

Tradition in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons *On the Song of Songs*

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'Osculetur me osculo oris sui' — Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. (*Song of Songs* 1.1)

When Bernard took to composing his series of eighty-six sermons *On the Song of Songs* he was contributing to an already extensive body of exegesis on this Old Testament text. The *Song of Songs* presents a dialogue between a Bridegroom, a Bride and their supporters. Expressed in the text are emotions of desire together with images and language of a sexual disposition. Modern scholarship has tended to see the *Song of Songs* as a celebration of human physical love.¹ It may seem surprising that such a text became a favoured subject of ascetic and monastic exegesis, but the fact remains that a long line of Christian theologians interpreted the *Song of Songs* as a hymn of spiritual, mystical love. Different exegetes accomplished this by means of a methodology that they applied to the text and the imagery that it presents. This methodology is an allegorical hermeneutic which shifted the language of carnal love into that of spiritual desire. The first major exemplar of this tendency within the Christian ethos was Origen of Alexandria, and it was as an exegete that he exerted an influence upon later theologians.² Origen's exegesis of the *Song of Songs* was not the first Christian commentary, but it was significant for the way in which Origen interpreted the figure of the Bridegroom and Bride as representative of Christ and the Church (reflecting rabbinical tradition) and as analogous of the relationship between Logos and the soul.³ In other words, Origen used an allegorical hermeneutic in his interpretation of the *Song of Songs* and transformed it into a text about mystical love.

Ancient catalogues of monastic libraries attest to the importance of both the *Song of Songs* in the monastic ethos and of Origen's contribution to the exegetical tradition. At the time of Peter the Venerable, for example, Cluny held fifteen commentaries on the Canticle,

including three copies of Origen and two of Gregory the Great.⁴ This is but one example, which testifies to the significance of these commentaries and of the importance of the works of Origen as well as those of Gregory the Great within this milieu. In the eighth century Bede too wrote a significant commentary. There are many other commentaries on the *Song of Songs*: it was clearly a much loved monastic text, catching something essential of the monastic ethos.⁵ It is not surprising that we find Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century adding his own contribution to this tradition.

In his own time, however, Bernard's sermons were criticised as derivative. Peter Berengar of Poitiers, an ally of Abelard, argued that Bernard plagiarised his commentary, that he hid under new formulae what previous commentators had already said:

It is therefore superfluous for us to look at your interpretation. And if you think that what I am saying is improbable, I offer four other books of exposition, by Origen, who I suppose was Greek, Ambrose of Milan, Reticus of Autun, and the English Bede.⁶

This passage tells us something of contemporary expectations of Scriptural exegesis. It underlines the dichotomy that existed in this period between the institutions of the cloister and the School. While Berengar may have judged biblical exegesis on the basis of novelty, this does not indicate that Bernard would have applied the same kind of valuation to his own work. The implication of Berengar's allegation is that Bernard rehearsed what Bede, for example, and Origen before him had already said, not to mention Ambrose and the mysterious figure of Reticus of Autun.⁷ It seems that in these commentaries Berengar saw a similarity which failed to meet his expectations of novelty and originality. The aim of this paper is to consider this question in more detail, by examining the evidence presented by the commentaries themselves. It shall be argued that Bernard's aim in commenting upon the *Song of Songs* involved an integration of tradition applied to the Cistercian ethos, which lent to his exegesis a traditional vocabulary within a profoundly unique and insightful reading of the text and of the images which it presents.

Bernard's commentary is located within the context of his series of eighty-six sermons *On the Song of Songs*, in which he expounded a mystical interpretation of the text. The sermons are not in themselves

a commentary, but they are founded upon the consideration of individual verses of the *Song of Songs*. Therefore we may treat the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* as Bernard's commentary. In the first sermon, which forms a preface to the rest of the text, Bernard states that he is writing not to religious neophytes but to men of the cloister who are ready to take on substantial teaching. He challenges his audience saying 'Prepare your gullets not for milk, but for bread.'⁸ The audience which Bernard was addressing consisted of adults, not children of the cloister. They were men of the world who were to be changed by *conversio morum*, but even those trained in the scholastic method were introduced by Bernard to the mainstream patristic and monastic tradition as he had received it.

