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THE MATERIALS SOURCES  
AND METHODS of  
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

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circulated and discussed during the week between 11 May, for which the prelates were summoned, and 18 May, when the formal session took place. At least one prelate must have taken the text home with him. That text was copied by the compiler of the *Collectio Claudiana*, under the mistaken impression that he had before him a convenient summary of the canons of the council of Westminster, to set beside those of the council of Tours (1163) and the third lateran council (1179). His mistake preserved a document of ephemeral practical use and no legal authority: a type of which very few survive from the early middle ages. For the historian, this document is a source of information about the problems and interests of the bishops of England in the 1170s, about their meeting at Westminster in 1175, about their relations with the pope and about the origin of some papal legislation. These questions are beyond the scope of this article. I hope to return to them, and to some of the unsolved problems connected with this material, on another occasion.

## ADDENDUM

In *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* ns 3 (1973) pp 52–5, S. Chodorow analyses Paris, Bibl. nationale ms lat 587, fols 133<sup>r</sup>–4<sup>v</sup>. Its readings strengthen the argument of this article by showing JL 13794, about lepers, with address to the archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans, but they modify it by attaching the second part of JL 13976 (*ACL* 20.4), about jews, to JL 13810, with address to the archbishop alone.

A SOCIO-LINGUISTIC APPROACH  
TO THE LATIN MIDDLE AGES

by MICHAEL RICHTER

There are two lights, a greater and a smaller one, that is to say, the wiser men and the less wise; the day signifies the wise men, and the night the uninformed. The greater light illuminates the day, for the wiser men instruct those who are more able. What is Augustine if not a sun in the Church? to whom does he speak if not to the wise? You, however, the priests, knowing less, are the smaller light, you illuminate the night, for you preside over the laity who do not know the Scripture and remain in the darkness of ignorance . . . The other section of the clergy who do not preside over the people of God are the stars, because although they cannot shine by doctrine, do nevertheless shine by their work onto the earth, that is, the Church.<sup>1</sup>

These sentences are taken from an anonymous sermon 'On the Priesthood', based on Genesis i, 16–20. The author of the sermon showed the priests their place in society: even though they did not belong to the intellectual élite, their profession and knowledge separated them clearly from the darkness of night in which the laity was imprisoned. In the course of the twelfth century, this passage from Genesis underwent an exegetical change and was used, from then onwards, to explain the political relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. What did remain was the notion of a fundamental difference between clergy and laity, and nowhere was this notion better expressed than in our sermon to the priests: *quodcunque lumen estis, lumen estis tamen*.<sup>2</sup> In true medieval fashion, our author equated knowledge with the knowledge of the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> He also stressed the fundamental difference between

<sup>1</sup> PL 147 (1879) col 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Compare Yves M.-J. Congar: 'The Fathers, and our Western Middle Ages which took this outlook from St Augustine and Cassiodorus, realised with what resources they had, a unity of wisdom between all knowledge and life itself, under the sovereignty of the Bible', *Tradition and Traditions*, trans Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (London 1966) pp 66–7.

light and darkness, between the clergy and the laity. While theology emphasises that ordination makes the clergy by virtue of its office into the mediator between God and man, this was not the main concern of our author. Instead, he voiced the belief, widely shared by the clergy generally, that knowledge as such was the prerogative of the clergy. Such an attitude raises the question of how the clergy was able to achieve monopoly of knowledge, and how it reacted to attempts by the laity to challenge this monopoly. In what follows I propose to enquire into this phenomenon by looking at the linguistic scene in the medieval west.

Our written sources for medieval history are almost exclusively in latin and come from the clergy themselves, and to accept their message uncritically entails the danger of sharing their deceptively calm presentation of what was in fact a complex situation. Sociolinguistics concerns itself with the social function of language, with language in social contact, and it pays more attention to the normative than to the informative aspect of language. In this light, the leading part of the clergy in the medieval west may be outlined provisionally in the following ways: –

- a) that christian religion found its most sophisticated interpretation in the west through the latin language, to the extent that latin became the *modus ecclesiasticus* par excellence;<sup>4</sup> and
- b) that latin as the *lingua franca*<sup>5</sup> was also used for other than religious purposes, but that in the religious sphere it was given most attention, and that a thorough knowledge of it was intentionally restricted to a limited and controllable section of the community.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the latin language stood at the cross-road of religious and secular activities, and this double function of one language in preference to others was of crucial importance to the leading position of the clergy.

<sup>4</sup> *Modus ecclesiasticus* was contrasted with *sermo vulgaris* in a legal dispute of c. 1180; see G. Fransen, 'Tribunaux ecclésiastiques et la langue vulgaire d'après les *questiones des canonistes*', *Ephemerides Theologiae Lovanienses*, 40 (1964) pp. 391–412 at p. 394.

