

III.—The *Verbum Abbreviatum* of Petrus Cantor

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The life and influence of Petrus Cantor are surveyed briefly as background for the major topic of this paper, a study of his use of classical citations and *exempla* in the *Verbum Abbreviatum*, to illustrate the place of ancient literature in a handbook intended for the moral guidance of the Paris clergy in the late twelfth century.

Petrus Cantor of Paris, of whose many writings only the *Verbum Abbreviatum* is generally known,¹ was born between 1120 and 1130, of a noble family of Gerberoi in the diocese of Beauvais. He was educated at Rheims, where he became a canon and perhaps cantor;² about 1169 he was called to Paris as canon of Notre Dame and lecturer in theology. A few years later he became chief cantor of the cathedral, an office which gave him considerable authority both in the cathedral itself and in the schools of the diocese. He fulfilled his obligations excellently, winning praise from his contemporaries as a man of action and a brilliant scholar and teacher; there is documentary evidence that he occasionally acted as judge in cases outside the ordinary routine of his office. In 1187 or shortly after, he completed the *Verbum Abbreviatum*, which was intended as a practical moral guide for the Paris clergy. The popularity of this work is indicated by the considerable number of manuscripts that have been preserved, not only in Paris and other French libraries, but in England, Munich, Vienna and Utrecht as well.³ The book is frequently mentioned by other writers of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and was extensively used by Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Gemma Ecclesiastica*. Briefer excerpts

¹ J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 205, cols. 9–528. According to H. Hurter, *Nomenclator Litterarius Theologiae Catholicae* (Innsbruck, 1892–1903) 4, cols. 125, 1352, the *Distinctiones* or *Summa quae dicitur Abel* is included in Cardinal Pitra's *Spicilegium Solesmense* 3.1–308 and in *Analecta Sacra* 2.6–154, 585–628.

² This summary of Petrus Cantor's life is based primarily on F. S. Gutjahr, *Petrus Cantor Parisiensis: sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Graz, 1899), which was generously loaned me by the Princeton University Library, and on M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1931) 3.159–162. The account by Dom Brial in *Histoire Litteraire de la France* (Paris, 1820) 15.283–303, needs some revision in the light of later studies, but is still useful.

³ For a list of the extant manuscripts see Manitius, *op. cit.* (note 2) 161–162.

are found in other works, among which we may note the three passages cited by Vincent of Beauvais in his *De Eruditione Filiorum Nobilium*, which are of interest as an application to secular education of material originally intended for the guidance of the clergy.⁴

In 1191 Peter was elected bishop of Tournai, but an irregularity in the election gave William, Archbishop of Rheims, and at that time regent of France in the absence of Philip Augustus, an excuse to confer the office instead on Stephen, abbot of Ste. Geneviève, though Pope Celestine III thought that Peter should be invested with the bishopric. Stephen himself ardently supported Peter's candidacy, claiming that the king wished it, and clearly felt that William's insistence on the change put him in a very awkward position.⁵ Aside from the dispute about the election, Stephen was an admirable choice; he was a notable scholar and preacher, and proved as successful in his diocese as he had been as abbot. If the flaw in Peter's election consisted in the failure of the chapter to consult the archbishop before the final vote was taken, it may explain William's stubbornness in the matter, since he was a man never willing to yield any part of his authority. He may well have been influenced also by the desire to keep Peter at Paris, where, with the dean of Notre Dame, he had recently been commissioned to reform the church fabric, under the archbishop's supervision.⁶ So Peter remained at Paris, where he continued his brilliant lectures on the Bible, and his extensive moral and exegetical writings. Among these we may note especially the Glosses on the Bible, of which a considerable number are preserved, the great *Summa de Sacramentis et Animae Consiliis*, and the *Summa de Contrarietatibus Theologiae*, a study of contradictory texts.⁷

⁴ Giraldus made much more extensive and systematic use of the *Verbum Abbreviatum* than has been recognized hitherto. I intend to publish a separate study of this topic elsewhere in the near future. The definitive edition of Vincent of Beauvais, *De Eruditione*, edited by the late Arpad Steiner, was published by the Mediaeval Academy of America in 1938.

⁵ Stephen of Tournai, *epist.* 177, *PL* 221.462-464.

⁶ If it were not for this fact, we might ascribe William's opposition to Peter's election in part to Peter's antipathy to the extensive building projects of the time. A man who attacked "superfluities" in building so vigorously (as in chapter 86 of the *Verbum Abbreviatum*) might well seem unsuited for a bishopric in the great age of church building.

