

- UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD -
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Creating the 'Hermit-Preachers'

Narrative, Textual Construction, and Community in
Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Northern France

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Abstract

This thesis offers a reassessment of those men whom we know of as the ‘hermit-preachers’ of north-western France through critical engagement with the narratives written about them. As such, it focuses upon their textual construction, rather than the men themselves, arguing that we must understand the texts for their intentions and as a whole instead of trying to mine them for historical ‘truths’ or ‘reliable’ information – a dramatic contrast to previous scholarship. Focused upon these narratives, linked with ideas of both story-telling and liturgy, I explore the progression of their (community) construction, from the mechanics of the actual texts’ production to certain visions of these men on parchment. By seeking to understand construction in text I thus examine how these men were represented, envisaged, and hence explore, through different notions integral to the sources, their linguistic and conceptual imagining in text. Through this analysis, I challenge many current paradigms and notions that underline scholarship, such as the *vita apostolica* and the notion of institutionalised founders. What emerges is a vision of these men quite different from that currently espoused in historiography, one with more nuance and appreciation of the linguistic creation of holy men, and the process that different communities undertook in establishing the hermit-preachers not as historical figures, but as subjects of literary narratives.

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Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> (Brussels, Antwerp, Paris, 1643-1940)
AP	<i>Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in Urbe Degentium</i> , ed. G. Busson (Le Mans, 1901)
BN	Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris)
CH	William the Monk, 'Contra Henricum', in Monique Zerner (ed.), <i>Contre Henri schismatique et hérétique: Suivi de contre les hérétiques et schismatiques</i> , SC 541 (Paris, 2011), pp. 154-215
GC	<i>Gallia Christiana</i> , ed. Denis de Sainte-Marthe et al., 16 vols (Paris, 1715-1865)
HLF	<i>Histoire littéraire de la France</i> (Paris, 1733-)
MGH Const.	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum (Legum Sectio IV)</i>
MGH SS	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores (in Folio)</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64)
RB	<i>Regula Benedicti (La règle de Saint Benoît)</i> , ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Jean Neufville, 7 vols, SC 181-6 (Paris, 1971-77)
RHF	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France</i> , ed. M. Bouquet et al., revised by L. Delisle, 24 vols (Paris, 1738-1904)
<i>Sacra Concilia</i>	<i>Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio</i> , ed. J.D. Mansi, 31 vols (Venice-Florence, 1759-98)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
<i>Supplementum</i>	Andrew of Fontevraud, 'Supplementum Historiae Vitae Roberti', in Jacques Dalarun, Geneviève Giordanengo, Armelle le Huërou, Jean Longère, Dominique Poirel, and Bruce L. Venarde (eds), <i>Les deux vies de Robert d'Arbrissel</i> (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 125-298
VBT	Geoffrey Grossus, 'Vita beati Bernardi Fundatoris Congregationis de Tironio in Gallia', <i>PL</i> 172, cols. 1367A-446D
VGS	'Vita Beati Giraldi de Salis', <i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , October, vol. 10, pp. 254-67
VRA	Baudri of Dol, 'Vita Beati Roberti de Arbrissello', <i>PL</i> 162, cols. 1043A-58A
VVS	Stephen of Fougères, 'Vita Beati Vitalis Saviniacensis' in E. P. Sauvage (ed.), <i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> 1 (1882), pp. 357-90

All biblical citations are taken from the Douay-Rheims bible, online at <http://www.drbo.org/>

Map

The World of the Hermit-Preachers



Adapted from Dalarun, Jacques, *Robert of Arbrissel: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in the Middle Ages*, trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Washington, 2006), p. xxxiv.

Introduction

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, years after their monasteries had been founded, initial hardships overcome, and brethren settled, certain monastic communities in north-western France started to produce – or commission from others – narrative lives (*vitae*) of their founders, individuals known to some modern scholars as ‘hermit-preachers’. So it was that Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron, Vitalis of Savigny, and Gerald of Sales, men who lived on the cusp of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, became inscribed into written history as holy men, enshrined for posterity in layers of complex hagiographic meaning. In regions not so far from these monastic communities, others were also composing narratives of two supposedly very different hermit-preachers, the condemned Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys. It was not monastic communities but individuals from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, acting on behalf of the community of the Christian faithful, who recorded the existence of Henry and Peter. In this way, all six of these men became subjects of narratives: they became text. But this is not a study of these men. This is not even primarily a study of the memory of these men. This is, first and foremost, a study of the creation, the imagining, the *construction* of these men in text.

For those who wrote these works, theirs was a complex task, sometimes involving many years of accumulated memory, rumours, and stories. Added to this were the conventions of genre, models taken from the bible, older works composed about hermits, and monastic writings; all of which were important in composing texts about figures who were conceived of as exceptional. What is more, these were authors who were positioned within certain communities. Each of these communities had their own agendas, and they took control, in one way or another, of the legacy of these men. What the writers and their communities have handed down to us, therefore, are rich narratives, replete with meaning and significance. It is these narratives, in their various forms, that are the subject of this thesis.

At the outset of this work though, let me be clear: the parameters of this project are not novel nor are the figures unstudied. In establishing my framework of enquiry, I have consciously used a grouping of these men taken, in part, from both contemporary *vitae* and histories of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which frequently grouped together Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron, and Vitalis of Savigny in particular. In these works, the three men were said to have been spiritual companions, to have preached together, and were routinely associated with one another.¹ In turn, this categorisation has been reinforced by historians who have classified these individuals as the 'hermit-preachers' or *Wanderprediger* – the latter Johannes von Walter's term – and who have often studied these men together.² Accordingly, choosing these particular figures determines our geographical and temporal locations, centred upon north-western France, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for this is when and where the majority of the narratives about them were written.

We must recognise, however, that despite the fact that there were strong connections drawn between these men in the Middle Ages, grouping them under the umbrella terms 'hermit-preacher' or *Wanderprediger*, is a modern scholarly imposition, and that these expressions were never employed in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. True, contemporaries came close, particularly with the designation of Vitalis of Savigny as a hermit and word-scatterer (*heremita, seminiverbius*), but elsewhere these men were never described as hermits and preachers concurrently, as we do so in historiography today.³ Instead, those who wrote about them used a variety of appellations: 'hermit',

¹ For the *vitae* see Geoffrey Grossus, 'Vita Beati Bernardi Fundatoris Congregationis de Tironio in Gallia auctore Gaufrido Grosso', in *PL* 172, chap. 3.20, cols. 1080D–81A and chap. 6.50, cols. 1397A–C; Stephen of Fougères, 'Vita Beati Vitalis Saviniacensis', in E.P. Sauvage (ed.), *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882), bk. 2.13, p. 381. For the histories see William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998), vol. 1, bk. 5.440, pp. 786–8; Robert of Torigni, *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ed. Léopold V. Delisle, 2 vols (Rouen, 1873), vol. 2, pp. 188–90; William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, ed. P.G. Walsh and M.J. Kennedy (Warminster, 1988), bk. 1.15, p. 76; Robert of Auxerre, 'Chronicon', in *MGH SS* 26, p. 229; Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, 'Chronica Alberici Monachi Trium Fontium', in *MGH SS* 23, p. 103.

² For Johannes von Walter see *Die ersten Wanderprediger: Studien zur Geschichte des Mönchtums*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1903/6). Partially translated into French by J. Cahour in *Bulletin de la commission historique et archéologique de la Mayenne*, vol. 23 (1907), pp. 257–92, 385–406 (Robert of Arbrissel), vol. 24 (1908), pp. 385–410, vol. 25 (1909), pp. 17–44 (Bernard of Tiron) and vol. 26 (1910), pp. 297–309, 379–402 (Vitalis of Savigny). Henceforth I cite this translation as separate articles pertaining to each of the three hermit-preachers. For other scholars whose work has had an influence on this grouping see R. Niderst and L. Raison, 'Le mouvement érémitique dans l'Ouest de la France à la fin du XIe siècle et au début du XIIe siècle', *Annales de Bretagne* 55:1 (1948), pp. 1–46; Jean Becquet, 'L'érémitisme clerical et laïc dans l'ouest de la France', in *L'eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII: Atti della seconda Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 30 agosto-6 settembre 1962* (Milan, 1962), pp. 182–211; Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe, 1000-1150* (London, 1984), esp. pp. 113–118 for her classification of hermits and hermit-preachers; Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steve Rowan (Notre Dame, 1995); Jean-Hervé Foulon, 'Les ermites dans l'Ouest de la France: Les sources, bilan et perspectives', in André Vauchez (ed.), *Ermite de France et d'Italie (XIe-XVe siècle)* (Rome, 2003), pp. 81–113.

³ I explore the term *seminiverbius*, its implications, and use, fully in chapter four of this work.

'preacher', 'word-scatterer', 'travelling monk', 'man of God', 'saintly man', 'holy man', 'founder', 'Father', to cite just a few. Medieval writers were obviously far less concerned with strict classifications than modern historians.⁴

Reflecting upon the term hermit-preacher, therefore, touches upon a larger problem: that of language, and the dissonance between the words used in the Middle Ages and those we use today. Similar problems have been noted with regard to the terms 'religion/*religio*', 'Cathars', and 'crusade'.⁵ Yet it is, in general, a problem that is underexplored and underappreciated in scholarship and, in the pages that follow, I stress the need to be more sensitive to medieval nomenclature and suggest what we might learn from this practice.

Further to this, the very imposition of the term 'hermit-preacher' is inherently problematic since the name flattens diversity and nuance, by implying similarity where there may have been difference. While contemporaries wrote of these men consulting one another and of preaching together, they did not write of them living exactly the same life. In fact, these individuals were presented in different ways in the narratives written about them, with differing emphases and foci, even though there were undeniable and significant similarities, as we shall see throughout this thesis. What 'hermit-preacher' silences, therefore, is the great variety of terms that contemporaries used, and conceptions that they held, about these individuals.

Nonetheless, I use the term hermit-preacher throughout. In one way, this has arisen from a need for clarity and recognisability. Though there were, of course, hermits who preached and preachers who were also eremitic at different points in history, the label 'hermit-preacher' is peculiarly attached to these men and so it is familiar to many historians.⁶ In another, the epithet is perhaps more suitable than any other as an overarching term, because it encompasses the two dominant ideas of eremitism and preaching found within the texts. To use the term hermit solely would obscure the powerful phenomenon of speech visible throughout the narratives.⁷ Due to these two considerations, then, I have kept the term hermit-preacher. The reifying effect of this specific categorisation is, however, something I seek to challenge throughout this work

⁴ Cf. Giles Constable, 'The Diversity of Religious Life and Acceptance of Social Pluralism in the Twelfth Century,' in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best (eds), *History, Society and the Churches: Essays in Honour of Owen Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 29–47, esp. p. 35.

⁵ Peter Biller, 'Words and the Medieval Notion of "Religion"', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36:3 (1985), pp. 351–369; Mark Gregory Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246* (Princeton and Oxford, 2001), pp. 15–19; Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (London, 1998), pp. 49–55.

⁶ For monks in the world prior to this period see, for example, Phyllis G. Jestice, *Wayward Monks and the Religious Revolution of the Eleventh Century* (Leiden, 1997)

⁷ See Patrick Henriët, 'Verbum Dei Disseminando: La parole des ermites prédicateurs d'après les sources hagiographiques (XIe-XIIe siècles)', in Rosa Maria Dessi and Michel Lauwers (ed.), *La parole du prédicateur* (Nice, 1997), pp. 153–85. This is the only piece of work, to my knowledge, that explores this terminology.

in order to view these men as distinct individuals, each of whom was subject to different community agendas and impetuses.

All the same it is, admittedly, more unusual to include Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys in such a study. Having been labelled heretics by medieval contemporaries, these two men are usually the subject of modern scholars of heresy rather than scholars of holy men. Yet there is frequent acknowledgement that the line between those who were celebrated and those who were condemned was by no means clear at the time.⁸ Accordingly, one might assume that the similar descriptions of the hermit-preachers' activities – both celebrated and condemned – support this fact. If the same activity could be at once chastised and venerated, this is surely testament to the lack of a clear division between orthodoxy and heresy. Yet those who wrote about Henry and Peter had no sense of the 'blurred boundaries' that we see in modernity: they firmly believed that these two men were heretics. The activities of these men appeared similar, rather, because the authors used the idea of mimicry to explain why Henry and Peter *looked like* orthodox preachers. Through this, they were imagined to have been impostors, impersonators of what was holy. Henry was, as reported by Bernard of Clairvaux, a 'rapacious wolf in sheep's clothing', and, according to another contemporary, a 'pseudo-hermit'.⁹ There is no need to say more about this here, as the idea of mimicry will resurface throughout the following pages, particularly in chapter four when we turn to ideas of the hermit-preachers' spirituality. Nevertheless this highlights, to my mind, the need to study Henry and Peter alongside figures such as Bernard of Tiron or Vitalis of Savigny, as contemporary members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy recognised that 'heretics' appeared orthodox, particularly to the laity, which informed how they were presented in text. It is for this very reason that my work is not, and indeed cannot be, just a straightforward comparison between 'orthodox' and 'heretical' preachers, even if they were explicitly juxtaposed at points.

⁸ See, for instance, Stanisław Trawkowski, 'Entre l'orthodoxie et l'hérésie: *Vita Apostolica* et le problème de la désobéissance', in W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst (eds), *The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages (11th-13th C.): Proceedings of the International Conference Louvain, May 13-16, 1973* (Leuven, 1976), pp. 157–66; Becquet, 'L'érémisme', p. 199; Elisabeth Magnou, 'Note critique sur les sources de l'histoire de Henri l'hérétique jusqu'à son départ du Mans', *Bulletin philologique et historique* (1962), p. 547; R.I. Moore, 'Some Heretical Attitudes to the Renewal of the Church', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, SCH 14 (Oxford, 1977), p. 88; Adriaan H. Bredero, 'Henri de Lausanne: un réformateur devenu hérétique', in R. Lievens, E. van Mingroot, and W. Verbeke (eds), *Pascua Mediaevalia: Studies voor Prof. Dr. J.M. De Smet* (Leuven, 1983), pp. 108–23; Jacques Dalarun, 'Robert d'Arbrissel et les femmes', *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 39:6 (1984), pp. 1145–6; W. Scott Jessee, 'Robert d'Arbrissel: Aristocratic Patronage and the Question of Heresy', *Journal of Medieval History* 20:3 (1994), pp. 221–35. The unclear line between heresy and orthodoxy is identified far more frequently by historians of heresy. This is perhaps no surprise, since one can hardly write of heresy without reference to orthodoxy: a transgression of the norm is only created with reference to that norm itself.

⁹ '...sub vestimentis ovium lupus rapax', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Epistola 241', in *PL* 182, sec. 1, col. 434A; *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in Urbe Degentium*, ed. G. Busson and A. Ledru (Le Mans, 1901), p. 409.

There are, then, precedents and important reasons for studying Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron, Gerald of Sales, Vitalis of Savigny, Henry of Lausanne, and Peter of Bruys as a group. And, just as this grouping is not novel, neither is scholarship lacking on these men: they have been previously explored both jointly and as individuals. I shall address these two approaches briefly in turn.

Collectively, the men we know of as hermit-preachers are integral to many of our modern narratives of the twelfth century: the changing conceptualisation of the apostolic life, the growing institutionalisation of the papacy, ‘new monasticism’, urbanisation, more public forms of spirituality, and so on.¹⁰ For this reason, the stories of these men appear familiar to many medieval historians, and their names are scattered throughout works that have defined the field. In these studies, the hermit-preachers have been attributed certain characteristics, the most dominant being that they were charismatic men, part of the ‘eremitic revival’, proponents of ‘reform’, who lived the *vita apostolica*, and who eventually succumbed to the inevitable process of institutionalisation by their foundation of monasteries. What is more, these works place the hermit-preachers within a wider narrative arc of the development of the twelfth-century church, foreshadowing the advent of mendicancy in the thirteenth century, and looking forward to the eventual papal recognition of the potential of such religious impulses to serve the institutional church.¹¹ The hermit-preachers can, therefore, be called upon as representative of many movements and spiritual currents: these men supposedly epitomise and conform to our ideas of the twelfth century as a whole. This is the conventional picture, one that is accepted in scholarship, and the archetypal characteristics attributed to the hermit-preachers within these historiographical narratives have stuck fast, even though they tend to be ascribed by scholars who are not specialists on these individuals.

Alongside being studied as a group which, as we have seen, carries larger implications for spiritual and ecclesiastical history, the hermit-preachers have also been examined individually. Numerous monographs and articles have been dedicated to studies on specific hermit-preachers – Robert of Arbrissel in particular seems to be the historians’ favourite. Notable among these works are those that have dealt extensively with the sources at our disposal, an effort more recently led by French scholars but initiated originally by Johannes von Walter.¹² In particular these historians have focused upon

¹⁰ It would be too lengthy to list all of these here but see, by way of brief example, Leyser, *Hermits*; Grundmann, *Religious Movements*; Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996). Each of these characteristics is dealt with in subsequent chapters, and these identify and explore the historiography more extensively.

¹¹ See Brenda Bolton, ‘*Via Ascetica: A Papal Quandary*’, in W.B. Sheils (ed.), *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition. Papers Read at the 1984 Summer Meeting and the 1985 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, SCH 22 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 161–91; Brenda Bolton, *Innocent III: Studies on Papal Authority and Pastoral Care* (Aldershot, 1995).

¹² The most important being Jacques Dalarun, *L’impossible sainteté: la vie retrouvée de Robert d’Arbrissel (v.1045-1116), fondateur de Fontevraud* (Paris, 1985); Bernard Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron, l’ermite, le moine et le monde* (Cormelles-le-Royal, 1998); Jaap van Moolenbroek, *Vital*

deconstructing texts, and this skilled source criticism – especially from the last thirty years or so – has allowed us to understand and to use the sources in a way hitherto impossible. This has undoubtedly paved the way for the next generation of scholars.

So it is through these works we know, or at least *think* we know, the hermit-preachers. Indeed, one might assume from the above that scholarship on these men is exhaustive and, consequently, that there is little further to be done. Yet these two lines of enquiry, conceptual and textual, have rarely met. And though the studies on individual hermit-preachers might comment upon how certain concepts were present within the sources, they have not sought to evaluate these critically in light of twelfth-century narratives, nor have they explored these in relation to the hermit-preachers as a group. One of the aims of this study, therefore, is to integrate these two approaches by studying concepts through their textual construction.

Far more significantly, however, all of the above research rests upon the assumption that the hermit-preachers are recoverable historical figures. It is this assumption, this approach towards the texts, which is the heart of the problem with previous scholarship, and thus it is this to which we turn now.

Historical Figures or Textual Construction?

Little was written by the hermit-preachers themselves. From the six individuals studied here, just one left writings of his own: all that remains from the perspective of these men is two charters and one letter, all by Robert of Arbrissel.¹³ For the most part then, the existence of the hermit-preachers was recorded in text by others' pens, often years, if not decades, after their deaths. In one sense, this was not particularly unusual. Generally speaking, medieval hermits were not authors, and those of twelfth-century France were no exception. Nevertheless, the point is that we hardly know hermits through their own words: we know *of* them through the writings of others. This is, of course, a fundamental historical problem when exploring these figures. How are we to discover what these men thought when they left us nothing from which to work? To my mind, the answer is simple: we cannot. The profound space that stands between the hermit-preacher and the written record cannot be overcome and is insurmountable. While this is not as problematic or as limiting as it first may seem, it does mean that the questions that shape our scholarly enquiry should be different. The

l'ermite, prédicateur, itinérant, fondateur de l'abbaye normande de Savigny, trans. Anne-Marie Nambot (Assen/Maastricht, 1990); Jacques Dalarun, ed., *Les deux vies de Robert d'Arbrissel, fondateur de Fontevraud: légendes, écrits et témoignages* (Turnhout, 2006). For Johannes von Walter, see above, n. 2.

¹³ Robert of Arbrissel, 'Sermo Domni Roberti de Arbrussello ad Comitissam Britanniae', in Jules de Pétigny (ed.), *Lettre inédite de Robert d'Arbrissel à la comtesse Ermengarde in Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 15 (1854) pp. 225–35; Robert of Arbrissel, 'Charta Roberti de Arbrissello...Petro Pictaviensi episcopo', in *PL* 162, cols. 1085D–88A; Robert of Arbrissel, 'Charta Roberti de Arbrissello...Gerardo de Salis', in *PL* 162, cols. 1088A–C.

question is not so much ‘who were the hermit-preachers?’, but more ‘how were the hermit-preachers constructed in texts into which they had no input?’ For the most part, these men are historically mute and the only voices we have are from those who purposefully fashioned these men in written narratives.

But this is not how historians have previously approached these individuals. One should accept of course that the effect of the sources upon the presentation of these men has been recognised. In 2003, while conducting a review of the sources and perspectives, Jean-Hervé Foulon commented upon this very problem, saying that to arrive at an understanding of the hermits of north-western France, one must not conflate the historical phenomenon with a phenomenon of the sources – here meaning hagiographies – whose authors selected information according to a particular ‘prism’.¹⁴ Here, Foulon grasped a profound point, with which I agree in principle, about the sources at our disposal: that the texts cause us to have a particular view of the hermit-preachers, because the medium of these works affected the presentation of their subject.

Nonetheless, Foulon’s thought is emblematic of the way in which most scholars have treated the hermit-preachers in the past, because he still sought what he saw as the historical phenomenon. Like him, others who have worked on the hermit-preachers have also been more tempted by the pursuit of the historical remnants of enigmatic individuals, rather than their literary instantiation. Authors of even very recent works still write on this premise, trying to tease ‘fact’ from ‘fiction’, ‘real’ from ‘manufactured’ or ‘symbolic’.¹⁵ Peeling away the many textual layers is supposed to leave us with a kernel of something pure, empiricist. It is supposed to leave us with the historical truth of the hermit-preachers.

By no means do I condemn this approach wholesale. Deconstructing texts is beneficial for historical research and is pertinent in seeking to appreciate the construction of the figures within them. We need to know, for example, if an author was borrowing from the *vita* of Saint Antony, or which section of a *vita* was taken from an earlier vernacular text. In this way, my own exploration builds upon those works cited above and contributes to our understanding of how such texts were patchwork constructions. But pursuing the historical figures behind these texts, from this very deconstruction, is seriously problematic for two fundamental reasons. First, this approach tends to overlook advances in the study of hagiography.¹⁶ In recent years, hagiography has been

¹⁴ Foulon, ‘Les ermites’, p. 84. Cf. Dalarun, *L’impossible sainteté*, pp. 146–7, who also said that the art of hagiography produced an ‘artificial’ Robert of Arbrissel.

¹⁵ See, for instance, much of the first chapter in Damian Kerney, *Hermits in the West of France during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Unpublished PhD, University of Sheffield, 2002), esp. pp. 8–9.

¹⁶ For a longer history of ‘hagiography’ and the changing meaning of the term over time see Guy Philippart, ‘L’hagiographie comme littérature: Concept récent et nouveaux programmes?’, *Revue des sciences humaines* 251 (1998), pp. 11–39.

opened up to new avenues of inquiry, new types of sources, new scholars.¹⁷ Within this vibrant and dynamic field, there has been a profound change in the way in which we approach sources in particular, and historians have started to question the construction of holy men within these texts.¹⁸ There is growing recognition, for example, that to look for the 'historical' within hagiographies, in the words of one historian, 'rather misses the point'.¹⁹ As such, the days of more positivist approaches towards holy men and saints are, generally, fading. Yet the hermit-preachers seem to have slipped through the net, and remain subjects that are spoken about as if we can rescue them from hagiographic conventions or *topoi*. We need, therefore, to bring our study of them in line with a better understanding of the texts at our disposal.

Secondly, attempting to find the historical individual within the sources completely disregards the mentalities of the authors, and the culture in which they were embedded. Medieval authors hardly subscribed to the idea that some parts of what they were writing were 'fact' and others 'fiction'. They would not, for example, have seen miracle stories, biblical citations, or other 'conventions' of hagiographies – however stereotypical to our eyes – as less true or valuable in teaching others about these men than, say, a description of their subject's presence at a particular council. The reconstituted biographies or 'modern *vitae*' of these men produced by scholars trying to find the historical 'truth', therefore, would have made little sense to the individuals who wrote such works, because it means disregarding anything that does not illuminate what we see as the 'real'.²⁰ But how, I would ask, can we dismiss miracles or other conventions that demonstrated a deep spiritual understanding of the world and a conception that God worked within it? By a previous focus upon the subjects of the texts, rather than the texts themselves, it is modern scholars who have decided what is important to take from the sources, rather than acknowledging what was important to those who recorded these men in the first place. In my opinion, then, previous scholarship has not 'read between the lines' as Bernard Beck postulated, but read *against the grain*.²¹

¹⁷ For some reflections upon, and examples of, these new approaches see, by way of example, Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, 'The Invention of Saintliness: Texts and Contexts', in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), *The Invention of Saintliness* (London and New York, 2002), pp. 1–23; Guy Philippart, 'Saints Here Below and Saints Hereafter: Towards a Definition of the Hagiographical Field', *Studia Liturgica* 34 (2004), pp. 26–51; Hilary Powell, "'Once Upon a Time There Was a Saint...": Re-evaluating Folklore in Anglo-Latin Hagiography', *Folklore* 121:2 (2010), pp. 171–89; Anna Taylor, 'Hagiography and Early Medieval History', *Religion Compass* 7:1 (2013), pp. 1–14.

¹⁸ Averil Cameron, 'On Defining the Holy Man', in James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Hayward (eds), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 36–42.

¹⁹ Powell, 'Folklore', p. 171.

²⁰ Cf. Felice Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographic" Texts as Historical Narrative', *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 95–113.

²¹ Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 11.

Viewed in this way, it is less a matter of trying to side-step the ‘prism’ of the sources – as Foulon put it – but rather a case of looking through it. What if we seek to define the filters through which these men were conceived in narrative, and explore how these produced a certain vision of these men? What if we start seeing the value in the whole of the source rather than just that which can be mined for elements that look to us like historical facts? By posing these questions, and recognising that we cannot see the hermit-preachers themselves but only an image of them created by others, we bring a new and unique appreciation to these narrative works. We do not need another study simply detailing different aspects of the hermit-preachers’ lives. Nor, I believe, do we need another study of the sources that produces these problematic reconstructed biographies. Instead, I offer here an alternative way of thinking about the hermit-preachers, that is, in terms of their construction in narrative.

Due to this approach towards the hermit-preachers, I shall focus far more upon the linguistic and literary imagining of these figures than others have done in the past, as I am seeking to understand how these individuals were *represented*, how they were imagined. The language used gives us crucial insights into this, because words were the tools of our authors. Hence throughout this work I shall explore how certain concepts – and the terminology intrinsically connected to them – created certain images of these men. Each chapter of this work, bar the first which deals with the processes behind the production of the narratives, is thus concerned with a different concept. The notion behind each chapter has been chosen for its fundamental importance to the hermit-preachers’ resultant textual image, that is, what visions of these men were created through writing. Such a systematic and sustained analysis of concepts in relation to their expression through language has not been undertaken thus far in scholarship. It is critical, however, not just because many of these concepts are at the forefront of scholarship in other areas, but also because it redresses many of the commonly held ideas about these men, as already explained. What is more, this investigation reflects upon the much wider issue of how to represent the past linguistically when faced with modern vocabulary and concepts embedded with centuries of meaning, often quite different from those of the Middle Ages. This is an issue, I reiterate, that deserves more care and attention in scholarship; words were not just the tools of our authors, they are also our own tools for expressing the past.

One might argue then that the perspective adopted here is more literary than historical. In some ways, this is correct: I have drawn from both literary theory and recent literary scholarship throughout, some of which has greatly advanced our understanding of medieval text. But in order to study a world in which the line between history and literature was blurred, we cannot enforce our own disciplinary dichotomy nor abide by it in our research.²² It is thus important to acknowledge, and engage with, the work of literary scholars in order to inform and develop our historical approaches.

²² See, again, Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism’, pp. 95–113.

The main intention of this thesis, therefore, is not to illuminate unknown periods or unknown characters but, rather, to undertake a serious reassessment of many of the concepts associated with the hermit-preachers. Throughout, I advocate a more sensitive – and, in a sense, more literary – understanding of medieval narrative texts written about exceptional religious figures. In doing so, I shall call into question basic, but simplistic and underexplored, notions that underpin our understanding of these men such as, for example, the idea that they lived the *vita apostolica*. In a broader sense, the implications of this are profound, for if we destabilise the certainty of some concepts then the impact of this will resonate in other areas of scholarship. Franciscan scholars for instance, taking the *vita apostolica* as an example again, may feel compelled to reassess their belief that the precedent of Francis of Assisi's 'apostolicity' can be found with the hermit-preachers. This stands true for the other concepts explored here. Consequently, I hope that this work will encourage other scholars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to reflect upon supposedly firm ideas, expressed using a specific terminology, because concerted study of these can reveal much fragility beneath the surface.

Plan of the Thesis

Chapter one opens this work by asking essential questions about the narratives written about the hermit-preachers: who, how, when, and why were they written? Through this, I explain how these works cannot be separated from those communities in which the authors were positioned, be they monastic or ecclesiastical. No man is an island, John Donne said, and neither were our authors. No work was written in isolation, or in silence. Each author was told stories by others, and communication flowed both in individual monasteries and across France. Each, moreover, wrote in response to contemporary concerns and needs that fundamentally defined the content and structure of what was written. These vastly underappreciated dynamics, underlying the production of each and every text, were thus crucial in creating the narratives about the hermit-preachers, and affected the resultant images of these men in the sources through which we now view them. From the conclusions raised in this first chapter, first and foremost that these men were community constructions, we can start to comprehend how other aspects of their textual imagining were created.

I start this examination of different aspects of textual construction in the following chapter, focusing upon the ideas of renown and reputation, since being known was undoubtedly a prerequisite to being written about. I first ask whether our ideas of these concepts have been overlooked because of reliance upon the Weberian notion of charisma. Following this, I focus upon how these ideas were expressed within the sources. Through exploring notions of public piety and 'talk' within the texts, I address how visibility and 'gossip' could be perceived as both positive and negative, and explore how this was connected to the fear of novelty in the twelfth century.

The next three chapters explicitly counter the somewhat standardised linear narrative about the hermit-preachers of which I spoke above: that they were an ‘offshoot’ of the contemporaneous reform movement, which awakened a desire to live the *vita apostolica*, but that this way of life ultimately failed because of its inevitable end in the cloister. These three concepts, reform, the *vita apostolica*, and foundation, are but three parts of the same meta-narrative that is historiographically pervasive, but that has faced little scholarly challenge. But once one removes one brick, and starts to question, say, the idea of reform, the whole narrative structure starts to wobble. If ideas of reform were not homogenous, and were created retroactively by communities who emphasised different elements for each hermit-preacher, as I argue in chapter three, each idea that supposedly emanated from this needs serious scholarly review. I thus follow this chapter by questioning the idea of the *vita apostolica*. I first ask whether we can defend the use of such a term, which permeates scholarly literature, when it was not present within the works written about these men. From here, I focus upon what we actually do see in the sources. This leads me to propose that we would be far better speaking of notions of apostolicity in relation to the hermit-preachers rather than the *vita apostolica*; such a concrete concept did not exist for those who wrote about the hermit-preachers.

We come to the end of the aforementioned traditional historiographical narrative in chapter five. Here, I return to the same communities with whom we started, by exploring the relationship between the individual and the institution that he founded. I question whether the establishment of monasteries was really portrayed in the sources as an inevitable and inexorable process, and if the notion of ‘founder’ was as stable as we currently assume. At the same time, I focus upon how the connections between individual and institution were emphasised in some aspects of the sources, such as deathbed scenes. Intriguingly, these were less visible in ones in which we would assume they would be more obvious: foundation narratives. In the end, we realise that the linear narrative from reform to foundation is at best problematic and, at worst, responsible for grossly misrepresenting the hermit-preachers.

One final point needs to be made about the structure of this work. In mirroring the current historiographical model, the framework of this thesis also mirrors the Weberian process from charisma to institutionalisation, by starting with the concept of renown and ending with that of the founder. And indeed, Max Weber’s sociological narrative does underlie, often implicitly, our understanding of the hermit-preachers as it does for many holy men. This is an idea, therefore, that must be confronted. Yet I should clarify that I do not seek to challenge explicitly Weber’s formulation itself, as it may have value when applied judiciously in other areas and certainly has the potential to illuminate historical processes. Nevertheless, I wish to draw attention to the effect that it has had on this field, alongside the larger implications of how we understand the

dynamics of medieval society and the role of holy or outstanding individuals within that society.

This dissertation is by no means intended to be the definitive word upon how the hermit-preachers were created in text. Over a decade ago, Patrick Henriet commented that a lot remained to be done on these men and this statement remains true.²³ A detailed independent analysis of the *vita* of Gerald of Sales for example is sorely needed, especially in light of some observations made in this thesis. There is, furthermore, revived interest in the hermit-preachers, shown by both recent translations of their *vitae* and forthcoming work.²⁴ This will undoubtedly stimulate renewed discussion about these individuals, and we may see other misunderstandings re-evaluated with time. Nonetheless, my work emphasises the care and attention needed in the treatment of figures for whom we have only the witness of others, and it urges scholars to be far more conscientious in both studying them individually and also inserting them into grand twelfth-century narratives. As such, I offer a much-needed reassessment of these men taking us beyond merely trying to find out 'what happened'.

²³ Henriet, 'Verbum Dei', p. 155.

²⁴ For Robert of Arbrissel see both the monumental work by Jacques Dalarun, *Les deux vies* and the more accessible *Robert of Arbrissel: A Medieval Religious Life*, ed. Bruce L. Venarde; for Bernard of Tiron there is both a French and English translation by Bernard Beck and Ruth Harwood Cline respectively. A translation of the *vita* of Vitalis of Savigny is forthcoming with Cistercian Publications, as is the first monograph in English on Bernard of Tiron by Kathleen Thompson. Only the *vita* of Gerald of Sales remains in need of translation, though there is a forthcoming thesis on the hermit-preacher and his foundations by Janet Burn at the University of Nottingham.

CHAPTER ONE

Creating the Narrative(s)

Knowing there to be nothing more important than the truth, I have transmitted to successors that which I saw or learnt from the reports of reliable men, with a truthful rather than polished style, by holding the level ground of humility, having put them into writing. And rendering the worth of the work rather than elaborating on it, I handed the material over to good clerks only.¹

– Geoffrey Grossus, Prologue to the *Vita Bernardi*

Written narratives about the hermit-preachers did not just spring into being; they took time, effort, and were intricate productions. In order to understand the construction of the hermit-preachers in text, therefore, we must first understand the process of creation and purpose behind the narratives that expressed their lives. As such, through this chapter I shall introduce the texts themselves upon which we shall focus for the rest of this dissertation. Through the exploration here, we lay the groundwork for the following chapters and will start to understand the complex process of how the hermit-preachers were created as textual figures.

In this chapter, I initially examine the authors of the texts and their positions within certain communities. As we shall come to see throughout this thesis, the authors' connections to these communities were particularly important in their construction of the text and thus the creation of the hermit-preacher within that text. From here, I move on to discuss how exactly these texts were produced and why we should think of the documents as community constructions. This will underline why it is crucial to study community dynamics in order to appreciate how these figures were represented in text. We shall, moreover, discover the important role that these communities played not only in the construction of the text, but also its conversation and thus the preservation of the hermit-preachers as literary figures.

Following this discussion, the latter part of this chapter will examine why (and hence when) these texts were written. Here, I suggest that the texts composed about those

¹ 'Sciens etenim veritate nihil esse praestantius, veraci stylo magis quam nitido, humilitatis tenente campestria, ea quae vidi vel fidelium hominum relatione didici, litteris commendata successoribus transmissi; operisque dignitatem magis attenuans quam explicans, bonis dictatoribus materiam tantummodo comparavi', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, cols. 1370D–71A.

hermit-preachers who were condemned and those who were celebrated were produced for slightly different reasons. For Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys, their condemnation was central to why medieval contemporaries chose to write about them, and the creation of these works fitted into contemporary ecclesiastical efforts which delineated the boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy. By contrast, it was liturgical and cult considerations that stimulated monastic communities to write *vitae* of their founders. As such, far more local concerns lay behind these texts. Yet there were some similarities, not only because liturgy was designed to transmit orthodoxy, but also because *vitae* were written within an existing framework of orthodoxy: *Lives* disseminated the holiest ideals of the Christian community. In this way, all of the texts written about the hermit-preachers were concerned with the edification of the Christian faithful, because they tried to teach others the correct classification of exceptional individuals within Christian society. Whether they managed to create clear categories, however, is debatable, as we shall come to realise in the following chapters.

Narratives, Authors, and Communities

First of all, it is important to identify the authors of the texts written about the hermit-preachers, and the communities to which they belonged before discussing the construction of these works. Here, I want to deal primarily with the authors of these texts rather than their dating, as these men were important individuals, not least to modern-day scholars because they have bequeathed to us knowledge of the hermit-preachers. It was their job, indeed usually their commission, to record the lives and deeds of these men. Through them, we gain a 'way in' to the communities whose knowledge aided the construction of these texts, as these individuals show us the importance of certain communities in the very production of the text. It seems only fitting, therefore, that we address them first.

Who Wrote the Hermit-Preachers' *Vitae* and Narratives?

Certain *vitae* of the hermit-preachers came directly from the communities that these men had founded throughout the course of their lives. Brethren from Fontevraud, Tiron, and Châteliers founded by Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron and Gerald of Sales respectively, all chose to write narratives about their founders. As such, these were texts that were produced within the monastic walls, within the monastic space, since the authors were embedded within the communities who wanted their founder memorialised. Consequently, there was a direct link between the community founded by the hermit-preacher and the author who wrote the *Life*. We shall deal with these authors in the chronological order of the texts' creation.

The first *vita* to be produced within a monastic community, although not the first written about a hermit-preacher, was that of Robert of Arbrissel, the *Vita Altera Beati*

Roberti de Arbrissello [hereafter *Vita Roberti altera*].² The text itself was anonymous, but an old tradition attributes the work to Andrew, the prior of Fontevraud and chaplain to Robert himself.³ Calling the text a *vita* is, however, a little problematic. Rather than an account of the whole of Robert's life, Andrew focused upon the week before the hermit-preacher's death, incorporating details of his life within this narrative. In fact, Andrew's authorship has been doubted in the past because he gave himself a significant role within the unfolding drama of Robert's last week on earth.⁴ While certainly hagiographic in tone, therefore, the text is very unusual in light of the other hermit-preachers' *vitae*, neither following the same structure nor including the same content. Nevertheless, since the text was a literary rendition of Robert's life, and one that was critical to the community at Fontevraud, we must include it when studying narratives about the hermit-preachers. Indeed, by including his own role in the text Andrew affirmed himself as an eyewitness to Robert's final days and, most significantly, to his parting words to the community.⁵ What is more, Andrew was a member of Fontevraud, unlike another who wrote about Robert, as we shall see shortly.

The next text composed within the cloister, chronologically speaking, was the *Vita Beati Bernardi Fundatoris Congregationis de Tironio* [hereafter *Vita Bernardi*], apparently written by a monk named Geoffrey who identified himself as *Gaufredus*, 'least of all monks', in the address of the *vita*.⁶ This was, of course, the *vita* of Bernard of Tiron. Yet aside from this remark within the address, the author told us nothing more about himself. No details within the work alluded to his position or status within the monastery. Three possible references to our author of the *Vita Bernardi*, however, can be found in the twelfth-century cartulary of Tiron, one dated 1126 and two others from the 1140s.⁷ From these, Lucien Merlet suggested that the author of Bernard's *vita* was the chancellor of Tiron, as a scribe called Geoffrey (a self-proclaimed *cancellarius*) had

² The transcription of this text in the *PL* (162 cols. 1057–78) is now inadequate since it does not include the end section of the *vita*, found in an old French manuscript in the 1980s by Jacques Dalarun. Dalarun originally transcribed this thirteenth-century work in *L'impossible sainteté*, pp. 264–99. He has since provided a critical parallel edition of the Latin and old French, alongside an English translation. See Andrew of Fontevraud, 'Supplementum Historiae Vitae Roberti', in Jacques Dalarun et al. (eds), *Les deux vies de Robert d'Arbrissel* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 190–298. Hereafter I cite the text from *Les deux vies* as *Supplementum*, and for the old French I use the English translation of the text.

³ For this attribution see Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, p. 23 and pp. 53–4; For Andrew as prior see *Grand cartulaire de Fontevraud*, ed. Jean-Marc Bienvenu, Robert Favreau, and Georges Pon, 2 vols (Poitiers, 2000), vol. 1, no. 142, pp. 128–9 and no. 411, pp. 404–5, and for his identification as chaplain see Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 24, p. 234.

⁴ See, for instance, the *HLF* 10, p. 168. Cf. Johannes von Walter, 'Vie de Robert d'Arbrissel', *Bulletin de la commission historique et archéologique de la Mayenne* 23, trans. J. Cahour (1907), p. 258.

⁵ For this idea of author as eyewitness in hagiography cf. Claudia Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6:3 (1998), pp. 431–48, esp. pp. 434–41.

⁶ '...monachorum omnium infimus...', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue, col. 1367A. Also printed in *AASS*, April II, pp. 220–54.

⁷ See *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de la Saint-Trinité de Tiron*, ed. Lucien Merlet, 2 vols (Chartres, 1883), vol. 1, no. 79, p. 99., vol. 2, no. 254, p. 24, and no. 289, p. 58.

written the first charter, and so Merlet supposed that the later charters identified the same Geoffrey.⁸ If these references refer to the Geoffrey who wrote the *vita*, then our author was a contemporary of Bernard – who died in 1116 – and, from the eyewitness stories given in the text, seemed to have known the hermit-preacher personally. Nevertheless, what should be made clear here is that the correspondence between the author of the *vita* and those references from the cartulary are based upon assumption. A final clue from the cartulary has been identified by Bernard Beck, who noticed that one charter gave a witness as *Galfridus armarius*, designating the supervisor of the *scriptorium*. Beck concluded that this could easily have been the author of the *Vita Bernardi*, since Geoffrey would have been entirely suitable for such a position because of his learning and his age at this point.⁹ To me, this is highly plausible since a monk in this position would have been the obvious choice within the monastic community to write the work. A Tironensian monk, and one who was responsible for some of the written output of the monastery, was hence also responsible for the *Vita Bernardi*. Aside from these references from the cartulary, however, we know hardly anything of Geoffrey. He produced no other literary text of which we know. Certainly the *vita* and its construction still remain difficult to decipher today, for reasons that will be discussed below.

Yet the *Vita Bernardi* was not the only *vita* that was written about Bernard of Tiron. Jacques Dalarun discovered another – albeit much shorter – life of the Tironensian founder in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, entitled *Brevis Descriptio in Vita Beati Bernardi Tironensis Abbatis*, hereafter *Vita Brevis*.¹⁰ This was not, it must be made clear, an abbreviated version of the much lengthier *Vita Bernardi* since although it had similar themes, the organisation, order and sometimes the information given did not match up with that of the 'main' life.¹¹ So, given that the *Vita Brevis* has been palaeographically dated to the (probably late) twelfth century, this demonstrates that the community had, interestingly, more than one version of their founder's life circulating contemporaneously.

The last *vita* to be discussed here, which seemingly originated from within a monastic community founded by a hermit-preacher, was the *Vita Beati Giraldi de Salis* [hereafter *Vita Giraldi*]: the *Life* of Gerald of Sales. As with the other *vitae* discussed so far, there are uncertainties over authorship. The author of the work gave no indication as to who he was, and he seemed content to be anonymous. Nevertheless, there are significant clues that the text was created in Châteliers, one of Gerald's foundations.¹² To start,

⁸ For the identification of the charters with Geoffrey Grossus see *Ibid.*, pp. II–III, n. 3.

⁹ Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 41; *Cartulaire de Tiron*, vol. 2, no. 164, p. 91. Cf. Kathleen Thompson, 'The First Hundred Years of the Abbey of Tiron: Institutionalizing the Reform of the Forest Hermits', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 31 (2009), pp. 113–114.

¹⁰ The text can be found in the BN, Lat. 584, ff. 78–80. For details of this text see Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, pp. 39–41 and for a transcription and French translation see *Ibid.*, pp. 476–9.

¹¹ I give an example of this differing information in chapter five of this study, pp. 170–1.

¹² 'Vita Beati Giraldi de Salis', in *AASS*, October X, chap. 3.23, p. 260.

the manuscript of the *vita* – the transcription from which we work today – was found in Châteliers monastery.¹³ The community which produced the text were often responsible for its preservation, as we shall see, so it would make sense that a text stored at Châteliers was also written there. Aside from the physical location of the manuscript, moreover, there are indications in the content that the author was a member of the Châteliers community. The first chapter, for example, started with the possessive ‘our Gerald’, suggesting that Gerald was founder of the community of which the author himself was also part.¹⁴ This in itself does not confirm Châteliers authorship but coupled with the author’s attitude towards the monastery, which he envisaged as the apogee of the hermit-preacher’s work and praised as the poorest and most pious of the hermit-preacher’s foundations, would seem to suggest it was his own.¹⁵ Surely the author was exalting his own monastic house. In addition to this, the author appeared to have had both intimate and detailed knowledge of Châteliers. He recounted Gerald’s passing sensitively and with great affection, had intimate knowledge of Gerald’s burial and funeral, and was able to describe changes to the monastic buildings over the twelfth century.¹⁶ It would certainly be an unusual amount of knowledge to have if the monk was not a member of the same community. It would seem fairly safe to assume, therefore, that we are dealing with a brother of Châteliers. Like the authors of the *Vita Roberti altera* and the *Vita Bernardi*, the author of the *Vita Giraldi* was a member of a community that was founded by a hermit-preacher, who then produced his *Life*.

While the exact identities of the authors of these three texts discussed above may elude us, therefore, it is clear that monks from communities established by the hermit-preachers were intent on memorialising them in the narrative form of *vitae*. An individual from each of these monasteries wrote a *vita* of the holy man who founded the very same community. This is deeply significant, because these authors existed in the ‘sacred space’ which the hermit-preacher was thought to have founded. It hardly mattered whether the author was part of the first generation, because whoever the personnel of the monastery were, their sacred space was understood to have been founded by the hermit-preacher: they were the *same* community. By writing these works, therefore, the authors were looking spatially inwards and temporally backwards to reflect upon their own communities, their traditions and their founder. I do not want to say more here about the significance of the author’s position within the monastic space, nor the conception of the ‘founder’, as it is something to which we shall return throughout the rest of the thesis, particularly in chapter five. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the profound connection that these monks must have felt with their own community and thus with the hermit-preacher when they started to create these texts.

¹³ For details of the manuscript, see pp. 39–40.

¹⁴ VGS, chap. 1.1, p. 254. See also Marie-Odile Lenglet, ‘La biographie du bienheureux Geraud de Sales’, *Cîteaux: commentarii cistercienses* 29:1 (1978), p. 17.

¹⁵ VGS, chap. 3.27, p. 261.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 3.26–9, pp. 261–2.

On the other hand, not all of the individuals who wrote *vitae* of the hermit-preachers were members of the communities founded by these holy men. Sometimes these monasteries chose individuals outside of their defined monastic spaces to write about their founders and, accordingly, appealed to bishops to help them in their task. To request or commission an author who was not a brother of the same monastery was not unheard of in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For instance, the (Latin) *vita* of Robert of La Chaise-Dieu, hermit and founder of the Benedictine monastery of the same name, was written by the accomplished author Marbode of Rennes, whose services were requested by the abbot Seguin of Escotay.¹⁷ What this case shows is that turning to 'outsiders' to write the life of the founder was not a rare occurrence, even if it was slightly more unusual.

Like the example cited above, both the *Vita Beati Roberti de Arbrissello* [hereafter *Vita Roberti*] and the *Vita Beati Vitalis Saviniacensis* [hereafter *Vita Vitalis*], the *vitae* of the hermit-preachers Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny, were produced by those who were not part of the monastic communities of Fontevraud or Savigny. The authors of these works not only held notable positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy but were also extremely well connected. Because of this, we know considerably more about them than those monks discussed above, and their literary and documentary output was higher. The first produced of the two was the *Vita Roberti*, written by Archbishop Baudri of Dol (or of Bourgueil), sometime shortly after Robert of Arbrissel's death in 1118 and he identified himself in the text.¹⁸ Baudri was, therefore, Robert's contemporary. Furthermore, since Baudri's previous monastery of Bourgueil was only some twenty kilometres from Fontevraud, it was likely that the two men knew each other personally. It is also not inconceivable that Baudri would have heard Robert preach. We know from his *Itinerarium* that the archbishop certainly travelled, as he vehemently disliked Brittany.¹⁹ Perhaps Baudri stood in the audience when Robert preached on one of his tours. As well as being Robert's contemporary, moreover, Baudri was a talented and skilful author in his own right. He is often studied for his poetry, and he produced a long verse for Countess Adela of Blois, the daughter of William the Conqueror, which described her bedroom and the tapestries therein. He was obviously a man of great learning and had an exemplary education.

The second text, the *Vita Vitalis*, was written by Stephen of Fougères, Bishop of Rennes, who had previously been King Henry II's chaplain and scribe.²⁰ Later in life,

¹⁷ Marbode of Rennes, *Vita Beati Roberti*, ed. Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Firenze, 1995), bk. 2.1, p. 38.

¹⁸ Baudri of Dol, 'Vita Beati Roberti de Arbrissello auctore Baldrico Episcopo Dolensi', in *PL* 162, chap. 1.5, col. 1046A. Baudri is sometimes called 'of Bourgueil' because he was abbot of the monastery before he became Archbishop.

¹⁹ Cf. Baudri of Dol, 'Itinerarium', in *PL* 163, chap. 1.1, cols. 1173B–C; Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.2, col. 1045A.

²⁰ Stephen was not, as is commonly stated, a member of the Fougères family who were heavily involved in the foundation and life of Savigny, and he does not appear in any charter concerning the

after his election to the bishopric of Rennes in 1168, Stephen seems to have been still proud of his previous position, and styled the beginning of his charters concerning Savigny as such: *Ego Stephanus, Redonensis ecclesie presbyter/episcopus et regis Anglie capellanus...*²¹ Stephen did not identify himself in Vitalis of Savigny's *Life*, but his authorship was affirmed by Robert of Torigni.²² The abbot of Mont Saint-Michel also attributed another *vita* to Stephen – that of the Mortain hermit William Firmat – but there are problems with this ascription that have yet to be resolved satisfactorily.²³ Nevertheless, whether or not the bishop of Rennes wrote the *Vita Firmati*, there was certainly an interesting story of how Stephen came to write saintly literature since he had previously written verse and song.²⁴ In his old age, Robert of Torigni tells us, Stephen had a miraculous vision in which a voice told him renounce playful things (which meant, Robert clarified, the earlier rhymes and songs Stephen had written) and to lift himself out of the dust.²⁵ In effect, he wrote the *vitae* of Vitalis and William as penitence for his earlier whimsical works.

Although Vitalis of Savigny and Stephen of Fougères were not contemporaries and Stephen never knew the hermit-preacher personally, it is clear that the bishop knew of Savigny through several different avenues. First, Stephen probably knew much about the monastery through his relationship with King Henry II. The Plantagenet ruler was a generous benefactor of Savigny, and had formed a close spiritual bond with a monk

family. Rather, he seems to have gained the toponym because he actually came from the town itself. See M. Pigeon, 'Etienne de Fougères et les Cisterciens', *Cîteaux: commentarii cistercienses* 31 (1980), p. 181. For the Fougères genealogy, see Daniel Power, *The Norman Frontier in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 499. The error that Stephen came from the Fougères family probably originated from Claude Auvry, which E.P. Sauvage perpetuated in his edition of the *Vita Vitalis*. See Auvry, *Savigny*, p. 13, and Sauvage in *VVS*, p. 356. See also the (outdated) entry for Stephen in the *HLF* 14, pp. 10–11. Thanks to palaeographic work, we know Stephen's hand and the charters that he drafted during his time in Henry II's court. See V.H. Galbraith, 'Seven Charters of Henry II at Lincoln Cathedral', *The Antiquaries' Journal* 12:3 (1932), pp. 269–78; T.A.M. Bishop, 'A Chancery Scribe: Stephen of Fougères', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10:1 (1950), pp. 106–7. V.H. Galbraith identified ten charters he thought to be by Stephen of Fougères to which Bishop added four more.

²¹ See, for example, BN NAL 2500 *Liber cartarum domus Savignei*, ed. Paul de Farcy, no. 15, f. 429, no. 49, f. 476 and no. 51, f. 479. As of yet there is no full printed edition of Savigny's cartulary but there are four complete transcriptions. See Béatrice Poulle, 'Savigny and England', in David Bates and Anne Curry (eds), *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1994), p. 160. I have only had access to two of these: that of Léopold Delisle (BN, NAL 1022) and that cited here by Paul de Farcy (BN, NAL 2500).

²² Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 74.

²³ For the text see 'Vita Sancti Guillelmi Firmati', in E.A. Pigeon (ed.), *Texte français et latin des vies des Saints du diocèse de Coutances et Avranches avec des notions préliminaires et l'histoire des reliques de chaque Saint, etc.* (Paris, 1892), pp. 398–417. The text is also printed in the *AASS*, 24 April, pp. 336–44. Here, I use E.A. Pigeon's version of the *vita*. For one argument over the attribution of the text to Stephen of Fougères see van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, pp. 54–6. Further study is needed.

²⁴ The only remaining verse of Stephen's is the *Livre des manières*. See Stephen of Fougères, *Le livre des manières*, ed. R. Anthony Lodge (Genève, 1979).

²⁵ Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 2, pp. 73–4.

there named Hamo during the 1150s or 1160s.²⁶ While Stephen was in the court of the king, therefore, Henry II was patronising the monastery and receiving spiritual advice from a Savigniac monk. Surely Stephen knew of this state of affairs. Secondly, Stephen wrote charters for two Savigniac daughter houses: Foucarmont, in the north of France, and Furness, in the north of England.²⁷ Hence he must have been aware of the Savigniac congregation and maybe knew a bit of their history and foundation by the hermit-preacher Vitalis. Thirdly, Stephen was apparently cantor of Mortain just before he became bishop of Rennes.²⁸ Like the distance between Bourgueil and Fontevraud, Mortain was also some twenty kilometres from Savigny. Furthermore, according to Stephen's own text, Vitalis had previously served as the chaplain to the Count of Mortain.²⁹ The future bishop of Rennes was very close to where Vitalis had actually lived and conducted his spiritual life. Many parts of Stephen's life therefore came into close contact with those who knew about the hermit-preacher, particularly with monks from Savigny.

The main narratives of Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny's lives were thus created by bishops, not the monastic community. Nonetheless, these texts were written at the *behest* of Fontevraud and Savigny. Baudri of Dol, for instance, wrote of this request directly and repeatedly, saying that the abbess of Fontevraud Petronilla of Chemillé had 'instructed' him, and that in writing the text he was 'acquiescing to the wishes of the nuns of Fontevraud'.³⁰ The work was also addressed directly to Petronilla and her sisters.³¹ If it was Petronilla who requested the text personally from the author, it seems that Baudri understood it as desired by the *whole* community not just the abbess, hence the address of the work. Similarly the *Vita Vitalis* was clearly requested by Savigny, which Vitalis had founded. Although there was no address, Stephen of Fougères used language that indicated the text was both written at Savigny's behest and was directed towards them. Early on in the *vita*, for example, the author proclaimed: 'Rejoice, Churches of Savigny, and be delighted that you merited having

²⁶ For Henry II's benefaction see Marjorie Chibnall, 'The Changing Expectations of a Royal Benefactor: The Religious Patronage of Henry II', in Emilia Jamroziak and Janet Burton (eds), *Religious and Laity in Western Europe, 1000-1400: Interaction, Negotiation, and Power* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 15–16; F.R. Swietek, 'King Henry II and Savigny', *Cîteaux: commentarii cistercienses* 38:1 (1987), pp. 20–1. For details of Hamo of Savigny and his relationship with Henry II see Lorna E.M. Walker, 'Hamo of Savigny and His Companions: Failed Saints?', *Journal of Medieval History* 30:1 (2004), pp. 45–60.

²⁷ *Recueil des actes de Henri II: Roi d'Angleterre et Duc de Normandie*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris, 1909), pp. 96–7.

²⁸ In one Stephen was called 'precentor', the other 'cantor'. See *Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁹ For Vitalis' time with the Count of Mortain see Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.5–7, pp. 362–4, and Brian Golding, 'The Religious Patronage of Robert and William of Mortain', in Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (eds), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 220–1.

³⁰ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.2, col. 1044C, chap. 1.5, col. 1046B.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Prologue, col. 1043A.

such a great and wise founder!’³² Undoubtedly this was directed at the monks of the same monastery. Furthermore, at the beginning of the second book of the *vita*, Stephen wrote that he had meant to finish the text shortly, but those who requested the life were compelling him to add more because they had acquired more information from Vitalis’ disciples who were still living.³³ This could only have been the Savigniac monks. The communities, therefore, were the instigators of the texts’ creation, which is underlined by the preservation of the texts in the very same monasteries, as we shall see shortly.

So the authors of both the *Vita Vitalis* and the *Vita Roberti* were not part of the monastic communities who sought to record in writing the deeds of their founder. In short, these communities were ‘outsourcing’ the memorialisation of the hermit-preachers. This is not to say that these communities wrote nothing of these men. We shall see throughout this study that Fontevraud and Savigny both recorded things about the holy men in text. Nevertheless these works that were produced, particularly in Savigny’s case, were incorporated into the *vitae* and many of the originals lost. To study the hermit-preachers is thus to study the end result of a process. This underlines why we must approach the hermit-preachers through the texts, the authors, and their relationship with the communities founded by the hermit-preachers. This relationship defined the construction of these men in so far as the communities dictated what information was provided for the authors, which was then woven or simply inserted into the narrative *vitae*. Importantly, since although these works were also community constructions, the production of the text depended upon the relationship and information flow between the community and the author. In these two cases just outlined, there were *degrees* of community construction. One can see the community in some parts, and the author in others. After all, both Baudri of Dol and Stephen of Fougères were not monks in communities that Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny founded, however well connected they were. Community commission did not result in an entirely community-led construction, and sometimes, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, the communities were not entirely happy with the product.

Medieval contemporaries, however, did not just write about those hermit-preachers who were celebrated. Narratives were also produced about the condemned hermit-preachers Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys. The texts however, with one exception, were significantly shorter in length than the *vitae* described above and responded to particular concerns about the hermit-preachers rather than being documentation of their whole life. Correspondingly, these works were not of one ‘genre’ like the *vitae*, but included letters, tracts, and histories. It is from this motley collection of works that we know about Henry and Peter. What is more, the authors of these works were neither members of the communities that the hermit-preachers had

³² ‘Laetare, Savigniensis Ecclesias, et jocundare, quae tantum tamque sapientem fundatorem meruisti habere!’, Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.1, p. 359.

³³ *Ibid.*, bk. 2.1, pp. 371–2.

gathered around themselves, nor had they any contact with their following. Further to this, although a few of these authors were monks, they saw themselves as writing on behalf of the community of the Christian faithful rather than a defined monastic community. As such, these authors thus reflected a profound difference in *perspective* compared to those who wrote about figures such as Bernard of Tiron or Vitalis of Savigny. Let us start by exploring the monks who wrote about the two hermit-preachers deemed heretical.

Both monks who wrote about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were well known to medieval contemporaries and indeed were outstanding – and outspoken – figures in their own time: Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable. Both of these individuals had a remarkable influence over the events of the twelfth century and both were figureheads for their respective monastic orders. Both, moreover, wrote much during the course of their lives and it is within these works that we find documents relating to Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys. For Henry, there are two letters pertinent to the hermit-preacher in the letter collections of Bernard of Clairvaux, one addressed to Count Alphonsus of Saint-Gilles, and the second to the people of Toulouse written upon Bernard's return from a preaching tour.³⁴ Conversely, Peter the Venerable wrote a lengthy doctrinal tract against the five supposed principal tenets of Peter of Bruys and his followers' (dubbed the Petrobrusians) beliefs, entitled *Contra Petrobrusianos Hereticos* [hereafter *Contra Petrobrusianos*].³⁵ Because I am primarily concerned with narratives, I will not explore the full content of this text throughout this work. Still, we must understand that authors were engaged in writing documents trying to counteract heretical beliefs on a doctrinal level, and the prefatory letter to this tract, moreover, is illuminating as to how Peter the Venerable discovered information about Peter of Bruys and hence shows communications about heretics across Christendom.

Despite the fact that both Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable came from coenobitic communities, neither were 'traditional' monks. Bernard, for example, spent much of his time in the world rather than apart from it. On this basis, John R. Sommerfeldt has commented pithily that contemporaries probably knew Bernard as *from* Clairvaux rather *of* Clairvaux, considering that conservative estimates suggest that he spent a third of his adult life outside of his monastery.³⁶ Bernard showed in his letters that he was acutely aware of his own position, and that it caused him a great deal of anguish. He suffered, he told his brothers at Clairvaux, not only because he was away from them but because, in his own words, 'I am forced to move in affairs that entirely disturb the peace of my soul, and perhaps are not so fitting with my

³⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', cols. 434A–6A; Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Epistola 242', in *PL* 182, cols. 436B–7C.

³⁵ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos Hereticos*, ed. James Fearn (Turnhout, 1968). I explore the dating of this text below.

³⁶ John R. Sommerfeldt, *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Spirituality of Relationship* (New Jersey, 2004), p. 114.

vocation.³⁷ 'I am a certain chimaera of my age', he wrote on another occasion, 'neither cleric nor layman. For long ago I cast aside the monastic life, but not the habit.'³⁸ Bernard obviously felt that he belonged nowhere; his vocation mixed with his pastoral obligations put him in a unique position. The abbot of Clairvaux's suffering and his sense of displacement has been dealt with in greater depth elsewhere so I need say little more about it.³⁹ Nevertheless, it serves to show that Bernard was not a 'traditional' coenobitic monk. Certainly when he wrote about heretics in particular Bernard saw himself as operating within Christendom, as in the *ecclesia Dei*, rather than in his specific monastic community. Beverly Mayne Kienzle aptly characterised as a 'process from turning from inside to out... from the domestic to the Lord's vineyard.'⁴⁰ In this way, he acted as a member of the Christian faithful, rather than a brother of a specific monastic community.

Peter the Venerable was little different. He too spent much time in the world rather than in the cloister and felt the same sense of responsibility for the wider Christian community. When fighting the Petrobrusians, for instance, his focus was broad, according to Dominique Iogna-Prat, and it was as if 'the Church was a vast monastery'.⁴¹ These were not, therefore, the same kind of monastic authors that we have encountered thus far. Though Bernard and Peter wrote with many of the same monastic conventions and emotions – we cannot divorce them absolutely from Clairvaux and Cluny – their sense of duty to the world outside of the monastery was completely different to that of their brothers. Both wrote, therefore, as part of their responsibilities to the world, and part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church (as imagined as a community), rather than as part of their responsibilities as abbots of specific monastic communities.

Two other texts were written about Henry of Lausanne, whose authors were not monks but more obviously members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The first was entitled *Contra Henricum Scismaticum et Hereticum* [hereafter *Contra Henricum*]. This work was a doctrinal tract that dealt with six erroneous propositions of Henry, apparently taken

³⁷ '...versari compellor in his quae amicam quietem omnino perturbant, et meo proposito minus fortasse conveniunt', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Epistola CXLIII', in *PL* 182, col. 299B.

³⁸ 'Ego enim quaedam chimaera mei saeculi, nec clericum gero, nec laicum. Nam monachi jamdudum exui conversationem, non habitum', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Epistola CCL', in *PL* 182, col. 451A.

³⁹ This has generally been discussed in scholarship with regard to Bernard's chimaera imagery. See, for example, Adriaan H. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 186–93; Constable, *Reformation*, p. 25; Christopher Holdsworth, 'Bernard, chimera of his age', in Robert G. Benson and Eric W. Naylor (eds), *Essays in Honor of Edward B. King* (Sewanee, 1991), pp. 147–63; John R. Sommerfeldt, *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (New Jersey, 2004), pp. 104–119; Sommerfeldt, *Spirituality of Relationship*, pp. 114–23.

⁴⁰ See Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229* (York, 2001), pp. 8–9, quote at p. 9.

⁴¹ Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism and Islam (1000-1150)*, trans. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca and London, 2002), p. 107. See also *Ibid.*, p. 101 on Peter's sense of responsibility to the wider world outside of the monastery.

from a work that he had written himself.⁴² The author identified himself in the title of the text as one 'William the Monk' (*Guilelmus Monachi*).⁴³ Monique Zerner, whose work has overturned decades of faulty historical assumptions about the text, and whose very recent transcription of a Niçois manuscript has allowed us access to it for the very first time, believes this to have been William, Archbishop of Arles.⁴⁴ Interestingly, William was not only the same archbishop to whom Peter the Venerable addressed the *Contra Petrobrusianos*, he was also later a papal legate, indicating that he held a certain level of authority within Christendom.⁴⁵ As such, William was surely writing about Henry as part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church, and his commitment to the unity of the Christian faith.

The second work was the *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in Urbe Degentium* [hereafter *Actus Pontificum*]. This text, however, was of a slightly different nature to those above, as instead of being focused solely on one hermit-preacher, it was a narrative of the deeds of the bishops of Le Mans, compiled by numerous authors from the ninth to the thirteenth century.⁴⁶ Only a section of the work was dedicated to Henry, part of the *Gesta Hildeberti*.⁴⁷ As this passage has been dated c.1137, we can assume that the author was probably a near contemporary of Bishop Hildebert who died in 1133, and he was thought to have been a canon of the cathedral church of Le Mans.⁴⁸ He may

⁴² For references to this work by Henry see William the Monk, 'Contra Henricum Scismaticum et Hereticum', in Monique Zerner (ed.), *Contre Henri schismatique et hérétique: Suivi de contre les hérétiques et schismatiques*, SC 541 (Paris, 2011), chap. 1.8, p. 168, chap. 2.5, p. 180, chap. 3.1, p. 182, chap. 4.1, p. 192. For more on the significance of this work, see below.

⁴³ *CH*, p. 154.