<sup>5</sup> For a definition see M. A. K. Halliday, A. McIntosh, P. Stevens, 'The users and uses of language', *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (London 1964, repr. 1968) p. 80: 'One language comes to be adopted as the medium of some activity or activities which the different language communities perform in common. It may be a common language for commerce, learning, administration, religion, or any or all of a variety of purposes: the use determines which members of each language community are the ones to learn it.'

<sup>6</sup> [Jack] Goody, in discussing restricted literacy as a policy, speaks of 'the inhibiting effects of religious literacy that dominated the culture of Western Europe until the advent of the printing press', [*Literacy in Traditional Societies*] (Cambridge 1968) p. 15.

## A socio-linguistic approach to the latin middle ages

Two preliminary questions may be raised briefly at the outset. First, was latin a *living* language during the middle ages? It seems best to settle for a relative answer and say that, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the period under review in this paper, latin was more of a living language than either before or after.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, what is the social function of language as such? Recent investigations of this question which is crucial to our discussion have provided new insights. Thus it has been said that 'a change in the mode of language use involves the whole personality of the individual, the very character of his social relationships, his points of reference, emotional and logical, and his conception of himself.'<sup>8</sup>

Medieval man was conscious of a cultural gulf between those people who knew latin, the *litterati*, and those who did not, the *illitterati/idiotae*,<sup>9</sup> a constellation expressed forcefully in the notion that there was the same difference between literate and illiterate people as there was between man and animal.<sup>10</sup> It is well to remind ourselves of some constituent factors of such a situation. Few people were as fortunate as Wecheleu, the welsh anchorite from Llowes who received the gift of the latin language from God, albeit incompletely, because he could

<sup>7</sup> For a review of earlier discussions see Christine Mohrmann, 'Le dualisme de la latinité médiévale', *Revue des Etudes Latines*, 29 (Paris 1951) pp. 330–48; see especially p. 339: 'Pour les humanistes médiévaux, le latin étant une partie de leur monde a eux, c'était quelque chose vivant', again, p. 344: 'ce qui est essentiel, c'est l'instrument vivant, interprète habile de la pensée médiévale . . .' (italics mine). This article is reprinted in C. Mohrmann, *Latin Vulgaire, Latin des Chrétiens, Latin Médiéval* (Paris 1955) pp. 37–54.

<sup>8</sup> [Basil] Bernstein, ['A Public Language: some sociological implications of a linguistic term', *Class, Codes and Control*] I (London 1971) pp. 42–60, at p. 54. Professor Bernstein there discusses the effects of change from what he calls 'public' to 'formal' language, thus essentially a change of 'code' of language, but it is assumed here that the adoption of a new language involves similarly fundamental changes. For a recent discussion of the linguistic term 'code' see R. Hasan, 'Code, register and social dialect', *Class, Codes and Control*, II, ed. B. Bernstein (London 1973) pp. 253–92.

<sup>9</sup> A gulf of some kind was bound to occur. It has been well said that '“education” implies that a man's outlook is transformed by what he knows', R. S. Peters, *Ethics and Education* (London 1970) p. 31. See also the important study by J. Goody and I. Watt, 'The Consequences of Literacy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 5 (London 1962–3) pp. 304–45, reprinted also in Goody, pp. 27–68.

<sup>10</sup> 'Quantum a beluis homines, tantum distant a laicis litterati', *PL* 196 (1855) col. 1651, which is also quoted by Herbert Grundmann in his excellent article 'Litteratus—Illitteratus', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 40 (Köln/Graz 1958) pp. 1–60, at p. 52, n. 39, and in [J. W.] Thompson, [*The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages*] (Berkeley, Cal., 1939) p. 143.

speak only in infinitives.<sup>11</sup> For most of his contemporaries, the acquisition of latin required a long and difficult process of learning. It is well established that language is best learnt by way of imitation,<sup>12</sup> but imitation almost inevitably effects profound changes in the learner of the new language. Thus, to perceptive contemporaries it appeared that Bernard of Clairvaux 'surpassed all in the elegance of his style and was so saturated in the Holy Scripture that he could fully expound every subject in the words of the prophets and apostles. For he had made their speech his own, and could hardly converse or preach or write a letter except in the language of scripture.'<sup>13</sup> Ironically enough, the same can be observed in a letter of Peter of Blois in which he explained why, as a native french speaker, he found it difficult to converse in english.<sup>14</sup>

In the west, latin was primarily, although not exclusively, the medium used by the church in so far as the church was controlled by the papacy,<sup>15</sup> and the use of a *lingua franca* which was closely related to the language spoken in Italy is itself an indication of the peculiar situa-

<sup>11</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, 'De rebus a se gestis', *Opera* I, ed J. S. Brewer, *RS* 21 (1861) pp 90 *et seq.*, where the anchorite sums up, using finite verb forms: 'Et ab illo die ego sic loqui, et Dominus meus, qui dedit mihi Latinam linguam, non dedit eam mihi per grammaticam aut per casus, sed tantum ut intelligi possum et alios intelligere', *ibid* p 91.