The sermons do not follow a logical plan established in advance, and not all of them address monastic issues. Instead Bernard addresses a variety of issues whilst using the text of the *Song of Songs* as a structure around which he frames his discourse. In his introductory sermons, Bernard establishes the interpretive programme that he will apply to the text. It is one that is allegorical, and which seeks the meaning of the text beyond the literal level of the words. This is marked by a conventional interpretation of the love of the Bridegroom and Bride as expressive of the love or desire of the Church for Christ and the Soul for the Logos. Bernard works with two paradigms which may be labelled as Christ-Church and Logos-soul. This dual interpretation is one that he will maintain throughout the sermons, although his preference is for the latter image. Bernard accepts the Solomonic authorship of the text, and places it as the third of the sapiential books, after Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, although he does not expand on this particular tradition. At the introductory level, Bernard is working within a tradition that seeks from the nuptial language and imagery of the *Song of Songs* a hymn to spiritual love. It would seem that for Bernard the latter is a denial of the former:

The external sound is not worth hearing, if the Spirit within does not help our weak understanding. Therefore let us not remain outside, lest we may be seen to dally with the allurements of lust, and offer modest ears to the sermon on love that is at hand. And when you reflect about the lovers, it is fitting that you should think not of a man and a woman but of the Word and the soul. And if I may have said Christ and the Church, it is the same, except that the Church does not desig-

nate one soul but rather the unity or rather the unanimity of many.⁹

In the sermons that follow, Bernard explores a vast expanse of issues and themes, most relating to the monastic life and to the development of love or *caritas* in the individual. Throughout he uses the material and language offered by the *Song of Songs* as his launching pad for reflection and instruction. He uses the Christ-Church and Logos-soul topoi throughout his sermon. It is a theme which we find used elsewhere in his oeuvre.

As has been indicated, Bernard was working within a tradition of exegesis that was extensive and rooted in the monastic ethos. Bede also composed a significant commentary on the *Song of Songs*, which he worked on over many years, completing it by 731.¹⁰ His commentary is in seven books, and it is a work that relates to the methodology associated with Origen, because Bede too applies the allegorical hermeneutic to his exegesis of the text. In the beginning of his work, Bede set out the text as a play with lines for Christ, the Synagogue and the Church, before commencing the analysis of the verses themselves. The sixth book is a collection of passages from the works of Gregory the Great, although not from his commentary on the same text. It would seem that the only commentaries to which Bede had access before writing his own are those of Origen and of the Donatist Julian of Eclanum.¹¹ The main commentary is found in Books 1 to 5.

Bede comments upon each verse of the canticle using the figure of the bridegroom and bride and the Synagogue/Church:

The Song of Songs of which the most wise king Solomon speaks of the mystery of Christ and the Church, the eternal king and his city, under the figure of the bride and bridegroom.¹²

Here we see the same kind of language encountered in the introduction to Bernard's commentary. What is key here is the formula which both apply to the interpretation of the Bride and Bridegroom. Here, Bede refers to the Christ-Church topos as one that is indicated *sub figura* - under the figure of the Bride and Bridegroom.

Long before the time of Bede, Origen composed both a commentary and homilies on the *Song of Songs*, the former translated into

Latin by Rufinus and the latter by Jerome, although neither survives complete in the Latin translation. The commentary was originally in ten books but there now remain a prologue and commentary to Song of Songs 2:15. Likewise of the homilies there are two, complete only to 2:14. We see reflected in these texts the differing audiences to which he directed his exegesis, one mature and sophisticated, the other directed to those who require a softer diet. The translator Jerome commended the homilies to Pope Damasus, but said that they were intended for the inexperienced:

It is not strong meat that I offer here; instead of that, with greater faithfulness than elegance I have translated these two treatises which he composed for babes and sucklings.¹³

In his own prologue to the commentary, Origen warns of the difficulties posed by the *Song of Songs* for those who are 'at the stage of infancy and childhood in their interior life - to those, that is to say, who are being nourished with milk in Christ, not with strong meat'.¹⁴ His concern is that people do not arrive at an inappropriate reading of the *Song of Songs*, and therefore he attaches an exegetical warning label to deter those who are immature and unprepared for what the text offers:

