunt* (32:341). Denys claimed that Bernard as "a most exalted contemplator was taken into rapture daily, as it were at will": *Fuit et contemplator altissimus, et quotidie quasi ad libitum raptus* (32:336). This is certainly a development of what is stated in twelfth-century accounts of Bernard, but with his own acute interest in the contemplative life, it was natural for Denys to approach Bernard in such a way.

If we turn to the second sermon in the collection, the first one given to religious, we can see from its title that it deals not only with Bernard but also with the audience itself: *De excellentiis S Bernardi et quam religiosa debeant esse colloquia nostra*. Here Denys made use of Bernard's life experience as a point of departure for encouragement to all religious. Returning to the incident of the barking dog (32:336-7), Denys mentioned the virtues and work of preachers in the church. He contrasted their good and fruitful words with

¹⁰The source is probably dist. II, ch. 12, "Quod aliquando foris diutius moratus Claramvallem rediit in spiritu". *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense* (abbreviated as EM), ed. Bruno Griesser (Editiones Cistercienses: Rome 1961).

¹¹Griesser (note 10 above) pp. 14-17.

words of detraction, rumour, discord, to be found in religious communities. Such utterances come from "evil and impudent dogs", as contrasted with the good barking dog Bernard was prophesied to become in his preaching.

From here we go to the stories of Bernard's innocence, how he resisted sexual temptation, but again the presentation is slightly different from that of the sermon to lay people. Bernard's own strength should provide a lesson for us in controlling our own passions, even if we fall again and again. In repeating the story of the girl who entered Bernard's bed, Denys supplied William of Saint Thierry's details about how she tried to arouse him by her touching and stroking. Denys added that Bernard was "a most beautiful youth", a simplification of what Geoffrey of Auxerre had written (VP III.1) about how Bernard's inward spiritual beauty affected his outward appearance. Here as often in Denys's references to Bernard, one gets the impression that Denys remembered what he chose to remember from his sources and did not check them carefully.

Bernard's response to sexual temptation provides an immediate lesson:

By such a great example we should be taught to turn aside from temptations in a manly way and to overcome faults and acts of negligence in ourselves with discipline, and not to give any place or time in our hearts to base fantasies but to escape from them without delay and to look upon the passion of Christ and other matters that concern compunction and salvation. And we are to be especially wary lest by sight, touch, kissing, imagination, sloth or sleepiness in choir that we provoke carnal arousal in ourselves.¹²

Denys did not mince words here. He provided specific and detailed prescriptions. While the sermon to lay people presents a simple series of tableaux from Bernard's life for edification, Denys in writing for a religious audience applied the experience of Bernard to modern community life. This hard-hitting commentary continues in Denys's description of Bernard's conversion to the monastic life, how his brothers tried to dissuade him, and how he ended up converting them by his eloquence. What can we respond to such wonders, asked Denys, we who have lived so many years in religion, but who cannot stand listening to anyone who talks of salvation? We get quickly tired out and "turn our hearing from truth to fables and so through empty, joking, frivolous and harmful words, we injure, scandalize and cool off each other's zeal."¹³ Denys drew a

¹²Denys 32:337: Tanto ergo exemplo edoceamur, tentationibus viriliter reluctari, propriasque culpas ac negligentias in nobis ipsis disciplinanter vindicare, turpibus phantasiis nec locum nec moram dare in cordibus nostris, sed nos ab eis indilate avertere, passionemque Christi et cetera ad compunctionem atque salutem spectantia intueri. Et maxime caveamus ne visu, tactu, osculo, imaginatione, torpore seu somnolentia in divinis, ad stimulum carnis provocemus nos ipsos....

¹³Denys 32:338: ... a veritate auditum avertimus, ad fabulas autem convertimus: sicque per verba vana, jocularia, frivola et nociva, nos invicem laedimus, scandalizamus, infrigidamus.

picture of religious life whose participants had no interest in talking about their mutual purpose:

If outsiders come, we are more than ready to listen to rumours of lay people and to ask impertinent questions and be refreshed by human misbehaviour and comforts, and to be entertained by cheap forms of consolation, rather than to edify them through attractive ways, gravity in our actions and salvific words. And so they are scandalized in us, and greatly wounded they leave, not touched by compunction, but made more bold to sin, for they see that we religious, who are said and thought to be something, are so superficial, talkative, and dissolute.¹⁴

Such a passage is so vivid that it hints Denys had first-hand experience of the problem. We should not think of him as an isolated hermit but as a member of a mixed order which was flourishing in the Rhineland in the fifteenth century and whose houses must have had many visitors. Some of these foundations, Denys seems to be saying, were not living up to their reputation.

Denys worried not only about the example that religious gave to outsiders who came to them. He also complained about how the brethren could harm each other. One who thinks he is giving good advice might actually be fomenting dissension in the community. He could stir up opposition to another member or to the head of the community himself. We must learn, he insisted, "by experience how we are to speak, profit and instruct, and through growth in virtue, through daily progress, we will collect within ourselves the gifts of wisdom and knowledge which we at the right time, when charity requires, can communicate to others".¹⁵

In the context of such advice we can see that even among the Carthusians, there were times when the brethren spoke to each other. For Denys it was extremely important that their talk was wholesome and edificatory. His sermon is really more about the abuse of speech in a religious community than it is a celebration of Saint Bernard, who merely provided a point of departure. Bernard was remembered for his good talk, for his preaching and example that inspired his surroundings.