⁴⁴ Until the publication of her pivotal article in 1998, the *Contra Henricum* was thought to have been edited by Raoul Manselli in 1953. See Raoul Manselli, 'Il monaco Enrico e la sua eresia', *Bulletino dell'Instituto Storico Italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 65 (1953), pp. 1–63. Zerner upended Manselli's transcription, showing that the Italian scholar had started from incorrect assumptions about the Parisian manuscript from which he worked, and that in fact he had transcribed a document which came from a very different context, written between 1180-1190, which was called the *Contra Hereticos* (though the BN catalogue still records the text as *Contra Henricum*. See BN Lat. 3371.). For her argument see Monique Zerner, 'Au temps de l'appel aux armes contra les hérétiques: du "Contra Henricum" du moine Guillaume aux "Contra Hereticos"', in Monique Zerner (ed.), *Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition* (Nice, 1998), pp. 119–56. Subsequently, Zerner has provided critical editions and French translations of both the *Contra Henricum* and the *Contra Hereticos*. See Monique Zerner, *Contre Henri*, esp. pp. 17–22 for authorship and dating. As a consequence of Zerner's scholarship, those translations of the *Contra Henricum* (sic) made from Manselli's work appearing in two oft-quoted and used collections of sources on heresy – R.I. Moore's *The Birth of Popular Heresy* and Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans' *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* – should be disregarded. Likewise, one should bear in mind that those works which discuss Henry published prior to Zerner's work are likely to have been influenced by the mistranscription of Manselli.

⁴⁵ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, p. 3. On William as the addressee and legate see also Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, p. 111.

⁴⁶ For the purpose, construction, and borrowing from the principles of the *Liber Pontificalis*, see Walter Goffart, *The Le Mans Forgeries* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 39–41.

⁴⁷ *AP*, pp. 407–15.

⁴⁸ R. Latouche, 'Essai de critique sur la continuation des *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in Urbe Degentium* (857-1255)', *Le Moyen Âge* 11 (1907), pp. 247–63, esp. pp. 261–3 for the author as a

have been, therefore, an eye-witness to Henry's actions within the city or had heard tales from those who were. Most importantly, he was also a member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and undoubtedly wrote as such when he turned to discuss the impact of Henry upon his city.

Medieval contemporaries were thus not solely interested in figures whom they could venerate and did not shy away from documenting the darker (or satanic) elements of Christendom. Indeed, some authors saw it as their responsibility. There was a stark difference, however, between those who wrote of individuals to be celebrated, and those who wrote of individuals who were damned. The monks who wrote about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were more likely to have been prominent individuals who became, through their works and efforts, spokesmen for Christianity and for orthodoxy. By comparison, those who wrote about the four hermit-preachers who were celebrated were more likely to have been more obscure, or even anonymous, authors. While this dichotomy was not necessarily that concrete, as the author of the *Actus Pontificum* demonstrates, this general difference between authorship suggests that there were different factors at play when choosing to write about individuals who were considered either heretical or orthodox. Certainly when we come to explore the reasons for writing we shall see, perhaps in contradiction to what one might expect, that those hermit-preachers deemed heretical were seen as having a broader use for the whole of the Christian community of the faithful.

Interestingly, even though all of the extant texts about the condemned hermit-preachers were written by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, we do have allusions to a text written or dictated by Henry of Lausanne himself, as mentioned above. We know that Henry was literate since Bernard of Clairvaux described him as *litteratus*.⁴⁹ Furthermore, in his prefatory letter to the *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Peter the Venerable remarked that he had seen a volume which was said to have been written down from Henry's own words.⁵⁰ These statements support the continual references throughout the *Contra Henricum* in which Bishop William of Arles said that he was responding directly to a text that Henry had written.⁵¹ Regrettably, however, this text has not survived. The loss or perhaps even the deliberate suppression of the work means that we have no 'inside perspective' for the hermit-preacher's life and beliefs. We do not know what he thought, aside from the six doctrinal errors that William laid out in the *Contra Henricum*. While not so unusual in itself, any community or following he had is also historically mute. This is distorting since it means we can only ever see Henry through individuals who were seeking to elucidate and refine what a heretic was.

canon. Cf. John S. Ott, 'Authority, Heresy and Popular Devotion: Le Mans (1116) Reconsidered', in Susan Karant-Nunn (ed.), *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2003), p. 103, n. 13., for the date of the text.

⁴⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, col. 435C.

⁵⁰ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Praefatio, p. 5.

⁵¹ See above, n. 42.

Yet this charge could also be levelled at those texts that sought to venerate an individual. The authors who wrote these must have also had thoughts of orthodoxy and heresy at the forefront of their minds when they made their protagonists into exemplary models of sanctity. Both, therefore, tried to mould their subjects into rhetorical categories that by no means reflected a 'binary' reality. Before we discuss this further however, we will explore how the dynamics between the community and the author functioned to produce such works.

Community Constructions

There are myriad ways in which we can see that these texts were community constructions, stemming from both oral and written traditions. From stories told by other members of the community to insertions of verse, these narrative texts were scattered with references showing both communication and collaboration between the author and the community. In some instances, *vitae* were even talked about as being 'arranged' or material 'collected' rather than written.⁵² Certainly we know the texts were edited over time; Stephen of Fougères added an extra book, Andrew of Fontevraud added what has now been divided into three extra chapters.⁵³ This tells us much not only about the production of hagiography as a genre but also what hagiography was meant to be. If material was arranged (and stories shared, and texts borrowed) we must not think of a *vita* as an unimpeded narrative flow. Rather, these texts were jumbled, sometimes messy, perhaps 'incorrect', almost by design because this was an inevitable result of their production. Breaks in the text or inconsistencies were bound to happen and this implies no particular fault on the part of the author. Exact chronologies, previously criticised in the *Vita Bernardi* in particular, were not the concern of the hagiographer.⁵⁴ One cannot criticise, or be disappointed with, a *vita* or the author of a *vita* if they are thought of in this way.⁵⁵ Seen as such, these works hold much more because they tell of information sharing and communication, how memories crystallised into text, and what medieval monks left for posterity. It shows us that these documents were founded, at some level, on interaction.

In a sense, arguing that hagiographies were community constructions is not a particularly novel suggestion. Over twenty years ago, Thomas Heffernan argued that the author of hagiographies was the community and that the narrative voice was thus collective.⁵⁶ As we understand *vitae* more and more, having been released from the

⁵² Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, Prologue, p. 357; Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.5, col. 1371A.

⁵³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.1, pp. 371–2; Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 73–5, pp. 296–8.

⁵⁴ Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 17.

⁵⁵ This is especially common in much older studies. See, for example, Johannes von Walter, 'Bernard de Thiron', *Bulletin de la commission historique et archéologique de la Mayenne* 24–25, trans. J. Cahour (1908), p. 397.

⁵⁶ Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 18–21.

grip of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sceptics, we appreciate the intricacy of their production, as shown in the introduction. But there are some caveats. First, we have never understood the texts that were written about the hermit-preachers in this way. As stated above, we know that these works were constructed to some extent but no one has pushed the argument further to suggest that these were at least in some way *community* constructions. Secondly, Heffernan did not discuss the dynamic between author and community as for him the author seems to be within the (monastic?) community.⁵⁷ But what happens if, as in two of our cases, the author was not a monk but a bishop? How does this dynamic function? This is important to consider because these were completely different types of authority. Thirdly, and this is something that I shall deal with throughout the rest of the thesis, if these documents were community constructions, what were the consequences for how the hermit-preachers were constructed throughout these texts? In scholarship thus far, as stated in the introduction, historians have simply tried to create reconstituted biographies of these men, pulling apart fact from fiction, construction from reality. This is an extremely problematic approach because it results in something false. Essentially we are just creating a new *vita* of these men but conforming to modern standards of historical study and biography. It also denies the holistic study of the works as parts are disregarded or branded as ‘untrue’.

It is not my intention here to explore in depth each and every instance of community construction as we shall see how numerous occurrences contributed to certain perceptions of the hermit-preachers throughout the rest of this thesis. Rather, here I would like to give an overview of the ways in which we can see this type of input and illustrate the relationship between the author and community.

First of all, it is clear that the authors had the cooperation of the hermit-preachers’ communities, and that oral communication was essential in the construction of their hagiographies, as it was in the creation of any *vitae*.⁵⁸ Our authors were explicit about this cooperation and many were extremely concerned with stating that their work came from testimonies, particularly eyewitness testimonies, of others. ‘Let no one mistrust our [account] that we inserted here on account of the novelty of such great things,’ Stephen of Fougères said of one particular episode in his work, ‘since we have described not our own [account] but that which we have shown to be true by the

⁵⁷ ‘[A sacred biography is] a narrative text of the *vita* of a saint written by a member of a community of belief.’ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Evelyn Birge Vitz, ‘Vie, légende, littérature: traditions orales et écrites dans les histoires des saints’, *Poétique* 72 (1987), pp. 387–402; Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, pp. 22–5; Edina Bozóky, ‘L’oralité monastique et la fabrication des légendes hagiographiques’, in Steven Vanderputten (ed.), *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 183–201. For a more ‘folkloric’ perspective on this aspect of *vitae* see Powell, ‘Folklore’, pp. 179–83.

testimony of the faithful that was given to us.⁵⁹ What Stephen thus recounted was clearly not his own recollections, but based upon those of others. Six times throughout the *vita*, as Jaap van Moolenbroek has noted, Stephen used phrases of the type 'as it is said'.⁶⁰ The bishop of Rennes was certainly very careful about citing his sources and underlining that he had independent witnesses for different episodes in Vitalis of Savigny's life. Similarly, Andrew of Fontevraud asserted that he was only able to tell a particular story illustrative of Robert of Arbrissel's mercy, when he pardoned some thieves while travelling, because a certain brother named Peter who was with Robert at the time was able to narrate it to him.⁶¹ The brothers were obviously supplying Andrew with information, and talking to each other about Robert's deeds. Elsewhere, Andrew wrote of how a musical monk used to chant about Robert.⁶² Oral did not just have to mean just the spoken word, it could also be song.

From such a perspective, the claim of gaining information 'from the reports of faithful men', which appeared in two of the *vitae*, should not be taken just as a hagiographic formula, devoid of meaning.⁶³ Instead this is evidence of the tradition of collaboration, especially considering the authors sometimes explicitly identified story-tellers. Moreover, what the phrase implies is that these reports were from members of the respective monasteries as 'faithful men' probably meant the authors' fellow monks. It would, therefore, be a mistake to disregard this comment. The phrase may have been an oft-used hagiographic formula, but it was rooted in something real.

It seems probable that there would have been more discussion of the founder within the community than that which I have cited above, and of which the authors left no direct indication. Indeed, Elisabeth van Houts has shown how there were many times and places within the monastery in which discussion could take place, however at odds the concept of monastic conversation might seem at first glance with the silence of the cloister.⁶⁴ Other examples of this type of communication in other twelfth-century *vitae* of hermits certainly support the truth of this.⁶⁵ Hence what we have in these sources is

⁵⁹ 'Nemo nostra inventa suspicetur esse, pro tantae rei novitate, quae huc inseruimus; quia, non nostra, sed quae fidelium attestazione probate sunt nobis que tradita, descripsimus', Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.6, p. 376.

⁶⁰ Van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 58.

⁶¹ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 19, p. 226.

⁶² *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 192.

⁶³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, Prologue, p. 357; Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.5, col. 1370D. Cf. Bozóky, 'L'oralité monastique', p. 193, who has called such a motif a 'hagiographic cliché' that must be treated with suspicion.

⁶⁴ Elisabeth van Houts, 'Conversations amongst Monks and Nuns, 1000-1200', in Steven Vanderputten (ed.), *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 267–92.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Vita Sancti Stephani Obazinensis (Vie de Saint Étienne d'Obazine)*, ed. Michel Aubrun (Clermont-Ferrand, 1970), bk. 2, Prologue, p. 94, and Hugh Francigena, 'Incipit tractatus de conversione Pontii de Laracio et exordii Salvaniensis monasterii vera narratio', in Beverly M. Kienzle (ed.), 'The Works of Hugo Francigena: *Tractatus de conversione Pontii de Laracio et exordii*

a strong indication of oral communication – or story-telling – between the monastic communities and the authors of the sources. Monks must have gladly swapped stories that praised their founder, and a definite sense of communication (between those who had known the hermit-preachers in life or had heard anecdotes about them, and those who were writing) pervaded the works. As a result, these sources do not simply express the individual authors' memory of the hermit-preachers but incorporate the memories of many others: a collective production resulted in a collective product.

Interestingly, stories were also being exchanged about the hermit-preachers who were eventually condemned by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The author of the *Actus Pontificum*, for example, wrote of a young cleric whom Henry of Lausanne had corrupted, but by whose *report* the heretic's 'wantonness' was completely revealed.⁶⁶ Likewise, both Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux spoke of rumours that they had heard about Peter of Bruys and Henry. In the prefatory letter of the *Contra Petrobrusianos* for example, Peter the Venerable said that he had heard (*audivi*) that Peter of Bruys had moved to a region not far from the recipients of the letter which, he claimed, was what had compelled him to write in the first place.⁶⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux said much the same when he started his letter to Count Alphonsus of Saint-Gilles: 'How much have we heard (*audivimus*) and learnt about the evil that the heretic Henry has made and makes every day in the Church of God?'⁶⁸ Here, knowledge from others inspired a specific journey rather than the production of a specific text, but Bernard could not have written the letter without others 'gossiping' about the hermit-preacher. Information sharing was still critical even though it was done within the wider Christian community rather than in the smaller monastic one. The transmission of knowledge to the authors, therefore, was crucial in the construction of the texts about all of the hermit-preachers even if it was not the hermit-preacher's own community that was disseminating the information in all cases.

Alongside oral reports, the authors also inserted previously written texts into their narratives. Sometimes this insertion was not obvious and the author not explicit about his borrowing from, or use of, other texts. In one particular case, the *Vita Bernardi*, it has been proposed that the whole work was created from different texts written before the final *vita*. Certainly discrepancies in the text are well documented, such as double episodes, inconsistencies in the spelling of names, and incorrect or even impossible chronologies.⁶⁹ When the *Vita Bernardi* was first systematically studied by

monasterii vera narratio; epistolae (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale Ms. 611) *Sacris Erudiri* 34 (1994), p. 288.

⁶⁶ *AP*, p. 412.

⁶⁷ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, p. 3.

⁶⁸ 'Quanta audivimus et cognovimus mala, quae in Ecclesiis Dei fecit et facit quotidie Henricus haereticus?', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 1, col. 434A.

⁶⁹ See, for example, von Walter, 'Bernard de Thiron', pp. 386–8; Jacques de Bascher, 'La "vita" de Saint Bernard d'Abbeville, abbé de Saint-Cyprien de Poitiers et de Tiron', *Revue Mabillon* 59 (1976/80), pp. 416–7.

Johannes von Walter, he proposed a solution to these discrepancies, suggesting that Geoffrey wrote the *Life* from two existing texts, one shorter (A) which he saw as trustworthy and exact, and one longer (B) which he saw as fabulous and only useful for one period of Bernard of Tiron's life.⁷⁰ Although von Walter never denied Geoffrey Grossus' own influence on the text, in essence he saw him acting as the redactor of these two sources. This explained, in his eyes, the double episodes and inconsistencies within the texts, and he conducted a rigorous in-depth examination of which episodes came from which source.⁷¹ Most significantly for our purposes, however, he proposed that both of these sources originated from Tironensian monks.⁷²

The *Vita Bernardi* was revisited many years later by Jacques de Bascher who substantially revised Johannes von Walter's conclusions. Instead of two sources, de Bascher insisted upon the unity of the *vita*, of one author whose style persisted throughout the whole of the text.⁷³ The solution to the chronological problems, he thought, was that Geoffrey Grossus paid particular attention to inform the reader of Bernard's earlier monastic life, but since he wrote such a time after Bernard's death he was mistaken over the length of these events and exaggerated the time span.⁷⁴ More recently, in the first full study of Bernard since von Walter, Bernard Beck took the middle ground between these two competing ideas about the *Vita Bernardi*, arguing for both a unity of the source and assigning full authorship to Geoffrey but also that specific sections were either from other texts composed earlier (such as a *sermo* within the text which he thought was a remnant of a *vita altera*) or later interpolations.⁷⁵ While I agree with de Bascher's criticisms of von Walter's methodology in particular – it was essentially pseudo-scientific – I see no reason to insist upon the *complete* unity of the source. Geoffrey Grossus himself said that he called upon many texts and he was one of the authors who spoke of material being 'collected' for such a pursuit.⁷⁶ To my mind, all three of these historians are far too focused on (and get caught up in) providing a correct chronology for Bernard of Tiron's life, the historicity of the source,

⁷⁰ Von Walter, 'Bernard de Thiron', pp. 388–9 and p. 407. Johannes von Walter's adage he used to support the trustworthiness of source A, that the shorter the source the more credence it has, is spurious. See *Ibid.*, p. 401. Interestingly, before von Walter's study the *Vita Bernardi* enjoyed an unblemished reputation. The entry for Geoffrey Grossus in the *HLF*, for example, said it was one of the better written and most 'proven' (*une des mieux écrites et des plus avérées*) works of the twelfth century. See *HLF* 12, pp. 163–4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 385–98.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 403–5.

⁷³ De Bascher, 'Bernard d'Abbeville', p. 421.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 421–2. De Bascher then gave his reconstituted chronological life of Bernard of Tiron, despite criticising von Walter for doing the same. See *Ibid.*, pp. 422–32.

⁷⁵ See Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, pp. 44–7 and p. 61 for the *sermo*, pp. 72–3 for disagreement with von Walter and pp. 48–9 for what he posited were later interpolations. The *sermo* is only available in Jean-Baptiste Souchet's version of the text at chapter sixty-three. See Geoffrey Grossus, *Beati Bernardi fundatoris et I. abbatis SS. Trinitatis de Tironio... vita, auctore... Gaufrido Grosso.*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Souchet (Paris, 1649), pp. 125–35. It is not to be confused with another section of interpolated speech in the text – a sermon supposedly preached by Bernard of Tiron at Coutances in Normandy. Accordingly, I refer to these as the *sermo* and sermon respectively.

⁷⁶ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.5, col. 1371A.

and the trustworthiness of the author. Although perhaps important in some contexts, this has a tendency to overlook how Bernard himself was constructed in the *vita* as a whole (and thus how we know the hermit-preacher today). Furthermore, the ‘historical figure’ of the hermit-preacher, whom von Walter and de Bascher both sought, is not the focus of this work. What we should appreciate is that the *Life* was written from a variety of sources. Suffice to say, the *Vita Bernardi* was most definitely a (Tironensian) community construction.

Similar to the case of the *Vita Bernardi*, when Marie-Odile Lenglet studied the *Vita Giraldi*, she argued that the work also came from other extant texts and proposed three distinct sections of the hagiography, two authors, anachronisms, insertions of other documents, and parts of the text in which stories were attributed to Gerald but were actually the actions of others.⁷⁷ Like Johannes von Walter before her, Lenglet tried to identify which parts of the hagiography came from different authors or texts and systematically analysed each chapter of Gerald’s *Life*. Certainly, the *vita* was a complex work, and Lenglet’s analysis is currently the only modern exploration to date.

Within this diverse collection of texts woven into a whole, Lenglet suggested there was a *vita prima* written by one of Gerald’s disciples very soon after his death in 1120, which formed the foundation of the first part of the text. Yet I cannot completely agree with Lenglet’s analysis. If sections seven to eleven of the *vita* were written solely by the author of what she identified as the *vita prima*, then how can we explain verbatim borrowing (unnoticed by Lenglet) from Bernard of Clairvaux’s *Liber de vita et rebus gestis S. Malachiae Hiberniae episcopi* [hereafter *Vita Malachiae*] in the final section?⁷⁸ Moreover, the first paragraph of the entire work, particularly sentences that Lenglet attributed to the author of the *vita prima*, also show remarkable similarities to the first chapter of the *Vita Malachiae*.⁷⁹ This being the case, these parts of the texts cannot have been written that soon after Gerald’s death since Malachy’s *Life* was not written until after his death in 1148, twenty-eight years after the hermit-preacher. My discovery of intertextuality between the *Vita Giraldi* and *Vita Malachiae* thus challenges Lenglet’s dating and, in turn, her hypothesis about the text’s construction. Furthermore, there is certainly at least one other case of textual borrowing which Lenglet failed to note: a miracle story that was remarkably similar to that told in two thirteenth-century Cistercian miracle collections.⁸⁰ Undoubtedly the *Vita Giraldi* is in need of an independent study to resolve these problems with Lenglet’s work.

Nevertheless, these cases suggest that Châteliers had copies of these texts and were engaging with Cistercian hagiographic and miraculous literature. In this case, this was not so much borrowing from texts about the hermit-preacher as applying other texts to

⁷⁷ Lenglet, ‘Geraud de Sales’, pp. 7–40.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.

⁸⁰ For full details of this see chapter three of this study, pp. 110–112.

the hermit-preacher. This suggests that what was in the monastery's library was critical in the resultant *vita* and thus the image of the hermit-preacher. What Lenglet also showed was how the text was formed from a dossier of materials, which had been collected over time.⁸¹ This was an astute choice of words: like Geoffrey Grossus, the Châteliers monk acted as a redactor as well as an author.

Other than these analyses of the *vitae* as a whole, it is clear that other texts written before their construction were added into the hermit-preachers' *Lives*. In two of the hagiographies, for example, there was verse inserted into the text. The author of the *Vita Giraldi* inserted three lines of verse into his first chapter, for example, saying that a certain person had commended the holy man with the interpolated verse.⁸² In the *Vita Bernardi*, by comparison, there were not just three lines but sections of verse scattered throughout the text, and in total, fourteen chapters in which the prose gave way to poetry. Indeed, the disjunction between verse and prose that sometimes occurred suggests that Geoffrey was copying from another text and that he was not trying to smooth the poetry into the hagiographic narrative.⁸³ While the exact author or form of these original verses is unknown, it is easy to envisage that monks from the same communities had memorialised their founders in verse which, in turn, could be used for the *vita*. What is more if, as François Dolbeau has proposed, hagiographic verse was intended for private devotion and reading, then this shows that personal veneration of these holy men was occurring in the monasteries before these *vitae* were written, and that this personal veneration was then included in the community record of the *vita*.⁸⁴ The continual remembrance of the hermit-preacher by his community thus contributed to later documents of remembrance.

In other cases, extant texts that were used are easier to identify because the author directly signposted the reader by telling them that what followed was from another source. For instance, two of the works studied here used the encyclical letters of *Rotuli*

⁸¹ Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', p. 38.

⁸² VGS, chap. 1.1, p. 254. Louis Duval suggested that this was the remnants of a verse life, though this could also have been a verse from a mortuary roll. See Louis Duval, 'Notice sur l'abbaye royale de Notre-Dame des Chatelliers', in L. Clouzot (ed.), *Mémoires de la Société de statistique, sciences, lettres et arts du département des Deux-Sèvres, Niort* (Niort, 1867), p. xi. See also Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', p. 18 and 32. For mortuary rolls and the representation of the reputation of their subject see also chapter two of this thesis, pp. 69–72.

⁸³ Johannes von Walter stated that it was difficult to determine whether the verse came from source B or the redactor but I see no reason why this could not have been a different source entirely. To my eyes, the text was certainly far more poetic than anything else in the *vita*. See von Walter, 'Bernard de Thiron', p. 398. On this verse see also Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, pp. 59–60. Beck seems to have changed his opinion, stating in the latter piece that the verse was borrowed from an extant text held in the library at Tiron but attributing it to Geoffrey Grossus in the former. See Bernard Beck, 'Bernard de Tiron ou l'impossible sainteté d'après la *Vita Beati Bernardi* de Geoffrey le Gros', in Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds), *Les Saints dans la Normandie médiévale* (Caen, 2000), p. 297.

⁸⁴ François Dolbeau, 'Un domaine négligé de la littérature médiolatine: Les textes hagiographiques en vers', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 45 (2002), pp. 129–39.

or mortuary rolls of the hermit-preachers to embellish their texts. These necrological documents were written upon the death of a notable figure in order to notify others of his death. An encyclical letter was attached to the top of a roll, written by the community from which the person came, and then sent to others by way of a messenger. At each stop on the given route, the roll would be signed with a *titulus*, showing acknowledgement of the death and offering prayers.⁸⁵ If the person was particularly notable, these *Rotuli* could be very long.

As stated, two of our texts inserted sections from these documents. The monk from Châteliens, for example, inserted what is thought to be the encyclical letter that would have accompanied Gerald of Sales' mortuary roll into the *Vita Giraldi*, but since this did not come from the monastic community itself, is more likely to be one of the *tituli*.⁸⁶ The inclusion of this work was directly signaled in the *vita*. Likewise, Stephen of Fougères copied Vitalis of Savigny's encyclical letter in the *Vita Vitalis*.⁸⁷ Presumably the Savigniac monks provided him with a copy although coming in book two of the text, which was a later addition, one assumes that the monks did not give him the document until they had already seen the first section of the work. Nonetheless, a document written by the community of Savigny was thus directly woven into the *vita* by its author. In addition to these two examples, Johannes von Walter hypothesised that the shorter source A of the *Vita Bernardi* was actually Bernard's mortuary roll – one assumes he meant encyclical letter.⁸⁸ Considering the above two examples, this is not so far-fetched in principle but it is somewhat at odds with the practices of Stephen of Fougères and the Châteliens monk, since Geoffrey did not insert this uncut. What we can conclude though is that the communities had preserved these necrological documents, and that they were within easy reach of our authors when writing their narratives.

Besides these stories and works, there were many other biblical, patristic, and earlier hagiographic texts that were used by the authors. To my mind, the use of these both justified and situated the actions of their subjects. In many ways this was to be expected. The Bible was, after all, central to the medieval conception of the world.⁸⁹ The process of monastic learning also meant that monks wrote within a memorial biblical framework, in which pertinent biblical passages could be retrieved by mnemonic cues.⁹⁰ In this sense, certain acts could provoke the memorial retrieval of

⁸⁵ For details of *Rotuli* see N. Huyghebaert, *Les documents nécrologiques* (Turnhout, 1972), pp. 26–32.

⁸⁶ VGS, chap. 2.18, p. 258; William of Poitiers *et al.*, 'Encyclique sur la mort du B. Giraud de Salles', in Léopold V. Delisle (ed.), *Rouleaux des morts du IXe au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1866), pp. 280–1; Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', pp. 15–16. Henceforth I cite only the *vita*.

⁸⁷ Stephen of Fougères, VVS, bk. 2.13–14, pp. 380–3.

⁸⁸ Von Walter, 'Bernard de Thiron', pp. 403–4.

⁸⁹ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1983).

⁹⁰ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2008).

biblical verses. It is also important to recognise that the bible was also a community language, and the scriptural voice of the whole of the Christian community, the significance of which will become clear in the following chapters. Furthermore, the 'genre' of hagiography was informed by its own long literary tradition: the writers thus borrowed from previous *vitae* and appropriated hagiographic motifs. There is no need to say more about this here, as we shall see the use of such literature in future chapters, but the biblical, patristic, and hagiographic literary base should be acknowledged when discussing the process of construction as it was integral to this process.

From the above exploration of community input into the texts one might question why it was first necessary to describe the authors at all. Why focus upon the person who only transcribed and told the stories of others? Was he not just a vector for the designs of the community? The issue is complex. On the one hand, there are ways in which one could identify authorial agency within the sources. First, as shown above, the author may have been a contemporary of the hermit-preacher, claiming to be an eyewitness to certain events that he then recorded in text. This demonstrates control over certain portions of the text, and acknowledges the importance of the author himself and his memories.⁹¹ There were places too, where the author was seemingly expressing his own thoughts, notably when he switched from the first person plural to the singular: 'I say', not 'we say'.⁹² Secondly, one could posit that it was our authors who were responsible for the 'finished product' as we know it, and that it was their decisions that created the *vitae* we have today and thus the perception of the hermit-preachers. In this sense, the author could have played a fundamental role in the creation of these men as text because he wove the stories together, however clumsily. Thirdly, and intrinsically related to the previous point, is that while the hermit-preachers may have been spoken or sung of, written about, or memorialised in verse, we have none of these sources, only that which we see through the *vitae*. By writing these texts these authors preserved much and it is their agency that is responsible for this preservation. From this perspective, it appears that we should not neglect the figure of the author himself.

On the other hand, however, one could also propose that the author himself was, in a sense, a community construction: this is where the issue becomes more complicated. For those who wrote about the hermit-preachers had been inducted into a monastic community, inculcated through the novitiate. Indeed, St Benedict wrote in his monastic rule that after taking the monastic vow, the novice would be thought of as one of the

⁹¹ See for example Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.5, col. 1370D. Cf. Beck, 'Bernard de Tiron ou l'impossible sainteté', p. 295.

⁹² See for example, *VGS*, chap. 1.8, p. 255.

community.⁹³ As such, the author's views, values, and perspectives – even his voice in a literary sense – would have been affected by both the specific monastic community of which he was part and the more general deep-rooted sense of monastic community that had existed for centuries. The assembling of the narratives too, may have already been partially or largely completed by the community before they were transcribed by a member of that very same community. Seen in this way, this is not a matter of untangling the community and the author to separate the two influences upon the narratives but, rather, recognition that there was not a clear-cut distinction between monastic author and monastic community.⁹⁴

Yet what of the authors outside of the communities, external to the monasteries? Here, there were degrees of community construction. The reader may have noticed that I have not referred to Baudri of Dol and his *Vita Roberti* as a community construction thus far. In fact the *Vita Roberti* is illustrative of the difficulties that could be faced by an author if the community was not forthcoming with information. At the start of his text, Baudri declared himself overwhelmed with the task ahead of him, not least because Abbess Petronilla had provided him with notes that '...contained next to nothing about Lord Robert.'⁹⁵ This not only highlights possible sources of tension between the author and the community, but also implies that it was common practice for the community to provide information. Petronilla gave Baudri notes and this information flow from community to author was the community's responsibility. Nevertheless because of the paltry information given by Fontevraud, Baudri had to rely upon his own knowledge of his subject perhaps more so than any other author in this study. It was undoubtedly the text that was least influenced by the hermit-preachers' community. Two reasons for this spring to mind. First, Baudri did not have close contact with Fontevraud – as Stephen of Fougères had with Savigny – and this would have influenced what the community told or gave to the bishop. Secondly, the immediacy of the text after Robert's death must have affected what could be provided for such a document. There had been little time to memorialise Robert in other documents that could be used for the textual construction of his *Life*. Yet as we have seen Andrew of Fontevraud had no such problems collecting testimonies for his text.

⁹³ On the process of receiving new monks and the novitiate in the Rule of Benedict see *Regula Benedicti (La règle de Saint Benoît)*, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Jean Neufville, 7 vols, SC 181-6 (Paris, 1972-7), vol. 2, chap. 58, pp. 626–32.

⁹⁴ For a similar, yet more modern, approach to the author see Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *The Rustle of Language* trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 49–55. For another poststructuralist view of the 'author' see also Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault* (Ithaca, 1977), pp. 113–38, and for a recent theory of the author and community as related to medieval literature see Slavica Ranković, 'Who Is Speaking in Traditional Texts? On the Distributed Author in the Sagas of the Icelanders and Serbian Epic Poetry', *New Literary History* 38:2 (2007), pp. 293–307, and Slavica Ranković, 'Communal Memory of the Distributed Author: Applicability of the Connectionist Model of Memory to the Study of Traditional Narratives', in Lucie Doležalová (ed.), *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 9–26.

⁹⁵ '...prope nihil de domino Roberto continebant', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.2, cols. 1045A–1045B.

Communication abounded within the monastery but was seemingly more precarious between the bishop of Dol and the brothers and sisters of Fontevraud. It is difficult to know exactly why this was the case, but the fact that Andrew lived in the monastery surely eased communication matters.

These degrees of community influence existed in other texts also. Despite the clearly good relationship Stephen of Fougères had with Savigny, in certain parts of the *Vita Vitalis* he added his own opinion on matters, again signified by the use of the first person singular rather than the first person plural.⁹⁶ In these places, Stephen was expressing his thoughts, not that which the monks of Savigny had given him to convey. The authors' memories and thoughts also contributed to the text and this reiterates my point above: we must take care not to neglect the figure of the author himself as he had his own agency and was not just a passive receptacle.

To end this exploration we must note that there was also one text used in the *Vita Vitalis* of whose origins we know nothing, and which may not have originated from Savigny. Twice within his work, Stephen of Fougères wrote of a source written in the vernacular, upon which he partially based his own work.⁹⁷ It is difficult, however, to discern which part of the text actually came from the old French and, in essence, the decision depends upon one clause within the text: *quae autem subjicimus*. This clause came at the end of two chapters upon the same subject, where Stephen had been relating Vitalis of Savigny's time as chaplain to the Count of Mortain.⁹⁸ For clarity, here is the passage: 'For this we related more clearly, translating [it] faithfully with the eloquence of Latin, just as we found written in the vernacular. What we are placing after (*quae autem subjicimus*), we learnt from the reports of faithful men...'⁹⁹ Johannes von Walter argued that this clause meant that latter part of the story from Vitalis' time with the Count of Mortain came from the 'faithful men' and that the content conformed with this because it was more a product of the imagination, apparently symptomatic of monks relating stories.¹⁰⁰ But I fail to see how this works since the verb *subjicere* was in the present tense and surely referred not to what Stephen had said but what he was going to say; what we *are* placing after, not what we *have* placed after. I am, therefore, in agreement with Jaap van Moolenbroek who argued that the *quae autem subjicimus* clause actually referred to the next chapter of the work, concerning the petition for the building of Savigny.¹⁰¹ It certainly makes more logical sense if the

⁹⁶ Among many example see for instance Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.1, p. 359; 1.3, p. 361.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Prologue, p. 357, bk. 1.7, p. 364.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, bk. 1.6 and 1.7, pp. 363–4.

⁹⁹ 'Haec enim, sicut romane scripta reperimus, latino eloquio fideliter transferentes, litteris evidentioribus tradidimus. Quae autem subjicimus, viris fidelibus referentibus cognovimus...', *Ibid.*, bk. 1.7, p. 364.

¹⁰⁰ Johannes von Walter, 'Vital de Savigny', *Bulletin de la commission historique et archéologique de la Mayenne* 26, trans. J. Cahour (1910), pp. 300–1.

¹⁰¹ Van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, pp. 59–61. Moolenbroek concluded that bk. 1.6 and 1.7 thus came from the vernacular text.

monks of Savigny provided the information concerning the establishment of their own monastery, rather than for an episode between the Count of Mortain and Vitalis. What this illustrates is that different sources provided different types of information for different periods of Vitalis' life. All the same, it is not clear how Stephen came across the source, which is why I am hesitant to place it above with information provided by the community. It is entirely possible the document came from Mortain itself since Stephen, as we saw above, lived there for a few years before his elevation to the bishopric of Rennes.

What the above examination of these texts supports is the 'messiness' of hagiographies. Marie-Odile Lenglet called the materials that formed a hagiography a *dossier* as we have seen but should we not apply this term to some of the *vitae* themselves? Different texts and traditions about the hermit-preachers were collected within one text. The hagiographer *arranged* this dossier, and perhaps added his own memories. In extreme cases, the author did not even attempt to smooth out the differences between sources, alter spellings or to write a flowing narrative. The hermit-preachers are, in essence, a collection of collated memories.

Community Preservation

The story of these communities' relationships with the texts that were written about the hermit-preachers does not end here, as they were often preserved *by* the same communities, and so it is to them that we owe our knowledge of these men. It is not my intention to explore the manuscript tradition in detail as this is beyond the remit of this thesis, but the question of community preservation is pertinent regarding *vitae* in particular.

We must start by recognising that we have neither autograph nor twelfth-century copies of the hermit-preachers' *vitae*. In fact, only one thirteenth-century manuscript remains today, that of Robert of Arbrissel's *vitae*, not in Latin but in old French.¹⁰² Unfortunately, all other medieval copies of the hermit-preachers' hagiographies have been lost. Indeed, the course of history has been particularly savage to Savigny's records, as the archives to which their library was moved after the French Revolution, Saint-Lô, were decimated during the Battle of Normandy in 1944.¹⁰³ Only that which was removed to the Bibliothèque Impériale during the nineteenth century has survived and this was selective at best although we do, it must be noted, owe the preservation of the twelfth-century manuscript of Vitalis' mortuary roll to the work of Natalis de

¹⁰² BN, Fran. 2468. For details of the manuscript see Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, esp. pp. 30–8.

¹⁰³ Béatrice Poulle, 'Les sources de l'histoire de l'abbaye Cistercienne de Savigny au diocèse d'Avranches', *Revue Mabillon* 68 (1996), pp. 105–25.

Wailly who saved the manuscript for palaeographic reasons.¹⁰⁴ Of the preservation or destruction of other manuscripts we know little. The *Vita Bernardi* was in such a fragile state when it was 'discovered' in the seventeenth century, as we shall see below, that it is easy to imagine the document fell apart over time. In centuries shaken by a revolution, religious upheaval, and two world wars, it is sometimes impossible to know what became of the manuscripts.

Thankfully however, the Bollandists and other historians preserved the hermit-preachers' *vitae* for posterity. Grand tours around Europe, the borrowing of the manuscripts between friends, and monastic communities who provided copies to eager historians all contributed to the safe-keeping of these texts for future generations. Nevertheless, when these historians sought out the *vitae* of holy men to transcribe for their editions, only thirteenth-century copies of those about the hermit-preachers remained. Interestingly, this in itself suggests that the communities of the thirteenth century were involved in the conservation of their founders' *vitae*. Generations later, the same community which produced the text preserved the text; community construction begot community conservation. This is why, in some ways, it is difficult to locate this study in a particular century. The hermit-preachers lived on the cusp of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Their *vitae* were written mainly during the twelfth century. The manuscripts of their lives were preserved in the thirteenth century. Finally, as modern historians, we work from transcriptions of these manuscripts made in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. What I describe throughout my work as the community construction of the hermit-preachers may not necessarily be, therefore, the twelfth-century construction. Transcribers may have subtly changed the *vitae* to suit their purposes. One copy of the *Vita Roberti altera*, for example, read 'a certain Franciscan brother' used to chant about Robert rather than a certain *poetic monk*, which was of course anachronistic.¹⁰⁵ Without earlier copies we cannot know whether other texts were altered in the same way but it is certainly worth bearing in mind. Nonetheless, in order to understand the role of the community *post hoc*, it would be helpful to know a little of the community preservation of each manuscript.

We know that Savigny preserved a copy of the *Vita Vitalis* because the prior of the monastery from 1698-1712, Claude Auvry, transcribed the manuscript as an appendix to his ambitious work *Histoire de la congrégation de Savigny*.¹⁰⁶ As such, this is the most direct and explicit case of community preservation. In the preface to his book,

¹⁰⁴ For the process of the removal into the Bibliothèque Impériale see Paul le Chacheux, 'Le fonds de l'abbaye de Savigny et la mission de Natalis de Wailly à Mortain', *Le bibliographe moderne* 20 (1920), pp. 5-27.

¹⁰⁵ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 2, p. 193.

¹⁰⁶ Claude Auvry's work was later published by Auguste Laveille in three volumes from 1896-8, but he did not publish the *pièces justificatives* since many of them had been printed in the interim. See Claude Auvry, *Histoire de la congrégation de Savigny*, ed. Auguste Laveille, 3 vols (Paris, 1896), vol. 1, p. xlv. Hereafter, I will cite Laveille's edition of the *Histoire de la congrégation de Savigny*, unless referring to the *pièces justificatives* when I will refer to the copy now in Paris, BN, NAF 4122.

Auvry said that he had had access to ‘ancient manuscripts’ that were, at the time, still held in the abbey of Savigny and her dependencies.¹⁰⁷ Yet in his transcription of the *Vita Vitalis*, or at least in the nineteenth-century copy of the work made by Marie Léandre Badiche, Auvry tells us nothing about the manuscript from which he transcribed, and simply headed the text *Vita S. Vitalis*.¹⁰⁸ No date, no provenance, no description of the manuscript nor what the text may have been bound with is present. We do not know, therefore, whether the *Vita Vitalis* was a *Savigny* copy or a *Savigniac* copy, although one assumes that it is more likely to have come from the motherhouse.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, a certain house in the Savigniac community had preserved a manuscript of the *Vita Vitalis*. It was clearly a document that the Savigniac monks wanted to keep. Later, in 1882, E.P. Sauvage used a copy of Auvry’s history to publish the *Vita Vitalis* and it is this edition that scholars still use today.¹¹⁰ It was, therefore, a member of the Savigniac community, albeit a member who lived over five centuries later, who preserved the *Vita Vitalis*. It is telling that Auvry wrote the work in the first place because so little was known about the monastery of Savigny and the Savigniac order.¹¹¹

As we noted above, Châteliers also preserved the life of their founder, the *Vita Giraldi*. When travelling around Europe, Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand found a thirteenth-century copy in the monastery and included it in volume six of their *Amplissima collectio*.¹¹² Nearly one hundred and fifty years later, the Bollandists used this transcription for their own in the *AASS*.¹¹³ The *vita* itself was written in the thirteenth century and thus it is possible that Martène and Durand stumbled across the autograph copy. If this was the autograph copy though, there was something critical missing: a prologue. In the transcription we have of the text, the *Vita Giraldi* started ‘Giraudus igitur noster...’ which is odd considering this was supposedly the start of the text.¹¹⁴ Why use the term *igitur*? Marie-Odile Lenglet suggested the suppression of something, and to my mind this is reminiscent of the start of a *vita* proper after a prologue.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the first chapters of both the *Vita Bernardi* and the *Vita Vitalis*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ BN, NAF 4122, f. 497

¹⁰⁹ In comparison, Auvry stated at the top of the *Vita S. Gaufridi*, the life of Savigny’s second abbot, that he had transcribed from the original manuscript at Savigny. See BN, NAF 4122, f. 528.

¹¹⁰ The nineteenth-century copy of the Auvry’s text from which E.P. Sauvage worked, made by Marie Léandre Badiche from a manuscript of the Bibliothèque municipale de Fougères, can still be found in the BN, NAF 4122. The *Vita Vitalis* is at ff. 497r -507v. Sauvage stated that he could not access the copy in Fougères. See Sauvage’s comment in Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, p. 355.

¹¹¹ Auvry, *Savigny*, vol. 1, p. 3.

¹¹² *Veterum Scriptorum Monumentorum Amplissima Collectio*, ed. Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand, 9 vols (Paris, 1724), vol. 6, cols. 989–1014.

¹¹³ The *AASS* version was published in 1869. The chapter division differs between these two versions; I use the *AASS* throughout.

¹¹⁴ *VGS*, chap. 1, p. 254.

¹¹⁵ Lenglet, ‘Geraud de Sales’, p. 17.

started in extremely similar ways after their prologues.¹¹⁶ Victor le Clerc noticed this when he wrote the entry for the *Vita Giraldis* in the *Histoire littéraire de la France*, and stated that he wished that Martène and Durand had not deleted the prologue to the text as this would have perhaps informed us about the author and the time in which he wrote.¹¹⁷ In comparison, in his introduction to the Châteliens cartulary, Louis Duval stated that this could not have been a deliberate act of Martène and Durand because D. Fonteneau, who copied some of the charters from Châteliens, did not find any such preamble to the work when he consulted the monastery's archives himself.¹¹⁸ Perhaps the prologue had been detached previously and used for something else or it had simply become lost in the previous centuries. Whatever the case, we have a text without a prologue which is regrettable, since prologues were often illustrative of how and why *vitae* were written; many of the examples I cited above were taken from these.

There is, however, one curious reference found in a work from the eighteenth century that suggests that the Châteliens manuscript of the *Vita Giraldis* was not the autograph copy, hitherto unacknowledged in studies of this text. This work from 1744, entitled *Estat de l'abbaye cistercienne des chastelliers* dealt with the recent history of the abbey and its appurtenances.¹¹⁹ Yet although this text was obviously originally designed for Châteliens, a certain Monsieur Foyot added a section on the monastery of Boschaud to the end of the codex, another of Gerald's foundations.¹²⁰ Here, when detailing the medieval history of the abbey, Foyot said that he had read the *Vita Giraldis* which was held in Châteliens, clearly conforming to what we know already about the manuscript from Martène and Durand. Yet Foyot went on to say that the manuscript was 'testified to have been extracted from a manuscript which is in the library of Clairvaux.'¹²¹ So was the 'Châteliens manuscript' taken from Clairvaux to Châteliens? Frustratingly Foyot gave us no more information than that. While Foyot was factually incorrect (he put, for example, the foundation of Boschaud by Gerald in 1159 but Gerald died in 1120) I do not think the reference to Clairvaux, however ambiguous, can be ignored. Châteliens had become, after all, a Cistercian monastery whose motherhouse was Clairvaux. If this is indeed the case then, this means the *Vita Giraldis* was preserved first and foremost at the Cistercian motherhouse and not by the community themselves. So it may have been that the wider Cistercian community were concerned with conserving the *Life* of the founder of one of their adopted monasteries.

¹¹⁶ Cf the VB: 'Bernardus igitur genere...' and the VV: 'Igitur in Bajocassina provincia...'. Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 1.6, col. 1373A; Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.1, p. 358.

¹¹⁷ *HLF* 21, p. 590

¹¹⁸ Duval, 'Notice', 10, n. 5.

¹¹⁹ BN Fr. 22477.

¹²⁰ The section on Boschaud is clearly of a different hand to that on Châteliens, and a M. Foyot signed his name on every folio relating to Boschaud. Unfortunately, I have been unable to discover anything more about the author/s of this text.

¹²¹ '...on assure avoir esté tirée sur un manuscrit qui en dans la bibliotheque de Clairvaux', BN, Fr. 22477, f. 443.

The *Vita Bernardi* was somewhat more complicated for seventeenth-century historians than the *Vita Vitalis* or the *Vita Giraldi*, because there were many copies of the text circulating at the time. The earliest copy we have of the *vita* is that of a canon of Chartres, Jean-Baptiste Souchet, whose work was published in 1649.¹²² This predates two other seventeenth-century copies of the *vita* that are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Vatican library.¹²³ In the preface to his work, Souchet wrote an intriguing story behind his research that is worth recounting.¹²⁴ Having first been given a copy of the *Vita Bernardi* by the Jesuit Jacques Dinet, Souchet's interest in Bernard of Tiron was piqued and he read the text, in his words, greedily. Sometime later, Souchet acquired another copy of the *Vita Bernardi* from his friend, André Duchesne. Yet when he compared the two, he found that there were not only differences in words and phrases, but in whole sections and the entire order of the text. Wanting an authoritative copy of the *vita* Souchet went to Tiron itself and thereupon came across an ancient manuscript of the *Life*, with the binding completely destroyed and falling apart. It was from this thirteenth-century copy, written at the request of Tiron's fifteenth abbot Jean of Chartres, and the other three he had also acquired – the fourth from William Laisne (prior of Mondonville) – that Souchet made his transcription.¹²⁵ As Souchet's edition is hardly ever used nowadays, and with historians favouring the more accessible AASS version it might seem irrelevant to discuss this edition of the *Vita Bernardi*. But what the canon's preface tells us is that Tiron kept a copy of the manuscript. Once again, like at Savigny and possibly at Châteliers, the founder's monastery safeguarded the story of both the hermit-preacher, and their origins. What is more, the subsequent editor of the life, Godfrey Henskens, used two copies of the *Vita Bernardi* for his own in the AASS, both of which were produced from the very same thirteenth-century copy that Souchet used.¹²⁶

The preservation of the final text to be discussed here, the *Vita Roberti altera*, is a particularly interesting one, because even though the majority of the work was conserved, this was not a case of safeguarding but of a community adapting and cutting the text for their own purposes. It was Jacques Dalarun's discovery of this fact, when he found the final missing part of the *Life* in a thirteenth-century manuscript (BN Fr. 2468), that has allowed us to see a clear agenda of the Fontevraud community when it came to preserving the legacy of their founder. Dalarun's scholarship caused a fundamental reassessment of the text, but most interesting for our present purposes is his contention that the ending was deliberately suppressed by Petronilla of Chemillé and that the abbess spread a truncated version of the work.¹²⁷ This being the case, the

¹²² Geoffrey Grossus, *Beati Bernardi*.

¹²³ BN, Lat. 13788 and Rome, *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, Reg. 526.

¹²⁴ Geoffrey Grossus, *Beati Bernardi*, pp. i–ii.

¹²⁵ Cf. Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, pp. 35–6.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–7, and pp. 305–8.

¹²⁷ Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, pp. 91–108. Cf. Dalarun's new preface to the translated version of *Robert d'Arbrissel, fondateur de Fontevraud* (Paris, 1985), where he tempers his attribution of 'ill

abbess of Fontevraud, and perhaps the nuns too, were influential in manufacturing a certain image of Robert that only came to light thirty or so years ago. The sheer impact that a monastic community could have upon a text's preservation is thus clearly apparent.

Finally, I must also note that one copy of the *Actus Pontificum* is thought to have been kept by the cathedral at Le Mans before being transferred into the city library.¹²⁸ As such, it is evident that members of the ecclesiastical body at Le Mans had a strong interest in storing works that described the deeds of their own bishops. In turn, this interest has preserved our knowledge of Henry of Lausanne's exploits in the city.

From this brief analysis of the manuscript traditions, we can see that in most cases the community which produced or commissioned the *vita* – a community founded by the hermit-preacher himself – preserved (or even self-censored in the case of Fontevraud) the narrative life of their founder. The community thus still played a fundamental role after they had helped to construct these works. As we move on to consider why these texts were written and for what purpose, the reason why they were preserved should become clear.

Condemnation, Canonisation, Cult

Time and purpose were inextricably intertwined in the creation of the *vitae* and narratives about the hermit-preachers, and all of these documents responded to certain needs. The texts we have concerning Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were fairly contemporaneous with the hermit-preachers' lives. In these cases, the content of the work was related to 'real-time' events, such as condemnations by church councils, or a preaching tour in the south of France against heresy. Hints of heresy appeared to require a swift response, which certainly explains two letters written to Robert of Arbrissel during his life by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹²⁹ As such, these texts reinforced the delineation of orthodoxy and heresy in the face of the hermit-preacher's activities. In turn, this was in order to teach others about the boundaries of both of these categories.

In comparison, Robert of Arbrissel's *vitae* aside, there was often a substantial interval between the death of the hermit-preacher and the creation of his *vitae*. During this

intent' towards Petronilla and her actions with regard to the *vita*: Jacques Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in the Middle Ages*, trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Washington, 2006), p. xv.

¹²⁸ Goffart, *Le Mans*, p. 42.

¹²⁹ Marbode of Rennes wrote to Robert of Arbrissel c. 1098; Geoffrey of Vendôme c. 1107. For these letters see Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter to Robert of Arbrissel', in Johannes von Walter (ed.), *Die ersten Wanderprediger Frankreichs*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1903), vol. 1, pp. 181–9; Geoffrey of Vendôme, 'Letter 79', in Geneviève Giordanengo (ed.), *Geoffrey of Vendôme: Oeuvres* (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 48–50. I discuss these at length in the next chapter.

intervening period the monasteries which these men founded had changed dramatically. All grew, and all established (more) daughter houses. Vitalis of Savigny and Gerald of Sales' houses had even been officially integrated into Cistercian monasticism (in 1147 and 1163 respectively) although to what extent Savigny in particular retained her original customs remains to be seen.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, whatever Savigny's 'Cistercianness', it is clear that from small beginnings, what Vitalis had created had become a fully-fledged monastic community, not unlike every other community founded by the hermit-preachers.¹³¹ More significant for our present analysis, much of the evidence cited above suggests that the hermit-preachers had developing or flourishing cults over this period. The collection of testimonies, stories, and celebratory documents we find in the *vitae* is evidence of this cult and worship, whether collective or personal. And so while the text's content may not have been contemporaneous with what it sought to describe, the construction was related to either cult-building events happening in the monastery or a liturgical need for such a document. *Vitae* thus provided prescribed reading about these men within a monastic setting and delivered, in a more fixed form, the vision of these men to the very same community which had helped construct the source. As the sources that were produced about Henry of Lausanne were written while he was alive, however, let us start with these.

Condemnation

The most official way in which a hermit-preacher could be condemned was by a church council, which classified correct and incorrect belief, that is, what (and perhaps who) was heretical, and in theory transmitted it to all the faithful through the conduit of attendees.¹³² Both Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were condemned repeatedly by such methods. In the case of the few narrative texts that were written about these two, it is important to establish whether they were constructed before or after these

¹³⁰ There has been much written about Savigny's incorporation into the Cistercians, the year in which this took place, and how 'Cistercian' Savigny was. By way of example see Jacqueline Buhot, 'L'abbaye Normande de Savigny', *Le Moyen Âge*, 3e Série (1936), pp. 104–21, pp. 249–63; Christopher Holdsworth, 'The Affiliation of Savigny', in Marsha L. Dutton, Daniel M. La Corte, and Paul Lockey (eds), *Truth as Gift: Studies in Medieval Cistercian History in Honor of John R. Sommerfeldt* (Kalamazoo, 2004), pp. 43–88; Francis R. Swietek, 'The Date of the Merger of Savigny and Cîteaux Reconsidered', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 101:2 (2006), pp. 547–74. For the statute of integration issued by the Cistercian Chapter General in 1147, see *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, ed. Josephus-Maria Canivez, 8 vols (Louvain, 1933), vol. 1, pp. 37–38, and for the papal bull see Eugenius III, 'Epistola CCXXVII', in *PL* 180, cols. 1282A–C. One must bear in mind that Constance Berman doubts the authenticity of these documents. See Constance H. Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, 2000), esp. pp. 142–8. For one response to her thesis see Chrysogonus Waddell, 'The Myth of Cistercian Origins: C.H. Berman and Manuscript Sources', *Cîteaux: commentarii cistercienses* 51 (2000), pp. 299–386.

¹³¹ This concept of 'Cistercianness' comes from a paper given at the University of Sheffield by Emilia Jamroziak, March 2012.

¹³² For these councils as channels of communication of the Church's message see Sophia Menache, *The Vox Dei: Communication in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 56–60.

official judgements. If written before, this suggests the texts were part of a process that elucidated what was heretical and may have been influential in decisions reached by these councils. On the other hand, if written after, then the texts might have simply reproduced judgements of anathema that had already been made by the church hierarchy and hence the texts were influential in the diffusion of such judgements.

The first condemnation of Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys may have been at the Council of Toulouse in 1119, the third canon of which read:

We condemn and drive out of the church of God as heretics those who, simulating the appearance of religion, reject the sacrament of the body and blood of the lord, the baptism of children, the priesthood and other orders of the church, and who discredit the legitimacy of the marriage contract: and we order that they be restrained by external powers. We subject their supporters to the same condemnation, until they return to their senses.¹³³

Those against whom this canon was directed were not named directly. On the one hand, there are reasons to believe that it referred to Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys, particularly because several of the points corresponded with the doctrinal errors of which the two were accused in later texts, especially the rejection of the baptism of infants and the usurpation of the sacraments.¹³⁴ On the other, the canon may have encouraged the identification and crystallisation of certain heretical errors in later works and so, looking back, it *appears* as if Henry and Peter were the subjects of the 1119 decree. It is difficult to say with any certainty whether this judgement was reactionary or anticipatory.¹³⁵ Our authors, therefore, may have been elaborating and developing the chastisement of Toulouse, but Toulouse may have provided the articulation of what traits were expected of a heretic, and so the writers might have made incoherent dissent conform to expected models.

No work was produced about either Henry of Lausanne or Peter of Bruys immediately after the Council of Toulouse. Nonetheless, the canon of Le Mans produced his section of the *Actus Pontificum* on Henry in 1137, as we saw above. What is more, William the Monk started to write the *Contra Henricum* around the same date.¹³⁶ This was, significantly, just two years after Henry had been condemned once again in the Council

¹³³ 'Porro eos qui religionis speciem simulantes, Dominici corporis et sanguinis sacramentum, puerorum baptismum, sacerdotium, et caeteros ecclesiasticos ordines, et legitimarum damnant foedera nuptiarum, tanquam haereticos ab ecclesia Dei pellimus et damnamus: et per potestates externas coerceri praecipimus. Defensores quoque ipsorum, eiusdem damnationis vinculo donec resipuerint, mancipamus', *Sacra Concilia*, vol. 21, cols. 226–7.

¹³⁴ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, pp. 4–5. For the denial of infant baptism in the full text of the *Contra Henricum* see *CH*, chap. 6, pp. 200–14, and Zerner, 'Contra Hereticos', p. 130. R.I. Moore also identifies this canon with Peter and Henry, though he states this could have been directed at others as well. See R.I. Moore, *The War On Heresy* (London, 2012), p. 123.

¹³⁵ Cf. Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, p. 24.

¹³⁶ Zerner, *Contre Henri*, pp. 20–1.

of Pisa in 1135.¹³⁷ For the author from Le Mans, this meant that he was reflecting upon events that could have taken place over three decades earlier in his city.¹³⁸ The canon was thus not producing a text that responded in real time to the actions of the heretic, but he was in all likelihood responding to the condemnation at Pisa.¹³⁹ Furthermore, two authors who would go on to condemn the hermit-preacher in other texts were present at this council: Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux.¹⁴⁰ The authors who would write about Henry in the future were thus well aware that he had been officially condemned, and this is likely to have affected the way they wrote about him, given that he had already been officially labelled as a heretic by the church.

The *Contra Petrobrusianos* also seems to have been closely connected to one council in particular: the Second Lateran in 1139. If one accepts Giles Constable's dating of the tract, based upon Peter the Venerable's letters, then the first redaction of the *Contra Petrobrusianos* was written just one year prior to the council in 1138.¹⁴¹ It was in the Second Lateran Council, in which Peter the Venerable himself had assisted, that the Toulouse canon above was reissued, verbatim.¹⁴² The heresy that Toulouse dealt with was apparently still rife. Strikingly, Peter the Venerable continued to edit his text after this council.¹⁴³ Either the message of the church was not being disseminated thoroughly enough or Peter the Venerable felt that he needed to expound upon Peter of Bruys' erroneous teaching. Perhaps Peter the Venerable's presence at the council prompted, or at least supported, the reissue of the canon in the first place, which makes sense considering he had just written the first draft of the defining tract against the Petrobrusians and that many of its judgements were contained within the text.¹⁴⁴ The *Contra Petrobrusianos* thus sought to reaffirm earlier damnation and highlighted the need to repeat and expand upon such a judgement.

¹³⁷ For an examination of the canons of the council see Robert Somerville, 'The Council of Pisa, 1135: A Re-examination of the Evidence for the Canons', *Speculum* 45:1 (1970), pp. 98–114; Robert Somerville, 'Another Re-examination of the Council of Pisa, 1135', in Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing (eds), *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages: Studies in medieval canon law in honour of Linda Fowler-Magerl* (Aldershot, 2009), pp. 101–110. None of the canons dealt with Henry explicitly, but his condemnation at the council was asserted in the *Actus Pontificum* and also by Geoffrey of Auxerre. See *AP*, pp. 437–8; Geoffrey of Auxerre, 'Epistola Ad Archenfredum', in *PL* 185, sec. 5, col. 412C.

¹³⁸ The date at which Henry entered Le Mans has been the subject of debate. For a summary of the arguments see Zerner, *Contre Henri*, pp. 26–7.

¹³⁹ John S. Ott also suggests that this was the case. See Ott, 'Le Mans', p. 104.

¹⁴⁰ Innocent II, 'Councilium Pisanum', in *MGH Const.* 1, Nr. 402, p. 578.

¹⁴¹ For the date see Peter the Venerable, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, ed. Giles Constable (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 285–8. See also Bredero, 'Henri de Lausanne', pp. 109–114, for a summary of the previous arguments over the dating of this text.

¹⁴² *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols (London and Washington, 1990), vol. 1, Lateran II, canon 23, p. 202. R.I. Moore has noted both that this could refer to either Henry or Peter and that it also condemned the Italian hermit-preacher Arnold of Brescia see R.I. Moore, 'The War Against Heresy in Medieval Europe', *Historical Research* 81:212 (2008), p. 199, n. 31.

¹⁴³ Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 285–8.

¹⁴⁴ For Peter's summary of his propositions against the heretics, which aligned with the condemnation of the church council, see Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, pp. 4–5.

Yet condemnation did not just happen by church council. When Bernard of Clairvaux wrote his two letters concerning Henry of Lausanne, he wrote as part of his preaching mission against heresy in the south of France in 1145.¹⁴⁵ Apparently after his condemnation at Pisa, Henry had once again taken to the road, and started preaching. It was this that Bernard's own mission sought to address.¹⁴⁶ Thus the letter from which we know about Henry was produced because of Bernard's preaching tour which was in turn motivated by Henry's preaching. The desire to condemn Henry in this way encouraged members of the hierarchy to produce written works about him.

Overall we can see that these texts were produced by those who had had direct (or near-direct) involvement with the hermit-preachers. Events in which members of the Church were involved – the community of the faithful one might say – stimulated or anticipated the production of these works, most notably through church councils. A series of judgements closely coincided with a series of texts. This was not the case, as we shall see next, for those works that commemorated rather than condemned.

Canonisation and Sanctity

With the development of the papal machinery during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries *vitae* were, around this period, starting to become an integral part of the official canonisation process for holy men.¹⁴⁷ Gone were the days where episcopal power and local veneration automatically afforded the holy man the epithet of 'saint'. From this point onwards, the power of the holy man had to be testified by both written record (*vitae*) and oral testimony before the papacy or at the very least before the pope's representatives. Reigning in what was thought necessary to be considered a saint in the church inevitably meant a drop in the official canonisation statistics, as not all attempts were successful. The author of the *Vita S. Stephani Obazinensis*, the *Life of the Limousin hermit Stephen of Obazine*, made a few wry and extremely perceptive comments about this very process. Very few saints' *Lives* were being written in the twelfth century, he observed. This was, he thought, either because the holy men were too humble or because '...they were not as famous for miracles as is now greatly demanded by those who want to write the lives of the saints.'¹⁴⁸ This was an astute comment considering evidence of miracles had become necessary for granting an

¹⁴⁵ For this tour in the context of Cistercian preaching against heresy see Kienzle, *Cistercians*, pp. 78–108.

¹⁴⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 4, col. 435D.

¹⁴⁷ For the changing canonisation process in this period, the increased control of the papacy, and the role of *vitae* see, among others, André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 22–57; Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 21–47; Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (London, 1948), pp. 82–106. See also Michael Goodich, 'The Politics of Canonization in the Thirteenth Century: Lay and Mendicant Saints', *Church History* 44:3 (1975), p. 295.

¹⁴⁸ '...non adeo miraculis claruerunt quod maxime nunc exigitur ab his qui sanctorum vitas describere volunt', *Vita S. Stephani Obazinensis*, ed. Aubrun, bk. 1. Prologue, p. 38.

individual sainthood.¹⁴⁹ So strict were the procedures becoming in the early thirteenth century that Pope Honorius III only allowed Robert of Molesme, founder of the Cistercians, to be venerated *as (tanquam)* a saint in the church of Molesme because he found both the investigations of the bishops of Langres and Valence wanting and also Robert lacking in miracles during his life.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, Robert was not officially transcribed into the catalogue of saints.

Understanding this growing formalisation and papal control of such procedures is important not only to understand the evolving context in which these texts were written, but also because there have been scholarly speculations that some of our *vitae* were written for canonisation attempts.¹⁵¹ Yet none of the hermit-preachers of this study was officially canonised. There were official attempts of which we know but these occurred much later. In 1244 for instance Ralph III of Fougères, a descendant of the family who had helped to found Savigny, wrote to Pope Innocent IV asking for the canonisation of Vitalis of Savigny.¹⁵² This letter corresponded neatly with the creation of the *Liber de miraculis sanctorum Savigniacensium* which was designed to aid the canonisation bid, and was written at the behest of the abbot at the time, Stephen of Lexington.¹⁵³ Through this huge miracle collection we see the increased demand for miracles by the papacy, although it seems that in the end nothing came of the Lord of Fougères' effort. Furthermore, in this case we also see one of the impetuses for creating documents about holy men: translation. During the early 1240s, Savigny had translated the bodies of their holy men from the chapel of Saint Catherine to the larger church (*majo rem ecclesiam*).¹⁵⁴ The translation and the miracles that accompanied this movement caused the monks to create the written memorialisation of the cult that surrounded these men. It is striking that a text that concerned Vitalis was created

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, the letter of Pope Honorius III concerning the canonisation of Robert of Molesme: Honorius III, 'Epistola LXXXIII', in César Auguste Horoy (ed.), *Medii aevi bibliotheca patristica* (Paris, 1879), vol. 4, p. 68. The letter is also printed in the AASS, April III, p. 685. Here, Honorius III said that miracles needed to be performed both in life and after death for someone to be transcribed into the catalogue of saints.

¹⁵⁰ Robert of Molesme's canonisation attempt was authorised by the Cistercian chapter general in 1220. See *Statuta*, ed. Canivez, vol. 1, p. 527. André Vauchez has commented that this was 'tantamount to a polite refusal of canonisation'. See Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 53, note a. For the whole process see the *Processus Canonizationis* attached to Robert's *vita* in the AASS, April III, pp. 683–5.

¹⁵¹ See for instance Beck, 'Bernard de Tiron ou l'impossible sainteté', p. 288; Foulon, 'Les ermites', p. 88; Lindy Grant, 'Savigny and Its Saints', in Terry N. Kinder (ed.), *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art, Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson* (Cîteaux, 2004), p. 111; Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, p. xv.

¹⁵² Ralph III of Fougères, 'Epistola ad Innocent IV', in Auvry, *Savigny*, vol. 3, p. 361.

¹⁵³ For a partial transcription of the text see 'Liber de miraculis sanctorum Savigniacensium', in *RHF* 23, pp. 587–605. This is based on a thirteenth-century Savigniac manuscript now in Paris, BN NAL 217. Artur Dumoustier also partially transcribed the text in the mid-seventeenth century, apparently from an original, for his *Travaux sur l'histoire de Normandie*, BN Lat. 10051, ff. 119r–120r. A partial (French) translation of the text was made in 1899 by the historian from Mortain, Hippolyte Sauvage. See *Le livre des miracles des saints de Savigny*, ed. Hippolyte Sauvage (Mortain, 1899). I will henceforth use the *RHF* transcription of the document.

¹⁵⁴ 'Liber de miraculis', p. 587.

because of the *translatio* of his body, as this was not a far cry from why his *vita* was written in the first place, as we shall see below. Nonetheless, neither of these documents solely concerned Vitalis. Alongside the founder of Savigny, Ralph III of Fougères requested the canonisation of the community's second abbot Geoffrey, two monks named Peter and Hamo (the latter whom we saw above), and a certain hermit called William of Niobe. The *Liber de miraculis* dealt with the same brethren from Savigny. This was collective veneration of a collection of holy men. Over time, other great and important figures from Savigny's history were thought to equal and deserve the same veneration as their founder. Consequently, we are not dealing with Vitalis' attempted canonisation alone.

