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While Abelard's reputation as a teacher was based mainly on his mastery of dialectic, and his censure was based, in part, on the confidence with with he maintained that dialectical analysis could help determine the truth of any statement, there is ample evidence that he came to view rhetoric as an increasingly valuable art.[1] Abelard had always been careful to preserve the priority of dialectic as that art which dealt with the analysis of the truth or falisty of verbal statements, a view that challenges the ethical dimension attribuited to rhetoric by most classical and patristic rhetoricians.[2] However, as he turned his attention to questions concerned with the daily runnng of monastic institutions, his philosophical interests also shifted from logical to ethical topics, from the theory of language to the theory of moral action. What has still not been sufficiently emphasised is the key role that Abelard's writings destined for the Paraclete played in this turn to rhetoric.[3] Whatever the status of authenticity or redaction of Ablelard's *Historia Calamitatum* and the ensuing correspondence (Ep. 1-9), the series

[1] For recent work on Abelard's theory of rhetoric, see C. Mews, C. Nederman and R. Thomson, *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003) containing C. Mews, 'Peter Abelard on Dialectic, Rhetoric, and the Principles of Argument, pp. 37–53; K. Fredborg's discussion of, and edition of Abelard's rhetorical excursus in his *Super topica glossae*: 'Abelard on Rhetoric', pp. 55–80; Peter von Moos, 'Literary Aethetics in the Latin Middle Ages: The Rhetorical Theology of Peter Abelard', pp. 81–97; and J. Ruys, '*Eloquencie vultum dipingere:* Eloquence and *Dictamen* in the Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard, pp. 99–112. See also, W. Flynn, '*Ductus figuratus et subtilis*: Rhetorical Interventions for Women in Two Twelfth-Century Liturgies', in *Rhetoric Beyond Words*, ed. M. Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 250–80.

[2]Mews, 'Peter Abelard on Dialectic', p. 48 refers to Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* IV. 4 as well as Isidore, *Etymologiae,* II. 1. 1.

[3] T. J. Bell, *Peter Abelard after Marriage: The Spiritual Direction of Heloise and her Nuns through Liturgical Song* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007), provides a full-length study of the various layers of textuality relating to the sequences *Virgines castae* and *Epithalamica*. A good, though necessarily partial, picture of Abelard's rhetorical practice emerges in which Abelard's command of, and interest in, the Song of Songs is especially highlighted. See the review article by C. Mews, 'Singing the Song of Songs at the Paraclete: Abelard, Heloise, and Gregory the Great on Mary Magdalen as Lover and Bride, *Citeaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 59 (2008): 299-313.

is self-conciously a work of epistolary rhetoric, as Heloise's reproof (in Ep. 4) of Abelard for not following the proper rhetorical rules in the salutation (of his Ep. 3) clearly demonstrates.[4] Moreover, the argumentation of the letters brings to the fore a major ethical issue—the mismatch between Heloise's disposition (*affectus*) and the goal (*intentio*) of her monastic conversion.[5] A mismatch that prompted Heloise (whether one believes her dilemma was resolved continued) to propose that Abelard cooperate in making the Paraclete a success,[6] especially as it became clear that the success of the Paraclete might ensure Abelard's reputation as a monastic reformer, its library, scriptorium, and the daily celebration of its liturgy might preserve his work, and its intercession (both political and spiritual) might prove efficacious for his soul.[7] It is not overstating the case to say that the this letter corpus as it has

[4] Ep. 4, p. 77: Miror, unice meus, quod praeter consuetudinem epistolarum, immo contra ipsum ordinem naturalem rerum, in ipsa fronte salutationis epistolaris me tibi praeponere praesumpsisti [...] Rectus quippe ordo est et honestus, ut qui superiores uel ad pares scribunt, eorum quibus scribunt nomina suis anteponant. Sin autem ad inferiores, praecedunt scriptionis ordine qui praecedunt rerum dignitate. (I am surprised, my only one, that contrary to the custom of letters, indeed contrary to the order of natural matters, you have presumed to place me before you at the opening of an epistolary salutation[...] Indeed, it is the correct order and honourable that those who write to their superiors or to their equals, place the names of those to whom they write before their own. But if they write to inferiors, they who take precedence in worthiness of affairs, should take precedence in the order of writing.)

[5] The language contrasting intention with disposition was formulated more precisely in Abelard's ethics (*Scito te ipsum*), but is nascent (or cleverly alluded to) in Heloise's Ep. 2 and Ep. 6. Ep. 2, p. 72, contrasts *effectus* with *affectus*: 'Nosti sum innocens. Non enim rei effectus sed efficientis affectus in crimine est. Nec quae fiunt sed quo animo fiunt aequitas pensat.' ('You know I am innocent, for concerning a sin, it is not the doing of the matter, but the disposition of the doer. And equity does not weigh what things are done but in what spirit they are done.'). Ep. 6, pp. 241-42, proposes a rhetorical solution to the ethical problem mentioning an '*intentus animus*': 'Aliquod tamen dolori remedium uales conferre, si non hunc omnino possis auferre. Ut enim insertum clauum alius expellit sic cogitatio noua priorem excludit cum alias intentus animus priorum memoriam dimittere cogitur aut intermittere.' (Yet you can bring some consolation to my sadness, though you cannot remove it completely. For as a nail driven in pushes out another, so a new thought precludes an earlier, since the mind intent on other things is forced to put away, or to interrupt, the memory of earlier things.)

[6] The rest of Ep. 6 proposes that Abelard write his treatise on the origin of nuns and, offering a particularly thorough criticism of gender-bias in monastic rules, ask him to write a completely new rule for the Paraclete.

[7] These themes are taken up most conspicuously in Abelard's, Ep. 3 and Ep. 5.

survived (especially in manuscripts most closely associated with the Paraclete) provides in epistolary form the rhetorical justification for its peculiar organisation and liturgical novel practices.[8] Moreover, it is clear that Abelard was concious that not only letter writing (broadly conceived to include his treatises on the origin of nuns, and his monastic rule) but also poetry and preaching were the principal means at his disposal to create a new type of reformed monasticism while displaying his practical mastery of rhetoric. In other words, even though the formal treatises codifying grammatical analysis with a view toward the production of new verse, and treatises codifying rhetoric with a view to the production of sermons, seem to postdate Abelard's life these are precisely the areas he paid special attention to, producing a collection of hymns for ferial, temporal and sanctoral cycles that outnumbered the hymn corpus traditionally in use, and a large collection of sermons for the most important feasts at the Paraclete.[9]

[8] For more detailed discussion see, W. Flynn, 'Letters, Liturgy and Identity: The Use of the Sequence *Epithalamica* at the Paraclete', in *Sapientia et Eloquentia: Meaning and Function in Liturgical Poetry, Music, Drama, and Biblical Commentary in the Middle Ages*, ed. G. Iversen and N. Bell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 301-48.

