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Abhandlungen

The Prologue to the *Historia calamitatum*
and the "Authenticity Question"*

by

C. S. Jaeger (Bryn Mawr College, USA)

The author of the *Historia calamitatum*, who either was or claimed to be Peter Abelard, opened his work with a few lines of introduction explaining its purpose and setting forth its contents. It reads as follows:¹

Sepe humanos affectus aut provocant aut mitigant amplius exempla quam verba. Unde post nonnullam sermonis ad presentem habitum consolationem, de ipsis calamitatum mearum experientis consolatoriam ad absentem scribere decrevi, ut in comparatione mearum tuas aut nullas aut modicas temptationes recognoscas et tolerabilius feras.

This unadorned bit of prose would not merit much attention in Abelard studies,² except for the fact that recently the ascription to Abelard has been questioned with meticulous argumentation based on the supposition of extensive historical contradictions within the *Historia*.³ In this context the prologue to the work looms large.

* Postscript: The present uncertainty about the authenticity of Abelard's autobiography rests on the works of John Benton cited in note 3 below. At a recent conference in Trier (Internationale Studententage – Petrus Abaelardus, 16–18 April, 1979), Benton, in response above all to criticism from Fr. Chrysogonus Waddell, retracted some central points in his own studies and conceded the authenticity of the greater part of the *Historia*. And so the present study, written almost a year earlier, is in the position of running off doors that were opened during its approach. Its appearance may still serve the purpose of warding off future doubts about the authenticity of the *Historia*, providing a commentary on its prologue, and offering some guide lines and bibliographical references for others engaged in authenticity disputes.

¹ Citations from *Historia Calamitatum: Texte critique avec une introduction*. Ed. J. Monfrin. Paris 1959, here p. 63 (= *Bibliothèque des Textes Philosophiques*).

² For a convenient survey of the "authenticity question" up to 1972, see Peter von Moos, *Mittelalterforschung und Ideologiekritik: Der Gelehrtenstreit um Heloise*. Munich 1974. (= *Kritische Information*, Nr. 15). Unfortunately von Moos' book appeared just at the front of a wave of interest in the authenticity of the *Historia* and personal letters. Besides the studies by Benton and Ercoli (below, n. 3), J. Monfrin, *Le problème de l'authenticité de la correspondance d'Abélard et d'Héloïse*. In: *Pierre Abélard / Pierre le Vénérable: Les courants philosophiques, littéraires et artistiques en occident au milieu du XIIe siècle, Abbaye de Cluny, 1972*. Paris 1975, pp. 409-424 (= *Colloques internationaux du CNRS*, nr. 546; henceforth cited as *Pierre Abélard / Pierre le Vénérable*); Mary McLaughlin, *The Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise and Abelard's other Writings for the Paraclete*. (Paper delivered at the 1974 meeting of the American Historical Association in a section devoted to the authenticity controversy); Peter Dronke, *Abelard and Heloise in Medieval Testimonies*. Glasgow 1976 (= *W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture*, Nr. 26).

³ J. F. Benton, *Fraud, Fiction and Borrowing in the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise*. In: *Pierre Abélard / Pierre le Vénérable*, pp. 469-506. Benton's arguments have met with some opposition. See the comments following his article (ibid., pp. 507-511). Also those of Dronke, *Medieval Testimonies*, p. liif. The stiffest opposition comes from Fr. Chrysogonus Waddell in still unpublished research refuting some of Benton's central points. Support has been scattered and faint. See Hubert Silvestre, *Reflexions sur la thèse de J. F. Benton relative au dossier Abélard-Héloïse*. In *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 44 (1977), pp. 211-216. Also J. Szövényfi, *Peter Abelard's Hymnarius Paraclitensis: An annotated Edition with Introduction*. Albany, New York and Brookline, Mass. 1975, vol. 1, p.

If Peter Abelard wrote it, then he also wrote a letter of consolation narrating his calamities, *consolatoriam de ipsis calamitatibus mearum experimentis*, which, considering the undisputed unity of style, structure, intent and thought of that work⁴, and the many features which link it to Abelard,⁵ could only be the *Historia calamitatum*. Whoever wrote the preface wrote all, or nearly all, the body of the text.

The opening sentence of the *Historia* comprises a formulation, with a few individual traits, of a commonplace idea: *plus movent exempla quam verba*. The idea has

15. (= *Medieval Classics: Texts and Studies*, vol. 2); D. W. Robertson. Review of von Moos, *Mittelalterforschung*. In: *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 21 (1978), p. 197. More recently Benton and F. P. Ercoli have published the results of a word count study broadly comparing the frequency of occurrence of common words and constructions in the *Historia*, genuine works of Abelard, works of other 12th century writers and of Gregory the Great: *The Style of the "Historia calamitatum": A Preliminary Test of the Authenticity of the Correspondence Attributed to Abelard and Heloise*. In: *Viator* 6 (1975), pp. 59–86. They find that certain words and constructions occur much more frequently in the *Historia* than in the other works sampled. Benton and Ercoli are cautious and modest in evaluating their findings. They suggest only that these findings make a broader study advisable. They follow the methodology of F. Mosteller and D. Wallace in their statistical study of the Federalist Papers. This study was successful in confirming conventional wisdom about the ascription of certain papers to certain authors. Mosteller – Wallace, and following them Benton – Ercoli, select common "function words" for sampling – connectives, particles, adverbs – words and constructions which are not "context sensitive." The question of methodology in this area is a tower of Babel. A reading of the studies collected by D. Erdman and E. Fogel, *Evidence for Authorship: Essays on Problems in Attribution*. Ithaca, New York 1966, will bear out my metaphor. The endless squabbles about approach presented there will commend the broadest eclecticism in the study of attribution. There is a school of thought opposed to the sampling methods of Mosteller-Wallace, Benton-Ercoli. It began with G. U. Yule's classic work, *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary*. Cambridge, England 1944. Yule finds nouns and adjectives the most reliable markers of an author's identity. This preference is born out in the impressive and valuable study by M. P. Brown, *The Authentic Writings of Ignatius: A Study of Linguistic Criteria*. Durham, North Carolina 1963. More recently G. Herdan in the second edition of his awesome work *The Advanced Theory of Language as Choice and Chance*. New York 1966 (= *Kommunikation und Kybernetik in Einzeldarstellungen*, vol. 4), vigorously attacks the reliance on "function words" as markers of style. See his chapter, "The Fallacy of Determining Style by Differences in Frequency of a few Grammar ('Function') Words," *ibid.*, p. 171, pp. 712ff. Herdan stresses that wide variations in the use of common words indicate nothing about authorship, since they can represent conscious choice on the part of the same author. If so, then Benton and Ercoli's results must be regarded as inconclusive. If the large scale computer analysis of the *Historia* recommended by Benton and Ercoli is nonetheless undertaken, it could certainly profit from the debate on the authenticity of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, conveniently summarized by G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*. Oxford 1976, p. 11ff.