Official requests for the canonisation of another of the hermit-preachers, Robert of Arbrissel, happened even later than this. In his case, two petitions were created, the first in the seventeenth century by an abbess of Fontevraud, and the second in the nineteenth century by the nuns of Chemillé.¹⁵⁵ Neither was successful. In fact, the attempts to canonise the hermit-preacher epitomise the papal requirement for an immaculate record of sanctity. For Robert, this was tainted because of the two letters cited above by Marbode of Rennes and Geoffrey of Vendôme. So damning were these that when Geoffrey's was published in 1610, the abbess of Fontevraud who was trying to secure Robert's canonisation sent two canons to destroy the twelfth-century manuscript. Fortunately for us they only succeeded in destroying one folio.¹⁵⁶ A flawless record, it seems, was crucial for both the nuns' memory of Robert and the attempted canonisation bid.

Neither of these official attempts of which we know thus coincided with the creation of the *vitae*, and whether the texts were intended for canonisation procedures when they were originally written is pure speculation since we have no evidence for this. Yet despite the lack of official recognition of the hermit-preachers at a papal level, they were still celebrated individuals within their localities. The case of Robert of Molesme above suggests that the lines between 'official' and 'non-official' canonisation were somewhat blurred even in the early thirteenth century.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, official canonisation did not preclude cult creation and local veneration and it certainly did not preclude qualifying the hermit-preachers as *sanctus*, which all of the authors of our texts used to describe the holy men.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Here I follow J.M.B. Porter, 'Fontevault looks back to her founder: Reform and the attempts to canonize Robert of Arbrissel', in R.N. Swanson (ed.), *The Church Retrospective* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 361–77.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 369–70.

¹⁵⁷ Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 69.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.2, col. 1045A; Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 9, p. 206; Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.8, p. 365; *VGS*, chap. 2.19, p. 258; Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 4.34, col. 1388C. While the term was only used once by Baudri of Dol, and sparingly by Andrew of Fontevraud, there are many more examples in the *Vita Bernardi*, the *Vita Vitalis*, and the *Vita Giraldi*. Here I have simply picked one instance where *sanctus* was employed in each of these texts as an illustration of its use.

Sanctus, though, is ambiguous. Were our writers inferring holiness or did they consider the hermit-preachers as saints? Used as a noun, *sanctus* surely implies saint and as an adjective, holy. It cannot be denied that the word was used far more frequently in the texts written about the hermit-preachers as an adjective. Nevertheless, it was still used as a noun on occasion indicating that even though the hermit-preachers enjoyed no official status as a saint in terms of papal ratification, they were still thought of as saints locally or by their monastic community. The thirteenth-century Cistercian chronicler Alberic of Trois-Fontaines for example wrote of *sanctus Vitalis* which suggests, as Jaap van Moolenbroek has pointed out, Vitalis of Savigny's sanctity within the Cistercian order.¹⁵⁹ As such, *vitae* transmitted a picture of orthodoxy to others, a Christian ideal: these texts were firmly embedded within conceptions of orthodoxy. But this was not the primary reason for producing such a text because by the time such texts were written, the orthodoxy of the founder was hardly in question.¹⁶⁰ These works still, nevertheless, were engaged with conceptions of orthodoxy even if they were not trying to create such a category. Let us consider this further by discussing the edificatory and liturgical functions of these works.

Instructing the Faithful: Edification and Liturgy

Traditionally, scholars have proposed that the use of hagiographies was edificatory, indeed defined the very genre by it, and have stated that they were inspirational models.¹⁶¹ One can hardly disagree with the importance of the concept: the idea of edification was present in all of the *vitae* written about the hermit-preachers. Baudri of Dol, for example, said that he hoped Robert of Arbrissel's *vita* would aid the instruction of the communal life.¹⁶² This is but one of many references taken from the works studied here. It is thus important to understand that these were seen as inspirational texts, spiritual stimulation for the mind and soul. Hagiographies portrayed part of their *raison d'être* as edification and education.

Claiming that hagiographies were meant to be imitated is however an inherent paradox, if by nature these works were meant to be recording something exceptional and thus *inimitable*.¹⁶³ Yet this relies upon the assumption that edification necessarily meant imitation. If we define edification as spiritual instruction or improvement, then *all* of the texts about celebrated and condemned hermit-preachers can be seen as

¹⁵⁹ Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, 'Chronica Alberici', p. 103; van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 77.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Becquet, 'L'érémisme', p. 199, who seems to conflate the time of events and the time in which the sources were written.

¹⁶¹ See Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater, 3rd ed. (New York, 1962), p. 3: '...to be strictly hagiographic the document must be of a religious character and aim at edification.'

¹⁶² Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 1.5, col. 1046B.

¹⁶³ Ineke van't Spijker, 'Model Reading: Saints Lives and Literature of Religious Formation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in Etienne Renard *et al.* (eds), *Scribere Sanctorum Gesta: Recueil d'études d'hagiographie médiévale offert à Guy Philippart* (Turnhout, 2005), p. 144.

edificatory in some way, as they were designed to teach Christians about the right and wrong forms of spirituality. Put simply, the texts taught others what was right and what was wrong, who should be celebrated and who should be condemned.¹⁶⁴ In this way, they were claiming a certain authority over behaviour and belief, pertinent for a time in which these were increasingly under scrutiny in contemporary ecclesiastical agendas which the reader should certainly bear in mind for when we turn to talk about the idea of 'reform' within these sources. Seeing the texts in this way thus explains more satisfactorily, I believe, the language of edification within and also illustrates how Christendom taught others about these men.

The understanding that *vitae* were teaching material for this very purpose was present within the sources: 'While relating the examples of the just, the authors of such great literature bring back the souls of their listeners from doing evil...', Geoffrey Grossus postulated in the *Vita Bernardi*.¹⁶⁵ Here we have an excellent example that explicitly connected edification to orthodoxy. The examples of holiness given in hagiographies, according to Geoffrey, could bring people back from the brink of sinfulness. This was not uncommon. Not one for flourishes, Stephen of Fougères stated it plainly after he had written about a miracle in the *Vita Vitalis*:

The faithful [man] should hear this, so that he might be more eager and more devoted; the doubtful [man] should hear this so that he might be strengthened in faith more robustly; all should hear this, so that the power and faith of the man might be known by everyone, and he might be glorified with the greatness of the Lord by them.¹⁶⁶

Simultaneously Vitalis' *Life* – the text and the specific story it told – (re)affirmed, strengthened and glorified faith. While saints in general were obviously bastions of orthodoxy (or models of holiness), this point focuses more on the textual reality of holy men. It was the works and the stories contained therein that were edificatory and enforced orthodoxy more so than the individuals themselves even if the individuals committed these acts in the first place. Texts and stories had power.

Intimately connected to this idea were the liturgical purposes of these works, since the message conveyed within was transmitted through liturgical practices. To my mind, it is clear that the majority of these *vitae* were designed for such purposes for two reasons. First, the structure of the some works lent itself to liturgical reading. As it has been argued by both Baudouin de Gaiffier d'Hestroy and Thomas Heffernan, the short sections of *vitae* were composed as easily digestible chunks for certain readings within

¹⁶⁴ For an analysis of the idea of 'teaching' in hagiography see Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ 'Sed et talium scriptorum propagatores, dum justorum proposito exemplo, audientium animos ab iniquitatis perpetratione retrahunt...', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.3, col.1370A.

¹⁶⁶ 'Audiat hoc fidelis, ut ardentior et devotior efficiatur; audiat dubius, ut in fide robustius confirmetur; audient omnes, ut ab omnibus virtus et fides viri cognoscatur, et ab eis Domini magnificentia glorificetur', Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.7, p. 377.

the monastery.¹⁶⁷ This accords in particular with the structure of the *Vita Bernardi*, the *Vita Vitalis* and the *Vita Giraldi*. All three of these texts gave a distinct sense that the authors had provided within their narratives short sections or stories that could be used to teach certain lessons.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, these lessons could have been used both collectively and in *lectio divina* – literally divine reading, but encompassing the sense of divine dialogue – as a supplement to scriptural readings.¹⁶⁹ At one point in the *Vita Bernardi*, for instance, Geoffrey Grossus wrote: ‘We *compilatores* are gnawing away at these writings...’, which is suggestive of the sense of ruminative reading connected to the practice of *lectio divina*.¹⁷⁰ The use of *vitae* was thus clearly on the authors’ minds when they came to write these documents, and, consequently, they composed their writings in a way in which they could be employed to teach others.

Secondly, in two particular cases the timing of the creation of the text either coincided with or closely followed the translation of the hermit-preacher’s body. In these cases, it appears that liturgical works were needed for the celebration and cult that grew (or was manufactured) around these translated bodies. Concerning the *Vita Vitalis*, there has been some speculation over the exact date of the text though scholars are generally in agreement that it was written during Stephen of Fougères’ episcopate (1168-1178), not least because Robert of Torigni said that Stephen had turned to writing saintly literature towards the end of his life as we saw above. Personally, I am convinced by Lindy Grant’s argument. She has suggested that the *Vita Vitalis* was requested by the Savigniac monks to coincide with the building of a new church in 1173 and the eventual translation of the Savigniac holy men in 1182.¹⁷¹ The *Vita Vitalis* itself made no mention of this new church. Vitalis lay, Stephen of Fougères said, in the choir of the church that he had founded.¹⁷² Yet it seems difficult to argue that the production of this text was not in some way related to the activity of the monastery seeing that the two were so close in time. Moreover, the production of a text in Latin, where something already existed in the vernacular, suggests liturgical purposes if, as Evelyn Birge Vitz has argued, to gain liturgical status the *Life* had to be written and written in Latin.¹⁷³ This being the case, the monks’ recourse to someone outside of the monastery must have been a conscious decision rather than a lack of someone within the

¹⁶⁷ Baudouin de Gaiffier d’Hestroy, ‘L’hagiographe et son public au XIe siècle’, in *Miscellanea Historica in Honorem Leonis Van Der Essen* (Brussels and Paris, 1947), pp. 135–66; Thomas J. Heffernan, ‘The Liturgy and the Literature of Saints’ Lives’, in Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (eds), *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo, 2001), pp. 73–105.

¹⁶⁸ Also suggested by van Moolenbroek, *Vital l’ermite*, p. 52; Foulon, ‘Les ermites’, p. 88; Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 66; Beck, ‘Bernard de Tiron ou l’impossible sainteté’, p. 289.

¹⁶⁹ Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 2011), pp. xi–xv.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Jamdudum compilatores haec scribentes corroditur...’, Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 13.123, col. 1437C. Cf. Robertson, *Lectio Divina*, esp. 63–4 but also throughout.

¹⁷¹ Grant, ‘Savigny’, 109–114, esp. p. 111. For the consecration of the chapel of Saint Katherine in 1181 see ‘Ex Chronico Savigniacensis Monasterii’, in *RHF* 18, p. 350. Reprinted from *Miscellaneorum*, ed. Baluze, t. 2, p. 315.

¹⁷² Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.21, pp. 386–7.

¹⁷³ Vitz, ‘Vie’, p. 393.

monastery who could write the life, since the *Vita Hamonis monachi* – the *Life* of the Savigniac monk who guided Henry II – was written around the same time by a member of the Savigniac community. It may simply have been a happy coincidence that at the time, the bishopric of Rennes was occupied by a learnt and erudite man whom the monks could call upon to write the *vita* of their founder.

The production of the *Vita Giraldi* also coincided with, or at the very least was written within a generation of, the exhumation of Gerald's tomb. The internal *terminus post quem* we have for the text is 1277.¹⁷⁴ Twenty-eight years earlier, in 1249, Abbot Thomas of Châteliers had dug up behind the altar where Gerald was buried and exhumed his body, placing the head in a gilded container and the body in a marble bier which he then raised up on six columns of stone behind the aforesaid altar.¹⁷⁵ Afterwards, the Châteliers monk tells his audience, many miracles occurred. Since the following abbacy started around 1281, it may have been the same Abbot Thomas who requested the life.¹⁷⁶ The monk who wrote the text certainly spoke highly of Thomas calling him most illustrious and skilled man (*conspicuisissimi ac prudentissimi*) and perhaps the abbot had a plan to celebrate or even revive Gerald's cult.¹⁷⁷ He certainly gave the hermit-preachers' body a very prominent, and public, position. The production of such a liturgical text would fit neatly with this act. In both of these cases, therefore, the production of *vitae* corresponded to events within the abbeys to which their communities anticipated or responded with complementary texts.

No such great event appears to have taken place in Tiron that might have directly stimulated or anticipated the production of the *Vita Bernardi*. Given that the text itself was ostensibly requested by and dedicated to the bishop of Chartres, Geoffrey II of Lèves, the work must have been written before his death in 1149.¹⁷⁸ Since the text also mentioned King Louis VI's death, we can give it a *terminus a quo* of 1137.¹⁷⁹ During this period, Bernard underwent no such translation like the two described above. It is conceivable that the text was intended for an episcopal or even pontifical canonisation particularly because Bishop Geoffrey was legate to Pope Innocent II, but this is pure

¹⁷⁴ The text actually reads '*millesimo centesimo septuagesimo septimo*' but since the part in question discusses Abbot Thomas' burial, it should surely read *ducentesimo* as with a previous chapter. VGS, chap. 4.36, p. 264.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 4.33, p. 263.

¹⁷⁶ Duval, 'Notice', p. lxxvi.

¹⁷⁷ VGS, chap. 4.32, p. 263.

¹⁷⁸ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue, col. 1367A. For Bernard's connection to Chartres see Margot Elsbeth Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History Through Liturgy and the Arts* (Yale, 2010), pp. 199–200.

¹⁷⁹ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 11.97, cols. 1424D–25A; de Bascher, 'Bernard d'Abbeville', p. 412. For further discussions of the dating of the *Vita Bernardi* see also van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 38; Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 47. Beck suggested that the mention of Thibaut IV of Blois and Chartres' death in 1151 was the result of a later interpolation since it does not correspond with the dedication of the text to Bishop Geoffrey of Chartres who died two years previously. See *Ibid.*, p. 49.

conjecture.¹⁸⁰ Yet even if there was no great event in the abbey or canonisation effort, the text was certainly to be used for liturgical purposes. Geoffrey Grossus himself acknowledged *vitae* as essentially liturgical texts.¹⁸¹ It seems fairly safe to assume then that the monks were using the *Vita Bernardi* as part of their worship.

We are left with the two *Vitae Roberti*. It is not inconceivable that Baudri of Dol designed something to be used for liturgy. Having lived as a monk he would have known the purpose of hagiographies and it surely would have been on his mind when he was writing about the hermit-preacher. In comparison, I cannot see that the *Vita Roberti altera* was written for liturgy as it had neither the right structure nor content. As stated above, the text was certainly no stereotypical *vita*. This was a work that was far more institutionally-minded, rather than one that was focused upon worship, and we shall see how this played out in chapter five of this thesis.

Leaving aside the *Vita Roberti altera* for now, the liturgical purpose of these texts answers the question: edification for whom? *Vitae* were an integral part of monastic liturgy. Saints' *Lives* were read aloud to the monastic community on the saints' feast days every year, and stories from them were read as part of the monastic liturgical cycles. Monks were, therefore, intimately acquainted with the acts and deeds of the saints, and the brothers and sisters of the hermit-preachers' communities would have been intimately acquainted with those of their founder after the *vita* had been written.¹⁸² This was edificatory, as when Geoffrey Grossus wrote of reading aloud saints' *Lives* on feast days, he said that by doing so the monks were honouring the memory of holy men and *edifying* the minds of the faithful.¹⁸³ One might see this as circularity: constructed by the community, the text was then used *for* that community and its worship.¹⁸⁴ Yet the community had not simply recycled these tales and stories but used them to create something new. The same stories might be told but in a different form, with additions, and in Latin.¹⁸⁵ A *vita* was more than the sum of its parts, even if it was the same community which produced and received the text. What the community made was, moreover, something that had the capacity for future use, in a way that oral stories and pieces of existing text did not. Once again, Geoffrey Grossus is illuminating. In the prologue to the *Vita Bernardi*, he said that the authors of hagiographies were exhorted to write (*describere*) the deeds of holy men and to make

¹⁸⁰ Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 65. Beck proposed this was the principal reason for the creation of the *Vita Bernardi* but we have no evidence of papal correspondence or the initiation of efforts to secure papal canonisation. See Beck, 'Bernard de Tiron ou l'impossible sainteté', p. 288.

¹⁸¹ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.4, col. 1370B.

¹⁸² Samantha Kahn Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge and London, 2007), p. 6.

¹⁸³ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.4, col. 1370B.

¹⁸⁴ Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁵ Julie Barrau has suggested that monks probably primarily communicated in the vernacular. See Julie Barrau, 'Did Medieval Monks Actually Speak Latin?', in Steven Vanderputten (ed.), *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 293–317.

their merits known to posterity.¹⁸⁶ Certainly posterity was a common concept in other texts about these individuals, and there was an explicit concern here about the very process of safeguarding memory, which surely could not have existed so directly in oral stories. The work would thus edify the minds of future brothers of the same monastery, that is, the community.

Of course the boundary of the monastic community had some permeability. Monasteries were not bubbles completely enclosed from the outside world, and the wilderness was more the wilderness of the mind than an inaccessible wasteland. Hence there could have been times at which the text was read and others were present: visiting abbots, pilgrims, the local ecclesiastical hierarchy, and so on. If 'monastic foundation legends' had both a private and public face, as Amy Remensnyder has rather neatly put it, then these *vitae* were no different.¹⁸⁷ While the text itself may not have been public, with access and literacy limited to a few, the ability to communicate it through liturgy was.¹⁸⁸ This is, however, very difficult to state assuredly as we do not have concrete evidence that others from outside of the monastery engaged with the text in this way. Because of this, I am unable to comment further upon this phenomenon.

Teaching others was also important in the texts that were written about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys and invariably connected to upholding orthodoxy. Peter the Venerable said that even if the heretics he wrote of chose not to repent, he hoped that his prefatory letter to the *Contra Petrobrusianos* would satisfy the 'inner questionings' (*occultis cogitationibus*) of some Christians and either heal their minds of lethargy or fortify them against the sharp tongues of heretics.¹⁸⁹ Communicating heresy to Christians would thus aid the propagation of orthodoxy as well as bolstering people's faith in the face of adversity. Only by educating others about Peter of Bruys, through text, was this possible. There were also several references in the works about Henry and Peter about avoiding heresy in the future. The author of the *Actus Pontificum*, for instance, stated that he wrote the passage on Henry in order that the Church might not be disturbed at another time by a similar delusion.¹⁹⁰ To keep the Christian faithful steadfast and true, he thus sought to inform others of what to avoid and there was a very real sense of learning here.¹⁹¹ As a result, these works might not be describing the highest form of spirituality, as with *vitae*, but they still prescribed Christian behaviour.

¹⁸⁶ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.1, col. 1367A.

¹⁸⁷ Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, 1995), pp. 295–7.

¹⁸⁸ For the Latinity of the cloister in general see Barrau, 'Medieval Monks', pp. 293–317.

¹⁸⁹ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ *AP*, p. 414.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Magnou, 'Henri l'hérétique', p. 540.

By doing so, they were able to communicate orthodoxy to others and strengthen their (orthodox) beliefs.

Who these texts sought to edify, however, was quite different. Whereas the texts about the other hermit-preachers edified a fairly local circle of people, texts about the two condemned heresiarchs sought a much larger audience. Despite the authors' insistence that part of the reason for writing about heretics was in order to try and return them to the flock of Christ, it is hard to appreciate this as the primary goal. Peter the Venerable expressed this well, so he is worth quoting at length:

For the Church, as Your Wisdom knows, has always been accustomed through past times never to pass over in silence the numerous and great varieties of heresy, which have frequently endeavoured to taint her purity but has, for the security and for the continual instruction of all, purged the blasphemy of all heretics by appeal to holy authorities and also reason. Therefore I, although the least of the members of the body of Christ, that is, of his Church, have striven to write these things, so that it may be of use for heretics, if that be possible. [Moreover], Catholics, into whose hands [the text] may fall, might turn back against impious doctrine or be more wary of the like.¹⁹²

There was a certain level of doubt here that such teaching could really cause heretics to transform their ways. Instead, Peter appeared to believe that writing about such people could be of more use to the Church and particularly to Christians who, after learning about preachers who spread erroneous doctrine, would be more on their guard. This was reinforced at the end of the letter when Peter differentiated between whom he was writing against and whom he was writing for – *against* the heretics, *for* the Christian faithful.¹⁹³ He had certainly cast a wide net.

All of the texts about the hermit-preachers were thus conceived, at least by their authors, as documents of spiritual instruction: a text did not have to be celebratory to be spiritually instructive. It was just as conducive to instruct others by pointing out what to avoid as it was by pointing out what to revere. In this way the hermit-preachers had the means, when recorded/constructed in texts, to be used as edificatory aids for the Christian faithful. Yet informing others was undertaken using different mechanisms. *Vitae* were part of monastic liturgy and thus these texts were repeatedly used by the same community which were crucial in their production. They

¹⁹² 'Nam istud, sicut sapientie uestre notum est, per retroacta secula semper facere consuevit, ut de tot tantisque heresum uarietatibus, que eius sinceritatem frequenter fermentare conate sunt, nullam unquam silentio preteriret, sed ad cautelam sui et ad perpetuam omnium instructionem auctoritatibus sacris et etiam rationibus omnium hereticorum blasphemias expurgaret. Quo ego, licet de minimis corporis Christi, hoc est eius ecclesie membris, ista scribendo facere nisus sum, ut quod scripsi hereticis, si fieri posset, prodesset; catholicos, in quorum manus incideret, contra nefandum dogma uel similia cautiore redderet', Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, p. 4.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

aimed at temporal longevity, but not necessarily geographical scope. Narratives about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were, by contrast, sent to different members of the wider Christian community. The different audiences – the local versus the 'universal' – suggest that hermit-preachers branded either orthodox or heretical were used in different ways. Whereas orthodox preachers functioned mainly on a local level, primarily edifying the same monastic community which produced the text, the heretical preachers were given a more grandiose function. Learning from their example, according to Peter the Venerable, could edify the whole of the Christian faithful. These were clear differences. Yet there was a more subtle difference regarding the categories of heresy and orthodoxy specifically. Each text functioned as an exemplar of both orthodoxy and heresy, as we have seen. Here then, holy men were exemplars not so much in the sense of Peter Brown's holy man, but because texts written about them produced exemplars.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps this enlightens us more generally as to the function of these men within the twelfth century and why recording them was useful to Christian society. But those written about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys contributed to the *creation* of such categories, in an era of uncertainty, whereas those about the other hermit-preachers were *already* embedded within orthodox tradition and were not aiming to create these individuals as orthodox figures: this perception is a by-product of textual genre and tradition.

Concluding Remarks

The texts written about the hermit-preachers were complex creations, with some compiling years of remembrance into one text that essentially formed a constructed dossier on the hermit-preacher. With the authors as our conduit, we have explored each of the (different) communities who composed these works, and the ways in which they contributed to documents that were often memorial mosaics. It is important to understand the sources in this way, to note the presence of other texts, other traditions, oral stories; to point out inaccuracies, chronological inconsistencies, mistakes, and errors: in essence, to deconstruct. From modern textual deconstruction we see medieval construction and the ways in which *vitae* and narratives were written, which is informative for the very nature of the 'genre' itself. Fragments of memory coalesced into a whole with the production of these works. It is this whole that I am interested in here. After all, this is how the representation of the hermit-preacher has been handed down to us through history. Instead of taking these fragments and piecing together what some have seen as a 'real' biography of these men – *artificially creating* the historical figure of the hermit-preacher – I want to take this conclusion and show how, if the whole is a construction then different elements of the hermit-preachers are constructions in themselves. If we have such rich texts, why not engage with what medieval contemporaries have left us, rather than working against the grain? While we might lose the ability to study these men directly, we gain a clearer picture of how

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Peter Brown, 'The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity', *Representations* 1:2 (1983), pp. 1–25.

medieval society and culture represented these men in text. There may be a lesson here for all studies of those whom we label 'charismatic' medieval figures.

Understanding the construction of the documents, and indeed by starting with them, we now understand that the hermit-preachers were constructed through dynamics between the author and community that existed at a particular point in time. Those works produced within the monastery were community constructions, and the author's perspective (often his own memory) was aided by that of his brothers and texts that the same community had already produced. To a lesser extent the works created by the bishops also functioned in the same way, collecting information given to them by members of the community that the hermit-preacher founded. If the community was not as cooperative, as we saw was the case with Fontevraud, then the representation of the hermit-preacher was informed more by the author than by the community. In contrast, those who wrote about the two condemned hermit-preachers had no contact with their followers and instead wrote as part of, and because of information provided by, the community of the wider Christian faithful. It is also striking that some of the most formidable and influential scholars of the period wrote against heresy, whereas the authors of the *vitae* were more obscure or even anonymous. There was a great difference in scale, therefore, between recording condemned and celebrated hermit-preachers in text.

This difference in scale reflected why these texts were written which was, in turn, often tied to specific needs and desires. *Vitae* provided the community – who were so important in the construction of the text – with liturgical documents which, by the delivery of this liturgy, were spiritually instructive for the same community. Those texts that were written about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were quite different and the authors envisaged that learning about heresy was not just edificatory for one small defined monastic community, but for the entirety of the Christian faithful. In this way, it appears as if it was far more important, in terms of the *ecclesia Dei* as a whole, to record those who were condemned rather than those who were celebrated because they had far broader instructional value. It would perhaps be simplistic to see this in terms of the local versus the 'universal' as there was undoubtedly more subtlety, but in many ways the texts did reflect this dynamic.

Accordingly, I have argued here that these documents were produced for slightly different reasons. Those created about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were intimately connected to the process of elucidating the boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy. As such, they were integral to the process by which Christendom defined its faith and the boundaries of that faith. Essentially, these texts helped to classify, and in certain ways manufactured, the divisions between what (and who) should be considered as holy and what should be considered as unholy or sinful, and often confirmed official condemnation. In contrast, though *vitae* were part of officially-sanctioned belief – they did, after all, present the expression of the holiest ideals of

Christian society – their production was, I believe, stimulated more by the need for liturgical documents for the community and the creation of cult, linked to the translation of the hermit-preachers' bodies. The consideration of orthodoxy was thus present, and surely engaged with, but it was not dominant since, when in the process of producing these works, our authors were not questioning their subjects' orthodoxy. In this way all of these documents were edificatory, providing spiritual instruction, but there was a significant different in the audience depending on whether the hermit-preacher was conceived as orthodox or heretical: those about the orthodox figures responded to more local considerations (cult, liturgy), those about the heretical responded to wider concerns (defining orthodoxy and heresy).

Having considered who wrote these texts, how they were written, and why, we now move to discuss certain aspects of the hermit-preachers in these texts. Each of the following chapters is focused upon a particular concept or idea and will build upon the conclusions made here. Through these, we shall see repeatedly the profound influence of the community in the portrayal of certain ideas within the narratives. What this different perspective will eventually produce is quite a different picture of these men than that currently propagated in scholarship. Since the hermit-preachers had to be known to be written about in the first place, it seems appropriate to start with the concepts of renown and reputation.

CHAPTER TWO

Reputation and Renown

The multitude of the faithful...might earnestly seek to hear of [Romuald's] life, but as is natural what does not exist cannot be heard. We are not unreasonably afraid, then, that his most celebrated *fama*, which till now has been on the lips of everyone, might be wholly erased from the memory of men, falling away with the passage of time.¹

– Peter Damian, Prologue to the *Vita Beati Romualdi*

When Peter Damian wrote of the Italian hermit Romuald in the mid-eleventh century he recorded in the prologue to the work – as shown in the above citation – his fears that knowledge of the holy man could easily fade into obscurity. Here, Peter emphasised at once the multitude's desire to hear of holy men, the importance of textual rather than oral preservation of memory, and the ephemeral nature of memory itself. Most importantly, he suggested the reputation of, and talk about, Romuald. The hermit's *fama*, Peter affirmed, was being widely discussed.

The hermit-preachers of this study were also, like Romuald above, individuals who were talked about. We saw in the previous chapter how discussion of these figures, particularly by monastic communities, contributed to the production of written works about them. These men thus had a reputation before they became the subjects of the narratives from which modern scholars work. In turn, the production of the texts themselves perpetuated or enhanced this reputation, especially with regard to *vitae* which were designed to be read as part of monastic liturgy. This was a concept, therefore, that was intrinsically connected to the sources, both before and after the time of their construction.

Renown and reputation were also, more importantly for our present concerns, significant – but not necessarily positive – ideas in the content of the works written about the hermit-preachers. Our authors wrote that these men had wide geographical significance, described how people far afield knew of them, and recorded that they were recognised by kings and princes. This was little different for the two hermit-

¹ '...fidelium multitudo...audire vitę eius hystoriam desiderabiliter quęrat, sed utpote quę non sit, audire non valeat; non inrationabiliter pertimescimus ne celeberrima eius fama, quę adhuc populi totius ore depromitur, labente curriculo temporum, de memoria hominum pęnitus deleatur', Peter Damian, *Vita Beati Romualdi* ed. Giovanni Tabacco (Rome, 1957), Prologue, p. 10.

preachers who were deemed heretical, whose visibility and influence was strongly condemned. As such, we are presented with an image of the hermit-preachers as prominent individuals. This is important because the presentation of who was renowned, where, and for what reasons is an indication of the values of a society and shows us to whom or what twelfth-century society was seen or presented to be responsive. An examination of these ideas gives us valuable insights into what our authors saw as important to record and preserve for posterity and the types of actions that they thought had granted such renown.

Accordingly, since the ideas of renown and reputation were so meaningful to both the creation and content of the documents under scrutiny here, one cannot study how the hermit-preachers were envisaged without confronting these notions. Given this point, it is particularly surprising that there has been no exploration of these concepts in relation to the hermit-preachers thus far in scholarship, especially since modern historians have acknowledged the importance of such notions in the last twenty years or so.² This is caused, however, by the overwhelming dominance of the concept of charisma and thus it is to this we turn first.

Reputation, Charisma and Grace

In scholarship concerning the hermit-preachers the concepts of reputation and renown have been, in my opinion, neglected because of the labelling of these individuals as 'charismatic'. This concept in itself has received little critical attention. Instead, the term is simply bandied about as a qualifying adjective rather than as a serious conceptual point.³ By characterising the hermit-preachers in this way, historians have

² See, for example, the edited collection *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, ed. Daniel Lord Smail and Thelma S. Fenster (Ithaca and London, 2003), and articles within *Médiévales* 24 (1993), special edition on *La renommée*.

³ Providing an exhaustive list of every qualification of the hermit-preachers as charismatic would be too lengthy here but see, by way of example, John Marshall Carter, "Fire and Brimstone" in *Anglo-Norman Society: The Preaching Career of St. Vital of Mortain and Its Impact on the Abbey of Savigny*, *The American Benedictine Review* 34:2 (1983), p. 167; Berman, *Cistercian Evolution*, p. 223; Kathleen Thompson, *Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France: The County of the Perche, 1000-1226* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 56; John J. Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now: An Ecumenical Church in a Postmodern World* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 2004), p. 66; Grant, 'Savigny', p. 109; Bruce L. Venarde, 'Power, Personality - and Perversity? Robert of Arbrissel (ca.1045-1116) and His Critics', in Robert F. Berkhofer III, Alan Cooper, and Adam J. Kosto (eds), *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe, 950-1350* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 214; Constance H. Berman, 'Monastic and Mendicant Communities', in Carol Lansing and Edward D. English (eds), *A Companion to the Medieval World* (Oxford, 2009), p. 239; Patrick Henriot, 'Les trois voies de la réforme dans l'hagiographie érémitique du XIIe siècle. Enquête sur la *Vita Bernardi Tironensis* (BHL 1251)', *Médiévales* 62 (2012), p. 110; Annalena Mueller, 'From Charismatic Congregation to Institutional Monasticism: The Case of Fontevraud', *American Benedictine Review* 64:4 (2013), pp. 428-44. Generally, it is applied far more readily to Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny than Bernard of Tiron or Gerald of Sales. For a scholar who does see charisma as an illuminating concept for medieval studies, particularly collective enthusiasm, see the chapter 'Charisma and Revivalism in the Thirteenth Century' in Gary Dickson, *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West: Revivals, Crusades, Saints* (Aldershot, 2000), pp.

assumed the Weberian process of charisma to institutionalisation, which posits that since charismatic authority is not an institutional or permanent structure, it has to be legitimated by its 'routinisation' or 'institutionalisation'.⁴ So when the hermit-preachers established communities, and when these communities adopted monastic Rules, the charisma of the founder was 'routinised' and incorporated into the accepted societal structures of the twelfth century. This Weberian model is implicit within most modern narratives that discuss the hermit-preachers and the formation of their communities.⁵ Most scholars, as Katharine Sykes has noted, do not cite Weber directly. Nevertheless, the sociologist's influence is clearly pervasive in the use of such terms as 'charismatic authority' to describe founders, and the historiographical cliché of the 'legally minded second generation' within the monastery.⁶ This generation is typically said to formalise and solidify many spiritual qualities of the original founder. Albrecht Diem has also commented that Weber's terminology and models have provided a 'silent backdrop for modern historical research' and have informed such influential work as that of Peter Brown.⁷ As such, Weber's theory seems to have become – perhaps inadvertently – paradigmatic both for the study of holy men and also for the history of monastic communities, although this is starting to be questioned in such works as the two cited above and deserves further exploration in future scholarship.

This chapter is not the place to explore in detail the question how applicable Weberian theory is to the historical development of monastic communities. Instead, I would like to emphasise that, as a consequence of designating the hermit-preachers as charismatic figures, scholars have overlooked the pivotal ideas of renown and reputation that are visible in the sources. To my mind, this stems from confusion between Christian and secular interpretations of charisma, which is partly down to Weber himself. When Weber wrote of charisma, he surely knew that there existed a very distinct Christian sense of the concept, originating from Paul, for whom charism had meant the gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁸ This is critical for understanding the interpretation of charisma in the Middle Ages. Yet Weber did not envisage charisma as solely defined by this understanding, as for him it meant extraordinary people who gained their authority from popular support as well as those who were seen as having

1–17. Cf. André Vauchez's comment upon the importance of Dickson's work in the introduction to his *festschrift*: André Vauchez, 'Introduction: Religious Enthusiasm and Charismatic Power in the Middle Ages', in *Images of Medieval Sanctity: Essays in Honour of Gary Dickson* (Leiden, 2007), pp. xiii–xxiii.

⁴ Weber, *Charisma*, pp. 54–61.

⁵ See for example Leyser, *Hermits*.

⁶ Sykes, *Inventing Sempringham*, pp. 19–20.

⁷ Diem, 'Monks', p. 523.

⁸ See 1 Cor 12:8–11. Cf. the entry for charism in André Vauchez, Richard Barrie Dobson, and Michael Lapidge, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 279; Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin, 'Introduction', in Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin (eds), *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Preaching 1200–1500* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 4–5, and for the difference between this and Weber's usage see Edward Shils, 'Charisma, Order and Status', *American Sociological Review* 30:2 (1965), pp. 200–1.

divine favour.⁹ The influence of this has been pervasive. When recalling that historians continually label the hermit-preachers as charismatic, the problematic nature of this difference in meaning becomes evident. One question that should immediately spring to mind is what do historians mean when they use the term? It is very difficult to answer with any certainty. Do scholars use it in a Weberian sense or in its Pauline sense? I suspect, though I am not certain, that it is more the former than the latter. What is clear however, if I may reiterate the introduction to this thesis, is that historians need to take much greater care with their use of language and acknowledge the influence that Weber has had.

As a consequence of this, and because 'charisma' has become so distorted, it is more appropriate to talk of *grace* in the Middle Ages, defined as a gift from God. What we retain here is its Christian sense, and one that is more in line with how medieval authors would have conceived of holy men, as conduits for the divine. Certainly the hermit-preachers were seen as having grace, this can hardly be questioned. But – and this is significant for our present purposes – there was a clear separation between this idea of *gratia* (a God-given gift) and renown (a temporal phenomenon) in the texts studied here. This is a stark contrast and consequently it is not correct to translate a certain Latin word that can designate renown – *fama* – as charisma, as has Ruth Harwood Cline.¹⁰ As such, we must separate the quality of grace from that of renown when seeking to explain the hermit-preachers' temporal reputation.

Grace could, however, be seen to create the circumstances that led to the growth of renown. In the *Vita Vitalis*, for instance, Stephen of Fougères told of a time when Vitalis of Savigny was giving a sermon in England, where many people present could not understand the vernacular language in which he spoke.¹¹ By an act of grace, and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, God made it possible for the whole audience to understand the language so that all could benefit from – and were not deprived of – Vitalis' beneficial words.¹² The incident was, of course, seen as miraculous.

⁹ '[Charisma is] a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as divine or exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual is treated as a leader', Weber, *Charisma*, p. 48. Also noted by Even-Ezra, 'Charisma', p. 152.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, *The Life of Blessed Bernard of Tiron*, ed. and trans. Ruth Harwood Cline (Washington, 2009), chap. 5.39, p. 47.

¹¹ Stephen of Fougères wrote of Vitalis speaking *romanam linguam*. See Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.11, p. 379. Cf. the *Vita Giraldi*, whose author specifically stated at one point that Gerald of Sales spoke a few specific words *in latino*, intimating that the holy man usually spoke in the vernacular: *VGS*, chap. 3.25, p. 261. For the language of preaching see Giles Constable, 'The Language of Preaching in the Twelfth Century', *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 131–52; Carolyn Muessig, 'Sermon, Preacher and Society in the Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval History* 28:1 (2002), pp. 78–9.

¹² Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.11, pp. 278–9.

In truth, the miraculous ability of the audience to understand the language of the preacher was not uncommon in the twelfth century, as Giles Constable has shown.¹³ Indeed, the above episode from the *Vita Vitalis* was not dissimilar to how Andrew of Fontevraud portrayed Robert of Arbrissel's preaching when he announced that the Lord had given the holy man such great grace that whenever he preached, each person in the crowd understood what was appropriate to himself.¹⁴ This said, Constable concluded from the phenomenon that it was not that unusual for preachers to speak in a language different to that of their audience, but I am more interested in the presence of grace and its effect upon communication. Clearly, grace was vital in the portrayal of the above situation in the *Vita Vitalis*. Without it, Vitalis of Savigny's preaching would have been futile; grace allowed communication between him and his audience and was conceived to have created understanding. Thus the presence of God in the world through the grace bestowed upon these men affected the efficacy of their preaching, crucial for the salvation of the souls in their audiences. Stephen of Fougères stated in the prologue to *Vitalis' Life* that God conferred the gifts of his grace through Vitalis' teaching, offering salvation to souls that had been weakened by the lethargic venom of the serpent.¹⁵ As such, grace created understanding which in turn proffered salvation to the hermit-preachers' audience.

Significantly, these were not the only *vitae* of the hermit-preachers that discussed how grace worked in terms of communication between the hermit-preachers and others. In the *Vita Giraldi*, it was said that Gerald of Sales went to Robert of Arbrissel in order to place himself under his tutelage because he had been inspired by praise of the great man. In her analysis of the text, Marie-Odile Lenglet stated that this could not have been the same Robert of Arbrissel of this study, but another hermit of the same name (Robert), whom the author conflated with the founder of Fontevraud, since the affirmation that Robert was an old man by the monk of Châteliers could not be possible when Gerald himself was a young man: the timings simply do not add up.¹⁶ But this hardly matters here, as the point is that there was a conception at the time of writing that Gerald was taught by the praised hermit-preacher, Robert of Arbrissel. Pertinently, for our present concerns, this praise was said to have stemmed from the fact that Robert had been inflamed by the Holy Spirit and, consequently, all who listened to him marvelled in the words of *grace* that came from his saliva.¹⁷ Others who wrote about Robert also emphasised his grace. Baudri of Dol, for instance, said of Robert that he was honoured by all when he travelled preaching through dioceses not only because he was worthy of such honour but also because God's grace travelled with him.¹⁸ Moreover, Andrew of Fontevraud said that the Lord had conferred such grace on

¹³ Constable, 'Language of Preaching', pp. 148–51.

¹⁴ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 23, p. 232.

¹⁵ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, Prologue, p. 357.

¹⁶ *VGS*, chap. 1.4, p. 255; Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', p. 20.

¹⁷ *VGS*, chap. 1.3, p. 254.

¹⁸ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.15, col. 1051A.

Robert that not only religious people held him in awe but even kings and princes yielded to his command.¹⁹ Grace thus appeared as the foundation of Robert's ability to communicate, and in turn created the talk that circulated about him and thus forged his resultant reputation. It was a theological gift with a distinctly social outcome as it underpinned both holiness and renown. Grace was even said to have affected the parameters of the hermit-preacher's reputation (to be discussed in full shortly), as Geoffrey Grossus said that the sanctity and grace of Bernard of Tiron's preaching was spread far and wide.²⁰ The divinity of grace, therefore, allowed communication between the hermit-preachers and their audiences, inspired others to follow the holy men, and helped to create a reputation for these individuals.

In addition to allowing communication, the God-given gift of grace also played an important part in communicating the lives of the hermit-preachers through text. Baudri of Dol, for example, called upon grace to inspire in him the same eloquence as Robert of Arbrissel so that God would pour forth speech that would be of benefit for future generations.²¹ Similarly, Andrew of Fontevraud asked that the grace of the Holy Spirit would assist him through the interceding merits of Robert.²² Fascinatingly, these two authors prayed for grace *through* the subject of their texts. The same grace that inspired Robert and contributed to his renown was called upon to inspire the authors who sought to perpetuate his renown through the construction of a permanent record of his life. This was, as Claudia Rapp has posited, one connection that tied together the saint, the hagiographer, and his work.²³ The divine favour that God bestowed upon His faithful was therefore double-edged: the authors saw it as having facilitated communication between the hermit-preacher and audience and it also facilitated the very production of the text itself. In these two ways, the concept of grace was absolutely fundamental to the renown of the hermit-preachers and it is an idea that both resurfaces throughout and in some ways underlines this chapter, because the men were believed to have received God's benefaction. All the same, grace was not renown itself. Having clarified these conceptual points, we now turn to the concepts of renown and reputation within the sources themselves.

The Parameters of Renown

We tend, in historiography, to envisage the hermit-preachers as important figures, who had considerable influence in their localities and beyond. Indeed, this concurs with the narratives about them, which proclaimed the great significance of their protagonists, and their universal influence, as we shall see shortly. Intriguingly though, these claims of universality have been distorted in scholarship since the sheer number of studies of

¹⁹ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 16, p. 218.

²⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 5.39, col. 1392A.

²¹ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.3, col. 1045B.

²² Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 1, p. 190.

²³ Rapp, 'Storytelling', p. 432.

these men means they have been given an inflated prominence in our narratives of twelfth-century religious expression. Further to this, as Jean-Hervé Foulon has aptly noted, priority has been given to those figures about whom a *vita* was written, which reflected the destiny or outcome of renowned hermits and not their historical journey.²⁴ Many hermits remain under-studied because *vitae* dominate our scholarly imagination. Ralph of La Futaye (or Fustaye), for example, is commonly grouped with the hermit-preachers even by contemporaries but the lack of a *vita* means that modern scholars usually mention him in passing – if at all – rather than attempting any type of systematic study.²⁵ In turn, because these texts insisted upon the great renown of the hermit-preachers, the content mirrors our preoccupation with the individuals and their placement within our constructed twelfth-century narratives: one reinforces the other. It is, nevertheless, important to explore what was claimed to be the geographical parameters of the hermit-preachers' renown and reputation for two reasons. First, by studying the narratives written about the hermit-preachers, we naturally have to confront the problem that we only have the 'outcome' (as Foulon put it) of the hermit-preachers' lives. A critical element of this was asserting their influence on the world and so we should not ignore this part of the hermit-preachers' construction. Secondly, and connected to this point, we must question the creation of this renown written in *vitae* in the context of other documents that show the same concept such as mortuary rolls. This allows us to explore the literary construction of such renown.

Universal Renown?

For those who wrote about the hermit-preachers, these were men whose words and deeds had great geographical significance, and their influence was said to have been extensive. This, in turn, implied great renown and reputation. Perhaps because of the scale of this claim, some of these assertions were deliberately vague. Baudri of Dol, for example, said that Robert of Arbrissel 'illuminated the western region of the globe'.²⁶ When Robert preached a sermon at the behest of Pope Urban II in 1095/6 the crowd was so big, said Baudri, that it seemed as if the whole earth had flocked to him.²⁷ The bishop thus envisaged the hermit-preacher as an extremely influential individual, so much so that he professed Robert's almost universal renown. In a similar manner, Geoffrey Grossus asserted that Bernard of Tiron was proclaimed by the whole world,

²⁴ Foulon, 'Les ermites', pp. 84–5.

²⁵ See, for example, Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 3.20, col. 1381A and 9.82, col. 1416B. See Niderst and Raison, 'Le mouvement érémitique', pp. 16–17.

²⁶ '...occidentalem orbis plagam irradiavit', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 1.4, col. 1046A.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 2.13, col. 1050C. Robert probably preached during Urban II's preaching tour around France where the Pope attempted to stimulate support for the first crusade, though it has been convincingly argued by Porter that Robert himself was not directly involved with this crusade preaching, even if parallels could be drawn between him and Peter the Hermit who preached ideas of crusade. Cf. J.M.B. Porter, 'Preacher of the First Crusade? Robert of Arbrissel After the Council of Clermont', in A.V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095-1500* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 43–53; Ernest O. Blake and Colin Morris, 'A Hermit Goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade', in W.B. Sheils (ed.), *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, SCH 22 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 82–3.

and that he was held in *universal* admiration.²⁸ In the *analecta* of various deeds added to the end of the *Vita Bernardi*, our author said that innumerable people from different nations would flock to Bernard, inspired by his 'renowned reputation' (*opinione famosa*).²⁹ In the same vein, 'far and wide' was another ambiguous claim about the spread of the hermit-preachers' reputation or praise.³⁰ As such, there were neither boundaries nor numbers that could encapsulate the parameters of such renown: it was seemingly limitless.

Interestingly, moreover, this was an assertion that was also made about Henry of Lausanne. The author of the *Actus Pontificum*, for instance, repeatedly commented upon the hermit-preacher's reputation.³¹ While this was seen as negative and worrisome rather than as a sign of greatness, the extensiveness of his renown was still stressed. Ubiquity, it seems then, was critical in the textual imagining of these men, and their geographical significance was pronounced by those who created this vision of the hermit-preachers in narrative.

Not every text, however, insisted upon such expansive claims. Sometimes clearer and more specific boundaries were given within the works. Vitalis of Savigny's wisdom was said to have reached the Normans and Britons, the Gauls and Angevins and crossed to the English inhabiting the parts across the sea.³² Here, we have clear distinguishable limits of the parameters of reputation. Though Geoffrey Grossus proclaimed Bernard of Tiron's universal renown, as we have seen, the Tironensian monk was also more precise within his work and stated that the founder of Tiron was acclaimed not only throughout the nearby parts of Gaul but also to the farthest ends of Burgundy, the Midi and Aquitaine and his reputation spread to the Anglo-Norman and British borders and even as far as Scotland.³³ Again, geographical boundaries were specified. Yet we must note that these parameters were still rather large – according to their hagiographers Bernard and Vitalis were known throughout the whole of the Anglo-Norman world and beyond. By emphasising the wide parameters of their reputation, the authors thus made the hermit-preachers not only relevant to the history of the communities that they founded but also to the history of areas or whole countries. It is perhaps not a coincidence that these areas contained daughter houses of both Tiron and Savigny.

Connected to the idea of the hermit-preachers' wide geographical significance, some authors chose to highlight their mobility alongside their transcendence of boundaries. Robert of Arbrissel's second hagiographer for example, Andrew of Fontevraud, declared that Robert preached not only to neighbours but even to foreign peoples –

²⁸ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 12.111, col. 1432D, 1.11, col. 1375B.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 14.129, col. 1440B.

³⁰ See for example, *VGS*, chap. 1.11, p. 256; Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 5.39, col. 1392A.

³¹ *AP*, pp. 408–9.

³² Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.5, pp. 362–3.

³³ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 11.95, col. 1424A.

though who these foreign peoples were he did not specify.³⁴ This was supported by a statement from a text entitled by Jacques Dalarun as *Le migravit* of Robert of Arbrissel, a short necrological document which comes to us from the Fontevraudine priory of Fontaines and was formerly part of the archives at Fontevraud herself.³⁵ Here, the author wrote that Robert was accustomed to travel in foreign lands for the sake of his preaching.³⁶ From this we could tentatively conclude that it was understood that accentuating mobility was an important part of Robert as represented in text. As a construction in memorial documents, the mobility that was emphasised pushed further the assumed parameters of Robert's reputation, and transcended boundaries of interaction.

This concept of preaching to many peoples coupled with the mobility of the hermit-preachers was connected to notions of apostolicity within some of the texts, since it recalled Christ's command in the New Testament to preach to all nations, and the inherent mobility in the mission of the twelve.³⁷ When the author of *Le migravit* spoke of Robert of Arbrissel's accustomed fashion of travelling to foreign lands for preaching, for example, he also spoke of Robert as a 'sort of second Paul'.³⁸ These two concepts were surely connected in the author's mind, as the Apostle himself was a preacher to all peoples and journeyed to many places, scattering the word of God. In a similar manner, the Châteliers monk wrote that the spirit of God rushed into Gerald of Sales '...so that he might carry the name of Jesus preaching in the presence of all nations and peoples.'³⁹ Leaving aside the gift of grace here, with which we have dealt above, this citation inferred that preaching and apostolicism were profoundly linked, since Gerald's preaching carried out Christ's command. I shall explore the idea of the *vita apostolica* in the fourth chapter of this thesis, and will examine in depth the identification of particular hermit-preachers with the apostle Paul, so I need not say more here. Nevertheless, these ideas built up particular notions of the hermit-preachers' apostolicity, and demonstrates the interconnectedness of ideas that we prise apart for historical analysis.

Highlighting the extensive reputation and geographical scope of the hermit-preachers was, therefore, commonplace in writing about these men. It was obviously part of their memorial formation in writing and something that the authors wished to emphasise to their audience. Why include it otherwise? Yet while these men were memorialised as translocal, even universal figures, the purpose and intent of these *vitae* was quite localised, as we saw in the previous chapter. Furthermore, much of this content came

³⁴ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 3, p. 192.

³⁵ Jacques Dalarun originally provided a transcription of the text in *L'impossible sainteté*, p. 301. Here I cite the version in Dalarun *et al.*, *Les deux vies*, pp. 636–7

³⁶ Dalarun *et al.*, 'Migravit', p. 636.

³⁷ Cf. Mt 28:29, Mk 13:10 and 16:15 for example.

³⁸ '...alter quodammodo Paulus...', Dalarun *et al.*, 'Migravit', p. 636. For further exploration of this identification with Paul, see chapter four of this work, pp. 137–40.

³⁹ '...ut praedicando portaret nomen Jesu coram omni natione et gente', VGS, chap. 1.10, p. 256.

from the (local) monastic community. This leaves us with an intriguing contrast between the great, expansive reputation of the hermit-preachers and the local community which produced and used the text. Clearly, the local nature of textual production and the much larger scope of influence claimed for its subject were not in tension, and even monks set apart from the world could emphasise the worldliness of their founder. To me, this suggests two things. First, less traditionally monastic elements of the text – hermit-preachers who were said to have abandoned the stability of the coenobium in favour of preaching – could be easily discussed within, and reconciled with, a monastic mentality. This shows not so much the permeability of the monastic community but the permeability of monastic *thought*: monks were able to think of spirituality in spaces far beyond their own. Secondly, the renown and reputation of the hermit-preachers was part of both their portrayal in text and also the conception of their sanctity, as it was something that the monks wanted to celebrate and to record for posterity. In some ways, this is not surprising since broad renown, outside of the monastery, was expected from a holy person. As such, this phenomenon within the sources about the hermit-preachers was in accordance with conventions, and demonstrates that these figures could be incorporated into traditional notions of monastic spirituality and ideas of reputation.

Indeed, this significance of the hermit-preachers was enforced over time. One specific example from the Savigniac monks demonstrates how the communities were responsible for reinforcing (or even inflating) the importance of their founder: a verse dedicated to Vitalis of Savigny in a thirteenth-century manuscript, now in Paris BN Lat. 1977.⁴⁰ The verse itself, a poetic memorandum of the hermit-preacher, is anonymous but Hippolyte Sauvage and Camille Jamont attributed the poem to Baudri of Dol, due to both his prolific production of such texts and the inclusion of the verse in a mainly unedited collection of his epitaphs in a Vatican manuscript.⁴¹ I find this likely also because particular phrasing calls for Baudri's authorship.⁴² The author, therefore, was no Savigniac monk. The verse itself, while beautiful, is not particularly remarkable. Instead, it is the position of this verse that is of interest here, as it was sandwiched between an epitaph to a certain (unidentified) pope, and a verse dedicated to Bernard of Clairvaux.⁴³ As such, Vitalis' memory was consciously inserted between the

⁴⁰ First transcribed by Etienne Baluze: 'Epitaph to Vitalis of Savigny', in Etienne Baluze (ed.), *Miscellanea* (Lucae, 1764), vol. 4, p. 15.

⁴¹ See Hippolyte Sauvage and Camille Jamont, 'Poésies latines en l'honneur de Saint Vital, abbé de Savigny (XIIe siècle) - textes. Imitations en vers français. Commentaires', *Revue de l'Avranchin: Bulletin trimestriel de la Société d'archéologie de littérature, sciences et arts d'Avranches et de Mortain* 10 (1900/1901), pp. 5–6. Sauvage and Jamont republished this article independently in *Avranches* (1902) under the same title. Jaap van Moolenbroek believes this may be a lost tituli from Vitalis' mortuary roll. See van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 14.

⁴² The line *vox clamantis spargendo semina verbi*, for example, recalls Baudri's description of Robert of Arbrissel as *seminiverbum*. See Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.1, col. 1043B. For more on the use of this terminology, and its specific apostolic connotations, see chapter four of this thesis, pp. 137–40.

⁴³ BN Lat. 1977, f. 84v. The papal epitaph has been assigned both to Pope Eugenius and Gregory the Great. See 'Epitaphium Eugenii papae Romani,' in *PL* 185, cols. 1254B–C; 'Epitaph to Gregory the

memories of God's representative on earth and probably the most renowned individual of the twelfth century. It was certainly quite an honour for the hermit-preacher, and suggests that in the thirteenth century Vitalis' holiness was equated to both that of a pope and Bernard of Clairvaux.

We cannot, however, take this placement as evidence of Vitalis' wide renown in the thirteenth century, since the manuscript originated if not from Savigny herself then almost certainly a daughter house.⁴⁴ As founder of what became the Savigniac order, it was perhaps natural that Vitalis should be seen – and remembered – alongside such great figures by members of Savigniac community. Nevertheless, here there was a fundamental difference between the person who wrote the text (Baudri of Dol) and what was done with it thereafter, since it was the Savigniac monks who were responsible for the positioning of the text, not the bishop of Dol. By placing Vitalis between two exalted figures, these monks exalted their own founder and history, just as was done in the *Vita Vitalis*. This perpetuated the significance which had already been shown in the *vita*.

Rotuli and Renown

One might ask, in light of the above points, to what extent the geographical and spatial significance of these men was created, or manufactured, by a community wanting to emphasise the importance of their founder. Can we know the reputation of the hermit-preachers during their lives? For the majority of these figures this task is difficult, but we do have one record pertaining to Vitalis of Savigny that gives us an indication of the extent of his renown at the time of his death, which helps us to analyse the concept within the narrative: his *rotulus*.⁴⁵ From this document, one gets an impression of the reputation of the deceased through the length of the roll. Given that by signing the parchment the communities acknowledged Vitalis' death, the logical axiom would be that the longer the roll, the greater the reputation of the individual. Accordingly, the furthest point would show the radius of influence.⁴⁶ Vitalis' *rotulus* is in fact remarkable in size for the twelfth century and the extant manuscript contains two hundred and seven entries, spanning a great deal of England and France, reaching York at its most

Great,' in *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques des départements* (Paris, 1849), vol. 1, p. 121. The epitaph of Bernard of Clairvaux has been ascribed to both Adam of Saint-Victor and Hildebert of Lavardin in the *PL*. See Adam of Saint-Victor, 'S. Bernardi Epitaphium,' in *PL* 185, cols. 567–9; Hildebert of Lavardin, 'Epitaphium abbatis Claraevallis,' in *PL* 171, cols. 1456A–B. The verse to Bernard is in rubrum in the ms.

⁴⁴ Anne Bondéelle-Souchier stated that Lat. 1977 probably came from a Savigniac daughter house precisely because of the presence of Vitalis' epitaph. See Anne Bondéelle-Souchier, *Bibliothèques cisterciennes dans la France médiévale: Répertoire des abbayes d'hommes* (Paris, 1991), p. 282. Theresa Gross-Diaz, on the other hand, stated that the manuscript was certainly Cistercian and tentatively proposed that it originated from the Savigniac mother house. See Theresa Gross-Diaz, *The Psalms Commentary of Gilbert of Poitiers: From Lectio Divina to the Lecture Room* (Leiden, 1996), p. 171.

⁴⁵ For *rotuli*, and their insertion into *vitae*, see chapter one of this thesis, pp. 32–3.

⁴⁶ Huyghebaert, *Les documents*, p. 32.

northerly point.⁴⁷ In itself, this is testament to the remarkable mobility of the era and the connectivity between monasteries, as the roll criss-crossed back and forth across the English Channel.⁴⁸ The mortuary roll thus appears to demonstrate that the geographical breadth of Vitalis' reputation, of which Stephen of Fougères wrote, was not merely rhetorical, and testifies the impact that Vitalis had throughout the Anglo-Norman world in which he operated. What is more, as the monks of Savigny sent the roll, this was an explicit form of a community-constructed memory.

But we should not be too hasty. *Rotuli* in general have not withstood the test of time and we are missing the first section of Vitalis of Savigny's mortuary roll from the churches of Brittany and the west of Normandy as well as the original encyclical letter. We know nothing of his reputation, therefore, in those geographical areas closest to his monastic foundation of Savigny. Furthermore, mortuary rolls were themselves constructed documents, both literally and metaphorically. Many *tituli* were either exceedingly formulaic, reproduced details from the encyclical letter or from those *tituli* above, and they do not tell us to what extent the individual was known or even whether the recipient community knew of the person in question before the roll reached them.⁴⁹ In his detailed analysis of the *tituli* in Vitalis' roll, Jaap van Moolenbroek concluded that only a handful offered more than formulaic prayers.⁵⁰ It is also possible that the efficacy of the carrier, or even the insistence of the Savigniac monks of many signatories, may have greatly enlarged the length of the roll, which again points to the community agenda behind the document. Nonetheless, a few *tituli* are illuminating. In the *titulus* from the female Abbey of Sainte-Trinité at Caen, for example, the community wrote that no one could ever hope to express how much benefit Vitalis bestowed upon people and urged Normandy to lament his death.⁵¹ In a poem Hugh of Avranches wrote for the hermit-preacher, he wrote of *knowing* Vitalis.⁵² These remarks exhibited Vitalis' renown and reputation. In addition to these, even if the religious had not known Vitalis prior to the *rotulus* reaching their community, they would have quickly been made aware of his importance, especially if they were one of the later communities to have added a *titulus* and saw the praise (and number) of preceding entries.

The roll thus shows us that Vitalis enjoyed a certain reputation and renown upon his death in 1122, which accords with what Stephen of Fougères tells us within the *vita*:

⁴⁷ For the roll see 'Rouleau de bienheureux Vital, abbé de Savigny', in Léopold V. Delisle (ed.), *Rouleaux des morts du IXe au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1866), pp. 281–344. Delisle also later provided a facsimile of the roll. See *Rouleau mortuaire du B. Vital, abbé de Savigni*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris, 1909).

⁴⁸ In the facsimile edition Delisle provided a list of the monasteries and their modern counterparts who signed the roll. See *Rouleau mortuaire*, ed. Delisle, pp. 39–43.

⁴⁹ Van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, pp. 22–3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–9, esp. p. 29.

⁵¹ 'Rouleau de Vital', ed. Delisle, n. 3, p. 285; van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 25.

⁵² 'Rouleau de Vital', ed. Delisle, n. 173, p. 333; van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, pp. 27–8.

the necrological document corresponds with how Vitalis was imagined in the literary text. This correspondence is interesting, since it seems that Stephen received the mortuary roll just before he came to write book two of the life, and his comments upon the parameters of Vitalis' renown came in the first book.⁵³ From this one could conclude that it is unlikely that the bishop took his information from the *Rotulus* directly, but he may have edited the first book in accordance with what he had received from the monks of Savigny. Whatever the case, Stephen was evidently in contact with the monastery, and part of their community memory of Vitalis was his wide reputation. As such, the comments in the *vitae* only formalised a renown of which the Savigniac monks were already well aware.

In fact, Stephen of Fougères' inclusion of the encyclical letter in the *Vita Vitalis* demonstrates how the content of a hagiography could make public a reputation that was already evident or had been evident in the past. The bishop wrote in the prologue to the *Vita Vitalis*, for example, that he thought it unprofitable if so great a man was passed over in silence and nothing was transmitted for the knowledge of future generations.⁵⁴ In light of this statement, *rotuli* were evidently not written to preserve someone's memory, renown or reputation but to acknowledge and pray for someone who had had renown: they demonstrated renown, they did not safeguard it. On the contrary, *vitae* did, as we saw at the very beginning of this chapter with the citation from Peter Damian. As such, the preservation of Vitalis' renown was far more important in the production of his *vita* than in necrological documents, which was, in turn, reflected in the content of the *vita* itself.

In contrast with Vitalis of Savigny, we no longer have the mortuary roll for the hermit-preacher Gerald of Sales although we know of its existence because of the *tituli* inserted into the *vita*.⁵⁵ This was added, according to our author from Châteliers, in order to support the praise of Gerald that he had given in the previous chapters.⁵⁶ Here, William of Poitiers and the 'desert abbots' (*eremicolarum abbatum*) said that they were going to discuss briefly the 'most famous and renowned' man, Gerald.⁵⁷ This use of a superlative suggests Gerald had a wide reputation but, lacking the manuscript, we do not know the extent of the *Rotulus*' circulation. Instead, the inclusion of the *tituli* indicates that the author wanted to cement the representation of a close relationship between Gerald and the Bishops of Poitiers. Indeed, it was a relationship of great importance elsewhere in the text.⁵⁸ A certain vision of Gerald was produced by its insertion and, as with Vitalis, this insertion made public a document that was not

⁵³ For the inclusion of the encyclical letter in the *vita* see chapter one of this work, p. 33.

⁵⁴ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, Prologue, p. 357.

⁵⁵ See chapter one of this work, p. 33.

⁵⁶ *VGS*, chap. 2.18, p. 258.

⁵⁷ '...religiosissima ac famosissimi viri Giraudi tangimus summatim...', *VGS*, chap. 2.11, p. 258. Anne Grondeux states that this adjective encompassed the whole of the positive sense of *fama*. See Anne Grondeux, 'Le vocabulaire latin de la renommée au Moyen Âge', *Médiévales* 24 (1993), p. 17.

⁵⁸ See, for example, *VGS*, chap. 1.11, p. 256.

designed for public reading. Unlike Vitalis, however, the inclusion of the necrological document tells us nothing of Gerald's reputation further afield and the loss of the mortuary roll means we have no complete picture that could suggest the hermit-preacher's renown at the time of his death in 1120. Once again, we only see the construction of the hermit-preacher within the *vita* and the author's choice to interpose the text within the narrative. This underlines the critical importance of starting with the construction of the sources before we analyse different aspects of the textual and literary construction.

In sum, it is clear that our authors were keen to articulate the far-reaching impact of the hermit-preachers and, through this, asserted their reputation and renown. There was, therefore, a disconnection between the content and intent of these works as the authors insisted upon great geographical significance while the texts were destined for local monastic communities. In narrative, holy men had to have great significance. It is difficult to determine to what extent this was a literary construction, and *rotuli* are fragile evidence. Nevertheless, Vitalis of Savigny's mortuary roll is an indication that a certain reputation existed in 1122. How, one might ask next, was this reputation said to have been formed in the texts? In the second half of this chapter, I examine two aspects of this formation: public presence and talk.

Creating Renown through Public Presence and Preaching

Patrick Henriët has commented that to be listened to, a preacher must have been preceded by a reputation.⁵⁹ This may be true, but preaching itself also created reputation and renown. It was a public act, seen by many, and our authors constantly reinforced the idea that the hermit-preachers had public personae. Geoffrey Grossus emphasised, for example, that at one time Bernard of Tiron had preached publicly to the people (*populo publice*), at another, to those gathered in an open space (*in proptatulo*).⁶⁰ These are but two examples showing that the authors understood the hermit-preachers to have lived, at least in part, public lives. To be clear though, 'public' did not necessarily indicate that the hermit-preachers forever roamed the countryside or preached in urban spaces – as one usually envisages – since the term could also mean cloistered or ecclesiastical space. When Andrew of Fontevraud wrote of Robert of Arbrissel's last sermon that he gave *ad populum* before his death, for instance, this was not in the open air but took place within the monastic chapter house of Déols.⁶¹ Yet since chapter houses were not designated as sacred spaces and were not completely restricted to the brethren, preaching within this setting was still what one might consider 'public'.⁶² So in these public settings, the hermit-preacher spoke. The

⁵⁹ Patrick Henriët, *La parole et la prière au Moyen Âge* (Brussels, 2000), p. 254.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.47, col. 1395D, 6.52, col. 1398A.

⁶¹ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 23, p. 232.

⁶² Julie Kerr, *Monastic Hospitality: The Benedictines in England, c.1070-c.1250* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 172–3.

messages, miracles that occurred, the rousing speech, must have been remembered and, by all accounts, the preaching of the hermit-preachers would have been a spectacle to behold. There was, however, something curious missing from the narratives that recounted this preaching: speech. Only once, as we shall see, was the sermon of a hermit-preacher reconstructed. What I first address here, then, is the preference for performance over content, and I examine whether this was a matter of the inexorable vicissitudes of time, or a conscious choice. From here, I turn towards how this public presence was situated within hagiographic conventions of framing actions by biblical passages.

Performance over Content?

As explained above, there is scarce record of what was actually preached by the hermit-preachers. Implicit within this fact are hints of the inevitable evanescence of performance: sermons given by these men faded and words were forgotten. Given that the texts were sometimes written long after the hermit-preachers' deaths, as we have seen, it would be unsurprising for memories of the sermons to have fallen into oblivion. This absence of words, lack of speech, has been lamented and has meant certain scholars have had to phrase their questions differently from those investigating historical figures for whom sermons remain.⁶³ As Augustine Thompson has stated, this has resulted in transforming the link between pulpit and nave into a 'social one'.⁶⁴ Lacking the traditional material to analyse these preachers, scholars have instead focused upon social relationships rather than the spoken word.