[9]Abelard's six *planctus* (laments in sequence form) may also have had liturtical use as part of the summer offices with Old Testament historiae (the selection of these varied greatly among institutions). Moreover as Bell's *Peter Abelard after Marriage* has demonstrated how bound up the sequences that Waddell attributed to Abelard (*Epithalamica* and *Virgines Castae*) were with Abelard's other writings and my 'Letters, Liturgy, and Identity demonstrates how effectively the sequence *Epithalamica* may be read in its full liturgical context at the Paraclete. The seminal work on the sequences are C. Waddell, 'Epithalamica: An Easter Sequence by Peter Abelard', *Musical Quarterly* 72 (1986): 239-71 and Waddell's unpublished paper 'Abelard and the Chaste Virgins'. It should be noted however that Peter Dronke has recently reiterated his arguments against Abelard's authorship of the two sequences in P. Dronke and G. Orlandi, 'New Works by Abelard and Heloise?' *Filologia mediolatina* 12 (2005): 123-77 (Dronke's contribution is on pp. 123-46). For the dating of treatises in the preceptive traditions of medieval rhetoric, see J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 135-355.

All three genres of practical rhetoric are invoked in one of the best examples of Abelard's concern for rhetorical display—the preface to his sermon collection. It is in the form of a letter and uses language directly reminiscent of Abelard and Heloise's letter corpus especially in its opening and closing formulae; it mentions his 'little book' of hymns and sequence; and it then refers to the present 'minor' collection of sermons setting up a rhetorical modesty topos.[10] Abelard's use of the topos could lead one to read the letter superficially as a statement of Abelard's distain for rhetorical devices, but the letter is written in elegantly balanced, always rhythmic phrases that are also usually assonant, consonant or rhymed. I have presented it below in lines divided to highlight some of these structural features:

Libello quodam hymorum vel sequentiarum
    a me nuper precibus tuis consummato,
veneranda in Christo et amanda soror Heloissa,
nonulla insuper opuscula sermonum
    iuxta petitio tuam,
tam tibi quam spiritalibus filiabus tuis
    in oratorio nostro congregatis,
scribere praeter consuetudinem nostram
    utcumque maturavi.

[10] Abelard would be fully aware that Cicero's first way of gaining benevolence for the speaker is to display humlity, see *De inventione,* I.16.22. A short description of the topos as part of medieval prefaces can be found in E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. Trask (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 83-4.

Plus quippe lectioni quam sermoni deditus,

expositioni insisto planicem quaerens

non eloquentiae compositionem:

sensum litterae, non ornatum Rhetoricae.

Ac fortasse pura minusque ornata locutio

quanto planior fuerit

tanto simplicium intelligentiae

commodior erit,

et pro qualitate auditorum ipsa inculti sermonis rusticitas

quaedam erit ornatus urbanitas,

et quoddam condimentum saporis,

paruularum intelligentia facilis.

In his autem scribendis seu disponendis

ordinem festiuitatum tenens,

ab ipso nostrae redemptionis

exordio sum exorsus.

Vale in Domino eius ancilla,

mihi quondam in seculo chara,

nunc in Christo charissima,

in carne tunc uxor,

nunc in spiritu soror

atque in professione sacri propositi consors.[11]

[11] P. de Santis gave the corrected edition of the text with similar line divisions in *I sermoni di Abelardo per le monache del Paracleto*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), p. 86. (The edition drops the line

> Recently, having completed a certain small book of hymns (and of sequences) at your request — O sister to be revered in Christ, and to be loved, O Heloise — I have hastened, contrary to my custom, to write in one way or another, some minor works of sermons, according to your petition, as much for you as for your spiritual daughters gathered in our oratory. Indeed, devoted more to lecturing than to preaching, I press on, seeking explanation's level ground, not eloquence's confection: language's meaning, not Rhetoric's ornament. And perhaps, being clean and less ornate, the more the style is straightforward, the more it will be suitable to the understanding of the uncritical; and in proportion to that trait of the listeners, the rusticity of an uncultivated sermon will be an urbanity of adornment, and the quick understanding of the little women, a spice for their sense of taste. Now, retaining the order of feasts in these sermons that are to be written down (or rather, to be arranged) I have commenced from the very origin of our redemption. Farewell in the Lord, his handmaiden, once dear to me in the world, now, in Christ, most dear: then, in the flesh, a wife, now, in spirit, a sister, and in the profession of a sacred purpose, a consort.

Not only is the structure of the letter highly wrought, the language is also so loaded with technical rhetorical (and literary)

'veneranda in Christo et amanda soror Heloissa' without comment, but the line appears in the translation in note 17 on the same page.)

meanings that it is almost impossible to bring them out in translation. Particularly striking is the unusual opening, in which the recipient is directly addressed in vocative rather than in dative, and in a line that interrupts the balance of four intermingled adverbial and object clauses each with an added prepositional phrase. This striking (and highly audible) use of direct address evokes the oral situation of a sermon preached in person for which the whole collection is a surrogate. The line is also (perhaps intentionally) ambiguous: As Jan Zilkowski pointed out, it might be more tamely read as 'sister to be revered and loved in Christ', emphasizing only their common religious life.[12] But its structure is echoed by the three-fold assonance and three-fold rhyme of the two closing formulae in which the former worldly relationships between Abelard and Heloise are boldly repositioned as those of male and female rulers of the Paraclete. In the letter's body, the most ornate language is used to complete the modesty topos: It invokes the art of Rhetoric itself to call Abelard's mastery of the art into question—he is more accustomed to lecturing than preaching, so he is going to speak plainly and clearly rather than elegantly. However, Abelard justifies his predilection with two rhetorical devices, arguing that he is preaching *ad status*, and invoking the doctrine of poetic license: The 'little women' (an echo of Jerome, as P. de Santis has pointed

[12] J. Ziolkowski, *Letters of Peter Abelard: Beyond the Personal* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press), pp. 64-72 contains further discussion and excellent notes to his fine translation of this letter.

out)[13] are 'uncritical' (*simplex*), so his use of more direct diction which might be counted as a fault for a different audience, will actually be counted as urbanity. In short, the sermon preface, when its form and content are fully considered, reveals itself not only to be a display of highly rhetorical prose, it also indicates that the sermons are part of a larger rhetorical project that includes Abelard's other contributions to its rationale, organisation, and liturgical life that were instituted under his and Heloise's joint leadership.