⁴ Cf. Benton, *Fraud Fiction and Borrowing*, p. 497: "The stylistic and thematic unity of the *Historia calamitatum* suggests to me that later additions cannot make up more than a small fraction of the whole letter." And *loc. cit.*: "... it is hard to believe that most of it was not written by one author." The literary unity of the *Historia* has been one of the most studied aspects of that work in recent years. E. g. R. W. Southern, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. In: *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies*. Oxford 1970, pp. 86–104; D. W. Robertson, *Abelard and Heloise*. New York 1972, esp. pp. 99ff.; P. von Moos, *Palatini quaestio quasi peregrini*. In: *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 9 (1974), pp. 124–158. Against this approach and its presuppositions, see Dronke, *Medieval Testimonies*, p. 11 et passim.

⁵ Von Moos could write in 1974: „Der radikale Zweifel an der Authentizität der gesamten *Historia calamitatum* dürfte seit der kommentierten Mitteilung der *Epistola Petri Abaelardi contra Bernhardum* durch R. Klibansky endgültig begraben sein, da sich darin bei aller Berücksichtigung topischer Elemente doch erstaunliche sprachliche und inhaltliche Parallelen zur Autobiographie finden lassen...“ (*Mittelalterforschung*, p. 87). Recent studies that connect the *Historia* in thought, temperament and intellectual obligation with Abelard are M. McLaughlin, *Abelard as Autobiographer: The Motive and Meaning of his "Story of Calamities"*. In: *Speculum* 42 (1967), pp. 463–488; McLaughlin, *Peter Abelard and the Dignity of Women: Twelfth Century "Feminism" in Theory and Practice*. In: *Pierre Abélard / Pierre le Vénérable*, pp. 287–333; D. K. Frank, *Abelard as Imitator of Christ*. In: *Viator* 1 (1970), pp. 107–113; P. von Moos, *Lucan und Abelard*. In: *Hommages à André Boutémy*. Ed. G. Cambier. Brussels 1976, pp. 413–443 (= *Collections Latomus*, vgl. 145).

direct counterparts in antiquity.⁶ It is fairly common among patristic writers,⁷ but Gregory the Great brought it into prominence⁸. Of the frequent instances of the motif in Gregory,⁹ two have particular affinities with the opening of the *Historia*.

He writes in the *Moralia in Job*, Bk. 25:

... quia ne divina praecepta nos terreat, antiquorum patrum nos exempla confortant, et ex eorum comparatione facere nos posse praesumimus, quod ex nostra imbecillitate formidamus. (PL 77, 329B–C)

and in the prologue to Bk. 1 of the *Dialogi*:

... sicut nonnulli, quos ad amorem patriae coelestis plus exempla quam praedicationes succendunt. Fit vero plerumque audientis animo duplex adiutorium in exemplis patrum, quia si ad amorem venturae vitae ex praecedentium comparatione accenditur, etiam si se esse aliquid existimat, dum meliora de aliis cognoverit, humiliatur. (PL 77, 153A)

In both cases statements are opposed to examples to the favor of the latter; the writer then commends comparison of examples to the lives of the readers for whom they are intended. This mirrors very closely the structure of the opening of the *Historia*.

In the 12th century the motif occurs often enough and in prominent enough works to indicate that it is not the private property of an individual author in that age.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the thought on which it is based and the particular phrasing in which it is couched in the *Historia* have a place in Abelard's writings. The beginning of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans shows some clear similarities. Scripture, it begins, like a rhetorical oration, intends either to instruct or to move the listener:¹¹

⁶ See the citations in H. Kornhardt, *Exemplum: Eine bedeutungsgeschichtliche Studie*. Göttingen 1936, p. 3ff., 59ff. The idea of Seneca that "in admonishing anyone we begin with precepts and end with examples" (*Ad Marciam de consolatione*, 2, 1) has an interesting affinity with the opening of the *Historia*, but had next to no resonance in the Middle Ages. See the commentary of P. von Moos, *Consolatio: Studien zur mittellateinischen Trostliteratur über den Tod und zum Problem der christlichen Trauer*. Munich 1971, vol. 3, p. 287 (= *Münstersche Mittelalterschriften*, vol. 3).

⁷ Cf. Ambrose, *PL* 16, 207B; *PL* 17, 236C, 254C. Jerome, *PL* 26, 618 B.

⁸ On the "exemplum" tradition in the Middle Ages and Gregory's influence on it, see J.-Th. Welter, *L'Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du moyen âge*. Paris & Toulouse 1927, p. 14f. (= *Bibliothèque d'histoire Ecclésiastique de France*).

⁹ Cf. *PL* 76, 326C, 328A, 318C (three times), 329B, 329C, 330A. This is a small sampling. In the *Moralia* alone the motif occurs 26 times. For these citations I am most indebted to Professor Gerhard Ladner, who, along with two student assistants at UCLA, has prepared a computerized text of the *Moralia*, from which I have drawn this information. In preparing this text, Ladner had the help of Dr. David Packard, whose expertise was used in providing the information given above. The genesis of this project and Packard's role in it are described in Ladner's article, *Gregory the Great and Gregory VII*. In: *Viator* 4 (1973), pp. 1–31.

¹⁰ Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo 59 in Cant. Sancti Bernardi Opera*. Ed. Leclercq, Talbot, Rochais. Rome 1958, vol. 2, p. 137; Giraldus Cambrensis, *Gemma Ecclesiastica*. Ed. J. F. Dimrock. London 1877, vol. 2, p. 6 (= *Rolls Series*, vol. 7). For a discussion of the motif in prologues to historical works, see G. Simon, *Untersuchungen zur Topik der Widmungsbriefe mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreiber*. In: *Archiv für Diplomatik* 5/6 (1959/60), pp. 103–105. The commendation of *exempla* at the beginning of a saint's life is also common (cf. St. Bernard, *Vita Malachiae, Opera*, vol. 3, p. 307). On the interesting subject of hagiographic aspects of the *Historia calamitatum*, see Th. Renna, *St. Bernard and Abelard as Hagiographers* (to appear in the journal *Cîteaux*).

¹¹ *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica*. Ed. E. M. Buytaert. Brepols 1969, vol. 1, p. 41 (= *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, vol. 11). The opening of this commentary is adapted from Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* (cf. *PL* 34, 245). But the threefold division into precepts, admonitions and examples, is Abelard's work.

In Veteri nempe Testamento lex, quae in quinque libris Moysi continetur, praecepta Domini primum docet. Deinde prophetiae vel historiae cum ceteris scripturis, ad ea quae tam praecepta erant, opere complenda adhortantur et affectus hominum ad obediendum praeceptis commovent.