Having limited himself in the second sermon to Bernard's example through speech, Denys in the third sermon, also to religious, turned to other aspects of Bernard's life worth imitation. Denys recalled how Bernard ignored his physical surroundings, a theme already developed in the first sermon but now used to show

¹⁴*Ibid.*: Si vero extranei veniant, paratiores sumus saeculares rumores audire, impertinentia sciscitari, levitatibus solatiisque humanis resolvi, ac vilibus consolatiunculis recreari. Quam per mores venustos gravitatemque gestuum et verba salubria eos aedificare: sicque scandalizantur in nobis, et magis vulnerati recedunt, non compuncti, sed ad peccandum audaciores effecti, quia nos religiosos, qui aliquid esse dicimur ac tenemur, tam leves, verbosos, dissolutos esse conspiciunt.

¹⁵Denys 32:338: ... et per experientiam discere qualiter sit loquendum, proficiendum ac instruendum; atque per incrementa virtutum, per quotidianum profectum, intra nos dona sapientiae ac scientiae colligamus, quae tempore opportuno, caritate exigente, aliis communicemus.

how it was important for any religious community to concentrate on spiritual matters and not be distracted by material concerns:

New plantations should make an effort to follow the first steps of this holy father by ridding themselves totally of every memory and affection and removing all carnal concupiscence and pleasures from their hearts. They are to cling to the divine with all their spirit and to occupy themselves firmly with spiritual matters. Then they will not lose the fervour of their first age or be broken by examples of the tepid and negligent.¹⁶

Such sermons deserve to be looked at more carefully, for rarely is Denys in his regular treatises so specific in naming the pitfalls of religious life. Bernard became almost an excuse for lashing out at a departure from the high standards of an earlier age. But Denys did not forget the saint: his way of life could be contrasted with that of the religious of Denys's day. These delighted in distinguishing various flavours of food and drink and decorated their cells in an ornate manner. They should remember the most holy abbot Bernard, "who for so many days never lifted his eyes so much that he considered how the cell of his novitiate was arranged", while we who have left the world have the world within us: *dum corpore sumus in cella aut choro, mente divagamur in mundo, et qui mundum exisse videmur, mundum intra nos clausum tenemus.* (32:340).

Seldom do we find Denys so eloquent and precise in summing up a contrast. He was probably influenced by the antithetical rhetoric of Bernard himself! But even if Denys could draw appropriate parallels between incidents from Bernard's *Vita* and the situation of his own day, Denys in these sermons dedicated to Bernard actually conveyed only a fraction of the saint's life. There is no hint here of the close friendships of Bernard with people such as William of Saint Thierry. There is little sense of how Bernard lived in a community and interacted with other men. Bernard is seen almost as a hermit, or as a hermit in community. It is a view of Bernard that has had a long lifetime, Bernard as a man of God isolated from his surroundings, affecting them, but being uninfluenced by them. I think the "real" Bernard was a much more social being, but the point here is that Denys seemingly effortlessly turned the monastic father into an eremitical type whose main contact with others was through his magnificent preaching. As Denys insisted, "when Bernard was in the midst of lay people and engaged in the tumults of the world, he remained in the quiet of his mind caught up in God".¹⁷ This statement is followed by the well-

¹⁶Denys 32:339: Novellae vero plantationes studeant sanctissimi patris hujus sequi primordia, omnem mundi hujus memoriam et affectum, universas carnis concupiscentias atque illecebras a suis cordibus excludendo totaliter, totaque mente inhaerendo divinis, et circa spiritualia se jugiter occupando; nec a primaevio suo tepescant fervore, nec tepidorum ac negligentium frangantur exemplis.

¹⁷Denys 32:340: Imo, quum in medio saecularium esset, quum in mundi tumultibus versaretur, in mentis quiete atque secreta cum Deo occupatione permansit....

known narrative of Bernard's day-long trek along the Lake of Geneva without his ever seeing it.¹⁸

Certainly it was expected that saints concentrated on their inner lives, as the Anselm who seemed to go to sleep during court debates.¹⁹ Anselm could "wake up" and continue the discussion. His biographer Eadmer wanted to emphasize that he was concerned with the affairs of his church, while Denys in writing about Bernard preferred to posit absolute distance between Bernard and the world around him: for Denys Bernard "... was cleansed of every carnal and secular affection". This is not the Bernard who preached a crusade, fought heretics, and persecuted Abelard. It is a man removed into his own spiritual world, and the portrait resembles much more what is to be found in the intimate passages of the *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense* on Bernard, the abbot as perceived by the monks of Clairvaux.²⁰ Thus it is not by accident that Denys included the story in the *Exordium Magnum* about how a brother saw Bernard being embraced by the figure of Jesus on the cross. In the original version there is mention only of an embrace (II,7) but in Denys the figure of Jesus both embraced and kissed Bernard (32:340-41). Here as elsewhere, Denys had probably not checked the source but thought he remembered what had happened. Denys was himself very much caught up in the content and meaning of the passion of Christ, so he would have noticed such a story and been eager to share it with his audience. But once again Denys saw Bernard in isolation. Such a story could not have been told without the fact of another monk's being present, but Denys concentrated on Jesus and Bernard in their embrace and practically ignored the community context.

To summarize Denys's use of episodes from Bernard's life in the early cistercian literature, he saw Bernard apart from his cistercian surroundings. The saint was remembered as being wise and ascetic, as an outstanding author who was "most inspired in the scriptures" (32:341). Denys by no means ignored Bernard's contribution to the reform of the church, but he saw him as an individual, not as part of a movement. He extracted Bernard from history and made him into a contemplative who saw all, suffered all, understood all, and spoke of all, but whose bonds with other men were quite secondary.