<sup>12</sup> See the comments of John of Salisbury on the teaching methods of Bernard of Chartres: 'Quibus autem indicebantur preexercitamina puerorum in prosis aut poematibus imitandis poetas aut oratores proponebat, et eorum iubeat vestigia imitari, ostendens iuncturas dictionum et elegantes sermonum clausulas', *Metalogicon*, I, cap 24, ed C.C.I. Webb (Oxford 1929) p 56. Also Peter of Blois on his own education: 'Profuit mihi, quod epistolas Hildeberti Cenomanensis episcopi styli elegantia et suavi urbanitate praecepas firmare et corde tenus reddere adolescentulus compellebar', *Ep* 101, *PL* 207 (1855) col 314.

<sup>13</sup> John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis*, ed Marjorie Chibnall (London 1956) p 26.

<sup>14</sup> Peter of Blois in a letter to ? Peter of Cornwall, prior of Aldgate (1202-12), Erfurt, Allgemeinwissenschaftliche Bibliothek, MS Ampl. fols 71, 209rb: 'Hoc enim mihi adhuc ad excusationem superest, quod cum sim Francigena sepe loqui Anglicis me oportet. Et Joseph quidem in Egipto "linguam quam non noverat audiebat" (Ps lxxx, 6). Ideo quandoque per interpretem loquebatur (compare Gen. xlii, 23). Omnis autem homo expeditus loquitur in lingua consueta quam insolita, quod potes videre in beati Pauli stilo quo utitur in epistola ad Hebraeos. Ipse enim dicit: "Malo quinque verba cum sensu loqui quam mille sine sensu" (1 Cor. xiv, 19), ac si dicat "fructuosius mihi est unam scire linguam et ea loqui et intelligi quam scire plures linguas et eis loqui, meumque sensum ab auditoribus non agnoscere". The information, and the transcript of this interesting passage, I owe to the generosity of Herr Rolf Köhn who is working on the manuscripts of Peter of Blois.

<sup>15</sup> Exceptions to this general rule were pre-Norman England and medieval Ireland, both less under the wing of Rome than the rest of Europe. This question requires detailed examination.

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tion of the western church headed by the papacy.<sup>16</sup> Most education was provided by institutions affiliated to and supervised by the church,<sup>17</sup> and it is not surprising to find that ethical principles advocated by the church should have permeated education generally. Most people who received formal education to literacy became *clerici* in profession as well as in name, although there always was, and as time progressed increasingly so, a section of the population who were taught to read and write although they did not intend to embark on an ecclesiastical career.<sup>18</sup> This process began with the king who in this respect as in others was acknowledged to be more than a mere layman. The contemporary jingle that *rex illiteratus est quasi asinus coronatus* was widely quoted.<sup>19</sup> An approach of greater subtlety to the need for the king to be educated is shown by John of Salisbury. It is necessary to mention in passing that, according to John's political philosophy, the law of the kingdom should ultimately be derived from God's commandments – the concept of *imago Dei* = *rex* = *lex animata*.<sup>20</sup> John emphasised how necessary it was for the king to be literate since he was required to read the law of God daily.<sup>21</sup> But he went further, and thus underlines the change in a person's outlook due to his mastery of the latin language. John said:

<sup>16</sup> This was indicated briefly by W. H. C. Frend, 'Coptic, Greek and Nubian at Q'asr Ibrim', *Byzantinoslavica*, 33 (Prague 1972) pp 224 *et seq.*

<sup>17</sup> For a survey see Philippe Delahaye, 'L'organisation scolaire au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Traditio*, 5 (New York 1947) pp 211-68. The most important stages during the period under consideration would appear to have been the roman council of 1079, held by Gregory VII, which ruled 'ut omnes episcopi artes litterarum in suis ecclesiis docere faciant', Mansi 20, col 50, and later the third lateran council held by pope Alexander III, especially c 18: 'per unamquamque ecclesiam cathedrali magistro, qui clericos eiusdem ecclesie et scholares pauperes gratis doceat, competens aliquod beneficium assignetur, quo docentis necessitas sublevetur et discentis via pateat ad doctrinam', Mansi, 22, cols 217-8, which is also in *Decret. Greg. IX*, V, 5,1. See also Pierre Riché, 'Recherches sur l'instruction des laïcs du IX<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 5 (Poitiers 1962) pp 175-82.

<sup>18</sup> This change of concept is clearly formulated in the early fourteenth century: 'Nec dicas quod debeat exponi "clerici id est literati" more Gallico, sicut quidam exponunt et dicunt quod omnis literatus est clericus', quoted in Wilhelm Wattenbach, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter* (3 ed Leipzig 1896) pp 426-7.

<sup>19</sup> [John of Salisbury], *Policraticus*, IV, cap 6, [ed C.C. I. Webb], 2 vols (London 1909) i, p 254. See also V. H. Galbraith, 'The Literacy of the Medieval English Kings', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 21 (London 1935) pp 201-38, and Thompson p 126.

