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## Reviews

PETRUS ABAELARDUS, *Petri Abaelardi Opera theologica, 5: Expositio in Hexameron*, ed. Mary Romig, with David Luscombe; *Abbreuiatio Petri Abaelardi Expositionis in Hexameron*, ed. Charles Burnett, with David Luscombe. (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaeualis, 15.) Turnhout: Brepols, 2004. Pp. lxxxvi, 170; 2 black-and-white plates, black-and-white figures, and tables. €120.

Peter Abelard's *Expositio in Hexameron* has never attracted the same attention as the comparable works of his contemporaries Thierry of Chartres or William of Conches, partly because of the lack of a reliable edition. The text in PL 178 is incomplete and based on only one out of four manuscripts, while the edition of Mary Romig, submitted in 1981 to the University of Southern California as a dissertation, is largely inaccessible to scholars. The present volume 15 of the Corpus Christianorum closes this long-felt lacuna, presenting the text of Abelard's *Expositio in Hexameron*, edited by the late Mary Romig and David Luscombe, with an *Abbreuiatio* of the same work, edited by Charles Burnett and David Luscombe.

Abelard's *Expositio in Hexameron* concentrates almost entirely on the historical sense of Genesis. Only short moral and mystical interpretations complete his literal exegesis. According to Abelard, the very first words of Genesis, "in principio creavit Deus celum et terram," describe the creation of the four elements, out of which the whole universe was formed. God's creation is rational and good: God planned everything in his eternal wisdom before he put it into work. Behind Abelard's exegesis stand questions of natural philosophy, but the fundamental hermeneutical principle is an anthropocentric perspective in a twofold way: On one hand, creation aims at the creation of man as its "finis et causa" (line 1493). On the other hand, it is Moses as the author of Genesis who describes this process with the intention to "recommend" God's creation, so that man will be obliged to obey and serve God as his creator.

According to Abelard's letter-preface to Heloise and her nuns, which precedes the exegesis of the six days of creation in all four manuscripts, it was generally believed that Abelard sent his first (now lost) draft of the *Expositio* to the convent of the Paraclete. The idea of Abelard composing a scriptural commentary at the request of the nuns would entirely correspond to the program of letters 8 and 9, where he had recommended the scientific study of Scripture as an appropriate occupation for Benedictine nuns.

The relationship between the four extant manuscripts of the *Expositio* is complex. There are no clear forms or redactions. As in PL 178 and Romig's dissertation, Manuscript A (Avranches, Bibliothèque municipale 135, fols. 75r–90v) was selected as the base text for this edition. It was copied by three French twelfth-century scribes (named A1, A2, and A3) from an exemplar. Romig already suggested that scribe A2—a scribe correcting the text of his colleagues as well as his own and writing most of the marginal texts—might have been Abelard himself. The introduction to the present edition is less positive: the authors are able to show that "at least the majority of these [marginal additions in A] are copied from elsewhere rather than composed on the spot" (p. lxvi). Therefore "the hand which copies them is not necessarily the author" (p. lxvii). Romig's original hypothesis about the hand of A2 deserves further investigation.

Sources for Abelard's *Expositio* include commentaries on Genesis by Ambrose, Jerome, Bede, and, especially, Augustine. Yet even if Abelard's general outlook on creation was indebted to Augustine, he preferred to quote the bishop of Hippo on those occasions where he—like Augustine before him—hesitated to give a definite answer to a problem. All

quotations from Augustine also occur elsewhere in Abelard's works, and the single phrase supposedly taken from *De Genesi ad litteram* goes back to Bede.

Abelard's numerous references to the Hebrew text are not always drawn from the Fathers. These passages may often be seen as contributions to "solve" questions of natural philosophy by simply showing that the Hebrew text has fewer difficulties ("minus habeat quaestio- nis," line 846). The introduction to the *Expositio* also stresses points of similarity between Abelard and his contemporary Thierry of Chartres, who commented in his *Tractatus de sex dierum operibus* on the first three verses of Genesis. Parallels to William of Conches's *Philosophia* are also frequent. The apparatus gives valuable information on the correspondences between Abelard's *Expositio* and the works of twelfth-century natural philosophers. For readers less familiar with the theological tradition, some more references to the biblical background would have been welcome (e.g., lines 746–47, Psalms 1.1; line 1694, Colossians 1.15; lines 1177–79 refer to Colossians 1.16 rather than to Ephesians 6.12).

Most valuable for further research is Charles S. F. Burnett's edition of a fragment, N, of Abelard's *Expositio*, called *Abbreviatio Petri Abaelardi Expositionis in Hexameron* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 17251, fols. 31r–33r). N precedes a copy of Abelard's *Expositio* in the same manuscript and covers the exegesis of Genesis 1.1–11 (without the letter-preface to Heloise). There are more and greater textual and doctrinal differences between the *Expositio* and the *Abbreviatio* than one would have imagined after Eligius M. Buytaert's 1968 article ("Abelard's *Expositio in Hexameron*," *Antonianum* 43 [1968], esp. 188–93). The most distinctive feature of the *Abbreviatio* is a scientific digression on the matter of elements, called "hyle" or "silva" by the philosophers and shared only with the latest manuscript of the *Expositio*. Other divergences include a contrasting interpretation of Genesis 1.5 ("et factum est vespere et mane dies unus"), where "evening" is understood as completion of the works formed from the matter created in the "morn- ing." Generally speaking, the *Abbreviatio* is more interested in the physical interpretation of Genesis and less in its theological aspects.

Whereas Buytaert and Romig thought that a pupil of Abelard was the author of N, the introduction to the *Abbreviatio* suggests a different solution (pp. 123–24): N could represent an earlier version of the *Expositio* that was subsequently modified for the use of Heloise and her nuns. This marked-up version of N—with some passages added, others substituted—was then copied into A. However tempting this hypothesis might be, there remains one question to be solved: how can N and A share a text written in the margin of A (*Expositio*, nn. 112–13; *Abbreviatio*, nn. 84–85)? Regrettably the edition of the *Abbreviatio* is not annotated. Further study on the quotations of authorities in N and other works of Abelard might help to clarify the status of the *Abbreviatio* and its relationship to the *Expositio*. The introduction to the *Expositio* as a whole does not discuss the circumstances behind its composition for Heloise and her nuns or the possibility that the *Abbreviatio* could be an earlier draft of the work.

Certainly Abelard's *Expositio* is less "conservative" than it was believed to be in the past. Both editions will enable scholars to judge the work within the context of Abelard's writings for the Paraclete and twelfth-century natural philosophy.

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