⁷ Petrus Cantor's books, including the evidence on those no longer extant, are listed in the works mentioned in notes 1 and 2, and in columns 9-14 of Migne's edition. Several of them are also discussed by B. Hauréau in various articles in *Notices et Extraits des MSS* (Paris, 1890-1891) 1-3.

In 1196 Peter is said to have refused the bishopric of Paris, but in the same year he acceded to the fervent request of the canons of Rheims, seconded by Archbishop William, that he should return to be their dean. With the consent of the chapter of Notre Dame he set out for his old home, but stopped on the way at the Cistercian Abbey of Longpont in the diocese of Soissons. Here he was taken ill, and died on September 22, 1197, after taking monastic vows. The necrology of Rheims claims him as *noster decanus*, though the epitaph at Longpont omits mention of the office which he never actually assumed:

Hoc jacet in loculo Petrus venerabilis ille:
Egregius auctor, Parisiense decus.

His death was commemorated in numerous contemporary records, and Stephen of Tournai's earlier estimate of his *integritas personae*, *hilaritas famae*, and the *suavis opinio* men held of him,⁸ was endorsed by the characteristic legend that sweet odors rose from his tomb, when repairs to the church at Longpont caused the grave to be opened some years after his death.⁹

If Petrus Cantor's books were as accessible to us, and as much read by students of the classical tradition in the Middle Ages as those of his better-known contemporaries are, this brief account of his life would scarcely have been needed. Familiar though he is to students of Biblical glosses, and, because of his passionate attacks on usury, to those interested in mediaeval economics, he is usually either ignored or passed over with brief mention in accounts of the Renaissance of the twelfth century. We need, therefore, to consider in more detail his reputation as a lecturer in the cathedral school of Notre Dame.

We are fortunate in having an unusually vivid picture of his teaching in the second book of Jacques de Vitry's *Historia Hierosolymitana*, written about twenty-two years after Peter's death. The book opens with an account of the evils prevalent in France at the time of the Crusades, and emphasizes the very vices that Peter so vehemently attacked, avarice, simony, usury, the negligence and loose lives of the clergy, and the extravagance of both

⁸ *Epist.* 177 (see note 5).

⁹ Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus* 12.48. For eulogies by contemporary and later authors, in addition to those given by Migne, Manitius, and Dom Brial, see Dom Remy Ceillier, *Histoire Générale des Auteurs Sacrés et Ecclesiastiques*² (Paris, 1863) 14.570-574.

clergy and laymen. Against this lurid scene is silhouetted the austere figure of Fulco of Neuilly, an unlettered priest who came to Paris to study, but found his fellow-students interested only in vain novelties. At last he found the inspiration he sought in Peter's lectures, which he attended daily, taking copious notes which he used in sermons to his rural congregation, until Peter persuaded him to preach at St. Séverin in Paris. Thence his fame spread, and he preached throughout France and in many parts of the Empire, against usury, selfish hoarding, and the immorality and inertia of contemporary life. Jacques de Vitry ascribed to Petrus Cantor, "a lily among thorns, and a rose among thistles," the inspiration that drove this French Savonarola to his work, and he gave Fulco in turn much of the credit for the subsequent revival of preaching in the work of Robert de Courçon and others.¹⁰

Ralph of Coggeshall also described Peter as pre-eminent among the theologians of his time.¹¹ Thomas of Cantimpré mentioned his friend John as having been auditor beati et magni viri, magistri Petri Cantoris Parisiensis.¹² An anonymous German cleric who had studied at Orleans and Paris included an abbreviated version of the *Verbum Abbreviatum* among the lecture-notes, versified rules of grammar, poems on teaching, love, women, saints, and simony, and other miscellanea of the sort dear to mediaeval students, in a volume now in the State Library at Zürich.¹³ These examples chosen from the many testimonies to Peter's fame may suffice to place him among those eminent teachers of the late twelfth century whose students, as E. K. Rand pointed out, must have carried an ample knowledge of the works of pagan authors over into the thirteenth century.¹⁴

Jacques de Vitry apparently did not exaggerate Peter's interest in good preaching, though he overlooked other able men who preached eloquently during the twelfth century. Stephen of Tournai and Petrus Comestor are notable examples. Petrus Comestor's

¹⁰ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 2.1-8. The description of Petrus Cantor, in metaphors drawn chiefly from the Song of Songs, is in chapter 7.

¹¹ *Chronicon Anglicanum, Rolls Series*, page 79.

¹² *Bonum Universale de Apibus* 2.1.19.

¹³ J. Werner, *Beiträge zur Kunde der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*² (Aarau, 1905) I: *Turicensis* C 58.275. For similar students' *collectanea* of a somewhat later date, see E. M. Sanford, "Some Literary Interests of Fifteenth Century German Students," *TAPhA* 59 (1928) 72-98.