Nevertheless, this focus has caused scholars to miss important insights about how the hermit-preachers were forged as characters in text. First, we should acknowledge that interpolated speech was not in short supply in some of the *vitae*: forty-one of the fifty-two chapters of Andrew of Fontevraud's *Vita Roberti altera* contained direct or reported speech of the hermit-preacher.⁶⁵ Likewise, the *Vita Bernardi* contained a significant amount of quoted speech from Bernard of Tiron on his death-bed, offering an emotional farewell to his brothers.⁶⁶ Thus the hermit-preacher did speak in hagiography and this is a phenomenon that has only just started to be recognised for its true research potential.⁶⁷ Indeed, we shall see the profound significance and poignancy of these deathbed speeches in the last chapter of this thesis. For our current purposes, however, we must simply recognise that these moments demonstrate that direct speech was not completely absent from these texts.

⁶³ Henriët, 'Verbum Dei', p. 155; Augustine Thompson, 'From Texts to Preaching: retrieving the medieval sermon as an event', in Carolyn Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2002), p. 18.

⁶⁴ Thompson, 'Texts', p. 18.

⁶⁵ Bruce L. Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel: A Medieval Religious Life* (Washington, 2003), p. 24.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 12, cols. 1429B–34B.

⁶⁷ See Henriët, *La parole*, esp. pp. 7–16.

When it came to preaching specifically, however, our authors recounted little speech of the hermit-preachers. The *Vita Vitalis*, for example, was founded upon episode after episode where Vitalis of Savigny performed public acts of piety and preached, yet Stephen of Fougères only inserted three instances of direct speech throughout his whole work, none of which directly corresponded to the hermit-preachers' sermonising. In fact, though many of the episodes in the *vita* revolved around Vitalis' preaching, none were directly concerned with the content of what he preached. Rather, his sermons simply formed the backdrop for other incidents and Stephen's text was replete with such phrases as 'while Vitalis was preaching', or 'as Vitalis preached', and so on.⁶⁸ Here, preaching simply set the scene and we are given no indication as to exactly what Vitalis was preaching.

Intriguingly, one work written about Henry of Lausanne bore the same characteristics: the *Actus Pontificum*. Here, the author spoke of Henry's preaching throughout his narrative. 'By his speech', the canon wrote of Henry's reputation before he entered Le Mans, 'even a heart of stone could easily be summoned to compunction...'⁶⁹ When Henry preached in the city, the canon reiterated the force of Henry's performance, saying that clerics sat weeping at his feet, that the hermit-preacher resounded like an oracle, and that Henry spoke as if a legion of demons had squeezed their roar through his mouth. Evidently this was quite some performance, and his ability to influence others was emphasised. All we are told of the substance of his preaching, however, is that it was full of hatred for the clergy.⁷⁰ There was no direct speech given, and there was no other allusion to the message that Henry put forth. In one way though, perhaps this is not as surprising as the above absence: why would a member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy record the words of a heretic? Of course one could have used such words as fodder for dialectical engagement, to train preachers against heresy, but even the *Contra Henricum*, which purportedly responded to Henry of Lausanne's beliefs, focused upon William the Monk's argument against Henry's errors rather than a description of the errors themselves.⁷¹ Furthermore, given the communities in which the author of the *Actus Pontificum* was situated – his church, his city, and the wider ecclesiastical hierarchy – he was surely more concerned with Henry's effect on the public and damning his actions rather than the exact content of his address to the people of the city. What the *Actus Pontificum* demonstrates then is that when Henry was imagined in text there was still a much stronger emphasis placed on the performance of his words rather than those words themselves. Simply put, there was no content, only performance of that content.

Despite this, there was one exception to this focus upon performance: a sermon said to have been given by Bernard of Tiron at Coutances in Normandy which was supposedly

⁶⁸ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.10, p. 366, 1.13, p. 369, 2.5, p. 375, 2.7, p. 376.

⁶⁹ 'Cuius affatu cor etiam lapideum facile ad compunctionem posset provocari...', *AP*, p. 408.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 409. The relationship between Henry and the clergy will be explored in the next chapter.

⁷¹ See *CH*, pp. 154–215.

interpolated into the *Vita Bernardi* by Geoffrey Grossus, the content of which will be explored shortly.⁷² So exceptional was the monologue that it has been taken as one of the only examples that truly allows us to see twelfth-century popular spirituality.⁷³ Yet one can never truly know whether Bernard spoke the same words as recorded by his hagiographer. Geoffrey never indicated that he was copying from an extant text but rather simply said that Bernard gave a certain answer to a question that had been asked of him, which effectively stretched into a sermon.⁷⁴ Furthermore even if this was the case, which seems unlikely, there was an inevitable difference between the speech-act of preaching and the documentation of this speech-act since these were two profoundly different media. Even though both were founded upon communication, what was spoken was not necessarily what was recorded.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the 'sermon' in the *Vita Bernardi* (however manufactured *post hoc*) does indicate that the general lack of sermons in other texts was not related to the genre of hagiography, if there was ever such a reified notion. There was certainly no 'hagiographic rule' that sermons could not be included and our authors did not hesitate to interpose exhortative speech throughout the *vitae*.

To my mind, therefore, what this presents is not so much the evanescence of the hermit-preachers' words but a conscious construction. When writing of the hermit-preachers' public presence – mainly their preaching – the act of performance took precedence over content.⁷⁶ Their public presence was remembered and recorded rather than the particular words that they used. Given that the audience of the text was monastic perhaps we could assume that the monks were far more concerned with words spoken to their own communities rather than those directed at the outside world. Yet this phenomenon of 'performance over content' was mirrored in one twelfth-century historian's account of Vitalis of Savigny's public piety. Orderic Vitalis gave a wonderful description of Vitalis' public performance, saying that he raised his voice like the trumpet of Isaiah's prophecies and the crowd trembled before him at his

⁷² Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.52–54, cols. 1398A–99D.

⁷³ See Etienne Delaruelle, 'Les ermites et la spiritualité populaire', in *L'eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII: Atti della seconda Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 30 agosto-6 settembre 1962* (Milan, 1965), pp. 212–47, esp. 217.

⁷⁴ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.52, col. 1398A.

⁷⁵ This problem is critical in preaching studies. See, among the vast literature, John W. O'Malley, 'Introduction: Medieval Preaching', in Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (eds), *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, 1989), p. 2; Beverly Mayne Kienzle, 'The Typology of the Medieval Sermon and Its Development in the Middle Ages: Report on Work in Progress', in Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand (eds), *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale. Actes du colloque internationale de Louvain-la-Neuve (9-11 Juillet 1992)* (Louvain-de-Neuve, 1993), p. 87 and pp. 97–8; Carolyn Muessig, 'What is medieval monastic preaching? An introduction', in Carolyn Muessig (ed.), *Medieval Monastic Preaching* (Leiden, 1998), p. 5; Beverly Mayne Kienzle, 'Medieval Sermons and Their Performance: Theory and Record', in Carolyn Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2002), p. 89. This has failed to be realised by others that have dealt with the sermon from the *Vita Bernardi*. See, for example, Kerney, 'Hermits', pp. 75–6, who argued that it was probably an accurate reflection of the event.

⁷⁶ See also Thompson, 'Texts', p. 25, who spoke of the problems rather than what this illuminates.

reproaches, blushing from his accusations.⁷⁷ Vitalis' words, however, were nowhere to be seen. This suggests not only an intriguing lack of importance of the medieval sermon and the words of the hermit-preacher spoken to the people, but also demonstrates the importance of entertainment and drama within these works.

Taking this into account, what was the point in constructing the power of this performance in text? What end did the authors see this performance as serving? Ultimately, the public presence and performative aspects of the hermit-preacher were seen as pivotal in the conversion of others, either to a better way of life or into the hermit-preachers' following. Even the canon who wrote the *Actus Pontificum* commented upon this very phenomenon, saying that monks, anchorites, and all of the clergy would imitate Henry of Lausanne after he preached.⁷⁸ It was thus known that preachers wanted to move their audience; even an author writing about a heretical preacher could acknowledge this. One might contend that this was the point of preaching in itself. Indeed, it has been said that this very capability of preaching is what separated its performance from theatre since it was not just a performance, but a moral performance.⁷⁹ And interestingly, this was thought of as a 'cure' against heresy itself: Peter the Venerable wrote that the heresy of Peter of Bruys should be rooted out by preaching, and that the emphasis should be placed on converting heretics rather than driving them out of the church.⁸⁰ At its heart therefore, the point of preaching was to try to change others.

Yet the point I wish to make here concerns both the conceived efficacy of the public setting as well as the future lives of the converted. An episode taken from the *Vita Bernardi* is illustrative of this. Here, Bernard of Tiron appeared in public after the neighbouring people of the newly-founded Tiron arrived at the monastery after discovering the monks were not, as they first thought, Saracens, but new prophets sent by God. As the crowd gathered, Bernard appeared before them and, according to Geoffrey Grossus, taught them whom they should fear and whom they should serve, and encouraged them 'to put the heavenly [realm] before the earthly'.⁸¹ After this act, Geoffrey continued, many people renounced the world and entered the Tironensian community.⁸² Preaching directly created conversion. That this episode was also recorded in the *sermo* inserted into the *Vita Bernardi*, with some sections copied verbatim, suggests that it was an important story for the Tironensian monks in the textual construction of their founder, one which they liked to tell.⁸³ In this regard the

⁷⁷ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1973), vol. 4, p. 332.

⁷⁸ *AP*, p. 408.

⁷⁹ Kienzle, 'Sermons', pp. 89–124, esp. pp. 90–8 and p. 123.

⁸⁰ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, p. 3.

⁸¹ '...coelestia terrenis praeponere...', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 8.72, col. 1410B.

⁸² *Ibid.*, chap. 8.72, col. 1410C.

⁸³ Geoffrey Grossus, *Beati Bernardi*, pp. 130–2. For the *sermo* see chapter one of this work, p. 30, n. 75.

story had two audiences, both the hermit-preacher's audience whom he converted and the audience of the text. If we consider that many of these new recruits would form part of the collective whose memories would be used for the construction of the *vita* itself then the fondness for such a story is understandable. Some of the memories of those people who had been converted by the hermit-preacher would surely have entered the monastery with the new recruits and possibly formed the basis for the recollections within the *vita* itself. The two audiences of this story from the *Vita Bernardi* were thus one and the same: the Tironensian community.

In theory, of course, monks should have purified their secular memories and turned themselves and their heart completely towards seeking the Kingdom of God when taking the monastic vow. But how, Bernard of Clairvaux asked in his sermon on conversion, was one to do such a thing? How could one erase such a stain upon one's mind? The answer was not the deletion, but the blanching of past memories, effected through God. Memories would not disappear but they would no longer be harmful to others.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, these particular memories of those converted by the hermit-preachers would have been peculiar because they were not secular memories as such, but memories of religious expression within the temporal realm. They were not, importantly, memories of secular sin. Lived experience in the world could be remembered within the context of the cloister because it was pertinent in the formation of the cloister itself: monks recalled their own conversion. This not only illustrates the transcendence, or perhaps the fragility, of monastic and worldly boundaries in memory, but also that the communities emphasised their direct link to the hermit-preacher by showing that some of their first disciples had been personally converted by the holy man.

Still, what is most significant about the above episode in the *Vita Bernardi* is the clear connection between public speech and conversion. Bernard of Tiron's appearance before the multitude and his beneficial words inspired others to abandon the temporal world and take up the monastic habit. The holy man's presence in public, who was of course conceived to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, was said to have caused people to flock to the nascent monastery.

This idea that preaching created converts was also prevalent in other *vitae*. Baudri of Dol said that after hearing Robert of Arbrissel many people renounced their corrupt manner of life: some of his audience returned home, improved, but some wished to enter into his service and become his permanent companions.⁸⁵ As a consequence of this conversion, Robert founded La Roë in 1096, a house of canons, to shelter the many

⁸⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ad Clericos de Conversione', in Jean Leclercq *et al.* (eds), *Le précepte et la dispense: La conversion*, SC 457 (Paris, 2000), chap. 28, pp. 388–90. On the particular conception of Cistercian memory see Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 169–91.

⁸⁵ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.12, col. 1050A.

people he had affected with his speech.⁸⁶ Gerald of Sales' hagiographer also said that many people had been converted to the monastic life because of his ministry, and commented that they offered so much that he had to found seven monasteries for men, and two for women.⁸⁷ We need give no more examples here as it is suffice to say that preaching, the public performance of the hermit-preachers' spiritual beliefs, was thought to have created conversion and thus granted salvation to many through the power of the word.

I do not wish, however, to deny here the power of the *exemplum* of the hermit-preachers in place of the effect of their words. Indeed, many of the hermit-preachers were imagined as having been as effective in converting others by their way of life as much as by their speech.⁸⁸ As such, Caroline Walker Bynum's suggestion that this was a distinctive characteristic of canonical spirituality in the twelfth century clearly needs to be rethought and deserves further study.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the above exploration suggests that the hermit-preachers were both remembered and envisaged through text in a way that emphasised the power and efficacy of their public presence rather than their words. These men did 'speak' through text, as we shall see in the final chapter of this thesis, but not in their role as preacher in these narratives. Medieval contemporaries clearly had a preference – in textual documentation of holy men – for the theatre and spectacle of performance. It was, in a sense, a dramatisation of the hermit-preacher within the world that demonstrated their power and efficacy, and infused the texts with a sense of performance.

What is more, aside from Robert of Arbrissel, it is rare to find a negative reaction from the hermit-preachers themselves to the renown created by their public presence. As a point of comparison, it is interesting that another hermit of the time, William Firmat, was portrayed as consciously and repeatedly avoiding the reputation he had gained.⁹⁰ In fact, there were three episodes in his *vita*, in which the holy man's mobility was imagined to have been caused by his avoidance of a popular reputation.⁹¹ In each of these there was a common theme: William's itinerancy was described as dictated by his fear and avoidance of a reputation. According to the author, the hermit evaded any public presence that attracted renown as he did not feel this part of his spiritual responsibility. As such, the writer played upon the traditional eremitic themes of

⁸⁶ For more on La Roë see Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 34–7.

⁸⁷ *VGS*, chap. 2.12, p. 257. For the problems with this assertion, see chapter five of this thesis, pp. 168–70.

⁸⁸ See, for example, Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.15, col. 1051A; Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 9, p. 206; Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.45, col. 1395A; 'Chronicon Sancti Sergii Andegavensis', in Paul Marchegay and Emile Mabilie (eds), *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou* (Paris, 1869), p. 143.

⁸⁹ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, 1979); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 22–58.

⁹⁰ For the construction of William's *vita*, see chapter one of this thesis, p. 19.

⁹¹ See 'Vita Guillelmi', ed. Pigeon, chap. 1, pp. 401–2 and chap. 2, p. 406 for these episodes.

abandonment, isolation, and solitude, which we do not find emphasised so strongly in the sources at the centre of this current work. William's persona as a hermit, rather than as a hermit-*preacher*, was imagined to have been starkly different to that of, for example, Vitalis of Savigny. What is more, the text written about William exemplified the fundamental paradoxical trope of eremitism: one sought a more perfect spiritual life by becoming a hermit but such an exemplary manner of living attracted attention.⁹² The solitary was never solitary for very long but William supposedly tried to remain alone. For the hermit-preachers of this study no such attempt was portrayed. Even if, according to Baudri of Dol, the burden of responsibility weighed heavily upon Robert of Arbrissel's shoulders, he was still active within the world and kept a public presence.

Justifying and Situating Public Piety

This public presence of the hermit-preachers described above needed to be explained in text, and this job fell to our authors as representatives of their community's memory. Here, the writers relied upon biblical models and citations in order to both justify and situate public piety within biblical paradigms. As discussed in chapter one, these authors wrote within a biblical framework and so here we encounter the first occasion where biblical passages framed specific actions of the hermit-preachers. This was another form of community construction, since the bible was the scriptural voice of the whole Christian community. What these authors passed onto their audience, and eventually to modern historians, was the situation of the hermit-preachers' public persona, presence, and actions within a rich biblical structure.

Three of our authors drew upon concepts from the parable of the talents, found in two of the synoptic gospels, when writing about the hermit-preachers' public presence.⁹³ As Christ taught his disciples through the parable that one should not hide the talent given to him, so too did the hermit-preachers not hide what had been given to them by God: grace. When bishops entrusted the authority to preach to Gerald of Sales rightly they knew, said the monk from Châteliers, that they should not keep watch over a talent but should benefit from it.⁹⁴ Similarly the Bishop of Rennes used the same concept in the prologue to his work when he wrote that Vitalis of Savigny used the talent given to him by God for the advantage of many people, and that the hermit-preacher was not afraid to conceal the lamp that was lit under a bushel of fear, thinking little of the threats of men.⁹⁵ Vitalis' visibility, his shining light, had to be shown and put to use in the world. When speaking at length later in the *vita*, Stephen of Fougères further remarked upon how Vitalis dispensed his riches readily to the multitude, and justified Vitalis' public presence as follows:

⁹² Also noted, in relation to the hermit Stephen of Obazine, by Brian Golding, 'Hermits, Monks and Women in Twelfth-Century France and England: The Experience of Obazine and Sempringham', in Judith Loades (ed.), *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition I* (Bangor, 1990), p. 129.

⁹³ Cf. Mt 25:14–30 and Lk 19:12–27.

⁹⁴ VGS, chap. 1.11, p. 256.

⁹⁵ Stephen of Fougères, VVS, Prologue, p. 357.

Because in truth it has been written: *Wisdom that is hidden and treasure that is not seen, what advantage is there in them both?* [Ecc 20:32] The good that [Vitalis] had he did not want to conceal but to reveal it in public for the advantage of the multitude, and he did not want to pass over any fear or threats in silence, but to rebuke erroneous acts of evil with an outspoken voice...⁹⁶

In the above quotation, Stephen used Ecclesiastes 20:32 to substantiate scripturally Vitalis' public presence: there would have been no spiritual advantage if the hermit-preacher had hidden his talents. Interestingly, in this short passage Stephen made Vitalis' public display of his piety part of his character. His public presence was connected to the type of person he was and his compassion for others.

The Archbishop of Dol, Baudri, also drew upon the concept of the talent when writing about Robert of Arbrissel's public piety. When he discussed the great many people that came to see Robert, for example, he wrote:

On his own initiative, [Robert] would have fled crowds of this sort and withdrawn alone, if he had not been afraid to incur blame on that account. For he had read: *Let him who hears say, 'come'* [Rv 22:17]. Therefore he favoured to distribute the talent entrusted to him that the Lord coming from the wedding exacted with interest.⁹⁷

If one compares Stephen of Fougères and Baudri of Dol's justification of their subjects' public presence we see a subtle, but significant, difference. For Stephen, Vitalis had no internal struggle as to whether he displayed his talent; he simply did not want to conceal the gift he had been given. Baudri, however, presented Robert's public presence as the outcome of an internal conflict, between what he personally desired and what he knew scripturally to be correct. In truth, one gets the impression throughout Baudri of Dol's work that Robert of Arbrissel was irreconcilably torn between a desire for solitude and his sense of responsibility for the wider world. The archbishop certainly wrote of the holy man as a tormented individual.⁹⁸ In this way, Robert embodied the tension between the active and contemplative lives, a wider

⁹⁶ 'Quia vero scriptum est: *Sapientia abscondita et thesaurus invisus, quae utilitas in utrisque? bona quae habuit occultare non voluit, sed ad multorum utilitatem in publicam produxit, nec ullius terrore vel comminationibus veritatem tacere voluit, sed malorum actus erroneos voce libera increpavit...*', *Ibid.*, bk. 1.4, p. 362.

⁹⁷ 'Hujusmodi frequentias ultroneus aufugeret, et solus delitesceret, nisi propterea culpam metueret incurrere. Legerat enim: *Qui audit, dicat, veni*. Incumbebat igitur talentum sibi commissum distribuere, quod Dominus a nuptiis veniens exigeret cum foenore', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.12, col. 1050B.

⁹⁸ See *Ibid.*, chap. 2.11, col. 1049D for this internal anxiety. Cf. Damian Kerney who argued that Robert's eremitism was due to a 'preoccupation with his own soul's salvation': Kerney, 'Hermits', pp. 39–40.

spiritual question of the twelfth century, by Baudri's portrayal of him as an individual where the roles of hermit and preacher were seemingly not easy bedfellows.⁹⁹

Strikingly, while Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny's public presence was justified by the men who wrote about them and who used the parable of the talents to explain their subjects' actions, Bernard of Tiron's was, remarkably, explained in direct speech of the hermit-preacher, in the aforementioned sermon in Coutances. Here, when preaching publicly, an archdeacon (who had a wife and children, wrote Geoffrey Grossus, with what one can only assume to be a disapproving tone) had brought a large entourage of priests and clerics to hear Bernard speak.¹⁰⁰ The archdeacon asked the hermit-preacher how, since he was a monk and therefore dead to the world, he could preach to the living.¹⁰¹ "Dearest brother", Bernard began, "have you not read in the Scriptures of God that Samson, who was so strong, killed his enemies with the jawbone of a dead ass?"¹⁰² In the next six hundred or so words in the *vita*, Geoffrey continued to reconstruct Bernard's apparently complex exegesis of the biblical passage from Judges 15:15, comparing the dead ass to the simple obedient people who bore the easy yoke of Christ and therefore were dead to the world, and the jawbone to the preacher as he must breakdown the scriptures by chewing the food of the soul.¹⁰³ Since the Christian people should be dead to the world, Bernard proclaimed, so too should their preacher and thus, being a monk conferred the right to preach. A licence to preach was acquired through the virtue of mortification.¹⁰⁴ The sermon thus pivoted around the right of the monk, traditionally thought to be dead to the world, to preach within the world.¹⁰⁵ As such, it tackled a central issue and indeed conflict within the twelfth-century, as religious expression spilled out of the cloister and the church struggled to institutionalise these new (visible) spiritual impulses. While the chosen passage was rather unusual – the Gospels were used far more frequently as we shall see in the fourth chapter of this thesis – a biblical framework was still used to justify Bernard's public presence. What is more, while this was expressed through direct speech of the

⁹⁹ For more on the active and contemplative lives, and their place within the representation of the hermit-preachers' spiritual lives, see chapter four of this work, p. 126.

¹⁰⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.52, col. 1398A. For the whole episode see *Ibid.*, chap. 6.52–4, cols. 1398A–99D. The issue of clerical celibacy was critical in ideas of reform, discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

¹⁰¹ This idea was taken from Paul, Galatians 2:20, and propagated in early monastic life by Cassian among others. See Cassian, *Institutions cénobitiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Guy, SC 109 (Paris, 1965), bk. 4.34, pp. 172–4. This was also connected to the competition over the right to preach in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

¹⁰² "Nonne, frater charissime, in Scriptura Dei legisti, quod Samson ille fortissimus de mandibula asini mortui inimicos suos interfecit?", Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.52, col. 1398A.

¹⁰³ This is another example of the ruminative language used throughout the *vita*. See chapter one of this work, p. 51.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 6.54, cols. 1399A–C. Cf. André Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West: From the Eighth to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Colette Friedlander (Kalamazoo, 1993), p. 115. I discuss the preaching licences of the hermit-preachers specifically in chapter four, pp. 144–6.

¹⁰⁵ For the question of lay preaching see John M. Trout, 'Preaching by the Laity in the Twelfth Century', *Studies in Medieval Culture* 4:1 (1973), pp. 92–108.

hermit-preacher, the fact that it was recorded by Bernard's hagiographer suggests that the public presence of monks within the world must have been a concern well into the middle of the twelfth century when Geoffrey was bringing together the *Vita Bernardi*.

Through these works therefore, the public piety and visibility of the hermit-preachers was both situated and justified in a biblical framework which was an integral part of its textual construction. This was an important part of writing these hagiographies, not only because it conformed to the general conventions of the genre by placing its subjects within a biblical framework, but also in the specific construction of the hermit-preachers in narrative.

Creating Renown through Talk

The parameters of renown were not only due to the actions of the hermit-preachers themselves, because their activities created *talk*. In one way, this was little different from the processes behind the creation of these works. We have seen, and I will reiterate here, that talk and discussion lay behind the author's pen. Our narratives tell us that communication was integral to their very creation. Having examined this in the previous chapter, however, we now come to the portrayal of the importance of discussion and talk *within* the sources. It is here that we encounter the term *fama*, which I shall discuss briefly first.

As a term, *fama* is complicated and difficult to translate as it was multifaceted in meaning. Modern translators have rendered the term, among other variants, as fame, reputation, renown, rumour, report, gossip or even infamy. At its worst, the translation can be spurious and misleading. In the recent English edition of the *Vita Bernardi*, for example, Ruth Harwood Cline translated *fama* as Rumour (capitalised), synonymous with the House of Rumour in Ovid's metamorphosis.¹⁰⁶ Personally I see no reason why this is necessary. Geoffrey Grossus gave no indication that he was using Ovid – nor, incidentally, did Harwood Cline provide a reason for her assumption – and it results in a particularly clunky translation. Furthermore, in translating *fama* in this way, Cline turns the noun into a character rather than a concept which obscures the many layers of meaning implicit within the word. Aside from this specific case, the problem with the myriad translations of the word is that each denotes *fama* perfectly correctly, yet none captures it perfectly. The fundamental problem is that there are two essential senses of *fama*: rumour (be it positive or negative) or reputation. *Fama* could thus mean an individual's image but it could also mean the talk which formed that image.¹⁰⁷ It was simultaneously a term that implied movement and discussion but also a relatively fixed

¹⁰⁶ Geoffrey Grossus, *Bernard of Tiron*, p. 15, n. 7.

¹⁰⁷ For definitions see Thelma S. Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, 'Introduction', in Thelma S. Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (eds), *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca and London, 2003), pp. 2–8; Claude Gauvard, 'La fama, une parole fondatrice', *Médiévales* 24 (1993), pp. 5–6. For variations on *fama* see Grondeux, 'Le vocabulaire', pp. 15–26.

reputation. Yet in the sources concerning the hermit-preachers, the term itself was hardly used even if the conceptions inherent within the word (such as reputation and renown) were integral to the construction of the hermit-preacher in text, as we have seen above. Instead, we only find the term used when the authors were implying movement. In these sources it was, therefore, inseparable from its embodiment in talk as well as ‘presupposing’ talk.¹⁰⁸

Talk and *Fama*

For one author in particular, Geoffrey Grossus, the word *fama* seems to have been a favourite and we find it scattered throughout the *Vita Bernardi*. Here, *fama* was a process by which things happened: reputation was made, followers acquired, and so on. It could even portray the hermit-preacher to others. During his life, said the Tironensian monk, Bernard of Tiron’s *fama* spread further and further every day, describing the features of his simple face, his pious innocence, gentle soul, rigorous abstinence, holiness of his life, even his old age and white hair. ‘And so by describing this’, Geoffrey concluded, ‘it was as if the absent man was made present before their eyes; and in this way he was made known and worthy to be loved by all.’¹⁰⁹ Talk about Bernard thus spread his reputation, and caused the wide parameters of his renown discussed above.

Yet the talk about Bernard of Tiron did not simply grant him renown. As with preaching and public performance, *fama* had observable results and for Geoffrey Grossus, these were fundamental to his own community. When the monk described the initial influx of people to the monastery, for instance, he said it was because many had been moved by *fama* of Bernard’s sanctity.¹¹⁰ At the time in which Tiron was a fledgling community, Geoffrey Grossus tells us elsewhere in the text, there had been a devastating famine across the region.¹¹¹ Despite the adversity, the monks concentrated on seeking the Kingdom of God and the Lord moved the soul of William II, Count of Nevers, to send the community a heavy gold vase from Burgundy to Bernard of Tiron. By selling the vase Bernard was able to buy not only enough food for the monks but also for the local beggars.¹¹² What is important here is that William II of Nevers had not, by Geoffrey’s own admission, known Bernard at the time. Rather, he only knew of him by *fama*.¹¹³ The powerful capacity of *fama* thus attracted support for the nascent community.

¹⁰⁸ Fenster and Smail, ‘Introduction’, p. 3; Maud Gleason, ‘Visiting and News: Gossip and Reputation Management in the Desert’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6:3 (1998), p. 503.

¹⁰⁹ ‘et ita designando, cum absentem quasi praesentem ante oculos eorum demonstraret; et sic notum et amabilem omnibus faceret’, Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 11.95, col. 1424A.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 8.74, col. 1411C.

¹¹¹ Ruth Harwood Cline identified this as the period 1109-1111. See Geoffrey Grossus, *Bernard of Tiron*, p. 77, n. 9.

¹¹² For the whole episode see Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 8.70, cols. 1409B–10A.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 8.70, col. 1409C.

Discussion of this communicative power of *fama* was not uncommon in contemporary hagiographies. In the south of France, we find much the same written about the foundations of Obazine and Silvanès established by the hermits Stephen and Pons of Léras respectively. After discussing the foundation of Obazine and praising the hermit Stephen's wisdom and goodness, for example, the author of Stephen's *vita* commented that '...with *fama* of this kind travelling around, a great number of people were converted to the service of Christ.'¹¹⁴ Likewise, after the knight-turned-monastic founder Pons had just chosen the site for Silvanès, Hugh Francigena tells us, the *fama* of the holy man spread everywhere, first to the neighbouring bishops and then to all of the people. Because of this, many people brought gifts to the new community and assisted them in all things.¹¹⁵ In both of these cases, the *fama* of the hermit-preacher was instrumental in the formation and consolidation of the new monasteries.

From these few examples, it appears that *fama* was thought to have motivated people to join the hermit-preachers, and to offer their support. I would argue, therefore, that Sophia Menache's contention that medieval communication was typified by immediate contact between those who spoke and those spoken to, is not strictly correct because this neglects the power of *fama*.¹¹⁶ The communication between the hermit-preacher and others, while direct while he was preaching, was not portrayed as direct in terms of the spread of reputation. Instead, this knowledge travelled through different channels of communication and often reached the ears of others by second-hand reports. *Fama* became a line of communication between the hermit-preachers and others and was frequently seen as fundamental in the delicate first moments of a new community.

Fama, Anxiety and Novelty

Talk about the hermit-preachers did not always have to be positive however, and our authors were well aware of this. Geoffrey Grossus said that since Bernard of Tiron outranked others, he busied himself to excel in pious habits in all things so that he would not risk slanderous *fama*.¹¹⁷ Indeed, it seems that the public presence and the visibility of these men could invite defamation of character. In a letter that Marbode of Rennes wrote to Robert of Arbrissel, the content of which we shall deal with in full shortly, the bishop wrote that Robert had climbed a high mountain, as it were, and through this had turned the tongues and eyes of men towards him. 'Do not encourage

¹¹⁴ 'Huiusmodi fama precurrente, ad Christi militiam plurimi convertebantur...', *Vita S. Stephani Obazinensis*, ed. Aubrun, bk. 1.9, p. 58.

¹¹⁵ Hugh Francigena, 'Tractatus', p. 295. See also for Pons of Léras Derek Baker, 'Popular Piety in the Lodévois in the early twelfth century: the case of Pons de Léras', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 39–47; Constance H. Berman, 'The Life of Pons De Léras: Knights and Conversion to Religious Life in the Twelfth Century', *Church History and Religious Culture* 88:2 (2008), pp. 119–37. For the text itself and the narrative within the context of the Cistercians see Berman, *Cistercian Evolution*, pp. 110–117.

¹¹⁶ Menache, *Vox Dei*, p. 9.

¹¹⁷ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.45, cols. 1394C–D.

scandal to the world by your actions,' Marbode said, 'as nearly the entire [world] follows you.'¹¹⁸ The great parameters of reputation so clearly emphasised by the authors of *vitae* could thus also have disastrous consequences. In truth, the bishop was probably acutely aware of such problems, given that he inserted a lengthy section addressing apparent criticism of Robert of La Chaise-Dieu when he wrote the second book of his *vita*. If Robert had not served Christ so excellently and if his great reputation (*opinio*) had not spread through different regions, Marbode wrote, these sons of pride [1 Mc 2:47] would not have considered him worthy of slander.¹¹⁹ Any reputation, it seems, could cause problems.

This brings us neatly to the condemned hermit-preachers of this study, because their reputation did indeed cause such problems mainly because it was not, according to those who wrote about them, founded upon holiness. The author of the *Actus Pontificum*, for instance, emphasised that the condemned hermit-preacher Henry of Lausanne had gained a reputation by rumour and opinion, rather than by the quality of his character or piety.¹²⁰ Here, rumour and opinion did not have to rest upon any measure of verifiable sanctity. Talk was presented as something unsubstantiated, unqualified and superficial. Reinforcing this statement from the author of the *Actus Pontificum*, Bernard of Clairvaux even quoted 1 Corinthians 15:33 'Evil communications corrupt good customs', when he wrote to the people of Toulouse upon return from his preaching mission there against Henry.¹²¹ As such, Henry was presented as having the same reputation as the holy men, but it was simply a façade. At this time, anxieties about rumour and opinion and their ability to subvert true faith were palpable.

Yet it was not *fama* alone that caused these anxieties, as talk was inextricably connected to the notion of novelty. To start with, we must understand that novelty was already considered a negative concept. Although this was undergoing a transformation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the change was slow and piecemeal and only manifested itself tentatively with the advent of the friars.¹²² For the period with which we are concerned here, novelty was decidedly negative and it was a criticism that was thrown around constantly. One could criticise others, and be criticised, with the same concept. On the one hand for instance, Bernard of Clairvaux compared the

¹¹⁸ 'Nulla etiam tua actione mundo, qui paene totus te sequitur, suscitans scandalum', Geoffrey of Vendôme, 'Letter 79', p. 150.

¹¹⁹ Marbode of Rennes, *Vita Beati Roberti*, bk. 2.3, p. 42.

¹²⁰ *AP*, p. 408.

¹²¹ 'Corrumpunt bonos mores colloquia mala...', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 242', sec. 1, col. 436D.

¹²² Beryl Smalley, 'Ecclesiastical Attitudes to Novelty c.1100-1250', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Church, Society and Politics* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 113–31. Novelty was a 'leitmotif' in Francis of Assisi's first *vita*. See William J. Short, 'Francis, the "New" Saint in the Tradition of Christian Hagiography: Thomas of Celano's Life of Saint Francis', in Jay M. Hammond (ed.), *Francis of Assisi: History, Hagiography and Hermeneutics in the Early Documents* (New York, 2004), pp. 153–63. See also Giles Constable, 'Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities', in Robert Louis Benson and Giles Constable (eds), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1991), pp. 64–5.

profane *novelties* of speech of those preachers who spoke without permission to poison.¹²³ On the other, Marbode of Rennes wrote that the attackers of Robert of La Chaise-Dieu chastised the 'new saint' (*novus sanctus*) for overturning the ancient order of holiness.¹²⁴ One could cite many more similar examples. Considering this, it is hardly surprising that the conjunction of talk and novelty was seen as subversive. How strange, the author of the *Actus Pontificum* proclaimed, that the people of Le Mans applauded novelty and were more interested in an unknown character than one of proven worth.¹²⁵ Certainly, he commented, when *fama* about Henry of Lausanne had originally circulated around the province, the people longed to be fooled by his discourse, applauding their own defeat with their characteristic fickleness.¹²⁶ For the author from Le Mans, *fama* and novelty coalesced in the capricious nature of the crowd.

Remarkably, this connection between reputation, novelty, and the character of the multitude was not only present in the texts that were written about hermit-preachers who had been deemed heretical by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Here we come to the two letters written to Robert of Arbrissel by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the first around 1098 by Marbode of Rennes. In this letter, the bishop spent much time reproaching Robert for his precarious relationship with women, his novelty, and the effect of this upon the wanton desires of the multitude. After a lengthy quote from Augustine concerning chastity and lust, Marbode said that many people, 'quite rightly', thought that Robert should be reprimanded for the great strangeness of his ragged clothes.¹²⁷ For each and every profession there was a fitting and proper dress code with which Robert did not comply and which if violated, Marbode contended, offended public opinion. He even quoted the Roman philosopher Seneca to reinforce his point: 'The wise man will not disturb the customs of the people, nor turn people to himself by novelty.'¹²⁸ Evidently, Marbode was worried about the lure of novelty. Indeed, Bruce Venarde has suggested that Robert's lifestyle had troubled the Bishop in the first place because of his refusal to acquiesce with the great traditions of the time.¹²⁹

Later in the letter, Marbode explained exactly why he called Robert of Arbrissel's wisdom into question when he rebuked the hermit-preacher for his criticism of absent churchmen in his preaching. The Bishop speculated that it would profit Robert if the

¹²³ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 242', sec. 3, col. 437B.

¹²⁴ Marbode of Rennes, *Vita Beati Roberti*, bk. 2.2, p. 40.

¹²⁵ *AP*, p. 409.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

¹²⁷ Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', p. 185.

¹²⁸ 'Sapiens autem publicos mores non perturbabit, nec populum in se novitate convertet', *Ibid.*, p. 185. For Seneca's letter see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, 'Epistle 14,' in Richard M. Gummere (ed.), *Lucius Annaeus Seneca: Moral Epistles* (Cambridge, 1917), vol. 1, p. 93. There was a copy of the letters in Saint-Aubin where Marbode died. See Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel*, p. 147, fn. 18.

¹²⁹ Venarde, 'Power', p. 224.

ecclesiastical order became worthless in common opinion because he and his followers alone would be held worthy. He continued:

We see crowds flocking to you from everywhere, devoting honour to you that they owe to their own priests. Yet what leads them, it is clear, is not the love of religion but that which is always familiar with the multitude: curiosity and desire for novelty. Nor do their lives appear better. Thus it happens that the loss of others serves your advantage.¹³⁰

Here, Marbode made points reinforced later in the *vitae*: that Robert's geographical significance was great and his reputation was such that crowds flocked to him. Yet for Baudri of Dol and Andrew of Fontevraud this reputation was to be celebrated. In contrast, Marbode essentially accused Robert of taking advantage of the vicissitudes of the laity. Again, the crowd were presented as being fickle, and again there was a difference between what the crowd were thought to be led by (whimsical desire), and what was seen as spiritually suitable. The bishop even announced that Robert subjected his followers to double damnation when the untested inevitably relapsed from the religious life, unable to keep their vows.¹³¹ It was a grave charge for Robert and rested upon the idea of his responsibility as a preacher. For Marbode, reputation and novelty evidently had a certain power and could hold sway over the laity. The hermit-preacher's responsibility (and correspondingly, his visibility to the crowd), meant that he had to keep this in check through a display of correct spirituality. As a bishop, it must have been a concern that was particularly troubling as Marbode had a high level of responsibility for his flock himself. If, therefore, preaching was the touchstone of orthodoxy and heresy in the later twelfth century, as Beverly Mayne Kienzle has suggested, then it was negative talk and novelty by which people were judged in the twelfth-century's earlier years.¹³²

These rumours about Robert of Arbrissel's practices continued for some time, even after Fontevraud was founded in 1101. Intriguingly, Baudri of Dol commented that Fontevraud was founded so that Robert and his followers could live and share a communal life without concern for scandal, probably intimating the letter from Marbode of Rennes.¹³³ Yet if the holy man hoped to quell the complaints about him by such an act, it did not work. Nearly ten years later, Geoffrey of Vendôme wrote to Robert with similar complaints as Marbode, though his letter was not nearly as exhaustive; Marbode had myriad complaints against the hermit-preacher, while

¹³⁰ 'Videmus ad te turbas undique confluentes, tibi tuisque honores, quos propriis debebant pastoribus impendentes. Quos tamen, ut manifestum est, non religionis amor, sed ea, quae semper vulgo familiaris est curiositas et novorum cupiditas ducit. Neque enim apparet vita eorum emendatior. Ita fit, ut aliena damna tuis serviant emolumentis.' Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', p. 187.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹³² Beverly Mayne Kienzle, 'Preaching as Touchstone of Orthodoxy and Dissidence in the Middle Ages', *Medieval Sermon Studies* 43 (1999), pp. 19–54.

¹³³ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 3.16, cols. 1051C–D. For an examination of this in relation to the perception of the foundation of Fontevraud, see chapter five of this work, pp. 165–6.

Geoffrey focused purely upon Robert's interaction with women. Nevertheless, during his critique the abbot expressed that the same concept, *fama*, was spreading Robert's reputation. When outlining his reasons for writing at the beginning of the letter, for example, Geoffrey commented that he had chosen to put pen to paper because 'unfavourable talk' (*fama sinistra*) was circulating about Robert.¹³⁴ That Geoffrey felt the need to qualify *fama* with the adjective *sinister* suggests that he essentially understood *fama* as a neutral concept by itself though it contained the possibility of negativity.¹³⁵ Later in the text, Geoffrey said that as talk had it (*sicut fama sparsit*), Robert was speaking in private to certain women, and attempting to create a new type of martyrdom by lying in bed with them.¹³⁶ So rumour here was not only important for communicating Robert's actions to Geoffrey, it was also responsible for creating a certain amount of negative *fama* in itself. After all, Robert would hardly have received these criticisms if Marbode and Geoffrey had not been made aware of his actions through the circulation of 'gossip' in the first place.

What we see through these two letters is a clear disconnect between Robert of Arbrissel's *vitae* and those letters written to him during his life. Baudri of Dol certainly hinted that Robert had come under fire but he did not specify for what, and he easily used the same concepts to praise the hermit-preacher which Marbode of Rennes and Geoffrey of Vendôme saw as potentially damning.

Concluding Remarks

Through the concepts of renown and reputation, certain visions of the hermit-preachers were created and these were profoundly important in the (temporal) after-life of the hermit-preachers. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, with many, great and efficacious sermons, with talk and rumour abounding, hagiographies conceived of these men as important individuals who were acclaimed far and wide. Our authors wrote of almost limitless parameters, powerful performances that converted many, and the ability of talk and *fama* to allow others to know of the hermit-preachers even if they had never seen them personally.

These visions of great significance did not exactly jar with other texts written about these men, but the purposes of other texts meant that these concepts were not thought of in exactly the same way. Necrological documents, for instance, provide us with a vision of renown but this was an acknowledgement of reputation, not a mechanism for its perpetuation. In another case, the letters of Marbode of Rennes and

¹³⁴ Geoffrey of Vendôme, 'Letter 79', p. 148.

¹³⁵ Claude Gauvard has commented that in its negative sense *sinistra* was often added to *fama*. See Gauvard, 'La fama', p. 6.

¹³⁶ Geoffrey of Vendôme, 'Letter 79', p. 150. One should note here the use of the verb *spargere* which was pivotal in the presentation of the apostolicity of the hermit-preachers. For this concept see chapter four of this thesis, pp. 130–6.

Geoffrey of Vendôme show that reputation and rumour could be hazardous and something of which to be wary rather than celebrated. Hagiographies were thus responsible for enshrining the hermit-preachers in specific visions of renown that did not quite tally with others. Nor did these insistences of the importance, or public presence, of the hermit-preachers correspond with the intent of the documents which were designed for liturgical readings within a monastic setting. Translocal or universal renown in content contended with being delivered in a local environment. There were obviously no problems with telling stories of feats far away from the monastery, and the communities did not shy away from the worldliness of their founder. Conceptions of the world certainly entered the monastery through interesting means. A fundamental construction in hagiography, and a fundamental construction of these men in narratives that have been handed down to us in modernity, has thus been made clear.

What is more, these concepts transcended the construction *of* the texts and construction *within* the texts because renown and reputation influenced the production of the texts as much as they were emphasised within the words of the works. At a very basic level, to be written about the hermit-preachers had to be known. But renown and reputation transcended construction and content in more complicated ways. Members of the monastic communities who had been converted by the hermit-preachers' sermons, for instance, would have related these stories of the hermit-preachers in the world and thus the recollections of these men in front of a crowd provided the basis for the content of the *vita*. The same grace that inspired the hermit-preachers was called upon to inspire the authors. As such – because these concepts were double-edged – this chapter provides a bridge between the first chapter of the thesis and the following chapters which focus more upon content within the texts. From this, we now turn to an idea that must have contributed to the conception that the hermit-preachers were renowned, that of their reforming characteristics.

CHAPTER THREE

The Papal Programme, Peace, and Prostitutes: Aspects of Reform

The archpriest [Robert of Arbrissel] was detained for four years in the house of the bishop for the purpose of restoring (*reformando*) peace between those at odds, freeing the church from the disreputable servitude of laymen, and stopping the unholy fornication of priests and laity. [Robert] thoroughly abhorred simony and manfully opposed all vices.¹

– Baudri of Dol, *Vita Roberti*, chap. 9

When Baudri of Dol wrote of Robert of Arbrissel's time spent as archpriest to Bishop of Rennes Sylvester de La Guerche, as cited above, he described the hermit-preacher's activities as essentially *reforming*: Robert restored peace between individuals and improved the moral condition of the church. More profoundly, what Baudri wrote neatly corresponded with the idea of the 'triple threat' to Christian, and more specifically clerical, morality propagated by the papacy during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as Robert opposed lay investiture (the appointment of clergy by the laity), nicolaitism (clerical marriage or concubinage), and simony (the buying or selling of ecclesiastical offices).² Yet Baudri spoke first of Robert restoring peace between those at odds, and it is here that the bishop chose to use the verb *reformare*: to reform or restore. And it is exactly this term and what it encompassed that has significance, not only to the hermit-preachers but also in the spiritual milieu of the time and, moreover, to historians of the High Middle Ages. For modern scholars, reform – in many guises – epitomises the twelfth century.³

¹ 'Quatuor igitur annis apud episcopum ita demoratus archipresbyter, pacem inter discordes reformando, Ecclesias ab infami laicorum ancillatu liberando, incestas sacerdotum et laicorum copulationes dirimendo, Simoniam penitus abhorrebat, omnibusque vitiis viriliter resistebat', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 9, cols. 1048C–49A.

² Simony originated from Acts 8:9–24, in which Simon Magus offered money to receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

³ For an overview of the ideas of reform (and the corresponding term 'renaissance') of the twelfth century see Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cleveland and New York, 1957); Brenda Bolton, *The Medieval Reformation* (London, 1983); Jean Châtillon, 'The Spiritual Renaissance at the End of the Eleventh Century and the Beginning of the Twelfth', *American Benedictine Review* 36:3 (1985), pp. 292–317; Constable, *Reformation*; the collection of essays within Robert Louis Benson, Giles Constable, and Carol Dana Lanham, eds., *Renaissance and*

In line with this, the hermit-preachers have been seen as archetypes of reform in historiography. Indeed, their activities are seen as having stemmed from, or stimulated by, ideas of reform and are imagined as an 'offshoot' of a movement commonly labelled as the 'Gregorian Reform', as outlined in the introduction to this work.⁴ Rooted in ideas of the improvement of the morality of the Church, the theory goes that this, and the twelfth-century reformation more generally, created a 'spiritual awakening' in all areas of the religious life, and that the hermit-preachers were simply one response to this. Significantly, this included a desire to return to the original ideals of the church and to live the *vita apostolica*.⁵ We shall come to the issue of the *vita apostolica* in the next chapter, but what one should recognise here is the assertion that the hermit-preachers were working within, and were a response to, reform. Certainly, in some senses, the importance of this 'reformist' ideology within the sources currently under scrutiny cannot be denied. Each text was saturated with ideas of change and transformation, and the works about the hermit-preachers were scattered with language that implied reform: *restituere*, *reintegrare*, *restaurare*, *reformare*, *revocare*, *redire*, *reddere*, *reflorere*, *renovare*, *renuntiare*, *eruerere*, *commutare*, *convertere*. Some authors even appeared to have had linguistic preferences among these: *restituere*, for example, was a particular favourite of Stephen of Fougères and he used the verb eight times throughout the *Vita Vitalis*.⁶ This accords with the rich nomenclature medieval contemporaries used to describe reform in this period.⁷ From this, it appears that the inclusion of the hermit-preachers in these narratives of reform is justified.

There is room, however, for a more subtle treatment of reform in line with the more subtle treatment of the sources advocated throughout this thesis. While it is true that the hermit-preachers were viewed as agents of reform by near contemporaries, and

Renewal in the Twelfth Century (Toronto, 1991); R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester, 1999), although Swanson argued for renaissances rather than the amorphous 'Renaissance'.

⁴ See, for instance, Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, p. 222; Maureen C. Miller, 'New Religious Movements and Reform', in Carol Lansing and Edward D. English (eds), *A Companion to the Medieval World* (Oxford, 2009), p. 222. See also below, n. 21.

⁵ For a good representation of this narrative see Bolton, *Reformation*, pp. 1–21. One should recognise that this is intrinsically linked to the idea of a 'crisis of coenobitism', and the apparent revival of the eremitic life. For this see Norman Cantor, 'The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050–1130', *The American Historical Review* 66:1 (1960), pp. 47–67, and the rebuttal by John van Engen, 'The "Crisis of Cenobitism" Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050–1150', *Speculum* 61:2 (1986), pp. 269–304, who convincingly argued that the Black monks were not undergoing any sort of 'crisis', and that a new focus on eremitism was not a response to the decline of Benedictinism.

⁶ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.1, p. 359, 1.10, p. 367, 2.6, p. 375, 2.9, p. 377, thrice in 2.10, p. 378, and 2.14, p. 382, although the last was part of the transcription from Vitalis' mortuary roll, as discussed in chapter one above.

⁷ Cf. Gerhart B. Ladner, 'Terms and Ideas of Renewal', in Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (eds), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 1–33; Constable, *Reformation*, p. 3; Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 1–2.

that their actions were envisaged as operating within a spiritual climate in which ideas of reform were paramount, this was neither homogenous nor consistent: different ideas of reform surfaced in different texts. In one *vita*, we may see more of what we would call a 'papal programme' of reform, yet another might emphasise the role of peace-making. As such, I aim to contribute to the ongoing challenge against the idea of a 'unified procedure' of reform.⁸ What I propose through this chapter then is a more delicate reading of how three aspects of reform were imagined: the papal programme, ideas of peace, and finally – intrinsically connected to both of these – the association with and conversion of prostitutes or sinful women. Throughout, I will emphasise the construction of these ideas and disparate weight placed upon each by different communities, and demonstrate that historians should not be so ready to insert the hermit-preachers into historiographical narratives of 'reform'.

Before exploring how such change was forged in text however, we should examine how representations of the hermit-preachers could allow discussion of, and poignant comments upon, a society in need of improvement. Two of our authors, notably both bishops, highlighted the need for such change by employing their subjects as spotlights upon society, and they elevated them above other contemporaries in religious offices. It was an interesting way in which more episcopal agendas shone through the sources.

Spotlights upon Society

Near the end of book one of the *Vita Vitalis*, Stephen of Fougères recounted a tale in which Vitalis of Savigny had found himself lost in a wood on one of his journeys. For three days, the hermit-preacher wandered through the forest, with companions but without food.⁹ Eventually on the fourth day, he found his way out and emerged into a village. Instead of satisfying his hunger immediately however, Vitalis started to preach and continued until the people realised how long he had been fasting. 'I reckon', Stephen concluded, 'that [Vitalis] is fed with the interior sweetness of the spirit, and for that reason he cared very little or not at all for the nurture of his body.'¹⁰ Sustained by the spirit, Vitalis was portrayed as the model ascetic, enduring hardship for his spirituality. It was a story with familiar eremitic themes.

Yet Stephen of Fougères did not finish his story with this proclamation of the eremitism of his subject, and the Bishop of Rennes took the opportunity to tack a scolding message onto the end of the above tale, in which he placed the holy man in contradistinction to his own contemporaries. What should be said about the

⁸ As with the recent publication, Steven Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900-1100* (Ithaca and London, 2013), p. 3.

⁹ Jaap van Moolenbroek has noted the biblical symbolism of Vitalis being lost for three days, drawing comparisons between the three days Jonah was trapped in the whale and the three days Jesus spent in the tomb. See van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 63.

¹⁰ 'Aestimo eum interna spiritus dulcedine saginari, ideoque corporis refectioem ab eo parum aut minime curari', Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.14, p. 370.

sluggishness of negligent preachers in light of this? Stephen asked after he had related the episode. Current pastors, he continued, ‘...are swollen (*tument*), rejoicing over a place of honour, and rarely or never apply themselves to the word of preaching in order to gain souls; because, while they only care about passing things, they rarely or never consider the matter of their own office.’¹¹ Vitalis showed that he thought very differently to them, Stephen said, because he ‘strove to scatter the seeds of the word of God with such vigilant zeal.’¹² The hermit-preacher did not even stop to eat, and so he was simultaneously elevated in the *vita* above others while throwing light upon their sloth. Most importantly, because Stephen was writing fifty or so years after Vitalis had died, as we have seen, he showed that he understood the hermit-preacher to be an extra-temporal figure, outside (historical) time, his past example throwing light upon contemporary problems.

Baudri of Dol also criticised those currently in religious offices through his subject Robert of Arbrissel. Before the bishop summed up Robert’s great deeds at the end of his *vita*, Baudri lamented what he saw as the indulgence of the hierarchical church, feeding off the suffering of others:

Our contemporaries, and also we bishops and abbots, clergy and priests, have entered into another’s work, and we have grown fat from the want (*penuria*) of those who previously suffered. Perhaps we accomplish little, and – this must be feared – possibly this is said for our reproach: *wickedness comes as if from their fat* [Ps 72/73:7].¹³

Self-reproaching, almost self-deprecatory, Baudri displayed here his profound fear of the attitude of those in positions of spiritual authority: he worried that the indulgence of these men equated to sin and wickedness. Like Stephen of Fougères above, the Bishop of Dol pitted Robert of Arbrissel against those within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, because he said that Robert had been made poor in every way for Christ: he was beggarly, indigent and poor but rich through the love of God who was his giver and master.¹⁴ The hermit-preacher thus stood in direct contrast to the clergy and cast shadows upon his contemporaries precisely because of his spiritual luminescence. This was explicit juxtaposition between the holy man and the institutional representatives

¹¹ ‘...de loci honore gaudentes tument, et rarum vel nullum praedicationis verbum lucrands animabus adhibent; quia, dum sola caduca curant, de ratione officii sui raro vel minime cogitant’, *Ibid.*, bk. 1.14, p. 370.

¹² ‘...tam vigilantia studio semina verbi Dei spargere studuit’, *Ibid.*, bk. 1.14, p. 370. For this idea of ‘scattering the word of God’, and its connections to notions of apostolicity, see the next chapter of this thesis, pp. 130–6.

¹³ ‘Contemporanei nostri, nos quoque pontifices, et abbates, clerici, et sacerdotes in labores alienos introivimus, et de eorum, quam priores pertulerunt, penuria impinguati sumus, et forsitan parum profecimus, et, quod pertimescendum est, fortassis ad improprium nostrum dictum est: *Prodiit quasi ex adipe iniquitas eorum*’, Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 4.24, col. 1056A.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 4.24, cols. 1056A–B.

of the day, perhaps made all the more pertinent since Robert – as an itinerant preacher – operated supposedly outside of these institutional structures.

It was, in fact, not uncommon for a holy man to be portrayed as a shining light, and in two other *vitae* we are presented with images of the hermit-preachers as luminescent.¹⁵ But in these works, the *Vita Bernardi* and the *Vita Giraldi*, Bernard of Tiron and Gerald of Sales cast no shadows; they were simply illuminating. By contrast, in the two examples above, Vitalis of Savigny and Robert of Arbrissel's light allowed Stephen of Fougères and Baudri of Dol to comment on the society upon which it was cast. This is important, since I would argue that in both of these stories we see the attitudes of the authors rather than the communities protruding through the texts. Stephen of Fougères was evidently expressing his own thoughts upon Vitalis of Savigny because he used the first person singular to start his analysis of the hermit-preacher's actions rather than the first person plural which, as the collective voice, inferred communication between himself and Savigny. In comparison, Baudri of Dol's comment upon the inadequacy of the clergy was clearly his own opinion not only because the comment was so obviously out of place within the context of what he was writing, but also because he listed bishops first – implying he was thinking of his own position.

These two bishops, therefore, appeared as individuals who deplored the current state of those religious in positions of authority, bound by responsibilities but failing to fulfil the duty that had been entrusted to them. Consequently, it would be tempting to conclude that Stephen of Fougères and Baudri of Dol's concern over the lacklustre qualities of those who ministered spiritual guidance indicated that both were assiduous in their duties. After all, their vocation meant they were responsible for the ministration of their flock and, in essence, their salvation. But there may have also been a rhetorical dimension to these writings. Views of clerical incompetency or inadequacy, as Jeffery H. Denton has shown, should be treated as 'suspect constructs' since they were likely to have been influenced by certain episcopal agendas, which reflected the interests of the ecclesiastical hierarchy more than what was actually happening on the ground.¹⁶ What is more, there were contemporary currents of thought that could have fed into these rhetorical constructions. Stephen's comments about negligent preachers, for example, could conceivably have been influenced by the increased focus on the practice and regulation of preaching at the time in which he wrote Vitalis' *vita*, as epitomised by the development of the *ars praedicandi* (preaching manuals) in the late twelfth century.¹⁷ Baudri too must have been familiar with the criticism directed at the wealth of those in offices in his own time and the contemporary emphasis on

¹⁵ Cf. *VGS*, chap. 1.1, p. 254; Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 14.128, col. 1440B and 14.129, col. 1440C.

¹⁶ Jeffrey H. Denton, 'The Competence of the Parish Clergy in Thirteenth-Century England', in Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford (eds), *The Church and Learning in Later Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of R.B. Dobson* (Donington, 2002), pp. 273–85, esp. pp. 273–8.

¹⁷ See, for example, Phyllis B. Roberts, 'The *Ars Praedicandi* and the Medieval Sermon', in Carolyn Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 41–62.

poverty, which would have influenced his comments about the clergy growing fat off of the needs of others.¹⁸ In this way, the presentation of the hermit-preacher seems to have been inextricably tied to the author's own position and the rhetorical framework in which he wrote, since these elements were not present in other works. As we can see from the above, this had a clear influence on the image of the hermit-preacher in text: he was openly juxtaposed to those currently in religious offices and, as such, was a spotlight upon his society.

Yet the hermit-preachers did not just illuminate; they themselves were *agents* of change, and they operated within a contemporary climate of reform. It is this transformative power, and the correspondence between the hermit-preachers and the contemporary papal programme of this reform, to which we turn now.

The 'Papal Programme'

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, spirituality in Western Europe was guided by the desire for moral and, correspondingly, ecclesiastical reform. These ideas were propagated by the papacy, most notably by Gregory VII after whom the movement is commonly named, but one must employ caution in asserting that this was a papally-led phenomena: all of the contemporary faithful sought to improve themselves and the world around them.¹⁹ Nonetheless, though this idea permeated many aspects of life, there were three central clerical transgressions that were at the heart of the matter in the eyes of the ecclesiastical establishment as noted above: lay investiture, nicolaitism, and simony. By the time the texts were written about the hermit-preachers, each transgression had been condemned by the papacy and their denunciation was written into canon law.²⁰ It was thus within this reforming framework that our authors wrote.

One cannot deny that some of the works written about the hermit-preachers corresponded with this contemporary papal programme of reform. Indeed, many scholars have placed these men within this context and there is a marked insistence that the reforming agenda of the hermit-preachers specifically stemmed from what is called the 'Gregorian Reform', as stated above.²¹ What the contemporary sources did

¹⁸ For an exploration of the idea of poverty, see the next chapter of this thesis, pp. 146–52. For the idea of 'old wealth and new poverty' in the second half of the twelfth century, see also Brenda Bolton, '*Paupertas Christi: Old Wealth and New Poverty in the Twelfth Century*', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, SCH 14 (Oxford, 1977), pp. 95–103.

¹⁹ For a historiographical overview of this see Miller, 'New Religious Movements', pp. 217–21.

²⁰ See, for example, the canons from the Lateran Councils of the first half of the twelfth century in *Decrees*, ed. Tanner, vol. 1, Lateran I (1123), canons 1, 3, and 7, pp. 190–1 and Lateran II (1139), canons 1, 2, and 6, pp. 197–8.

²¹ For instance see Louis J. Lekai, 'Motives and Ideas of the Eleventh-Century Monastic Renewal', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 4:1 (1969), pp. 3–20, esp. p. 7; Bennett D. Hill, 'The Counts of Mortain and the Origins of the Norman Congregation of Savigny', in William C. Jordan, Bruce McNab, and Teofilo F. Ruiz (eds), *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer* (Princeton, 1976), p. 241; Charles Dereine, 'Les prédicateurs «apostoliques» dans les diocèses de

not show, however, was a consistent and coherent correspondence between the actions of the hermit-preachers and those views disseminated by the highest levels of Christian authority, and this deserves some reflection.

We have seen above that Baudri of Dol wrote that Robert of Arbrissel spent his time as archpriest to Sylvester de La Guerche, Bishop of Rennes, in the fight against lay investiture, the unchaste union of priests and laity, and simony. In fact, the passage cited at the beginning of this chapter reads like a textbook on Gregorian Reform. What is more interesting though is that Baudri recounted that prior to his position with Sylvester, Robert had been a student in Paris during the papacy of Gregory VII, foremost champion of papal reform. 'We said this', Baudri continued, 'so that we might openly make known in what time Robert grew up and studied.'²² Here then, by placing Robert's life during Gregory VII's pontificate, the hermit-preacher was also positioned squarely within a particular (and reforming) milieu. As a result, this suggests that Baudri envisaged Robert's activities under Sylvester to have been informed by the fact he was living in the time of Gregory VII.²³ The Bishop of Dol obviously felt that the audience would understand the significance of this by itself as he gave no more information on the subject. In this way, Robert was presented as an individual embedded within the context of contemporary papal desires, and one who sought to combat the aforementioned offences.

According to Andrew of Fontevraud however, there was more to the story, since in his deathbed speech when confessing his sins, Robert declared that he had once fallen into the corruption of simony in the appointment of the Bishop of Rennes, which is thought to have been the same Sylvester for whom the hermit-preacher worked.²⁴ In this context, Robert's later work for the bishop could be seen as a way to atone for the sin of simony, and thus was more about Robert's own personal reform and penitence than that of the institutional church or even of the Breton diocese of Rennes. Furthermore, though not mentioned in either of his *vitae*, Marbode of Rennes wrote in his letter to Robert that the hermit-preacher was said to love cohabitation with women, in which manner he once sinned.²⁵ From this, Jacques Dalarun has proposed that Robert was probably married prior to his renunciation of the world, putting Robert's opposition to

Thérouanne, Tournai, et Cambrai-Arras durant les années 1075-1125', *Analecta Praemonstratensia* 59 (1983), pp. 171–2; Carter, 'Fire and Brimstone', p. 168; Leyser, *Hermits*, pp. 69–77; Berman, 'Communities', p. 237, among others. As Maureen C. Miller has noted, however, scholarship has moved away from the label of 'Gregorian Reform', preferring to emphasise different actors and ideas during the period. See Miller, 'New Religious Movements', p. 215.

²² 'Haec idcirco diximus, ut quibus temporibus Robertus excreverit et studuerit, patenter insinuaverimus', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 1.7, col. 1047B.

²³ Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 14–15.

²⁴ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 41, p. 266; Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 13–14.

²⁵ Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', sec. 5, p. 182. See also Fiona J. Griffiths, 'The Cross and the *Cura Monialium*: Robert of Arbrissel, John the Evangelist, and the Pastoral Care of Women in the Age of Reform', *Speculum* 83:2 (2008), p. 326.

clerical marriage in line with this atonement for past sins.²⁶ One has to wonder whether this was deliberately omitted by both of those individuals who wrote the holy man's *vitae*. Overall therefore, through his *vitae*, two different images of Robert in relation to his reforming efforts were thus presented: one in which he was informed by his education and the papacy, and the other in which he attempted to extirpate his own sin. Our authors who wrote of Robert hence deployed ideas inherent within the ecclesiastical reform movement to explain Robert's apparent actions in different ways.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Robert of Arbrissel himself condemned simony. For in his letter of 1109 to Ermengarde, daughter of Count Fulk IV of Anjou, Robert consoled the Countess for her living arrangement, saying that she lived among barbaric and rude men, and that Brittany was replete with simoniacal clergy (bishops, abbots, and priests), wicked princes, adulterers and the incestuous. In short, people ignorant of God's law.²⁷ This statement is extremely pertinent since it allows us the rare opportunity to see the opinion of the hermit-preacher himself. Whereas in the exploration above we only had the voices of others, here we have Robert's voice, and it was a clear statement that chastised those currently in positions of ecclesiastical authority. In this way, Robert's own beliefs seem to have tallied with that of the contemporary spiritual climate and the papal and ecclesiastical ideals transmitted through canon law.²⁸ He was, after all, a product of his time. Through the letter, moreover, we see that Robert was evidently disseminating this view to others. It is therefore unquestionable that the hermit-preacher was well aware of the condemnation of clerical transgressions, emanating from the papacy.

This conception that the hermit-preachers were involved in the battle against simony was also present in the *Vita Bernardi*. Here, Geoffrey Grossus recounted that while Bernard of Tiron was prior of Saint-Savin he had resisted the acquisition of a certain church, which the abbot had wanted to buy. Notably, the hermit-preacher had warned that the plague of simony was entering the monastery indirectly.²⁹ Bernard was hence presented as knowledgeable about contemporary attitudes.³⁰ What is more, this same story was also present in the *Vita Brevis* of Bernard.³¹ This indicates that the conception of Bernard combating simony was firmly fixed in the minds of the Tironensian monks, and that this was part of their memory of Bernard. As such, it appears that Bernard was also conceived, like Robert, as having been involved in the fight against clerical immorality and the reform of Christianity at the time.

²⁶ Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, p. 12.

²⁷ Robert of Arbrissel, 'Sermo', p. 228.

²⁸ Also noted by Venarde, 'Power', p. 224.

²⁹ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 2.14, col. 1377A.

³⁰ This episode is also noted as evidence of reforming attitudes by Leyser, *Hermits*, p. 71.

³¹ 'Brevis Descriptio in Vita Sancti Bernardi Tironensis Abbatis', in Bernard Beck (ed.), *Saint Bernard de Tiron* p. 476.

In addition to this we must note that Bernard of Tiron, alongside Robert of Arbrissel, was imagined to have been prepared to suffer martyrdom during the Council of Poitiers in 1100, on account of his steadfastness against Duke William IX of Aquitaine, who had apparently flown into a rage because he realised he would suffer punishment for his adultery.³² In his *vita*, Bernard was celebrated because he both opposed a tyrant and the act of adultery. In this manner, the story points both towards the moral reform of society mentioned above, and towards the views of sexuality that will be discussed shortly. Yet this passage, as Ruth Harwood Cline has noted, was taken from Hugh of Flavigny's chronicle, and Geoffrey Grossus had substituted the names of the papal legates who had resisted William of Aquitaine with that of Bernard and Robert.³³ This episode from the *Vita Bernardi* was thus a shrewd act of editing, and demonstrates that it was obviously important for Geoffrey and the Tironensian community to see Bernard as central in this anecdote, as the legate's role from Hugh of Flavigny's work was attributed to the hermit-preacher. What this projected was an image of Bernard where the hermit-preacher was not just involved in the moral improvement of the society around him but critical to its combat. In light of this, I am not sure that we can say with such certainty then, as Patrick Henriët has recently, that there was no conception of 'universal reform' (meaning that of the hierarchical Church) within the *Vita Bernardi*.³⁴ It may have left only faint traces, but it was there.

