

13 Bernard of Clairvaux: work and self

M.B. PRANGER

LIFE AND WORK

There is no doubt that Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) is the most famous Cistercian, so much so that he is often mistakenly considered to be the Order's founder. It is Bernard who expanded the modest beginnings of the Order under Robert of Molesme (1098) into universal fame. After a brief spell in the monastery of Cîteaux, Bernard moved to Clairvaux in Champagne, whence he organised and supervised, in the shape of an amalgam of intra- and extramural activities, both his own life and the life of the Cistercian Order.¹ In themselves those activities amount to an ecclesiastic-political career that, in theory, does not betray any need of monastic underpinnings. Thus Bernard's (in)famous interventions in the world of (Church) politics such as his manoeuvrings on behalf of Innocent II during the papal schism of 1130, his meddling in the theological controversy surrounding Abelard at the Council of Sens in 1140 and his preaching of the Second Crusade in 1147 could all have been the work of any politically minded cleric whosoever. His activist behaviour certainly does not seem to owe anything to a particular brand of Cistercian spirituality. At the same time, ever since founding Clairvaux Bernard held but one position: the abbacy of his monastery. Whether attending to his duties as an abbot inside that monastery or hitting the road on Church business, he acted on the assumption that his authority did not exceed the limits of his profession, even though, unsurprisingly, his opponents took a different view on this claim. As such there was nothing abnormal about an abbot reaching out beyond the walls of his monastery in matters political and ecclesiastical. In the case of the freshly established Cistercian Order, however, with its ambition of return to the letter of the Benedictine Rule – that is, to poverty, withdrawal and *stabilitas loci* – things looked different. In fact, no one was more vociferous than Bernard in denouncing monastic exhibitionism both intra- and extramurally. In criticising the splendour of Cluny

(as well as the political and architectural power play of the abbot of Saint-Denis, Suger) Bernard has drawn a line in the sand separating the politics-prone existence of prelates and bishops from 'us' monks 'who have withdrawn from the people, we who have left behind all that is precious and beautiful in this world for the sake of Christ'.²

As Bernard has left us an extensive literary oeuvre, it would be interesting to know to what extent this life hovering between monastic contemplation and extramural activities is reflected in his work. As a matter of fact, in describing, in this chapter, Bernard's writings, I shall focus on this particular aspect. Before doing so, let me first take a look at the nature and scope of his literary production. Taking pride of place are the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, the Sermons on the Song of Songs, a work that has been highly influential in the history of Western Christian devotion. This *chef d'oeuvre* is supplemented by a vast body of sermons. Thus we have sermons following the rhythm of the liturgical year from Christmas to Ascension, sermons on feast days of saints and on a variety of incidental subjects. Next there are the treatises, some of which have become highly popular: on the Benedictine theme of the degrees of pride and humility, on love, on grace and free will, the so-called *Apologia*, a diatribe against the luxurious excesses of Cluny. Another work that has become immensely popular is *De consideratione*, dedicated to Bernard's pupil-become-pope, Eugenius III. Designed as a handbook for papal behaviour, both spiritual and political, it deals with topics ranging from practical instructions to the pope to mystical contemplation. Finally, there is a collection of parables and an extensive letter collection dealing with a variety of topics, most famously the controversy between Bernard and Abelard.

LITERARY REPUTATION

Paradoxically, Bernard's reputation as an ecclesiastical power broker and as a devout mystic has got in the way of his being appreciated as a writer. Admittedly, the epithet *mellifluus* (honey-dropping) testifies to his eloquence. In addition to Bernard's political reputation, it was on the intensity and the personal touch of his devotion, however, that his fame became founded rather than on his stylistic merits. As for those merits, it should be pointed out that post-medieval Roman Catholic literary taste tended to share the humanistic criteria dominated by a preference for moderation and classicist form. Thus it became possible to extol the authenticity of Bernard's devotion while voicing one's reservation with regard to his style. Bernard's nineteenth-century biographer