Widows and Virgins at the Paraclete

As Thomas Bell has argued, the ultimate goal of the whole of this rhetorical outpouring was to provide a liturgical setting that might allow Heloise and her nuns to affirm their religious vocations by closely identifying with the exemplum of the *Sponsa Christi*, particularly as it was conveyed by the Song of Songs and Ps. 44 in two sequences (that he attributes to Abelard). Like the Song and the Psalm the sequences are also in the form of bridal processional songs (*epithalamica*).[14] However, a narrow focus on the sequences texts tends to emphasize the *Sponsa Christi* image in preference to others that are developed equally strongly and to confuse the subtle ways in which nuns coming from quite differing life-histories are differently integrated into a goal that celebrates their eventual heavenly marriage.

[13] P. de Santis, *I sermoni*, p. 86.
[14] T. J. Bell, *Peter Abelard after Marriage*, pp. 14, 39-73, 275-306.

In fact, if one reads the letter corpus as a connected argument underpinning the Paraclete as an institution, Heloise's questioning of her own motivations, functions to forestall objections that could certainly have arisen for her community over her leadership. This is especially the case since the rhetoric of the *Sponsa Christi* (at least in nun's institutions) often tended to be intimately connected to a discourse that brings Christ's virginity and sacrifice into a close relationship to the ideology of clerical chastity and which accord virginity with quasi-priestly status: Nuns who have rejected the world (sacrificing sexual relationships) in anticipation of their heavenly union give themselves as a quasi-Eucharistic sacrifice.

Heloise's position in her community could never be that of consecrated virgin, but a voluntary and mutual agreement between a married couple to go into monastic institutions gave the couple the legal status of widows. Even though Heloise (in Ep. 4) states that she took her vow only in obedience to Abelard's command, her willingness to obey the command meant that her status as a widow was unassailable.[15] Moreover, other formerly married women entering the Paraclete would make up at least a significant minority of the nuns at any given time, so a rhetorical strategy that could create a common discourse incorporating both widows and consecrated virgins was desireable.

[15]Ep. 4, p. $$. On the legal status of married religious, see P. L. Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church: The Christianisation of Marriage during the Patristic and Early Modern Periods* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 227-38.

Abelard's construction of widows and virgins as *Sponsae christi* was first presented in embryo in Ep. 5, where Abelard interpreted the biblical *Sponsa's* 'Nigra sum, se formosa' ('I am black, but comely') as more clearly suited (*expressius*) to (Benedictine) nuns because their black habits outwardly proclaimed their status as 'widows' in continuity with the first women followers of Jesus, who (like widows) mourned him at the tomb and were the first witnesses to the resurrection.[16] In identifying the biblical *Sponsa* as a widow Abelard was silently drawing on a traditional contrast between Jerusalem personified as a widow in the book of Lamentations 1.1, and the new Jerusalem revealed as a 'bride adorned for her husband' in the Apocalypse 22. Not only was the Lamentations text linked to the Song of Songs as its formal antithesis, both texts were allegorically linked to the death and resurrection of Christ by the use of the first at Good Friday and the other in the Easter season allowing Abelard to draw upon the powerful image suggesting widows might be eschatologically transformed into a brides. Abelard supported his identification of all nuns with widows by arguing (principally in Ep. 7) that nuns had their origins in the diaconal relationship that women had towards Jesus during his life, and that this relationship had its historical continuation in proto-monastic communities led by widows as related in 1 Timothy, chapters 3 and 5. Abelard stressed that the

[16] For fuller analysis of these passages see Flynn, 'Letters, Liturgy and Identity' and Flynn, '*Ductus figuratus et subtilis*.

early church was commanded to be especially supportive of these communities.

In highlighting this cluster of texts, Abelard not only placed widows at the centre of women's monastic identity, but also created an interpretation of widowhood (at least at the allegorical, tropological and anagogical levels) that could include within it the category of consecrated virgins, who wore the same sombre habit as those in the order of widows. So, one might say that at the Paraclete, all virgins are allegorically widows, but not all widows are literally virgins, yet all might transfer their affections to their heavenly *Sponsus*, Christ and Abelard's liturgical innovations encouraged this by highlighting the loss experienced at Jesus's death by his women disciples, who, anticipating the order of nuns, had left everything to follow him, and had who had experienced the joy at Jesus's resurrection, anticipating their transformation from citizens of Jerusalem, abandoned by her Lord like a widow, to citizens of the new Jerusalem, adorned like a bride for her husband.

Although Abelard's construction of all nuns as widows was designed to create a shared communal identity, he seems also to have been keenly aware that the standard rhetoric exalting Virgins might tend to undermine Heloise's leadership.[17] For example, arguing (in Ep. 7) that the widows mentioned in First Timothy are

[17] It is worth pointing out that when C. L. Carson and A. J. Weisel summarised the patristic literature in the 'Introduction' to their jointly edited volume *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999), pp. 1-7, they arrived at a reading that entirely matches the constructions that Abelard offered to the Paraclete nuns in Ep. 7, 252-5.

deaconesses and that deaconesses and abbesses are two names for the same office, Abelard appealed to Gregory the Great's use of the same biblical passage to prohibit the appointment of youthful abbesses (Heloise, herself, had referred, in Ep. 6, to a canon that allowed the ordination of men as deacons at twenty years of age, but deaconesses at forty)[18]:

> Hanc quoque Apostoli prouidentiam, de diaconissis scilicet eligendis, beatus Gregorius secutus, Maximo Syracusano episcopo scribit his uerbis: Iuuenculas abbatissas uehementissime prohibemus. Nullum igitur episcopum fraternitas tua nisi sexagenariam uirginem, cuius uita hoc atque mores exegerint, uelare permittat.[19]
>
> And following the Apostle's provision, Blessed Gregory wrote to Maximus, bishop of Syracuse about how deaconesses should be chosen in these words: We most vehemently prohibit youthful abbesses. Therefore your brotherhood of bishops should allow none but a virgin of sixty years, whose life and character they have tested.