Given the attacks on simony by two of our hermit-preachers, one should also be aware that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries simony was sometimes condemned as heresy.³⁵ While neither Henry of Lausanne nor Peter of Bruys were accused of simony directly, there were a few hints that Henry was seen to have been caught up in it. Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, spoke of Henry as 'selling the Gospel', and preaching for money.³⁶ Additionally, the author of the *Actus Pontificum* stated that some of the clergy of Le Mans had been led astray by Henry due to 'private donations'.³⁷ These associations between holiness and money surely indicated a mind-set in which those writing about Henry saw him as operating in contradiction to the reforming impulses of the day, and that they envisaged the monk-turned-heretic as corrupted by avarice.

More significantly, though less explicit, was the condemnation of Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys for their disregard of the sacraments, which was present in most of the texts which condemned these two men, including pronouncements of the church

³² Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.48, cols. 1396A–C.

³³ See Ruth Harwood Cline, 'Mutatis Mutandis: Literary Borrowing from Jerome's Letter to Eustochium and Others in the Life of Blessed Bernard of Tiron by Geoffrey Grossus', *The Haskins Society Journal* 21 (2009), p. 128.

³⁴ Patrick Henriët, 'Les trois voies', pp. 105–22, esp. pp. 111–12.

³⁵ Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Pollution, Purity, and Peace: An Aspect of Social Reform between the Late Tenth Century and 1076', in Thomas Head and Richard Landes (eds), *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 295–6.

³⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, col. 435C.

³⁷ *AP*, p. 409.

councils discussed in chapter one of this thesis. Now we must note that – although a fiercely debated point in the eleventh century – the simony of an incumbent did not necessarily mean that their sacraments were invalid in the eyes of the church.³⁸ It is also evident that Peter of Bruys did not condemn the efficacy of the sacraments on the grounds of unworthy priests.³⁹ Nevertheless, what this suggests is that the men deemed heretics were operating within a spiritual climate in which questioning the clergy was paramount, and this brings us to an important point.

Central to one particular narrative written about Henry of Lausanne, the *Actus Pontificum*, was the heretic's anticlerical sentiment.⁴⁰ Indeed, the text pivoted around the story of the uprising of the people against the clergy, which Henry supposedly fermented by his preaching in the city while the Bishop, Hildebert, was away on business in Rome. After he preached, the author said, the mob were so stimulated by hatred for the clergy that they vigorously beat them, and the clerics only narrowly escaped with their lives.⁴¹ The situation was only resolved when Hildebert returned with his clergy and overcame Henry, who fled the city.⁴² Here then, Henry was envisaged in a situation where criticism of the clergy was readily received, even if the 'mob' lacked agency and were portrayed as passive recipients of his message. As such, one could place this squarely within reforming efforts that themselves critiqued the morality of the church hierarchy.⁴³ To counter this, the narratives that were written about Henry emphasised the authority and triumph of the clergy. It was Hildebert, for example, who vanquished Henry from the city in the *Actus Pontificum*, making its message strongly imbued with a sense of his, and the clergy's, righteousness. Likewise, Bernard of Clairvaux's letter to the people of Toulouse written under a decade later told the population that they needed to 'obey the bishop and the other superiors and teachers of the Church', once again enforcing clerical status and authority.⁴⁴ Texts about heretics, therefore, could be used to disseminate important messages about the authority of the hierarchy in the face of those who sought to dismantle its authority.

All the same, aside from Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron, and to some extent Henry of Lausanne, we find no direct mention of such elements of the papally-endorsed reform or the idea of the triple threat of investiture, simony, and nicolaitism in sources concerning the other hermit-preachers. The authors of the *Vita Vitalis* and the *Vita Giraldi* do not refer to simony or nicolaitism within their texts. What we should

³⁸ Cushing, *Reform*, p. 96.

³⁹ Moore, *War on Heresy*, pp. 125–6.

⁴⁰ Cf. *CH*, chap. 2, pp. 170–80 for Henry's apparent proposition against going to the priest for penitence.

⁴¹ *AP*, pp. 409–10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁴³ Cf. Moore, 'Heretical Attitudes', pp. 87–93; Andrew P. Roach, *The Devil's World: Heresy and Society 1100–1300* (Harlow, 2005), pp. 29–31, who argue that Henry was offering an 'alternative' to the established church.

⁴⁴ 'Obedite episcopo, caeterisque praepositis vestris, magistris Ecclesiae', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 242', col. 437A.

recognise, therefore, it that there was no general view that these men were proponents of the central tenets of the ecclesiastical project of reform. This stands in stark contrast to what some scholars – especially those who do not specialise in the hermit-preachers – have assumed about these men. The somewhat lazy historiographical use of these men as examples of reform, as explained in the introduction to this chapter, thus needs careful reconsideration. Furthermore, even in cases where there was concurrence – as in the cases of Robert and Bernard – these were not ideas that permeated the texts but came up in specific contexts, most notably when these men were working within ecclesiastical structures. Robert was only explicitly said to have combated simony when he was archpriest to the Bishop of Rennes, Bernard when he was prior of Saint-Savin. So, as Patrick Henriët has astutely commented, we should be careful in our tendency to map the 'reform of the Church' onto everything during the twelfth century; this was not an essential concept to a hagiographer.⁴⁵ How then, I would ask in light of this, can we automatically place the hermit-preachers within the larger narratives of twelfth-century reform? From the above examination, one gets the impression that, for the figures who were venerated, their connection to the combat of such clerical transgressions was by no means a definitive, or even a critical, part of their memory and textual legacy.

But the hermit-preachers were, nevertheless, responsible for other types of reform. These men did not have to mirror the exact concerns of the papacy to be thought of as transforming the society around them. In fact, we find that the most explicit language of reform (such as the verbs *reformare*, *restaurare*, and so on) was used when it came to their peace-making activities and so it is to this which we now turn.

Reformare Pro Pace: Reforming Language and the Idea of Peace

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, medieval contemporaries employed a rich vocabulary when speaking about reform. It was not simply *reformare* that was used (in fact, this was more uncommon), but terms such as *renovatio*, *restituere*, *restaurare*, *reflorere*, and so on. Still, despite the large number of terms that might be used, it is notable that the verbs *reformare* and *restaurare* were typically used, in the case of the hermit-preachers, to describe one particular activity: peace-making. For our authors, reform (that is, *reformare* specifically) was the reconciliation of feuding individuals. This conception at once highlights the role of peace as foundational in the idea of reform itself, intrinsically connected to the Peace councils that occurred prior to the 'Gregorian Reform', as Amy Remensnyder has shown, but also demonstrates that specific terms were used to describe specific actions.⁴⁶ As the language of these works has not been subject to any sustained study, as I explained in the introduction to this thesis, these quirks of nomenclature have hitherto not been recognised. The idea of peace,

⁴⁵ Henriët, 'Les trois voies', p. 115.

⁴⁶ Remensnyder, 'Pollution', pp. 280–307. Cf. Constable, *Reformation*, p. 138 and 239.

moreover, is generally undervalued in studies of these men despite the fact that 'peacemaker' is cited as a characteristic function of the holy man.⁴⁷ What is more, given that Patrick Henriët has asserted that these individuals' principal contribution to 'reform' was 'Christian cohesion' by the pacification of conflicts, this is all the more intriguing.⁴⁸ Though this certainly deserves fuller study in the future, I would like to undertake a brief exploration here in order to demonstrate how the language of reform was connected to the concept of peace.

We have seen in the opening quotation of this chapter that when Baudri of Dol depicted Robert of Arbrissel's time as archpriest to Bishop Sylvester of Rennes, he commented first of all that Robert had stayed in Rennes for the purpose of restoring peace between those at odds: *pacem inter discordes reformando*.⁴⁹ As such, Baudri clearly saw Robert's peace-making skills as inextricably connected to his reform of the church, linked to the papal programme as discussed above. Consequently, it seems that the hermit-preacher's role as mediator between people was paramount. When taking into account that, according to Baudri, Sylvester had summoned Robert to be his 'mediator' (*interpres*) in ecclesiastical affairs, the point becomes even more important, since Baudri's language implies that peace-making was part of Robert's role within the Breton diocese.⁵⁰ In this way Robert's function as peace-maker was critical to his work within the institutional church.

Baudri of Dol was not the only author to use such language to describe the peace-making activities of the hermit-preachers, and the bishop's language was mirrored (or possibly borrowed) in the *Vita Roberti altera*, where Andrew of Fontevraud wrote of Robert's intervention in a quarrel between Bishop Ivo of Chartres and Bernier, the abbot of Bonneval. Here, Andrew commented that many before had tried to restore (*reformare*) peace between the two, but it was only Robert who was able to resolve the argument.⁵¹ After this, the Fontevraudine monk continued, peace was restored (*pace reformata*) between the leaders of the church.⁵² Again, the verb *reformare* denoted the restoration of peace that had previously existed and envisaged Robert as instrumental in bringing this about.

The language of peace-making and reform was, however, most present in the *Vita Vitalis*. At the end of a particular chapter Stephen of Fougères wrote that anyone would

⁴⁷ See Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), pp. 80–101. See also Brown's own reflection upon this seminal article, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971-1997', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6:3 (1998), pp. 353–76. The importance of the concept of peace has been acknowledged with regard to the hermit-preachers, however, by Patrick Henriët though not with regard to the specific language used. See Henriët, 'Verbum Dei', pp. 177–83.

⁴⁸ Henriët, *La parole*, p. 248.

⁴⁹ See above, fn. 1.

⁵⁰ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 1.8, col. 1048B.

⁵¹ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 13, p. 212.

⁵² *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 214.

be able to understand easily from what followed the abundant grace Vitalis had in restoring and reforming (*restauranda et reformanda*) peace between those at odds.⁵³ Two potent verbs resulted in two potent stories, and in the following two chapters of the *vita*, Stephen related two tales in which Vitalis restored peace between feuding individuals.

In the first, Stephen of Fougères recounted a story in which while Vitalis of Savigny was preaching, a knight was present who had caused the death of another.⁵⁴ For this reason, the brothers of the deceased decided to kill the knight in order to avenge their brother. Vitalis summoned the brothers and talked to one of them in order to make peace, but only found hatred and evil. Remarkably, the hermit-preacher then placed a sword in his hands and said to him: "Behold if you are able, you will avenge the blood of your brother, and if God permits, that which you want very much you will accomplish."⁵⁵ Remarkable events! Stephen exclaimed. Raising the sword to commit vengeance, the man's hand and the whole of his body started shaking violently, and he collapsed. Stunned by this, the man promised to fulfil the peace he had previously refused and so Vitalis left, 'having pacified the bonds of friendship, and with peace having been restored between them.'⁵⁶

The second story was somewhat briefer and involved a dispute between several men of London whom Vitalis of Savigny had tried to reconcile. One of the parties had refused to listen to the holy man, and even took up arms against him. But Vitalis had been fortified with spiritual arms and urged the man to make peace with his enemy. When the man refused to listen to Vitalis a second time, he was seized with pain and froth spouted from his mouth. Thus, Stephen of Fougères stated, peace and concord was established between the man and his enemy by means of the man of God.⁵⁷ As such, both of these stories were scattered with supposedly 'reforming' verbs, specifically denoting the reestablishment of peace. This was a very clear vision in which the concept of reform was linked to the concept of peace.

In fact, it seems that this conception which linked the verb *reformare* with the idea of peace came from the Savigniac community. In both of these stories, Stephen of Fougères indicated that he had gained his information from others.⁵⁸ Given that the Bishop of Rennes specifically mentioned that he had gained some of his material from 'faithful men' presumably meaning Savigniac monks, as shown in chapter one of this

⁵³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.9, p. 366.

⁵⁴ One should also note here the prevalence of knights as antagonists in the *Vita Vitalis*. See *Ibid.*, bk. 2.3, pp. 372–3, bk. 2.6, pp. 375–6, bk. 2.8, pp. 379–80.

⁵⁵ "Ecce hunc sanguinem fratris tui, si potes, ulciscere, quodque nimis cupis, si Deus permittit, perfice.", *Ibid.*, 1.10, p. 367.

⁵⁶ "...pace inter eos restituta...amicitiae vinculo pacatos dereliquit", *Ibid.*, bk. 1.10, p. 367. For the whole story see *Ibid.*, bk. 1.10, pp. 366–7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, bk. 1.11, pp. 367–8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, bk. 1.10, p. 366, and bk. 1.11, p. 367.

work, one can assume that these stories also came from the same source. Furthermore, Jaap van Moolenbroek has proposed that these two chapters on peace were also a development of the motif of peace found in the encyclical letter of Vitalis' mortuary roll, where the brothers of Savigny had written that the hermit-preacher had restored peace between those quarrelling (*inter discordantes pacem restituerat*).⁵⁹ As such, what Stephen wrote both confirmed and developed the perception of peace that was already present in the monks' memories of the hermit-preacher. The vision of the Savigniac community hence underlined the presentation of their founder within (hagiographic) text.

In contrast to this, the verb *reformare* was used only once in the *Vita Bernardi*, when Geoffrey Grossus was discussing the special relationship that the hermit-preacher had with the Count of Perche, Rotrou II. According to him, Rotrou obeyed Bernard in many things, and tempered the plundering and cruelty of his learning so that 'he might reform his own life for the better.'⁶⁰ While this was not peace-making in the sense of what was discussed above – it was not the reestablishment of peace between individuals – it is nevertheless hard to deny that peace was important in the improvement of Rotrou's conduct, as the count promised to abandon his plundering ways. In this manner, Rotrou's personal reform forged by the hermit-preacher undoubtedly affected the peace of society in the Perche.

What the sources show then is that the language of reform was closely associated with peace-making activities and the reconciliation of people or of an individual's temperament. This signals something which scholars have neglected: the importance of peace as a concept in how the hermit-preachers were envisaged in text and their perceived effect upon the world.

Conversely, the hermit-preachers deemed heretical stood in direct contrast to this, as they did not create or re-establish peace, but disturbed it. The entire episode related above about the anticlerical revolt that Henry caused, for example, was inherently connected to the upset of the peace between the clergy and laity that was central to the right order of society. The writer even used the term *perturbare* (to disturb, to throw into confusion) to describe the effect that Henry had had upon Le Mans.⁶¹ But in general, this disturbance of 'right order' has tended to be overlooked in favour of asserting Henry's anticlerical tendencies, and neglects the fact that the dangers this posed to the peace of society were utmost in the minds of the clerical hierarchy. Indeed, one might see Henry's activities as described in the *Actus Pontificum* not in the context of the fear of heresy, but in the fear of schism, as recently suggested by Monique Zerner, which she proposed was much more pronounced in the first half of the twelfth century, particularly because of the contemporaneous papal schism

⁵⁹ Van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 62; *VVS*, bk. 2.14, p. 382.

⁶⁰ '...vitam suam in melius reformaret...', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 9.81, col. 1415C.

⁶¹ *AP*, p. 414.

between Innocent II and Anacletus II.⁶² To her mind, this explains why the author of the *Contra Henricum* labelled Henry both a heretic *and* a schismatic.⁶³ Indeed, William the Monk said in the prologue to his work that Henry had troubled the peace of the church and divided its unity.⁶⁴ Many might leave the Church of God, he later asserted, citing Henry as one of these dissidents, but the Church would maintain its unity until the end of time.⁶⁵ Faced with the disruption of peace, William assured Henry he would not triumph in light of the eternal unity of the Church. Viewed in this way, the comments made in the *Actus Pontificum* firstly about the clergy having been led astray by Henry's schism, and secondly about Bishop Hildebert's concern that those whom the hermit-preacher had corrupted would cause a schism in the church take on a different significance, in which protecting the unity of the church appeared to underline concern about anticlerical sentiments.⁶⁶

Perhaps, moreover, the memory of the commune of Le Mans from the 1070s, the first of its type in France, still loomed large in the minds of contemporaries. Conceived by the ecclesiastical hierarchy as a 'false peace', communes challenged – as did Henry – the right order in the world.⁶⁷ The history of the very city itself may have caused our author of the *Actus Pontificum* to be particularly troubled about the peace which Henry disturbed. Even so, the fact that Henry's upheaval of peace caused so much consternation may explain why the *creation* of peace was seen as so important in the narratives written about those hermit-preachers who were venerated, as it was not only a fundamentally defining ideal in Christendom, but one that was particularly distinct during this period.

When we view, then, the visibility of the papal programme of reform and the idea of peace together, we see that there was no clear monastic/episcopal divide between these two aspects of reform. While Bishop Baudri of Dol's *vita* of Robert of Arbrissel strongly suggested that his subject worked towards papally-endorsed ideals, so too did the Tironensian monk Geoffrey Grossus, and it was the work of Bishop Stephen of Fougères that had a pronounced emphasis on ideas of peace, although he was influenced by the Savigniac monks. We can, therefore, draw no firm conclusions about specific monastic and episcopal agendas on reform. Nevertheless, what is important to note here is the distinctiveness of different aspects of reform across the *vitae*: Robert of Arbrissel was imagined to have been far more in line with papal policy than Vitalis of Savigny, for instance, and this is just one example that may be obscured by the homogenising terminology 'hermit-preacher', as suggested in the introduction to my

⁶² Zerner, *Contre Henri*, pp. 24–34.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶⁴ *CH*, Prologue.2, p. 156.

⁶⁵ *CH*, chap. 3.2, p. 186.

⁶⁶ *AP*, p. 408 and 413.

⁶⁷ For communes and their connection to the disturbance of peace, see Jehangir Yezdi Malegam, *The Sleep of Behemoth: Disputing Peace and Violence in Medieval Europe, 1000-1200* (Ithaca and London, 2013), pp. 230-63, and specifically pp. 237-8 for the commune of Le Mans.

work. Let us say no more about this now though, but instead turn towards the final aspect of reform to be explored in this chapter: the conversion of prostitutes or sinful women.

Sinful Women

As shown above, the issue of clerical celibacy was paramount within the milieu of twelfth-century reform. Intimately connected to this was the problem of sexuality in general, and particularly that of women. What one should recognise first though is that the view of women at this point was mixed, particularly because of the contemporary growth of Mariolatry – the cult of the Virgin Mary.⁶⁸ As such, women were simultaneously condemned and celebrated, and there was no contradiction in this thought. Take, for example, the exemplary starting sentences from two consecutive chapters of Marbode of Rennes' book of verse, the *Liber Decem Capitulorum*:

De meretrice:

Innumerable are the traps which the crafty enemy
Sets throughout the world's hills and plains,
Among them the greatest, and which hardly anyone can evade
Is Woman, the sad source, the evil root, the defective offspring,
Who begets many scandals throughout the whole world...⁶⁹

De matrona:

Of all the things which appear to have been granted, given by God
For the use of humanity, we should value nothing to be more beautiful
Nothing to be better than a good woman, who is part of our
Body, as we are part of her flesh,
Whom, not unjustly having been compelled by the law of nature,
We love for the good of society, even if she offends us...⁷⁰

Marbode of Rennes' two chapters were designed to be read as a deliberate juxtaposition symbolising woman as both Eve and Mary, which was also perpetuated in the art, iconography, and literature of the period.⁷¹ The paradoxical duality of woman was inherent within these two biblical figures: she was both the cause of the fall, originator of sin, but also its redemption through the virginal conception and the birth

⁶⁸ For Mary's cult in twelfth-century France see Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres*.

⁶⁹ 'Innumeros inter laqueos quos callidus hostis/Omnes per mundi colles camposque tetendit,/Maximus est, et quem vix quisquam fallere possit/Femina, triste caput, mala stirps, vitiosa propago/Plurima quae totum per mundum scandala gignit...', Marbode of Rennes, 'Liber Decem Capitulorum', in *PL* 171, chap. 3, *De meretrice*, col. 1698B.

⁷⁰ 'In cunctis quae, dante Deo, concessa videntur/Usibus humanis, nil pulchrius esse putamus/ Nil melius muliere bona, quae portio nostri/Corporis est, sumus atque suae nos portio carnis,/Quam non immerito naturae lege coacti/Ut sociale bonum, vel cum nos laedit, amamus...', *Ibid.*, chap. 4, *De matrona*, cols. 1699D–1700A.

⁷¹ Henry Kraus, 'Eve and Mary: Conflicting Images of Medieval Women', in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (eds), *Feminism and Art History* (New York and London, 1982), pp. 79–99. Reprinted from *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1967), pp. 41–62.

of Christ. This view was critical within the twelfth century. On the one hand, womanhood became more subject to a 'pollution language', which Jo Ann McNamara linked to misogynist values, as the issue of clerical celibacy became ever more important in a reforming Church bent on the purification of the clergy.⁷² On the other, there was the rise of the cult of the Virgin as cited above, and a distinct sense that the *cura monialium* (the pastoral care of nuns) could have positive – even salvific – effects, as men identified with Christ's commendation of his mother Mary to John. As Christ entrusted the care of his mother to his disciple, all men were entrusted with the care of women.⁷³ For all the promotion of misogyny, abusive language, and chastisement, women could be viewed as spiritually beneficial.

The works written about the hermit-preachers represented this duality of womanhood, as their involvement with women was seen, in some cases, as evidence of holiness, and in others, something that was inherently dangerous, and that should be avoided. This was central to ideas of reform, since it displayed the purification/pollution rhetorical dichotomy that was present in contemporaneous reforming thought: the celebrated hermit-preachers were seen as cleansing society by their actions with women, whereas the condemned were imagined to have contaminated it.⁷⁴ For the remainder of this chapter, then, I shall explore both sides of this phenomenon, illustrating how the dichotomous view of women in this period could be employed to different effect in different sources. In addition to this, and in contrast to previous scholarly treatment of these issues, I am concerned throughout with how the stories written about the hermit-preachers' relationship with women, in particular with sinful women, were forged and created in narrative. We shall start with those stories that used the hermit-preachers involvement with sinful women as evidence of their sanctity.

Three Stories of *Meretrices*: Robert of Arbrissel, Gerald of Sales, Vitalis of Savigny

Three of the hermit-preachers under study here had dealings with sinful, deceitful, or scandalous women. One term in particular – *meretrices* – was often used to signify such women, although by the twelfth century the word did not necessarily denote a prostitute, as it had done in the past. Rather, a *meretrix* was a scandalous woman and the term was, in this way, part of the 'pollution language'.⁷⁵ Converting these women

⁷² Jo Ann McNamara, 'The Herrenfrage: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150', in Clare A. Lees (ed.), *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 3–29. Cf. Conrad Leyser, 'Custom, Truth, and Gender in Eleventh-Century Reform', in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Gender and the Christian Religion*, SCH 34 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 75–9, who argues that this was not concerned with women at all but a heavily coded rhetoric about men judging men. For the development of the idea of clerical celibacy see Helen Parish, *Clerical Celibacy in the West, c.1100-1700* (Aldershot, 2010), pp. 87–122.

⁷³ Griffiths, 'Women', pp. 303–30, esp. pp. 313–27. Cf. Jn 19:26–7.

⁷⁴ See Remensnyder, 'Pollution', pp. 280–307; Henriot, *La parole*, pp. 249–54, among others.

⁷⁵ J.M.B. Porter, 'Prostitution and Monastic Reform', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 41 (1997), pp. 76–7; R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2006), p. 90; Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History*

to the religious life (as the hermit-preachers did) can hence be seen in the context of the purificatory programme of the contemporary church, as discussed above. But there is more to it than this, since Dominique Iogna-Prat has suggested that the conversion of *meretrices* should be viewed in light of the individual penitential and purificatory practices employed by the hermit-preachers themselves, since subjecting oneself to the fire of lust by being around women was an extreme way in which one could overcome the temptation of the body.⁷⁶ In this context, this was as much about personal reform as it was about being in line with the institutional programme of reform. Yet while this is certainly important to acknowledge, I am less interested in the perceived reasons for such actions than in how these stories were created in text. In the following section, I shall examine three stories of the conversion of these women, the first concerning Robert of Arbrissel, the second Gerald of Sales, and the last Vitalis of Savigny. Let us start with Robert.

Robert of Arbrissel's connection to, and conversion of, prostitutes is fairly well established in modern scholarship. It might come as a surprise, therefore, that this does not generally stem from the primary works from which we know the hermit-preacher: his *vitae*. For Baudri of Dol merely stated that *publicanae* and *meretrices* were among Robert's followers.⁷⁷ Although the inclusion of *meretrices* was certainly notable, there was no detailed exposition, no story of conversion, no great edifying lesson. The inclusion of only two words (*publicanae* and *meretrices*) signified this relationship and even then, *publicanae* only alluded to prostitution; it could equally mean female sinners.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Baudri's reference to *meretrices* featured in a list of the different women who assembled around Robert. Poor and noble, widows and virgins, whores and those who spurned men, all came together around the hermit-preacher.⁷⁹ The point was, therefore, not to highlight harlots in Robert's following *specifically*, but to emphasise the eclectic nature of the female group, the diversity of female conversion to the religious life, and Robert's wide appeal, obviously connected to the notion of his renown, as explored in the previous chapter.⁸⁰ Consequently, while this quotation does tell us that *meretrices* were in Robert's entourage, it does not tell

of an Urban Institution in Languedoc (Chicago, 2009), p. 16; Keiko Nowacka, 'Networks of Ideas, Networks of Men: Clerical Reform, Parisian Theologians and the Movement to Reform Prostitutes in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century France', in Jeremy Gregory and Hugh McLeod (eds), *International Religious Networks* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 63. The term was, interestingly, also applied to priests' wives, which underlines its use as part of the pollution rhetoric. See Remensnyder, 'Pollution', p. 298.

⁷⁶ Dominique Iogna-Prat, 'La femme dans la perspective pénitentielle des ermites du Bas-Maine (fin XIe - début XIIe siècle)', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 53:1 (1977), pp. 47–64.

⁷⁷ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 3.18, col. 1053A and 3.19, col. 1053B.

⁷⁸ Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel*, p. 127, fn. 44.

⁷⁹ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 3.19, col. 1053B.

⁸⁰ Cf. Dalarun, 'Robert d'Arbrissel et les femmes', pp. 1142–5, who discussed this varied collection of women in order to break down the historiographical dichotomy between aristocracy and prostitutes as usually applied to Robert's female recruits.

us anything about how they came to be there or the process of their conversion. It was decidedly vague.

We also find no such language in Robert of Arbrissel's second *vita*, and the author Andrew of Fontevraud made no allusions to the conversion of prostitutes even if the hermit-preacher's pastoral care of women figured prominently in his text. Instead, and for reasons that will be discussed fully in the last chapter of this thesis, the brother of Fontevraud focused far more upon the position of women within the institutional hierarchy of the monastery, rather than their condition prior to conversion. Both of Robert's hagiographers, therefore, made little of Robert's association with prostitutes.

Correspondingly, we hear barely anything of Robert's conversion of such women from contemporary twelfth-century historians. Robert of Auxerre wrote that many women gathered around the hermit-preacher, some of whom had been dragged away from prostitution (*de prostibulis*) by the holy man, but he was the only one to do so.⁸¹ While women were constantly noted as followers, *meretrices* or prostitutes were not otherwise mentioned in the writings of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century historians. Given this, one might ask how we know of Robert's activities with *meretrices*. Where did this information come from if it was not embedded in the Fontevrauldine community-constructed texts and hence did not stem from the cloistered community nor from the Bishop of Dol? Here, we shall wander briefly beyond the realm of Robert's *vitae* to a different narrative.

The founder of Fontevraud's conversion of prostitutes is actually found – in elongated narrative form – in a text dubbed the 'Rouen miracle', which probably originated from a twelfth-century manuscript from the monastery of Vaux-de-Cernay, not far from Paris.⁸² The short tale began with Robert wandering barefoot through streets and towns, so that he could invite prostitutes (*fornicarias*) and sinners to repent their sins.⁸³ In Rouen, the hermit-preacher entered a brothel, sat at the hearth, and proceeded to preach to the women. "If I knew what you have asserted to be true", one of the women said in reply to Robert's sermon, "I swear to you by Christ whom I have angered with innumerable sins, I would freely renounce them."⁸⁴ The hermit-preacher told her in response that if she did renounce her sins and accept his guidance, she truly would gain God's mercy. At this the *meretrix*, alongside others who lived there, prostrated herself at the holy man's feet, promising to renounce her sins and do penance, and so Robert led the women from the city towards the wilderness and gave them 'promised rewards'.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Robert of Auxerre, 'Chronicon', p. 229.

⁸² For the critical Latin text, see 'The Rouen miracle', in Jacques Dalarun (ed.), *L'impossible sainteté*, p. 349.

⁸³ The specific verb was *consueo*, denoting that this was a familiar practice for Robert.

⁸⁴ "Si scirem vera esse quae asseris, juro tibi, per Christum quem innumeris peccatis exacerbavi, quod libenter eis abrenuntiarem.", 'Rouen', ed. Dalarun, p. 349.

⁸⁵ For a detailed analysis of the text itself see Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 82–93.

It is not so much the story that is of interest here, much as this showed once again the efficacy of the hermit-preacher's words and his propagation of the idea of repentance, but rather the monastery from which the manuscript apparently came, and the manuscript itself in which the story was embedded.⁸⁶ Here, the physical production of a text is illuminating in regard to how change was recorded. I shall deal with these two points in turn. To discuss the first, we must recognise that there is no extant original manuscript of the Rouen miracle and that our knowledge of the text comes from two seventeenth-century works, B. Pavillon's *La vie du bienheureux Robert d'Arbrissel* and Jean de la Mainferme's *Clypeus nascentis fontebraldensis ordinis*.⁸⁷ Pavillon's extract was headed: *Ex. lib. MS. Abbatiae de vallibus Cernaij*, and, at the bottom of the passage, he wrote that he had obtained the text from Maillet, who had copied an original from Vaux-de-Cernay.⁸⁸ This statement that the story was taken from Vaux-de-Cernay is striking because the monastery was a Savigniac daughter house, founded in 1118.⁸⁹ Accordingly, it is possible that a companion of Vitalis of Savigny, who was present during (and thus an eyewitness of) Vitalis and Robert's time preaching together, had seen such an event take place, and had handed down the story to brothers at Vaux-de-Cernay or he himself had been one of the monks sent to live in the first community there.⁹⁰ This is, of course, speculation. In reality, we do not know how the miracle reached Vaux-de-Cernay.

Yet while we could try to ascertain the truth of this story, as previous historians have done, I would argue that this is hardly the point.⁹¹ Monks cannot, of course, be assessed by our modern standards of 'truth' and this type of analysis would have been incomprehensible to those who wrote hagiographic texts. In any case, we are missing more important observations by becoming embroiled in proving this truth. To my mind, the importance of the miracle comes from the fact that the monks at Vaux-de-Cernay felt it necessary to record the tale in writing. For those at the Savigniac daughter house, it was obviously important to present Robert in a reforming light and to record him as converting prostitutes for posterity. Consequently, this must have perpetuated a certain memory of him in their community. What is more, we also can see from this

⁸⁶ See Henriet, *La parole*, 264–265., for this episode in relation to the efficacy of the hermit-preacher's word.

⁸⁷ Here I follow the work of Jacques Dalarun, who detailed the textual history of the 'Rouen miracle'. See Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, pp. 345–7.

⁸⁸ B. Pavillon, *La vie du bienheureux Robert d'Arbrissel* (Paris, 1666), p. 547, no. 18.

⁸⁹ For the foundation by Simon of Nielfa see *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame des Vaux de Cernay*, ed. Lucien Merlet and Auguste Moutié, 3 vols (Paris, 1857), vol. 1, pp. 1–3. Also printed, but given the date 1128, in *GC 7, Instrumenta*, no. 62, col. 52.

⁹⁰ Jacques Dalarun is also of this opinion. See Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, p. 346.

⁹¹ Historians have used, for example, the dedication of a church at Fontevraud to Mary Magdalene to suggest that this story was true. See, for example, Porter, 'Prostitution', p. 75; Moore, *Formation*, p. 89. One must note, however, that the idea that this priory solely housed prostitutes comes from the seventeenth century, not contemporary sources. See Dalarun, 'Robert d'Arbrissel et les femmes', p. 1144.

text that an oral history of Robert could have existed and was perpetuated in parallel, but never converging with, other texts that were written about him. Stories were told from monk to monk in certain communities, and eventually enshrined in text and in a specific literary tradition. These communities were thus profoundly influential in the construction of the hermit-preachers as figures in text.

The second point of interest stemming from the Rouen miracle is the manuscript in which the story was included. We have seen that Pavillon stated that the story originated from Vaux-de-Cernay, but he also commented that the manuscript contained the miraculous actions of many saints from the twelfth century.⁹² What this sounds like is a collection of *exempla*: short, edifying tales.⁹³ So if the story was handed down orally, then it was only chosen to be recorded for posterity in text when the monastery was writing a collection of miracles performed by notable twelfth-century individuals. Such a text could have been used for edifying purposes within and possibly outside the cloister walls. Consequently, the text itself was meant to have an effect on the audience, just as the hermit-preachers had affected their audience. The purpose was to edify, to transform.

But there may be more to the tale than this. Interestingly, Keiko Nowacka has recently proposed that there was a deeper motive at work here: a counteraction of 'any lingering doubts' over Robert of Arbrissel's relationship with women. She points to both Marbode of Rennes and Geoffrey of Vendome's letters to the hermit-preacher, as discussed in the previous chapter, and suggests that troublesome rumours about Robert continued into the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, precipitating the creation of the Rouen miracle as a defence of Robert's pastoral care of women.⁹⁴ This is certainly a provocative suggestion, and signals a persistent contemporary need to vindicate Robert's actions. Viewed in such a way, there is much more to the hermit-preacher's association with prostitutes as imagined through narrative than first meets the eye.

Yet to use prostitutes for moral or edifying messages was, in fact, not uncommon and they were actually a frequent character in *exempla* collections of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Here, we move onto the second of our case studies in this section, Gerald of Sales and his experience with a *meretrix* as written in his *vita*. One day while he was preaching in Saint-Maixent, Gerald's hagiographer tells us, a foolish woman invited the hermit-preacher to her house, hoping for either sex or money. After he had finished his sermon in the town at midday, Gerald went to her house whereupon the *meretrix* asked the holy man to sleep with her. In response, Gerald said he had to prepare himself and he spread some charcoals from a burning furnace upon the floor,

⁹² Pavillon, *La vie*, p. 547, no. 18.

⁹³ For *exempla* in general see Frank Anthony Carl Mantello and A. G. Rigg (eds), *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, 1996), pp. 582–8.

⁹⁴ Nowacka, 'Networks', pp. 60–1.

placed his cloak on top, lay on the middle of the coals, and then invited the woman to join him. Upon seeing this evident miracle, the wicked *meretrix* became upset, remorseful, and prostrated herself at Gerald's feet. Consequently, the woman was changed and tonsured (*mutatur et tondetur*) by the holy man and he guided her into the monastery of Fontevraud.⁹⁵ It was quite an entertaining story from the brother of Châteliers.

This compelling episode from the *Vita Giraldi* had what one would consider a common characteristic of a hagiographic story: the triumph of the saint over sin through a miracle with an entertaining narrative and which resulted in conversion. What is more, the story was not completely without precedent, as the ordeal of fire was commonly depicted in *vitae* as a test of a holy man's sanctity by the elements: overcoming the flames was proof of holiness.⁹⁶ In light of this, it is perhaps little wonder then that the story from the *Vita Giraldi* was remarkably similar to two others that circulated in the thirteenth century, both embedded in *exempla* collections: one from the *Dialogus Miraculorum* by the Cistercian, Caesarius of Heisterbach, and the other by the Dominican friar Thomas of Cantimpré. Both of these authors wrote of *meretrices* who seduced holy men but who were, like in the *Vita Giraldi* above, overcome by the invitation to sleep on a bed of logs, straw or coal, which were set on fire. Each ended with the *meretrix* expressing her guilt and the renunciation of her sin.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, although the ideas have deep roots, to the best of my knowledge this exact story was not present in earlier medieval hagiography, and so it is possible that there was some textual borrowing between the three *exempla* outlined above. In consideration of this, I would like to take a moment to reflect briefly upon the Cistercian connection between the *Dialogus Miraculorum* and the *Vita Giraldi*. First, one should remember from chapter one of this thesis that Châteliers was a Cistercian monastery, whose motherhouse was Clairvaux. Our author of the *Vita Giraldi*, therefore, must have been well aware of the Cistercian proclivity for producing *exempla* style texts that started to proliferate from Clairvaux herself during the latter half of the twelfth century.⁹⁸ Perhaps stories of this ilk were circulating among the

⁹⁵ VGS, chap. 2.19, pp. 258–9. The tonsure of women symbolised their change in status as they entered the religious life, and the verb *tondeo* was also used to signify female tonsure in sources concerning thirteenth-century Franciscan women. I would like to thank Kirsty Day for bringing the Franciscan use of the verb to my attention.

⁹⁶ Iogna-Prat, 'La femme', pp. 58–60. For the idea of ordeal more generally cf. Thomas Head, 'Saints, Heretics, and Fire: Finding Meaning Through the Ordeal', in Lester K. Little, Sharon A. Farmer, and Barbara H. Rosenwein (eds), *Monks & Nuns, Saints & Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society: Essays in Honor of Lester K. Little* (Ithaca, 2000), pp. 220–35; Peter Brown, 'Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change', *Daedalus* 104 (1975), pp. 133–51.

⁹⁷ Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols (Cologne, 1851), vol. 2, bk. 10.34, pp. 241–2; Thomas of Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus*, ed. Georgius Colvenerius (Douai, 1627), pp. 349–51.

⁹⁸ For this development see Stefano Mula, 'Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Cistercian *Exempla* Collections: Role, Diffusion, and Evolution', *History Compass* 8:8 (2010), pp. 903–12.

Cistercians then and some had reached Châteliens. On the other hand, Caesarius of Heisterbach's text itself was also extremely popular and well-disseminated in the thirteenth century. Thus Châteliens may have even had a copy of the work, the stories from which were woven into the overall narrative of Gerald's *vita*.⁹⁹ Whatever the case, strong Cistercian links were present. In light of both of these points, it seems likely to me that the inclusion of the story in the *Vita Giraldi* indicates Cistercian influence upon Châteliens. In this way, it was the wider Cistercian community of which Châteliens was part that shaped the presentation of Gerald of Sales, and in particular his activity with *meretrices*, through narrative and, if true, reveals that larger monastic organisations could influence the presentation of individuals.

However the monk from Châteliens came upon the story, the broader point here is that the narrative must have been thought so compelling – and emblematic of sanctity and morality – that it was included in multiple texts, featuring different subjects. What this also supports is the idea that these texts had an important use and function for monasteries and their audiences, since *exempla* were designed as lessons much like sections of the *vitae* that could be used in liturgy, as shown in chapter one of this work. This is interesting, since it indicates that writing about the hermit-preachers was clearly far more purposeful than simply describing how they lived. These works were not designed to be filed away and forgotten about, but to be used and engaged with.

From Robert of Arbrissel and Gerald of Sales, let us move to the third and final case, taken from the *Vita Vitalis*. In comparison to the two examples above, this text shows us another way in which hagiographic authors constructed stories of the conversion of *meretrices* and how the authors of *vitae* could 'narrativise' passing phrases. In the *Vita Vitalis*, Stephen of Fougères dedicated a section of his text to Vitalis of Savigny's conversion of prostitutes. Here, the Bishop of Rennes told of how God granted Vitalis a great service of grace in converting women who were prostitutes, how he won them over with kind words and gentle encouragement and, once converted, how he drew them into legitimate marriage.¹⁰⁰ These women were part of a three-fold change; they were rescued, converted, and restored by Vitalis and, specifically, this was done by the efficacy of his word.¹⁰¹ Jaap van Moolenbroek has suggested that this chapter of the *Vita Vitalis* was an amplification of the phrase *meretricibus legitima conjugia* found in the encyclical to Vitalis' mortuary roll, which Stephen later transcribed.¹⁰² However, if the story is an amplification of this phrase, Moolenbroek fails to note explicitly where Stephen obtained the information for such a story although one presumes he thinks

⁹⁹ This would fit with Marie-Odile Lenglet's suggestion that this portion of the text was a compilation of stories, though she did not note this connection between the Cistercian *exempla* collections and the anecdote from the *Vita Giraldi*. See Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', p. 14 and pp. 26–7.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.9, pp. 365–6.

¹⁰¹ Stephen of Fougères used the corresponding Latin verbs: *reuerere, convertere, reddere*. See *Ibid.*, bk. 1.9, p. 365. This corresponds to the efficacy of Robert of Arbrissel's word as shown above.

¹⁰² Van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 62; Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.14, p. 382; 'Rouleau de Vital', ed. Delisle, p. 284.

that the Savigniac community supplied the additional details. This still raises the question: how did Stephen extend three words from the encyclical into nearly two hundred in the *Vita Vitalis*?

It seems to me that we have two options here. First, Stephen simply took the three words from the mortuary roll and constructed a story around them, seeing that as his job as hagiographer. It was an act of enhancement and embellishment. Indeed, the bishop chose to add his own thoughts on the matter, saying that just as the Pharisees and Scribes complained over Christ's association with sinners [Lk 15:2] so perhaps the reader might misrepresent the story or judge that something so great could not have been done by Vitalis. Anyone who says such things, Stephen said, accumulates a pile of sin for himself.¹⁰³ The bishop certainly took his position as author seriously, trying to quell any problems that the story might have caused in the mind of the reader. Somewhat alarmingly, this might be an admonition of his own hesitation about the story but it was, nonetheless, a clear acknowledgement that he had heard the story from others.

The second explanation is that the bishop was given additional information about Vitalis' activities with prostitutes, either from the Savigniac brothers or an external source. I cannot say any more about this speculation here, because we do not have any evidence for this. Nevertheless, this story is at once both a good indication of how hagiographies were written and also demonstrates what we lack about the explicit sources of information for the production of such texts. The authors did not always cite their sources.

Overall, what we see through these three examples is that there were different ways in which the stories about the hermit-preachers and their activities with *meretrices* were created within text: different avenues of transmission, different ways of composing these episodes. In each, the role of certain communities was extremely decisive as their information shaped how such stories were written for posterity.

The Dangers of Sex

The hermit-preachers' association with women in general was not, however, universally accepted as positive by their twelfth-century compatriots, and the vilification of women at the time – as discussed above – was central to this. Marbode of Rennes, for example, had warned Robert of Arbrissel about his involvement with women, writing about the dangers of Robert's cohabitation and the fact that it was said that women were constantly by his side. 'For the beginning [of sin] was caused by woman,' Marbode wrote, 'and through her we all die. If we want to avoid sin, we must

¹⁰³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.9, pp. 365–6.

cut away the cause [of sin] from us.¹⁰⁴ Here the bishop invoked, as Fiona Griffiths has eloquently put it, the 'spectre of Eve'.¹⁰⁵ The danger that women posed was clearly evident.¹⁰⁶

The particular affiliation with sinful women discussed above was even ridiculed by William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. Here, William wrote of the madness of Count William IX of Poitou who was said to have built a little monastery at his castle of Niort, with the idea that he would establish an abbey of concubines (*pelicum*), and the intention to promote a girl to the position of abbess or prioress according to the notoriety of the brothel from where she came. The Count was swiftly excommunicated, according to William, by Bishop Peter of Poitiers.¹⁰⁷ Generally, modern scholars – myself included – think this to be a parody of Fontevraud, particularly given the fact that the section came directly before the historians' discussion of the life of Peter of Poitiers and then Robert of Arbrissel himself.¹⁰⁸ What William's story suggests is that people knew about prostitutes who had been converted by the hermit-preacher, and that this was seen as something that could be legitimately mocked or derided.

In this context, and bearing in mind again the defamation of women during the twelfth century, it is hardly surprising that sexual licentiousness was associated with those hermit-preachers deemed heretical. Indeed, it has been noted that the rhetoric of sexual impurity was critical in reforming attitudes.¹⁰⁹ To this effect, Henry of Lausanne was portrayed as promiscuous, adulterous, and 'wholly devoted to wantonness'

¹⁰⁴ 'Initium enim a muliere factum est et per illam omnes morimur; unde si peccatum volumus declinare, causam a nobis debemus amputari peccati', Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', sec. 8, pp. 182–3.

¹⁰⁵ Griffiths, 'Women', p. 306.

¹⁰⁶ One should note that the dangers of interacting with women was also raised in relation to Robert of Arbrissel and *married* women in the acrimonious letters exchanged between Peter Abelard and his old master Roscelin of Compiègne between 1119–20. Roscelin had accused Robert of being complicit in the sin of adultery when he accepted wives into his community who had fled their husbands. In a letter written to a bishop of Paris shortly after, Abelard wrote that Roscelin was hostile only to the good, dismissing his critique of Robert as insolent. It is significant that Robert's closeness to women was still causing unease nearly four years after his death and could be used as material to dispute whether his actions with women were 'correct'. The difference in Roscelin and Abelard's attitudes reflects the ambiguity surrounding religious relationships with women, or rather what women were imagined to be, at the time. See Roscelin of Compiègne, 'Epistola XV', in *PL* 178, cols. 361C–2A; Peter Abelard, 'Epistola XIV', in *PL* 178, cols. 357B–8A. The initial letter from Abelard to the canons of Saint-Martin is now lost, as is Roscelin's supposed text written against Robert, the *Contra Robertum*. See Dalarun, *Les deux vies*, pp. 624–32. For an exploration of this issue in the context of relationships between men and women in religious communities see Constant J. Mews, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Gender in Religious Life: Robert of Arbrissel and Hersende, Abelard and Heloise', *Viator* 37 (2006), pp. 113–48; Constant J. Mews, 'Robert d'Arbrissel, Roscelin et Abélard', *Revue Mabillon* 20 (2009), pp. 33–54.

¹⁰⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta*, vol. 1, bk. 5.439, pp. 782–4.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 393; Porter, 'Prostitution', p. 71; Moore, *Formation*, p. 89; Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ See Cushing, *Reform*, pp. 120–5; Remensnyder, 'Pollution', pp. 280–307.

throughout the *Actus Pontificum*.¹¹⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux too spoke of Henry's association with sinful women, saying that after a day preaching he was to be found with *meretrices*, and sometimes even with married women.¹¹¹ In this way, Henry was portrayed as one who freely flouted both rules of clerical celibacy and the accepted boundaries of interactions with women. What is more, through their depiction of Henry, both of these authors revealed the attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and demonstrated that they viewed Henry through the contemporary reforming and rhetorical lens. Writing as part of this institutional structure of the church thus clearly affected the authors' portrayal of their subject: it located heresy very specifically as the non-orthodox within the reform movement.

Yet it is worth remarking that the activities of the hermit-preacher with regard to women were presented, in some senses, in similar ways, be the subject of the text heretical or orthodox. The canon from Le Mans had written that at Henry of Lausanne's behest, many young men had taken in marriage women for sale, that is to say, prostitutes.¹¹² This is, strikingly, very similar to Vitalis of Savigny's activities detailed above, and yet Henry was damned and Vitalis revered. In fact, the chastisement of Robert of Arbrissel for his association with women, and in particular with prostitutes, has been used in scholarship to demonstrate exactly this: the fine line between heresy and orthodoxy.¹¹³ Nevertheless, this has not been considered in terms of textual construction, as explored above. To my mind what we see here, in the context of the duality of women at the time (both redeemer and seductress), is that any association with women at this point could be used either to celebrate or to condemn the hermit-preacher. The peculiar dichotomy of womanhood at this point, as a biblical and rhetorical construct, meant that the concept could be employed to suit any agenda. In this manner, activities that might appear the same in essence were given very different treatments depending upon the categorisation of the subject (orthodox or heretical) in the text in question. What one sees is that women and their manifestation in metaphors of the Virgin Mary, Eve, and Mary Magdalene, were important in the imagining of the hermit-preachers in text.

Concluding Remarks

Through this chapter we have seen three aspects of reform in the twelfth century as described through the texts written about the hermit-preachers: the papal programme, the idea of peace, and the complex issue of the hermit-preachers' association with women. What has been argued is that those writing about the hermit-preachers were very much in tune with contemporary currents of thought, and presented the hermit-

¹¹⁰ '...totus deditus petulantie...', *AP*, p. 114. Cf. Moore, *War on Heresy*, p. 115, who commented that the author sought to discredit Henry through the depiction of him as a 'sexual libertine'.

¹¹¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, col. 435C.

¹¹² *AP*, p. 412.

¹¹³ See, for example, Nowacka, 'Networks', pp. 55–66.

preachers as such also. Some authors placed the hermit-preachers within the context of papally-endorsed programmes of reform, such as simony or nicolaitism, as occurred with Robert of Arbrissel and Bernard of Tiron. Others, such as Stephen of Fougères, focused upon the idea of the hermit-preacher's role as a peace-maker and the Bishop of Rennes gave the sense that this was how he understood Vitalis of Savigny's reforming character. Our authors, moreover, presented the idea that the hermit-preachers were contributing to reform through the purification of society by their conversion of *meretrices* to the religious life, and they wove together *exempla*-style stories that could be used for the edification of the future faithful. Here were conceptions that the venerated hermit-preachers profoundly transformed the world around them in an effort to cleanse Christian society of polluting elements and to maintain the peace of the church. What is more, these ideas of reform were present in the narratives written about heretics, particularly the *Actus Pontificum*. Here, Henry of Lausanne was portrayed as anticlerical and, more profoundly, as someone who disturbed the peace of the church. As such his depiction, and his vanquishing by bishop Hildebert, clearly played upon contemporaneous thought about the clergy.

What I have also argued, however, is that there was no homogeneous way of discussing these notions of reform, and that these ideas were employed subtly and to different aspects of the hermit-preachers' lives in narrative. If one views this chapter as a whole, then, it is clear that there was no overarching sense that the activities of the hermit-preachers emanated from the 'Gregorian Reform' or that they worked towards its implementation in Christian society. True, these ideas were present but they were not all-encompassing or a definitive way in which to view these men. Here, one might reflect upon how constant scholarly treatment of these men together, under the banner 'hermit-preacher', may be partly responsible for this distortion and homogenisation of diversity within the sources.

In turn, the conclusions raised here are suggestive as to how we might engage more critically with ideas of 'reform' across the twelfth century. If there was no homogeneity or uniformity with regard to the hermit-preachers, then scholars must be sensitive as to how the term reform, used to describe the whole of the twelfth century and most religious movements therein, can be at once reductionist and over-deterministic. To me, a far less heavy-handed approach is necessary, one in which the ideas of reform are not simply mapped equally onto every twelfth-century figure who lived soon after the period dubbed the 'Gregorian Reform'. Through more recent works, such as those by Patrick Henriët and Steven Vanderputten, it is evident that this idea is being challenged, and that the conceptualisation of reform is up for debate and deconstruction both by scholars who work on the hermit-preachers themselves and monasticism more generally. What I hope to have contributed here, then, is not the definitive word on 'reform and the hermit-preachers' but, rather, different ways in which we might view how this relationship functioned in the eyes of those who constructed the hermit-preachers as textual figures.

From this idea of reform, we now move to the idea that the hermit-preachers attempted to live the *vita apostolica*. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this has been envisaged as a desire that was 'awakened' by the 'Gregorian Reform'. Yet if there was hardly a concrete ideology of ecclesiastical reform in the sources, as I have proposed above, then we must follow this by questioning the idea that the *vita apostolica* supposedly sprung from it.

CHAPTER FOUR

The *Vita Apostolica*?

There was obviously a common motivation behind... contemporary episodes: the model of the apostles had become an ideal, expressing itself in a demand for evangelical itinerant preaching and voluntary Christian poverty.

– Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*,
trans. Steven Rowan, p. 9

When dealing with the spirituality of the hermit-preachers, it is a fundamental assumption of modern scholarship that these men lived the *vita apostolica* and it is a category within which these men are placed by historians.¹ Two works remain fundamental to this assumption: Herbert Grundmann's *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (as quoted above) and Ernest W. McDonnell's much-cited article of 1955.² Both of these studies proposed that, against a backdrop of the 'Gregorian Reform', the *vita apostolica* was the common denominator for heterodox religious movements, and that it inspired what is thought of as new forms of spirituality in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A little over twenty years after McDonnell, Stanisław Trawkowski called the *vita apostolica* – somewhat enigmatically – the '*mot d'ordre*' for all new twelfth-century religious orders and heretical groups.³ What these works stress therefore is that the *vita apostolica* was an influential and self-aware phenomenon during the twelfth century. Furthermore, they offer a teleological perspective that culminates in the thirteenth-century mendicant orders and, as such, have been important to the larger narrative arc of ecclesiastical history. The hermit-preachers are positioned near the beginning of these narratives, and are posited to play a central part of these new religious impulses, in which individuals tried to live by the concept of the *vita apostolica*. They are, therefore, framed firmly within this historiographical paradigm. This has a significant implication: such a linear scheme makes these men appear as forerunners of Francis of Assisi.⁴ In

¹ Also noted, but not critically, in Burkhard, *Apostolicity*, p. 66.

² Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, pp. 7–21 and 219–31; Ernest W. McDonnell, 'The "Vita Apostolica": Diversity or Dissent', *Church History* 24:1 (1955), pp. 15–31.

³ Trawkowski, 'Vita Apostolica', p. 157.

⁴ See, for example, Giles Constable, 'The Study of Monastic History Today', in Giles Constable (ed.), *Religious Life and Thought (11th-12th centuries)* (London, 1979), pp. 21–51; Gerhart B. Ladner,

light of this, the hermit-preachers have been presented as failed experiments of an idea that would only be fully realised with the coming of the friars.⁵ Here, the ultimate 'success' of the *vita apostolica* is seen to define, and be defined by, its apparent beginnings.

Since these works by Herbert Grundmann and Ernest W. McDonnell, however, there has been nothing substantial written upon the *vita apostolica* regarding the hermit-preachers specifically. Most scholars accept Grundmann's conclusions and, broadly speaking, either treat the *vita apostolica* fairly superficially within general studies relating to twelfth-century spirituality, or simply call the hermit-preachers apostolic in passing.⁶ Through repetition in these works, the *vita apostolica* has become paradigmatic of the hermit-preachers' spirituality and the concept itself has never been directly questioned.

Yet in 1978, Derek Baker tantalisingly hinted at the need for reassessment of the concept as a whole when he criticised Charles Dereine's 1959 article concerning the apostolic spirituality of the founders of Afflighem. In this, Dereine had emphasised the need to study small communities where the new spiritual 'ideal' became diluted over time as it was gradually substituted by more 'traditional' practices.⁷ Baker offered the following indictment concerning Dereine's contention: 'Dereine may talk of "this ideal" and know what *he* means, but...contemporaries varied widely in their understanding of these matters: to talk of *vita apostolica* or "hermits" *tout court* projects an artificial certainty which the careers of individuals did not reflect.'⁸ While Baker went on to question the extraordinariness of the hermit-preachers in the context of twelfth-century spirituality, he did not re-visit this notion of 'artificial certainty' with specific

Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages, 2 vols (Rome, 1983), vol. 2, p. 526; Augustine Thompson, 'The Origins of Religious Mendicancy in Medieval Europe', in Donald Prudlo (ed.), *The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 5–13.

⁵ Andrew Garrett Traver, *The Identification of the Vita Apostolica with a Life of Itinerant Preaching and Mendicancy: Its Origins, Adherents and Critics Ca.1050-1266* (Unpublished PhD, Toronto, 1996), p. 2. This is inherently linked to the idea that the *vita apostolica* of the hermit-preachers 'ended in the cloister'. For an explicit example of this, see Janet E. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 130.

⁶ Cf. McDonnell, 'Diversity or Dissent', p. 15ff; Magnou, 'Henri l'hérétique', p. 546; Delaruelle, 'Les ermites', p. 216; Trawkowski, 'Vita Apostolica', pp. 157–66; Leyser, *Hermits*, p. 26ff; Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, pp. 1–22; Bolton, *Reformation*, pp. 19–21; Ladner, *Images* 2, pp. 526; Châtillon, 'Spiritual Renaissance', p. 302ff; Kathryn L. Reyerson, 'The Way of Mary or That of Martha: Conceptions of Monastic Life at Savigny, 1112-1180', in Andrew MacLeish (ed.), *The Medieval Monastery* (St Cloud, 1988), p. 35; Vauchez, *Spirituality*, p. 106ff; Henriët, 'Verbum Dei', pp. 164–77; Henriët, *La parole*, p. 245; Gary Dickson, 'Medieval Revivalism', in Danil Bornstein (ed.), *Medieval Christianity* (Minneapolis, 2010), p. 172; Moore, *War on Heresy*, p. 129. For a study of 'apostolic' preachers in a different geographical area, see Dereine, 'Les prédicateurs «apostoliques»', pp. 171–89.

⁷ Charles Dereine, 'La spiritualité "apostolique" des premiers fondateurs d'Afflighem', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 54 (1959), pp. 41–66, esp. pp. 44–5 and p. 65.

⁸ Derek Baker, 'Reform as protest: the evidence of western eremitical movements', in *The Church in a Changing Society: conflict - reconciliation or adjustment? Proceedings of the CIHEC-Conference in Uppsala August 17-21, 1977* (Uppsala, 1978), p. 56.

reference to the apostolic life. Indeed, his words of caution seem to have fallen on deaf ears in modern scholarship and, as of yet, we have no study that questions the use of this problematic phrase to describe the hermit-preachers of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. What is more, as a result of this broad acceptance of the term, there is no work that concentrates solely and specifically upon notions and expressions of apostolicism in the narrative sources about the hermit-preachers. Since no one has questioned the term, no one has attempted to find what lies beneath it.

There are, consequently, two fundamental scholarly failings that this chapter addresses. First, no one has questioned the use of the phrase *vita apostolica* itself and explored how suitable such a term is for the hermit-preachers. The opening half of this chapter thus examines the incongruities between the language of modernity and the language of the Middle Ages in specific relation to the hermit-preachers and the texts that were written about them. Through examining this dissonance, and showing the problems with linguistic imposition at a time when semantics were in flux, I argue that the *vita apostolica* is not a suitable term to apply to these men. Instead, I suggest that we may be better thinking of *notions* of apostolicity or apostolicism, contained in certain moments or aspects of the hermit-preachers' imagined lives. Taking this as my starting point for the second part of this chapter, I move onto explore these notions and expressions of apostolicity in depth, mainly through studying the biblical framework within which certain activities of the hermit-preachers were placed, or positioned against in regard to those condemned. This contributes to scholarship a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of how such notions were constructed in text and how these created a certain image of the hermit-preachers, who were not *entirely* defined by their apostolicity but were still envisaged as either successors of the apostles or imitating certain apostolic qualities. Ultimately, from these two parts, a far more complex picture emerges than the one currently painted in historiography.

How Suitable is the *Vita Apostolica* as a Model?

Modern and Medieval Terminology

Despite the frequency with which it is asserted that the hermit-preachers lived the *vita apostolica*, it is very difficult to find a consistent definition of the term in present day historiography. Definitions vary from 'the life of a poor wandering preacher' to 'the desire to return to the precepts and councils of the Gospels and examples of the early church'.⁹ Correspondingly, we find a panoply of phrases employed by historians though their meaning is, or can be, analogous: *vita apostolica*, *vita evangelica*, *vita apostolica et evangelica*, the apostolic model, apostolic poverty, evangelical poverty, voluntary poverty, apostolic preaching, evangelical itinerant preaching, and so on. Some have even used these terms virtually interchangeably, particularly *vita apostolica* and *vita*

⁹ Cf. Traver, 'Vita Apostolica', p. 34; Châtillon, 'Spiritual Renaissance', p. 315.

evangelica.¹⁰ Yet are these the same? If not, what is the difference? Historians have not been forthcoming with further explanation.

Yet while modern historians have used many hypernyms to describe the spiritual impulses of the twelfth century, and used them generously at that, this was not the case for those writing about the hermit-preachers at the time. Hitherto no scholar has noted the striking absence of the phrase itself, or the scarce use of its associated nouns or adjectives, in the texts that were written about these individuals. The phrase 'vita apostolica' was not used once across the entire corpus of documents. When there was employment of related words there was, noticeably, no consistency. Bishop Peter II of Poitiers called Robert of Arbrissel *vir apostolicus* in one charter confirming Fontevraud, but *vir religiosus* in two other charters concerning the monastery.¹¹ Another charter from Countess Ermengarde of Maine called Robert 'a wise steward of the word of evangelical preaching' but others failed to qualify his preaching with 'evangelical'.¹² Although the verb *evangelizare* (to preach the gospel) appeared in two *vitae*, that of Robert of Arbrissel and Gerald of Sales, the example from the latter is troublesome.¹³ One would think that the use of this verb in the *Vita Giraldi* is clear evidence that Gerald of Sales was thought of as being an evangelist, that is a preacher of the gospel, who thus imitated the apostles. But the author of the *Vita Giraldi* borrowed from Bernard of Clairvaux's *Vita Malachiae*, as we saw in chapter one. In this work, Bernard had specifically emphasised Malachy's apostolic qualities, calling him an apostolic man multiple times and dedicating an entire chapter of the work to describing Malachy's 'signs of apostleship' (*signa apostolatus*).¹⁴ Both authors also used a phrase from the same biblical verse, *opus facit evangelistae* [2 Tim 4:5], to describe their subjects.¹⁵ I would suggest, therefore, that this imagining of Gerald was heavily influenced by Bernard's construction of Malachy and that the language of the source built up a vision of Gerald based in part upon Bernard's depiction of the Irish preacher. We must be careful, therefore, to understand from where the language came. In essence, what these cases show is that there was certainly no systematic application of 'apostolic' nomenclature in the sources. Robert of Arbrissel, moreover, was far more likely to be described using such terminology than any other hermit-preacher, suggesting that

¹⁰ See, for example, Châtillon, 'Spiritual Renaissance', p. 306; Burkhard, *Apostolicity*, p. 67, and Landes' entry for 'Heresies, Apostolic', in William W. Kibler, *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1995), p. 446.

¹¹ Peter of Poitiers, 'Charta confirmationis ordinis et congregationis Fontis Ebraldi a Petro Pictaviensi episcopo,' in *PL* 162, col. 1089D; *Idem*, 'Petri Pictaviensis episcopi charta confirmans omnes possessiones monasterii Fontis Ebraldi,' in *PL* 162, col. 1091C; *Idem*, 'Carta donationis de Rofiaco,' in *PL* 162, col. 1092C.

¹² '...verbi euvangelice predicationis sagaciter dispensatorem...', printed in Dalarun, *Les deux vies*, p. 621.

¹³ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 4.23, col. 1055C; *VGS*, chap. 2.18, p. 258, ch. 2.19, p. 258.

¹⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Liber de vita et rebus gestis S. Malachiae Hiberniae episcopi', in *PL* 182, chap. 7.17, col. 1084D, chap. 16.38, col. 1095A, and for the chapter on Malachy's 'signs of apostleship' see chap. 19.44, cols. 1098B–99A.

¹⁵ *VGS*, chap. 1.10, p. 256; Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Vita S. Malachiae', 19.44, col. 1098D.

categorising all of the hermit-preachers under one term is a misrepresentation, an issue highlighted in the introduction to this thesis and to which we shall return throughout this chapter. All the same, what is most significant here is that only a few of the above examples of what one might call 'apostolic terminology' came from hagiographers and thus most did not originate from the community-based narratives which are the principal sources on the hermit-preachers, and the main focus of the present work.

Of course in itself, the absence of the phrase *vita apostolica* or inconsistent use of associated terms may have been incidental for those who wrote about and constructed the identity of these individuals. As Peter Biller has suggested in his study of the term *religio* in the Middle Ages, medieval contemporaries could have had the *thing*, even if they did not have the *word*; concept could take precedence over language.¹⁶ Indeed, when comparing hermits to earlier Christian figures who did not have the name 'hermit', 'perhaps because it had not been invented yet', the author of the twelfth-century tract *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia* concluded that they still held the eremitic life perfectly.¹⁷ This was an astute acknowledgement of the fluidity of language and shifts over time. So, one could have understood another's way of life as an imitation of the apostles without needing to identify it explicitly as the *vita apostolica*.

To my mind however, there is a basic problem with the scholarly quasi-epithetical use of this term when we do not find the equivalent in contemporary sources. While historians are not being anachronistic exactly – since the phrase was commonly employed in the twelfth century as we shall see shortly – they are imposing it upon individuals who were not described using this terminology, which Marc Bloch cautioned against in *The Historian's Craft* over half a century ago.¹⁸ By continually affirming the *vita apostolica* as 'the model' by which the hermit-preachers lived, we reify, condense, and simplify the lives of these men into a single, uniform category, easily understandable to our modern sensibilities. In turn, we miss the nuances hidden beneath the surface of this blanket term. Even if Biller's supposition is correct in this case and medieval contemporaries could have had the thing without the word(s), the absence of the expression *vita apostolica* needs exploring rather than being unreservedly and indiscriminately imposed upon these men. Furthermore, by starting with the assumption that the hermit-preachers lived the *vita apostolica*, there is already a framework that defines our enquiry. We start with the modern categorisation without questioning whether this categorisation is appropriate. The ubiquitous use of

¹⁶ Peter Biller, 'Words', p. 360.

¹⁷ '...ideo quia forsitan adhuc inventum non erat...', *Libellus De Diversis Ordinibus Et Professionibus Qui Sunt in Aecclesia*, ed. Giles Constable and Bernard Smith (Oxford, 2003), p. 12.

¹⁸ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putman (Manchester, 1992), p. 143. For the use of *vita apostolica* and related terms in the twelfth century see, for example, Constable, *Reformation*, pp. 156–60.

the term *vita apostolica* has, therefore, prevented us from seeing the issue of apostolicity in the lives of the hermit-preachers clearly.

Yet if using the term *vita apostolica* is not anachronistic in itself, one might ask exactly what did twelfth-century contemporaries envisage the concept to mean? In order to understand any notions of apostolicity in the sources, we must understand the conceptual framework in which the authors were situated, and so it is to this we turn now.