¹⁸VP III.4 = PL 185:306. See the excellent article by Michael Casey, "Bernard the Observer", *Goad and Nail. Studies in Medieval Cistercian History*, X (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1985), 1-20.

¹⁹*The Life of Saint Anselm by Eadmer*, ed. R. W. Southern (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1972) p. 46.

²⁰See my article, "The first cistercian renewal and a changing image of Saint Bernard", *Cistercian Studies* (Trappist, Kentucky, 1989) 25-49.

DENYS'S READING OF BERNARD'S WORKS

At the end of the third sermon on Bernard, Denys mentioned two of his works that especially showed his power of contemplation, "The Book On Consideration" and "The Epistle to the Brethren of Mont Dieu". For the second work Denys added the proviso, "if he wrote the Letter".²¹ This reservation he followed up elsewhere, in the treatise *De Praeconio sive Laude Ordinis Cartusienensis* (38:420). It is worthwhile to look carefully at Denys's deliberations about authorship here, for even if he got the answer wrong in terms of authorship, he showed an awareness of Bernard's world.

"That epistle to the Brethren of Mont Dieu is commonly ascribed to the most blessed and most outstanding and spiritual man Saint Bernard", Denys started, here as elsewhere endowing the saint with generous titles. But then he added: "Nevertheless some people, not without reason, doubt whether it truly is his [composition]". Three reasons point away from Bernard as author. First of all, in the prologue of the work (which we can call, in conformity with later usage, the *Golden Epistle*), the author says that he made excerpts from the books of Saint Ambrose on the Song of Songs and similarly from the sayings of Saint Gregory, as well as what Bede had written on the subject. But Bernard, Denys pointed out, "did not usually concern himself with excerpts of this kind" (*Bernardus autem non consuevit excerptionibus hujusmodi occupari*).

So far, so good, we can say, for in our time it has been established that the *Golden Epistle* was the composition of Bernard's friend and biographer, William of Saint Thierry.²² But Denys defeated his own logic by admitting as evidence for authorship a statement in the same disputed treatise! He turned to what the author of the introduction to the *Golden Epistle* stated about his other works: the author mentioned a commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans in which he drew "from the fountains of the holy fathers" and so said "little or nothing" that was his own. Assuming that Bernard was the author of this commentary, Denys believed he could conclude that Bernard, after all, did make collections of excerpts. His evidence rested solely on his attribution of the Commentary on Paul to the Romans to Bernard. The argument thus loses its force because Denys confirmed one part of a dubious preface by making use of another sec-

²¹Denys 32:341: ...patet in ejus libris atque sermonibus, praesertim in libro de Consideratione, et in Epistola ad Fratres de Monte Dei, ei Epistolam edidit ipse.

²²For a brief history of the debate about authorship, see J. M. Déchanet's introduction, *The Golden Epistle. A Letter to the Brethren at Mont Dieu*, trans. Theodore Berkeley (The Works of William of Saint Thierry 4: Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo 1976).

tion from the same preface. Denys did not seem to see any problem here.

A second reason appears, he added, for rejecting the *Golden Epistle* as Bernard's work. Whoever collected the passages contained in a florilegium of Bernard, which Denys called *Flores Bernardi*, took nothing from the *Letter to the Brethren of Mont Dieu*. Finally, Denys pointed out a stylistic discrepancy (*ob stili diversitatem*) between the Letter and the accepted works of Bernard. He did not go into detail, however, but immediately turned to another aspect of the argument.

But from certain things it appears probable that Bernard did write that epistle. For in the same prologue it says, "There are other works of ours, and on the Song of Songs until that place: "Scarcely had I passed them, when I found him whom my soul loves" (Cant. 3:4). For up to that place he wrote on the Song.²³

In point of fact Bernard's Sermons on the Song of Songs only reached the first verse of the third chapter, and it is surprising that Denys did not pay more attention to this difference between the Commentary mentioned in the preface to the *Golden Epistle* and Bernard's own work. An even worse error is Denys's interpretation of another passage in the preface, where the author had written, "For against Peter Abelard, who succeeded in keeping me from finishing the said work...". Denys's interpretation is that the author must have been speaking "of that Peter Leone the antipope, adversary of Pope Innocent, against whom Bernard preached for several years, and was kept from writing books". For a twentieth-century historian, who would see the dispute between Abelard and Bernard as a central point in twelfth-century intellectual history, it is a good lesson to see how a relatively conscientious fifteenth-century writer could have completely "forgotten" about the existence of Abelard! It is hard to believe that Denys could have not known Abelard's identity, especially considering the fact that the *Vita Prima* told about Bernard's confrontation with him. We have to conclude that Denys had either forgotten the text or had not read the biography of Bernard carefully enough.

Another attempt to reconcile the information of the prologue to the *Golden Epistle* with the facts of Bernard's life and authorship comes when Denys quoted from the prologue's words: "Old age and sickness release me from common labour". Here Denys rightly remembered that Bernard was excused from some of the obligations of monastic life. He quoted from Bernard's *Sermons on Psalm 90* (Sermon 10:6, SBO IV:447). In fact, both Bernard and William of Saint Thierry were given special privileges because of their health, and so this confusion is

²³Denys 32:420: Verumtamen ex quibusdam apparet probabile quod S Bernardus epistolam illam ediderit. Nam in eodem prologo loquitur: Sunt et alia opuscula nostra, et super Cantica canticorum usque ad illum locum: Paululum quum pertransissem eos, inveni quem diligit anima mea [Cant. 3:4]. Nempe usque ad id super Cantica scripsit.

understandable.