¹⁴ "The Classics in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 4 (1929) 249-269.

sermons, with their abundant citations from Ovid, Martial, and Seneca, suggest the probable character of Petrus Cantor's homilies, which have not come down to us, though many chapters of the *Verbum Abbreviatum* could have been used in the pulpit with very little change.¹⁵ Peter reminded his readers of the importance of sermon-writing when he said: In tribus igitur consistit exercitium sacrae Scripturae: circa lectionem, disputationem, et praedicationem.¹⁶ How many of his students, like Fulco, used their lecture-notes for Sunday sermons?

A recent study of the unpublished Biblical glosses of Petrus Cantor throws further light on his methods of teaching.¹⁷ He is credited with being the first master to introduce into his formal lectures on the Bible the type of *exempla* or illustrative anecdotes which had long been used for the edification of unscholarly laymen.¹⁸ His students were thus well equipped for their function as preachers, and some of his *exempla* from contemporary life recur in thirteenth century sermons and in collections for the use of preachers. This application to advanced clerical education of a device widely used in lay instruction may account in part for the admiration he inspired in those masters of the *exemplum*, Jacques de Vitry and Caesarius. The use of well chosen contemporary anecdotes is one of the most attractive features of the *Verbum Abbreviatum*, and should make that work required reading for anyone interested in clerical or lay life in twelfth century Paris.

Clearly, Petrus Cantor was an original and outstanding figure among the "doctors" at Paris; his methods of exposition and his wide range of knowledge exerted a vital influence on his contemporaries and on the younger generation who were his students. An examination of his use of classical quotations and anecdotes in the *Verbum Abbreviatum* is therefore significant for the study of the transmission of classical influence; though it does not add to the list of ancient works known at the period, it throws considerable light on the ways in which familiar books were used by scholars

¹⁵ See L. Bourgain, *La Chaire française au XII^e Siècle d'après les Manuscrits* (Paris, 1879), especially pp. 50-51, 250-251; Manitius (see note 2) 158. The three "sermons" of Petrus Cantor in *Paris B.N.Lat.* 14859 are merely extracts from the *Verbum Abbreviatum*.

¹⁶ *Verbum Abbreviatum* c. 1.

¹⁷ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1941) 156-218.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 212-213. Cf. G. Frenken, *Die Exempla des Jacob von Vitry* (Munich, 1914).

who had completed the basic study of grammar, with its emphasis on memorization of passages from the *auctores ethnici*. Some topics almost automatically suggested certain quotations; with others the association varies widely, and some failed to awaken a classical response, either because of their essentially Christian and mediaeval character, or because their Biblical and patristic illustrations took precedence over the classical.

The title of the book, drawn from the Latin text with which the work begins: *Verbum abbreviatum fecit Dominus super terram*,¹⁹ and the introductory chapters on the need of abbreviating the Scriptures to save the time and trouble of copying, reading, emending, and even of carrying the ponderous tomes that contained the complete Bible and its glosses, would naturally lead us to expect a Biblical compilation with little or no pagan material. Yet large portions of the introduction itself are drawn from the *Epistulae Morales* of Seneca, who is actually referred to in the first chapter as *theologus*, though elsewhere he is either named, or identified as *philosophus*. The list of superfluous material in the Bible includes topics with historical rather than ethical value:

ut situs locorum, numeros annorum et temporum, genealogias, dispositiones mechanicas in aedificiis, ut in dispositione tabernaculi, templi etiam imaginarii. Non ideo data est nobis sacra Scriptura, ut in ea vana et superflua quaereremus, sed fidem et doctrinam morum, et consilia et responsiones ad infinita negotia in ecclesia emergentia.²⁰

On the other hand, Peter adds so much material from the "good things that other writers have said,"²¹ and so many contemporary anecdotes and patristic passages, to the Biblical chapters he has chosen as morally edifying, that his "abbreviation" is far from avoiding the big evil of a big book. The Scriptures, especially the historical books of the Old Testament, are his chief source, with Seneca's letters always at hand to supplement them. The arrangement of material is his own, fairly logical in the sequence of topics but not as systematic as it might have been had he written a generation later. For the ancient and mediaeval authors cited, as he tells us, he constantly selected and excerpted passages from the many books he read, for he agreed with Seneca: *Quidquid ubicumque bene*

¹⁹ Romans 9.28; the King James Version obscures the sense of *verbum*.