Vacandard is a case in point. Emphasising Bernard's 'originality' he feels obliged to point to the danger of excess resulting in a loss of control with regard to style: 'There is, therefore, no lack of originality in the abbot of Clairvaux. However, one serious criticism that can be made with regard to his style is that it is not always in accordance with the standards of literary tradition. Bernard's was an age in which taste was neither predominant in literature nor in the arts.'³ Although Vacandard wrote before the revaluation of twelfth-century art and literature – to begin with Charles Homer Haskin's seminal *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* of 1927 – his views echo through in Henri de Lubac's characterisation of Cistercian and, in particular, Bernardine devotional style:

Under the hands of the Cistercian monks it looks sometimes as though traditional doctrine particularises towards an inner experience of increasing richness and subtlety which, however, is no longer, can no longer simply be, the experience of the Church itself, that is of the entire community of the faithful. A culture of the hothouse, ardent meditation on liturgical texts rather than on the Bible for its own sake.⁴

This intra-Catholic criticism of Bernard's subjectivism testifies to some uneasiness with regard to the literary liberties he apparently took compared to a more objective and more organised method of reading, and meditating on, the Bible 'for its own sake'. Paradoxically, Bernard himself has become notorious for accusing others like Abelard of imposing their own 'subjective' standards and 'overstepping the boundaries set by the Fathers'.⁵ By trespassing those supposedly fixed boundaries of orthodoxy, Abelard is to be seen as the pinnacle of egotistical subjectivism: 'There is nothing he does not know of all things in heaven and on earth except his own self.'⁶ Admittedly, Christianity was familiar with a long tradition in which heretical views were condemned as the aberrations of *singular* minds incapable of adhering to what was believed and upheld by all, always and everywhere. The twelfth century, however, saw the rise of the singular mind as a more independent and self-conscious individual, which is why the era is dubbed by some as that of 'the discovery of the individual'.⁷ Although slightly over-the-top, this characterisation is correct in so far as Bernard did indeed initiate a devotion in which the intimate relationship between the adoring subject and the objects of adoration such as God, Christ and Mary took pride of place. Highly influenced by Bernard, this intimacy was further processed in Franciscan and other late medieval thought

and went on to become the standard expression of Catholic as well as pietistic Protestant faith (Mary excluded, of course). What remained unsolved in the process is the freedom of movement this devotional subject was allowed vis-à-vis Church doctrine and rules. At which point were boundaries overstepped? It is clear that the late Middle Ages and the early modern era witnessed an increase in Church authority proportionate to the intensification of subjective devotion, both looking as if entangled in an iron embrace. Inside that embrace it is hard to detect an independent human subject or individual operating for its own sake.

Now if we want to assess Bernard's work, devotional subjectivity and individuality as they have emerged out of the Cistercian and, more generally, the twelfth-century mindset are squarely in the way. In order to get a less anachronistic glimpse of Bernard's notion of the self as a key to understanding his literary work, we should realise that his subjectivity originates in the monastic community and its tradition of living the repetitious and communal life of the liturgical Hours. This in itself would suffice to prevent Bernard's self from acting as a merely private individual. His is a monastic *persona* representing its community. What is new about this representation is the highly privatised way in which Abbot Bernard's 'self' claims to speak on behalf of that community as if there is only place for one person qua person – the abbot – whilst the listening community serves as the silent audience for the latter's rhetorical performance.

Talking about 'rhetoric' we are back at Vacandard's and Lubac's characterisation of Bernard's style as a little wild and out of control. In voicing their concerns, those two authors conflate, as it were, two turning points in twelfth-century thought. The first is the one described above, the rise of the individual (devotional) subject, which runs the risk, feared in retrospect by Catholic historians and theologians, of running counter to the sound exteriority of Church authority and rules. Underlying this first turning point is a second one, the fear of a loss of control over the fixed rhetorical genres in use ever since the birth of Christian literature, in which an authorial self, or, for that matter, a self *tout court*, is always embedded in the rules and games imposed by rhetoric. Shaped by the history of devotion as well as by its sequel, the Romantic subject, the modern reader has to cleanse his mind of notions of personal and psychological directness. When tackling texts such as Bernard's that seem to overflow with precisely that, our reader should honour the fact that they can only be accessed indirectly, by following and decoding the rules of rhetoric.