The Apostolic Framework and its Transformation

A critical problem facing the classification of the *vita apostolica* is that the conceptualisation of the apostolic life underwent a fundamental transformation during the twelfth century.¹⁹ In the earlier Middle Ages, the *vita apostolica* had been synonymous with the monastic life, stemming from a reading of the Acts of the Apostles 2:42–7 and 4:32–5. Defined by these verses that described the primitive Jerusalem community, imitation of the apostles meant living with one heart and soul and possessing all things in common. It was a particularly coenobitic interpretation and was conceived as such: to live the *vita apostolica* meant to live the life of a monk. But at some point during the twelfth century – and scholars disagree over exactly when this shift occurred – a new conceptualisation of the apostolic life was created based upon the synoptic Gospels rather than on the Acts of the Apostles.²⁰ It is difficult to determine whether a textual shift resulted in behavioural changes regarding how people practiced the apostolic life or whether behavioural changes meant different biblical verses had to be found to justify or situate a new way of living the religious life in the twelfth century.²¹ Simply put, did certain biblical verses inspire twelfth-century contemporaries or were actions classified by certain biblical verses *post hoc*? Whatever the case, it is clear that verses which emphasised poverty and the apostle's role as (commissioned) preacher became more central. In practical terms, this meant a transformation from a life separated *from* the world to one lived *in* the world, slightly more in line with how we think of apostleship in modernity.²² Premium was placed

¹⁹ For more detailed explorations of this transformation see the chapter 'Monks, Canons and Laymen in Search of the Apostolic Life' in M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, And Society in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1997), pp. 202–38; Constable, *Reformation*, pp. 156–60; Constable, 'Renewal', pp. 51–6. See also Traver, 'Vita Apostolica', pp. 8–29.

²⁰ This has sometimes been expressed in modern scholarship semantically: from *vita apostolica* to *vita evangelica*. See Traver, 'Vita Apostolica', p. 34; Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)* (New York, 1998), p. 6. This was, however, a conceptual not a semantic shift and so I find this inappropriate.

²¹ James Preus finds many such retroactive justifications for these types of transformations. See James S. Preus, 'Theological Legitimation for Innovation in the Middle Ages', *Viator* 3 (1972), pp. 1–26.

²² For how the meaning of the word 'apostolic' has changed over time see L.M. Dewailly, 'Notes sur l'histoire de l'adjectif apostolique', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 5:2 (1948), pp. 141–52; Henri Holstein, 'The History of the Development of the Word "Apostolic"', in Albert Plé (ed.), *The Apostolic Life*, trans. Ronald Halstead (London, 1958), pp. 31–49. For biblical usage in particular see Francis H.

upon preaching, rather than the community structure of the apostolate and over time this would become a decisive and permanent re-definition of what it meant to be apostolic, which still informs our views of the concept in the present day. Considering this somewhat teleological point, it is not that surprising that many historians have seen the *Wanderprediger* as foreshadowing and prefiguring the advent of the mendicant friars in the early thirteenth century, as stated in the introduction to this chapter.

For contemporaries, however, this transition from an interpretation based upon Acts of the Apostles to one based upon the Gospels was far from smooth as, indeed, with most conceptual change throughout history. One idea does not simply replace another. Accordingly, the older conception of the *vita apostolica* based upon a correspondence between the communal and the apostolic life did not disappear completely, and it actually became the subject of an impassioned debate between monks and canons, where questions of apostolic heritage, ancestry, and authenticity, figured heavily.²³ Many important figures weighed in upon this debate, such as Peter Damian, who commented in one of his letters that it was obvious that the rule of the canons originated from the norms of the apostolic life.²⁴ Others were more vehement, not only defending their own position but attacking monks for their declaration that only they lived the apostolic life. Anselm of Havelberg, for example, who was a Premonstratensian canon before his elevation to the bishopric of Havelberg in 1129, asserted the temporal dominance of canons – the older as the more legitimate – in a letter written to Egbert, Abbot of Huysburg, in 1138:

You allege the entire faithful of the Old and New Testament to be monks, and you do not fear to say openly that the Scripture where Luke the evangelist writes: *they had one heart and one soul*, and so on, pertains to the fellowship of monks and not to the apostles and their followers, [when] at that time the name of monk was not even known among them. Besides, the book is called the *Acts of the Apostles* not the *Acts of the Monks*. Furthermore, you cite certain words of Blessed Augustine [commenting] on Psalm 132: 'Behold, to live as one is a good and happy thing,' in which he clearly commends the same apostolic and

Agnew, 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105:1 (1986), pp. 75–96; John P. Meier, 'The Circle of the Twelve: Did It Exist During Jesus' Public Ministry?', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116:4 (1997), pp. 636–43; Wolfgang A. Bienert, 'The Picture of the Apostle in the Early Christian Tradition', in Wilhelm Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (eds), *New Testament Apocrypha: Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses and Related Subjects* (Kentucky, 2003), pp. 6–13.

²³ For a discussion of this in reference to the right of canons to preach see Bynum, *Docere Verbo Et Exemplo*, pp. 18–21.

²⁴ Peter Damian, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel, *MGH: Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, (1983) Letter 98, p. 91.

communal life, which you still ignorantly attempt to twist to mean only the monastic profession.²⁵

The apostolic and communal life, Anselm argued here, did not and could not refer to monks as the title of monk did not even exist at the time of its original establishment. Clearly Anselm was one individual who believed you could not have the thing if you did not have the word, at least on a polemical level. There is no need to explore further the details of this debate, as this is not the purpose of the present chapter. Yet it is important to acknowledge, because it demonstrates that contemporaries were questioning their own definitions of the apostolic life and that there was no absolutely fixed meaning. What is more, this was about scriptural authority, namely which verses underpinned different institutional styles of Christian living and the reader should bear this in mind because the idea of authority was thoroughly intertwined with notions of apostolicity in those texts written about the hermit-preachers.

As he had been a canon, Anselm of Havelberg brings us neatly to a rather pertinent point that must be made about Norbert of Xanten, the hermit-preacher who founded Prémontré. In his *Episcopi Dialogi* Anselm had said that Norbert not only lived in imitation of the apostolic life himself but also guided people ‘to the perfection of the apostolic life’, that is, to live as a canon.²⁶ Clearly Norbert was seen as apostolic as well as the institution that he founded. In fact, Norbert’s first *vita* contained a fair few explicit references to the apostolic life. The holy man was even reported to have said that he had chosen to live the evangelical and apostolic life (*evangelica et apostolica vita*) as rightly understood.²⁷ But it is hard to escape the impression that all of these remarks were linked to the fact that the Premonstratensians believed that they were living the apostolic life and were simultaneously embroiled in a debate about this very subject. The majority of explicit uses of the adjective apostolic in Norbert’s *vita*, for instance, came within the context of the canonical life. The only instance in the work where this was different was when Norbert was said to have been proclaimed as an apostolic man (*apostolicum virum*) by the people of Nivelles because of his performance of a particularly dramatic exorcism.²⁸ To me, Norbert’s creation in text

²⁵ ‘...asseris universos tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti fideles monachos fuisse, et non vereris aperte dicere: Scripturam illam, quam scribit Lucas evangelista: *Erat illis cor unum et anima una*, etc., etc., ad societatem monachorum, et non potius ad apostolos et eorum asseclas pertinere, inter quos nec nomen quidem monachorum tunc temporis sciebatur, unde et idem liber *Actus apostolorum*, non *Actus monachorum* inscribitur. Adducis etiam quaedam verba beati Augustini in psalm. CXXXII: *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare in unum*, in quibus ipse quidem apostolicam et communem vitam patenter commendat, quae tu tamen ad monasticam tantummodo professionem satis imperite niteris retorquere’, Anselm of Havelberg, ‘Epistola Apologetica Pro Ordine Canonice Regularium’, in *PL* 188, cols. 1119C–20A.

²⁶ Anselm of Havelberg, ‘Episcopi Dialogi’, in *PL* 188, chap. 1.10, col. 1155A; Theodore James Antry and Carol Neel, *Norbert and Early Norbertine Spirituality* (New Jersey, 2007), pp. 29–30. For Anselm see also Jay Terry Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg: Deeds into Words in the Twelfth Century* (Leiden, 1998).

²⁷ ‘Vita Norberti Archiepiscopi Magdeburgensis’, in *MGH SS* 12, chap. 9, p. 678.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 681.

was thus heavily influenced by his community and the Premonstratensian *canons* writing about him. This is a crucial difference between Norbert and the hermit-preachers under scrutiny here. Since Norbert is often included in the modern scholarly grouping of these men under the rubric *vita apostolica* – nay actually a pivotal reason for the inclusion of the hermit-preachers within this category – this point is significant: the founder of Prémontré profoundly distorts the prominence of apostolicity for the other men within this categorisation. We must, therefore, question the apostolicity of the hermit-preachers on their own grounds, without Norbert.

In the midst of this transformation of the conception of the apostolic life were the hermit-preachers and those who wrote about them. These individuals stood, temporally, both near the beginning (in terms of when they lived) and in the middle and at the end (in terms of when the narratives were written) of these apparently changing conceptualisations. In one sense this leaves us with a peculiar problem: through the texts are we seeing a later twelfth-century view of apostolicity projected back? This issue is curiously similar to the problem of the modern imposition of term *vita apostolica* outlined above, and the retroactive construction of these men in relation to this concept is surely something to ponder if impossible to answer. But what is more important about the twelfth-century context of the concept, within which our communities imagined the hermit-preachers, is the fact that explicit language *could* identify the apostolic life. In fact, because of its position in the dialectic debate between monks and canons we might even say that there was an 'apostolic' discourse.²⁹ Consequently, it seems likely that those who wrote about the men under discussion had language at hand which they could have used, but chose not to. Why?

The instability in the nature of the term may have been part of the problem itself. If our authors still understood that the term was in circulation and being used to describe conventional monasticism or at the very least the communal Christian life, then it would hardly have been appropriate for the individual hermit-preacher. Correspondingly, language and ideas coalesced slowly, tentatively, around the new meaning of the term. Given the negative perception of novelty described in chapter two of this thesis, it would be understandable if our communities were perhaps somewhat hesitant to claim this way of living for individuals rather than institutions. For one to claim that he was living the apostolic life – or that the person he wrote about was – was to claim one of the most powerful authoritative models for Christian living since the very inception of the bible. Declaring the *vita apostolica* was tantamount to declaring authority for one's way of life and, at same the time, there were many criticisms of those who were declared heretics for their apparent declaration that *they* were living the true apostolic life, as we shall see in more detail below. In this context, is it any wonder that the communities who celebrated the

²⁹ On the concept of Christian discourse, but not specifically the bible, see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, 1991), esp pp. 1–14.

hermit-preachers took a more moderate approach? It was, overall, a slow process from conceptualisation to linguistic realisation and with good reason. So much for the language. But what about the homogenising effect of the *vita apostolica* as a label?

Did the *Vita Apostolica* Define the Hermit-Preachers' Spirituality?

Derek Baker's contention cited above that the label of the *vita apostolica* creates 'artificial certainty' is unquestionably true for the hermit-preachers, and this is clearest when we recognise their eclectic lives. Preaching may have been pivotal to the 'newer' conception of the apostolic life, as we saw above, but the hermit-preachers did not spend their whole lives preaching. We call these men *hermit*-preachers because they were, quite obviously, portrayed as hermits as well. But if these men were also eremitic and followed eremitic models, then what is apostolic about this? In part two we shall see that this was a remarkably complex issue and that eremitism was not automatically equated to apostolicity.

Even in periods when they did preach, however, there tended to be a separation between preaching and solitude. As reported by his hagiographer, after Gerald of Sales had spent the day inflaming the tepid, urging forward the lazy, explaining the origin of sin, and teaching the people what they should do and what they should avoid, he returned to his retreat and nest 'with the habit of a good bird.'³⁰ Similarly, after discussing both his eremitism and his preaching, Andrew of Fontevraud declared that whenever Robert of Arbrissel found a suitable place, he would scatter the word of God by day, and then retire to a deserted place in order to pray to God at night.³¹ There was obviously a delicate balance to be drawn between the public presence and interiority of these holy men, which reflected the dichotomy between action and contemplation that was pivotal in twelfth-century spirituality, most visibly manifested in monastic rhetoric concerning the biblical models of Mary and Martha.³² In this manner, the hermit-preachers were presented as having varied lives, and were imagined as following both the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*. Yet despite the fact that some historians have noted the different aspects of their spirituality – and the presence of this dichotomy in particular – it seems to be overlooked when it is asserted that they lived the *vita apostolica*, especially given that scholars are identifying the *vita apostolica* with the newer, active, sense of the term.³³ Where is the contemplative in this?

Alongside this, in order to support the different aspects and facets of the hermit-preachers' spiritual lives, their hagiographers drew upon many different biblical and

³⁰ VGS, chap. 1.11, p. 256.

³¹ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 50, pp. 276–7.

³² See the chapter 'The Interpretation of Mary and Martha', in Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. pp. 22–43.

³³ See, for instance, Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, pp. 82–3, who illustrates the examples of the Mary and Martha in the *Vita Bernardi*.

early Christian figures whom the hermit-preachers were said to imitate. Indeed, this was part of the rich literary tradition of hagiographic writing, as noted in chapter one.³⁴ At the end of the second *vita* of Robert of Arbrissel, Andrew of Fontevraud gave a long list of spiritual figures whom Robert imitated: he was greater than Joseph in patience, a true Daniel in wisdom, John the Baptist in the desert, Arsenius in his prayer and weeping, Martha in his welcome and servitude and, significantly, Paul in his preaching and travel.³⁵ For Andrew, Robert imitated the apostle Paul yet this imitation was only one aspect of his spiritual being. Similarly, in the mortuary *tituli* of the hermit-preacher Gerald of Sales, subsequently inserted into his *vita* as we have seen, Bishop William of Poitiers and the 'desert-dwelling abbots' (*eremico-larum abbatum*) said of Gerald that he was 'completely on fire and inflamed others: at one time he was John in the desert, at another Paul in public...'³⁶ We do not have to look far in other texts written about the hermit-preachers to see similar instantiations of biblical and early Christian figures whom the hermit-preachers were thought to imitate. In drawing virgins into spiritual wedlock with Christ, Robert of Arbrissel was imitating Blessed Hilary, whom he had read had done the same for his own daughter.³⁷ In his eremitism, Bernard was an athlete of Christ, a new Antony in the desert.³⁸ Christ, the Apostles, John the Baptist, Mary or Martha, St Antony, Arsenius, Hilary of Poitiers...the list could go on. In the fertile imagination of the twelfth century the authors found countless imitable models whom they entangled, intertwined, and even confused, in the spiritual character of their subject. Where, one might ask, is the dominance of the *vita apostolica* or the apostles as a model? It seems to me that imitating the apostles was not a defining characteristic. Surely even the author of the classificatory work *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in ecclesia* cited above would have had trouble fitting the hermit-preachers into his neat schema of religious lives.

From Deconstruction to Reconstruction

From this overview of both the limits of previous research and the language and ideas within the sources themselves, it should be clear that it is high time for a reassessment of the role, place and conceptualisation of apostolicity in those narratives written about the hermit-preachers. One cannot simply continue to assert that the hermit-preachers lived the *vita apostolica* in light of the problems both with terminology and classification of spiritual characteristics. The phrase is neither reflective of the language that our authors used nor was it an absolutely definitive concept in the textual imagining of these men. From this perspective, the *vita apostolica* is an edifice that crumbles rather easily.

³⁴ Also noted by Henriët, *La parole*, p. 243.

³⁵ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 69, pp. 292–3.

³⁶ 'Totus ardebat, et alios accendebat: nunc Joannes in eremo, nunc Paulus in publico, faciebat et dicebat...', *VGS*, chap. 2.18, p. 258.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, bk. 1.3, p. 254.

³⁸ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 8.74, col. 1411C.

But if we deconstruct we must reconstruct. It is not enough to collapse such an established category of thought without offering something in its place. In the next part of this chapter I thus examine concepts of apostolicity – not, importantly, the *vita apostolica* – in the narrative constructions of these men. I argue that although the hermit-preachers may have been created in text within a framework that was quasi-apostolic in nature (that is, based upon situating their perceived actions within paradigms taken from the Gospels), these only manifested themselves in certain moments or when the communities were constructing certain characteristics or activities of the holy men. Even then, there was hardly overwhelming consistency. A certain model of the *vita apostolica* may have been contained within these moments but this was not explicitly stated and these were subtle allusions rather than outright declarations, which is why I prefer to speak of notions of apostolicity rather than the *vita apostolica*. This is a subtle differentiation but critical for understanding how individuals were memorialised in text, enfolded in layers of meaning that need to be teased out in order to appreciate their true complexity.

An Examination of Apostolicity

In order to accomplish the detailed examination in this next part of the chapter, I will focus upon two areas, preaching and poverty, because it is here that we find certain actions situated within specific biblical paradigms, alluding to apostolicity. In essence, I am exploring notions of apostolicity on each side of the designation *hermit, preacher*. But, as we shall see, these allusions to apostolicity were subtle, sometimes fragile, and often fraught with meanings that have not been understood in the fairly superficial treatment of the issue in historiography, as outlined above. It was not simply a case of affirming, for example, that preaching was conceived of as apostolic, but rather that hints of the apostolic nature of the hermit-preachers came by way of language, allusions, and intimations of biblical verses and language, which is why I pay such attention to linguistic construction within this section. What is more, we must remember that the bible was a community language. Through understanding the creation of the hermit-preachers in relation to the bible, we see a different but no less important element of input by the community. First, I shall deal with the issue of preaching.

Preaching

For twelfth-century individuals living in the midst of changing conceptualisations of the apostolic life, apostolicity was not automatically connected to preaching. ‘Preaching, baptising and [performing] miracles do not make the apostle’, Rupert of Deutz said in the early twelfth century, ‘but having virtue, and just as it was enjoined onto them, being humble themselves before others.’³⁹ As Dominique Chenu noted with typical

³⁹ ‘Nam non facit apostolum praedicare, baptizare et miracula facere, sed virtutes habere, et, sicut illis injunctum est, prae caeteris seipsum humiliare’, Rupert of Deutz, ‘De Vere Vita Apostolica’, in *PL*

lucidity, Rupert saw apostolicism not as a 'function, *officium*', but as a 'mode of life, *vita*.'⁴⁰ Apostolicity was an interior value, not an outward display of piety. Yet only slightly later, Bernard of Clairvaux said in his *Vita Malachiae* that the apostolic form (*forma apostolica*) was going out to preach on foot and that the true successor of the apostles was he who did such things.⁴¹ Clearly we have two competing conceptions, which reflected the transformation of the *vita apostolica* outlined above.

Those who wrote about the hermit-preachers did not stand in between these two views – they were far more in line with Bernard of Clairvaux's opinion than Rupert of Deutz. Nevertheless, none was as unambiguous as Bernard in defining preaching as apostolic. Geoffrey Grossus, for instance, wrote of Bernard of Tiron, Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny as travelling barefoot (*nudis pedibus*) while preaching.⁴² Stephen of Fougères repeated much the same about Vitalis.⁴³ Neither, however, explicitly stated that this meant the hermit-preachers were successors to the apostles, even if going barefoot did recall Christ's commands to his disciples that they should go forth without shoes.⁴⁴ This was not a definition that was created, therefore, but a perception.

One might say that this reflected the genre of the source, since it was not the hagiographers' job to define apostolicity. But this was exactly what Bernard of Clairvaux had done in the *Vita Malachiae*, and he obviously felt it important to do so. In fact, going barefoot is emblematic of how notions of apostolicity could be considered dangerous, not by the communities who memorialised the hermit-preachers as celebrated individuals, but by others looking upon these individuals' activities from different perspectives. Marbode of Rennes, for example, criticised Robert of Arbrissel's followers since they went through fields in shoes, but through towns barefoot.⁴⁵ Those who gathered around the holy man were, in Marbode's eyes, hypocrites. The fundamental facet by which Bernard of Clairvaux classified apostolicism above was thus, to others, troubling if unfettered and this idea played out in the concept of 'being sent' to preach discussed below.

Following this, one of the major ways in which apostolicism in preaching was hinted at was through language which brought to mind the parable of the sower. In truth, this was so pervasive – for both the celebrated and condemned hermit-preachers – that it is worth studying in some detail.

170, bk. 2.16, cols. 631D–2A. Giles Constable has suggested that the word *vere* was used in the title of this text to refute the idea that apostolicism was defined by preaching. See Constable, *Reformation*, p. 158.

⁴⁰ Chenu, *Nature*, p. 206.

⁴¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Vita S. Malachiae', chap. 19.44, col. 1098B.

⁴² Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.50, col. 1397A.

⁴³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.20, p. 386.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mt 10:10, Lk 9:3, Lk 10:4.

⁴⁵ Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', sec. 28, p. 188.

The Parable of the Sower

At a certain time, Stephen of Fougères wrote in the *Vita Vitalis*, there was a church council in England, at which many illustrious members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy had gathered, along with a few men who had previously conspired to kill the hermit-preacher Vitalis of Savigny.⁴⁶ Vitalis, prepared to die for truth, was not fearful of these men so he climbed to the pulpit and ‘...began to scatter the seeds of the word of God.’⁴⁷ Through Vitalis’ preaching, and hearing the power of the divine word, the men who were involved in the perfidy confessed their guilt and humbly begged for pardon from the holy man. According to the *vita*, these men had converted from evil to good, and became protectors of the truth that they had previously attacked.⁴⁸

This short episode in the *Vita Vitalis* was not unusual in the way that it portrayed Vitalis of Savigny’s preaching. Elsewhere in the text, Stephen repeated his use of the verb *spargere* (to scatter, sow, pour forth; spread, disperse) and, in the same vein, called Vitalis a *dispensator* of the Word.⁴⁹ Writing in these terms must have immediately brought to mind the parable of the sower from the synoptic Gospels for the monastic audience of the text.⁵⁰ As the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot Isaac of Stella demonstrated in his sermons, the seed in the parable represented the word of God, the sower Christ, and the different types of soil, the listeners’ receptivity to the Gospel message.⁵¹ From this, we might be tempted to conclude that in using such language Vitalis was likened to Christ. But while the sower from the parable was often seen as analogous to Christ, he could equally be discerned in the apostles who took up Christ’s mantle and who were originally taught the parable in order to preach the Word effectively. Consequently, by using such allusions to the parable of the sower, Stephen posited a deliberate ambiguity between imitating Christ and imitating the apostles. At once, Vitalis was both *imitatio Christi* and *imitatio apostolorum*. The reification of the hermit-preachers under the term *vita apostolica* has tended to obscure this matter because the terminology insists upon a reading of the sources wherein the hermit-preachers were imitating the apostles and not Christ in their preaching; there is no room for ambiguity. Nevertheless Vitalis’ preaching was, at least partially, apostolic because Stephen framed him in a way that identified him with the apostles who originally spread the word.

⁴⁶ This is thought to be the Council of London of 1102, called by King Henry I, which puts Vitalis at the heart of Anglo-Norman politics.

⁴⁷ ‘Veniens itaque illuc, eminentiorem locum ascendens, semina verbi Dei spargere coepit’, Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.4, p. 374.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, bk. 2.4, p. 374.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, bk. 2.7, p. 376 and bk. 2.14, p. 382.

⁵⁰ Cf. Mt 13:18–23, Mk 4:3–20, Lk 8:5–15.

⁵¹ Isaac wrote a long exegesis on the parable of the sower, see Isaac of Stella, *Sermons*, ed. Anselm Hoste, 3 vols, SC 207 (Paris, 1974), vol. 2, Sermons 18–26, pp. 8–141.

It is reasonable to assume that Stephen may have been influenced by his own position, since as Bishop of Rennes part of his own pastoral responsibilities was to preach the word. Many sources across the Middle Ages gave bishops the sole responsibility of preaching and Stephen may have even been familiar with Gratian's precept: 'Let the bishop take upon himself no concerns of domestic things, but let him only be occupied with reading, prayer and preaching the word of God.'⁵² In his role he must have understood the charge of preaching and what this meant both in a theological and practical sense. In this way, we might be seeing the bishop's own opinions in the text rather than the Savigniac community. But the use of such language was not restricted to those texts written by bishops. Bernard of Tiron and Gerald of Sales' hagiographers – both monks – talked of their subjects' preaching as 'sowing the word of God'.⁵³ This was, therefore, more likely to have stemmed from a community (monastic) perception of the hermit-preacher rather than the author himself. Significantly, moreover, this imbued the hermit-preachers with a certain sense of authority because it was bishops or priests who were traditionally thought of as successors to the apostles by their dispensation of the divine word.⁵⁴ By conceiving these men to have preached in such a way and with the use of such language, the authors and their communities thus placed the hermit-preachers on par with these figures of authority. The exact consequences of this will come to light explicitly when the idea of 'being sent' to preach is explored below but it is an important aspect of apostolicity that the reader must bear in mind.

If these communities were investing their founder with a certain authority by situating them within a biblical context, then it is all the more striking that we see the same language and concepts used in the narratives written about the hermit-preachers who were eventually condemned. In these cases, however, the language was not used in a positive manner but was inverted. Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys subverted these biblical models rather than fulfilled them. Peter the Venerable, for instance, wrote that in his preaching Peter of Bruys had sown and nurtured five seeds of erroneous doctrine.⁵⁵ To the abbot of Cluny, the hermit-preacher was still imagined within the context of the same biblical paradigm. Similarly, in the letter from the clergy to Henry of Lausanne apparently copied straight into the *Actus Pontificum*, the clerics admitted that they had believed that Henry would have faithfully admonished people for the sake of their salvation, and that he would '...sincerely sow the seed of the word

⁵² 'Episcopus nullam rei familiaris curam ad se revocet, sed lectioni et orationi, verbi Dei praedicationi tantummodo vacet', Gratian, 'Decretum Gratiani', in *PL* 187, *Distinctio* 88, c. 6, col. 418B. See also Trout, 'Preaching', p. 93; Reginald Ladner, 'The Plight of Preaching in the Twelfth Century', in Pierre Félix Mandouret (ed.), *St. Dominic and His Work*, trans. Mary Benedicta Larkin (St. Louis and London, 1948), pp. 120–37.

⁵³ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.50, col. 1397B; *VGS*, chap. 1.11, p. 256.

⁵⁴ Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages, 1000-1200* (Pennsylvania, 2000), p. 123. Fichtenau mentions this point in relation to heresy rather than orthodoxy.

⁵⁵ 'Et quia prima erronei dogmatis semina a Petro de Bruis per uiginti fere annos sata et aucta quinque precipua et uenenata uirgulta produxerunt...', Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Praefatio, p. 4.

of God in their hearts.⁵⁶ There was obviously an expectation here that preaching would conform to this biblical image. But all Henry had done, the clerics went onto say, was to *sow discord* between the clergy and people. ‘You have extended to us,’ they bitterly concluded, ‘the kiss of Judas.’⁵⁷ Duly, Henry was forbidden to preach again in the city of Le Mans, though this certainly was not the last to be heard from him. In this letter therefore – a letter from integral members of the community at Le Mans – we see concern from the community about the very same community.

Given the perspective of those who wrote about these men, and the purpose with which they wrote, this use of language can be explained in several ways. First, those who sought to affirm true faith in their texts, to contribute to the definition of heresy in a tumultuous time, used the language of orthodoxy that was also employed to honour others: this made Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys theologically recognisable. The actions of these two men had to be expressed in terms of this biblical model, and using similar language, as it was how contemporaries understood preaching. Accustomed to listening to orthodoxy, in church or in public sermons, twelfth-century individuals would have been used to hearing both the parable of the sower and the preaching of their own day described as sowing and scattering. Isaac of Stella’s extensive sermons are just one example of this. To warn people about heretics, to edify others, to have *impact*, the author and those who contributed to the work must write with language and concepts that would be similar to the reader. So despite the fact that these phrases were probably employed in a literary sense also – because they made effective analogies – their efficacy derived from the fact that the authors were writing in terms their audiences would understand. Indeed, one gets the sense that these men could only be imagined within these paradigms. What we see is the language and conceptualisation of the whole Christian community, how the faithful were only able to envisage and explain heresy by relating it to familiar models – *apostolic* models.

Yet while this use of language was undoubtedly connected to familiar paradigms in which our authors thought, there was also something more dangerous and seditious implied here: the false imitation of models of holiness and the impersonation of the parable of the sower. We know, from the introduction to this thesis, that Henry was described by Bernard of Clairvaux as a ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’, and this statement was repeated twice by the author of the *Actus Pontificum*, whose narrative about the hermit-preacher was actually replete with images of Henry as a charlatan and hypocrite.⁵⁸ And in fact, this was common imagery in the twelfth century, as around 1130 a canon of Chartres, Payen Bolotin, had written a satirical poem about ‘false hermits’ of the time, whose speech, he wrote, was as ‘sweet as it is bitter’, and who

⁵⁶ ‘Et semen verbi Dei in cordibus eorum sinceriter seminares...’, *AP*, p. 410.

⁵⁷ ‘...nobis osculum Jude porrexisti...’, *Ibid.*, p. 410.

⁵⁸ *AP*, p. 407 and 410. The second instance of this appeared in the interpolated letter from the clergy to Henry.

had the 'heart of a wolf' but 'clothes of a lamb'.⁵⁹ So when discussing Henry's spirituality, the author of the *Actus Pontificum* and clergy of the work framed the heretic in the same way, that is, in terms of his duplicitous character, his mimicry of orthodoxy. For what Henry did when he appeared in Lausanne to preach, according to the sources, was appear *as if* holy: he *seemed* as though he would sow the word of God.

In light of this, the idea cited at the very start of this chapter of the *vita apostolica* as the common denominator for all religious movements during this period, including heretics, seems rather weak. How can one identify a common denominator that motivated all expressions of religiosity when one only has access to how the orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy expressed this religiosity? These people were bound by frameworks and wrote in their own identifiable language. What is more, those in authority would have surely had little interest in thinking outside of these conventions because these were the very things that they were trying to implement. We saw in chapter one of this thesis that Peter the Venerable was far more interested in upholding orthodoxy and fortifying Christians against heresy, rather than returning heretics to the fold, for example.⁶⁰ To me, therefore, the hypothesis of 'common denomination' thus seems guilty of unconsciously colluding with both the sources and their agendas.

That contemporaries did write with their own identifiable language is shown by the fact that describing heresy in this way was not limited to the two hermit-preachers of our present study. Bernard of Clairvaux, a stalwart fighter against heresy, apparently saw the issue in much the same terms. According to his hagiographer, Geoffrey of Auxerre, while on a preaching tour against heresy in 1145 across the south of France, he supposedly addressed the citizens of Albi as such: "'I have come to sow, but I find the field already sown with the most wicked seed.'"⁶¹ Here, Bernard's secretary and close friend wrote of him simultaneously enacting the sowing of the word while affirming that heretics had subverted the true faith. This deliberately juxtaposed Bernard with the heretics. The heretics had performed the same action as Bernard but had done so with different produce: wicked rather than good seed. Once again, heretics were presented as impersonating orthodoxy and, at once, 'heretical' preaching was understood in opposition to a norm. Interestingly though, we must note that this implies that the activity of scattering the seed was not seen as inherently problematic,

⁵⁹ 'Dulcia fatur/cum sit amarus: corde lupinus, uestibus agnus', in Jean Leclercq, 'Le poème de Payen Bolotin contre les faux ermites', *Revue Bénédictine* 68 (1958), p. 77. See *Ibid.*, pp. 63–73 for a discussion of to whom the poem was directed. Leclercq identified the hermit-preachers as possible candidates.

⁶⁰ See chapter one of this thesis, p. 55.

⁶¹ "'Seminare, inquit, veneram, sed praeoccupatum a semine pessimo agrum inveni.'" , Geoffrey of Auxerre *et al.*, 'Vita Prima Sancti Bernardi', in *PL* 185, chap. 10, col. 414D. Cf. Kienzle, *Cistercians*, pp. 100–1.

it was rather that problems came from the *quality* of what was being scattered.⁶² As such, the dichotomy between orthodoxy and heresy here appeared to be determined by what was said rather than the speech-act itself.

Yet it was not simply the fact that Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were sowing a 'wicked seed' that alarmed the authorities, but the fact that they were gathering followers through this very act. That individuals who were seen as heretics were responsible for growth and conversion was particularly troubling, and to this effect members of the Church hierarchy described this growth as stunted, truncated, or wicked. Peter the Venerable depicted Peter of Bruys as cultivating 'particular and poisonous thickets' as a result of his preaching.⁶³ The author of the *Actus Pontificum* said that Henry of Lausanne's preaching produced the type of tree that bore leaves rather than fruit.⁶⁴ It was not the case, then, that Henry and Peter's preaching was seen as barren. Rather, what they produced was portrayed as contemptible, in line with the argument above. Perhaps if Henry and Peter had not 'borne fruit' in their task and found no followers, we might have fewer contemporary accounts of their activities, as the subversion of others was one issue that the ecclesiastical hierarchy did not take lightly. Poignantly, by using this language both Peter the Venerable and the author of the *Actus Pontificum* damned the followers as well as the leader. Considering that these texts were written with an eye to warning people about heresy, this was an apt way through which to infer the insidiousness of the two men.

Typically, Bernard of Clairvaux was more emotive on the subject of the results of Henry of Lausanne's preaching, saying: '...we know that man by his fruits. Churches without people, people without priests, priests without the respect owed to them, and finally, Christians without Christ.'⁶⁵ With every clause successively more distressing, and with the climactic phrase 'Christians without Christ', Bernard amplified the evil fruits of Henry's preaching in this letter and played upon his audience's emotions.⁶⁶ However, while Bernard spoke in the same terms as those who wrote about the revered hermit-preachers – fecundity, production and fruit – there was a subtle difference. Though he employed the synoptic Gospel of Matthew, using verse 7:15–16 in particular presented Henry as a (false) prophet, rather than a (false) apostle.⁶⁷ False prophets, Matthew reported Christ to have said, would be known by their fruits: good trees brought forth

⁶² This stands in direct contradiction to the argument that preaching itself was the touchstone of orthodoxy and heresy. See Kienzle, 'Preaching as Touchstone', pp. 19–54.

⁶³ '...precipua et uenenata uirgulta produxerunt...', Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Praefatio, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *AP*, p. 412.

⁶⁵ '...a fructibus ejus cognoscimus illum. Basilicae sine plebibus, plebes sine sacerdotibus, sacerdotes sine debita reverentia sunt, et sine Christo denique Christiani', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 1, col. 434A.

⁶⁶ This 'crescendo' was mirrored in Bernard's earlier sermon 65 from his sermons on the Song of Songs. See Kienzle, *Cistercians*, p. 89 and 93.

⁶⁷ Cf. Hildebert of Lavardin, 'Epistola II, XXIV', in *PL* 171, col. 242C, who had also called Henry a 'false prophet'.

good fruit and evil trees brought forth evil fruit. Every tree that did not bring forth good fruit should be cut down and cast into the fire, and it is unmistakable that to Bernard, Henry represented the evil tree. At the end of the same letter he asked Count Alphonsus of Saint-Gilles, whom he addressed, if he really hoped to collect fruit from such a tree.⁶⁸ One assumes this was rhetorical. Again here, we find a need to assert the recognisability of heretics. Certain biblical verses, employed liberally by those writing about the heretical hermit-preachers, made clear that one could identify a heretic easily, namely by his fruits.

In spite of this, one must be careful in assuming that a clear line was drawn between apostles and prophets. Included in a letter of 1143/44 from Everwin of Steinfeld to Bernard of Clairvaux was an interesting paragraph of reported speech supposedly from the heretics of Cologne, about whom Everwin was writing to Bernard. Everwin disclosed to the abbot that the heretics had apparently said: “Pseudo-apostles defiling the word of Christ, which they seek for themselves, have derailed you and your fathers... To distinguish between you and us, Christ said: *By their fruits you shall know them*. Our fruits are the footsteps of Christ.”⁶⁹ Here, we have both an interesting conjunction of apostles and prophets, and a sense that heretics were projecting the mimicry – that had been applied onto them – back onto the institutional church. It was an interesting inversion of the arguments of the clerical hierarchy. More important though, is the point that while the heretics defined those who were leading the church astray as ‘pseudo-apostles’, they then went onto discuss themselves by making use of the same biblical verse as above: Matthew 7:16. Yet by stating that their fruits were the footsteps of Christ they paralleled themselves with the apostles. There was a definite sense of ambiguity with the scriptural reference used here.

What was even more ambiguous, in fact, was that those who wrote of the acclaimed hermit-preachers also described the results of preaching using prophetic biblical verses. Stephen of Fougères wrote: ‘Be gladdened, I say, all who live in Savigny, and exult, and that which He said through the prophet Isaiah, recognise [this] having been fulfilled in you: *Strangers shall eat the desert turned into fruitfulness* [Is 5:17]’.⁷⁰ Here, the result of Vitalis of Savigny’s preaching – that is, the congregation of Savigny – was discussed in terms of fulfilling a prophetic biblical verse. It cannot have been something that was confined to Savigniac thought either, because the twelfth-century historian William of Newburgh wrote much the same when he discussed the preaching of Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron, and Vitalis, as he said that the three men went around

⁶⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, ‘Ep. 241’, sec. 3, cols. 435C–D.

⁶⁹ “Pseudoapostoli adulterantes verbum Christi, quae sua sunt quaeiverunt, vos et patres vestros exorbitare fecerunt...Ad distinguendum nos et vos, Christus dixit: *A fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*. Fructus nostri sunt vestigia Christi.”, Everwin of Steinfeld, ‘Epistola CDLXXII’, in *PL* 182, col. 678A. To whom they said this, or from where Everwin gained this information, is unclear.

⁷⁰ ‘Laetamini, dico, omnes qui Savigneium colitis, et exultate, et illud quod per prophetam Isaiam dicitur, in vobis impletum cognoscite: *Deserta in ubertatem versa advanae comedent*’, Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.1, p. 359.

castles and villages sowing, 'according to Isaiah', by all waters from which they gathered abundant fruit from the conversion of many.⁷¹ In all of these examples, figures from both the Old and New Testament could be associated with the preaching of these individuals.

So while the scattering and sowing of the Word alluded to the parable of the sower and thus conceptions of apostolicity, as explained above, the harvest of this preaching was understood by Matthew 7:15–16 and Isaiah, and thus by conceptions of prophetism. Again, this belies the lack of nuance in the current model of the *vita apostolica* imposed upon these men which leaves absolutely no room for notions of prophetism in connection to apostolicism. In fact, I can find no study that even mentions this idea of prophetism, let alone one that explains how prophetism interlinked with apostolicity. Yet this was fundamental in medieval thought. The Old Testament was thought to prefigure the New and, accordingly, the prophets prefigured the apostles.⁷² Prophetism and apostolicism were thus inherently linked to one another, and in the medieval mind-set this meant our authors could talk of both at the same time without contradiction. This was connected, moreover, to the fact that both prophets and apostles were exceptionally powerful (and interconnected) manifestations of the work of God upon earth: through them God worked in the temporal sphere. As conduits for the divine, the hermit-preachers were little different and so it is little wonder that their contemporaries presented these individuals in the likeness of their biblical counterparts. One should also acknowledge that the similar language in the two sections of the bible would have encouraged this link. Medieval memory was honed in very different ways to how we think of memory in modernity, and contemporaries were trained to recall similar material across biblical texts.⁷³ The analogous language in these two sections of the bible would have thus recalled the other when writing. Viewed in this light, prophetism and apostolicism were inexorably intertwined not only because one prefigured the other, but also because biblical verses upon these figures shared the same nomenclature. Both, significantly, could be used to describe preaching and its results.

Here then we can see that those writing about the hermit-preachers imagined them in text as situated within certain biblical paradigms which inferred apostolic qualities. The men – even heretics – sowed and scattered and the particular biblical allusions that were made demonstrate that the communities wanted the men to be seen and perpetuated within these contexts. These were neither explicit nor consistent references, and also integrated conceptions of prophetism at the same time as apostolicism. Examining notions of apostolicity in this way thus reveals particularly

⁷¹ William of Newburgh, *History*, bk. 1.15, p. 76.

⁷² Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, Prologue.2, col. 1369A. See also the chapter 'The Old Testament in Twelfth-Century Theology' in Chenu, *Nature*, pp. 146–61, esp. pp. 146–7, and Kienzle, *Cistercians*, p. 18.

⁷³ For the concept of medieval memory see Carruthers, *Memory*.

intricate thoughts about preaching. Nevertheless, these were general indications that did not relate the hermit-preachers to specific apostles. But, as we shall see now, the apostle Paul held notable importance in two particular hagiographies.

Seminiverbius: Identifications with Paul

By eloquently combining the ideas of sowing and the word in the use of the noun *seminiverbius* (word-scatterer) our authors construed the hermit-preachers as a specific imitation of Paul. This has been noted by a few historians, but has not yet been given the full exploration that it deserves and thus remains underappreciated for its role within allusions to apostolicity.⁷⁴ What is more, tracking this term not just through hagiographies but also through other twelfth-century texts shows that a particular community was influential in designating one specific hermit-preacher as *seminiverbius* and thus effectively highlights the idea of community construction discussed in chapter one.

The term itself originated in Acts of the Apostles 17:18 where Paul was described – derogatorily – as a ‘blabbermouth’ (*spermalogus*). When translated in the Latin Vulgate however the term was rendered, more positively, as *seminiverbius*. As such, the noun was, in Bruce L. Venarde’s words, ‘recast as a badge of honour for eloquent preachers’.⁷⁵ Despite this, some early Christian contemporaries seem to have used *spermalogus* and *seminiverbius* fairly interchangeably. The venerable Bede, for example, in his biblical commentary *Expositio Actuum Apostolorum* said of Acts 17:18 that it was right that Paul was called a *seminiverbius*, ‘*id est σπερμολογος*’, because the seed was the word of God.⁷⁶ Paul accepted, Bede said again in *In Ezram et Neemiam*, that the name that he was given – *spermologus*, ‘*id est seminiverbius*’ – was correct since he sowed the word.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, what is clear is that for Bede it was Paul who was responsible for scattering the Word, and that the term *seminiverbius* was firmly attached to the apostle.

The first to apply the term to a hermit-preacher was Baudri of Dol, who called Robert of Arbrissel *seminiverbum* in the *Vita Roberti* composed around 1118.⁷⁸ While it is true that the cartulary of La Roë, Robert’s first foundation, noted that the hermit-preacher was ‘...*verbum Dei per diversa loca seminante*’, the noun *seminiverbius* with all of its specific connotations to Paul cannot be found.⁷⁹ Here then, Baudri pushed the idea

⁷⁴ Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 120–1, n. 3; Hugh Feiss, ‘*Seminiverbius*: Preaching in the *Vita* of Vitalis of Savigny’, *American Benedictine Review* 63:3 (2012), p. 257.

⁷⁵ Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 120–1, n. 3.

⁷⁶ Bede, *Expositio Actuum Apostolorum*, ed. M.L.W Laistner (Cambridge, MA, 1939), 65.

⁷⁷ Bede, ‘*In Ezram Et Neemiam*’, in D. Hurst (ed.), *Beda Venerabilis Opera: Opera Exegetica* (Turnhout, 1969), p. 281.

⁷⁸ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, Prologue.1, col. 1043B and 2.14, col. 1051A.

⁷⁹ Printed in Dalarun, *Les deux vies*, p. 612.

further with the explicit identification of Robert with the apostle Paul by his choice of words. Robert was given a Pauline sense of apostolicity, focused upon the idea of preaching. Yet despite Andrew of Fontevraud's repetition of the term in the *Vita Roberti altera*, undoubtedly borrowed from the poetic Baudri, in reality the term stuck far more resolutely to another hermit-preacher, Vitalis of Savigny.⁸⁰

In the 1130s, the historian Orderic Vitalis applied the phrase *optimus seminiverbius* to Vitalis of Savigny: he was the very best word-scatterer.⁸¹ It is not clear whether Orderic had read the *Vita Roberti* and had added the adjective due to Baudri of Dol's employment of the term. The historian certainly knew Baudri and his work well.⁸² But Orderic did not write about Robert of Arbrissel in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, possibly because he was aware of the criticisms of the holy man in the letters of Marbode of Rennes and Geoffrey of Vendôme, discussed above. While appreciative of the Cistercians, the historian was still very critical of other 'novel' monastic practices.⁸³ Perhaps Robert's innovation was a step too far. There are, therefore, two options. It may simply be that Orderic had not read the *Vita Roberti* and since we know that he had read Bede, the twelfth-century historian's use of the term could have other origins.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Orderic may have made a conscious decision to pilfer the word from Baudri's work and apply it to someone whom he believed to be the more suitable candidate.

Whether Orderic Vitalis had read the *Vita Roberti* or not, the word choice had consequences, as the abbot of Mont Saint-Michel Robert of Torigni picked up on Orderic's glowing praise. For in his tract composed in 1154 on the new religious orders, which made reference to Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Robert too called Vitalis of Savigny *optimus seminiverbius*.⁸⁵ Given the textual relationship between the two works therefore, the transmission of the phrase from Saint-Evroul to Mont Saint-Michel is fairly certain.⁸⁶

Later, in the early 1170s, Stephen of Fougères used exactly the same words, again calling Vitalis *optimus seminiverbius*.⁸⁷ Considering its prevalent use already, we need to ask from where Stephen lifted this phrase. In many ways, the terminology was not a

⁸⁰ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 23, p. 232.

⁸¹ Orderic Vitalis, *History*, vol. 4, bk. 8.27, p. 332.

⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, bk. 9.18, pp. 188–90.

⁸³ For Orderic's praise of the Cistercians see *Ibid.*, vol. IV., bk. 8.26, 312–26, and for examples of his cynicism see *Ibid.*, vol. IV, bk. 8.26, p. 312 and 8.27, pp. 332–4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 332; Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, 1996), p. 10 and p. 177.

⁸⁵ Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 189.

⁸⁶ For details of the relationship between the two texts, and the two men, see Marjorie Chibnall, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni', in R. Foreville (ed.), *Mélanges De Millénaire Monastic Du Mont Saint-Michel*, 3 vols (Paris, 1967), vol. 2, pp. 133–9; van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, pp. 48–52.

⁸⁷ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.12, p. 386.

great leap from what was written in Vitalis of Savigny's *Rotulus*, to which we know Stephen of Fougères had partial access from chapter one. Here, communities had testified to the power of Vitalis' words and wrote in different ways of him scattering the word.⁸⁸ Yet none of the *tituli* explicitly used the term *seminiverbius*, and since it is unlikely that Stephen had the whole mortuary roll, it is improbable that he was reflecting upon the language employed within these. In light of this it is far more feasible, and indeed reasonable to assume, that the word reached Stephen of Fougères from Robert of Torigni, and there are two ways in which this could have occurred. On the one hand, we know that the two men were friends.⁸⁹ Robert could have easily supplied Stephen with details of Vitalis or perhaps even a copy of his tract, including his designation of Vitalis as *optimus seminiverbius*. On the other, the community at Savigny themselves had a copy of the tract in the twelfth century, probably transcribed before the *Vita Vitalis* was written.⁹⁰ Considering that they had supplied Stephen with other documents from which to work, it is highly likely they might have also given the bishop, or even just mentioned to him, a source which effusively commended their founder. From Baudri of Dol to Orderic Vitalis, through Robert of Torigni to Stephen of Fougères, the term *seminiverbius* was thus transmitted through the twelfth century, attached to the hermit-preachers. Still, for Vitalis it did not stop there, and this was all to do with the community of Savigny.

When compiling a list of their abbots in the thirteenth century, the Savigniac monks were still calling their first abbot, Vitalis, *optimus seminiverbius*. This in itself reveals that the brothers of Savigny felt a certain attachment to the phrase that described their founder. But there was more to the *Abbatēs monasterii Savigniacensis*, because the text shows that the brethren were still engaging with Robert of Torigni (and hence using the phrase *optimus seminiverbius*) well into the thirteenth century. Compare, for instance, the similarities of the start of the *Abbatēs monasterii Savigniacensis* with the start of Robert of Torigni's section on Vitalis from his tract on the new religious orders:

Abbatēs monasterii Savigniacensis

Robert of Torigni

Beatus Vitalis heremita optimus seminiverbius in confinio Normanniae et minoris Britanniae aedificavit in vico Savigneio, monasterium istud quod dicitur aedificans...⁹² Savigniacum.⁹¹

⁸⁸ 'Rouleau de Vital', ed. Delisle, sec. 76, p. 310, sec. 101, p. 316, sec. 173, pp. 333–4.

⁸⁹ Pigeon, 'Etienne de Fougères', p. 182.

⁹⁰ The twelfth-century ms is now at the BN, Lat. 5232. For details of its content see Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 182. I am grateful to Thomas Bisson for bringing to my attention that this was probably an early version of the work, given that it was separate from the Chronicle, as after the late 1150s the tract on the new religious orders and the chronicle were always placed together.

⁹¹ For the original manuscript see BN, Lat. 4862, ff.132v–3r, and for details of this ms see Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 1, pp. iv–vii. The text was transcribed by Étienne Baluze in 1679 at the head

Given the striking similarities, it seems that the monks were using Robert of Torigni's description of their founder for their very own abbatial lists. The preservation of the phrase *optimus seminiverbius* also demonstrated that the Savigniac community felt that it best suited the perpetuation of their founder's memory. In fact, as stated in the introduction to this work, the above designation is probably the best justification of our modern day label of 'hermit-preacher': *heremita, optimus seminiverbius* effectively equals hermit-preacher, albeit slightly more eloquently.

But the label of *seminiverbius* did not originate from Robert of Torigni, however much the Savigniac monks relied upon his work. If the first application to Vitalis of Savigny by Orderic Vitalis originates from the *Vita Roberti*, which I strongly suspect it does, then its original use was by Baudri of Dol who was also a poet and probably appreciated the poetry of the word as much as its connotations. Furthermore, the label was not all-encompassing for the community of Fontevraud. We would do well to recall that Andrew of Fontevraud had characterised Robert of Arbrissel as Paul *only* 'in his preaching and travel'. He characterised the hermit-preacher as different biblical figures when discussing other areas of his spiritual life.⁹³ Yet its application to Vitalis of Savigny was far more significant because it was picked up by his community and probably passed onto the author of his *vita* by them. So what we have, I believe, is an individual (Baudri) external to a particular monastic community (Fontevraud) applying a word to a particular hermit-preacher (Robert) that was favoured so much by another community (Savigny) that it became integral to their self-perception of their founder (Vitalis) and thus influenced both the narrative of his life and subsequent texts. *Optimus seminiverbius* became almost a linguistic marker for Vitalis which revealed that the community of Savigny saw him – and perpetuated their imagining of him – as the embodiment of Paul.

Through the above analysis it is clear that the preaching of the hermit-preachers – the very act of this preaching – was instilled with notions of apostolicity because our communities used terms that equated these acts to Gospel passages. This granted the hermit-preachers authority because they were acting within the most authoritative framework – the bible. Nevertheless preaching was not just about biblical authority and contemporaries were also concerned with the authority given by the contemporary hierarchical church. We thus turn now to the issue of 'being sent' to preach.

of the *Chronicon Savigniacense*, then copied from Baluze in 1877 for the *RHF*. See Étienne Baluze, *Miscellaneorum liber secundus...* (Paris, 1679), vol. 2, p. 310; 'Indiculus Abbatum Savigniacensis Monasterii', in *RHF* 14, pp. 518–19.

⁹² Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 189.

⁹³ See above, p. 127, n. 35.

Commissioning Preaching

Nearly one thousand years before the advent of the hermit-preachers, Tertullian had said that the designation of an apostle meant one *who was sent*.⁹⁴ As such, he was drawing upon biblical passages where Christ had sent his apostles out into the world to spread the word.⁹⁵ As we have seen though, much had changed in the following millennium, not least the connection between monasticism and apostolicism. As a result this begs the question: did the hermit-preachers, like the apostles, have to be sent to preach the word? If so, was the concept of 'being sent' discussed in terms of apostolicity? Consequently, for this part of my analysis on preaching and notions of apostolicity, biblical ideas frame my enquiry rather than the narratives about the hermit-preachers. This is necessary not only because the twelfth century was a transitional period in terms of the concept of the *vita apostolica*, but also because it was transitional with regard to the importance of the (specifically biblical) idea of being sent to preach, as the institutional church tightened its grip upon those under its watchful gaze. Here then I take a slightly different approach and explore preaching and apostolicity through this concept rather than through the sources directly because this allows us to appreciate its changing nature and how the hermit-preachers were situated within this. Perhaps somewhat ironically, the idea of being sent to preach was much more significant for those who were seen as not sent and so I start with the condemned hermit-preachers of this study.

At the time when Henry of Lausanne was preaching, and thus when narratives about him were written, the issue of being sent to preach as a biblical definition of an apostle (as defined by the hierarchical church) was becoming one of increasing importance. Bernard of Clairvaux was particularly firm on the subject. In his letter written to the people of Toulouse upon returning from his preaching mission there in the 1140s, for instance, he warned the populace not to receive any foreign or unknown preacher unless they had been sent explicitly by the pope or had permission from the bishop. To this effect, he cited Romans 10:15: How can they preach if they are not sent?⁹⁶ Considering that one reason Bernard undertook such a tour was to counteract the supposed heresy of Henry, it is likely that the abbot was thinking at least in part of Henry when he wrote these words. All the same, the idea that one had to be sent to preach was clearly an on-going concern for Bernard. Elsewhere, in his commentary on the Song of Songs, Bernard had articulated the same sentiments and identified one of the foxes who destroyed the vineyard as the desire to preach without being ready or sent, and exhorted people not to preach without permission.⁹⁷ 'It is not appropriate for a monk to preach in public,' Bernard stated plainly, 'nor is it permitted for those not

⁹⁴ Tertullian, 'Liber de praescriptionibus adversus haereticos', in *PL* 2, chap. 20, col. 32A.

⁹⁵ Cf. Mk 3:14, Lk 10:1.

⁹⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, col. 437B.

⁹⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Sermo LXIV', in *Sermons sur le Cantique*, ed. Jean Leclercq, H. Rochais, and C.H. Talbot, 5 vols (Paris, 1996-2007), vol. 4, chap. 1.3, p. 302.

sent.⁹⁸ While Bernard was talking specifically about monks leaving the monastery to preach here, his later relation between foxes and heretics suggests that the matter was as applicable to them as it was to monks. What is most important here is the citation from Romans 10:15, which gave the problem not only a distinctly Pauline theological underpinning, as has been noted by C. Colt Anderson, but also viewed it in terms of the qualification of the apostle.⁹⁹ Present at this time, therefore, was a conception that preachers needed to be sent which connected them to the apostles and their authority.

Yet when we revisit the (possible) previous condemnations of both Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys as detailed in chapter one, such as the Council of Toulouse in 1119 or the Second Lateran Council of 1139, we find no reference that castigated heretics for not being sent to preach. Rather, the judgement issued in these councils focused upon the doctrinal errors of heretics.¹⁰⁰ It was only later that this idea came to the fore, after its propagation by such influential figures as Bernard of Clairvaux. What is more, Henry *had* originally been given an episcopal licence to preach in the city of Le Mans by bishop Hildebert.¹⁰¹ Perhaps the similarity between the celebrated and those hermit-preachers later condemned here was the most apparent to contemporaries: when he first appeared, Henry seemed to be just another wandering preacher in the eyes of those in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, another Robert of Arbrissel.¹⁰² Indeed, R.I. Moore has specifically commented that seeking a licence was ‘not the act of a determined heretic’.¹⁰³ On the other hand, however, we could instead view this in light of the concept of mimicry and of heretics mimicking orthodoxy, of which I spoke above. In fact, it was in this context that the licence given to Henry was explained in the text, with the writer saying that Henry and his followers had put on the appearance of penitents, and that Hildebert had not expected the treachery of a ‘Trojan horse’.¹⁰⁴ To my mind, the similarities were used to explain why Hildebert had granted Henry such a licence in the first place, and staunchly defended the actions of the bishop. This is hardly surprising given that this section of the text was the *Gesta Hildeberti*, not the *Gesta Henrici*, and that it sought to bolster the authority of the clergy as we saw in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, what is important to recognise for our present purposes is that for the two condemned hermit-preachers, there was not much that connected ‘being sent’ to apostleship, or even the subversion of this concept, despite the few remarks by Bernard of Clairvaux.

⁹⁸ ‘...publice praedicare nec monacho convenit...nec non misso licet’, *Ibid.*, vol. 4, chap. 1.3, p. 302.

⁹⁹ C. Colt Anderson, ‘St. Paul and Reform Rhetoric in the High Middle Ages’, in Steven Cartwright (ed.), *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2012), p. 338.

¹⁰⁰ *Sacra Concilia*, vol. 21, cols. 226–7.

¹⁰¹ *AP*, p. 407.

¹⁰² Jesse, ‘Robert d’Arbrissel’, pp. 222–3; Moore, ‘Heresy’, pp. 38–9; R.I. Moore, ‘Literacy and the making of heresy, c. 1000 – c. 1150’, in Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (eds), *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 29. Hildebert knew Robert of Arbrissel, as we have seen from the exploration in chapter two of the letter he wrote to the hermit-preacher.

¹⁰³ Moore, ‘Heresy’, p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

The matter of being sent to preach, however, was more noticeably concerning for the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the later twelfth century and the language with which it was described is important here. In many ways this was linked to the growth of the Church's institutional agenda to combat heresy. In 1184 at the Council of Verona, for instance, Pope Lucius III issued the following bull:

We decree to lay under perpetual anathema... [those who] claim authority for themselves for the sake of preaching, since the Apostle said: *How can they preach, unless they are sent?* [We include] all who, either having been forbidden, or having not been sent, may have presumed to preach publicly or privately, contrary to the authority having been received from the Apostolic See or the local bishop.¹⁰⁵

Due to this canon and the fact that the council also called upon bishops to seek out and uproot heresy in their dioceses, Verona has been cited as the start of a systematic institutional attack upon heresy.¹⁰⁶ Certainly the reissue of the decree in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 demonstrates the longevity of, and anxiety over, the issue.¹⁰⁷ There is no need to comment further upon this issue here, as this goes far beyond the remit of the current work and deals with issues that crystallised with the presence of other heretical groups, such as the Cathars or the Waldensians. This is supported by arguments in the *Contra Hereticos*, written in the 1180s, that picked up these links between being sent and the notion of apostolicity, and demonstrated discrepancy between individual and institutional interpretations of what defined 'being sent', and the support of different biblical verses.¹⁰⁸ The imperative point, however, is that the authority of preaching was increasingly becoming defined by the idea of 'being sent', confirmed by biblical verses, which invested it with a sense of apostolicity.

In light of this I would suggest, then, that the concept of being sent to preach and the demand that preachers should be appointed seems to have only appeared when the number of those preaching who were not priests or bishops proliferated, that is, in the context of later twelfth-century heresy. In the midst of the apparent confused and unsettled conception of the apostolic life, acknowledging this is vital because at this point, the very concept of being sent (one of the original qualifications of an apostle) became one of the major – and defining – boundaries between heretical and orthodox preaching. Through needing to assert their authority, members of the ecclesiastical

¹⁰⁵ '...perpetuo decernimus anathemati subiacerere...auctoritatem sibi vendicant praedicandi; quum...Apostolus dicat: « quomodo praedicabunt, nisi mittantur? » omnes, qui vel prohibiti, vel non missi, praeter auctoritatem, ab apostolica sede vel ab episcopo loci susceptam, publice vel privatim praedicare praesumpserint...', Lucius III, 'Ad abolendam diversarum haeresium pravitatem', in Giovanni Gonnet (ed.), *Enchiridion Fontium Valdensium* (Torre Pellice, 1958), p. 51.

¹⁰⁶ Moore, *Formation*, p. 8; Moore, *War on Heresy*, pp. 205–13.

¹⁰⁷ See *Decrees*, ed. Tanner, vol. 1, Lateran IV, canon 3, pp. 233–5 for the canon on heretics and specifically p. 235 for this point.

¹⁰⁸ 'Contra Hereticos', in Zerner, *Contre Henri*, Prologue, pp. 220-2 and chap. 2 'De missione', pp. 228-32. For this text see above, chapter one, p. 24, n. 44.

hierarchy confidently cited Romans 10:15 as proof that one could not preach without being sent. It was, importantly, a tangible way to differentiate between who was, and who was not, a heretic and it gave the Church a certain level of control over individual spirituality under an institutional roof. This appeared apostolic because of its fundamental connection to the apostles but it was, at its heart, concerned with authority. What we see developing throughout the twelfth century then is a process that sought to define orthodoxy and heresy with regard to preaching, efforts which refused to associate heretics with the apostles because they were not sent. Institutional ratification was thus vital in classifying who stood outside of the true faith.

On the other hand, if the idea that the hermit-preachers had to be sent in order to preach was becoming so significant, it is perhaps odd that we do not find a similar focus in those texts written about the hermit-preachers who were revered. For most of the communities, who sent the hermit-preachers or whether they were even sent at all did simply not seem to be an issue. We saw in chapter two that Bernard of Tiron apparently said in a sermon that his authority to preach came from the fact that he was dead to the world and had mortified himself, when asked why he thought he was able to preach.¹⁰⁹ From this, André Vauchez has commented that Bernard's answer implied that leading a life according to the Gospels was thought of as value enough in itself.¹¹⁰ Yet the link between ascetic practice alone and the power to correct publicly had already been asserted, many centuries before, by Gregory the Great.¹¹¹ In this sense, Bernard's answer as to why he was able to preach fitted more squarely with traditional thought patterns rather than anything to do with apostolicity. Most importantly for our current purposes, the hermit-preacher's identity as a monk was seen as more important than any authorisation that the church could give. Given that the speech was possibly reconstructed by the Tironensian monks, as also suggested in chapter two, it may have been that the community were keener to highlight their founder's identity as a monk than as a commissioned preacher.

There were occasions, nonetheless, when this warranted discussion, particularly when the hermit-preachers were said to have been granted preaching licences. Scholars have discussed these frequently, regarding either the need for control of preaching by the church, or whether they actually existed.¹¹² As of yet, however, preaching licences have not been explored with reference to their apostolicity, which is crucial because, as we have seen, the biblical qualification of an apostle as 'sent' was gaining more importance. Interestingly though, only once within the hagiographies do we find

¹⁰⁹ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.53–4, cols. 1398D–99D.

¹¹⁰ Vauchez, *Spirituality*, p. 115.

¹¹¹ Conrad Leyser, 'Expertise and Authority in Gregory the Great: The Social Function of *Peritia*', in John C. Cavadini (ed.), *Gregory the Great: A Symposium* (London and Notre Dame, 1995), pp. 38–61; Anderson, 'Paul', pp. 336–7.

¹¹² Cf. Becquet, 'L'érémisme', pp. 197–8; Leyser, *Hermits*, pp. 74–5; Jessee, 'Robert d'Arbrissel', p. 229; Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, pp. 18–19; Henriët, 'Verbum Dei', pp. 164–5; Porter, 'Preacher?', pp. 48–51.

preaching connected to the idea of an apostolic office, when Geoffrey Grossus described Pope Paschal II's bestowal of a preaching licence upon Bernard of Tiron. Here he wrote:

After [Paschal] handed over this post of apostleship to Bernard, unwilling that the vicar of the apostles, whom he was appointing to preach without money, might run short of nourishment, he advised that he should accept food of the body from those whom he restored by his word of salvation.¹¹³

Although this passage demonstrates Geoffrey's eagerness to reveal the empathy of the Pope towards the holy man, it is not Paschal II's concern for Bernard's health that interests me here. Rather, I am concerned with the language used to describe the preaching office, which suggests a connection between preaching and apostolicism: Paschal II granted Bernard the 'post of apostleship' (*vicem apostolatus*). There are several points that need to be made here. First, the community saw apostleship as corresponding to the office of preaching and, in turn, saw Bernard's role as preacher as the re-enactment of this apostolic office. Secondly, that Bernard was sent to preach directly by the pope created an unbroken chain of apostolic succession; from Christ to Saint Peter, through Paschal II to Bernard. Bernard was made apostolic because he had received his commission from the Vicar of Christ. Thirdly, considering that the usurpation of this office was so important for those writing about heretical hermit-preachers, this statement put Bernard firmly within the realm of orthodoxy and gave him institutional ratification for his activities. Here we see how hagiographies could contribute to the process of defining heresy and orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, despite Giles Constable's suggestion that the above depiction of Bernard's preaching illustrated the shift from a monastic conception of the *vita apostolica* to one connected with preaching, it needs to be acknowledged that describing the preaching licence as the bestowal of an apostolic office was not an idea that was applied to all of the hermit-preachers.¹¹⁴ In fact, this conception was absent in the two other texts that detailed the conferment of a licence to a preacher, the two *Lives* of Robert of Arbrissel.¹¹⁵ In these, neither Baudri of Dol nor Andrew of Fontevraud talked of Urban II as granting Robert an 'apostolic' office, with Baudri saying that Urban II enjoined on Robert the 'office of preaching' (*praedicationis officium*) and Andrew that Robert was charged with the 'duty to preach' (*officium praedicatoris*).¹¹⁶ Remarkably, despite the lack of explicit apostolic nomenclature here, the chapter

¹¹³ 'At postquam ei vicem apostolatus tradidit, nolens ut apostolorum vicario, quem sine pecunia ad praedicandum destinabat, victus deficeret, monuit ut ab illis cibum corporis acciperet, quos verbo salutis reficeret...', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 7.59, col. 1403A.

¹¹⁴ Constable, *Reformation*, p. 157.

¹¹⁵ For a discussion of Robert's preaching licence as a mechanism of control by the church see Jessee, 'Robert d'Arbrissel', p. 229.

¹¹⁶ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.14, col. 1050D; Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 6, p. 200.

heading in the *Patrologia Latina* edition of the work states that Robert became engaged in the office of the apostolic preacher: *apostolici concionatoris praeclare obitum munus*.¹¹⁷ One is left wondering whether this denoted the act of preaching or the licence to preach. As a result, we are presented with a picture where Robert was sent to preach (by Urban II), but he was not sent as an ambassador of an *apostolic* office.

What we have seen then is that there were many apostolic themes and tropes employed when writing about the hermit-preachers' preaching. From going barefoot, through their scattering of the word, to their identification with the apostle Paul and, to a certain extent, by the idea of being sent to preach, these individuals were imbued with a sense that they imitated the apostles. Even heretics were portrayed in this way, though what they produced was seen as subversive. At no point, however, did our authors outrightly assert that this was the *vita apostolica* or, indeed, *imitatio apostolorum*. Instead, these indications of apostolicity were more subtly constructed, through situating these actions within biblical paradigms. What is more, certain communities emphasised different aspects of these notions of apostolicism, such as Vitalis of Savigny and his imitation of Paul. This was certainly one way in which Savigny took control of their founder's legacy. Under the homogenising effect of the phrase *vita apostolica*, this distinctiveness of certain hermit-preachers has, in my opinion, been obscured until now. With this in mind, let us move to the second area in which we can also see notions of apostolicity: ideas of poverty.