When the prophets and patriarchs, he continues, saw that precepts alone did not suffice to procure the obedience of the people, they resorted first to admonitions and warnings, then to examples: *Exempla quoque ex historiis necessarium erat adiungi ...* The subject of *commovent* is *historiae*, or *exempla ex historiis* (as the subject of *adhortantur* is *prophetiae*). Hence the thought can be paraphrased, *exempla affectus hominum commovent plus quam praecepta*. This very nearly repeats the opening sentence of the *Historia*. In both texts the unillustrated verbal utterance takes second position to examples; both texts speak of "stirring human emotions" (*Hist.*: *hominos affectus*; *Comm. Rom.*: *affectus hominum*).¹²

The opposition of examples to words has a place in Abelard's thought. Words are the first step in moral instruction; examples are its fulfillment:

*At vero Dominum decebat hoc suae orationis exemplo nos maxime ad patientiae virtutem et ad summam dilectionis exhibitionem exhortari, ut quod ipse docuerat verbis... proprio exemplo nobis exhiberet in opere.*¹³

The opposition of words to examples as a turn of phrase is also quite common in Abelard's works.¹⁴ This opposition is consonant with a more general idea in Abelard: the rejection of frail words in favor of some higher means of conveying truth. Language, he maintains, is a man-made tool, invented as an emergency measure to stave off sheer chaos and arbitrariness in the communication of thought;¹⁵ there are more reliable means of generating understanding. A spectrum of ideas in Abelard's works breaks from this single thought: *res* as opposed to *verba*;¹⁶ *intellectus* or *sen-*

¹² I believe this wording is characteristic of Abelard. Cf. *Comm. Rom.*, p. 280: *Ipsa quidem verba, quae proferimus, affectum nostrum et devotionem intellectu suo in Deum excitant et commovent...* Hymn 111, (Ed. Szöverffy, vol. 2, p. 231): *Et humana/Moves corda/Signis et prodigiis*. There is a clear resonance in *Historia*, p. 100: *Quippe quo feminarum sexus est infirmior, tanto earum inopia miserabilior facile humanos commovent affectus...* As for *Exempla provocant*, cf. Abelard's Hymn 119, (Ed. Szöverffy, vol. 2, p. 241): *Verbis nos instruunt, / exemplis provocant...* Cf. Ep. 3 (old numbering), *The Personal Letters between Abelard and Heloise*. Ed. J. T. Muckle. In: *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953), p. 76: *... ut exemplo maxime superiorum ad orationis instantiam inferiores provocarentur*

¹³ *Peter Abelard's Ethics*. Ed. & Trans. D. E. Luscombe. Oxford 1971, p. 60 (= *Oxford Medieval Texts*). Also Ep. 9, *PL* 178, 325B, *ibid.*, 333B; Sermon 13, *PL* 178, 488B; Sermon 17, *PL* 178, 504C; Sermon 33, *PL* 178, 594A.

¹⁴ His Ep. 9 begins and ends with it (*PL* 178, 325B, 336A). Also *PL* 178, 239A, 396B, 488B; *Ethics*, p. 106; *ibid.*, p. 120; Ep. 8, Ed. T. P. McLaughlin, *Abelard's Rule for Religious Women*. In: *Mediaeval Studies* 18 (1956), p. 284. Cf. *Historia*, p. 108; Ep. 2 (Ed. Muckle), p. 73. Though the phrase *tam exempla quam verba* is commonplace, this list (by no means complete) is somewhat telling. By comparison, the opposition of words to examples occurs only once in St. Bernard's 86 Sermons on the Song of Songs and the *De consideratione* (citation in note 10, above).

¹⁵ Cf. Ep. 8 (Ed. McLaughlin), p. 245; *Theologia Christiana*. Ed. Buytaert, vol. 2, p. 198, p. 230, p. 237, p. 245 (= *Corpus Christianorum Cont. Med.*, vol. 12); *Theologia "Scholarium"* (*Inro. ad Theologiam*), *PL* 178, 1063D-64A; *Expos. in Hex.*, *PL* 178, 781; Sermon 1, *PL* 178, 386B. On the subject see Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel*. Stuttgart 1959, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 632.

¹⁶ The most impressive formulation of the opposition of *res-verba* as an idea (not merely a turn of phrase) is in the *Theologia Christiana*, p. 198; also *ibid.*, p. 230, p. 266, p. 268; *Apologia "ne iuxta Boethianum"*, *Opera Theol.* Ed. Buytaert, vol. 1, p. 359; *Comm. Rom.*, p. 78, p. 188, pp. 243-244, p. 301; *Probl. Hel.*, *PL* 178, 709A; *Sic et Non*, *PL* 178, 1343B; Sermon 30f, *PL* 178, 568D; Sermon 33, *PL* 178, 604B. Also, in works of questioned authenticity: *Historia*, p. 67, line 148, line 153; *ibid.*, p.

sus-verba;¹⁷ *facta* or *opera-verba*.¹⁸ The motif already discussed, *exempla-verba*, has its place here as well.

Peter Abelard, then, might well have written the opening sentence of the *Historia*. But this is the most we can conclude from these observations. The fact that the conventional motif seems to share its particular wording only with other uses of it in Abelard's works is at best worth noting. There may be abundant instances of the phrase *exempla provocant* or *commovent humanos affectus* in other Latin works which I have overlooked.¹⁹ The fact that there are some noteworthy parallels to the opening of the *Historia* in Gregory the Great likewise points vaguely towards Abelard. Considering his close ties to Gregory, both in style and thought,²⁰ would not be at all surprising if he had adapted a phrase or a train of thought he found in the *Moralia* or the *Dialogi*. But that does not distinguish him sharply from many other writers.

It is possible to speak with more assurance about the second part of the prologue.²¹ He writes the letter of consolation to his friend, *...ut in comparatione mearum tuus aut nullas aut modicas temptationes recognoscas et tolerabilis feras*. The author

71, p. 99, p. 106; Ep. 2 (Ed. Muckle), p. 68, p. 69; Ep. 3, p. 74, p. 75; Ep. 5, p. 88. For discussions of "things and words" in the 12th century, see M.-D. Chenu, *Théologie symbolique et exégèse scolastique aux XIe et XIIe siècles*. In: *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck*. Gembloux 1951, esp. p. 520; also the important article by F. Ohly, *Vom geistigen Sinn des Wortes im Mittelalter*. In: *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 89 (1959), pp. 1-24; and on this topic in quite a different context, with a useful bibliography, H. Steger, *Philologia Musica: Sprachzeichen, Bild und Sache im literarisch-musikalischen Leben des Mittelalters: Lire, Harfe, Roue und Fidel*. Munich 1971, p. 62ff. (= *Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften*, vol. 2).

¹⁷ On this motif as a feature of Abelard's style, see L. Engels, *Abelard écrivain*. In: *Peter Abelard: Proceedings of the International Conference, Louvain, May 10-12, 1971*. Ed. E. Buytaert. The Hague 1974, p. 19ff. On the place of the idea in Abelard's thought, L.-M. De Rijk, *La signification de la proposition (dicium propositionis) chez Abelard*. In: *Pierre Abelard / Pierre le Vénéral*, pp. 547-555, and J. Jolivet, *Arts du langage et théologie chez Abelard*. Paris 1969, p. 71ff. In addition to the citations given by Engels, I would point out the following: *Theol. Christ.*, p. 270; Sermon 19, *PL* 178, 514A; *Inro. ad Theol.*, *PL* 178, 1052D; *Expos. Symb. Apost.*, *PL* 178, 619B; *Petrus Abaelardus Dialectica*. Ed. L. De Rijk. Assen 1970, p. 92. And in works of questioned authenticity: *Historia*, p. 68, p. 83, p. 84, p. 85; Ep. 8 (Ed. McLaughlin), p. 286; *Le poème adressé par Abelard à son fils Astralabe*. Ed. B. Hauréau. Paris 1893, p. 157 (= *Notices et extraits de quelques manuscrits latins de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. 34, nr. 2).