A MISERABLE LIFE

Let us turn to a conspicuous example of what seems to be a *cri de coeur*, and nothing but that, Bernard's famous outcry about his tormented self in his Letter 250:

It is time for me to think of myself. My monstrous existence, my tormented conscience beg for your pity because I have, so to speak, become the chimaera of my century. I am living neither as a cleric nor as a layman. Long ago I abandoned, if not the monastic habit, then, at least the monastic way of life.⁸

Generally, this outcry has been taken to represent Bernard's frustration about the disproportionate amount of time he spent, willy-nilly, outside his monastery. Thus we would have an example here of quasi-modern, psychological introspection dealing with the troubles of a divided self. Meanwhile it may be worth remembering that being tormented by a divided self was part of the monastic profession just as it was the monk's duty to lament the sinful state of the human condition regardless of the specifics of his own sinful behaviour: the so-called *officium flendi*, the office of weeping. Here we are confronted with the opposite of what British prime minister Harold Macmillan once described, over and against all attempts at long-term planning, as the inevitable core business of politics: 'events, dear boy, events'.⁹ In Bernard's case, this would come down to acknowledging the fact that his extramural dealings with short-term projects would always be overruled by the *longue durée* of monastic rituality. In that light it is not surprising to find another version of the 'short-term' personal outcry in one of the Sermons on the Song of Songs as part of the routine of monastic self-accusation and contrition:

I have been living miserably because I have been wasting my time. All I know is that you, O God, will not reject a contrite and humble heart.¹⁰

This 'outcry' could have been uttered by any monk anywhere and at any time. In fact, 'at any time' means 'always'. Hard though it may be for the modern reader to understand individuality in terms of ritual and repetition, this is exactly what is required in order to get access to Bernard's texts. Perhaps the counter-intuitive nature of this approach is sweetened a bit if one realises, first, that the premise that our *ordre du discours* with regard to individuality always moves from the singular to the general may be less self-evident than it seems (take, for instance,

the expressions of singularity in classified advertisements, mostly in terms of one comprehensive *uomo universale*) and, second, that, then as now, expressions of the self are intrinsically rhetorical. Thus Bernard's '*perdite vixi* / I have lived miserably' tries to say something, not about the psychological state of his mind, but, rather, about the performance of life – *his* life, that is – as exemplary. In that respect the difference between a medieval saint's life and Bernard's personal account of his sinful existence is one of genre rather than of essence. Both are concerned with sin and perfection. If to the modern ear 'exemplary' primarily rings a moralistic bell, the notion of *imitatio* is what comes first and foremost to the fore in the medieval context of *exemplum*.

THE AUTHOR AS ABBOT, FATHER AND BROTHER

With notions such as imitation and *exemplum* we have at our disposal the principal tools that go into the making of Bernard's literary oeuvre, albeit on the condition that here too the difference with later use of those notions should be taken into account. This difference mainly lies in the fact that late medieval *imitatio* such as Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, although deeply influenced by Bernard, is much more of a one-way affair than the original. In Thomas we find, for instance, Christ vis-à-vis the believer, the one to be 'imitated' by the other, the one superior and, in a sense, immovable to be approached by the other, the inferior sinner. What has gone in the historical process is the performative aspect which makes the relationship between Bernard and his 'example' reciprocal, and sometimes even interchangeable to the extent that the one is absorbed by the other.