²⁰ *Verbum Abbreviatum* c. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.* c. 1.

dictum est, meum est.²² The result was a useful *vade mecum* for the cleric who aspired to lead a godly, useful and literate life, and a book that could well take the place of several volumes, but the introductory diatribe against prolixity would lead us to expect more rigid pruning. Seneca, however, hardly offered a model of brevity, even when he praised it.

Some chapters of the *Verbum Abbreviatum* are really a patchwork of quotation and paraphrase from Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*, embellished with Biblical illustrations and one or more lines from the poets. In others, on more definitely Christian topics, Seneca is the only pagan author cited. The quotations from Seneca are both more numerous and more extensive than those from any other author; they often provide the keynote for a chapter, and make clearer the application of the Biblical passages summarized in it to the current problem under discussion. Without them, the book would lose much of its essential character. In view of the extensive use of Seneca by Christian writers, this is not at all strange, but it illustrates the full adoption of the pagan moralist as an exponent of Christian ideals so notably that one is surprised to find no mention of Petrus Cantor in a leading modern study of Seneca's influence.²³

Of the poets, Ovid, as one might expect, is most frequently quoted, especially *De Remedio Amoris*, the *Metamorphoses*, and *Ars Amatoria*, with a few quotations from his other works. In the number of citations, Ovid is a close second to Seneca, with nearly forty instances, but in bulk he is far behind, since usually only one or two lines are quoted. His frequent appearance does not therefore suggest the constant direct reference to his works that we must

²² *Epist. Mor.* 16.7, quoted in chapter 1. A contemporary vernacular parallel is the *Bible Guiot*, written about 1206 as a mirror for Christians in the *siècle puant et orible*, with many quotations from the "philosophers" Seneca, Vergil, Lucan, Ovid, etc. who are described as *incorruptibles censeurs des moeurs des mauvais princes*. Cf. J. Orr, *Les Oeuvres de Guiot de Provins* (Manchester, 1915).

²³ Cf. P. Faïder, *Études sur Sénèque (Recueil de Travaux Publiés par la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, Univ. de Gand, 49, 1921)*; the chapter on "La Gloire de Sénèque," 108–152, discusses the extensive use of Seneca as an authority on ethics, but does not mention Petrus Cantor. The only mention Peter makes of Seneca's tragedies is a citation of a pseudo-Senecan play which I have not been able to trace; indeed it may be no play, but a confused memory of an anecdote connected with the tale of Crassus's death by a draught of molten gold. In chapter 52, Peter tells how, sicut legitur in tragedia quadam Senecae, Nero in hell, being bathed in molten gold by his servants, saw a group of *advocati* who had newly arrived, and called them as his friends, to share in his bath.

assume in the case of Seneca, but it does indicate a wide acquaintance with the poems, which seems to spring from past reading and memorization rather than from mere consultation of *florilegia*. Peter does not show any signs of considering Ovid dangerous; indeed, his frequent citations were well calculated to lead his readers to the poems themselves.

The first quotation from Ovid, in contrast to most of the others, seems very inappropriately chosen. In his second chapter, on the superfluous trappings of the Scriptures, Peter quoted *De Remedio* 343-344:

Gemmis auroque teguntur
Omnia: pars minima est ipsa puella sui.

Considering Ovid's advice to the lover to catch his girl unadorned, and see how unattractive she then appears, one can only conclude that Peter had completely forgotten the context. In chapter 6 the importance of *res* as contrasted with *verba* in studying the Bible is emphasized by a quotation from *De Remedio* 144:

Res age: tutus eris.

In this case, though Peter's topic is unrelated to Ovid's, the poet's words fit the case excellently.

Peter had an opportunity to warn his readers that *auctores ethnici* are not edifying throughout, however useful individual lines may be to point a moral, when he quoted twice, in chapters 51 and 78, *De Remedio* 323:

Et mala sunt vicina bonis,

but such an application of Ovid's words was far from his thoughts. Lines 161-162 of the same poem, the explanation of Aegisthus' adultery in terms of his lack of wholesome activity, are also used twice, in chapter 81, *Contra pigros*, and in 113, *De duplici pace*, in which Aegisthus typifies the demoralizing effects of the world's peace, in contrast with the peace of God.