¹⁸ *Theol. Christ.*, p. 161; *Comm. Rom.*, p. 78; Ep. 12, *PL* 178, 346B; Ep. 13, *PL* 178, 356B; Sermon 27, *PL* 178, 550C; Sermon 29, *PL* 178, 562D; *Carmen ad Astralabium*, p. 166, p. 171, p. 177, p. 180, p. 182.

¹⁹ Though I doubt it, H. Walther lists only one occurrence of it: *Proverbia Sententiaeque Lainitatis Medii Aevi*. Göttingen 1963, vol. 1, p. 1067: *Exemplo melius quam verbo quisque docetur*. The only close parallel I have found is in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Part II, i, Quaeest. 34, Art. 1: *In operationibus enim et passionibus humanis, in quibus experientia plurimum valet, magis movent exempla quam verba*.

²⁰ On Abelard and Gregory, see Engels, *Abelard écrivain*, p. 29f., p. 36f. On Gregory and Abelard's monastic thought, J. Leclercq, *Ad ipsam sophiam Christum: Le régime monastique d'Abelard*. In: *Rév. d'ascétique et de mystique* 46 (1970), p. 163. On the stylistic dependency of the *Historia* on Gregory, see Muckle, *The Personal Letters*, pp. 52-54, esp. p. 52: "... they [i. e. the *Historia* and personal letters] resemble the style of St. Gregory's *Moralia* so closely as to make one suspect it was derived from that work."

²¹ Its beginning, the motif "presence-absence", is not important for my purpose, but see the discussion by Peter von Moos, *Palatini quaestio*, (above, note 4), p. 126f. On the concept of the letter as a continuation of a conversation in absence of one partner, *sermo absentium*, see G. Constable, *Letters and Letter Collections*. Turnholt 1976, p. 13f. p. 19 (= *Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge occidental*, vol. 17).

restates this purpose in the same formulation near the end of the work: *...ut, sicut in exordio praefatus sum epistolae, oppressionem tuam in comparatione mearum aut nullam aut modicam esse judices...* (p. 107). The phrase recurs, almost word for word, in Abelard's Sermon 12, though here Christ offers the consoling example of the greater sufferer to the martyrs, the lesser sufferers:

*Conferant martyres quae passi sunt, et videant in comparatione
Dominicae passionis nulla esse vel parva quae passi sum. (PL 178, 483A)*

Similar phrasings are to be found here and there in Abelard's works. For instance, he writes in the *Apologia "Universis"*: *...cum pauca scripserim, parva, vel, ad comparationem aliorum, nulla...* (PL 178, 105). The phrase *aut nulla aut parva* is common enough in Abelard,²² but also elsewhere. Hence a formulation in the preface to the *Historia* corresponds very closely to a formulation in Abelard's Sermon 12, a work whose authorship cannot be contested. This correspondence must be carefully analysed.

First it should be noted that the prologue to the *Historia* is an integral part of that work and could not have been added later onto the body of the work.²³ Not only does the work begin and end with a variant of the phrase, *ut in comparatione mearum tuas aut nullas aut modicas temptationes recognoscas*,²⁴ but the perspective it suggests is one element that lends a structural unity to the work as a whole. Abelard's calamities intensify progressively in the course of the *Historia*. Occasionally he looks back, compares his past with his present sufferings, and finds the former "either nothing or only slight." After his defeat at Soissons, he compares his suffering with the pain caused by his castration:

Conferebam cum his quae in corpore passus olim fueram quanta nunc sustinerem; et omnium hominum me estimabam miserimum. Parvam illam ducebam proditionem in comparatione huius injuriae... (p. 89)

At St. Gildas he compares the barrenness of his life with the fruits of his earlier teaching (p. 99). The comparison brings him nearly to the point of despair, and he no longer considers his previous torments as anything at all (*...prios molestias quasi jam nullas reputans...* --p. 100). Hence the second sentence of the *Historia* states a narrative perspective from which the author regarded Abelard's calamities in the body of the work: comparison of sufferings. Heloise, or the author of the first letter ascribed to her, perceived this structure and reiterated it in summing up the *Historia*: (You fulfilled what you promised your friend in the beginning of your letter) *...ut in*

²² PL 178, 489C, 559A, 603A; *Hymn. Paraclit. Praef.* (Ed. Szövérfly), vol. 2, p. 10.

²³ As for instance Aegidius of Paris in the early 13th century added a prologue to the *Aurora* of Petrus Riga, with the justification, *Vulnificabat eum defectio magna libellum / Cui neque quae decuit ianua prima fuit (Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata. Notre Dame, Indiana 1965, vol. 1, p. 12 [= University of Notre Dame Publications in Mediaeval Studies, vol 19].) Works written without a prologue apparently aroused the impression of incompleteness, hence invited tampering. Robert of Melun wrote to his friend Gilbert Foliot urging him to add a prologue to his commentary on the Song of Songs, and Gilbert agrees to do so, *ut sic operis completio digna foret* (PL 202, 1148A).*

²⁴ On the construction *ut* plus subjunctive in the *Historia* and personal letters, see Muckle, *The Personal Letters*, p. 53f.; Benton and Ercoli, *The Style of the "Historia"*, p. 72, p. 79ff.

comparatione tuarum suas molestias nullas vel parvas reputaret (Ep. 2, ed. Muckle, p. 68). This consistent perspective confirms the assumption that was my point of departure: the ascription of all or most of the *Historia* hangs on the ascription of its prologue.