But if any man who lives only after the flesh should approach it, to such a one the reading of this Scripture will be the occasion of no small hazard and danger. For he, not knowing how to hear love's language in purity and with chaste ears will twist the whole manner of his hearing away from the spirit to the flesh.¹⁵

Origen says here that the premise upon which he bases his exegesis is a mystical interpretation of the sexual language of the text. He goes on to clarify that the language of the Bride is intended as a spiritual concept rather than a fleshly category:

Let no one think that she loves anything belonging to the body or pertaining to the flesh, and let no stain be thought of in connection with her love.¹⁶

The disposition towards physical love here is pejorative. This illustrates Origen's methodology by means of which he un-sexed the *Song of Songs*, applying an allegorical interpretation. In this way he re-created the thematic structure of the text as a song about spiritual union and mystical love. As translator, Jerome conveyed Origen's methodology and exegesis to the Latin West. Despite later criticisms of Origen, Jerome was enthusiastic about Origen's reading of the *Song of Songs*, saying that while Origen surpassed all writers in his other books, 'in his *Song of Songs* he surpassed himself'.¹⁷ Jerome's attraction was most likely to Origen's rendition of the allegorical interpretation of the text that minimised the carnal reading of the language of love. We see this in a letter which Jerome wrote in which he discusses the raising of a young girl to be a virgin consecrated to Christ. He says that reading the *Song of Songs* should be left to the end of her training:

... for, if she were to read it at the beginning, she would fail to perceive that, though it is written in fleshly words, it is a marriage song of a spiritual bride. And not understanding this she would suffer from it.¹⁸

The tradition that we may associate with Origen hinges upon a methodology that stressed the disjunction between physical and meta-physical love within the context of the conjugal language of this text. He interpreted the language and imagery of love according to an allegorical interpretation intended to generate a spiritual translation of the *Song of Songs*. By means of introduction, we can see that these particular exegetes observed similar conventions of methodology and interpretation. These involved the integration of the figures of the bridegroom and bride into an allegory of love. This was an allegory which symbolised the union of Christ and the Church and the Logos and the soul. The parallels between these exegetes are obvious, and may indeed give weight to the criticism that Bernard essentially reproduced what Origen and Bede had said before him. However it is striking to note that Bede in his commentary devoted an entire book, the sixth, to extracts taken from the oeuvre of Gregory the Great by means of which Bede consciously places his work within a convention and demonstrates the authorities that support his exegetical methodology. He shows that his commentary was indeed *not* original but rather was grounded upon the foundation of tradition. In the

twelfth century, Bernard was criticised for what Bede valued in his work. Is Origen's exegesis the primary precursor to Bernard's? There is evidence to suggest that Bernard did have direct access to the works of Origen. Of the manuscripts gathered for the library at Clairvaux there are eight *Libri Origensis* commenting 'on the Old and New Testaments'.¹⁹ However just because the books were on the shelf does not mean that Bernard actually read them. We need to look further, at the way in which these exegetes apply the allegorical methodology to the verses themselves.

To take an example from the text, the Bride speaks the opening words of the *Song of Songs*: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui* — *Let him kiss me with the kiss of this mouth*. Origen divides his comment on this verse into three sections. In the first, he re-states the allegorical premise that interprets the desire of the Bridegroom and Bride as representative of that of Christ and the Church and the Logos and the soul. His actual consideration of the verse follows in two sections, in which he applies both representations to the words of the bride. In both instances, Origen interprets the words as expressive of the desire for union with Christ, but the emphasis is necessarily different in each instance.