A line from the story of Narcissus, *Metamorphoses* 415:

Dumque sitim sedare cupit, sitis altera crescit,

appears three times, in chapter 16, *De paupertate*; 20, *Contra cupiditatem et avaritiam*, and 97, *De bona esurie et siti*. Narcissus seems to have been the subject of a popular song in Paris, for in chapter 27, *Contra simoniam existentem in substantiis sacramentorum*, Peter

compares simoniacs who shift their offers to suit the taste or greed of the man they are trying to bribe, to minstrels: qui videntes cantilenam de Landrico non placere auditoribus, statim incipiunt de Narcisso cantare, quod si nec placuerit cantant de alio. The Narcissus song was probably based directly on Ovid's familiar version. We have a curious bit of evidence that it was not as popular in England, or at least in Wales, as it was in Paris, for Giraldus Cambrensis used the same illustration in his *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, but substituted *cantilena de Wacherio* for that on Narcissus.²⁴

An exception to Peter's usual habit of quoting a line or more of poetry without comment occurs in chapter 74, where he writes:

Illud etiam fabulosum, damnablem esse modicam occasionem mali, ostendit, ubi dicitur:

ego te miseranda peremi
Qui in loca plena metu iussi te nocte venire.²⁵

Sic et advocatus, vel alius quilibet (qui, maxime pro iniusta causa, aliquem mittit Romam) dicere potest: Ego te miserande peremi, qui in loca plena metu, per Alpes, per Apenninum, et mille pericula mortis, misi te.

Both Horace and Juvenal, so much valued as *auctores ethici* by mediaeval moralists, are quoted almost as often as Ovid. Horace's *Epistles* naturally offered the greatest number of illustrations for the *Verbum Abbreviatum*, though the *Satires* and the *Ars* are also effectively used, and there are two passages from the *Odes*. One of these was particularly appropriate to Peter's favorite theme of moderation. Chapter 17, *Contra quaeritantes et detinentes superflua*, a brief discussion based chiefly on Augustine, Jerome, and Solomon, closes with Horace's famous lines on golden mediocrity,²⁶ which provide a neat transition to chapter 18, *De mediocritate*. This chapter includes excerpts from the Bible, Augustine, and Seneca as a warning against ostentation both in luxury and in poverty: nempe propositum nostrum est secundum naturam vivere. For frugality, Peter says, and not self-torture suits the true Christian philosophy. Those who describe him as an unremittingly severe moralist overlook this passage. The same theme recurs in chapter 67, *De mediocritate in omnibus tenenda*, in which successive quotations from

²⁴ *Gemma Ecclesiastica* 2.26.

²⁵ *Met.* 4.110–111.

²⁶ *Carm.* 2.10.5–8.

Horace and Ovid form a little cento on the virtues of the *media via*, concluded by a line from Cicero: *Summum ius, summa iniustitia est.*²⁷

Horace's account of the conversation between Aristippus and Diogenes on cabbages and kings²⁸ is quoted in chapter 21, *De avaritia*, as a good example for Christians to consider, but Peter's memory played him false in this case, for he represents Aristippus as contentedly washing his vegetables, preferring menial work and coarse fare to the luxury and flattery of the court. This chapter, as we might expect from its subject, is a long one with many Biblical, classical, and contemporary illustrations, including several other lines of Horace. The five lines quoted from the Tantalus story²⁹ are particularly appropriate to Peter's treatment of the theme of avarice, a vice only too closely associated with the Roman character. The same lines appear in chapter 97.

The extensive use of Juvenal's *Satires* is natural in a writer who agreed with him that posterity would be unable to add to the vices of his age.³⁰ In at least one case, a line of Juvenal is inserted without any indication that it is quoted, as we so often do with a familiar line of Shakespeare. Describing Diogenes' tears for human stupidity, in chapter 96, Peter concludes: *Sed mirandum, unde ille suffecerit umor.*³¹ Peter's favorite quotation from Juvenal is

Imponit finem sapiens et rebus honestis,

which he quotes four times³² to illustrate the need of moderation in connection with as many distinct activities. The blessings of poverty are emphasized in three different chapters by the line

*Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.*³³

Juvenal's outcry against the honor given to filthy lucre, with its wording slightly changed for purposes of quotation, is also used three times. In one case, Peter seems to forget that Juvenal is not a contemporary Christian moralist, when he writes:

²⁷ Horace, *Serm.* 1.2.24: 1.1.105; Ovid, *Met.* 1.136; Horace, *Epist.* 1.18.9: *Serm.* 1.1.106-107; Cicero, *Off.* 1.10.33, substituting *iniustitia* for *iniuria*.

²⁸ *Epist.* 1.17.13-16.

²⁹ *Serm.* 1.1.68-72.

³⁰ Juvenal 1.147-149.

³¹ Cf. Juvenal 10.32, where the words refer to Heracleitus, not Diogenes.

³² Juvenal 6.411, in chapters 31, 63, 111, 118.

³³ 10.22, in chapters 16, 72, 86.