The purpose of the *Historia*, according to its preface, is to console: "Abelard" wants to console an absent friend (whose identity is a mystery) suffering temptations and grief by telling him the story of his own tribulations, so that by comparison, those of the friend will appear trivial. The treatments of this statement of purpose by Georg Misch, R. W. Southern and Peter von Moos connect the *Historia* with the traditions of consolatory rhetoric.²⁵ But with the exception of Misch, these scholars place the statement of purpose in the prologue only very obliquely within that tradition. For my purposes it is important to determine to what extent this opening is conventional, since if the formulation in question is purely conventional, then the occurrence of the same phrase in Abelard's Sermon 12 can be accounted for as a chance of common literary obligation, and we cannot conclude that Abelard wrote both passages. However, the statement of purpose in the preface to the *Historia* is undoubtedly not a conventional turn of phrase, at home among the topoi of consolatory rhetoric. Peter von Moos in his monumental work, *Consolatio*, mentions this preface in his discussion of the category which he calls "Paradigmentrost", consolation through examples. He describes this category as follows: "Der Gedanke an die 'anderen', die Gleiches erleiden, soll den Trauernden aus seiner Isoliertheit erlösen..." (*Consolatio*, vol. 3, p. 115). The conventional formulation of this type of consolation in the Middle Ages derived from Seneca, *Ad Polybium de consolatione* I, 4:

*Maximum ergo solacium est cogitare id sibi accidisse quod omnes ante se passi sunt omnesque passuri; et ideo mihi videtur rerum natura, quod gravissimum fecerat, commune fecisse, ut crudelitate fati consolaretur aequalitas. (Cited in *Consolatio*, vol. 3, p. 110)*

The opening of the *Historia* is obliquely related to this figure, since it promises consolation through examples. But the turn of thought, "Take comfort. My sufferings are far worse than yours. By comparison yours are trivial," would be decidedly out of place in consolatory rhetoric. It would be an unfeeling consoler who tried to convince the bereaved that his sorrow amounted to nothing! and there is a certain cold egotism in regaling a mourner with tales of one's own tribulations.²⁶ "Paradigmentrost" tries to persuade the mourner that his troubles, though great, have been faced and overcome by others; it is radically egalitarian (cf. *aequalitas* in the passage from Seneca), and the preface to the *Historia* is certainly not. Von Moos is entirely right

²⁵ G. Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie*. Frankfurt 1959, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 550: "Hier kommt eine antike philosophische Tradition zum Vorschein..."; Southern, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 89-90: "It was necessary to say something like this [in consolatory epistles]: 'your misfortunes, however great, have all happened to other and better men.'"

²⁶ And in fact the reaction of Heloise to this "consolation" suggests that it accomplished the opposite of its intended effect. Cf. Ep. 2 (Ed. Muckle), p. 68: *Tanto dolores meos amplius renovarunt, [i. e. the story of Abelard's suffering] quanto diligentius singula expresserunt et eo magis auxerunt, quo in te adhuc pericula crescere retulisti ut omnes pariter de vita tua desperare cogamur...* Ep. 4, p. 77: *... quibus consolationis remedium afferre debuisti, desolationem auxisti, et quas mitigare debueras exciasti lacrymas.*

in mentioning the prologue to the *Historia* in connection with "Paradigmentrost", though for obvious reasons he was not interested, in *Consolatio*, in Abelard's highly individualistic variation of the figure.^{26a}

The notion that consolation or edification comes from the comparison of greater with lesser examples is traceable directly to the thought and teaching of Peter Abelard. An idea that recurs frequently in his work is that the saints and Biblical figures provide examples against which the reader can measure himself. In his Sermon 29, he holds up the figure of Susanna as a model,

... ut in comparatione, si quae sacri propositi feminae minus quam noverint habeant, de suo defectu erubescant. (PL 178, 555D)

In Sermon 26, the purity of the Virgin is compared with that of the faithful:

Esi enim multi amici Dei dicantur... comparatione tamen Dominicae Matris... nulla est fidelium anima immunis a macula. (PL 178, 543B)

In the *Problemata Heloissae*, he says that Paul commended first the example of the saints, then that of Christ to the Ephesians, ...ut ejus comparatione humiliores ac ferventiores in ejus dilectione teneamur (XXIX, PL 178, 714B). In Sermon 33, he says that Job was shown examples of just and continent men leading the solitary life, so that by comparison with his wedded life he would be restrained from pride (...ut eorum scilicet comparatione se compescat ab elatione -- PL 178, 582C). In excusing the sinner-Pope Marcellinus, in Sermon 27, he points to the examples of yet worse sins committed by the apostles:

Quod si post Petrum, Paulum quoque summum coapostolum ejus Marcellino conferamus, levissimam Marcellini culpam in hac transgressionem censebimus. (PL 178, 548B-C)

These various examples of the fruits of comparison (gotten only from a scanning of the works for the Paraclete -- there are more instances²⁷) are typical of Abelard's use of figures from Scripture in teaching the nuns of the Paraclete. In the letter of direction for the Paraclete, he admonishes them to read Scripture, since it is a "mirror of the soul" in which the reader can see reflected the beauty or ugliness of her own soul.²⁸ And it is just this process in which he invites them to take part, when for instance he commends the figure of Susanna to them so that by comparison with her virtues, they will be ashamed of their own faults (555D). There is consolation for the saints in the comparison of their own sufferings with those of Christ (483A), and in

^{26a} The rhetorical *locus* of this prologue is, as Peter von Moos kindly pointed out to me, *exemplum impar, ex maiore ad minus dictum*. See: H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*. Munich 1960, vol. 1, pp. 230-231, parag. 420b.

²⁷ Cf. Ep. 7, *The Letter of Heloise on Religious Life and Abelard's First Reply*. Ed. J. T. Muckle. In: *Mediaeval Studies* 17 (1955), p. 271, p. 272. Abelard's fondness for the construction in *comparatione* plus genitive in the context of self evaluation shows again the influence of Gregory the Great. Cf. *Moralia*, PL 75, 990C; PL 76, 21A, 81B, 121D, 156D, to mention only a few instances.

²⁸ Ep. 8, (Ed. McLaughlin), p. 285: *Speculum animae scripturam sacram constat esse, in quam quilibet legendo vivens, intelligendo proficiens, morum suorum pulchritudinem cognoscit vel deformitatem apprehendit, ut illam videlicet augere, hanc studeat removere*. Heloise restates the principle in her prefatory letter to the *Problemata*, PL 178, 678B: *Quibus [viz. to us at the Paraclete] saepius intantum Scripturae sacrae doctrinam commendasti, ut eam animae speculum dicens, quo decor eius vel deformitas cognoscatur ... Clearly comparison of self to Biblical examples was an important part of Abelard's teaching on the Scriptures. He has impressed it on them saepius.*

the same way there is consolation for Abelard's unnamed friend in comparing his own calamities with those of Abelard. Hence the second sentence of the prologue to the *Historia* not only employs phrasing which Abelard also used, but the process of comparison it urges is closely tied to Abelard's thought.

It is difficult to account for such correspondences by any other explanation than that the passages under discussion all come from Abelard. But we should seek another explanation anyway. The kind of textual evidence just presented would normally count as proof of Abelard's authorship, at least of the passage in question,^{28b} but the implications of John Benton's studies -- however one evaluates the historical evidence he brings forward -- force us to be sceptical of any simple evaluation of conventional philological evidence for authenticity. In order to account for the historical discrepancies he finds in the *Historia* and for various inconsistencies and contradictions in the letters of direction, Benton proposes the hypothesis,

"that sometime in the 13th century a forger, or a pair of forgers, motivated by a desire to modify the institutions of the Paraclete, compiled and reworked the eight letters we can read today in ms. T, making use of both authentic writings of Abelard ... and a twelfth century 'autobiographical' letter which was itself a work of imaginative fiction, produced perhaps by some skilled student of the *ars dictaminis*." (*Fraud, Fiction and Borrowing*, p. 472).