The framework set for this literary performance is the office of the abbacy itself – which means that, just as in his political activities so also in his writings, Bernard, whether extending or diminishing his personal position, speaks *ex officio*. In accordance with the Rule of Benedict this position comes down to being, within the monastic space, the vicar of Christ. 'For the abbot is thought to perform the offices of Christ, which why he is called by His name, as the Apostle says: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, Father".'¹¹ Now, in spite of the fact that humility is the benchmark of the Benedictine/Cistercian life, in exercising his function the abbot is not asked to hold himself in low esteem but, rather, to follow the firmness of the divine person(s) he represents. Characteristically, Bernard can be seen to take this prescription from the Rule with regard to the abbot one step further and adorn it with biblical, literary embellishments that hitherto

had seemed to be the privileged domain of God and Christ themselves. A spectacular example of this theatrical technique of crossing borders in which divine firmness and human vulnerability merge, can be found in Bernard's famous lament over the death of his brother Gerard (in Sermon 26 of the Sermons on the Song of Songs). In that sermon Bernard, while commenting on the Cantic text about 'the tents of Cedar', breaks down into tears, suppressed so far; he has to interrupt his ongoing commentary on the Cantic and tells the story of his personal grief. One border is crossed here already, that of the sermonic genre which yields to the genre of the lament.¹² Inevitably, we come across a lot of 'self' in this sermon-alias-lament, the more so since the commonplace of having one's life divided into halves when losing a friend is further 'personalised' because Bernard has not only lost a friend but also a brother. At the same time, at no point does Bernard lose sight of the fact that his brother is, however special, his monastic brother, like a Martha of sorts taking care of the practical affairs of the monastery in order to unburden his more Mary-like, contemplative brother, the abbot. But inside the monastery, family ties are even more complicated than that, since for Bernard being his brother's brother is preceded by being his brother's Father as well. In the end – that is, at the moment Gerard dies – this fatherhood is enacted by the one and only representative of fatherhood on the spot: the abbot. Staying his brother's brother, he makes his appearance in the deathbed scene somehow disguised as God the Father:

And he [Gerard] repeated those words: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit' and he sighed frequently. *And turning himself to me* he said with a happy look on his face: 'Father, Father, what great good it is that God deigns to be the Father of mankind! What glory for men to be sons of God, God's heirs. For if they are sons, they are also heirs.'¹³

Vacandard's verdict notwithstanding, literary taste reigns supreme in this passage. Perhaps this can be illustrated when we first pay attention to the surface level of this text and dissect the various elements from Scripture and actual facts and experience glued together in accordance with medieval reading techniques. Thus we have the quotation from the Psalms ('Father, into thy hands ...') that had in turn been adopted by Christ on the cross. 'Father' being the key word here also triggers memory by calling to mind passages from Paul about the Father of mankind. Next we notice the unbreakable bond between fatherhood and sonship which includes the right of inheritance, so tight indeed that no explicit

mention of brotherhood is made. The effect of this semantic (contrary to factual) absence makes itself felt if we compare this passage as it is repeated, almost to the letter, in the *Exordium Magnum*, a later, hagiographic account of Bernard's life and work by Conrad of Eberbach:

And repeating this phrase: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit', sighing frequently, he said: 'Father, Father', turning himself to the holy abbot, his brother, 'what great good it is that God in his dignity is willing to be the Father of mankind.'¹⁴

Inevitably, there is the shift from the first to the third person singular, which tends to objectify the story a bit. More dramatically, there is also a change of word order. Instead of 'turning to me [or, turning to the holy abbot, his brother], he said: "Father"', a clear distinction is established between Father and brother by having 'turning himself to the holy abbot, his brother' moved to a safer position, much closer to the 'facts', after 'Father' has been evoked and an unmistakable shift to the brother is made. With that shift the author of the *Exordium* appears to ignore the specifically Bernardine suggestion of ambiguity with regard to the question of who exactly is being addressed as 'Father'. Of course, it is God, the Father, but Bernard himself does not exclude himself from being part of that picture. By 'specifically Bernardine' I do not mean the use of well-known exegetical techniques such as typology (the establishing of links between biblical figures extended to the writer/believer: David, Christ, Bernard and, in this case, quite audaciously between God and Bernard in their capacity as father) without denying that such a technique is somehow in place here. It is the suspense that counts, the very fact that no fixed scheme is visibly applied. Instead we see the hand of the author draw a picture in which Bernard is hovering between his various roles of brother, abbot and Father without either firmly denying or affirming the distinctness of any one of them.