As a final argument, Denys asserted that the author of the treatise was obviously so learned and wise that it must have been Bernard, who was known to be a great friend of the Carthusians (38:420). But Denys still hesitated and decided that regardless of the author's identity, it must have been someone who was spiritually very close to Bernard:

But, whether Saint Bernard or another perhaps contemporary of his composed that epistle, it is truly ascribed to Bernard, as being of his person or from another who was like him in grace, according to the manner that a friend is said to be an alter ego. As also saint John the Baptist is called Elias, and those who are much alike are considered to be the same, so that we say, "You saw that one, you have seen this one".²⁴

Wisely Denys hedged. He expressed a truth that to some degree compensates for his methodological error of using one citation from the Letter's prologue to support the evidence of another section. He admitted that Bernard cannot be proven to be the author, but he realised that the man had to be someone who was close to Bernard. William of Saint Thierry, for all his disagreements with Bernard, was his friend and confidant and did share many of his thoughts and writings.

This relatively careful discussion is only a diversion from Denys's actual topic. Denys's purpose was to use the *Golden Epistle* to point out that the twelfth-century author praised the carthusian life highly for its practices and did not in any way criticize the monks for their total refusal to eat meat. Once Denys "established" authorship, he could use the work, with Bernard's authority, to show the merits of his order's discipline: "Thus Bernard wrote to those Carthusians...". What is philologically and historically a shambles of an argument still provides flashes of insight: awareness of stylistic divergency, appeal to the authority of a collection of Bernard's writings, and, most of all, recognition of the work's closeness to the milieu of Saint Bernard.

Denys probably studied the works of Saint Bernard at an early point in his life. In what was probably his first tract, written at the age of 26 or 27 and apparently dedicated to his novicemaster, *Contra detestabilem cordis inordinationem in dei laudibus horisque canonicis*, Denys in his preface referred to Bernard's writings.²⁵ Our minds should be in accord with our voices, Denys in-

²⁴Denys 32:420: Verum, sive S. Bernardus, sive alius ei forsan contemporaneus illam compegit epistolam, ipsa vere Bernardo adscribitur, utputa ejus personae aut alteri ei in gratia utputa ejus personae aut alteri ei in gratia simili: juxta quem modum amicus dicitur alter ego; sanctissimus quoque Joannes Baptista vocatur Elias; et qui multum sunt similes, iidem feruntur, ita quod dicimus: Vidistis istum, illum vidistis.

²⁵See Stoelen (note 1 above), col. 435.

sisted:

Unde Bernardus: Nonnullos arbitror experiri interdum in oratione quendam mentis ariditatem et hebetudinem, ut solum orantes labiis, non satis attendant quid vel cui loquantur, pro eo quod ex quadam consuetudine cum minus digna reverentia accesserunt. (40:193) (Whence Bernard says: I think that some people at times experience in prayer a certain mental dryness and dullness, so that only praying with their lips, they are not sufficiently attentive to what they are saying or to whom. This is due to the fact that they have grown accustomed to approaching [prayer] with less than appropriate reverence.)

This passage is taken from Bernard's *Sermones de Diversis* (nr. 25, SBO VI:1,192), a brief sermon entitled "De obsecratione, oratione, postulatione et gratiarum actione". It is by no means among the most well-known of Bernard's sermons, and one wonders whether its citation here indicates that Denys knew the corpus well - or whether he gleaned the passage from a florilegium. It is impossible to decide on the basis of the evidence we have, but the citation is beautifully suited for Denys's purpose, to show how difficult it can be to pray with attention, to think about the words at hand, and to penetrate their meaning while we are saying or singing them in choir.

Denys also quoted from Bernard in one of his *Sermons on the Song of Songs* where Bernard addressed the brethren who fell asleep during vigils:

I sleep and my heart watches, says the Spouse in the Song of Songs (5.2). They sleep in body and are dead in heart. Let them hear Blessed Bernard on the Song of Songs saying, "I grieve that some of you in the holy vigils are overcome by sleep and do not revere the citizens of heaven, but in the presence of the princes appear to be dead". (cf. Song 7:4. SBO I,33)²⁶

The young carthusian writer was able to skip from a lesser-known sermon of Bernard to a much more prominent work. But in both places he found appropriate material to show the saint's concern for the attention of monks or religious in choir. In another reference in the preface, Bernard is remembered as having said that whatever the brothers sang or spoke in choir, they would be in debt for every letter: *usque ad unam litteram te noveris pro certo debitorem* (40:194). Thanks to the insight of Chrysogonus Waddell at Gethsemani Abbey, this passage can be seen as derivative of the *Speculum Monachorum*, found under the name of Arnulfus of Boheries (PL 185:1175-78). Arnulfus wrote that unless one in choir is being lifted up into a rapture, the monk is responsible for every single word he speaks or hears in the psalmody: *Ad psalmodiam cor habeat; nisi fortassis ad aliquid sublimius rapiatur: sed etiam omnium quae ibi dicuntur, usque ad unam litteram se pro certo noverit debitorem vel dicendi in choro suo, vel audiendi in alio* (PL 185

²⁶Trans. Kilian Walsh, *On the Song of Songs I. The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux* 2 (Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo 1977), p. 41.

1175).

Here we have proof that Denys was dependent on pseudo-bernardine writings besides the *Golden Epistle*. But the statement is not so far from Bernard's point of view. The assertion may well be derivative of a story in the *Exordium Magnum* (II,2) about how Bernard saw angels in choir writing down the words spoken by the monks according to their quality.