The presence of authentic Abelardian material in these letters might be accounted for by the idea that "a forger both covered his tracks and lightened the load of the amount he had to create by filling as much as a half of his book with extracts from the writings of Abelard" (p. 491). The many traces of Abelard's thought and style in the *Historia*, then, may be the result of imitation by that skilled student of the *ars dictaminis*, either lending authenticity to his false ascription or paying homage to an admired master. With such a suspicion about the composition of the *Historia* in the air, stylistic arguments for authenticity, like the ones I have presented, must be tested with caution and scepticism.^{28a}

The following bit of evidence linking the *Historia* to Abelard illustrates the problems of evaluating stylistic evidence, and can help us formulate some criteria for evidence useful in determining the authenticity of an individual passage. In the *Historia* we are told that Abelard's students gathered around him and mourned after his castration, and the author exclaims,

...quanta stupeat ammiratione, quanta se affligeret lamentatione, quanto me clamore vexarent, quanto planctu perturbarent, difficile, immo impossibile est exprimi. (p. 80)

Abelard used this syntactic frame in his Sermon 29 to describe the anguish of the relatives of Susanna as they watch her being led off to her trial:

...quanto pudore confusi, quantis lacrymis perfusi ejus innocentiam deplorarent, quis commorare vel cogitare non plorando queat? (PL 178, 559A)

^{28b} A good example of the use of traditional inner-textual material to determine authenticity is Van den Eynde's treatment of Abelard's sermons: *Le recueil des sermons de Pierre Abélard*. In: *Antonianum* 37 (1962), pp. 17-54. Brown's study of the Ignatian corpus of letters (above, note 3) is important for testing and validating stylistic criteria in authenticity disputes. See also Yale, *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary* (above, note 3), pp. 221-280, where he tests the ascriptions of the *De imitatione Christi* to Thomas à Kempis and Jean Gerson with an eye to working out valid stylistic criteria for determining authenticity.

Stylistically these passages are nearly identical. Besides the anaphora, *quanto... quanto*, there are in both cases rhyming verbs following the conjunction: *ammirazione... lamentatione... vexarent... perturbarent* in the one, *confusi... perfusi* in the other.²⁹ The main clause in both cases, besides meaning practically the same thing, makes use of an intensifying repetition: *difficile, immo impossibile; commemorare vel cogitare*. Both are loosely metrical.³⁰ Also striking is the similarity in context. In a moment of tragic crisis, many friends gather in public around the tragic figure and weep and lament:

Sermon 29: *Deducitur illa ... ad iudicium cum parentibus et filiis, et universis cognatis suis.* (558D) ... *Flebant non solum sui, sed omnes qui noverant eam*³¹ ... *In medium matrona sancta trahitur...* (559A)
Historia: Mane autem facto, tota ad me civitas congregata ... intolerabilibus me lamentis et ejulationibus cruciabant... (p. 80)

Abelard admired and perhaps felt some sense of identification with the figure of Susanna, one that is expressed in works of unquestioned authenticity,³² and in the *Historia*.³³ It may be that these affinities encouraged him to cast the "lament for Abelard" in the same syntactic frame as the "lament for Susanna" (or vice-versa, depending on which was written first³⁴). But on the other hand, the near identity of these passages can be neatly accounted for by the fraud-fiction hypothesis. The "lament for Abelard" could be the work of a clever student, perhaps a student of Abelard, someone who knew his works well. Possibly Pseudo-Abelard worked with a copy of the master's sermons in hand, read the scene of Susanna's arrest, connected this scene with the lamenting for Abelard's castration (in which he may even have taken part³⁵) and conceived a similar scene to include in his fictive biography. He then lifted the syntax from that passage³⁶ and used comparable rhyme and metre. Such

²⁹ Cf. Engels, *Abelard écrivain*, p. 33: "... il est hors de doute que, chez Abelard, celle-ci [viz. rhyme] n'est pas seulement un résultat fortuit, mais, très souvent, un effet voulu..."

³⁰ On Abelard and the *cursus*, see K. Polheim, *Die lateinische Reimprosa*. Berlin 1925, p. 418; Engels, *Abelard écrivain*, p. 33, note 95: "Abelard me semble pratiquer sur une assez grande échelle la théorie du 'cursus'". But also Benton and Ercoli, *The Style of the "Historia"*, p. 75, note 44.

³¹ Cf. Daniel, 13, 33.

³² In Ep. 9, he commends the figure of Susanna to the nuns of the Paraclete as an example of a learned woman living in "the world" who because of her learning was able to "condemn the priests and judges who had condemned her" (*PL* 178, 332D), and he devotes an entire sermon to her (Sermon 29, *PL* 178, 555-564).

³³ When Abelard is condemned at Soissons, a certain Thierry, *scholaris magister*, perhaps Thierry of Chartres, upbraids the judges in the words of young Daniel berating the judges of Susanna. Cf. *Historia*, p. 88.

³⁴ The *terminus post quem* of the *Historia* is 1131, since the author mentions the papal privilege for the founding of the Paraclete issued in that year. Van den Eynde dates the sermons some time after 1129/1130 (*Le recueil des sermons*, p. 20), but before 1135/36 (*ibid.*, p. 54). See also Van den Eynde, *Chronologie des écrits d'Abelard à Héloïse*. In: *Antonianum* 37 (1962), pp. 337-349.

³⁵ There may be some confirmation of the statement in the *Historia* that not only many of Abelard's students, but "the entire city" mourned for him after his castration, in the letter of Fulk of Deuil, written shortly after that event. Cf. *PL* 178, 374C-D (among Abelard's letters, Ep. 16): *Plangit ergo hoc tuum vulnus et damnum ... liberalium clericorum ac nobilium clericorum multitudo. Plangunt cives, civitatis hoc dedecus reputantes... Quid singularum feminarum referam planctum... Tantus ergo omnium luctus exstitit, ut melius mihi videaris te debere velle perisise quam servasse quod perit.*