<sup>20</sup> *Policraticus*, IV, caps 1-2, i, pp 235-8.

<sup>21</sup> *Policraticus*, IV, cap 6, i, p 254: 'Legenda est ergo omnibus diebus vitae suae. Ex quibus liquido constat, quam necessaria sit principibus peritia litterarum, qui legem Domini cotidie revolvere lectione iubentur.'

*legat mens principis in lingua sacerdotis . . . Nam vita et lingua sacerdotum quasi quidam vitae liber est in facie populorum.*<sup>22</sup>

While the king was thus obliged, by virtue of his office, to be imbued with some of the educational values offered to the clergy, this happened much less frequently among the aristocracy. Let us look at a case in which it did take place, and see what attitude was taken by a sympathetic cleric to this situation. Take a letter which the abbot Philip of Harvengt wrote to Henry, a layman who had received formal education.<sup>23</sup> In the first place, Philip stated that literacy would put Henry well above his social equals.<sup>24</sup> More than that: so well was Henry educated that he surpassed in his knowledge many members of the clergy.<sup>25</sup> Favourably as Philip regarded Henry's education, he made it nevertheless very clear that the clergy (whatever its educational standard, we may be permitted to add) held the most important place in society.<sup>26</sup> He pointed out that latin was the language which deserved most respect in the west since God's good deeds were praised therein.<sup>27</sup> He conveys the impression that literacy was generally despised by the laity as an unmanly skill, yet acknowledged that this skill would enable Henry to judge the behaviour of knight, prince, and prelate.<sup>28</sup>

So long as literacy was more or less restricted to the clergy, serious anticlericalism was unlikely to arise on a large scale. When it was voiced, some clerics brushed it aside as irrelevant and inappropriate. This impression is certainly given by Geoffrey of Vendôme in a letter to fellow-clerics. He discussed therein the sensitive case of a priest who, when having a mistress, physically attacked and injured her husband because the latter objected to his wife's adultery. Clear as the rights and wrongs of this situation may appear, Geoffrey nevertheless resented any criticism from the laity in this *incerta re*, as he called it: –

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid* p 255.

<sup>23</sup> *PL* 203, (1855) cols 151–6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid* ed 151: 'tanto principi adsunt dona charismatum tam preclara, ut in aliis huiusmodi principibus inveniri valeant satis rara'; col 152: 'dignum fuit ut a vulgatum ignorantia, et brutorum hominum stolidi caecitate, scientia litteralis educeret, et clara praeditum redderet libertate . . . Multum ergo debes patri tuo cuius tibi cura et diligentia sic providit, ut . . . te . . . vellet quoque super ceteros comites litterarum scientia sublimari.'

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid* col 152: 'tantis, ut aiunt, litteris es imbutus, ut quamplures clericos transcendas in eorum nequaquam numero constitutus.'

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid* cols 155B, 155D, 156B; see also col 816.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid* 154B–C.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid* col 153: 'invenis quid populum, quid militem, quid principem deceat vel prelatum.'

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You write to us to say that the priest hates the people for the truth which the people speak of him. I write to you that two things are true: truth creates hatred, and hatred creates lies. It is possible that the priest hates the people because of the truth, and equally that the people lie because they hate the priest. But the people have to be guided, brethren, not followed in accusing the clergy. True is the proverb that says: *praece dere debet qui ducit asellum*. The people are the ass which you must guide, not follow.<sup>29</sup>

In such a milieu, it was all too easy for the educational gulf between clergy and laity to develop into a social chasm. One would like to know how typical of his age Roger Bacon was in saying that: –

from the beginning of the world the common people (*vulgus*) were separated from the knowledge (*sensus*) of the saints, the philosophers, and all other wise people, and all wise men despised the ways of the common people, nor did they communicate to them the heights of wisdom, for the common people cannot grasp them, they deride and abuse them to their own disadvantage and to the disadvantage of the wise.<sup>30</sup>

The division of society into the informed and the uninformed is described by Roger Bacon as the result of a deliberate choice on the part of the laity. There is, however, no indication that the laity were repeatedly obliged to make the choice themselves. Instead, education was much more commonly regarded by the clergy as a prerogative which was, if not divinely ordained, as some maintained, at least perpetuated by the church. Philip of Hervengt might well emphasise the liberating value of education,<sup>31</sup> but the conservative western church reserved such liberation only for her servants. It has been maintained recently that 'how society selects, distributes, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the dis-

<sup>29</sup> *PL* 157 (1899) col 180. 'Ducendus est populus, non sequendus', is perhaps a pun on a passage in a letter from Pope Celestine I of AD 429 (*PL* 50, col 437): 'docendus est populus, non sequendus', which was found in all important canon law collections and was finally taken into Gratian's collection; see *Dist. LXII*, cap 2. A similar view of the priests' exemption from popular criticism is expressed by pope Innocent III, *PL* 214 (1855) cols 697–8.