However, when Abelard described the office of the deaconess/abbess in his Rule for the Paraclete, although appealing to the argument of his last letter, he flatly contradicted Gregory's statement that the abbess should be a virgin of sixty years, and instead appealed to the greater (and earlier) authority of the

[18] Ep. 6, p. 245.
[19] Ep. 7, p. 264.

Apostle (in 1 Timothy itself) in order to argue for the appointment of a literal widow as deaconess:

> Quae quidem omnia quid intelligentiae uel rationis habeant, quantum aestimamus, epistola praecedente nostra satis disseruimus. Maxime cur eam Apostolus unius uiri et prouectae uelit esse aetatis. Unde non mediocriter miramur quomodo perniciosa haec in aecclesia consuetudo inoleuit ut quae uirgines sunt potius quam quae uiros cognouerunt ad hoc eligantur et frequenter iuniores senioribus praeficiantur.[20]
>
> We thoroughly explained all this in our last letter and how highly we regard what kind of understanding and reasoning they hold. Especially why the Apostle wanted her [the deaconess] to be the wife of one man, and of advanced age. Whence I marvel not a little at how the pernicious custom has grown up in the church that those who are virgins are chosen for this office rather than those who have known men, and frequently younger women are placed in charge of older women.

The stipulation that only true widows be appointed as abbess at the Paraclete, underpinned by Abelard's appeal to apostolic authority, would certainly have had the effect (and probably had the intention) of shoring up Heloise's authority against a tradition that often accorded special privileges for consecrated virgins.

[20] Ep. 8, 252.

Abelard was, of course, fully aware of the texts that accorded a special prerogative for virgins and had even quoted a large segment (abridged here) of *Virginum Laus*, attributing it to Jerome, as part of his treastise on the origin of nuns:

> Istae proprium aliquid prae caeteris habent, dum de illo sancto et immaculato Aecclesiae grege quasi sanctiores purioresque hostiae pro uoluntatis suae meritis a Spiritu Sancto eliguntur, et per summum sacerdotem Dei offeruntur altario.[21]
>
> These women have something proper to them beyond other women, since they are chosen by the Holy Spirit from the holy and immaculate flock of the Church, as holier and purer sacrifices on account of the merits of their will, and are offered at the altar by God's high priest.

The key words and phrases in the text 'sanctiores purioresque hostiae' (holier and purer sacrifices) 'per summum sacerdotum Dei offeruntur altario' ('they are offered at the altar by God's high priest') bring the language of the consecration of the Mass and of the consecration of virgins into close relationship, suggesting that the sacrifice of virginity has an especially close relationship to the sacrifice of the virgin, born of a Virgin, Christ. In this reading, the high-priest, allegorically Christ himself, offers the virgins as sacrificial victims upon the altar at their consecration, which suggests that consecrated virgins have a strong connection with

[21] Ep. 7, p. 267.

priests who make visible Christ's self-sacrifice. A virgin-abbess might exploit her quasi-priestly status to gain higher standing both within and beyond her monastery.[22]

However, Abelard's interpretation of the passage ignores their traditional allegorical meanings, even undermining them by immediately suggesting that the special nature of their consecration consisted in the fact that (unlike monks), virgins should only be consecrated by a high priest (which he glosses as a bishop), and that they should be so-consecrated only on certain high feast days unless they are in danger of death:

> Virginum quippe consecrationem, nisi periculo mortis urgente, celebrari alio tempore non licet quam in Epiphania et Albis Paschalibus et in apostolorum natalitiis; nec nisi a summo sacerdote, id est episcopo, tam ipsas quam ipsarum sacris capitibus imponenda uelamina sanctificari. Monachis autem [...] etiam si sint virgines qualibet die benedictionem et ab abbate suscipere [...], permissum est.[23]
>
> Indeed, one may not celebrate the consecration of virgins (except when the danger of death is imminent) at any time other than Epiphany, the Sunday in Albs (Easter Octave) and the Nativities (feast days) of Apostles. Nor may either they or veils placed upon their heads be consecrated, unless by the high priest, i.e. the bishop. Yet monks [...] even if they are virgins,

[22] See for example, Hildegard of Bingen's interpretation of virgins and widows in *Scivias*
[23] Ep. 7., p. 267.

are allowed to receive blessing from the abbot on any day whatsoever.

Since virgin monks were not accorded the same consecration rites, one might infer that any special prerogative that virgins have pertains to their sex rather than to their virginal status. Abelard, fully aware of the rhetoric that accorded a quasi-priestly significance to virginity, thus subordinated it to an argument that by highlighting the dignity of women over men, and thereby minimized any potential rivalry between consecrated virgins and widows.

Hymns for Holy Women

The lengthy and complex treatise on the origin of nuns (Ep. 7) that Abelard wrote for the Paraclete community is versified in summary form in his extaordinary cycle of ten hymns for Holy Women found in the third libellus of his hymnal. This libellus contained hymns for the sanctorale, however it has an unusal structure (best, though not wholly, preserved in only one manuscript, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms 10147-10158, fols 91v-96v) that mixes together hymns for the common with hymns for individual saints, and presents their hierarchy in a slightly unusual order (Mary, Apostles, Evangelists, Innocents, Martyrs, Confessors, Holy Women, Angels, All Saints):[24] Its rationale