³⁶ And in fact liked the formulation well enough to use it throughout the *Historia*. Cf. p. 74 (lines 379-383): *O quantus in hoc cognoscendo dolor avunculi! quantus in separatione amantium dolor ipsorum!*

a process of imitation is not improbable. Stylistic reliance on an admired master was part and parcel of the study of composition in the 12th century; John of Salisbury indicated this in his description of the teaching methods of Bernard of Chartres.³⁷ This could apply to the imitation of a contemporary or near-contemporary model, as well as to a classical or patristic one. The superb new edition of the *Architrenius* of Johannes de Hauvilla by Paul Schmidt³⁸ allows us to observe the process of imitation in some detail. It becomes clear in Schmidt's extraordinarily detailed citations of quotations and echoes of other writers in the *Architrenius* that a poet imitated rare wording, polished phrasing, striking syntactic formulations. John of Hauville, needless to say, was an eclectic imitator. Though he borrowed heavily from Alain of Lille, he did not of course consistently imitate the style and thought of a single author. The author of the *Historia*, by contrast, did consistently reproduce the style and thought of Peter Abelard, and if this work was a forgery, then it stands alone in the Middle Ages.³⁹ Pseudo-Abelard, if he existed, was a writer whose stylistic virtuosity is equal to, or rather far superior to, that of Abelard, since Abelard gained a reputation for *suavitas eloquii* (*PL* 178, 372B, Ep. 16) by producing naturally and, as it were, unreflectingly his own style, whereas Pseudo-Abelard re-produced in a long and impressive work the style and thought of another man by calling on special talents which permitted him to do so! Be that as it may, in dealing with individual passages, evidence like that of the two just discussed must be put aside in determining whether one passage is ge-

quanta sum erubescencia confusus! quanta contritione super afflictione puelle sum afflictus! quantos meroris ipsa de verecundia mea sustinuit estus! Loc. cit., lines 400-402: ...quanto estuaret dolore, quanto afficeretur pudore, nemo nisi experiendo cognosceret. Ibid., p. 89: Quanto autem dolore estuarem, quanta erubescencia confunderer, quanta desperatione perurbarer, sentire tunc potui, proferre non possum.

³⁷ *Metalogicon*, I, 24.

³⁸ Johannes de Hauvilla, *Architrenius*, Ed. P. G. Schmidt. Munich 1974.

³⁹ On literary forgeries in the Middle Ages, see H. Fuhrmann, *Einfluss und Verbreitung der pseudoisidorischen Fälschungen von ihrem Auftauchen bis in die neuere Zeit*. Stuttgart 1972, vol. 1, p. 73 ff. (= *MGH*, Schriften, vol. 24). The work by Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum: Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung*. Munich 1971 (= *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 1, pt. 2) treats only antiquity and early Christianity. An interesting case in vernacular literature is the imitation-forgery of Wolfram von Eschenbach by Albrecht von Scharfenberg in his work which has come to be called *Der jüngere Tiurel*. There is a fine recent study of the literary dependence of Albrecht on his model by Linda Parshall, *The Art of Narration in Wolfram's Parzival and Albrecht's Jüngerer Tiurel*. Dissertation, London. The study will appear in the Cambridge series of German monographs, *Anglica-Germanica*. Parshall shows that Albrecht, for all his borrowings and imitation, comes nowhere near successfully concealing his stylistic identity, much to his own disadvantage. This points up a principle of both literary forgeries and imitations in the Middle Ages: the style and temperament of the forger-imitator are never submerged in those of his model. According to M. P. Brown (above, note 3), not even Pseudo-Ignatius, certainly a more clever imitator than Nicholas of Clairvaux, and in the judgment of Brown a more educated man and more accomplished stylist than his model Ignatius, took pains to conceal his idiosyncrasies. Cf. *The Authentic Writings of Ignatius*, p. 46, p. 52, p. 95. The so called "Trierer Stilübungen" offer a good example of this principle from the 12th century. See the study by Norbert Höing, *Die 'Trierer Stilübungen': Ein Denkmal der Frühzeit Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossas. I. Teil*. In: *Archiv für Diplomatik* 1 (1955), pp. 257-359. They consist of three letters composed by a single author and ascribed by him to Frederick Barbarossa, Archbishop Hillin of Trier, and Pope Hadrian IV. While the enterprising author characterized each purported writer by varying ideas and attitudes, the style of the three shows no variation whatsoever. Höing can confirm the judgment of Jaffé, "... dass die drei Schreiben überhaupt die gleiche Ausdrucksweise haben und dieselbe Sprache sprechen" (Part I., p. 289).

nuine or not, since the very features which argue for authenticity also lend probability to the fiction-imitation hypothesis. We can conclude beyond all reasonable doubt that one passage was modeled on the other, but not that the same author wrote both. The "lament for Susanna" is impressive and conspicuous, both for its drama and for its rhetorical coloration, and an imitator would have been drawn to just such a passage.

The only kind of stylistic features useful for determining the authenticity of an individual passage in a work suspected of being a literary imitation are phrasings and syntactic formulations which are unique and inconspicuous, combine two or more unimportant and unrelated phrases and occur infrequently, preferably only once, in genuine works.⁴⁰ The recurrence of such a formulation in the *Historia* would place the authenticity of the passage in which it occurs beyond all reasonable doubt. The phrase in Sermon 12, *videant in comparatione dominicae passionis nulla esse vel parvae quae passi sunt*, would seem to fit these criteria. The combination of the inconspicuous *in comparatione* plus the genitive⁴¹ with the homely *nulla vel parva* is wholly idiosyncratic. A forger might have hit on one of these features (particularly *in comparatione* plus the genitive, since it is somewhat prominent in other works), but that he could have combined them just as Abelard combined them in Sermon 12 is out of the question.⁴² Nor is it likely that he would have hit on that passage to imitate: neither the context in Sermon 12⁴³ nor the wording commended it as a model.

If the correspondences in question are the result of imitation, then the motive was not aesthetic. Hence we must seek another explanation, one that can account for Pseudo-Abelard's interest in the dross of literary expression rather than the gold. One possibility is that a clever forger reproduced even insignificant details of phrasing and syntax in order to lend an air of authenticity to his work. The idea of imitating an author's style in order to support a false ascription was not wholly unknown. Wolfgang Speyer can point to several examples in antiquity, and to one in early Christian writings, namely Pseudo-Ignatius.⁴⁴ In the high Middle Ages one can point to the case of Nicholas of Clairvaux, the personal secretary of St. Bernard. Nicholas, a man of some learning and a skilled stylist, allegedly took advantage of Bernard's trust to forge letters in the abbot's name, using his seal without Bernard's knowl-

⁴⁰ Hence common words and phrases in Abelard, like *tanto-quanto*, *detrimentum famae*, *vehementer*, *res ipsa clamat*, *fragilior sexus* – the kind of evidence on which the stylistic study of the *Historia* has relied since Schmeidler – are quite useless, even as clues, where there is a suspicion of literary imitation. The study of the authenticity of this work would profit from dropping these traditional means altogether. The first task of anyone who suspects its authenticity is to show what vocabulary (particularly nouns and adjectives) Pseudo-Abelard employs but does not share in common with Abelard. However, the irreplaceable basis of an authenticity study must be a thorough knowledge of Abelard as a writer and of the institutional history of the 12th century. In this I heartily agree with von Moos, *Mittelalterforschung*, p. 90, parag. 41.1.

⁴¹ I have not found a single occurrence of *in comparatione* plus genitive in Bernard's 86 sermons on the Song of Songs, and only one occurrence in his *De consideratione*.

⁴² The combination never occurs in Gregory's *Moralia*.

⁴³ Unless of course we assume that the author of the *Historia* connected Abelard with Christ. But who is more likely to have made this connection than Abelard! Cf. Frank, *Abelard as Imitator of Christ* (above, note 5).