In the body of the treatise there are two references to Bernard. The first deals with Mary, who should be our second object of praise in prayer: "according to the saying of Bernard" Denys wrote, Mary is as closely united to the inaccessible lamination of the uncreated light of the Holy Trinity, penetrating the abyss of deity, as is possible for any creature without personal union.²⁷ This is a fair rendering of what Bernard wrote in his sermon for the Sunday within the octave of the Assumption, in which he commented on Apocalypse 12:1 (a woman clothed with the sun), to describe Mary's special position among creatures (SBO V, 264). We notice, however, that Denys dressed up the passage in more theological language than Bernard used, with terms like *deitatis*, and *increateae lucis sanctae trinitatis*. In Denys we have a more fully articulated theological vocabulary in terms of nouns instead of adjectives. Denys is in no way unfaithful to Bernard's presentation of Mary, but he can be said to elaborate on it.

In a later chapter (27) Bernard is brought in to join writers such as John Climacus to deal with concupiscence. *Dicit etiam B Bernardus: Qui jam concupiscentiam vicit...* (40:253). I have not thus far succeeded in finding the source of this passage, but I would not be surprised if Denys gleaned it, as well as other statements in Bernard that could be arranged according to topic, from some *Flores Bernardi*, where the entries would have been conveniently alphabetized.²⁸ Otherwise I cannot see how Denys could have plucked so many appropriate passages of Bernard from completely different places in his writings.

To follow Denys's way of using fragments of Bernard's writings on the same subject, we can turn to his treatise on the Third Rule of Saint Francis, *Enarratio in Tertiam Regulam S. Francisci*. In article 35 of this work, Denys dealt with obedience and brought in Bernard as an authority on the subject:

²⁷Denys 40:198: ... quae secundum dictum Bernardi, illi inaccessiblei lumini increatae lucis sanctae Trinitatis tantum conjuncta et immersa est, deitatis penetrando abyssum, quanto hoc est possibile alicui creaturae sine personali unione.

²⁸Other instances where Denys seems to be using a florilegium of Bernard, arranged according to subjects, include passages dedicated to *humilitas* in the treatise *De laude et commendatione vitae solitariae* (38:351) and on *obedientia* in *Enarratio in tertiam regulam S. Francisci* (38:494).

The outstanding doctor of religious, the holy father Bernard, says: "Learn, o man, to obey; learn, you who are earth and death, to accede and subdue yourself, for of your God and Lord Jesus Christ, the Evangelist says, that he was subjected to all, that is to Mary and Joseph. (Lk 2:51) (Denys 38:494).

This passage is taken from Bernard's *Sermones in Laudibus Virginis Matris* (1:8 = SBO IV, p. 19). The language has been slightly rearranged, but the substance of the passage is almost the same.

At this point Denys continued to quote from Bernard, and one might expect him to have borrowed from further passages in the same sermon. This is not the case at all. He turned to a consideration of the obedience of Saint Paul, quoting from Bernard's sermon *In Conversione S Pauli* (SBO IV:331). The passage is built over Paul's question to God, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" (Acts 9:6), which is seen as an indication of a perfect form of obedience. Denys did not include Bernard's further reflections on this statement, until he came to a passage in the same sermon on the weak will and waywardness of people today who do not ask the Lord what he wants of them but tell him what they want from him: *Quam pauci inveniuntur in hac perfectae oboedientiae forma, quia suam ita abiecerint voluntatem et ne ipsum cor proprium habeant, ut non quid ipse, sed quid Dominus velit.*

This complaint is followed by two sentences which are reversed in the order in which they appear in the standard version of Bernard, but otherwise the same text is used:

They discern and judge and choose in which matters they obey him who commands, or in what it is necessary to obey the will of their teacher. Their obedience is not full, nor are they prepared to obey in all matters, nor in everything do they try to follow him who did not come to do the will of his father (Jn. 6:38).²⁹

After this appears a new segment of Bernard, but one which I have been unable to identify. Bernard is to have said that it is deception to claim that one is being obedient by following one's own will as if it were that of one's spiritual father. Whoever obeys on the surface but murmurs in secret shows only false obedience, for only charity makes obedience pleasing:

Quicumque enim aperte aut occulte satagit ut spiritualis pater hoc ei injungat quod ipse habet in voluntate ipse se falli, se putat se obedientem. Neque in ea re ipse obedit praelato, sed magis ei obedit praelatus. Quod si obediat quis quidem ad oculum, murmuret autem in abscondito, falsa est obedientia. Sola caritas facit obedientiam gratam et acceptabilem Deo; et verus obediens dat suum velle et suum nolle. (38:494)

²⁹Denys 38:494: Discernunt atque diiudicant et eligunt in quibus obediunt imperanti, imo in quibus necesse sit praeceptorem suum ipsorum obedire voluntati. Non est eorum obedientia plena, nec parati sunt in omnibus obsequi, nec in omnibus sequi conantur eum qui non suam sed Patris venit facere voluntatem. Cf SBO IV:332.

Since this entire chapter or article is supposed to be made up of citations from Bernard, this passage cannot be looked upon as Denys's editorial commentary. Either I have missed it in Bernard's works, or it belongs to the pseudo-bernardine literature that by the end of the Middle Ages was a growth industry.³⁰

From here we go to a familiar passage in Bernard, about the double leprosy of the heart: *In corde namque est duplex lepra, videlicet propria voluntas et proprium consilium.* We begin here a long passage taken from one of Bernard's sermons on the Resurrection (SBO 5:105, Sermo 3 In Resurrectione, "De lepra Naaman"). The text of Bernard is slightly but insignificantly rearranged. At the end of the passage Denys indicated he was leaving Bernard by saying: *Haec Bernardus* (38:495).