Item: Exemplum ploratorum et ploratricum Longobardorum, in exsequiis mortuorum ad flendum et plangendum solo pretio conductorum. Quibus sunt similes quidam in ecclesia psallentes et pro pretio cantantes, quorum quivis:

O nummi, nummi, vobis hunc praestat honorem.³⁴

In chapter 51 Peter quotes Juvenal effectively in an attack on the current desertion of the liberal arts and theology in favor of the law:

Omissis enim artibus liberalibus, caelestibusque disciplinis, omnes codicem legunt et forensia quaerunt, ut foris et in exterioribus appareant, sicque gloriam et lucrum mendicent. Item ad haec poeta:

Si fortuna volet, fies de rhetore consul,
Si volet haec eadem, fies de consule rhetor.³⁵

Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is cited fifteen times. Peter considered Cato the Younger the classical prototype of Christian virtues, an opinion for which Seneca gave him ample grounds, and he naturally found Lucan's description of Cato's simple life, his rigid morality, and his uncompromising stand against Caesar well suited to his purposes, as did so many other mediaeval writers.³⁶ Lucan's famous description of honest poverty inevitably found its place in the *Verbum Abbreviatum*.³⁷ And the line

Hinc usura vorax, avidumque in tempore faenus,³⁸

characterized the evil which Peter most constantly attacked. The words

Omnia Caesar erat

are quoted three times, twice in attacks on pluralities in church office, with Caesar's usurpation of Roman offices to point the danger, and again in a comment on Cato's republicanism.³⁹ Peter's interest in the late Roman republic also led him to quote Lucan 1.125-126 in chapter 54, *Contra ambitiosos*, with the comment: *ambitione destructa est respublica, interfectus senatus*.

³⁴ Juvenal 5.136, in chapter 26; the same line is used in 36 and 153. Another repeated passage, 2.37-38, seems a less obvious choice, but is appropriately used in chapter 88, *De sancta prodigalitate*, and 135, *Contra gulam et ebrietatem*.

³⁵ Juvenal 7.197-198.

³⁶ See E. M. Sanford, "Quotations from Lucan in Mediaeval Latin Authors," *AJPh* 55 (1934) 1-19.

³⁷ 5.526-531, quoted in chapter 16, *De paupertate*, together with 1.165-167.

³⁸ 1.180, in chapter 50, *Contra faeneratores*.

³⁹ 3.108, in chapters 16, 32, 113.

In chapter 86, *Contra superfluitatem aedificiorum*, and in 132, *De sepeliendis mortuis*, he groups together three lines, from Lucan, Vergil, and Maecenas, which are also used in Hildebert's *Moralis Philosophia*:

Caelo, tegitur qui non habet urnam.
Facilis iactura sepulchri.
Sepelit natura relictos.⁴⁰

Thus three pagan poets remind the Christian of the insignificance of tombs for their mortal remains.

The nine citations from Vergil are chiefly from the *Aeneid*. In addition to the line quoted above, we may note the comparison of a bribe-taker to Vergil's shepherd, in chapter 25: cupidus est similis illi fatuo pastori Vergiliano, de quo:

Lupi Moerim videre priores.⁴¹

In chapter 49 Peter compares actors, a profession for which he sees no possible excuse, to the drones barred from the hive by the worker-bees.⁴² *Auri sacra fames* inevitably appears in chapter 54, *Contra ambitiosos*, and Vergil's description of *Fama* in 76, *Contra rumorosos*.⁴³ In chapter 71 he warns monks against yielding to family affection; to those who let their widowed sister depend too much on them he says: dicant si volunt et grammatici:

In te omnis domus inclinata recumbit.⁴⁴

Statius' *Thebais* is quoted six times, Martial and Terence each three times, Claudian twice, and Persius and Propertius each once. Prose writers, aside from Seneca and Cicero, are generally mentioned only as authority for *exempla*. Quintilian, Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Josephus, "Agellius," Macrobius and Sallust are each cited once or twice in this fashion, and Valerius Maximus is named three times but was probably the source of a larger number of the *exempla* quoted without a specific authority.

Cicero, however, is used for his interpretations of ethical standards rather than as a mere source of anecdote. In contrast with

⁴⁰ *Bell. Civ.* 7.819; *Aen.* 2.646; the quotation from Maecenas is probably taken from Seneca, *Epist.* 92.35, where it is quoted in a passage of similar content but different wording, and without the other two citations.

⁴¹ *Ecl.* 9.54.

⁴² *Geo.* 4.107 and *Aen.* 1.435.

⁴³ *Aen.* 3.56: 4.174-175.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 12.59.