[24] Chrysogonus Waddell demonstrated that is possible to trace many of the elements of the Paraclete liturgy of 1132-32 through later liturgical sources that he both edited and commented on extensively. Reference will be made to Waddell's editions and commentaries published in the Cistercian Liturgy Series (Trappist KY: Gethsemani Abbey, 1983-1989), comprising the following volumes: *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Ms français 14410, and the Paraclete Breviary: Chamont, Bibliothèque Municipale Ms 31: Introduction and Commentary*, CLS, 3 (1985); *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary: Edition*,

is partially based on the standard liturgical hierarchy for saints, but also on Abelard's interpretation of salvation history. Thus, Mary, the apostles, the evangelists and the innocents are presented in a section dealing with saints who thought to be alive during the events recorded in the Gospels, but the innocents (martyrs), already moved from the temporale, are also moved from their chronological position, since they are of lower rank than the other New Testament saints. Next (male and female) Martyrs and Confessors represent the early church in the expected liturgical hierarchy. These are followed by the large cycle of ten hymns for women, comprised of four hymns for feasts of Holy Women, four for feasts of Virgin-Martyrs, and two for Mary Magdalene (for text and translations, see below, Hymns 88-97). It begins with an introductory hymn (88) that establishes a hierarchial order (Mary, Virgins, Widows, and even 'harlots' who represent redeemed sinners). However, aside from the virgin Mary, the treatment of them in the next three hymns (89-91) follows biblical order, treating women from the Old Testament followed by women from the New. The next four hymns (92-95) treat the Virgin-Martyrs of the early church; and the last two (96-97) are for the feast day of Mary Magdalene. Although Mary Magdalene, as a New Testament saint had already been mentioned, here she is treated as the

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CLS, 4 (1983); *The Paraclete Breviary: Edition*, 3 vols, CLS, 5–6 (1983) and CLS, 7 (1984); and *Hymn Collections from the Paraclete*: *Introduction and Commentary*, CLS, 8 (1989); *Hymn Collections from the Paraclete*: *Edition,* CLS, 9 (1987), cited hereafter by series, volume and page.

outstanding example of a penitent sinner who is forgiven and redeemed. The Brussels manuscript breaks off after the first two lines of hymn 96, but as Waddell has demonstrated the tenth hymn can be found the Paraclete Breviary. Waddell also suggested that two other groups of hymns for saints (those for Angels and for All Saints) might have made up the end of the original hymnal, but gives no rationale for the placement of Angels well down the hierarchy instread of directly after hymns of Mary.[25] Neverthess Waddell's conjecture seems sound since the presentation of the hymns in this order completes the narration of salvation history by looking to the future church of angels and saints in the celestial city.

The mixing of chronological and hierarchical arrangements that Abelard adopted for his hymnal enabled him to retain an arrangement by feasts of the sanctorale that nevertheless starts from the 'origin of our redemption', i.e. the same arrangement that he adopted for his sermon collection, as shown above. This strategy also allowed all ten hymns for women to be entered in one series, even though they were written to serve three different feasts. Abelard unified each series in his hymnal by assigning it a metre that was not duplicated elsewhere. All of the hymns for women follow the metrical pattern 4p + 7pp x 4 . 4p + 5pp x 2 and each pair of full lines ends with a half-rhyme (i.e. even though the line

[25] Waddell, CLS, 8, p. 40.

ending has the stress on the third to the last syllable, the rhymes normally organise the sound of the final one or two syllables).[26] Each of Abelard's cycles is thought to have had its own tune, unique to Abelard's hymnal, but only the tune for the day hour hymns (10-29) of the first libellus, has survived.[27] .

By carefully constructing his series of women with a unified formal structure, Abelard was thus able to pursue the principal rhetorical strategy already seen in his letters above, leveling the differences between the two orders of women at the Paraclete by emphasising the dignity accorded to women in scripture and tradition. A dignity greater than that of men that more fittingly accords all nuns (both widows and virgins) with the title of *Sponsa Christi*.

Throughout the cycle, Abelard relies heavily on three stereotypes of women that permeate much Christian (and classical) literature: women are at fault for humanity's fall, weaker than men and more bodily than men. But he then carefully chooses exempla that overturn the stereotypes, a strategy taken from his letter-treatise Ep. 7. In fact the first four hymns (88-91), that establish the biblical precedents, and the next three that establish the early church precedents in virgin martyrs (92-4) follow Ep. 7 very

[26] The summary of the metre is adapted from Waddell, CLS, 8, p. 26, but I have indicated the final accent for each half-line: '4p' indicates that the half-line is four syllables in length ending on a paroxytone accent, a penult; '+' indicates a caesura, '7pp' and '5pp' indicate that the half-line is seven or five syllables in length ending on a proparoxytone accent, an antepenult; 'x 4' or 'x 2' indicates the number of lines the patter repeats and the full stop '.' indicates where the pattern shifts within the stanza.
[27] CLS, 8, pp. 45-54.

closely.[28] However, the hymn series is less complex and recursive than the letter-treatise, in which Abelard's first concern was to establish the women disciples of Jesus as the precedent for the order of nuns. In the hymn cycle the material is rearranged so that the New Testament archetypes of nuns are placed in their proper chronological order.

The interplay between hierarchial ordering and salvation history that is reflected in the libellus as a whole, also influcences the structure of the hymns for holy women. The first hymn of the series (88) is arranged hierarchically, but Abelard blends in salvation history, attributing sin and redemption to both sexes (ll. 1-4) and and and then uses the priority of Eve's sin to argue for a greater grace being accorded to women in Mary (ll. 5-10). Mary is thus treated as *sui generis* because of her unique role as mother of God (see also hymn 89, ll. 1-2) and is thus treated before the other ranks (hymn 88, ll. 11-12). Although Abelard continues to treat the ranks of women in hierarchical order (virgins, then widows), he minimizes differences in dignity: while virgins directly imitate Mary (ll. 13-14), widows do not 'lack marriage' (ll. 15-18)—a somewhat cryptic reference to the rhetoric of the widow becoming a bride, that influenced Abelard's choice of biblical references in Ep. 7, discussed above. The final stanza of this mentions two 'harlots', to

[28] See, J. Szövérffy , *Peter Abelard's Hymnarius Paraclitensis*, 2 vols (Albany:Classical Folia, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 254-63, and pp. 244-9 for a critical commentary that provides cross-reference to Abelard's other writings in PL 178. Hymns 88 and 89 summarise material from Ep. 7, pp. 268-70 and 274. Hymn 90 summarizes Ep. 7, pp. 270-271. Hymn 91 begins with material from Ep. 7, p. 271, but then summarizes pp. 254-58, 271 and 274. Hymn 92 uses material from Ep. 7, pp. 270 and 275. Hymn 93 summarizes Ep. 7, pp. 270-1.

invoke a category of famous sinners who neverthess attained sainthood, and points out that the virtue of Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdalene proved greater than their fault (ll. 18-24). Any reader of the letter correspondence will recognise that the offensive term used for harlot, *scorta*, echoes the famous paragrah in Heloise's Ep 2, in which she would have preferred to be Abelard's concubine or harlot rather than his wife, and that were even Augustus to offer her marriage to make her his empress, she would prefer to be Abelards whore (*meretrix*), a term taken up towards the end of the hymn cycle describing Mary Magdalene as a 'blessed whore' (hymn 96, line 18).[29] These references demonstrate that the rhetoric of hymn cycle, like the letters, may have been designed to buttress Heloise's authority over her community.