Poverty

There is no doubt that the hermit-preachers were conceived of as poor and as lovers of poverty. One *tituli* from Vitalis of Savigny's mortuary roll, for instance, called him both a *pauper* and *mendicus*.¹¹⁸ Bernard of Tiron was said to have burned with the love of poverty in the *Vita Bernardi*.¹¹⁹ In his epitaph to Robert of Arbrissel, Hildebert of Lavardin spent much time writing in praise of Robert's austerity, which was tantamount to poverty.¹²⁰ This was, therefore, a perceived characteristic that transcended textual genre, and it was not just present in the narratives, even if this was the place in which the concept was particularly emphasised. It is important to explore this concept of poverty and its relation to apostolicity not only because we find interesting (and delicate) links between the two, but also because poverty has been a facet of the hermit-preachers' spiritual characteristics that modern historians have closely associated with their apostolicity, being twinned with preaching as part of the new

¹¹⁷ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.14, col. 1049B.

¹¹⁸ 'Rouleau de Vital', ed. Delisle, sec. 67, p. 307; Constable, *Reformation*, p. 147.

¹¹⁹ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 6.49, col. 1397A.

¹²⁰ Hildebert of Lavardin, 'Epitaphium Roberti', cols. 1391C–92A, esp. lines 9–20.

spirituality of the twelfth century.¹²¹ Indeed, Jennifer Deane commented that a specific biblical verse, Matthew 19:21, mandated a life of preaching and poverty.¹²² As Christ instructed the apostles to live in poverty, the hermit-preachers lived without possessions and gave what they could to the poor. In this way, poverty has been viewed as part of the newer model of the *vita apostolica*: individual poverty based upon the Gospels rather than the communal poverty based upon Acts of the Apostles. In the final part of this chapter I suggest that there were certain concepts of poverty that were imbued with a sense of apostolicity through an analysis of eremitism, the renunciation of the world, and care of the poor. Nevertheless, as with preaching, these links were far from clear, consistent and definitive.

Through Eremitism to Apostolicity?

In our hagiographies, there was a consistent connection between poverty and eremitism, in the sense that poverty was related to asceticism and austerity: to live under austere conditions as a hermit inevitably involved being poor. Hence poverty was often framed in terms of the eremitic life rather than the apostolic and was defined as a fundamental characteristic of the hermit, not of the apostle. When the monk of Châteliers thought of Gerald of Sales' transition from a canon of St. Avit to the eremitic life, for example, he imagined it as primarily defined by poverty: from a poor canon, he had been made a poorer hermit.¹²³ The holy man's subsequent time as a hermit was imparted in text with a deep sense of his poverty, and the monk from Châteliers wrote at length of his poorness in food and clothing. In this way Gerald was, he said, like John the Baptist.¹²⁴

In fact, this comparison of a hermit-preacher to John the Baptist was not unique. This is perhaps not surprising when one recognises that the biblical figure was, of course, an eremitic and ascetic icon, because he too wandered in the wilderness, wearing clothes made of camel hair.¹²⁵ The fact that all of the hermit-preachers were said to have

¹²¹ Cf. McDonnell, 'Diversity or Dissent', pp. 15–16; Delaruelle, 'Les ermites', p. 216 and pp. 226–31; Friedrich Kempf, 'The "Vita Evangelica" Movement and the Appearance of New Orders', in Friedrich Kempf *et al.* (eds), *Handbook of Church History: The Church in the Ages of Feudalism*, trans. Anselm Biggs (London, 1969), p. 453ff; Glenn Olsen, 'The Idea of the Ecclesia Primitiva in the Writings of the Twelfth-Century Canonists', *Traditio* 25 (1969), p. 65ff; Ladner, *Images*, vol. 2, p. 527; McGinn, *Mysticism*, p. 6; Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, p. 8; Chenu, *Nature*, pp. 240–4; Christopher M. Bellitto, *Renewing Christianity: A History of Church Reform from Day One to Vatican II* (New Jersey, 2001), p. 65.

¹²² Mt 19:21: 'Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."' Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* (Maryland, 2011), p. 57.

¹²³ VGS, chap. 1.6, p. 255.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 1.7–8, pp. 255–6.

¹²⁵ Mt 3:4. For John the Baptist as a religious symbol see John Howe, 'The Awesome Hermit: The Symbolic Significance of the Hermit as a Possible Research Perspective', *Numen* 30: 1 (1983), pp. 112–113.

donned hairshirts surely recalled, at heart, this biblical model.¹²⁶ But evoking John the Baptist also brings us back to the compartmentalisation of spirituality about which I spoke above. Two texts, the *Vita Roberti* by Andrew of Fontevraud and the *Vita Giraldi*, compartmentalised eremitic spirituality by John the Baptist since both Robert of Arbrissel and Gerald of Sales were conceived of as being John the Baptist 'in the desert'.¹²⁷ As such, there was a model for eremitism who was not an apostle, upon whose symbolism the communities could call to describe and situate the perceived poverty of the hermit-preachers.

One author in particular helps us to understand how this was related to apostolicity in the twelfth century: Marbode of Rennes. In the letter that Marbode wrote to Robert of Arbrissel he criticised the hermit-preacher for his clothing and said, somewhat acerbically, that Robert only lacked a club to complete the outfit of a lunatic.¹²⁸ 'As you might propose to be imitating John the Baptist, first fulfil the measure of the confessors and apostles, and you might be able to ascend to him', Marbode told Robert, 'for reason shows that just as there is no fall from the depths, thus there is no starting from the heights.'¹²⁹ In Marbode's eyes, there was a spiritual hierarchy. Confessors, the apostles, and John the Baptist were separate rungs on a spiritual ladder and Robert had to climb to the lofty heights before he could imitate John. While imitating all three of these models was part of the spiritual life, they were separate and could not be conflated. One had to advance through each model. Living like John the Baptist was, therefore, not living like the apostles.

Eremitism was also linked to another equally important figure who implied poverty, St Antony, particularly in the *Vita Bernardi*. Here, we find the same clear link as in the *Vita Giraldi* between poverty and eremitism. Bernard of Tiron was, as stated above, described as burning with the love of poverty and the Tironensian community clarified what mode of life they conceived this to be when they spoke of how Bernard travelled to Rome, wearing his clothes of poverty, that is, of the *hermit* life.¹³⁰ At another point in the *vita*, they classified hermit rags as the very habit of humility and poverty.¹³¹ Most significantly, it was said that people flocked to Bernard in order to see a 'new Antony' and so that they could follow his poverty.¹³² In this way, Bernard was imagined not as an apostle because of his poverty but as an imitation of St Antony who, next to John

¹²⁶ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.11, col. 1049C; Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.10, p. 378; *VGS*, chap. 1.7, p. 255.

¹²⁷ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 69, p. 293; *VGS*, chap. 2.18, p. 258.

¹²⁸ Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', sec. 18, p. 186. This was no joke. Though some years later, the Breton heretic Eon of l'Etoile was condemned for apparent madness and imprisoned after the Council of Rheims in 1148.

¹²⁹ 'Quod sibi imitandum tibi proposueris Iohannem Baptistam, imple prius confessorum, imple apostolorum mensuram, ut ad eum...consequenter possis ascendere. Nam sicut ad ima non recidendum, sic nec a summis incipiendum ratio docet', *Ibid.*, sec. 20, p. 186.

¹³⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 7.55, col. 1400A.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 8.66, col. 1407B.

¹³² *Ibid.*, chap. 8.74, col. 1411C.

the Baptist, was probably the most important ascetic and eremitic model of the Christian church.¹³³ Certainly poverty was emphasised far more in the *Vita Bernardi*, suggesting that the Tironensian monks believed it was an essential element of their founder which needed to be recorded in text. From this, it seems that Bernard's poverty was modelled on St Antony, not the apostles.

Yet there was, I think, something deeper at work here indicating that apostolicity was implicit *within* eremitism. In St Antony's *vita* by Athanasius produced in the mid-fourth century, the bishop of Alexandria told an interesting and pertinent story of the holy man's conversion. When he was a young man, Antony was considering how the apostles had forsaken everything to follow Christ, and how in Acts of the Apostles they had sold and distributed goods to the poor. While pondering this, Antony went into a church at the very same time that the Gospel verse Matthew 19:21 was being read: 'Jesus said to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me'.¹³⁴ This was, Athanasius commented, God's design and upon hearing the biblical verse Antony immediately sold all of his possessions and started his journey into the desert.¹³⁵ In his hagiography, Antony's eremitic flight was thus predicated upon a Gospel verse. It was apostolic because Antony shaped his life to imitate the apostles.

Admittedly, despite the claim that he was like a new Antony, Bernard of Tiron's initial entry into the religious life was not framed in quite the same way in the *Vita Bernardi* as the *Vita Antonii*, probably because the hermit-preacher entered the monastery before the wilderness. To this effect, Geoffrey Grossus defined his decision to join the followers of the monastic profession by the Benedictine rule, not by the Gospels.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, when Bernard later fled from the monks of Saint-Savin who sought to make him their abbot, he established himself around the borders of Maine and Brittany where there was already a multitude of hermits. This was, said Geoffrey, almost like 'another Egypt'.¹³⁷ Clearly Antony, and the eremitic milieu in which he lived, was seen as a model for these men and was critical in envisaging the eremitic life. It is highly likely, moreover, that Tiron had a copy of the *Vita Antonii* given that Geoffrey referenced Athanasius in the prologue to the work as one of the brilliant doctors of the church who encouraged monks to write the lives of saints.¹³⁸ That a copy of Antony's *vita* can be found in the manuscript BN Lat. 584 – which also contained the *Vita Brevis* of Bernard – strongly supports this conclusion.¹³⁹ This would certainly explain why

¹³³ The importance of Antony as a model in the *Vita Bernardi* is also noted by Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, pp. 87–92.

¹³⁴ Cf. Lk 14:33.

¹³⁵ Athanasius, *Vie d'Antoine*, ed. and trans. G. J. M. Bartelink, SC 400 (Paris, 1994), chap. 2, pp. 133–5.

¹³⁶ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 1.8, cols. 1373C–74A.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 3.20, col. 1380D.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Prologue.1, col. 1368A.

¹³⁹ Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 39.

Antony is used far more frequently in the *Vita Bernardi* than any of the other hermit-preachers' *vitae*. Consequently through parallels to Antony, Bernard's eremitism could have been understood as inherently apostolic as he followed (or was *like*) another Christian holy man who was understood to have entered the religious life in imitation of the apostles. Indeed, this notion is supported by the *sermo* attached to the *vita*, which said of Bernard: 'Following the life of the apostle, and of the Gospel, he entirely cast off and spurned the empty pleasures of the world...'¹⁴⁰ Here was an explicit identification between following in the apostles' footsteps and renunciation of the world that was entirely absent in the *Vita Bernardi* proper. In a piece of work that was added to the text then, the Tironensian monks obviously felt it necessary to clarify the apostolic framework behind the abandonment of the world.

In truth, it was common in the twelfth century for communities to write of hermits being inspired by the same biblical verses as St Antony – Matthew 19:21 or Luke 14:33. Renunciation of the world, which included renunciation of all material possessions, was a conversion moment that was often placed within the context of these Gospel passages, and it is probably due to this that scholars have said hermit-preachers were 'inspired' by the *vita apostolica*.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, citing these passages was common in explaining the conversion to the eremitic life. We find both used, for instance, in another contemporary hagiography, that of the Mortain hermit William Firmat.¹⁴² One could surely cite more examples in which hermits were said to have been inspired by the same verses.

More significant for our present concerns, however, was the fact that in the encyclical letter to Vitalis of Savigny's mortuary roll that Stephen of Fougères had copied into the *Vita Vitalis*, the community of Savigny had written that when the hermit-preacher had reached a mature age, he began to love the poor and set the evangelical precept Matthew 19:21 before his eyes.¹⁴³ Here, the monks considered Vitalis to have been explicitly motivated by the Gospel and thus his renunciation of the world was instilled with a distinct sense of apostolicity. The story was unmistakably similar to that of St Antony.¹⁴⁴ As such, one could say that the Gospel defined the perception and textual construction of this moment in the hermit-preacher's life. But Vitalis' community thought in slightly more complex terms than this, as they had also written that the holy man had followed Saint Benedict: *he looked down on the world as a faded bloom*.¹⁴⁵ The phrase, lifted from the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, was a unique reference

¹⁴⁰ 'Vitam namque Apostolicam sequens, et Evangelicam, vana mundi oblectamina omnino spreuit & abiecit...', Geoffrey Grossus, *Beati Bernardi*, chap. 63, p. 134. For the *sermo*, and its identification as the remnants of a *vita altera*, see chapter one of this work, p. 50.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Châtillon, 'Spiritual Renaissance', p. 302ff; Vicaire's entry for the 'Apostolic Life' in Vauchez, Dobson, and Lapidge, *Encyclopedia*, p. 85; Dickson, 'Revivalism', p. 172.

¹⁴² See 'Vita Guillelmi', ed. Pigeon, chap. 1, p. 400.

¹⁴³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.13, p. 380.

¹⁴⁴ This similarity has also been noted by van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁵ '...quasi aridum mundum cum flore despexit', Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.13, p. 380.

that we do not find used by any other community which wrote about the hermit-preachers.¹⁴⁶ Here, Benedict was envisaged as inspiration for Vitalis' piety and poverty in conjunction with the biblical verse from Matthew, and thus the model of St Antony. The hermit-preacher's mode of life was certainly given plenty of past precedent: eremitic, apostolic, and monastic.

For Robert of Arbrissel, however, the link to St Antony was not so clear in his *vita*, nor were there any firm links between apostolicism and poverty in terms of eremitism. Baudri of Dol saw Robert's renunciation of the world as influenced by his desire for solitude, and said that he stayed in the forest rejecting the society of men.¹⁴⁷ This of course was a common feature of the eremitic life but Baudri did not liken Robert to Antony nor, for that matter, to any other eremitic figure. The Bishop of Dol did, it must be admitted, describe Robert's departure from his position as archpriest to bishop Sylvester of Rennes prior to his conversion moment as inspired by Matthew 10:23, but the passage triggered Robert's wandering, not specifically his complete rejection of the world that came after.¹⁴⁸ If anything, Robert's itinerancy was conceived as apostolic not his solitude, though one could argue that these went hand in hand.

On the other hand, in one of the only texts we have from a hermit-preacher's own pen, Robert of Arbrissel's letter of 1109 to the Countess Ermengarde, Robert compared renouncing the world with being naked to following the naked Christ on the cross.¹⁴⁹ Even though Robert urged the Countess to deny her desire to leave the world, there is little doubt that he associated renunciation with following Christ, like the apostles. He was not the only hermit-preacher to speak in these terms. Norbert of Xanten for instance, as Theodore James Antry and Carol Neel have noted, was fond of characterising himself as *nudus nudum Christum sequens*.¹⁵⁰ The formula was used so frequently that Giles Constable has suggested that the author of the *Actus Pontificum* used it unwittingly when he described Henry of Lausanne as leading women to live *nudus nudam*.¹⁵¹ That this phrase was employed when describing heretics was remarkable and suggests that this normative formula was pervasive in framing not only orthodoxy but also heterodoxy. Nonetheless, the hermit-preachers' own designation as *nudus nudum Christum sequens* displays a divergence between how the hermit-preacher personally expressed renouncing the world and how the community

¹⁴⁶ Gregory the Great, 'De vita et miraculis venerabilis benedicti abbatis', in Adalbert de Vogüé (ed.), *Dialogues*, 3 vols, SC 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978-80), vol. 2, p. 126.

¹⁴⁷ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 2.11, col. 1049C.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 1.10, col. 1049A.

¹⁴⁹ Robert of Arbrissel, 'Sermo', p. 227. *Nudus nudum Christum sequi* was a common formula in the twelfth century, originating from the asceticism of St Jerome. For a survey of the instances where this formula was used see... Giles Constable, 'Nudus Nudum Christum Sequi and Parallel Formulas in the Twelfth Century, A Supplementary Dossier', in F. Forrester Church and Timothy George (eds), *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Leiden, 1979), pp. 83-91.

¹⁵⁰ Antry and Neel, *Norbert*, p. 34.

¹⁵¹ Constable, 'Nudus Nudum', p. 90; *AP*, p. 411.

understood this renunciation. It is a poignant reminder of what we lack due to the absence of documents written by these men.

In sum, the profound but complex relationship between poverty and eremitism meant that being characterised as poor did not necessarily make the hermit-preachers like the apostles. These men were placed within a Christian framework where certain sacred writings were vital to explain and situate their perceived actions, but there were not always specific links to the apostles or Gospels. Instead, what we find is more akin to traditional themes and paradigms of eremitism. Medieval contemporaries could employ John the Baptist as a model just as easily as the apostles. But through these traditional motifs of eremitic withdrawal, there were hints at apostolicity, primarily mediated through the figure of the desert father St Antony. There was a Gospel-centric way of envisaging poverty and eremitism because of the relationship between the renunciation of the world, St Antony, and specific Gospel verses. In this way, the hermit-preachers' poverty, particularly that of Bernard of Tiron and Vitalis of Savigny, was imbued with a sense of apostolicity.

Before we move to the second aspect of poverty to be explored here, we must note that this renunciation of the world was not framed in such terms for those hermit-preachers labelled heretical. In fact, Bernard of Clairvaux expressed Henry of Lausanne's life as its antithesis:

The man is an apostate who, having forsaken the religious habit (for he used to be a monk), has returned to the filthiness of the flesh and the world, just as a dog to its vomit [Prov 26:11]...When he began to beg, he sold the Gospel (for he was learnt). Pulling to pieces the word of God for money, he proclaimed the Gospel so that he could eat.¹⁵²

For Bernard, Henry's apostasy rested upon an inversion of the renunciation of those hermit-preachers considered within the boundaries of orthodoxy. Other hermit-preachers renounced the world, Henry returned to it; others gave everything they had to the poor, Henry sold the Gospel. Fraudulently, he profited from it. The contravention of correct spiritual behaviour was thus framed as an inversion of the (holy) eremitic norms.

Yet eremitism was not the only area with regard to poverty in which following the Gospel was emphasised. I now turn to another aspect of the hermit-preachers' lives that had apostolic overtones: giving to the poor.

¹⁵² 'Homo apostata est: qui relicto religionis habitu (nam monachus exstitit) ad spurcitas carnis et saeculi, tanquam canis ad suum vomitum...Cumque mendicare coepisset, posuit in sumptu Evangelium (nam litteratus erat), et venale distrahens verbum Dei, evangelizabat ut manducaret', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, cols. 435B–C.

Caring for the Poor and Needy

When the hermit-preachers renounced the world they sold all of their material possessions, as we have seen. But their connection to poverty was broader and less individualistic than this since these men were also said to have loved the poor. The Savigniac community, for instance, said in the encyclical letter to Vitalis of Savigny's mortuary roll that he was frugal himself but generous with the needy (*egentibus*).¹⁵³ In what followed, the brothers of Savigny detailed the hermit-preacher's care for the poor saying that in seeking not what was his own but that of Christ [Phil 2:21], he provided nourishment and clothing for them, and also offered hospitality to the wandering and homes for lepers.¹⁵⁴ In order to follow Christ (to be like the apostles) Vitalis gave generously to the poor though this was, it must be said, only one of his many virtuous traits. Turning one's heart towards God was thus not just about personal abandonment of the world but also entailed *caritas* and deep love for others.¹⁵⁵ While Ernest McDonnell classified this as a core characteristic of the *vita apostolica*, with which I do not agree in light of my above argument, I cannot deny that this love for others was certainly viewed as apostolic.¹⁵⁶

Yet this love for the poor was often seen in terms of 'collective conduct', the *vita communis* one might say, which has not been appreciated for its ramifications on visions of apostolicity. When he had gathered a crowd of those renouncing their sins, Baudri of Dol said that Robert of Arbrissel wanted to call them *pauperes Christi*.¹⁵⁷ This was, as some scholars have noted, solidarity with the poor and disadvantaged of society.¹⁵⁸ To me though, what is more important here is the collectivity of the term. Later in the *vita*, Baudri wrote that it was clear that Robert of Arbrissel imitated the one who said *the spirit of the Lord is upon me, he sent me to proclaim [the Gospel] to the poor* [Isa 61:1, Lk 4:18]. 'In fact', he continued, 'Robert proclaimed (the Gospel) to the poor, called the poor, collected the poor.'¹⁵⁹ By such an action, Robert thus gathered a community and this community were thought of in terms of their poverty and

¹⁵³ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.13, p. 381.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, bk. 2.14, p. 382.

¹⁵⁵ For explorations of *caritas* in the high Middle Ages see Jörg Sonntag, 'On the Way to Heaven: Rituals of Caritas in High Medieval Monasteries', in Gert Melville (ed.), *Aspects of Charity: concern for one's neighbour in medieval vita religiosa* (Berlin and London, 2011), pp. 29–54. There is a wealth of literature available on the concept of *caritas* within Cistercian monasticism, but see especially Martha G. Newman, *The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098–1180* (Stanford, 1996). Also illuminating is Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The Cistercian Conception of Community: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality', *The Harvard Theological Review* 68:3/4 (1975), pp. 273–86.

¹⁵⁶ McDonnell, 'Diversity or Dissent', p. 15.

¹⁵⁷ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 3.19, col. 1053B.

¹⁵⁸ Kempf, 'Vita Evangelica', p. 455; Burkhard, *Apostolicity*, p. 69.

¹⁵⁹ 'Nonne Robertus evidenter illius imitator claruit, qui dixit: *Spiritus Domini super me, evangelizare pauperibus misit me? Iste revera pauperibus evangelizavit, pauperes vocavit, pauperes collegit*', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 4.23, col. 1055C.

identification with their founder. It was, consequently, not only Robert who was thought of in this way but also his followers.

In the *Vita Bernardi*, the community even spoke of this care for the poor in institutionalised terms. Here, Geoffrey Grossus characterised poverty as one type of martyrdom and noted that Bernard of Tiron's customs were preserved by him and his brethren:

...there are three types of bloodless martyrdom: chastity in youth, abstinence in abundance, bountifulness in poverty. Already [Bernard] had triumphed over two in Aquitaine, and he was a daily martyr in Francia in order that he might obtain the hand of the third. However much he was afflicted by excessive poverty, he still gave that which he was able to the poor and to those who turned up, and deprived himself and his followers. This custom instituted at that time is still observed in our monastery today.¹⁶⁰

While the poverty (and hence apostolicity) of the hermit-preachers was portrayed as institutionalised here by those who followed Bernard, this is quite different from the traditional synonymy between the monastic community and the apostolate as discussed in section one. Rather than coming from any association with Acts of the Apostles, the poverty of the community came from the founder of the monastery Bernard, whose poverty in turn was motivated by the Gospel. This was a stark shift in how the poverty of the monastic community was conceived.

In some ways, then, the links between poverty and apostolicism were far more complex and fragile than those between preaching and apostolicism. With preaching, the communities seem to have been able to infuse this action with notions of apostolicity fairly easily and far more decisively. In comparison, there were many other models used for poverty which weakens any solid and indisputable links to apostolicity. Nonetheless poverty, in some senses, was clearly thought of as Gospel-inspired. Mediated through St Antony, the renunciation of the world was implicitly framed by following the Gospel. Caring for the poor too was thought of in terms of imitating the Gospel, though this became collective through the creation of communities rather than something that was an individual characteristic of the hermit-preachers. It is clear that while the Gospel had superseded the Acts of the Apostles as a biblical framework for the conceptualisation of poverty, this had yet to be articulated decisively. What is

¹⁶⁰ '...tria sint sine sanguinis effusione martyrii genera, castitas scilicet in juventute, abstinencia in abundantibus, largitas in paupertate; quia jam de duobus in Aquitania triumphaverat, ut de tertio quoque palmam obtineret, in Francia quotidie martyr erat. Quia quamvis nimia paupertate afflictus, quae habere poterat sibi suisque subtrahens, pauperibus et adventantibus erogabat. Hinc et consuetudo ab illo data et instituta usque hodie in monasterio nostro retinetur', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 11.92, col. 1422B.

more, there were still many other non-apostolic figures who were said to have shaped the poverty of the hermit-preachers.

What Remains of the *Vita Apostolica*?

Ultimately, the hermit-preachers were created as textual figures imbued with notions of apostolicity. From their preaching to their poverty, aspects of their lives were framed and explained by Gospel verses, in line with the more individualistic newer twelfth-century conceptualisation of the *vita apostolica*. This was far from the community understanding of the apostolate as written in the Acts of the Apostles. Our authors used particular verses and stories from the bible to emphasise this. In preaching, expressions such as 'scattering the word of God' or the idea of 'sowing' the word alluded to the parable of the sower. The elegant term *seminiverbius* likened two particular hermit-preachers, Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny, to Paul. For Vitalis this association was to prove definitive and this is indicative of the fact that each hermit-preacher was characterised with slightly different emphases by their communities. While for Savigny, for example, this was Vitalis' imitation of Paul, for Tiron it was Bernard's imitation of St Antony. As such, though the *vita apostolica* implies homogeneity, with closer examination we can see that there were striking differences between the hermit-preachers and how notions of apostolicity were forged in text. That this was somewhat dependent upon their monasteries underlines the community mechanisms behind the creation of the narratives.

This was, remarkably, no different for Henry of Lausanne or Peter of Bruys, even if these two could not be viewed as legitimately imitating the apostles in any shape or form. Instead, their actions were seen as inverting, twisting and subverting the very same notions of apostolicity that were applied to those who were celebrated. This is indicative of a common framework that those at the time used to discuss what looked like – but was not necessarily – expressions of apostolicism. In every way, heresy stood in stark contrast to orthodox practices: heretical preaching sowed discord, spread seeds of evil, and Henry of Lausanne returned to the world to sell the Gospel instead of renouncing his possessions and following Christ. But there was more to the matter than simple juxtaposition of Henry of Lausanne's activities against someone like Vitalis of Savigny, and here I would emphasise the concept of mimicry of which I spoke in the introduction to this thesis, and that has resurfaced in places throughout this chapter. Many of the examples above clearly presented Henry as an impersonator, presenting only a façade of orthodoxy. In this way, we cannot disregard the duplicitous nature of Henry's image which informed the very creation of these juxtapositions between heresy and orthodoxy.

But all this does not mean that it should be stated unreservedly that these men were seen as living the *vita apostolica*, since both the phrase and an explicit conceptualisation of this was decidedly absent from the narrative works that memorialised them. Hagiographies in particular were less likely to use terms associated with apostolicity than other contemporary documents. It was Bishop Peter of Poitiers who called Robert a *vir apostolicus*, not Baudri of Dol or Andrew of Fontevraud. Studying, as such, the semantics of the issue may seem like a superficial approach towards such a complicated issue. One could argue that it is as much about spiritual meaning, inference and internalisation as about expressing the *vita apostolica* with clear and consistent language. Perhaps knowing the bible intimately, monks might have understood the hermit-preachers as imitators of the apostles without needing clarification. In semantic terms, there might have been the signified (an image) without the signifier (a word). But words have meaning and they are powerful things, particularly words that expressed one of the most powerful Christian ideals. To live the *vita apostolica* was, in essence, to live a life sanctioned by Christ himself. The force of the phrase or defined idea cannot be overestimated and this is why it became such a point of contention between monks and canons during the twelfth century. These two religious groups argued over their very legitimacy and authority using explicit language and conceptualisations. For the hermit-preachers then, whose creators did no such thing with their own words, we cannot impose this term nor overlook its absence. What is more, the communities knew the documents they were constructing would be saved for posterity by their brothers – which indeed, they were – so the monks were constituting images of the men in text they assumed would be transmitted. In this, a clear vision of the *vita apostolica* was omitted.

Nothing, therefore, remains of the *vita apostolica* as a homogenous, reifying, classificatory term, not for the hermit-preachers of twelfth-century northern France in any case. No longer should we apply this term so readily and so carelessly to these men. Yet there were apostolic characteristics bestowed upon these men, this we cannot deny, because some of their actions were framed by the Gospel. In this manner it would be better, I think, to talk of these men as being imbued with notions of apostolicity and allow for the possibility that the *vita apostolica* may have never been defined with any finality and remained a site of creative tension and uncertainty. The hermit-preachers were certainly not symptomatic of the transformation of the 'vita apostolica'. Recognising this does not just influence studies of the hermit-preachers because, as I stated in the introduction to this chapter, positing that these men lived the *vita apostolica* puts them within a larger trajectory of religious and church history, one which ended with the mendicants and the institutionalisation of these forms of religious life. The distortions that the categorisation of the *vita apostolica* causes, therefore, reverberate across many areas of scholarship. In light of this, we must start, in future research, to question what remains of this grand narrative.

Traditionally, however, the *vita apostolica* was said to have been a 'failed experiment', one that ended in the cloister. This is the last stage of the overarching linear narrative from reform to foundation, as explained in the introduction to this work. As we have confronted, and deconstructed, both reform and the ideas of the *vita apostolica*, therefore, we shall now move to the supposed last stage in this process, that of foundation.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Individual and the Institution

In that time there were four hermits in Aquitaine, of whom one, namely Saint Vitalis, founded the abbey of Savigny in Normandy, another the most excellent house for nuns, Fontevraud, in Anjou, the third a house in Brittany which is called Saint-Sulpice, and the fourth the abbey of Tiron in the diocese of Chartres, under the counts of the Perche.¹

– Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Chronica*, entry for the year 1100

When twelfth- and thirteenth-century historians wrote of the hermit-preachers they always included, as illustrated above by the work of Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, the institutions that these men had founded.² The only exception, it seems, was the chronicle of Saint-Maixent, whose author neglected to cite Vitalis of Savigny's namesake foundation.³ Except for this chronicle, however, the coupling of hermit-preachers and their foundations seemed to be fairly tenacious, and contemporaries always discussed these men with reference to particular houses that they had established. Why? One reason could be that these authors were borrowing references from each other, and thus we have received the perception of an inevitable link between an individual and an institution from a relationship between texts and their authors.⁴ But this connection must have originated from somewhere and, to my mind, it is intrinsically related to the fact that the men were buried in these foundations. Subsequent miracles around the bodies then created cults which, in turn, cemented the relationships between the hermit-preachers and their monasteries, as they appeared to be divinely sanctioned.⁵ In this way, the tie between individual and institution was undoubtedly related to the fact that contemporary historians wrote many years after the hermit-preachers' deaths, during which time this relationship became well established. It would have been

¹ 'Erant hoc tempore in Aquitania quatuor heremite, quorum unus, videlicet sanctus Vitalis, fundavit abbatiam de Savigneio in Normannia, alter domum monialium excellentissimam Fontis Ebraldi in Andegavia, tertius domum que dicitur sancti Sulpitii in Britannia, quartus abbatiam de Tyron Carnotensis dyocesis sub comitibus de Pertico', Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, 'Chronica Alberici', p. 103.

² Cf. Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 2, pp. 188–9, William of Newburgh, *History*, bk. 1.15, p. 76; Robert of Auxerre, 'Chronicon', p. 229.

³ *Chronique de Saint-Maixent* ed. Jean Verdon (Paris, 1979), p. 176.

⁴ Dalarun, *Les deux vies*, pp. 634–5.

⁵ For the cults of the hermit-preachers, see chapter one of this thesis, pp. 42–3, and 46–54.

difficult, one imagines, envisaging a hermit-preacher without attachment to his foundation and burial place.

Of course, this was little different for those communities who produced the *vitae* of the hermit-preachers. These texts were also written retrospectively and when the communities already had an end point in mind: their own foundation, and the burial of the hermit-preacher in that foundation. Accordingly, one might argue that these documents were necessarily teleological, because they were, in part, foundation narratives.⁶ The *vitae* explained the (spiritual) origins of a specific community, established by the hermit-preacher and his relationship to that community.⁷ Indeed, this phenomenon could be seen as representative of what one historian has called the 'whiggish character' of hagiography.⁸

To my knowledge, however, no modern historian has explored how the communities who wrote about the hermit-preachers described the attachment of these men to those institutions that they founded, nor sought to understand the mechanisms by which this was imagined within hagiographic writing. This is problematic, because currently we assume that this connection was a given and not a constructed phenomenon. One might also think that each community not only felt equally attached to the hermit-preacher as their founder, but also that they expressed this in similar ways. This was not the case. In fact, there was no set narrative for foundation. Some communities phrased the foundation as climactic, whereas other texts barely mentioned it. Occasionally, the hermit-preachers' role in the foundation was even subordinated to that of someone else, despite being called 'founder' in the same document. Furthermore, in some cases, there was no agreement over the identity of the institution's founder, with different texts naming different individuals. Viewed in this light, one will see that there was a clear malleability behind the concept of 'the founder'. This important observation has not been appreciated fully in modern scholarship. What is more, the hermit-preachers' connection to their foundations was sometimes articulated most strongly in deathbed and funeral scenes, perhaps even more so than in the narrative of the actual foundation. This suggests that there were certain events that operated effectively as hagiographic tropes in which our communities could emphasise their founders' loyalty to them and his connection to the community. What I aim to accomplish in this chapter then is to destabilise the firm historiographical connection (both medieval and modern) between individual and

⁶ I use the term 'narrative' here deliberately, to differentiate that studied here from what Amy Remensnyder has classified as foundation 'legends' since the hermit-preachers were the actual founders of these monasteries. Nevertheless, in terms of textual creation both narratives and legends of foundation can be seen as part of what Remensnyder classified as 'imaginative memory'. See Remensnyder, *Remembering*, esp. pp. 1–15.

⁷ This is distinct from secular foundations, whose importance to the monastery was also subject to textual construction, see Karen Stöber, 'Self-Representations of Medieval Religious Communities in Their Writing of History', in Anne Müller and Karen Stöber (eds), *Self-Representation of Medieval Religious Communities: The British Isles in Context* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 369–84.

⁸ Head, 'Saints', p. 227. See also a similar comment in Foulon, 'Les ermites', p. 85.

institution. In turn, this questions Weber's paradigm which places institutionalisation as the inevitable end point for charismatic individuals. Here, then, we shall move beyond the conventional narratives of foundation, death, and burial, showing how these aspects of the narratives about the hermit-preachers were created in different ways. In doing so, I am contributing to an ongoing scholarly debate that challenges the notion of the founder, but whose conclusions will not come to full fruition for a few years.

Before we consider the connection between individual and institution however, it must be noted that the heretical hermit-preachers are, of course, less immediately helpful to the current exploration. Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys did not have foundations in any monastic sense, and their deaths were not treated with any reverence. As far as we know, Henry of Lausanne's death was not even recorded. Nonetheless, we should not ignore them, as the question of the individual and institution was still pertinent here, since our authors and the ecclesiastical community accentuated the *lack* of a connection to an institution, rather than affirming a relationship between individual and place. Consequently, I shall start and end this chapter with an examination of Henry and Peter. With this in mind, let us start with the foundations of the hermit-preachers, and a discussion of the problem of itinerancy and community.

The Founded and the Founder(s)

Heresy, Itinerancy and 'Community'

We cannot, as I say, speak of the 'foundations' of heretics. Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys did not found monasteries, and we do not find references to any sort of 'foundation' in the narratives written about them.⁹ There was no defining moment in which they gathered their followers in one place: they were tethered nowhere. We only call Henry 'of Lausanne', as Monique Zerner has noted, because it appeared first on a list of places where Henry had preached and was then forced to leave.¹⁰ Similarly, it seems to me that we sometimes call the preacher Henry *of Le Mans* because of the existence of the *Actus Pontificum*, which irrevocably tied the story of Henry's life to the city of the same name. The production of texts in certain places tied the hermit-preacher to that place. Hence modern scholarship has connected Henry to places with which he probably had no such attachment.

Yet despite the addition of the toponym 'Lausanne' to Henry, the monk-turned-heretic was still itinerant and this itinerancy was seen as problematic, to be condemned. Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, declared that when Henry gave up his monastic vows and returned to the world, he was made a gyrovague and a fugitive on the

⁹ Also noted by Moore, 'Heretical Attitudes', p. 88.

¹⁰ Zerner, 'Contra Hereticos', p. 124; Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, col. 435C.

earth.¹¹ This was obviously a reference to St Benedict's condemnation of such practices in his Rule, where he had said that gyrovagues lived the 'most wretched way of life' (*miserrima conversatione*).¹² Aligned with the father of Benedictinism, Bernard showed his disdain for those who left the monastery. This is interesting, considering that we saw in chapter one that Bernard spent much of his own life away from the monastery, and that he struggled to reconcile this with his views of the stability of the coenobium. Here then, Bernard was projecting the views that he espoused in other texts: stability of life was paramount. The situation was little different for Peter of Bruys, and when Peter the Venerable spoke about the preacher at the beginning of the *Contra Petrobrusianos*, he highlighted the instability and vagrancy of heresy. First, Peter the Venerable said, it was driven out of *Septimania*, in modern southern France, from where it had moved to Gascony, in south-west France. Heresy had no fixed place or abode, it corrupted whomever it could, it administered its deadly poison here and there.¹³ By its nature and insidiousness, it was constantly on the move. This lack of stability, therefore, lack of 'foundation', was another aspect for which these two men were admonished by those in positions of ecclesiastical authority.

In light of this, it is important to note that those hermit-preachers who were celebrated were not criticised for their own itinerancy, and that they were not perceived as gyrovagues, despite clear contemporary criticism of their way of life.¹⁴ Any such criticism was unlikely to come from hagiographies of course, given that the function of the works was to praise their subject. Yet even Robert of Arbrissel, whose pre- and even post- Fontevraud life was the subject of much disapproval, did not suffer from complaints about his peripatetic nature, even though his followers did.¹⁵ One might claim that a fundamental difference was that Robert's itinerancy, alongside the other acclaimed hermit-preachers, was endorsed (or perhaps controlled) by the ecclesiastical hierarchy through his preaching licence, as discussed in the previous chapter. But when Henry of Lausanne first entered Le Mans, he too was given permission to preach by the bishop, Hildebert, as we have seen. Nevertheless, one must not forget that the above comments criticising Henry's itinerancy came long after his official condemnation, and this is suggestive of the powerful influence that the label of heresy had upon the depiction of an individual. Bernard of Clairvaux's attitude was, I would argue, markedly coloured by this, as he sought to present *every* aspect of the hermit-preacher as unacceptable. I am not suggesting here that Henry and Peter were conceived of as heretics just because of their itinerancy, this certainly was not the case. But this was yet another way in which their lives were constructed in conscious juxtaposition with permissible spiritual expression, and perhaps another way in which heretics were viewed as having a façade of orthodoxy.

¹¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', sec. 3, cols. 435B–C.

¹² *RB*, ed. de Vogüé and Neufville, chap. 1.12, p. 440.

¹³ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Praefatio, p. 3.

¹⁴ Cf. Leclercq, 'Payen Bolotin', pp. 53–4.

¹⁵ See Marbode of Rennes, 'Letter', sec. 28, p. 188.

Though itinerant, it is evident that both Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys attracted people with their words and that they had groups, or followers, around them. As we saw in chapter two, there were no qualms about asserting that Henry had gained a reputation even if this was thought to be founded only upon rumour and opinion, rather than by any proven worth. To this end, Bernard of Clairvaux proclaimed the following in his letter to Count Alphonsus of Saint-Gilles: ‘Oh anguish! [Henry] has been heard by so many, and he has so many people who believe in him.’¹⁶ The author of the *Actus Pontificum* concurred that people wanted to be fellows and partakers in Henry’s heresy.¹⁷ The hermit-preacher was, therefore, evidently popular with those to whom he preached. Furthermore, later in the *Actus Pontificum*, in the letter inserted from the clergy to Henry, the clerics stated that they forbade Henry and his ‘companions’ to preach in the diocese of Le Mans, and that if he continued to do so, they would excommunicate him, his accomplices, supporters and assistants.¹⁸ This was a powerful statement from the ecclesiastical hierarchy inserted into the history, an affirmation of the perceived power of excommunication. But it also shows that Henry was seen to have had a fairly sizeable group of followers. Similarly, Peter the Venerable also spoke of ‘pits’ (*foveas*) of heresy created by Peter of Bruys, surely making an analogy between groups of heretics and the pits of Hell.¹⁹ Hence there was a sense that these two men had some semblance of a community around them though this was never described as such. This brings us to a related point about the nomenclature of community itself.

In all of these references, the nouns *congregatio* or *communitas* were never used. In the case of the hermit-preachers these terms were strictly reserved for specific orthodox religious communities. It is, therefore, also worth acknowledging here that although we could call the collection of hermits in the forest of Craon a ‘community’ with good reason I believe – it was certainly presented as being organised with some social conventions of a community – it was still not thought of as a *communitas*.²⁰ Instead, it was believed that after living in the forest, the hermit-preachers were *subsequently* founders of many and great communities (*congregationum*), as expressed by Geoffrey Grossus.²¹ By juxtaposing eremitic organisation with the coenobitic community, Geoffrey illustrated that *communitas* and *congregatio* were very specific designations. If these nouns could not be applied to the forest hermit ‘community’ it is hardly surprising that they were not employed when discussing the followers of the heretics Henry and Peter. So while Henry and Peter were seen as having a group of

¹⁶ ‘Proh dolor! auditur tamen a pluribus; et populum qui sibi credat, habet’, Bernard of Clairvaux, ‘Ep. 241’, sec. 3, col. 434C.

¹⁷ *AP*, p. 408.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁹ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Praefatio, p. 3. Cf. Isaiah 24:17.

²⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, for example, wrote of the hermits convening a ‘council’ when Bernard of Tiron arrived in the forest, essentially to induct their new member. See Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 3.21, cols. 1381B–C.

²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 3.20, col. 1381A.

followers, this was not conceived – and could never be written – in the same way as those (monastic) communities founded by Robert of Arbrissel or Bernard of Tiron for example. They were neither authorised nor stable, certainly not comparable to monastic congregations, and an unacceptable form of a religious community. Again, the two heretics were conceived as the antithesis of orthodoxy and this was expressed using, or rather declining to use, specific linguistic markers.

In light of these precarious associations between Henry of Lausanne, Peter of Bruys, and their followers, it is striking that those hermit-preachers who were within the bounds of orthodoxy were firmly tied to the communities that they had founded. It was obviously much more important for the memory of these men to be institutionalised than it was for the fleeting phenomena of heresy. Nonetheless, we must employ some caution here, since even if their *vitae* were produced within the monastic communities that they had founded, the connection between this community and individual was more nuanced than has previously been assumed. Let us turn to this now.

The Place of Foundation within the Narratives

There is no denying that some of the narratives written about the hermit-preachers were what we might call teleological, in that they envisaged the monastic foundation as the climax and 'end point' of the hermit-preachers' lives. For instance, in what Bernard Beck believes to be a later interpolation (due to its orthography and the inclusion of the affiliation of Savigny to Clairvaux in 1147) a scribe, presumably a Tironensian monk, described the geographical location of each of the hermit-preachers' foundations in the *Vita Bernardi* with a certain sense of predestination:

While Bernard was building his monastery in *Francia*, Robert of Arbrissel had constructed his in Aquitaine, Fontevraud, Ralph of La Futaye in Brittany, Vitalis of Mortain was fashioning his in Normandy, Savigny in the diocese of Avranches, which after that time he submitted to Lord Bernard [of Clairvaux] with the dependent monasteries. The heavenly judge wished them to stay far from each other and separated in different regions; because each one of them had constructed so many and such great monasteries that one region could not hold them at all, one province would not be sufficient at all for the communities united by them.²²

²² 'Dum igitur Bernardus monasterium suum aedificaret in Francia, Robertus Abreselensis suum construxerat in Aquitania, nempe Fontis Ebraldi, Radulphus Fusteiensis in Britannia, Vitalis vero de Mauritonio suum fabricabat in Northmannia, nempe Savinejum in dioecesi Abrincensi, quod postea domno Bernardo cessit cum monasteriis inde pendentibus. Quos supernus arbiter longe a se positos, et in diversis regionibus separatos manere voluit; quia tot et tanta unusquisque illorum monasteria construxit, ut una eos regio minime caperet, una provincia congregationibus ab illis adunatis minime sufficeret', *Ibid.*, chap. 9.82, col. 1416B; Beck, *Saint Bernard de Tiron*, p. 48.

Looking back, the writer obviously envisaged the monastic topography to have been decided by God; the place in which each of the hermit-preachers founded a monastery was preordained. Their specific placing was necessary because their great spirituality, given by God, could not possibly be contained in one place.

This sense of predestination presented above was also central to the portrayal of Bernard of Tiron elsewhere within the *Vita Bernardi*. For instance, Geoffrey Grossus asserted the idea that Tiron was Bernard's spiritual home when he discussed the monastery's physical foundation. 'When Bernard had placed the home of his monastery', our author declared, 'no trick could expel him from there, no adversity caused by stormy weather could cast him aside, because he had clung to Christ, the firm solidity of immovable stability.'²³ There is much we can glean from this short quotation. First, Geoffrey Grossus' phrasing was clever and deliberate. The 'trick' to which Geoffrey referred came several chapters earlier in the text, when monks of Saint-Denis had claimed that they were entitled to the tithes and burial fees of the land where Bernard had originally constructed Tiron in 1107, which forced Bernard to abandon his efforts and to seek another site.²⁴ Secondly, Geoffrey played on the traditional monastic idea of the monastery as port in the storm. If there was trouble (stormy weather) in the world, Bernard would be safe in the haven of the monastery. Thirdly, and most significantly, by depicting Bernard as immovable, Geoffrey made Tiron the only place where Bernard would settle. This immovability was of course metaphorical. Andrew of Fontevraud wrote of Bernard's expedition to Blois alongside Robert of Arbrissel to visit the imprisoned Count William II of Nevers in 1116, well after the establishment of Tiron.²⁵ But whether Bernard physically left his foundation is hardly the point, since he was spiritually tied to it. For Tiron as a community it was symbolic that Bernard was said to have abandoned his position everywhere else but here: he was presented as having spent his whole life fleeing the responsibility of abbacy only to embrace it at Tiron.

Viewed in this light, we could see the imagined stages of Bernard of Tiron's life as in contrast to the Benedictine Rule, in which Benedict envisaged the monastery as preparation for the desert, not vice versa.²⁶ And interestingly, this was not the only text which followed this schema. The presentation of Gerald of Sales' adoption of the canonical habit at Saint-Avit is a particularly interesting case because of his age – an issue not present in other narratives – and which attached the idea of progression to the idea of maturity. When he was young, the author of the *vita* tells us, Gerald went to

²³ '...postquam coenobii sui sedem locaverat...nulla eum inde expulit calumnia, nulla potuit illinc dimovere procellosae tempestatis adversitas; quia Christo inhaeserat, qui est immobilis stabilitatis firma soliditas', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 9.82, col. 1416B–C.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 9.77, col. 1412C. The first site was Tiron-Brunelles, the second Tiron-Gardais, settled in either 1113 or 1114.

²⁵ For this episode see Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 17, pp. 220–4.

²⁶ *RB*, ed. de Vogüé and Neufville, chap. 1, pp. 436–8. Also noted by Henriët, *La parole*, p. 244.

Robert of Arbrissel so that he could be educated in the religious life.²⁷ Robert urged Gerald to take up the habit of a canon and to follow a more lax religious way of life for the time being, and told Gerald that only when he grew up might he press on to the farthest desert.²⁸ Here Gerald lived for a long time, among the canons of Saint-Avit, until he reached a 'manly age'. He left to produce a more bountiful harvest, and from a poor canon became a poorer hermit.²⁹ Gerald's time as a canon was thus envisaged as preparation, or even a period of gestation, before he became a hermit, which in turn led him to preach, gather followers and found a monastery.

This observation is important given the fact that many of these hagiographies were written at a time in which the primacy and legitimacy of different types of religious life were being debated. We have already seen how passionate the debate was over whether canons or monks lived the true 'apostolic' life. The issue of whether the coenobium or desert was spiritually superior, and to which one naturally progressed, was little different. Peter Damian was vociferous in this debate, for example, arguing in his letters that one should progress from monastery to hermitage, as this was in accordance with the Benedictine rule: the monastery, he declared, must be transitional.³⁰ Yet in contrast to this view, it was the desert life that was portrayed as transitional for Bernard of Tiron – as shown above – and the monastery was no liminal space but the end point of his religious career. If there was, then, an 'eremitic revival' during the twelfth century then this needs further detailed exploration to be understood in light of the progression from individual to institutional spirituality that could be portrayed within the texts studied here.³¹

Nevertheless I must be clear: these were not envisaged as untested, untried, and inexperienced men entering the (figurative) desert. All had ecclesiastical backgrounds: Bernard of Tiron had been prior at Saint-Savin before becoming, somewhat unwillingly according to his *vita*, abbot at Saint-Cyprien, Vitalis of Savigny was chaplain to the count of Mortain, Robert of Arbrissel served Bishop Sylvester of Rennes, and Gerald of Sales was a canon at Saint-Avit as we just saw.³² All of this occurred before the hermit-preachers embarked upon the path of eremitism. Yet the transition from hermit to

²⁷ Lenglet has contested the identity of Gerald's teacher as Robert of Arbrissel because Robert could not have been – as he was called by the hagiographer – an old man (*senex*) at this time, and suggested the author had conflated Robert of Arbrissel with another hermit of the same name. See Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', pp. 19–20. For my own analysis of the reference to Robert of Arbrissel in the text see below, p. 170.

²⁸ VGS, chap. 1.4, p. 255.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 1.6, p. 255.

³⁰ Peter Damian, *Die Briefe*, vol. 4, letter 152, pp. 8–9.

³¹ For this eremitic revival see, by way of example, Leyser, *Hermits*; Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. 22–31; Becquet, 'L'érémisme', pp. 182–211; Niderst and Raison, 'Le mouvement érémitique', pp. 1–46; Derek Baker, "'The Whole World a Hermitage": Ascetic Renewal and the Crisis of Western Monasticism', in Marc A. Meyer (ed.), *Medieval Church and Society: Studies for Denis Bethell* (London, 1993), pp. 207–23

³² Cf. Baker, 'Renewal', pp. 207–23, who has used this point to argue that one can debate the 'newness', or innovative character, of these figures.

founder was presented as part of the literary chronology of their lives. This chronology was also present in other sources and was a way in which to frame the path of these individuals' lives. In a passage very reminiscent of the *Vita Bernardi*, for example, the twelfth-century chronicler Robert of Auxerre said of Robert, Bernard, Vitalis and Raoul de La Futaye: 'First they lived in the desert for the love of poverty and abstinence, thereafter each one became a founder and father of many monasteries.'³³ To describe the hermit-preachers' lives in this way has indeed become standard, and Jacques Dalarun put it neatly: 'eremitism, preaching, foundation: there is an unavoidable process.'³⁴ Here then was a definite sense of progress from desert to coenobium, from the solitary to the communal, which inherently privileged the communal over the solitary even though Benedict saw the eremitic life as spiritually superior.

Yet not every *vita* imagined the foundation as the end point on a linear progression from hermit to founder, itinerancy to stability. In hagiographic narratives, there was an undeniable difference in focus and emphasis on foundation in each of the narratives and, correspondingly, how our authors portrayed the hermit-preachers' attachment to that foundation. This was distinctly visible in two texts, the *Vita Roberti* by Baudri of Dol and the *Vita Vitalis* by Stephen of Fougères, though for two different reasons.

In the *Vita Roberti*, Baudri of Dol presented the foundation of Fontevraud in 1101 as precipitated by a need to allay certain fears about Robert of Arbrissel and his followers: 'Lest anything be done ill-advisedly', the Bishop said, 'since the women ought to live with the men, [Robert] resolved to seek somewhere they could live together without the concern of scandal...'³⁵ Here was the apparent reasoning behind Fontevraud's foundation. No sense of inevitability or desire for a foundation permeated this narrative. According to Baudri, Robert established Fontevraud, in essence, because his hand was forced. Indeed, this has been recognised in historiography, with scholars commenting that Fontevraud was Robert's 'solution' to the criticism that he had faced by Marbode of Rennes three years previously.³⁶ For our present purposes, it is striking because Baudri gives the impression that the foundation of the house was not one of Robert's aspirations.

Furthermore, Baudri of Dol also framed Robert of Arbrissel's post-Fontevraud life as one in which he continued to fulfil the responsibility that had been entrusted to him by

³³ '...abstinentiae et paupertatis amore prius heremum incolentes, postea singuli plurium monasteriorum extitere fundatores et patres...', Robert of Auxerre, 'Chronicon', p. 229. Dalarun has noted the textual relationship between Geoffrey Grossus and Robert of Auxerre. See Dalarun, *Les deux vies*, pp. 634–5.

³⁴ 'Érémisme, prédication, fondation: il y a là un processus incontournable', Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, p. 180. See also Henriët, *La parole*, pp. 244–5.

³⁵ '...ne aliquid ageretur inconsulto, quoniam mulieres cum hominibus oportebat habitare, ubi possent sine scandalorum scrupulositate conversari et vivere, deliberavit perquirere...', Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 3.16, cols. 1051C–D.

³⁶ Jacqueline Smith, 'Robert of Arbrissel: *Procurator Mulierum*', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women*, SCH Subsidia 1 (Oxford, 1978), esp. pp. 180–4.

Urban II, when the Pope had granted Robert permission to preach. Robert could not have assisted the workmen in building the monastery at Fontevraud even if he wanted to, Baudri said, because he had to preach to many peoples, as commissioned by Urban II.³⁷ It was for this reason that Robert named a nun, Hersende, the first abbess of the monastery, so that he was able to travel free from distractions and responsibility towards the fledgling community. So whereas Geoffrey Grossus saw Bernard as *ending* his itinerancy with Tiron, Robert put in place an institutional hierarchy under which he could *continue* his.³⁸ One gets the sense from Baudri, through his presentation of Robert, that the hermit-preacher did not want to be tied down in life even if the community would tether his memory to Fontevraud in the production of his second *Life*, as we shall see below. Viewed in this light, the coupling between Robert and Fontevraud appears to be falsely imposed.

In comparison, the *Vita Vitalis* barely mentioned the foundation of Savigny (1112) which is striking compared to the intense focus on foundation found in some other sources. Stephen of Fougères dedicated only one chapter to Savigny herself, with scarce mention of the monastery elsewhere in the text.³⁹ Even here, the 'Savigny chapter' was more concerned with the manoeuvrings of the Fougères family (as it contained the apparent dispute between Lord Ralph of Fougères – the secular founder – and his youngest son Henry who was opposed to the foundation) rather than the monastery or the monks. The chapter does not even mention the monks.⁴⁰ It was the secular story of foundation here that took precedence, not the story of the monastery's spiritual beginnings and, remarkably, put the onus for foundation more on the Fougères family than on Vitalis himself, despite the fact that Vitalis was called 'founder' in the very same text.⁴¹ This is particularly odd, given that we know the information for this chapter probably came directly from the Savigniac monks themselves.⁴² As such, it appears that the brothers were more concerned with the role of their secular benefactors, side-lining Vitalis, their spiritual founder.

Interestingly this emphasis in the *Vita Vitalis* has, I believe, resulted in historiographical studies that focus far more on the Fougères' family role in the foundation, than on the hermit-preacher himself.⁴³ As such, the focus in the source has been reflected in the focus in modern scholarship. But what is more important to acknowledge is that Stephen of Fougères' text was not a teleological narrative, either in concept or in organisation of the text. Savigny did not seem to be envisaged, at least in the *Vita*

³⁷ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 4.21, col. 1054B.

³⁸ Cf. Venarde, 'Power', p. 225, who has also commented upon how Robert seemed to 'reverse the standard trajectory from rootlessness to permanence.'

³⁹ For other references to Savigny see Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 1.1, p. 359, bk. 2.14, p. 382.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, bk. 1.8, pp. 364–5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, bk. 1.1, p. 359.

⁴² This relates to the *quae autem subijcimus* clause discussed in chapter one of this work. See above, pp. 36–7.

⁴³ See, for example, Buhot, 'L'abbaye de Savigny', no. 1, p. 4–5; Hill, 'Savigny', pp. 243–6.

Vitalis, as an 'end point', and structurally the chapter was placed between the story of Vitalis' service to the count of Mortain and his conversion of *meretrices*. It was hardly a climactic moment in the text, which is intriguing considering that the twelfth-century historian Orderic Vitalis, writing a great deal earlier than Stephen, prefaced his sentence on the foundation of Savigny with the adverb 'finally' (*denique*), giving Savigny the end point in Vitalis' religious career.⁴⁴ Here is yet another example of the teleological tendencies of historians, and this highlights the profound difference between the presentation of foundation in history and hagiography. In the context of the broader narrative of Vitalis' *vita* then, the foundation of Savigny appeared not exactly inconsequential, but as having equal importance as everything else in the text. This demonstrates that the textual focus on foundations could vary widely.

Of course secular benefactors also figured in other texts. It was not only Savigny who remembered the importance of the local secular hierarchy in monastic development, and it seems that it was important for certain individuals to be named and recorded in these foundational documents. One must not forget the importance of secular founders, though it is not the focus of the present work. At one point in the *Vita Bernardi*, for example, after many instances of how different individuals had helped the monastery, Geoffrey Grossus simply provided a list of patrons; it was an acknowledgements section for the monastery.⁴⁵ As such, one might wonder about the dynamic between these secular and saintly figures in a monastery's self-perception expressed through hagiography, though this complex issue is for another study than my own. For our current purposes, it is enough to note that even when secular patrons were present in these texts, it was rare for them to be written about in preference of the spiritual founder, as was the case in the *Vita Vitalis* above, where the Fougères family took precedence. It was certainly a curious way of describing the foundation, and may suggest that the monks of Savigny were not overly concerned with detailing Vitalis of Savigny's role in their foundation within his hagiography. Perhaps for the Savigniac community, Vitalis was more holy man than he was 'founder'.

Finally, we must consider the foundation of Châteliers in 1119 by Gerald of Sales because here the hermit-preacher's role was also subordinated, not to the secular founder, but to one of his disciples: a man named Peter Duvar. According to the *vita*, it was Peter who secured and approved the land for Châteliers from Bishop William (presumably of Poitiers) and reported the matter back to the hermit-preacher, who then visited the site himself a couple of months later.⁴⁶ Here then, Gerald's role was supervisory rather than fundamental, which was emphasised by the fact that on the feast of St. Bartholomew (24 August) the hermit-preacher apparently arranged the

⁴⁴ Orderic Vitalis, *History*, vol. 4, bk. 8.27, p. 330.

⁴⁵ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 11.98, col. 1425B.

⁴⁶ The Châteliers monk recorded that Peter had secured the site in Lent 1119 and that Gerald sanctioned it in May of the same year. See *VGS*, chap. 3.23, p. 260.

baptism of Peter and two others of his disciples.⁴⁷ Gerald was never, it must be remarked, the abbot of Châteliers. Yet the hermit-preacher was still listed as having founded the house.⁴⁸ Even though he was portrayed as having had only a small hand in the establishment of Châteliers, Gerald thus still assumed foundational authority over the site.

What we have seen in these examples is that the connection between individual and institution as portrayed in 'foundation narratives' in the *vitae* of the hermit-preachers was no standardised affair. Different communities told different stories of their foundations through the *Lives* of the holy men, and only in one text – the *Vita Bernardi* – did this story of foundation mirror a teleological progression from eremitism to preaching to foundation. Here, the monastery was climactic but this sense of climax was not visible in other texts. In light of this, let us turn to another way in which we can demonstrate the problematic nature of connections between the founder and his foundation.

One Foundation, Different Founders

In a few cases, the foundation of the same monastery was attributed to different individuals in different sources. True, these occurrences were rare, but the two examples I shall examine below give further indications of the mutability of the idea of the founder. They do, nonetheless, confirm the significance of being credited with the foundation of an institution. I shall start with Gerald of Sales and the foundation of Tusson.

In the *Vita Giraldi*, Gerald of Sales' hagiographer listed seven monasteries for men which were founded by the hermit-preacher: Cadouin, Grandselve, Dalon, Bournet, Alleuds, Absie, and Châteliers, and two for women, Tusson and Bourbon.⁴⁹ However, as Marie-Odile Lenglet has also noted, the list given in the *vita* did not correspond with that given by the chronicle of Saint-Maixent.⁵⁰ Here, fifteen Geraldine houses were listed, adding Gondon, Fontdouce, la Tenaille, Saint-Benoît-du-Pin, Bonnevaux, *Castrense*, le Chalard, and a house called *Corbasin* to Gerald's foundations that appeared in the *vita*.⁵¹ The author of the chronicle seems to have been especially well informed – or wanted to appear so – since he provided the diocese of each establishment and in most cases the first abbot or prior. This was much more information than was given in the *vita*. Yet notably, Tusson and Bourbon were not included nor was any mention made of female foundations. Perhaps, one might conclude, both authors only included those they felt to be the most important?

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 3.23, p. 260.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 3.23, p. 260.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 2.12, p. 257.

⁵⁰ For the differences between the two texts see also Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', pp. 12–14.

⁵¹ *Chronique de Saint-Maixent*, ed. Verdon, pp. 190–1.

As a matter of fact, the story of Tusson, in the diocese of Poitiers, is particularly intriguing and worth exploring in full since this was a foundation that was attributed to two hermit-preachers, Gerald of Sales and Robert of Arbrissel, through different genres of documentation. First the hagiographic story. Shortly after the brief list of Gerald's male foundations, cited above, the author of the *Vita Giraldi* related Tusson's origins. Originally, he claimed, Tusson was consecrated by Gerald alongside Robert of Arbrissel whereupon Robert ordered the house to be the head of the order (*caput ordinis*). 'Truly', our hagiographic author continued, 'Fontevraud was the daughter of Tusson.'⁵² This hierarchy was said to have existed for a short while until the nuns were forced, on account of the scarcity of water, to enter Fontevraud. From then on, Tusson was considered a daughter of Fontevraud. This small narrative thus imagined Tusson to have had a lofty start as the head of an important female convent – the head of an *ordo*, even.

From other foundational texts however – charters rather than narratives – it appears that Tusson was not a Geraldine foundation but a priory of Fontevraud. In 1112, the land had been given voluntarily to Robert of Arbrissel by a local nobleman Fulk Frenicard and, after some manoeuvrings to overcome the competing claims of monks from the nearby monastery of Nanteuil, the site of Tusson was confirmed as a possession of Fontevraud by Bishop Peter II of Poitiers.⁵³ The agreement between Tusson and Nanteuil was confirmed by Pope Paschal II in 1117, and the foundation was subsequently listed in Pope Calixtus II's lengthy bull of Fontevraudine possessions as a continuation of the privilege given two years previously by Paschal.⁵⁴ Furthermore Tusson was listed, albeit with a slight orthographic difference (*Tucum* instead of *Tucio*) in the chronicle of Saint-Maixent as Robert's foundation.⁵⁵ At no point in these documents was Tusson presented as a foundation associated with Gerald of Sales: he was utterly absent from all other accounts and privileges that discussed the establishment of the priory.

Yet in Gerald of Sales' *vita*, as we have seen, Tusson was clearly stated as founded by Gerald and was raised in status as the mother house of Fontevraud. Marie-Odile Lenglet's answer to this problem was typically historical, and she argued that the monk from Châteliers was thinking of an entirely different person named Gerald of Tusson and had become confused between the two Gerald's. Accordingly, Lenglet posited that the two references to Gerald of Tusson in miracle stories in the *Vita Giraldi* were the product of an oral tradition that had attributed to Gerald of Sales acts of a different

⁵² 'Fontem-Ebraldi vero filiam Tutionis...', *VGS*, chap. 2.12, p. 257.

⁵³ Peter of Poitiers, 'Carta insignis de fundatione conventus Tucionensis', in *PL* 162, cols. 1093B–94D. For more on Bishop Peter of Poitiers see George T. Beech, 'Biography and the Study of 11th Century Society: Bishop Peter II of Poitiers 1087-1115', *Francia* 7 (1979), pp. 101–21.

⁵⁴ Paschal II, 'Epistola CDXCII', in *PL* 163, cols. 419D–20B; Calixtus II, 'Epistola XXXII', in *PL* 163, col. 1123A.

⁵⁵ *Chronique de Saint-Maixent*, ed. Verdon, p. 172.

individual.⁵⁶ This may be true, but I would argue that this downplays the textual significance of the attribution, because the link to Robert of Arbrissel and Fontevraud that the hagiographer made was paramount to how Gerald was envisaged in the *vita* as a whole. In order to explain this, we must digress for a moment.

Examining the *Vita Giraldi* in its entirety, it is evident that there were two important holy men in the work aside from Gerald: Robert of Arbrissel and Bernard of Clairvaux. Robert was instrumental in the first half of Gerald's life, apparently teaching the young man and instructing him in the religious life.⁵⁷ Bernard, on the other hand, was more important for Gerald later in life. In fact, our hagiographer was quite insistent upon this matter, maintaining that because Bernard was made abbot in 1114 and Gerald died in 1120, a relationship must have existed.⁵⁸ This inclusion of Bernard of Clairvaux was in part, I believe, an effort of the hagiographer to ingratiate himself, and his community, with that of his mother house of Clairvaux, and to cement the filial relationship. Given that a copy of the text may have been stored at Clairvaux, as we saw in chapter one, then this had a lasting effect. But there is more to Bernard's importance in the source than this, because taken into consideration alongside the influence of Robert of Arbrissel we can see that our author was inserting Gerald into a twelfth-century context and spiritual milieu, and in association with two important twelfth-century figures. It is in this context that the story of the foundation of Tusson should be seen, because stating that Tusson was originally the mother of Fontevraud firmly ensconced Gerald in twelfth-century history and affirmed his integral importance to it. In essence, the author of the *Vita Giraldi* created a foundation narrative for Tusson that bolstered Gerald's influence not only in the diocese of Poitiers, but also as part of the history of the Fontevraudine order. This projected Gerald as an eminent twelfth-century individual to those listeners and readers of the text.

The attribution of an 'alternative' founder also occurred with Savigny. In the *Vita Brevis* of Bernard of Tiron the author declared that Bernard had founded Savigny before being moved by a vision to establish his namesake, whereas many other documents affirmed that Savigny was founded by the hermit-preacher Vitalis.⁵⁹ Yet in the *Vita Brevis*, it was

⁵⁶ Lenglet, 'Geraud de Sales', pp. 25–6; *VGS*, chap. 2.13, p. 257 and chap. 4.30, pp. 262–3.

⁵⁷ Robert of Arbrissel's role may have mirrored the role of the hermit Imar in the *Vita Malachiae*. Cf. *VGS*, chaps. 1.3, 1.4, and 1.6, pp. 254–5; Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Vita S. Malachiae', chap. 2.4–5, cols. 1077A–78A.

⁵⁸ *VGS*, chap. 3.21, p. 260. Cf. *Ibid.*, chap. 3.22, p. 260 where the hagiographer wrote that Bernard of Clairvaux helped to integrate the monastery of Grandselve into Cistercian monasticism, although this is thought to have taken place well after Gerald's death. Interestingly, Constance Berman suggests that Grandselve could have been Robert of Arbrissel's foundation, given the dual dedication to the Virgin Mary and to Mary Magdalene. For this, and the date of Cistercian incorporation see Berman, *Cistercian Evolution*, pp. 127–8. Bernard was actually made abbot of Clairvaux in 1115.