Seneca, he is quoted rarely, but, like him, with every indication of direct and fruitful consultation of his work. Chapter 14, *De duobus generibus humilitatis malae*, quotes the well-known description of men who inscribe their names on books they have written *de contemnenda gloria*.⁴⁵ Elsewhere Peter quotes only *De Officiis*, certainly the one of Cicero's works most similar in purpose to his own, and made doubly appropriate by the frequent references throughout the *Verbum Abbreviatum* to the political problems of Cicero's time. A quotation from Book I has already been mentioned; it is interesting to note that Cicero himself described the phrase *summum ius summa iniuria* as *iam tritum sermone proverbium*.⁴⁶ In chapter 114, *De patientia*, Peter quotes *De Officiis* 1.33.120, on the necessity of choosing one's plan of life, with the following comment:

Sed nos ipsos deliciis enervavimus et resolutos fecimus, ut nec etiam Christianos labores et agones tolerare possimus. Maxime autem nobis obici potest, quod patientia gratuita, et pro tanto praemio, non possumus ferre ea quae perpassi sunt ethnici patientia naturali, et saepe pro causa inhonesta.

He then substantiates this reflection on the degeneracy of his times by instances from Seneca of the fortitude of Metellus, Rutilius, Socrates, and Mucius Scaevola.⁴⁷

Chapter 84, Peter's famous discussion of respectable means of livelihood in contrast with those that no Christian should adopt, seems to be influenced by *De Officiis* 1.42.150-151, though the wording is not identical. Book II provides Peter with a useful attack on avarice in rulers and magistrates, which he quotes at length, showing a clear comprehension of its context, and a passage from Book III is used to illustrate the dangers of favoritism.⁴⁸

The *Verbum Abbreviatum* is most notable, as we have seen, for its wide range of contemporary anecdotes, shrewdly chosen and vividly told, with an eye to effective narrative as well as to their moral application. Biblical passages, especially from the historical books of the Old Testament, are often handled in a similar style, as are *exempla* drawn from patristic literature and from saints' lives. Classical anecdotes are less frequent, but have a significant place

⁴⁵ *Arch.* 11.26.

⁴⁶ *Off.* 1.10.33. Manitius overlooked this passage in his list of the chapters in which *De Officiis* is quoted.

⁴⁷ *Epist.* 24.4.

⁴⁸ *Off.* 2.22.77-78, in *Verbum Abbreviatum* chapter 25; 3.10.43 in chapter 23.

in the argument of numerous chapters. Aristotle and Alexander appear more than once. Other *exempla* deal with Xerxes, Socrates, Diogenes, Demosthenes, Diocletian and Sapor, Apollo's prophecy that Sparta would fall prey to her own avarice, and the Romans Popilius, Tubero, Mucius, Rutilius, Metellus, the Catos, Scipios and Laelius. These ancient tales often follow Biblical illustrations and are capped in turn by contemporary anecdotes, though this order is not consistently followed.

Peter was especially interested in the examples of Roman virtue, as models for his readers to follow, and it is chiefly in connection with these that he adds accessory comment to make their application clear. His interest in the late Roman republic is characteristic of his period, when so many factors combined to direct the attention of thoughtful men to the problems of civic responsibilities and of the maintenance of sound government.⁴⁹ For example, in chapter 44, *Contra eos quo exuunt se a iurisdictione suorum praelatorum*, he says: Sed sic sublatis sunt consules et proconsules de medio, ut pauca vel nulla imperent, et omnia Caesar sit, qui omnia sicut omnibus imperet. He was particularly fond of citing the Catos, Laelius, and Scipio as models for his readers. Seneca's emphasis on these men reenforced their obvious claims on his interest.⁵⁰

Chapter 84, *Contra varios artifices istarum vanitatum*, is a good illustration of his respect for *prisca Romana virtus*: Ad has vanitates et superfluitates fingendas, curiositas Christiana varios habet artifices, quibus forte caret idololatria. Incredibile enim est Scipiones, Catones, Laelios, si tales opifices vidissent, eos statim non repulisse.⁵¹

One might assume from this passage that he had never heard of the extravagances of the Roman Empire, but elsewhere he contrasts the noise and distractions of imperial Rome with the solitude that should be sought by Christian anchorites: Habeat sibi Roma suos tumultus, arena saeviat, circus insaniat, theatra luxurient, rumoribus vacet, salutationibus gaudeat. . . .⁵² A little later he paraphrases Seneca's advice to the man who wishes to avoid the distractions and vices of modern life: Elige itaque Catonem (O

⁴⁹ For material on this point, see E. M. Sanford, "The Study of Ancient History in the Middle Ages," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (1944) 21-43.

⁵⁰ He quotes Cato's *Moral Distichs* eight times, but with no indication whether he shared the common misconception about the author's identity.