Hymns 88 and 89 develop the Old Testament types for each rank of women, but after explaining that the honour bestowed on Mary as Mother (*genitrix*) of God is unique (hymn 88, ll. 1-2) presents the types in a reversed hierarchical order though none of the ranks is mentioned in the hymn text. Instead, the text constrasts women's strength with men's: Thus, Eve (wife and sinner) has a more honourable creation than Adam's, since hers was within paradise (ll. 6-10), and she was made from bone, a stronger substance than clay (ll. 11-12). Three widows (ll. 13-18) who acted more courageously than men follow. Only one of them,

[29] Ep. 2, p. 71

Judith, whose name is witheld, is called a widow (line 16). The other two, Deborah and the mother of seven sons, were not called widows in scripture,[30] but were named as widows in early church and patristic sources.[31] The final stanza of hymn 89 (ll. 19-24) and opening stanza of hymn 90 (ll. 1-6) treat Jephtah's daughter and her sacrifice of her life as a result of a vow her father had made. Her status as a virgin is made clear in the following stanza that compares her constancy with that of virgin martyrs (ll. 7-12, developed further in hymns 92 and 93 dedicated to virgin martyrs). For the final OT Testament exemplum in the cycle, Abelbard treats Esther. This is in contrast to Ep. 7, where Esther is treated after Deborah and Judith as women who suceeded against enemies when men failed before, treating the those who died faithfully. As a married queen, Esther does not fit the series, but (like all these holy women) may be used typologically to represent the church who frees her people (ll. 15-16).[32] Using Esther for this purpose brings allows Abelard to tie into the bridal imagery of the Song of Songs, and of Ps. 44—a royal epithalamicum used at feasts of virgins that

[30] For Deborah see, Judic. 4. 9-10, for the mother of seven sons, see 2 Macc. 7.1-40.
[31] See, Ambrose, 'De viduis' in *De virginibus: De viduis*, ed. by Franco Gori, Sancti Ambrosii episcopi Mediolanensis opera, vol. 14.I, pp. 243-319; see, chapter 7 on Judith, chapter 8 on Deborah and the anonymous *Passio SS. Machabaeorum, die antike lateinische Übersetzung des IV. Makkabäerbuches*, Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philog-histor. Kl., Dritte Folge, Nr. 22), ed. by Heinrich Dörrie, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938. Dörrie lists 39 manuscript sources, most of which date from the 9th to the 13th centuries and many of which have West Frankish Benedictine provenance. Most of IV Maccabees (5-18) deals with the sons' martyrdoms, presenting them as a triumph of reason over emotion. Speeches attributed to the mother occur in chapters 16-18, and she is identified as a widow at 16. 6 and 18.9. The first idenification forms part of a lament that a lesser woman would have said, while the second forms part of her oration. The text (17.1) reports that she was thought to have thrown herself on the pyre burning the remains of her sons to avoid being violated.
[32] See, Jerome, 'In Sophoniam', in *Commentarii in prophetas minores*, ed. by M. Adrien, CCSL 76A, p. 655; and Isidore, *Allegoriae quaedam sacrae scripturae*, PL 83, col. 116A.

is an important source text for Abelard's hymns for virgin-martyrs (see especially, hymn 94, ll. 19-21).[33]

Abelard returns to the normal hierarchical pattern in order to discuss types from the New Testament in hymn 91, first briefly mentioning (in l. 6) not only Mary, a virgin and Anna, a widow, the women whom he had singled out in Ep. 7 as the model for nuns' orders,[34] but also Mary's cousin Elisabeth, whom he had identified in Ep. 7 as a wife (*coniugata*). Abelard had argued that Anna and Elisabeth to deserve the title prophet of prophets for their early recognition of Christ: Anna (given the title prophet in Lk 2.36) and Elisabeth who 'recognised the Son of God at his conception'.[35]

The final two stanzas of hymn 91 (ll. 7-18) then discuss Mary Magdalene (without naming her) summarising the opening arguments from Ep. 7, which describe women providing diaconal ministry to Jesus both during his life and after his death.[36] Since Abelard followed Gregory the Great's conflation of Mary Magdalene with all the women who annointed Jesus, she, a penitent sinner, emerges as the principal type for women leaders of monastic communities.[37] Both Abelard and Heloise preferred the early church

[33] T. Bell, *Peter Abelard after Marriage*, pp. 66-71, discusses the influence of Ps. 44 on the sequence *Virgines castae* and on pp. 255-7 discusses the similar use of the psalm in hymn 94, *Quantum sponso*.
[34] Ep. 7, p. 269: 'Ac prius in Anna et Maria uiduis et uirginibus sanctae professionis forma est exhibita quam in Ioanne uel apostolis monasticae religionis exempla uiris proposita.' (And first in Anna and in Mary was the model of a holy profession displayed for widows and virgins that the examples of John and of the Apostles had displayed for men of the monastic order.)
[35] Ep. 7, p. 263 and 271.
[36] Ep. 7, 254-8. Diaconal acts listed by Abelard included the simple provsion of physical needs, such as Mary of Bethany's preparing food, but especially the multiple annointings which the biblical text itself attributes spiritual meanings, see Luke 7.36-50, Luke 8.2 and John 11.2.
[37] See Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in euangelia*, ed. by R. Étaix, CCSL 141 (1999), II 25 and 33, pp. 205, 292.

title *diaconissa* to the title *abatissa* to reflect the origin of the office in ministry to Christ.[38] Mary Magdalene is thus credited with the corporeal annointing of Christ as priest and king (ll. 6-10). Actions that Abelard equated with handing down the sacraments (ll. 11-12). Mary Magdalene's role as the apostle to the apostles (a title mentioned in Ep. 7, though not in the hymn text) is alluded to since the hymn refers to the woman whow was the first to see the risen Christ is stressed (ll.13-14), and her identity is confirmed since the closing lines characterise her as 'more worthlless because of sin' but preceding all others in this grace (ll. 15-18). Mary Magdalene would not fit either the category of virgin or widow, but her association with the women mourning Jesus made her allegorically a widow mourning for her true *sponsus* and so, Abelard's most important type for the order of nuns.[39]

The next two hymns of the cycle 92-93 use the feasts of the virgin martyrs to extend the types for nuns into the period of the early church. As in his letters, Abelard faced the difficulty of presenting the patristric layer of extravagant praise of virginity in such a way that it would not undermine his principal goal of uniting both widows and virgins under the leadership of an older widow. Thus even though Abelard acknowledges and even plays with the idea of the priestly-status of Virgins, the dominant imagery for them is as a type of the Sponsa Christi, the bride of Christ, that as

[38] For the diaconissa see Ep. 4, p. 77; Ep. 6, p. 245; Ep. 7, pp. 262-5, Ep. 8, pp. 252-4, 258-9 and passim.
[39] See remarks on Abelard's Ep. 5 above and W. Flynn, 'Letters, Liturgy, and Identity'.