⁵⁹ Beck, 'Vita brevis', p. 476. For the foundation documents of Savigny see Ralph I of Fougères, 'Fundatio Savignei', in *GC* 11, Instr. III, col. 110, and also Paschal II, 'Epistola CDLVII', in *PL* 163, cols. 397A–B.

Bernard who was made responsible not only for Tironensian monasticism, but also Savigniac. Again, like Gerald of Sales, Bernard was given an inflated significance in terms of twelfth-century foundations by appropriating part of Vitalis' memory. This is all the more striking because, in contrast to the *Vita Brevis*, the *Vita Bernardi* gave no such responsibility to Bernard, instead saying that although he had originally settled in the forest of Savigny with land granted from Ralph of Fougères (Savigny's secular founder), it was Vitalis who built a different monastery in the same place.⁶⁰ In the longer text Bernard was thus not accountable for the initial foundation of Savigny even if there was some close overlap between the two hermit-preachers. As such, the responsibility for the foundation of Savigny was readily attributable to Bernard of Tiron in one text, but not in another, which again illustrates the ambiguity that could surround the conception of the founder. The neat links so readily used by near-contemporary historians of Robert and Fontevraud, Bernard and Tiron, Vitalis and Savigny, were thus not always apparent in hagiographic accounts.

These two examples, unusual as they were, demonstrate the need to explore what we mean when we say 'founder' in modern historiography. Clearly, if medieval contemporaries could give responsibility of a monastic foundation to another with whom we do not usually associate it, then the connection between individual and institution was not entirely secure. At the very least, it is evident that this could be manipulated to suit the agendas of those who were writing these narratives. Once again, therefore, we are made aware of both the fragility of the historians' pairing of individual and institution, and the constructed nature of this attachment. Yet those writing about the hermit-preachers were still keen to present them as important to their monasteries. After all, these men were buried within these foundations. To explore this further, we now turn to examine their deathbed and funeral scenes.

Deathbed and Funeral Scenes

The death of those hermit-preachers who were celebrated was, for the most part, the most sensitively and beautifully handled part of their *vitae*. In both deathbed scenes and the portrayal of the transition of the soul to heaven, we often find passionate and touching language filled with emotion. When Robert of Arbrissel died on 25th February 1116, for instance, Andrew of Fontevraud tells us that he made the sign of the cross for himself and for his flock, amidst the tears of his brothers and laments of his nuns.⁶¹ Death was, moreover, a joyous moment in which the hermit-preacher came to the end of one life and the beginning of another.⁶² It was pivotal because it signified not finality,

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 7.62, cols. 1404C–05A.

⁶¹ Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 52, p. 280.

⁶² See, for example, *VGS*, chap. 3.26, p. 261.

but a transition.⁶³ Given this, the often disproportionate space that death scenes occupied in hagiographies is understandable.⁶⁴

Death scenes in literary narratives were, however, also one of the most 'standardised' moments in *vitae*; certain motifs, stereotypes and models had developed over the centuries, and there were fixed ways in which to describe the death of a holy man.⁶⁵ It is, in the words of one historian, 'as if the same death was described' in each text.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, I am not interested in these standardised models of death *per se*. Instead, what I would like to explore here is how certain elements within these death scenes were created by the communities who wrote about the hermit-preachers, and how this could function to produce a connection, often profound, between the individual and the institution. As we shall see, the concentration on *topoi* in previous scholarship has tended to obscure these matters. Here I start by discussing deathbed speeches, before moving onto funeral scenes and arguments over the possession of the body. Finally, I reflect upon the disparity between the narratives of the celebrated hermit-preachers and those who were condemned.

Deathbed Speeches

Historians have noted that in deathbed scenes the dying holy man was rarely alone. Instead, he was surrounded by his own community, friends that had been called from other places, and even spectators or bystanders.⁶⁷ Within this milieu, the holy man would address these people with his last words: his *ultima verba*.⁶⁸ These deathbed speeches had great importance in the last days of the holy man, as they instructed their disciples how to live and urged them to continue living the religious life. What is more, the speeches were given at poignant moments close to death, a time in which the boundaries between heaven and earth perhaps seemed a little closer.⁶⁹ Because of this, the hermit-preachers' words were imbued with a particular sense of authority. It is

⁶³ Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994), p. 2. For an examination of the idea of death and burial in general see also Christopher Daniel, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London and New York, 1998).

⁶⁴ This was common in *vitae*. See Pierre Bognioni, 'La scène de la mort dans les premières hagiographies latines', in Claude Sutto (ed.), *Le sentiment de la mort au Moyen Âge* (Montreal, 1979), p. 187; Michel Lauwers, 'La mort et le corps des saints. La scène de la mort dans les vitae du Haut Moyen Âge', *Le Moyen Âge* 94:1 (1988), p. 22.

⁶⁵ For the common literary motifs and ideas used in death scenes see Lauwers, 'La mort', pp. 21–50; Bognioni, 'La scène de la mort', pp. 185–210; Michael Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint: A Hagiographical Topos', in Katariina Mustakillio (ed.), *Hoping for Continuity: Childhood, Education and Death in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Rome, 2005), pp. 227–38; Jacques Dalarun, 'La mort des saint fondateurs de Martin à François', in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde Occidental (IIIe-XIIIe siècle)* (Rome, 1991), pp. 195–202.

⁶⁶ Lauwers, 'La mort', p. 29.

⁶⁷ Daniel, *Death*, pp. 37–9; Lauwers, 'La mort', pp. 24–5; Goodich, 'Death', p. 229.

⁶⁸ For *ultima verba* in the early medieval *vitae* see Bognioni, 'La scène de la mort', pp. 190–1.

⁶⁹ R.C. Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion: Social Ideals and Death Rituals in the Later Middle Ages', in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London, 1981), p. 51.

little wonder then that the communities wanted to record them. This is a typical explanation.

But there is a dynamic here that has been missed in the explanation of *ultima verba*, and indeed missed by much previous scholarship on the topic: the role of the community. A deathbed speech was presented as the singular voice of the holy man, and it was often given as direct speech in *vitae*. Yet if these words were spoken to many, witnessed by many, and probably remembered by many, then this singular voice is deceptive. To my mind, what we see here is the creation of the singular voice from the memories and recollections of the community. These memories coalesced into a single speech narrative, and an especially authoritative speech narrative for the community at that, given that it often dealt with the community itself. Indeed, considering this authoritative power of this speech act, one might very well wonder about the extent to which these words were ‘invented’ to suit different community priorities. Nonetheless, let me be clear; this is not a question of the historical accuracy of these deathbed scenes or recovering the ‘true words’ of the hermit-preachers.⁷⁰ I have said, and will reiterate again here, that these types of questions are unanswerable when studying the hermit-preachers and indeed hagiographies in general. But it is interesting, in light of the community aspect that lies behind these ‘spoken’ words, that for the hermit-preachers the texts in which we have the majority of this direct speech came from those written by members of the communities that the hermit-preachers had founded: the *Vita Roberti altera* of Robert of Arbrissel, the *Vita Bernardi* and the *Vita Giraldi* all contained the hermit-preachers’ parting words. The producers of these narratives in particular thus appeared to be more concerned with linking the individual and the institution, and projected a deep connection between hermit-preacher and monastery through his very last words on earth. With this in mind, let us explore the parting words of the hermit-preachers.

Deathbed speeches were used to convey various different messages by the community to the readers and listeners of the texts, but the perpetuation of the teachings of the hermit-preacher and the legitimacy of the current hierarchy were unmistakably the most important and took precedence.⁷¹ In the *Vita Bernardi* for instance, the community’s memory of Bernard of Tiron’s deathbed speech was the hermit-preacher spending his last days addressing his disciples, soothing their laments, and instructing them in the right way to live. Several times throughout these addresses, Geoffrey Grossus reported – through Bernard’s words – the importance of the brothers following the precepts that Bernard had taught them: “‘If you are willing to follow the example which I showed you, the customs I handed over, and if you reject contrary things that have been cut out,’” Bernard said, “‘you will not be burdened so greatly by

⁷⁰ A point also made by Sykes, *Inventing Sempringham*, p. 113.

⁷¹ Dalarun, ‘La mort’, pp. 199–200.

the want of things when I am dead...".⁷² Five days later, Bernard spoke similarly to his brothers: "I avoided unprofitable inventions, with which I would have made you guilty of collusion: desiring these things I promoted that which is necessary, like a father for his children."⁷³ Even without explicit identification, it is clear that these two citations referred to the Benedictine Rule and the need for Tiron to follow it without additions or dispensation. Tiron was, after all, a Benedictine Abbey without an independent rule unlike Fontevraud for instance, and the whole of the *Vita Bernardi* was positively strewn with references to the Rule of Benedict. Given that by the time of construction Tiron had many daughter houses, and the *Vita Bernardi* would have been read aloud in each on Bernard's feast day, this was surely a prime opportunity to administer monastic conventions within the Tironensian *ordo*, spoken through the founder's voice.⁷⁴ Indeed, this also occurred in another Benedictine monastery, as Gerald of Sales urged much the same through his speech on his deathbed.⁷⁵

From this it would be tempting to suggest that the communities, at the time of writing, required a nudge towards what was perceived as their founders' original ideals and that they instituted this through the authoritative words in the deathbed speeches of the hermit-preachers. If a community was becoming more lax, then what could be better than words spoken by the founder (imbued with grace) to remind the brothers of the narrow path to God? Yet this would not only assume that there was an absolute authority behind the text whose agenda permeated the whole document (a disciplinary abbot, for example), but also subscribes to Louis J. Lekai's – notably influential but problematic – notion of 'ideals and reality', in which foundational ideals of perfection in monastic life were gradually superseded by a more complicated reality in which these ideals could no longer be held.⁷⁶ This was degradation of the ideal, rather than any sense of evolution. Lekai's thesis, however, is a model from which scholars are increasingly turning away and is, in any case, simply inappropriate here since we only know of the 'founders' ideals' through the presentations within the hagiographies themselves.⁷⁷ How are we to know whether or not this was a retroactive imposition?

Nevertheless, even without following the 'ideals and reality' paradigm, one could still state that the community which contributed to the *Vita Bernardi* were concerned to

⁷² '...quae vobis ostenderim exempla, quae tradiderim instituta, his sectas refutando contrarias, sequi volueritis; non tanta, me defuncto, gravabimini rerum inopia...', Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 12.107, col. 1430B.

⁷³ '...inutiles (vitans) adinventiones, quibus vos praevaricatores redderem: his inhians, quibus ad pernecessaria, quasi pater filios, proveherem', *Ibid.*, chap. 12.113, col. 1433C.

⁷⁴ For the development of Tiron and its daughter houses see Thompson, 'Tiron', pp. 104–117.

⁷⁵ *VGS*, chap. 3.26, p. 261.

⁷⁶ Louis J. Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* (Kent, Ohio, 1977); Louis J. Lekai, 'Ideals and Reality in Early Cistercian Life and Legislation', in John R. Sommerfeldt (ed.), *Cistercian Ideals and Reality* (Kalamazoo, 1978), pp. 4–29. Cf. Dereine, 'La Spiritualité "Apostolique"', pp. 41–66, who also follows this idea with regard to the smaller foundation of Afflighem.

⁷⁷ For an explicit challenge to Lekai's idea see, for example, Constance H. Berman, 'Cistercian Ideals Versus Reality: 1134 Reconsidered', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 39 (1988), pp. 217–31.

impress upon their readers the centrality and importance of the Benedictine Rule for their own way of life. This shone through in the text. Furthermore, through the performance of these works, the audiences of the texts would have repeatedly heard what was presented as their founders' wishes, in the authorial voice, to stay true to the Benedictine Rule. Since the Rule of Benedict was also read in liturgy, this was a double re-enforcement of monastic organising principles. Bernard of Tiron's deathbed speech and Gerald of Sales' parting words were thus a powerful way of communicating that the desires of the founder were in line with the present monastic institutional precepts. The communities were surely well aware of this when they came to write the narratives of their founders' last days. Given the inter-order competition for spiritual superiority of which I spoke above, moreover, this was a firm declaration in favour of the Benedictine Rule and of coenobitism.

Alongside the perpetuation of those spiritual guidelines envisaged to have been instituted by the hermit-preacher, communities could also use the hermit-preachers' deathbed speeches to confirm their own spiritual hierarchy. A striking example of this was Petronilla of Chemillé's election as abbess of Fontevraud and, correspondingly, her authority over the congregation as a woman who had been married prior to taking the monastic vow. As stated by Andrew of Fontevraud – who wrote, one should recall, because Petronilla felt that another *vita* was necessary after Baudri of Dol's efforts – Robert gathered his congregation together, sensing that he would die soon, and 'spoke' to his brothers and sisters about his desire to provide for the future of the church with the election of an abbess. The hermit-preacher asserted that he did not want to hand over this position to a claustral virgin but to a lay convert (*conversa laica*). Only a lay convert would be able to manage the temporal affairs of the monastery and Robert cited the example of Martha, who knew how to minister to external affairs.⁷⁸ Shortly after, Robert declared the election of Petronilla of Chemillé, widow of the Lord of Chemillé.⁷⁹ Every part of this election reasoning and decision was written in direct speech, and was presented as Robert's words.

In my opinion though, it is evident that this part of the deathbed speech had a clear community, or rather an abbatial, agenda. Some years prior to the creation of the *Vita Roberti altera*, Petronilla of Chemillé's authority had been plainly declared in the Fontevraudine statutes, which stated that she had been chosen as abbess personally by Robert of Arbrissel, and which confirmed her power to rule and the obedience owed to her.⁸⁰ Bruce L. Venarde has noted that this clause from the statutes evidently came from Petronilla herself.⁸¹ This being the case, it seems likely then that the above points from Robert's deathbed speech, that dealt with much the same issue, were likely to

⁷⁸ This was not Robert's preference of a widow to a virgin, as noted by Dalarun, 'Robert d'Arbrissel et les femmes', p. 1143. See also Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, pp. 183–91.

⁷⁹ For this speech see Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chaps. 4–7, pp. 194–202.

⁸⁰ 'Statutes of Fontevraud', in *PL* 162, cols. 1083D–84D.

⁸¹ Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel*, p. 85.

have been influenced by Petronilla herself and were an assertion of her authority. Certainly, she chose an effective mechanism by which to accomplish this: the hermit-preacher's words were powerful and presented her position as endorsed, or rather specifically chosen because of her background, by the very founder himself. Here then, while we see yet another example of how the community influenced the textual figure of the hermit-preacher, we see also how more powerful figures *within* this community could hold sway over the production and message of a text. One wonders whether the clause in the aforementioned statutes that the brothers had to obey the abbess in all things came into play here.⁸²

Intriguingly, however, Robert of Arbrissel's apparent desire to have a woman lead the congregation who was a *conversa* did not last. Indeed, 'Robert's' precept was only partially realised by Petronilla of Chemillé's successor Mathilda of Anjou, who had been married but only as a child and the marriage was unconsummated.⁸³ No other abbess after Mathilda fulfilled Robert's words as presented in the *Vita Roberti altera*. Thus although Petronilla may have felt that Robert's words could support her own authority, they did not hold sway for the future Fontevraudine institutional hierarchy. This supports the idea that these texts emanated from particular communities, at particular points in time, and that their content was bound to the needs and desires of the members of that same community. We cannot study them without reference to this.

In addition to Petronilla of Chemillé's election as abbess, Robert of Arbrissel's speech in the *Vita Roberti altera* also confirmed Fontevraud as the head of the order. "For you know," Robert said upon his deathbed to Leger, Archbishop of Bourges, "that I appointed the place of Fontevraud the head of all other places. There is the greater part of our congregation; there is the foundation of our religious community."⁸⁴ Later in Andrew's lengthy narrative of the week preceding the holy man's parting, Robert spoke to the Lord Alard of Châteaumeillant and affirmed, for the second time, how he founded Fontevraud as the head of his entire order and had it confirmed from Rome by Pope Paschal II.⁸⁵ At once, the text established Fontevraud's legitimacy as mother house as well as establishing legitimacy from Rome. It was a powerful message, and relaying Fontevraud's confirmation in Robert's voice certainly gave the statement significantly more weight and authority than Baudri of Dol had done in Robert's first *vita*, when he said that God had put Robert in charge of His people with the help of

⁸² 'Statutes', cols. 1083D–84D.

⁸³ See Mueller, 'Charismatic Congregation', pp. 433–44, who positions this in the context of the inevitable transition from charisma to institutionalisation.

⁸⁴ "Scis enim...quod ego locum Fontis Ebraudi omnium aliorum locorum caput constitui. Ibi etiam est major pars nostrae congregationis, ibi etiam fundamentum nostrae religionis.", Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 33, p. 252.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 48, p. 275. Dalarun notes here that this was probably the term *ordo* in Latin. For Paschal's privileges of 1106 and 1112 see Paschal II, 'Epistola CLV', in *PL* 163, cols. 164C–65B; Paschal II, 'Epistola CCCXXXIX', in *PL* 163, cols. 296A–97A.

Paschal II.⁸⁶ In the *Vita Roberti altera*, it appeared to be Robert who confirmed this, not Andrew.

It was in these sections of the texts, then, that the community gave the hermit-preachers the authorial voice, and thus momentarily the authorial agency. As such, the control of the content of the text itself was presented as having switched from author to subject. In these moments the words that the audience of the text would have heard came from the hermit-preachers' own mouths: he 'spoke' through the text. And in my opinion it is extremely significant that it was when the future of the monastery was at stake – either in terms of spiritual precepts or institutional hierarchy – when this switch occurred. Words were powerful things, and our communities used them judiciously to demonstrate the wishes of the founder *for* the monastery. It is also worth noting that recording the words that perpetuated the worship or hierarchy of the community in direct speech were far more important than those words that created the community in the first place – we would do well to remember that we only have one example of a hermit-preachers' sermon in direct speech, as shown in chapter two. This disparity is indicative of the assumed power of the deathbed speech, and suggests that we should take it far more seriously than simply as a hagiographic motif.

In comparison to these works, Baudri of Dol and Stephen of Fougères' texts on Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny respectively contained no such deathbed speeches. Baudri said that Robert had had conversations with both sexes but did not give any details of what these entailed, and Stephen merely stated that while Vitalis was ill, he carried on his usual routine of prayer and died after singing the morning canons.⁸⁷ There was, therefore, no elaborate death narrative in either of these documents. Jaap van Moolenbroek has proposed that the absence of such a narrative in the *Vita Vitalis* is due to the fact that Stephen of Fougères neglected to transcribe what was said in (the now lost) concluding part of the encyclical letter to the mortuary roll.⁸⁸ Consequently, Moolenbroek also believes that the historian Orderic Vitalis' information on Vitalis' death originates from this missing section of the letter.⁸⁹ But this is pure speculation, based on the fact that Moolenbroek thought that the community of Savigny *would have* included something on Vitalis' death and thus there must have been something missing from Stephen's transcription. To me, this seems like rocky ground upon which to base an argument. Nonetheless in truth Moolenbroek's speculation matters little to the argument here, because my point is that Vitalis' *vita* included no death narrative, regardless of whether this was deliberately omitted from something that existed or whether the Bishop of Rennes had been given no such

⁸⁶ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 1.1, col. 1043C.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 4.26, col. 1057A; Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.16, p. 383. Jacques Dalarun has noted that Vitalis had a typically 'coenobitic' death in this way, since he died during a monastic office. See Dalarun, 'La mort', p. 198.

⁸⁸ Van Moolenbroek, *Vital l'ermite*, p. 18.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35. Cf. Orderic Vitalis, *History*, vol. 4, bk. 8.27, p. 332.

information by the Savigniac monks. What is more, even if the encyclical letter to the *Rotulus* had contained information on Vitalis' death, then the absence of any other discussion of the hermit-preacher's death in the *Vita Vitalis* indicates that it was only the Savigniac community which had record of this moment. This moment was, therefore, a concern for monastic communities, not for episcopal authors, and this striking difference is suggestive of how the communities in which the authors were located influenced the narratives about the hermit-preachers.

From these deathbed speeches, the moment of the hermit-preachers' death was always described in the most eloquent manner. Departing among tears and laments, surrounded by their sobbing flock, the hermit-preachers ascended to the heavenly kingdom amidst the happy grief of their brothers, leaving behind bright mists and sweet smelling odours.⁹⁰ From this moment, the communities began to mourn their founder, to celebrate his soul's ascension to heaven and, in a few cases, to wrestle with others over the burial of the holy man. It is this last issue to which we come now.

The Final Resting Place

For one hermit-preacher, the matter of burial was relatively simple. After Bernard of Tiron died on 25th April 1116, Geoffrey Grossus related that his body was carried on a bier into the church that he had founded and after three days and nights he was placed in his tomb.⁹¹ Yet there were no issues here because Bernard fell ill and died in Tiron. Body and foundation, individual and institution, were together and would remain so.

It was not always so straight-forward. If a hermit-preacher became ill at another foundation or a neighbouring monastery or town tried to seize the body, then problems over where the body should be buried quickly ensued. Corporeal remains endowed with spiritual powers were vigorously sought after in the relic-hungry twelfth century. Indeed, I think we must place this phenomenon firmly within the realms of relic culture – and relic theft – that had developed in the High Middle Ages.⁹² That relics were important to these communities was clear throughout our texts: the *Vita Bernardi*, for example, spoke of shutting away locks of Bernard of Tiron's beard for relics which were then used to restore the sick to health.⁹³ These texts were, of course, written within contemporary spiritual currents and trends and, accordingly, reflected

⁹⁰ André Vauchez suggests that this odour was paramount in the perception of sanctity. See Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 428.

⁹¹ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 13.125, cols. 1438C–D.

⁹² See Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990), and also Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁹³ Geoffrey Grossus, *VBT*, chap. 13.125, col. 1438D.

the cultural values of the time and the importance of miracles.⁹⁴ Even more relevant for our present purposes, concerning *bodies* as relics, is that fact that our hagiographers wrote of individuals being cured by such methods as lying underneath the bier of the deceased hermit-preacher.⁹⁵ Due to their miraculous power, the bodies of holy men were valuable spiritual commodities, because they at once demonstrated the power of the divine and also gave impetus to the creation of cults in the sacred spaces in which they were housed. Accordingly, anecdotes that related conflicts over these bodies were certainly not unusual and can be seen in other contemporary hagiographies not studied here.⁹⁶ Yet unlike the type of *furta sacra* that Patrick Geary has investigated for instance, the attempts to appropriate the bodies of the hermit-preachers were not successful: this point is extremely important. The communities were not gaining a new symbolism as with those who stole relics from other communities, but keeping, securing, and emphasising their symbolic attachment to the holy man within their own community.⁹⁷

When the monastery which created the *vita* eventually, probably inevitably, ‘won’ the fight over the body, a sense of victory and triumph permeated the text, and often this victory was followed by days of celebration. There is thus an interesting correspondence between where the body ended up and the community which produced the *vita*: it was one and the same. To the reader, this might sound like an obvious point but I would argue that this raises the question of whether the physical presence of the hermit-preachers’ body, and correspondingly the need to defend and legitimise this presence, was connected to the impetus to construct the *Life* in the first place. Indeed, we saw in chapter one that the translation of the body was sometimes an important catalyst for the very production of the text. At the very least, possessing the relic allowed the community to relay its importance to the hermit-preacher within the *vita* itself or to ‘advertise’ itself effectively to potential converts. Andrew of Fontevraud made some astute comments concerning the effect that a hermit-preacher’s body had on the place where it was buried, although, somewhat typically for him, it was through Robert of Arbrissel’s voice:

For if I [Robert] am buried there, the living will love the place more, and those whom the Devil has taken captive in disobedience will come to seek mercy. For they will hear it said that I lay in Fontevraud and...bound by my love, they will hurry to return to obedience...Thus when they recall the way I always loved them, the way I taught them, or how God nourished them with his teaching through me, through divine

⁹⁴ For miracles and miracle collections more specifically in the High Middle Ages see Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215* (London, 1982), and Simon Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth Century England* (Oxford, 2006).

⁹⁵ Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.19, p. 385.

⁹⁶ See, for instance, *Vita S. Stephani Obazinensis*, ed. Aubrun, bk. 3.6, p. 206.

⁹⁷ For this transformation of the symbolism of relics in their new space see Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 5–7.

inspiration some of them...will come together to seek the mercy of God before my tomb.⁹⁸

Here, we have a pertinent passage since Andrew, through Robert's voice, was describing if not Robert's cult then at the very least the principle of how the cult of a holy man started: with the relic of his body. Andrew hence implied that he was acutely aware of just how powerful Robert's body could be in securing Fontevraud's future with donations, patronage and the entrance of others to the monastery.

In view of the sentiments expressed in the above quotation, it is hardly surprising the place of burial was so significant. In one *vita* in particular, the *Vita Roberti altera* of Robert of Arbrissel, the issue took up most of the text because Robert had not died at Fontevraud in 1116 but at a daughter house, Orsan. Before we turn to this however, we must recognise that Robert's final resting was not portrayed as problematic in the hermit-preachers' first *vita* produced by Baudri of Dol. The bishop simply narrated that Robert had died at Orsan and that his body was then carried back to Fontevraud where he was buried in a mausoleum.⁹⁹ This straightforward narrative thus ended Baudri's work. It was quite a different story in the text produced within Fontevraud some two years later.

Out of seventy-five chapters in Robert of Arbrissel's second *vita*, forty-one were dedicated to the question of where Robert should be buried, albeit with a few lengthy digressions in between from the author. The dispute functioned, in this way, as the focal point of the work and a springboard from which to express Robert's holiness, his way of life, and his commitment to Fontevraud. As such, even though today we commonly call Andrew of Fontevraud's text a second 'life' of Robert it was, as stated in chapter one, more like a tract than a 'standard' hagiography. It was also the text that had the largest disparity between the real time elapsed and the amount of space dedicated to it: seventy-five chapters described only seven months of Robert's life.¹⁰⁰ Throughout these chapters, Andrew detailed the long back-and-forth between Robert himself, Petronilla of Chemillé and her nuns, Archbishop Leger of Bourges, and the Lords Alard of Châteaumeillant, Raoul of Déols and Geoffrey of Issoudun, concerning where Robert wanted to die and be buried.¹⁰¹ Even when this dispute had been settled after Robert's death and the decision made to return Robert's body to Fontevraud, there were still difficulties when men from Candes, a neighbouring town, tried to steal

⁹⁸ 'Si enim ibi sepultus fuero, et viventes eundem locum amplius diligent, et illi quos diabolus per inobedientiam captivat misericordiam quaerere venient; audient enim dicere quod ego in Fontebraudi jaceo et...amore meo constricti, festinabunt ad obedientiam suam reverti...Dum itaque ad mentem revocabunt qualiter eos semper dilexi, qualiterve eos instruxi, vel quomodo doctrina sua Deus eos per me satiavit, aliqui, divina inspiratione...ante tumbam meam misericordiam a Deo competere venient', Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 34, p. 254.

⁹⁹ Baudri of Dol, *VRA*, chap. 4.26, col. 1058A.

¹⁰⁰ September 1115 – March 1116. For a timeline see Venarde, *Robert of Arbrissel*, pp. xi–xiv.

¹⁰¹ For the whole episode see Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 26–67, pp. 236–91.

the relics during the procession of the hermit-preacher's body.¹⁰² Andrew wrote a prolix account, whose twists and turns created a compelling story.

The significance of this elaborate death narrative is that it showed simultaneously the 'pull' of the hermit-preacher (which in itself was a poignant expression of his renown as discussed in chapter two), as well as expressing a deep bond between hermit-preacher and foundation.¹⁰³ Though Jacques Dalarun has endeavoured to show Andrew's precision and 'objectivity' throughout this episode, there is little doubt in my mind that the story still functioned to articulate Robert's powerful bond to his community.¹⁰⁴ Throughout Robert's speeches, there was a sense of desperation and longing for Fontevraud: "'Oh Fontevraud, Oh Fontevraud!'" he cried at one point, "'how I wanted to lie in you!'"¹⁰⁵ Other places were not suitable, not Bethlehem nor Jerusalem, Rome nor Cluny.¹⁰⁶ Robert scorned the holiest places in the Christian world of the time to be buried in the mud of Fontevraud, affirming the monastery to be *his* holiest of places. Robert's heartfelt interpolated speech in the text is, in my opinion, the most emotional, sensitive and evocative writing we have in any of the hermit-preachers' *vitae*. Consequently, I would argue that Andrew was trying to play upon not only the spiritual and emotional connection between Robert and Fontevraud, but also that he was trying to counteract the more ambivalent relationship between the hermit-preacher and his monastery shown in Baudri of Dol's *Vita Roberti*. Perhaps we can, once again, sense Petronilla of Chemillé's presence behind the work.

It was not only Robert of Arbrissel's body that was subject to rival claims. Stephen of Fougères related a similar problem even if it was a considerably shorter ordeal. After Vitalis of Savigny died on 16th October 1122, Stephen wrote, many people gathered around the body. When Vitalis was carried through the throngs, the people of the neighbouring town Le Teilleul decided they wanted to keep his body. But, try as they might, they could not lift the bier upon which his body was placed, and gave up exhausted. After this effort, two Savigniac monks came up to the bier, lifted it easily, and carried it back to Savigny. On account of their reverence for Vitalis, the monks spent three days singing psalms and praying in the abbey. Stephen concluded the episode as so: 'Through this evident miracle, I believe, God made known that the Church of Savigny refused to be deprived of her own shepherd.'¹⁰⁷ The connection between Savigny and Vitalis was thus cemented by a miracle – it was God's will for

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, chap. 65, pp. 288–9.

¹⁰³ R.I. Moore also notes how the fight over Robert's body was evidence of his great effect on the world. See Moore, *War on Heresy*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁴ See Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté*, pp. 151–76, esp. p. 176.

¹⁰⁵ 'O Fons Evraldi, Fons Evraldi, tam aestimavi in te jacere!', Andrew of Fontevraud, *Supplementum*, chap. 26, p. 238.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 32, p. 250.

¹⁰⁷ 'Hoc autem tam evidenti miraculo, credo, Deus innotuit quod ecclesiam Savigniensem proprio pastore privare noluit', Stephen of Fougères, *VVS*, bk. 2.17, p. 384.

Vitalis to be buried there because of the deep bond between him, his brothers, and the foundation of Savigny.

In addition to Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Savigny, it appears that Gerald of Sales also had burial problems, but these were less clear-cut than those of the two hermit-preachers discussed above. Gerald had, the author of his *vita* tells us, been visiting another of his foundations Absie, in the diocese of Poitiers, when he fell ill. Realising that he was going to die soon, Gerald requested the presence of the local Lord Tirolius who would allow him to be transferred to Châteliens, which he did fairly speedily.¹⁰⁸ However, it is not clear whether Gerald wanted to be buried at Châteliens. While the author commented that Gerald did not want to renege on a promise he had made to the monastery, we cannot be certain whether he had promised his body to the monks or simply said he would visit them, as he was accustomed.¹⁰⁹ Even so, being buried at Châteliens was unquestionably important for Gerald's connection to the monastery. When the monks of Châteliens buried Gerald on the eighth day of Easter 1120 it was, in the words of his biographer, in the 'newest and poorest, the most worthless but pious' of all the places Gerald had founded.¹¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, the monk from Châteliens depicted his own house as the most admirable of Gerald's foundations. Furthermore, Gerald's final resting place allowed the author to use a motif from Genesis cleverly when he affirmed that the hermit-preacher was buried in the seventh monastery that he had founded because, as it was found written in Genesis 2:2, from every work that has been brought to completion, on the seventh day there was rest.¹¹¹ In this way, Gerald's work mirrored God's work. In fact, we might even question whether it was *because* Gerald was buried there that the monks of Châteliens chose to write his life. If Gerald had been buried at Absie, would his *vita* have been written in that monastery instead? It is perhaps telling that the *tituli* from the mortuary roll inserted into the *Vita Giraldi* mentioned no specific monastery that Gerald built but just that he called many to the desert, and that he built many monasteries.¹¹² Bishop William who wrote the text drew no such attachment between Gerald and Châteliens as did his brothers there.

Through these cases we can see that it was imperative for the community to convey that the body should, and indeed did, remain with the foundation. These funeral narratives worked to articulate this, using stories of either the pleas of the hermit-preacher himself or the divine intervention of miracles. The textual rendition of the conflicts over these relics, moreover, communicated to the readers of the text a sense that it was both the will of the hermit-preacher and God for him to be buried there,

¹⁰⁸ I have not been able to identify Lord Tirolius.

¹⁰⁹ *VGS*, chap. 3.24, pp. 260–1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 3.27, p. 261. It should be noted that Foyot, of whom I spoke in chapter one of this study, believed that Gerald's body had been found at Boschaud (daughter of Châteliens) but he did not substantiate this claim, merely saying it seemed like it was Saint Gerald (*'il y a apparence que c'est St Giraud'*). See BN Fr. 22477, f. 443.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 2.12, p. 257.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, chap. 2.18, p. 258.

which produced a bond between individual and sacred space that was perhaps not so evident in the foundational narratives of that monastery. It was here, really, where the connection between individual and institution was most strongly envisaged.

The Death of the Condemned

Recording the deaths of Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys was quite a different matter. Unlike the individuals who were celebrated, those deemed heretical left no parting words, no final goodbye, and no elaborate death narrative was recorded. In fact, no text even related Henry of Lausanne's death and we are unaware of what became of the monk-turned-heretic and, as such, we must turn to the historical situation briefly.

The last we hear about Henry in person is from Bernard of Clairvaux's hagiographer, Geoffrey of Auxerre, who said that after Bernard had preached against the heretic in his tour around the Languedoc in the mid-1140s Henry went into hiding, but was eventually captured and handed over to the bishop, whom Raoul Manselli assumed was the papal legate Alberic.¹¹³ Bernard himself made no mention of this apprehension in his letter to the count of Toulouse upon his return, dated to late 1145. Several historians have speculated about what happened after Henry's apparent seizure by Alberic, but the truth of the matter is that Henry disappeared from recorded history after this point.¹¹⁴ If Henry was arrested by the legate it is possible he might have been brought before the Council of Rheims in 1148. But despite the council legislating against heresy, Henry was never mentioned by name, and the wording of the canon (number 18, referring to the heresy in Gascony and Provence) indicates that the hierarchy was concerned with Henry and Peter of Bruys' followers rather than the men themselves.¹¹⁵ Similarly, while both Robert of Torigni and the *Chronica Majora* noted the same episode in Gascony in the early 1150s concerning a young girl, whose spirit the Lord had 'awakened' (*suscitavit*) and was able to recall many to the bosom of the church by proving Henry's errors in debate, there was no indication whether this story dealt with Henry in person or the proliferation of his teachings.¹¹⁶ It appears to have been, therefore, far more important to record how Henry's heresy was *overcome* as opposed to what had happened to the heretic himself.

¹¹³ Geoffrey of Auxerre *et al.*, 'Vita Prima', chap. 6.17, col. 313C; Manselli, 'Enrico', p. 32.

¹¹⁴ For the different conclusions scholars have drawn about Henry after this point and his death see Marcia L. Colish, 'Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lausanne, and the Façade of St. Gilles', *Traditio* 28 (1972), pp. 456–7.

¹¹⁵ For the canon, see *Sacra Concilia*, 'Concilium Remense', col. 718. Noted by Moore, *Formation*, p. 24. Moore has also stated this as somewhat of a 'turning point', since neglecting to cite either Henry of Lausanne or Peter of Bruys left its canons open to 'general application', though the council did specifically deal with the Breton heretic, Eon de l'Etoile. See Moore, *War on Heresy*, p. 155.

¹¹⁶ Despite the *Chronica Majora* copying Robert of Torigni almost verbatim, the episode was given the date 1151, while Robert of Torigni cited it as occurring in 1152. Cf. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, 7 vols (London, 1874), vol. 2, p. 188; Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, vol. 1, p. 266.

Seen from a broader perspective, it might seem striking that we find nothing of Henry of Lausanne's death in the historical record, given the growing phenomena of the public spectacle of the eradication of heresy, matched by a church developing the means of heretical suppression. But, as R.I. Moore has shown, this did not start to develop before the mid-twelfth century and at this point there was no systematic way in which to deal with, or even record, heresy.¹¹⁷ As such, the lack of attention given to Henry is perhaps not so surprising. What is more, as R.C. Finucane has commented, heretics were denied any 'posthumous existence whatsoever', which reinforced their rejection from the church.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the fact that Henry's death went unrecorded was remarkably different from the death of those preachers who were acclaimed.

In comparison to Henry of Lausanne we do know what happened to Peter of Bruys, who died in either 1135 or 1136, since Peter the Venerable reported that the heresiarch had been burnt to death by the faithful in Saint-Gilles, with the very crucifixes that he had set on fire.¹¹⁹ It was poetic judgement. Although we do not have any other textual representation of Peter's death, Marcia L. Colish has suggested that the event influenced the redesigning of the Romanesque façade at Saint-Gilles cathedral, which has been dated between 1116 and the 1140s. The architect of the façade, Colish has proposed, designed the iconography in order to 'counteract' Petrobrusian and also Henrician teachings, which is why depictions of the passion and crucifixion figured so heavily in the new design considering that both were said to have preached against the cross.¹²⁰ If this is indeed the case, then the counterbalance of Peter's teachings was preserved for posterity in architecture rather than text. The people of Saint-Gilles would be forever reminded of the importance of the passion and the crucifixion whenever they saw the front of their cathedral and thus it would become part of lived experience. The representation and subsequent understanding of the meaning of Peter's death, therefore, was monumental for the southern French town.

In essence, what we see here is that recording the deaths of individuals deemed heretical did not seem to matter for ecclesiastical contemporaries. This was in some ways not so surprising if we compare it to those hermit-preachers studied above. For these two individuals who had been condemned, there was no one invested in writing about their deaths, no confirmation of holiness through the soul's ascension to heaven, no triumph of sanctity at the end of life. Put simply, there was nothing to be learnt. Nonetheless, this contrast is perhaps all the more important to acknowledge because

¹¹⁷ Moore, *War on Heresy*.

¹¹⁸ Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse', p. 58 and 60.

¹¹⁹ Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, Praefatio, p. 5.

¹²⁰ Colish, 'St. Gilles', pp. 451–60, esp. pp. 458–60.

of this, as the label of heresy fundamentally altered what our authors were interested in documenting.

Concluding Remarks

Overall, we have seen through this chapter that the connection between individual and institution was by no means as firm or fixed as twelfth- and thirteenth-century chroniclers posited. Though contemporary historians such as Robert of Auxerre may have seen the hermit-preachers' lives as a process that ended in the foundation, there was a remarkable dissonance between this presentation and the presentation of the foundation narratives contained within the *vitae*. Certainly one, the *Vita Bernardi*, created a teleologically-structured narrative that emphasised the finality of the foundation in the process of the hermit-preacher's life. Others, however, subordinated the role of the founder in their own foundation, either putting more onus on the secular founder (as with the *Vita Vitalis*), or on a disciple of the hermit-preacher (as with the *Vita Giraldi*). Some used the malleable notion of 'founder' to assign the foundation of houses to figures with whom they would not usually be associated. Baudri of Dol even presented Robert of Arbrissel's foundation as a response to scandal, and not something that would have naturally developed, had Robert had his way. Indeed, the Bishop of Dol dedicated few words to Fontevraud throughout the narrative and, in my opinion, thought little of Robert's attachment to the house.

Yet Robert of Arbrissel's connection to the monastery that he founded was forged in narrative some two years later, through a text written within Fontevraud by Andrew, with clear input from Abbess Petronilla of Chemillé. Here, it was not the foundation narrative that connected individual and institution, but his deathbed speech: Andrew used the power of the hermit-preachers' own words to express the deep commitment to and bond Robert had with the house, which were absent from Baudri of Dol's work. This was cemented by a protracted story concerning Robert's desire to be buried in Fontevraud, and those contemporaries who sought to keep his body for themselves. In this case, Andrew's account of the hermit-preacher was truly exceptional and should be recognised as such. Yet there were indications in other texts that all monastic communities understood the efficacy of the hermit-preachers' words in a deathbed setting, and both the *Vita Bernardi* and *Vita Giraldi* used the authorial voice of the holy man in such a way. We must recognise, therefore, the ability that the community had to 'speak' about institutional matters through their representation of the hermit-preacher in text.

Seen from a broader perspective, these arguments hint towards something bigger: that the hermit-preachers were not seen as institutionalised, or viewed as individuals who became subsumed by their foundation. Instead, what we see is the acknowledgement of a holy man as a founder, but not necessarily one who was irrevocably tied to an

establishment. This challenges a deeper narrative running through modern studies of monasticism, that of charisma to institutionalisation. Because of this, it is hard to escape a sense that this was an inevitable development. But Baudri of Dol is proof that contemporaries did not view the foundations of the hermit-preachers in this light. This is undoubtedly something that needs further exploration in scholarship, with a wider source base, and a greater array of holy figures and the houses that they established. Yet from the discussion presented here, I would suggest that we take more care when asserting the attachment of these individuals to institutions, and continue to explore how figures that we label as 'charismatic' were envisaged as interacting with the more regulated structures within Christendom.

Finally, we should note that it was members of these communities that the hermit-preachers founded who wrote or supplied information for the very texts we have studied over the previous five chapters. So in ending this chapter we have turned full circle back to the production of the very texts themselves. It is, consequently, a pertinent moment to move towards some conclusions that can be drawn from this study as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

Envisaging the 'Hermit-Preachers'

Writing a narrative work about a 'hermit-preacher' was a complex task because contemporaries not only had the genre of the texts to contend with – the hagiographic tropes, the pre-configured paradigms – but also others' memories, often alongside other memorial texts that had been written between the individual's death and their entry into the narrative historical record. Our authors had a lot of material to sift and evaluate as the communities in which they were embedded supplied them with information, stories, rumours, and certain agendas. Worried about the legitimacy of an institutional hierarchy? Request a text that described the founder instilling this hierarchy in the last week of his life, as Abbess Petronilla of Chemillé did with the *Vita Roberti altera*. Wanted a certain phrase to be perpetuated? Supply the author with a document in which the phrase was employed, as Savigny provided for Stephen of Fougères and the term *seminiverbius*. Consciously and unconsciously, these communities moulded how the hermit-preachers were written about, the language chosen, the anecdotes selected, and the meanings with which they were ascribed. And so the texts were, to a certain but significant degree, **community constructions**.

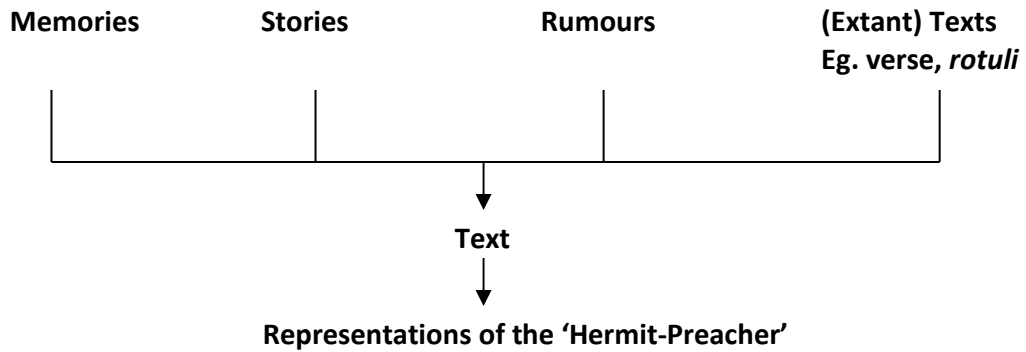
For the most part, these works presented themselves as chronological narratives of their subjects' lives. But there was no sense given that this information came from one person, one author. Indeed, our writers were often perfectly explicit about borrowing from others and even if they were not, most went to little effort to disguise their activities or smooth the whole thing over. Many written cues, for example, have showed us that this exercise was collaborative: phrases appeared throughout the texts such as 'arranging material', 'from the reports of reliable men', 'as it is reported'. Alongside these expressions – which should not be dismissed as hagiographic formulae – was the inclusion of other texts: encyclical letters to mortuary rolls, verse, memorial pieces of writing, sections from vernacular sources, letters from the clergy,

contemporary histories, the lives of the desert fathers, many biblical passages, and so on. Everything the community had at their disposal went into these narratives which projected specific visions of the hermit-preachers. This explains why certain hermit-preachers took on different characteristics in their textual representation. Savigny, for example, gave the encyclical letter from their founder's mortuary roll to the individual whom they had requested write his life. It is little wonder that Stephen of Fougères emphasised many of Vitalis' characteristics found within this text (the conversion of *meretrices* to take but one example) and provided 'narrativised' versions of them. Gerald of Sales was presented as particularly apostolic because the *scriptorium* of his monastery obviously had or had been lent a copy of the *Vita Malachiae*. Likewise, Geoffrey Grossus had a copy of the *Vita Antonii* to hand which is why Bernard of Tiron had stronger eremitic qualities in text than any of the others studied here. What is clear is that in the production of these sources, the authors and their communities were engaged in a process of sharing both information and resources, and that the specific availability of information, older texts, and other materials profoundly affected the resulting work. To my mind, the homogenising effect of the modern term 'hermit-preacher' has tended to conceal these variations.

Not everything discussed in this work, of course, is identifiable as a community construction nor was absolutely everything that was written dictated by the community. We cannot forget that several of our authors were eyewitnesses and probably used their own memories of the hermit-preachers. We must also remember that, on occasion, the authors inserted what was visibly their own opinion, as we saw in chapter three when Baudri of Dol and Stephen of Fougères used their subjects to bemoan the current state of the church hierarchy. Undeniably, the lived experience of our authors informed the content of these narratives. Nevertheless, the various ways in which the communities shaped the presentation of the hermit-preachers have surfaced and resurfaced throughout the preceding pages. In every concept explored here, it is possible to glean and illuminate the influence of the community, even in areas in which it might not seem so apparent at first. Naturally, the voices within the community did not have to be equal. Indeed, some may have been louder than others, which was surely the case with Petronilla of Chemillé and Andrew of Fontevraud's presentation of Robert of Arbrissel's deathbed speech, in which the abbess used the authoritative voice of the hermit-preacher to affirm her own authority. Whether loud or quiet though, these voices are hard to ignore.

Following this establishment of how the texts were created, what this work has presented in its structural organisation is the **process of a construction**: the development of the hermit-preacher from conversations between monks and nuns, and personal memories, to conceptual visions on parchment. Chapter one was the point of departure for this process, and demonstrated the complex sources with which the author had to work. The second chapter, on reputation and renown, illustrated how these ideas were both necessary for the hermit-preachers to be written about in

the first place and also how this reputation was a fundamental facet of the portrayal of these men, be it positive or negative. In this way, studying the concepts of reputation and renown allowed us to bridge the mechanics of source production and what was actually written down in the eventual narratives. The remaining three chapters dealt with the resultant textual representations of the hermit-preacher though linguistic, conceptual and community depictions. This process can be expressed simply as such:



From this diagram, one sees that what has emerged overall is the progression of a process; from scattered texts and memories we see a fusion of different images of these men. During this process, conflicts and different interests were essential, as certain images took precedence over others. One must not imagine that this was an entirely consensual process. These activities culminated in the literary representation of the hermit-preacher that we see in the narratives upon which this work has focused. As such, it would be tempting to conclude – when reading the texts as a whole – that these different aspects of the hermit-preachers coalesced if not into an absolute image in the final product, then certainly a more holistic one than that which existed previously: from many records, came one. Undoubtedly creating this more complete (and, for that matter, elaborated) image of the hermit-preacher was a fundamental ambition for those writing about these men, even for those who wrote about heretics. Our authors collected many different types of evidence and included things that they knew, had heard or read, in a single text. Consequently, if my work has created a narrative, it is a narrative of the source construction and resultant images, not that of the hermit-preachers' lives. This is a fundamental difference between my work and that which precedes it.

But, as I have emphasised throughout my work, one must be careful with narratives. Here, what may appear above to be a series of developments is obviously an oversimplification, and the linear nature of such a process is perhaps more the consequence of historical research methods, rather than the reality of the situation. The authors hardly collected all of the information before they started, collated it, and then sat down to write about the hermit-preachers. These texts – bar the letters of Bernard of Clairvaux – must have taken months if not years to write, especially something the length of the *Vita Bernardi*. We know that these works were edited over time and subject to interpolations and additions. Stephen of Fougères, as we have seen

for example, added a second book to the *Vita Vitalis* presumably after sending the first to the monks of Savigny for their approval. Similarly, Andrew of Fontevraud added a section now divided into three chapters to the end of his. Our authors, therefore, returned to their desks periodically to revise and refine. During this process the writers, or even other members of the monastery if we include later interpolations, included stories or passages – most probably as they heard them – and this resulted in some awkward phrasing or organisation of the text that others may have criticised in the past but is in fact evidence of their essentially piecemeal construction.

We must also differentiate between the creation of these texts and how they were intended to be used subsequently. If we accept the idea that *vitae*, for example, were designed for liturgical reading and that they were created in easily digestible chunks for this very purpose, which I think we must given the evidence, then what mattered to the medieval successors of the text was not the work as a whole but the distinct sections and stories therein. It was not so very different from the scattered fragments of evidence that existed prior to the construction of such a text. In both of these cases – before and after the creation of their *vitae* – the **recorded** knowledge of the hermit-preachers, for all intents and purposes, only existed in fragments. What this meant is that the period of creation itself (however short or long this was in reality) was a renegotiation of the identity of a particular individual.¹ As such, these men coalesced into a *fuller* image only during the time in which the text was produced.

Yet while we should acknowledge the fact that before and after the texts were created the written record of the hermit-preachers only existed in fragments, we should not let this misdirect us because we do not study the fragments but the whole. The amalgamation of different materials, added to the lived experience of the author – whether a contemporary or not – created something new, different from that which came before. The piecing together of different elements was a transformative act, completed by our authors. The whole, as St Augustine put it, was greater than the sum of its parts.

Intrinsically related to this point is the fact that nearly all of the constituent documents of which we know – those produced by the community themselves in any case – have been lost to the vicissitudes of time. We only have the Savigniac encyclical letter to Vitalis of Savigny's mortuary roll because Stephen of Fougères transcribed it. The only surviving evidence for the poetry in the *Vita Bernardi* is from the *Vita Bernardi* itself. The letter sent from the clergy of Le Mans to Henry of Lausanne only exists in the *Actus Pontificum*. Why? Permit me to speculate slightly for a moment. Both Savigny and Tiron preserved the *vitae* of their founders; other communities did the same. These were presumably used by that very same community in liturgy and perhaps in *lectio divina*. With these texts the communities thus had something usable that collected previously

¹ This idea arose from a workshop on Monasticisms and Mendicancies held at the University of Sheffield, in a collaborative project with the Universities of Leeds and York, November 2013.

disparate evidence. I would propose, then, that once the *vitae* had been written, the monks felt it unnecessary to preserve separately other written documents that had *already* been preserved by the actions of the hagiography's author: the *vita* now took precedence. Whether the constituent elements were deliberately thrown away, left to disintegrate, or recycled and reused for other works, we do not and perhaps will never know. Monks and nuns could certainly be ambivalent about the preservation of documents, but they were also fiercely aware that they could manipulate texts to accord with the images of their subjects that they wished to present, as happened with the truncation of Andrew of Fontevraud's *Vita Roberti altera*.² The point is, however, that *vitae* exist today, other texts do not. There was, therefore, something exceptional about these narratives which meant they were saved, preserved over time. Furthermore, if this hypothesis is correct, then it would not be that dissimilar to the use (or, rather, disuse) of charters once a cartulary had been drafted. In such a way, monastic practices across different textual genres were intriguingly similar, if once records had been collated the original could be discarded or ignored. This point surely necessitates future scholarship.

What this study has also shown is that within these patchwork texts, beneath the level of production, lay the **power of concepts, words, and language**, which had the ability to elucidate, exhort, dissuade, define, persuade, suggest, and shape the representation of the hermit-preachers as recorded for posterity. Allow me to reiterate a few examples. Calling a hermit-preacher *seminiverbius* was not just an eloquent way of saying that they were a preacher or that they scattered words: it was an identification with one of the greatest Christian preachers, and thus invested these men with an extraordinary level of authority. This was, as we have seen, particularly poignant for the monks of Savigny. Similarly, using the verb *reformare* to denote peacemaking indicates a specific understanding about language of reform, and different from that which we currently accept in scholarship. Even refusing to use certain words, such as *congregatio* or *communitas* to describe the following of a hermit-preacher deemed heretical or a 'community' of hermits living in a forest, suggests that terms designated very specific things and were not transferable. In the end, concepts were not just ideas, words not just units of language.

Our authors clearly understood the power of words themselves, how could they not? First of all, they were all writing about people who converted others through this very medium. Even the words of heretics had an undeniable effect. Words had the ability to inspire, to transform lives, or to corrupt others. Though these narratives might have emphasised or even privileged performance over the content of preaching, as we saw in chapter two, those who wrote about the hermit-preachers knew that the word was efficacious. For those who wrote about the hermit-preachers who were venerated,

² For this ambivalence see Antonio Sennis, 'The Power of Time: Looking at the Past in Medieval Monasteries', in Anne Müller and Karen Stöber (eds), *Self-representation of Medieval Religious Communities: The British Isles in Context* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 307–25.

words were paramount in the creation of their community because the preaching of the hermit-preachers created the nascent monastery. Seen as intercessors, moreover, this power originated from God because He bestowed grace upon the hermit-preachers. These men were conduits for the divine, and in this context it is little wonder that words of grace were said to have come from Robert of Arbrissel's saliva. We must not forget that ultimately these men were seen as spiritual beings. The words of heretics were no less powerful, but they were far more dangerous. 'At the voice of one heretic', Bernard of Clairvaux exclaimed about those who followed Henry of Lausanne, 'the voices of the prophets and apostles have been silenced in them...'³ Their words, moreover, were thought to have spread and engendered hatred of the clergy, as we saw in chapter three. Viewed in this way, one can hardly deny that those who wrote about these individuals were well aware of the ability of words to affect, even control, others.

Secondly, the authors inserted (or reconstructed, or imagined) the speech of the hermit-preachers within their narratives, and to my mind this was done particularly judiciously. Let us briefly reconsider the words of the hermit-preachers within these documents that have appeared throughout the previous chapters. Only once was a sermon thoroughly quoted: that of Bernard of Tiron in Coutances. This did not contain Bernard's spiritual ideals but instead justified his right to preach as a monk, traditionally thought to be dead to the world. In a context where monastic involvement within the world was challenged, particularly preaching, Geoffrey Grossus shrewdly deployed a counterpoint through the words of his subject, which seemingly vindicated Bernard's activities. Other than this, the words of the hermit-preachers were sparse throughout the texts until we reach their deathbed scenes, as we saw in chapter five. Here, the speech of these men was more crucial for those texts written within the confines of the cloister, whose authors were more interested in the hermit-preacher as 'founder' than as preacher. In the *Vita Bernardi* and the *Vita Giraldi*, for example, the words of the holy men were used to express their commitment to the community and ensured the continuation of community values after their deaths. For Andrew of Fontevraud, Robert of Arbrissel's deathbed farewell was even more important because it secured the future institutional hierarchy of his own monastery and, strikingly, suggests the influence of an authoritative abess. That this direct speech was inserted, when the preached message of the hermit-preachers was not, is surely indicative of both an acknowledgement of its authority and, pertinently, community priorities.

Thirdly, and finally, the authors believed that they were writing for posterity, and expected their texts to be read: this was a conscious transmission of knowledge. It was, moreover, an *imperative* transmission of knowledge. For those writing *vitae*, their work was vital proof of God's agency in the world through the mediation of holy men. Geoffrey Grossus wrote that contemporaries were exhorted to write the deeds of holy

³ 'Ad vocem unius haeretici siluerunt in eo omnes prophetae et apostolicae voces...', Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Ep. 241', col. 434C.

men and transmit collections of them for posterity. If people failed to do so, the Tironensian monk said, they committed an offence and their salvation was jeopardised. Both the *Vita Bernardi* and the *Vita Vitalis* contained the same biblical verse in their first few lines: 'For it is good to hide the secret of a king: but honourable to reveal and confess the works of God.'⁴ Again, we must not overlook the spiritual dimensions of saintly figures. Conversely, for those writing about condemned men, announcing and revealing their supposed perfidy was pressing in order for the relevant authorities to combat it. There were, therefore, two very different reasons for transmission, but what should be highlighted is that writing these narratives always included these imperatives of transmission. Indeed, those writing were not wrong in their assumptions of posterity; we saw in chapter one that the works were preserved either by the community in which they were written or by those to whom the text was directed. What this demonstrates is that those responsible for the documents understood the gravity of the written medium. Without devaluing the importance of oral traditions – because these were still undeniably significant given the importance of discussion between the authors and their informers which I have highlighted – in these cases the written word had both authority and power. Integral to this very power was the creation of symbolism through words. One gets the impression that the authors knew the importance of choosing and employing the 'right' ones at the right time.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that every word was used consciously, that there was a deliberate intention behind each and every word choice. There is very little way of knowing exactly how self-aware our authors were when they used specific language, because they did not tell us. Occasionally it appears as if a word was used with some deliberation: the constant use of the term *fama* in the *Vita Bernardi* for instance, or *restituere* in the *Vita Vitalis*, both not prevalent in other texts, seen in chapters two and three respectively, display penchants for specific words. Yet in many ways it matters little whether these were employed intentionally as any language – whether employed with consideration or written with less heed – is evidence of a linguistic and social milieu or even of a common discourse.

Critically, this helps to explain why so much of the same language was replicated time and time again not just in hagiographies but also, more significantly, in those texts written about the condemned hermit-preachers. *Nudus nudum*, as we have seen, was employed to describe Henry of Lausanne as well as to depict those individuals who were venerated. Given this point, I would like to take a moment to make some brief reflections upon those hermit-preachers labelled heretical.

By and large, the texts written about Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys were created by the same mechanisms as explained above, though their authors wrote as part of the wider community of the Christian faithful rather than members of smaller

⁴ Tobit. 12:7.

communities such as monasteries. In turn, the texts themselves reflected this, with their focus on larger concerns such as the authority of the clergy, and the emphasis on the peace of the church. In each work, moreover, the actions of these men were envisaged in direct opposition to the holy and, importantly, described in such similar – but inverted – ways to other hermit-preachers that this appeared to be deliberate. Such ‘binaries’ though, appear somewhat of a double standard to modern eyes, since different texts chastised and venerated the same activities. I cannot deny that this is, in hindsight, a product of a fine line between heresy and orthodoxy; certainly this idea is supported by Robert of Arbrissel who veered dangerously close to heresy, as has been shown by the letters of Marbode of Rennes and Geoffrey of Vendôme. But this was also related to the fact that those who wrote about heretics wanted to show that these individuals mimicked orthodoxy. How else could one explain why Henry was originally given a licence to preach in the city of Le Mans? The similar depictions of the hermit-preachers were thus also the result of the conception that the heretics were imposters of what was holy. Nevertheless, this thesis has not been a study of heresy and orthodoxy but one of the creation of individuals in text. Reinforcing the labels of heresy, which had been ascribed to Henry and Peter prior to the production of these works, was just one aspect of this construction. From this, let us return to reflect upon the language in the sources and address our own modern employment of terminology.

If the language utilised by those who wrote about the hermit-preachers bears testimony to their linguistic milieu, then the current language that both past and present scholars use to describe these men rests, somewhat lamentably, upon our own historiographical one. Charisma, reform and the *vita apostolica*: these are three terms that are perpetually associated with the hermit-preachers, kept alive by their continual usage; our vocabulary is historiographically, and in the case of charisma sociologically, determined. Yet none of these terms so readily employed in scholarship have been subject to any serious or sustained analysis, at least not in direct relation to all of the hermit-preachers studied here. Exploring the linguistics alongside the concepts, however, has shown these words are not only fundamentally misleading but also in one case, to put it bluntly, incorrect. The concept of charisma has overshadowed any discussion of renown and reputation which were far more important concepts in the (temporal) characterisation of these men. I question, moreover, the appropriateness of the term's utilisation, considering it is so imbued with Weberian notions, corrupted from its Pauline sense. Further exploration of this point, however, is for future scholarship. With regard to the term reform, it has been illustrated that the transformative powers of these men, particularly in converting others and restoring peace between feuding individuals, was more prevalent and had far greater significance than any grand concept of reform stemming from the papacy. The hermit-preachers were hardly construed as leaders of the ‘Gregorian’ or papal reform movement. Even if the central tenets were expressed, such as by Baudri of Dol when describing Robert of Arbrissel's time as archpriest to Sylvester of Rennes, it is difficult to conclude that this was a definitive ideal, from which the hermit-preachers' activities

absolutely sprung. Finally, applying the term *vita apostolica* to these men is simply inappropriate as well as inaccurate, since the hermit-preachers were imbued with complex **notions of apostolicity**, but never seen as living the *vita apostolica*. Since no scholar has ever noted the complete absence of this phrase itself, and hence accepted the paradigm of spirituality with which we frame these men, the hesitancy and nuance in the narratives has been completely overlooked. What we have found throughout this study, therefore, is that a different vocabulary is needed to speak of these men in any meaningful way.

With this in mind, we must surely revisit our own modern day narratives of the twelfth century, and, as such, there are much broader lessons to be learnt from this work, extending far beyond an exploration of the hermit-preachers in and of themselves. The reason for this lies in one of the historiographical strands that I outlined in the introduction to this study whose ideas have informed many areas examined above: the inclusion of the hermit-preachers in grand teleological narratives spanning from the 'Gregorian' reform (or however one wants to term it) to the advent of the friars, the Fourth Lateran Council and beyond. These men are made into units in our historical trajectory of the twelfth century and this is often dependent upon three concepts studied in this work, reform, the *vita apostolica*, and institutionalisation. But let us compare what we have learnt above with Jacques de Vitry's assessment of Francis of Assisi's followers in the thirteenth century: '[they] strove so hard to renew (*reformare*) the religious way of life, the poverty and humility of the early Church in themselves...that they tried to follow not only the instructions but also the advice put forth in the Gospel completely, in deliberate imitation of the apostolic life.'⁵ Here, Jacques used explicit vocabulary of the type we do not see in those texts explored here, and conceptions that have been explored here were out rightly asserted. We have seen nothing of the sort in this thesis. In light of this then, the links made between the hermit-preachers and later movements and developments of the church need serious review in future work.

I hope that because of this analysis, therefore, we will finally start to move beyond Herbert Grundmann's work, especially with regard to the *vita apostolica*. I also hope that it will no longer be the case that the hermit-preachers are always qualified with the adjective charismatic, at least not unthinkingly. Linked to this, the whole paradigm of charisma to institutionalisation clearly needs deep reflection, particularly regarding its order, as it is obvious with regard to the hermit-preachers that their 'charisma' was a retroactive, textually-manufactured, product of the community. Weber's model does not need to be completely dismissed, but its influence does need to be acknowledged and problematised more conscientiously in future. Lastly, we should learn to be more

⁵ Cited in Gert Melville, 'Knowledge of the Origins: Constructing Identity and Ordering Monastic Life in the Middle Ages', in Joseph Canning, Edmund J. King, and Martial Staub (eds), *Knowledge, Discipline and Power in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of David Luscombe* (Leiden, 2011), p. 57.

cautious in classifying the hermit-preachers as part of some great reform movement. If there is one overarching point that the reader should take from this thesis, therefore, it is that reifying or homogenising terminology conceals many unstudied and important phenomena, as it has done in the case of the 'hermit-preachers'.

None of these conclusions would be possible were it not for my approach towards the hermit-preachers as **textual figures** rather than historical realities. Throughout this work, I have not sought the historical reality of the hermit-preacher but rather how his being was construed in text. Obviously, I do not deny the historical fact that these men existed; they were not purely literary figures or empty vessels for certain ideas. But attempting to discover the historical 'truth' within the texts has, in the first instance, created illusionary figures that have been mistaken for 'historical' ones, with serious consequences for the accuracy of our understanding of the period. Even more importantly, this has lured historians away from, in my opinion, frankly far more interesting questions about how twelfth-century communities documented exceptional figures – those who were seen to stand far above others, or far below in the case of those considered heretical. Indeed, once we embark upon this line of questioning, we find that many commonly held assumptions about these men start to fall apart in the wake of a more complex reading of the sources and an understanding that all we ever see of the hermit-preachers is an image, filtered through many lenses. In posing different questions therefore, this work has provided a better understanding of how the representations of such men were produced as part of a complex interplay of sources, memory, and (culturally embedded) language.

My work is not meant to be the definitive word on the hermit-preachers, as I stated in the introduction to this thesis. There are clearly areas that need further care, attention, and research and I would bring to the reader's attention the under-explored links between apostolicism and prophecy in particular, as a study of these would add much nuance to our comprehension of expressions of spirituality in medieval narratives. Furthermore, what I have presented throughout this study is primarily the image of the hermit-preachers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But memory and legacy are never fixed. Dávid Falvai, for example, has shown how the literary representations of thirteenth-century female saints underwent ongoing revisions until the fifteenth century.⁶ Over the centuries following those studied here, then, the depictions of these men must have evolved as did the needs of the communities. As such, one could certainly take this research further, and study how certain visions were either perpetuated or forgotten beyond these centuries, and explore how these were re-worked and reshaped over time.

⁶ Dávid Falvai, 'Memory and Hagiography: The Formation of the Memory of Three Thirteenth-Century Female Saints', in Lucie Doležalová (ed.), *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2010), 347–64.

We would not be dealing just with the communities' visions of the hermit-preachers either, as once historians' interest in these men was piqued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the images of these individuals must have shifted in alignment with historical concerns. In including Bernard of Tiron in his seventeenth-century compendium of the saints of Normandy, for example, Artur Dumoustier inserted two passages from the *Vita Bernardi*, both of which are still frequently cited in works about the hermit-preacher.⁷ Indeed, one of these passages, which detailed the preaching of Robert of Arbrissel, Bernard of Tiron, and Vitalis of Savigny, has been called the 'classical image of the hermit-preacher'.⁸ Accordingly, repetition of certain passages has undoubtedly 'popularised' specific portrayals of these men. These studies are hence responsible for creating their own textual constructions of these men while examining images created in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A comprehensive examination of the imagining of the hermit-preachers as forged in text from the Middle Ages to modernity would thus contribute much to our appreciation of how the dynamics of memory, legacy, and textual construction shift in an ever-changing (historical and historiographical) world.

⁷ Artur Dumoustier, *Travaux sur l'histoire de Normandie*, BN Lat. 10051, f. 106. He transcribed chap. 6.50, and chap. 11.95, the former on the preaching of Bernard, Vitalis, and Robert, and the latter on Bernard's renown and *fama*.

⁸ Thompson, 'Origins', p. 6.

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