<sup>30</sup> 'Compendium Studii' cap 3, *Fr Rogeri Bacon Opera Inedita*, ed J. S. Brewer, *RS* 15 (1859) p 416.

<sup>31</sup> *PL* 203 (1855) col 152: 'Unde et litterarum scientiam recte vocant ethnici liberalem, quia eum qui labore et studio sortitur gratiam litteralem, a confuso vulgi consortio et a multitudine liberat publicana, ne pressus et oppressus teneatur compede et hebetudine rusticana.'

tribution of power and the principles of social control'.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Emile Durkheim argued long ago, when discussing the interaction of education and society, that 'education, far from having as its unique principal object the individual and his interests, is above all the means by which *society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence*'.<sup>33</sup>

The conservative nature of the western church can best be seen in her attitude towards the use of the vernacular languages. Although little evidence has been preserved to study popular preaching before the fourteenth century when attitudes began to change, there is good reason to believe that the laity were instructed by the clergy in the vernacular, apparently without great regard to theological subtleties. Thus Peter of Blois wrote: –

You ask me to send you, in written form, the sermon I gave to the common people; and what I expounded crudely enough for them (for such was their capacity) I should attempt to translate into Latin . . . Things can be passed over lightly in the vulgar tongue, whereas the dignity of Latin demands longer treatment.<sup>34</sup>

Peter here expressed an opinion which was generally shared by the clergy, that the complexity of theological arguments increased and should increase with the capacity of the audience.<sup>35</sup> The clergy might have acted in this fashion out of consideration for their audience, yet consideration was but a step removed from condescension. It has been rightly pointed out that latin, as a language foreign to all people in the west, lacked the control of popular usage.<sup>36</sup> As a medium, it was controlled solely by the church, and attempts by the laity to participate more actively in ecclesiastical business in the vernacular were, on the whole, strongly opposed. Thus pope Gregory VII firmly refused the

<sup>32</sup> Bernstein, pp 202–30, at p 202.

<sup>33</sup> Emile Durkheim, *Education and Sociology* (Chicago 1956) p 123 (italics mine). See also further: 'Not only is it society which has raised the human type to the dignity of a model that the educator must attempt to reproduce, but it is society, too, that builds this model, and it builds it according to its needs.' p 122. Lynn Thorndyke claimed that 'in the developed medieval culture elementary and even secondary education was fairly widespread and general', 'Elementary and Secondary Education in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 15 (1940) pp 400–8, at p 401, but his paper hardly bears out this claim.

<sup>34</sup> Peter of Blois, *Sermo LXX*, 'Ad populum', *PL* 207 (1855) cols 750–1.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Petrus Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, cap 65, where he says on the subject of preaching: 'non enim omnibus indifferenter proponere debemus, sed quasi ad quamdam praegustationem maiora maioribus, et minora minoribus offerre', *PL* 205 (1855) col 198.

<sup>36</sup> R. W. Southern, *The Life of St Anselm by Eadmer* (London 1962) p xxvi.

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duke of Bohemia permission for celebrating the divine office in the vernacular. The pope maintained that

not without reason has it pleased Almighty God that Holy Scripture be a secret in certain places lest, if it were plainly apparent to all men, perchance it would be little esteemed and be subject to disrespect; or it might be falsely understood by those of mediocre learning and lead to error.<sup>37</sup>

This had not always been papal policy. In the celebrated mission to the slavs in the ninth century, pope John VIII explicitly stated to Methodios that

there is nothing contrary to the faith or to sound doctrine in singing Mass in the said Slavonic language, or in reading the Holy Gospel and the sacred lessons from the New Testament and Old Testament, properly translated and expounded, or in chanting other offices of the hours in the same tongue.<sup>38</sup>

Supporting his approval with reference to the scriptures, he stressed that God should be praised in all languages.<sup>39</sup> Admittedly, such tolerance for the use of the vernacular in the church arose from an exceptional situation, in the west at any rate, which is too well known to require detailed comment here, but the increasing insistence of the western church on the use of latin appears to indicate conscious papal

<sup>37</sup> *Reg. Greg. VII*, vii, 11, pp 473–5, ed Erich Caspar, *MGH Epp sel*, II (1920); see also Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge 1920), pp 23–4; Giovanni Miccoli, 'Ecclesiae primitivae forma', *Studi Medievali*, 3 series, I (Rome 1960) pp 470–98, especially at pp 79–81. On the vernacular in worship more generally see Cyril Korolewsky, *Living Languages in Catholic Worship*, trans D. Attwater (London 1957) also Maurice Michaud, 'Langue d'Eglise et droit liturgique', *L'Année Canonique*, 3 (Paris 1954–5) pp 99–128, esp pp 120 *et seq*; for the early period see G. Bardy, *La question des langues dans l'Eglise ancienne* (Paris 1948) and A. G. Martimort, 'La discipline de l'Eglise en matière de langue liturgique. Essai historique', *La Maison-Dieu*, 11 (Paris 1947) pp 39–54.