Abelard had stated was particularly adapted to nuns since their renunciation makes all nuns widows. The dominant strand of rhetoric is again to celebrate the acheivements of women (here women martyrs), contrasting them favourably with men (especially in hymn 93). The first hymn of the cycle (92) starts by identifying the virgin and the martyr with the *sponsa Christi* (l. 1), and although Abelard clearly signals that the hymn cycle is appropriate to virgin martyrs, he aligns the sacrifice of any virgin with that of martyrs (l. 4): the one overcomes the flesh, the other, the enemy. In a passage, that closely follows Abelard's discussion of St. Agnes in Ep. 7, the hymn text mentions a duplex palm (ll. 3 and 7) symbolising the double sacrifice virgin-martyrs. This is interpreted as the reward for the sacrifice of both heart (or spirit) and body (ll. 13-14, 19-22).[40] Abelard equates this sacrifice with the sacrifice of the 'red and tender calf' (ll. 14-15)—a reference to Moses' making the old covenant of the book in Exod. 24.4-8, and so a type for the sacrifice of the New Covenant, aligning the sacrifice of virgn-martyrs with the Eucharist. However Abelard does not explain the allegory stating that it can be known only 'if you match well the reality with the signs' (l. 18).

Hymn 93 stresses the theme of the miraculous fortitude of virgin martyrs, developing material used earlier to describe their Old Testament type: Jephtah's daughter (compare ll. 1-12 with

[40] Ep. 7, 275.

hymn 90, ll. 1-12) . Again, the strategy is to use the stereotype of women's frailty to emphasise that their acheivement must be that much more miraculous. The theme is also present at the conclusion of the hymn which again draws on material from Ep. 7 that described St. Agnes (ll. 15-22), and rhetorical question asking who should the young call 'bearded men' (l.19-20), is paraphrased from a sermon on St. Agnes by Gregory the Great.[41] Although hymn 92 began by identifying virgins and martyrs with the *sponsa Chrsiti*, the theme is not taken up again until hymn 93 which paraphrases (ll. 13-16) the famous passage from the Song of Songs 8.6-7 that claim that love cannot be conquered even by death. The implication is that the sacrificial love of virgin martyrs, provides them with their right to the title *sponsa.*

In hymns 94-95 the virgin-martyrs are greeted in heaven in a procession that leeds them to their heavenly *sponsus.* Hymn 94 aligns the sacrifice made by virgin martyrs with that of Christ, who is also described as a virgin martyr (ll. 5-6). In a section that most clearly stressses a special prerogative of virgin-martyrs, the text claims that their purity brings them into an especially fitting relationship with Christ that accords them a place at his side (ll. 7-12) and it is their priestly purity that means they will not be separated on account of the 'beauty of sacred flesh' (l. 9). It should be emphasised that those living as consecrated virgins in the

[41] Gregory, *Homiliae in euangelia*, CCSL 141 I, 11, p. 76. See also, Ep. 7, 263.

Paraclete can only anticipate this status, since the hymn text emphaisizes that it is the constancy of faith exhibited by virgin-martyrs preservating their bodies up to their deaths that earns them the right to lead the 'other women' (l. 11) . Since Abelard had carefully defined the true sacrifce of a virgin as an integrity of spirit as well as body in hymn 92 (ll.13-14), the integry of body that consitutes their sacrifice in hymn 94 (ll. 1-4) is an outward sign of the persistence of their faithful intention.

The remainder of hymn 94 (ll. 11-30) consitutes an epithalamium, leading (in hymn 95) to the bedchamber of the heavenly *sponsus*. The bridal procession begins by paraphrasing Psalm 44 (hymn 94, ll. 11-15). Within this material Abelard has used a characteristic phrase 'iuncto latere' (l. 11), which, as Bell has pointed out appears in many of Ablelard's writings on virgins as well as in the sequence *Virgines caste* used at the Paraclete for all the feasts for which Abelard's hymns for virgin martyrs are assigned.[42] While other material (ll. 25-26) develops the epithalamium by paraphrasing the praise of the *sponsa* in the Song of Songs (7. 1), the theme of the double sacrifice of the virgin martyr is developed through a reference to their double reward mentioned at the beginning of hymn 92 (l. 3) as a 'double palm'.

[42] See Bell, *Peter Abelard after Marriage*, pp. 72-3, 230-32. Abelard's use of the phrase appears to derive from Origen commenting on S. of S. 1.3, *In Canticum Canticorum homiliae II* in *Origenes secundum translationem fecit Hieronymus* ed. by W. Baehrens, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Corpus berolinense 33 (Berlin: Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1925), pp. 27-60 (at p. 34): 'Sponsa non post tergum sequitur, sed iuncto ingreditur latere, apprehendit dexteram sponsi et manus eius sponsi dextera continetur, famulae vero ingrediuntur post eum' (The *sponsa* does not follow behind, but processes at his side, she takes the right hand of the *sponsus*, and the right hand of her *sponsus* is held securely, but the handmaidens process in after him.)