So far the embedding of Bernard's authorship in his abbacy has produced two seemingly contradictory results. On the one hand, in order to be effective his 'personal' exclamations have to be assessed against the backdrop of ritual. On the other hand, once seen as part and parcel of the monastic Order, as yet unknown vistas became visible, paving the way for the primordial functionary inside that Order to claim literary freedom and flexibility of movement for his devotional and literary self. The simultaneous functioning of both dimensions seems to go against the grain of general suppositions about exegetical writing in the high Middle Ages as being primarily technical, objective, schematic,

exemplary and depersonalised and, conversely, once personalised, *really* personal over and against the impositions of schemes and ritual.

In what follows I will give two more examples of this symbiosis of form and flexibility as a literary principle set out on a scale of increasing intensity and audacity: Bernard addressing the Virgin Mary and his intrusion into, and fusion of, the scenes of Christ's birth and passion.

THE AUTHOR AND THE VIRGIN MARY

It is a well-known fact that Bernard played a major part in developing both the devotion to the Virgin Mary and a sensitivity for the religious importance of the major aspects of Christ's life on earth, his birth and suffering. Now the iconic presence of such images has become so familiar a part of the Western mindset as to make us forget that once upon a time they were coined and established. As with the origins of so many such devotions the initial picture is more complicated than the eventual, more simplified images of Mary and Christ. Let us have a look at such a constitutive text in which Bernard evokes the scene of the Annunciation by dramatically beseeching the Virgin to consent to the Angel's proposal of sacred conception:

You heard that you will conceive and that you will give birth to a son. You heard that it will happen, not through a man but through the Holy Ghost. The Angel is awaiting an answer. For the time has come for him to return to the one who sent him. It is in the same manner that we, O Mistress, are waiting for the word of mercy in a state in which we are miserably held down by the sentence of damnation ... And, behold, to you is offered the price of our salvation. If you consent, we will be freed at once ... Blessed Virgin, open your heart to faith, your lips to confession, your body to the Creator. Look, he for whom all nations have been longing is standing outside, knocking on your door [Rev. 3.20; S. of S. 5.2]. O, do not let your hesitation cause him to pass by! Then your soul would start to wander again, looking for him whom your soul loves [S. of S. 3.1–4]. Rise, run and open! Rise in faith, run in devotion and open your heart in confession!¹⁵

Again, if we look at this passage from the viewpoint of the tradition at whose origin it lies, we recognise the iconic features as we know them from medieval art in the guise of a static and almost frozen rendering of biblical scenes, including the presence of the adorer(s). What we are not presented with in those iconic settings is the restlessness, not

only of the adoring soul but also of the adored object. In this particular scene that restlessness is distilled by Bernard the author from the biblical text in a highly theatricalised manner. Rather than offering the reader an explanatory reading of the text, Bernard creeps into it, so to speak; he makes himself part of the biblical scene both as observer and participant-alien-vocal supporter of the Angel's message and request. Once again it is his position as abbot that authorises him to enter into the conversation between the Angel and the Virgin. Whilst in Gerard's death scene Bernard acted on behalf of – even, in a sense, *as* – God the Father, he now represents the human race, lending voice to the latter's urgent need of redemption. In either case borders are being blurred between the human and the divine, between the voice of the Virgin and the voice of the abbot. Thus Bernard's own restlessness is in a sense transferred from the longings of the sinful and unquiet soul to the oxymoronic possibility of the Virgin herself turning into a wandering ghost due to her having been too late in consenting when her lover passed by. The very fact that the relationship between Christ's incarnation and his virginal mother is expressed in terms of the Song of Songs, although deriving from an older tradition, is also vintage Bernard. In using Song of Songs texts, Bernard does not hold back from drawing erotic imagery into virginal scenes ('rise, run and open'). But to highlight the 'erotic' and isolate it from its context would be anachronistic. The text is more complex and multilayered than that. First and foremost it reveals the suspenseful existence of Christ's representative, the abbot, more specifically, the abbot's self. What follows, in terms of reading and explanation of sacred scenes, is but an extension of that nucleus out of which the literary universe of a virginal existence can be seen to spring.