<sup>38</sup> *PL* 126 (1852) col 906 (Jaffé no 3319); see also A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge 1970) pp 20–79, especially at pp 59–66. Even in the thirteenth century, we find the church occasionally not opposing the use of the vernacular, so in the legislation of the fourth lateran council, c 9: 'Quoniam in plerisque partibus intraeandem civitatem atque dioecesim permixti sunt populi diversarum linguarum, habentes sub una fide varios ritus et mores, districte precipimus ut pontifices huiusmodi civitatum sive dioecesum provideant viros idoneos, qui secundum diversitates rituum et linguarum divina officia illis celebrent et ecclesiastica sacramenta ministrent, instruendo eos verbo pariter et exemplo', Mansi, 22, 998; *Decret. Greg. IX*, I, 31, 14.

<sup>39</sup> *PL* 126 (1852) 906: 'neque enim tribus tantum, sed omnibus linguis Dominum laudare auctoritate sacra monemur'.

policy of a non-theological nature rather than haphazard evolution and needs itself more investigation. So do the concepts held about the alleged superiority of latin over the vernacular languages. It has been pointed out that Dante was one of the first to claim for the vernacular a status almost equal to the one held by latin.<sup>40</sup> This occurs surprisingly late, at a time, moreover, when the social scene in Europe was undergoing profound changes.

It is true that the appearance of the multitude of languages on earth was associated with man's sinful attempt to build the tower of Babel, but the Lord's blessing had been given to the existence of the vernacular languages in the new covenant and the pentecostal mission of the apostles (Acts ii, 1-11). Henceforth, the vernacular languages could be regarded, in the church, either as a continuation of man's Babel or as a sign of a new beginning.<sup>41</sup> As the treatment of the various heretical movements in the twelfth century shows, the church initially did not take too seriously their concern with the dissemination of the gospel in the vernacular, only to over-react in the second half of the century when her authority was seriously threatened.<sup>42</sup> While in no way wishing to deny that there was substantial theological reason to fight some of the heresies, I have the impression that the linguistic element received more than its fair share of attention. For all its flamboyance, Walter Map's account of the appearance of the waldensians before the third lateran council voiced the then prevalent attitude of the hierarchy towards the use of the vernacular: -

In every letter of the divine page there flit on the wings of virtue so many sayings, there is heaped up such wealth of wisdom, that any to whom the Lord has given the means can draw from its fulness. Shall then the pearls be cast before swine, the word be given to the ignorant, whom we know to be unfit to take it in,

<sup>40</sup> See H. J. Chaytor, *From Script to Print* (London 1966) p 79, commenting on Dante, *Il Convivio*, I, x, 10.

<sup>41</sup> J. Travers, 'Le mystère des langues dans l'Eglise', *La Maison-Dieu*, 11 (1947) pp 15-38. 'La vraie conclusion, c'est que dans l'Eglise seule les langues sont vraiment réhabilitées, dans l'Eglise seule elles perdent pour les hommes et pour les nations leur caractère nocif', p 25. We must also mention the important study by Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, 4 vols in 6 pts (Stuttgart 1957-63).

<sup>42</sup> See Janet L. Nelson, 'Society, theodicy and the origins of heresy: towards a reassessment of the medieval evidence', *SCH*, 9 (1972) pp 65-77; Brenda Bolton, 'Tradition and temerity: papal attitude to deviants, 1159-1216', *ibid*, 79-91.

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much less to give out what they have received? Away with such a thought, uproot it!<sup>43</sup>

Other ecclesiastics regarded the instruction of heretics in the vernacular as an absurd task, although they were forced to condescend at times.<sup>44</sup> Only a century later did the church take up the challenge to use the vernacular, and then for a very different purpose. When it became clear that the crusades had failed as a military undertaking, some people turned to the idea of conquering the Saracens by converting them to christianity; this was to be done by using their vernacular languages. Suffice it here to point to the rather fantastic plans of a Raimund Lull and a Pierre Dubois at the turn of the thirteenth century.<sup>45</sup>

Within her own confines, the church maintained strict linguistic control. Yet even here the façade began to crack, apparently as a consequence of a development not connected with the use of the vernacular. The rise of satire as a literary genre in twelfth-century Europe has recently been linked with the church's increasing absorption with the technical aspects of government. Those who had received the finest education and who had been instrumental in the reform of the church from the mid-eleventh century onwards, had to yield to the legal technocrats.<sup>46</sup> Their reaction was, on the one hand, to criticise the language used by the papal court,<sup>47</sup> on the other hand to point out

<sup>43</sup> Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, I, cap 31, ed T. Wright, CS, 50 (1850) p 64; English translation from M. R. James, *Cymmrodorion Record Series*, 9 (London 1923) pp 65 *et seq.*