⁵¹ Compare Socrates, Cato and Laelius in chapter 69.

⁵² C. 72, *Commendatio solitudinis loci*.

Christiane, Paulum). Si hic tibi nimis rigidus videtur in religione, elige remissioris animi et vitae virum sanctum alium cuius vita, mores, et oratio placeant.⁵³ Though he so greatly admired Cato, Peter, like Seneca, evidently felt that his standards of conduct were beyond the reach of many good men.

The fabulous monsters of pagan antiquity appealed to his imagination, as Cato did to his moral sense, and furnished picturesque metaphors for some otherwise rather pedestrian arguments. Two-headed Janus is attested, he says, by the poets, but there is no authority for a two-headed mass; the holders of pluralities are called "Geryons," beasts with two bodies and two heads, or are compared with Briareus; bishops are blind to the misdeeds of their fellows, though they should be argus-eyed, and they are too prone to emulate Proteus, or Horace's horse with the human head and bird's plumage.⁵⁴ The detested *advocati*, on the other hand, have the eyes of Argus, the claws of the Sphinx, the hands of Briareus, the perjury of Laomedon, the wiliness of Ulysses, the deceit of Sinon, the faith of Polymnestor, the piety of Pygmalion, the wisdom of Achiophel, and the kiss of Absalom.⁵⁵ Men whose good principles are corrupted by evil communications are compared to Scylla and the Harpies.⁵⁶

Of the one hundred and fifty-three chapters of the *Verbum Abbreviatum* only sixty have no classical citations or allusions. Some have a very small proportion of classical material, a single passage of Seneca, or a line from Horace, Juvenal, or Ovid. In some the classical portions outweigh those from Biblical, patristic or mediaeval sources. Avarice, gluttony, usury, extravagance, pride, poverty, moderation and civic virtue are among the themes that call for abundant use of classical authorities. Humility, faith, the cardinal virtues, Christian charity, and certain of the deadly sins are discussed without benefit of pagan writers. The balance seems to be fairly even between the use of the ancients as warnings and as noble examples.

It would be false to conclude that Peter never expressed his own ideas directly, though it is clear that he considered his function to

⁵³ Based with slight modifications on Seneca, *Epist.* 11.10. The parenthesis is his own addition, and the words *virum sanctum alium* are substituted for Seneca's *Laelium*. Was there no obvious Christian parallel for Laelius?

⁵⁴ Chapters 29, 31, 32; Horace, *A.P.* 1-2.

⁵⁵ C. 51.

⁵⁶ C. 70.

be that of compiling and organizing his material, and would not often undertake to say something in his own words which had been well said by another. For modern taste, he depends too much on mere juxtaposition of apt quotations, and when he breaks his usual custom, as in chapter 49, and inserts a comment *ex propria ratiocinatione*, as a sort of gloss on the text, we wish that he would do so more often. But his originality appears in many of his contemporary anecdotes, and in his invectives against the corruption and extravagance he saw about him, especially in ecclesiastical circles. His readers probably gained a more vivid sense of the eternal wisdom of the ancients through quotations from their works in successive chapters on themes that came close home to the business of the twelfth century than they would have through essays on the classical view of life.

Peter rarely apologizes for using pagan authors to expound Christian doctrines. In chapter 16, *De paupertate*, in which there are an unusual number of citations from Lucan, Juvenal, Seneca, Horace, and Ovid, interspersed with instances from the Old Testament, he quotes from Jerome Quintilian's statement that orators use the poets' verses to delight the ear:

Hoc autem non dicet Christianus, cui tamen de ethnicis scripturis (spoliatis Aegyptiis, Hebraeisque ditatis) licet inducere, resectis unguibus, et tonsis crinibus puellae, ut veritas commendandae virtutis, vel vitii suffocandi, amplius commendetur et confirmetur testimonio adversariorum.

Yet he seldom remembers that the poets are *adversarii*. In chapter 21 he selects a few lines of Horace as sufficient to strangle the monstrous vice of avarice: Hoc epitheton iugulare sufficiat illud Horatii;⁵⁷ though he supplements the passage with other illustrations. Perhaps he felt that he had depended too much on pagan authority in this chapter, for the next one begins: Non tantum exemplis ethnicorum detestamur et iugulamus avaritiam, et omnem acceptionem munerum, sed et exemplis plurimis sacrarum Scripturarum. He could not resist, however, inserting a line of Vergil and anecdotes of Demosthenes and Quintilian, among the Biblical examples that follow.

⁵⁷ *Serm.* 1.1.68-72, the Tantalus story, discussed above.