Looking back over this entire chapter in Denys, we can rightly ask whether he carefully gleaned appropriate quotations from Bernard on obedience or whether he used a florilegium that had already gotten these passages together under the subject heading "obedientia". An indication that the latter was the case is provided by Denys's treatise *De professione monastica*, where article 13 concerns "how frequently the holy fathers exhorted religious to obey freely and promptly." There are passages from Jerome, from the Rule of Saint Benedict, and from Bernard (Denys 38:570). We find the exact same excerpt from Bernard's sermon on the Conversion of Paul (SBO IV,331-2), rearranged in the manner that Denys already had followed in his borrowings made in the *Enarratio in tertiam regulam S Francisci*, with sentences reversed from the usual order found in the standard text of Bernard's sermon. In the treatise on monastic profession, just as in that on the third rule of Saint Francis, this passage is followed by the same warning against false obedience which I have not been able to find in Bernard and which may either be his own or a pseudo-bernardine composition.

The reappearance of the identical passages from Bernard quoted in the same order indicates either that Denys himself made a collection for his private use of appropriate bernardine sayings on various subjects or that he had reference to such a collection. Since he himself mentioned a *flores Bernardi* in order to establish Bernard's authorship (38:420), it seems likely that in turning to Bernard as an authority for subjects such as obedience, concupiscence, or the discipline of monastic life, Denys made use of such a florilegium.

Such a convenience is by no means surprising. What is remarkable is that Denys, so great a consumer of authorities, also seems to have looked closely

³⁰See Mabillon's numerous doubtful works attributed to Bernard, printed originally at Paris in 1839 (*Sancti Bernardi...Opera Omnia* II.1) and reprinted in PL 184. These works deserve new attention as a source for later medieval spirituality.

and read through individual works by Bernard. This must have been the case, for example, with Bernard's *Apologia*, addressed to William of Saint Thierry and critical of the practices of the cluniac monks. Bernard's criticisms were perfect for Denys in his *De reformatione claustralium*, where he used excerpts from church fathers and monastic rules in order to criticize the practices of his day. In his Article 20 he quoted exclusively from Bernard of Clairvaux (38:239). Before turning to Bernard's Apology, however, Denys started with an appropriate passage from one of Bernard's Sermons *In Laudibus Virginis Matris* (SBO IV:55-6), where the saint lamented how many men entered the service of Christ, "under pretext of community usefulness" only to spend their monastic vocation involved in worldly business. They are compared to dogs returning to the vomit (2 Peter 2:22). Such men have not crucified the world in themselves. In the monastery they become more worldly than they ever were out in the world.

It is very possibly an indication of Denys's knowledge of Bernard that he could join up such a passage in Bernard, whose intent had been to contrast present-day monastic life with the humble life of Mary, with the much better-known polemic against Cluny in the *Apologia*. First Denys took a general statement in this treatise, where Bernard stated that no order can live in disorder (Apol. 15), and then he launched into Bernard's enumeration of specific wrongs committed by the monks of his day. A close analysis of these passages would show how Denys excerpted from Bernard's chapter 16 onwards to 19 some of the most striking examples of monastic abuse that the saint had provided. We are entertained, for example, by Bernard's famous description of how many ways an egg could be prepared at Cluny.

Denys was not exclusively attached to Bernard's Apology. In considering the subject of monastic dress, he reverted to Bernard's sermon *In laudibus virginis matris* and took a single sentence from it: "What shall I say of that monastic habit, in which not warmth but colour is required, and there is more emphasis on the cult of clothes than of virtues?" (SBO IV:56). After this insertion, Denys returned to the text of the *Apologia* (24, SBO III:101) and Bernard's polemic against monastic clothing. From here, instead of continuing with Bernard's list of abuses, Denys went back to the beginning of the Apology, where Bernard lamented proud people who do not follow the humility of Christ. Bernard was not specific, while Denys wanted to make the point absolutely clear: *religiosis* in Bernard became *religiosis superbis*. (38:240-41. SBO III:82-3).

Here Denys repeated Bernard's specific accusations and mentioned the officials of religious orders who failed to show a sense of responsibility for those entrusted to them (*Apologia* 27). Afterwards he summed up his uses of Bernard:

These are a few of the sayings taken from the great and divine Bernard, who wrote many things which are most profitable, and

which I wanted to be read with respect by those whom they concern, so that they have God before their eyes and think of the brevity of this life and amend themselves according to the doctrines and rules of the holy fathers.³¹

Denys rarely summarized his quotations of Bernard as he did here, but these lines hint that he himself pieced together the appropriate passages. If we compared in greater detail the precise borrowings from Bernard's *Apologia* with the original text, it would become apparent that Denys felt at liberty to take what he needed and to leave out large sections of Bernard.

The result, however, is by no means a misrepresentation of Bernard's ideas. Denys managed to concentrate his Bernard by leaving out some illustrations, biblical references, and repetitions. His interweaving of a sermon dedicated to Mary with excerpts from the Apology may show that he knew the original text (though the possibility of a florilegium cannot be completely eliminated). In this case, I think Denys borrowed from Bernard as a free agent, often working with him at first hand.

Denys dedicated many passages in several of his treatises on the religious life to the requirements of obedience. As we already have seen, he could in at least one case have been dependent on a florilegium, but at times probably went straight to the source. This seems to be what he did in the treatise *De obedientia superioribus praestanda*, where the question is asked whether religious are obliged to obey their superiors in all things (38:518) Denys's response looks to Bernard:

Further, Saint Bernard acknowledges that obedience is not sincere and full when men judge and distinguish in what they ought to obey and in what they are not to obey.