<sup>44</sup> Roger Howden reports remarks of a cardinal-priest working against the Albigensians in Toulouse: 'quaesivimus ut latinis verbis respondentes suam fidem defenderent, tum quia lingua eorum non erat nobis satis nota, tum quia evangelia et epistolae, quibus tantummodo fidem suam confirmare volebant, latino eloquio noscuntur esse scripta. Cumque id facere non auderent, utpote qui linguam latinam penitus ignorabant, sicut in verbis unius illorum apparuit, qui cum latine vellet loqui vix duo verba iungere potuit, et omnino defecit; necesse fuit nos illis condescendere, et de ecclesiasticis sacramentis propter impertitiam illorum, quamvis satis erat absurdum, vulgarem habere sermonem.' Houedene, ii, p 157.

<sup>45</sup> For Lull see his *Liber de fine*, ed Adam Gottron, *Ramon Lulls Kreuzzugsideen, Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte*, 39 (Berlin 1912), esp pp 66-9, and p 88; for Dubois see *De recuperatione terre sancte*, ed Ch. — V. Langlois, *Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire* (Paris 1891) pp 47-51, 59-60, 68, 108 *et seq.*

<sup>46</sup> Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (London 1972) pp 122 *et seq.*

<sup>47</sup> Nigel Wireker: 'Si scribat dominus papa, etiam sine omni conjunctione et adverbio plane et aperte, ita ut nihil sit ambiguum (text: *ambiguus*), nihil contrarium, mandatum tamen eius nihilominus eluditur.' 'Tractatus contra curiales et officiales clericos', *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists*, 2 vols, ed T. Wright, RS 59 (1872) i, p 205.



gleefully how insufficiently educated were these newcomers in church administration. Significantly, such criticism came from the educated class itself, whose members, like Henry, Philip of Hervengt's correspondent, having been educated to know what the ideal standards were, became rather sharp in their reaction. Nigel Wireker could write about William of Longchamp, bishop of Ely and justiciar of England: 'If the bishop is led to the book like the ox to the water, this saying could be applied to you not unfittingly'.<sup>48</sup> We may also mention the case of the priest who offered his bishop what he thought were 200 eggs and who had to give him eventually 200 sheep because by mistake he had offered *oves* when he had intended to offer *ovas*, and the bishop took him at his word.<sup>49</sup> Yet insufficient education was not confined to the lower clergy. We hear of Robert, abbot of Malmesbury, being cross-examined by papal delegates because he had been accused of illiteracy. When asked to explain the phrase *Factus est repente de coelo sonus*, he explained *repente* as follows: *Repente, il se repenti*.<sup>50</sup> One may wonder in how far the purity of teaching could be maintained in a language unfamiliar to the laity and difficult to grasp even for those who were educated.

We have highlighted so far the impact of the latin language on the medieval west within the community of christians rather than in the political sphere. We have seen that latin was a social language in the sense that the familiarity with the language determined a person's social standing in his own country and in society in general.<sup>51</sup> It has become evident that this situation gave a unique place in medieval society to the clergy, not by virtue of its office but by virtue of its education. There were, however, also occasions when opinion could differ over language use, and, objectively speaking, there was no independent authority to which appeal could be made when such ambiguity occurred, especially at the highest level. From what has been said so far, it is hardly surprising that the church assumed this control over language use.

The best-known incident of this kind is perhaps the dispute between pope Adrian IV and the German emperor Frederick I over the significance of the imperial coronation. It occurred over a letter of the pope

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid* p 224: 'Si ducitur episcopus ad librum sicut bos ad aquam, . . . apud te titulus iste tibi non potest opponi'.

<sup>49</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, 'Gemma Ecclesiastica', ii, 34, *Op* ii, ed J. S. Brewer, *RS* 21 (1862) p 332.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid* p 346.

<sup>51</sup> Bernhard Bischoff, 'The Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 36 (1961) pp 209-24, at p 210.

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to the emperor which was delivered in 1157 to the diet at Besançon. The pope's reminder, in that letter, that he had conferred the insignia of the imperial crown on the emperor and that he would not regret giving even greater *beneficia* to him<sup>52</sup> caused a storm of protest in the assembly. The imperial chancellor, Rainald of Dassel, translated the crucial passage in this letter to his audience in a particularly offensive manner by giving *beneficium* the meaning of *feudum*.<sup>53</sup> The extent to which the pope claimed control over the use and interpretation of the latin language can clearly be seen in another letter which he wrote to the emperor in the following year, explaining what he had meant in the disputed passage. We should note both that the pope felt a need to elaborate on his earlier statement in order to make it clearer, and also that he openly admitted to giving his words a special meaning. He wrote: -

Admittedly, this word *beneficium* is used by some people with a meaning different from the original one. But it ought now to be understood in the sense in which we used it and which it is well known to have carried ever since;

similarly, on the technical term *conferre*, the pope said: -

Certain persons have tried to twist this word and another, in the phrase 'we have conferred on you the emblem of the imperial crown' . . . For by saying 'we have conferred' we simply mean, as stated above, 'we have placed' . . .<sup>54</sup>

This incident was more than a quarrel over the interpretation of a few words; it epitomised the long struggle between empire and papacy over their respective places in the world. Thus it was understandable

<sup>52</sup> [Ottonis et] *Rahewini* [*Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris*], ed G. Waitz, 3 ed, *MGH in usum scholarum* (Hannover/Leipzig 1912) p 175: 'imperialis insigne coronae libentissime conferens . . . neque tamen penitet nos . . . si maiora beneficia excellentia tua de manu nostra suscepisset'.