But in hymn 94 (ll. 16-22) 'she inherits what was mentioned above, the crowns' garlanded with the emblems of martyrs and virgins roses and lilies. The word 'crowns' is not used anywhere else in this cycle, but in the passage on 'bearded men' paraphrased from Gregory in Ep. 7,[43] Abelard had added the phrase 'frequentius ipsum gemina uirginitatis et martyrii corona pollere nouerimus' ('we know it [the frail sex] has more frequently attained the double crown of virgin and martyr'). Twin crowns 'coronas geminas', garlanded with roses and lilies are also mentioned in the sequence *Virgines caste* (stropes 11a-12a).[44]

In the final hymn dedicated to viring martyrs (hymn 95) the procession leads the bride to the bed of the bridegroom. The hymn uses language such as *federata* (l. 3) , *uxor* (l. 4), *federa* (l.5), and *copula* (l. 6) that is more reminiscent of secular rather than sacred marriage, but as Abelard had clearly stated in Ep. 9 to the nuns of the Paraclete (quoting Jerome) 'If [a virgin] should read the song of songs at the beginning of her studies, she might come to harm, not understanding, beneath the fleshly words, the wedding song of a spiritual marriage.'[45] The admonitions earlier in the cycle (hymns 89, ll. 5-6; 92, ll.16-17) suggest that one should be able to

[43] As mentioned above, Abelard had already developed earlier section of the Gregory paraphrase in hymn 93, ll. 19-22.
[44] Bell, *Peter Abelard after Marriage*, pp. 117, 205, 257-9, misses this connection because of a misreading of his principal manuscript, Paris, Bibliothéque nationale, n. a. lat. 3126, fols 84v-87r (at 86r): He reads 'geminas' as 'gemmea' thus weaking the connection of the sequence to Abelard's writings. For a good text and translation of Virgines case, see G. Iversen and E. Kihlman, *Virgines caste* in *Sapientia et Eloquentia*, ed. Iversen and Bell, pp. 489-92.
[45] Ep. 9, p. 222: si in exordio legerit, sub carnalibus uerbis spiritalium nuptiarum epithalamium non intelligens uulneretur.

match signs to the reality correctly, identifying the content of this hymn (95) as anagogical (helped by the refererence to the 'bed of *heavenly* bridgegroom', 'celestis sponsi thoro', l. 2, and the contrast of faith and reality ll. 5-6). The hymn narrates the procession led by angels, serving as paranymphs, a term that in secular usage would refer to men who bring a bride to her groom from her home (ll. 6-7), but they prove to be those angels were guardians of chastity in life, lead the virgin as bridesmen to the bridal chamber. The use of the word 'obviam' (l. 11) was probably intended to call to mind the parable of the wise virgins, since they are twice said to go to meet (obviam) the bridegroom at the wedding feast (Mt. 25.1, 6). The whole pericope, Mt. 25.1-14, normally formed the Gospel for feasts of virgins. While Abelard had used language evocative of secular marriage up to the point the (male) vigin-martyr embraces the virgin-martyrs (ll. 11-14), he does not narrate the joys of heaven, but paraphrases 1 Cor. 2.9 which states that they are ineffable, but eternally prepared for those who love God (ll. 15-21).

The rhetorical strategy celebrating the heavenly marriage of virgins in the hymns for virgin martyrs might be expected to appeal principally to the Parclete's virgins, who had been consecrated to Christ as his brides. But by emphasizing the double sacrifice of virgin martyrs of both spirit and body, Abelard puts the Paraclete's virgins in the position of being metaphorically virgin martyrs,

Moreover Abelard locates the special prerogative of virgins firmly in the future, when they walk at the side of the *sponsus*, until then they have not earned the double crown.

The last two hymns of the series 96-97, both dedicated to feasts of Mary Magdalene, when read as part of the longer series dedicated to holy women offer a startling contrast to the hymns celebrating virgin martyrs. Using the same terms employed to describe acceptable sacrifice of Jephtah's daughter and the virgin martyrs ('victimam' in hymn 90, l. 6; 'holocaustum' in 92, l. 14, and 94, l. 4), he argues that penitence may follow in lieu of sacrifice ('victime', hymn 96, l.6) and (paraphrasing Ps. 50.18-19) argues that 'a contrite heart, a troubled spirit is more pleasing than all burnt-offerings' (ll. 6-7 'holocaustis'). Moreover, while the hymns for virgin martyrs stress the necessity of a double sacrifice of spirit and body, hymn 96 contrasts Old Testament animal sacrifices with the true sacrifice of Mary Magdalene (ll. 9-20), which leads to her immediate pardon (ll. 21-22). In the following hymn (97), the harsh penance of the church (ll. 1-6) is contrasted with God's ability to judge the heart correctly (ll. 7-12), and the exemplum of the Pharisee who 'ignores the Lord's mercy (ll. 13-14) is provided as a warning to those who might think they have the right to judge others (ll. 15-18). The final part of the hymn (ll. 19-22) allude to Mary Magdalen's life after being freed from her demons (ll. 19-20, Abelard's 'quasi septem ...demoniis, suggests that he interprets the

demons metaphorically). She then became an exemplum of how great a faith and love one might have for Christ, a theme already covered in the cycle in hymn 91 (ll.7-18), where she is established as the model of diaconal ministry towards Christ during his life extending even to an apostolic ministry as first witness to the resurrection after his death.[46]

Thus, while it remains true that at the Paraclete, all virgins are allegorically widows, but not all widows are literally virgins, that conclusion can be supplemented with the corrolary that Abelard's carefully constructed rhetoric allowed widows at the Paraclete to conceive of themselves allegorically as virgins: They could make a parallel offering of their hearts and spirits in 'laments of penitence', a sacrifice 'better than all burnt offerings' (presumably even the acceptable burnt-offering of a virgin marytr's body) and so they too could ultimately gain entry to the marriage feast, even to the marriage bed, and to the title *sponsa Christi*. In the meantime, their status as true widows fit them for leadership of all nuns who were to live as good widows in this world, and the particular nun Heloise, whom Abelard called his inseparable companion (a term he applied to Mary Magdelene's relationship to Christ) could be ratified as his consort in their sacred profession[47].

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[46] This presentation of Mary Magdalene is extensively developed in the Easter services at the Paraclete, see W. Flynn, 'Letters, Liturgy, and Identity' and W. Flynn, '*Ductus figuratus et subtilis*', and T. Bell, *Peter Abelard after Marriage*, pp. 265-68, 303.

[47] On 'inseparable companion' (*inseparabilis comes*) see, S. Valentine, '"Inseparable Companions": Mary Magdalene, Abelard and Heloise' in *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Eurpoe: Gender,*

Power, Patronage and the Authority of Religion ed. by K. A. Smith and S. Wells (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 151-71.