This statement is dependent on Bernard's masterful treatise *De precepto et dispensatione* (ch. 23), though it is not a direct quote. Later in the same chapter, Denys referred to the treatise:

But the fact that this is true is proven by the words of Bernard, saying in his book *De dispensatione et praecepto*: Let the prelate forbid me none of the things which I promised, nor require from me more than I promised.³²

This is chapter 11 in *De precepto*. From here Denys reverted to the tenth chapter,

³¹Denys 38:241: Haec pauca ex dictis magnis et divini Bernardi, de his multa saluberrime conscribentis, sunt sumpta: quae dignanter ab his quos concernunt cupio legi, ut prae oculis Deum habentes, vitaeque hujus brevitatem pensantes, juxta sanctorum Patrum doctrinas ac regulas se emendent.

³²Denys 38:519: Porro quod haec ita se habeant, probatur ex verbis Bernardi, in libro de Dispensatione et praecepto dicentis: Nihil me praelatus prohibeat eorum quae promisi, nec plus requirat a me quam promisi. Cf SBO III:261.

where Bernard pointed out that obedience is promised not to the abbot but to the rule. Bernard specifically mentioned the Rule of Saint Benedict, while Denys made the passage more general and applicable to any monastic or eremitical rule. From this point Denys jumped to chapter 12, Bernard's definition of perfect obedience that does not know law and is not restrained by boundaries. As often in his writings, Denys exhibited skill in compiling a series of passages from Bernard that illustrated or lent authority to one of his ideas. It is hard to imagine that Denys got all appropriate material exclusively from a florilegium. Here, as in his use of the *Apologia*, Denys seems to have been excerpting from the full text of Bernard.

What has surprised me most in looking at Denys's use of Bernard, especially in treatises on monastic life in Volume 38, has been the carthusian scholar's broad-ranging use of the saint. I have found only a few citations from the letters of Saint Bernard,³³ but the rest of his works are richly represented in the passages I have been able to identify. The *De Consideratione*, the *Apologia*, and the *De precepto et dispensatione* seem to have been his favourite treatises, while at the same time Denys was able to find appropriate passages from sermons. He was at home with Bernard's well-known *Sermones in Cantua*, but the sermons based on feasts of the liturgical year and the miscellaneous sermons collected in volumes 5 and 6 of the Leclercq-Rochais edition are also richly represented. Indeed, an excellent way to appreciate the importance of Bernard's sermons for a religious audience in the later Middle Ages would be through a more careful review of Denys's borrowings. One can see that sermons of Bernard, which to us might seem at times to wander into difficult symbolic associations, could easily be excerpted for passages of great power and relevance to an audience looking for guidance in questions of community and individual religious life.

It should be remembered that the references to Bernard are but a fraction of thousands of references in Denys to church fathers and writers from Saint Paul to Jan Ruysbroeck. Denys by no means limited himself to monastic authors and was happy, for example in writing on the solitary life to cite Seneca as well as Petrarch.³⁴ Because he had read so much, he could make associations that

³³Not surprisingly, Bernard's letter to Guigo and the brethren of La Grande Chartreuse (Ep. 11, SBO VII:52-3) is used (*De praeconio sive laude ordinis carthusiensis* 38:421). More interestingly, Denys found in Bernard's letter to Suger, abbot of Saint Denys near Paris, an appropriate passage on how the angels attend the monks when they are in prayer or psalmody (*De laude et commendatione vitae solitariae*, 38:354 = Ep. 78:6, SBO VII:205). This passage in Bernard may be connected with the story in the *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense* (II.3) about how Bernard saw angels in choir writing down the words the monks sang.

³⁴For Petrarch, see Denys *De vita et fine solitarii* (38:279), where he is called *elegantis poetae, et solitudinis amatoris eximii*. For Seneca, the same treatise, pp. 298-99.

lifted him out of a carthusian context and put him into contact with the fuller tradition of European writings on the intellectual and spiritual life. But Bernard was important to Denys as an authority whose definitions and distinctions clarified essential points, especially within monastic life and discipline.

BERNARD THE TIMELESS AUTHORITY

The many, perhaps too many, quotations and formulations of the previous pages should make it clear that Denys was in debt to Bernard. But just taking over the text of a writer does not necessarily indicate that an author understands him completely. What can bother us is that Denys shows little sense of historical perspective towards Bernard (or towards very many of his other authorities, for that matter). In this sense Denys is very much a medieval thinker, working *sub specie aeternitatis* and not interested in seeing how the requirements of his own age were different from those of Bernard's. Thus the arguments taken from Bernard to criticize Cluny in the twelfth century were good enough for Denys in criticizing the religious life of his own day. Denys did not stop to ask to what degree anything might have changed.