⁴⁴ *Die literarische Fälschung*, p. 82. But there were of course other instances. Cf. Constable, *Letters and Letter Collections*, p. 50.

edge. Bernard dismissed him from his service and wrote a vitriolic letter to Pope Eugenius denouncing his former friend (Ep. 298, *PL* 182, 500-501).⁴⁵ Bernard's charge is that Nicholas wrote false letters using the abbot's seal, but – if the charge was true at all, – it may be that he also "authenticated" the letters by imitating Bernard's style. He did so in authorized letters. In 1146 Bernard had him write to the English nobility encouraging them to take up the cross in the 2nd crusade. This task called for hortatory skill, and Nicholas relied more on that of Bernard than on his own. He modeled his letter on Bernard's Epist. 363 (*PL* 182, 564ff.) written with the same purpose shortly before to the clergy and people of Eastern France. Here then is a case in which "a skilled student of the *ars dictaminis*" with alleged inclinations to forgery imitated a near-contemporary model, and we can assume that there would have been little difference between the "honest" and dishonest imitation of Bernard's style. How then did Nicholas operate? He opens with some turgid Biblical phrasing borrowed directly from Bernard:

Nicholas:

*Commota est et contremuit terra,
quia Rex coeli perdidit terram suam,
terram ubi steterunt pedes ejus.* (Inter
Bern. Ep. 468, *PL* 182, 671B)

Some further correspondences:

Vides et dissimulat ille magnus providentiae oculus, ut videat si est intelligens aut requirens Deum, si sit qui doleat vicem ejus... (*PL* 182, 671C)

Et quia terra vestra fecunda est virorum fortium, et militari juventute referta, decet vos inter primos, et cum primis ad tantum sanctum opus accedere, et armatos ascendere ad serviendum Deo viventibus. Eia igitur, fortissimi milites, accingimini; et qui non gladium habet, emat eum. (*PL* 182, 672B)

Bernard:

Commota est siquidem et contremuit terra, quia coepit Deus coeli perdere terram suam. (*PL* 182, 565A)

Respicit [Deus] filios hominum, si forte sit qui intelligat, et requirat, et doleat vicem ejus. (566A)

Quia ergo facunda est virorum fortium terra vestra, et robusta noscitur juventute referta, sicut laus est vestra in universo mundo, et virtutis vestrae fama replevit universum orbem; accingimini et vos viriliter, et felicia arma accipite Christiani nominis zelo. (566C)

These borrowings fall under the heading of literary imitation. Nicholas copies stirring and memorable phrasing. He lifts passages which serve the same purpose in his letter as they served in its model. Nicholas did not pick up insignificant phrasing from his model. He regarded the opening as critical, and so he set the earth shaking in the first sentence; Bernard had opened with protestations of humility.

⁴⁵ For a summary of Nicholas' career and his problems with Bernard, see G. Constable, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*. Cambridge, Mass. 1967, vol. 2, pp. 316-330.

No firm conclusions can be drawn from comparing these borrowings with the opening of the *Historia*. We cannot say that by analogy to Nicholas of Clairvaux Pseudo-Abelard ought also to have wished to put some more prominent phrasing of his model at the beginning of his work. Each literary forgery is a work of individual genius; no conventions and rules apply which would make the *modus operandi* of forgers predictable. The comparison does however force us again to ask the question: if the opening of the *Historia* rests on imitation of Abelard, then what was the forger's motive? Nicholas was clearly aware that the opening of his work was a critical point: it puts forth dramatically the famed eloquence of Bernard. But the author of the *Historia* at this point produced the phrase, ... *humanos affectus aut provocant aut mitigant amplius exempla quam verba*, part commonplace, part Abelard; and he recalled or hit on the phrase in Sermon 12: *videant comparatione dominicae passionis nulla esse vel parva quae passi sunt*, which is inconspicuous and unique in genuine works. We can only conclude that if the prologue to the *Historia* was composed in imitation of Abelard, then this imitation was wholly unmotivated and disinterested. It does not lend grace, elegance or force to the work; it does not assure the contemporary reader of Abelard's authorship.

Furthermore we can say with certainty that no sensibility existed in the high Middle Ages to which a process of subtle and detailed imitation would have responded. It does not require the reproduction of minute details of genuine phrasing in order to convince even learned readers in the 12th century of the authenticity of a forged work. The critical attitude to forgeries was strictly limited,⁴⁶ and even where some sense of the philological integrity of a text is evinced, it is restricted to striking features of style and the most crude sort of anachronism.⁴⁷ And here we are speaking of official documents, texts where there is a powerful practical incentive for determining authenticity. To imagine a literary forger reproducing unmemorable details of phrasing as part of his plan to defraud is to confuse modern philological sensibilities with medieval ones. When James McPherson set out to write the poems of a bard named Ossian in the 18th century, he reckoned with sceptics of the stamp of Dr. Johnson, and this anticipation of sharp critical abilities, combined with the personal genius of the forger, brought forth a forgery brilliantly reproducing an alien style. If the "forger" of the *Historia calamitatum* tried to lend authenticity to his handiwork by modelling part of his prologue on an insignificant clause in Abelard's Sermon 12, then he was covering tracks that no one in his day would have dreamed of looking for, and he was performing a feat that none of his contemporaries could have appreciated, except of course Abelard.

If we are to avoid making the weaker argument the stronger, then we must put aside the idea that the prologue to the *Historia* is based on skillful imitation of Peter

⁴⁶ Cf. Fuhrmann, *Die Pseudo-Isidorischen Fälschungen*, vol. 1, pp. 112-136.

⁴⁷ See H. Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenkritik für Deutschland und Italien*. Leipzig 1912, vol. 1, pp. 15-19; Fuhrmann, *Pseudo-Isidor*, vol. 1, pp. 123-127.

Abelard.⁴⁸ The correspondences in question are much more satisfactorily accounted for by supposing that Peter Abelard wrote that prologue. Mary McLaughlin has shown that there is a unity of thought, motive and style underlying Abelard's writings for the Paraclete.⁴⁹ The echoes of Abelard's style in the opening to the *Historia* are undoubtedly part of that unity. My conclusion is that this preface constitutes a statement, the authenticity of which is beyond all reasonable doubt, that Abelard wrote a letter of consolation narrating his own calamities in order to comfort an absent friend and to convince him of the comparative triviality of his sufferings. That letter is of course the *Historia calamitatum*.

⁴⁸ It might be objected that the possibility of imitation, likel or not, gains strength because of the evidence of historical inaccuracy in the text of the *Historia*; we must account for anachronisms and contradictions somehow. I for one am not convinced that the historical evidence against its authenticity is best accounted for by a hypothesis of forgery and fiction. The means of corrupting a genuine text are many and well known: scribal error, wilful tampering, large scale additions. But the means of producing a fictional autobiography which bears many traces -- both obvious and subtle -- of the style, temperament and thought of the man to whom it is ascribed, are extremely limited; very few litterati in the Middle Ages would have commanded or would even have dreamed of mustering such means.

⁴⁹ In: *Peter Abelard and the Dignity of Women* (above, note 5).