Surprisingly, Bernard's mentioning of Song of Songs fragments does not betray any trace of allegory or the fourfold meaning of Scripture (literal, allegorical, moral, mystical). That very device can be held responsible for producing a fixed and stable reading method which has contributed to the impression, right or wrong, of medieval exegesis having become a semi-automatic affair. Elsewhere, as in the Sermons on the Song of Songs, Bernard did indeed move from the historical to the mystical, for instance when discussing the various meanings of the 'kiss' from the opening line of Song of Songs: 'Let Him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.' However, rather than producing fixed meanings of scriptural words and texts, Bernard, also when using a common device such as allegory, prefers to blur borders and to keep moving without pinning down one singular and static meaning. His work is littered with striking examples of this flexible way of reading. I conclude this chapter

with one such display of rhetorical cunningness which – seemingly – covers its technical tracks.

THE AUTHOR'S STAGING OF THE NATIVITY AND THE PASSION

In the third Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord we find Bernard once more in proximity to sacred events. Musing about the miracle of Christ's birth, the paradox of God's son shrinking down to the size of a child in the manger, he reflects on the fact that this entire scene is produced for his benefit:

And I recognise for my own the time and the place of this birth. Tender infant frame, wailing screaming child, and then the poverty and the wakefulness of those to whom the birth of the saving God is first announced, the shepherds. These things are mine. They happen for me. They are laid down before me to imitate. At night time, in winter time is when Christ was born. By chance? Winter, summer, day, night are his for the choosing. And was it by chance he was born in this unkind season, at dead of night?¹⁶

Measured against Bernardine standards this passage is fairly routine. A picture is painted of Christ wailing in the crib; a scene which is subsequently appropriated by the observer as being 'his'. The self that is thus brought out does, however, keep a certain distance. No ambiguous use of fatherhood here. Nor does Bernard intrude as unashamedly into the scene as when taking up the role of participant in the Annunciation. Before long, however, the writing abbot enters the scene, not only by taking up a part in it but, once more, by developing various roles out of his very own 'self':

Brethren, Christ's tears bring on in me at once shame and agony. There was I playing outside in the square, while in the secrecy of the royal bedroom a sentence of death was brought against me. His Only Begotten got to hear of it. He came out. He had put down his diadem. He was wearing sackcloth, and his head was spattered with ash. He was barefoot, and weeping and wailing, because his little slave-boy had been condemned to die. Quite suddenly, I see him coming out. I am struck dumb. New thing. I am told the reason why. What am I to do? Play on, make play of his tears? If I have taken leave of my senses, if I am not of sound mind, I will not follow him, will not weep with the weeping.¹⁷