It is perhaps unfair to argue on the basis of modern historical awareness and to object against such a missing dimension in Denys. He would have probably been unimpressed with such criticism and might have replied that monastic life and discipline are the same at all times, so the canons of Bernard's age were good enough for his own. In defending and praising the Carthusian Order, Denys similarly showed a one-dimensional understanding of Bernard. He correctly quoted from Bernard's famed letter (11) to Guigo the prior of La Grande Chartreuse, but then he concluded that Bernard would have become a carthusian himself if he had not had his preaching and other important work to do. There is no hint or indication here that Bernard was very satisfied as the publicist of the Cistercian Order and so preferred cenobitic to eremitical monasticism:

These and many similar things he wrote there and elsewhere to them and concerning them (the Carthusians)... And briefly, so much grew the love of his heart for them, that he wanted to be made one of them, and would have been, if great fruit in preaching and other great causes had not provided an obstacle.³⁵

³⁵Denys, *De praeconio*..., p. 421: Haec ac multa similia ibidem ac alibi scribit ad eos et de eis. Quod si in omnimoda ab esu carnum abstinentia eos sensisset reprehensibiles, periculose vescentes, haud dubium quin insinuasset id est: quod nusquam egit, imo eorum abstinentiam eximie commendavit. Et breviter, in tantum excrevit amor cordis sui ad ipsos, quod unus ex eis fieri peroptavit, et factus fuisset, nisi major fructus in praedicando et aliae grandes causae praebuissent obstaculum.

Bernard's secret desire to become a carthusian may have been a special story in the order, but I see no evidence for it in the sources we have for him, contemporary or later. One senses again the growth in the late Middle Ages of pseudo-bernardine stories and tracts, which borrowed from the saint's immense prestige in order to lend authority to writings or ideas. Denys was so eager in this treatise to defend carthusian habits of abstinence that he made Bernard into a closet carthusian.

Historical facts that are so important for us, such as that of Peter Abelard, were apparently very secondary for a fifteenth-century writer like Denys. We should not judge him by our own standards but see him in the context of his time as a spiritual writer who felt that the rich heritage he had was to be used for edification and exhortation. In Bernard as in the desert fathers, Benedict, Cassian, or even Thomas Aquinas, Denys found collections of writings that could be moulded into the forms he wanted to create: relatively brief, persuasively-argued treatises that reminded his readers of cenobitic and eremitical standards and of the purposes of a life apart from the world.

If we move out for a moment from Denys's sheltered existence to the religious world for which he wrote, we can see that he tried through writers like Bernard to alter and improve his surroundings. One can ask how a carthusian could get so involved in the world around him. The answer is that Denys was not directly or immediately present, but the very nature and content of his spiritual readings encouraged him to speak out. Especially in his sermons, he was willing to use the life experience of people like Bernard of Clairvaux to comment directly on what was wrong in monasteries and to provide recommendations for improvement. It is difficult to know what impact Denys might have had, except from the fact that the Carthusians themselves had sufficient respect for him to publish all his works at Cologne in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Here we can see an awareness of the troubles the church was then experiencing and a belief that the spread of Denys's works could be an important contribution to the christian life.³⁶

"Anyone who criticizes us for not eating meat is himself a lover of meat", Denys could proclaim, before turning to his authorities (38:421-2). At times he lacked a sense of proportion in distinguishing between the trivial and the essential in monastic or eremitical life. But he did show a sense of balance in his borrowings from Bernard, taking what could be useful, leaving out a great deal, but seldom betraying Bernard's own meaning. In Denys we see how Bernard lived into the late Middle Ages, took on meaning in new contexts, and was made available to new generations of monks and scholars.

³⁶See, for example, the "Epistola nuncupatoria" that accompanied the publication of Denys's Sermons on the Saints in 1542 (31:ix-xi).

THE CARTHUSIAN IMPACT UPON ANGEVIN ENGLAND

H. E. J. COWDREY

In numerical terms, the Carthusian settlement in Angevin England was small. Only one house, Witham (dioc. Bath), was established; its impact upon English life was largely owing to one man, Hugh of Avalon, who came from la Grande Chartreuse probably in 1180 to be its third prior and who was bishop of Lincoln from 1186 until his death in 1200.¹ However, King Henry II's part in the foundation of Witham and in determining Hugh's career was a considerable one.² This paper will be concerned with two topics. The first is the hundred years and more of association between the Norman and Angevin royal families and strict and eremitical forms of the religious life which made Henry II's sponsorship of the Carthusians a natural development. The second is the factors, apart from the personal stature of Hugh of Avalon, which enabled the Carthusians to find a larger place in Angevin England than their small numbers might lead one to expect.

In a broad sense, the coming of the Carthusians was well prepared. The Rule of St Benedict itself which formed the basis of all western monastic life declared that it was only 'a little rule for beginners' (*hanc minimam inchoationis regulam*: 73.8). St Benedict's second sort of monks were the anchorites or hermits who, after long proving in a monastery, advanced to the single combat of the desert and fought alone against the vices of the flesh and of the mind (1.3-5). In the tenth and eleventh centuries, a tide of strict, eremitical monasticism, which began in Italy, spread ever more widely in Western Europe; in it, the Carthusians had their place after 1084, when St Bruno founded la Grande Chartreuse. It should be noticed that the tide in general left its mark upon Rome, for example, at an early stage in the mixed monastic community of Greek and Latin monks on the Aventine which from the early 980s was jointly dedicated to St Boniface and St Alexius; half a century or so later, the prior of the hermit community at Fonteavellana (dioc. Gubbio), Peter Damiani, was also from 1057 to 1072 cardinal-bishop of Ostia and a mentor of the reform papacy. The foundation

¹H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Carthusians in England', in: *La Naissance des Chartreuses. Actes du VI^e Colloque International d'Histoire et de Spiritualité Cartusienne (Grenoble, 12-15 Septembre 1984)*, edd. B. Bliigny and G. Chaix (Grenoble, 1986), pp. 345-56, 'Hugh of Avalon, Carthusian and Bishop', in: *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. M.G. Sargent (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 41-57.

²Cowdrey, 'The Carthusians' (as n. 1), p. 348.