<sup>53</sup> The whole incident has been subjected to a very thorough scrutiny by Walter Heinemeyer, 'beneficium—non feudum sed bonum factum. Der Streit auf dem Reichstag zu Besançon 1157', *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 15 (Köln/Wien 1969) pp 155-236.

<sup>54</sup> *Rahewini* p 196: 'Licet enim hoc nomen, quod est "beneficium", apud quosdam in alia significatione, quam ex inpositione habeat, assumatur, tunc tamen in ea significatione accipiendum fuerat, quam nos ipsi posuimus, et quam ex institutione sua noscitur retinere', and: 'unde quod quidam verbum hoc et illud, scilicet "contulimus tibi insigne imperialis coronae", a sensu suo nisi sunt ad alium retorquere . . . Per hoc enim vocabulum "contulimus" nil aliud intelligimus, nisi quod superius dictum est "imposuimus".'



that a mere explanation of words was not sufficient to close this particular episode. It shows that language use could become a problem of international dimensions, and that, in the medieval west, the church was the ultimate authority with regard to the use of the latin language.

As we have shown in this paper, this situation was closely linked with medieval education. It would thus appear to be more than coincidental that Italy, where papal control was particularly felt and resented, should have become the first country to revive secular schools on a large scale, and that Frederick II, the great adversary of the political papacy, should have been the first ruler in medieval Europe to found a purely secular university, outside the control of the church (Naples, 1224).

We have attempted to sketch the social position of the church and the clergy from a single point of view, that of language and language control. We have given some avenues of further study and indicated some effects of the linguistic situation in medieval Europe. There may be others which the linguistic situation might, if not explain, at least show in a different light: is it not possible to account for the relative sterility of theological thought in the post-patristic west compared with the fecundity of the multilingual east by reference to the papacy's conservative and effective language control? Be that as it may, a socio-linguistic approach to the latin middle ages offers a great variety of further fields for research. All written material from the middle ages is a potential source of information when approached with the help of the linguistic social sciences. In the light of what has been said here, that widely used term the 'latin middle ages' should be, to the historian, a challenge rather than a statement of fact.

## SCISSORS AND PASTE: CORPUS CHRISTI, CAMBRIDGE, MS 139 AGAIN

by DEREK BAKER

AMONGST the manuscripts bequeathed to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, by Matthew Parker in 1575 is one of the most important surviving collections of sources for the history of the north of England in the twelfth century. Manuscript 139, as it now is, contains, amongst other items, unique, or almost unique, copies of the so-called *Historia Regum*, which had been ascribed to Symeon of Durham before the end of the twelfth century, its continuation by John of Hexham, and the *History* of Richard of Hexham. It was a prime, and in part a unique, source of Twysden's pioneering edition of 1652,<sup>1</sup> and its value is in no way diminished today. This apart, the manuscript is of great interest as a manuscript, and the problems of its date, provenance and composition are still the subject of debate. The most recent and definitive account of the manuscript was given by Peter Hunter Blair in a fifty-five page article contributed to the volume of essays edited by Nora Chadwick under the title *Celt and Saxon*.<sup>2</sup> His conclusions, which supersede all earlier views, were that the manuscript was compiled in the period c 1165–70 at the cistercian house of Sawley in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the subsequent discovery of an erased Sawley *ex libris*, now visible only in ultra-violet light, and dated by Ker to the late twelfth/early thirteenth century,<sup>3</sup> reinforced his view. Yet there still remain problems and uncertainties, and my

<sup>1</sup> R. Twysden, *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores X* (London 1652).

<sup>2</sup> [P. H.] Blair, ['Some observations on the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham'], *Celt and Saxon* (Cambridge 1963) pp 63–118. See also [H. S.] Offer, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, ns 2 (1970) pp 51–62. I am grateful to Mr David Dumville for his criticism of this paper, and for a preview of his two valuable forthcoming papers on the 'Nennius' material in MS 139. See [David] Dumville, 'The Corpus Christi Nennius', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 25 (1972–4) pp 369–80, and 'Nennius and the *Historia Brittonum*', *Studia Celtica* 9 (1974).

<sup>3</sup> N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (London 1964). See below p 98 and n 77.