Due to its kaleidoscopic composition, this text makes heavy demands on the reader. In terms of medieval exegesis, the only fixed element the reader can go by is the moral meaning to be distilled from the picture of the wailing Christmas child in the crib, that those tears cause shame and agony to the extent of making our reader weep as well. In other respects the passage is utterly confusing. Take the biblical references. They are scattered all over the text but none of them constitutes an identifiable quotation. 'Playing on the square' may allude to Zech. 98.5: 'And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof' but can also refer to Matt. 11.16: 'What shall I compare this generation with? It is like boys sitting in the square.' Next there is the 'bedroom' of the king, clearly from the Song of Songs, but in this place primarily meaning 'a courtroom'. This is quite unlike the standard approaches to scriptural allusions, which are somehow meant to ring a bell with the monastic audience. Here that ring only causes confusion with regard to any mnemonic technique; a confusion that is next extended to another one underlying all this dreamlike vagueness: the question of who exactly is talking. Where Bernard's line of exposition started with the tears of the Christmas child versus the tears to be elicited from the stony heart of the believer, the expositor's self and baby Christ change places: Bernard turns into an innocent child playing in the square whilst his master hears about the deliberations inside the royal bedroom that lead to his 'little slave-boy' being sentenced to death. Clearly, no distinct narrative and expository lines can be drawn. What does 'the royal bedroom' mean and what does it contribute semantically to the grimness of this tearful episode? Do love and tenderness absorb doom and death, and do monastic wailing and weeping come down to enacting precisely that? Maybe, but this much is clear: what is being expressed here moves beyond the parameters of a distinct and prosaic reading of the text and has meanwhile turned into poetry of a kind. Of course, this entire procedure is rooted in the establishment of a self, the self of the Father abbot whose reading authority includes the playing out of different roles, Father, Son, brother, lover and child.

All this seems to justify Lubac's suspicion that what we have here is a 'culture of the hothouse, ardent meditation on liturgical texts rather than on the Bible for its own sake'. As a Jesuit trained in the classical tradition but also steeped in modern literature, Lubac sensed that Bernard's writings, rather than being governed by austere rules of faith and genre, testified to a freedom of literary movement springing from the mnemonic overflow of a literary self. The display of such freedom may have been hard to swallow for those for whom the exteriority

of Church authority prevailed, always and everywhere. If one looks at Bernard from the perspective of a different and less anachronistic time line, however – one that takes its starting point in the beginnings of Christianity rather than in its late- and post-medieval outlook – Bernard's daringness in absorbing and reproducing biblical and liturgical texts processed through his very own, literary self is in a league with the way the Apostle Paul handled *his* self by reading it into *his* holy writ as did, in turn, Church Fathers such as Origen and Augustine. Not for nothing, besides being called *Doctor mellifluus* (honey-dropping doctor), has Bernard's official epithet always been *ultimus inter patres*, 'the last of the Fathers'.

Notes

- 1 See Christopher Holdsworth's chapter in this volume.
- 2 *Apo* XII.28; C. Rudolph, *The 'Things of Greater Importance': Bernard of Clairvaux's 'Apologia' and the Medieval Attitude toward Art* (Philadelphia, PA, 1990).
- 3 E. Vacandard, *Vie de Saint Bernard, abbé de Clairvaux* (Paris, 1920; first pub. 1895).
- 4 H. de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1959–63), vol. II (1959), p. 582.
- 5 *Ep* 193; SBOp 7, pp. 44–5.
- 6 *Ep* 193; SBOp 7, p. 45.
- 7 C. Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (New York, 1972).
- 8 *Ep* 250.4; SBOp 7, p. 147.
- 9 Like many famous quotations, this one is unsourced.
- 10 SC 20.1.1; SBOp 1, p. 114.
- 11 *Rule of Benedict*, ed. P. Schmitz (Maredsous, 1955; first pub. 1946), chapter 2, p. 49; Rom. 8.15.
- 12 In an ironic attack, Abelard's student Berengar accused Bernard of trespassing the laws of rhetoric by mixing up his commentary on a bridal song (the Song of Songs) with a lament. See Berengar, *Apologeticus*, PL 178:1863–4.
- 13 SC 26; SBOp 1, pp. 170–81; Rom. 8.16–17.
- 14 Conrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum cisterciense sive narratio de initio ordinis cisterciensis*, ed. B. Griesser (Rome, 1961), 154, dist. 3.
- 15 *Miss* 4.IV.8; SBOp 4, p. 54.
- 16 *Nat* 3.1; SBOp 4, pp. 257–8, translated by P. Cramer in M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden, 1994), p. 240.
- 17 *Nat* 3.4; Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, p. 242.