Church: Let it be the Church who longs for union with Christ; but the Church, you must observe, is the whole assembly of the saints. So it must be the Church as a corporate personality who speaks and says: 'I am sated with the gifts which I received as betrothal presents or as dowry before my wedding with the King's Son and the Firstborn of all creation, His holy angels put themselves at my service and ministered to me, bringing me the Law as a betrothal gift.'²⁰

Soul: ... let us bring in the soul whose only desire is to be united to the Word of God and to be in fellowship with Him and to enter into the mysteries of His wisdom and knowledge as into the chambers of her heavenly Bridegroom. For when her mind is filled with divine perception and understanding without the agency of human or angelic ministration, then she may believe she has received the kisses of the Word of God Himself.²¹

In both of these passages Origen has interpreted the words attributed to the Bride as expressive of the desire for a mystical experience. We see that Origen's mysticism is focused upon the Logos and that the Word is perceived in and through Scripture. Scripture contains the record of the Incarnation, its prophetic and apostolic witness and to that extent God may be contemplated in Scripture through Christ. For Origen, understanding Scripture is not just an academic exercise but a mystical experience.²²

If we look at another patristic commentary, we see that Gregory the Great works within the same tradition of Origen in interpreting the desire of the Bride within the context of the Incarnation.

'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.' For this is the desire for the Mediator between God and man, and for the advent of their redeemer they pray to the Father that he might send the Son.²³

Like Origen, Gregory's exegesis of the text is driven by a mysticism that relates the outer words to the inner life:

Therefore in this book the Lord and the Church are not designated as 'lord' and 'slave-girl' but as 'bridegroom' and 'bride'; so that not only fear, not only reverence, but even carnal love be abandoned, and in these exterior words inner ardour might be inflamed.²⁴

Gregory's commentary is interesting because like Bernard he was a contemplative forced into the active life.²⁵ Gregory bridges the gap between the Patristic period and the monastic Middle Ages,²⁶ between Origen and Augustine, and Bede and Bernard. The originality and potency of his own contribution to the theology and spirituality of medieval monastic culture should not be underestimated. In his comment he interprets the image of the kiss as the conference upon the Church of the presence of Christ, in a reading which brings an Augustinian emphasis to the interpretation of the text.²⁷ Bernard refers directly to Gregory's comment upon the passage from *Song of Songs* 2.14, which talks about the 'clefts of the rock'. He says 'Another writer glosses this passage differently, seeing in the clefts of the rock the wounds of Christ. And quite correctly, for Christ is the rock.'²⁸ Elsewhere Bernard cites Gregory's example as one with the

otium to continue composing his commentary upon Ezechiel even whilst Barbarian invaders were threatening Rome and 'the necks of its citizens'.²⁹ Bernard was clearly acquainted with the oeuvre of Gregory, and may have seen in Gregory's life something of a prototype for his own.

In his commentary, Bede also defines the request of the Bride and the image of the kiss as representative of the Incarnation.

Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. That is to say: do not forever fill me with the learning of angels or send prophets; come yourself as you have promised.³⁰

Again, we find that Bede adheres to a convention which regards the kiss as expressive of the desire of the Bride for the Incarnation. But this is not to say that Bede's commentary is derivative. In his comment upon this verse, Bede stresses the distinction between the impartial teaching of the prophets and the reign of the Kingdom of Heaven which the advent of Christ inaugurates. For Bede, the desire expressed by the Bride finds fulfilment and direction by means of the direct intercourse with Christ modelled by the disciples who went up the mountain where Jesus was sitting and received the teaching 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for unto them is the Kingdom of Heaven.'³¹

Bernard commits the first nine of his sermons *On the Song of Songs* not only to the words of the opening verse of the text, but also to the image that it presents of two lovers kissing. He begins considering the kiss in the first sermon, but breaks off to discuss the title of the text, returning in the second sermon to the kiss and continuing until the ninth, when he finally moves on to another image. His use of the text at hand is varied and highly developed, at times straining what seems to be a reasonable interpretation of the text. The opening sermons are conspicuous for the amount of material Bernard is able to derive from this single verse and the image which it presents of two lovers kissing.

In *Sermon 2* Bernard has placed the kiss within the liturgical context of Advent, and accordingly interprets the desire of the Bride as expressing the expectation of the Incarnation, according to the convention already seen in Origen, Gregory and Bede:

... not one of the prophets makes an impact on me with his words. But he, the one whom they proclaim, let him speak to me, 'let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.'

For his living, active word is to me a kiss, not indeed an adhering of the lips that can sometimes belie a union of hearts, but an unreserved infusion of joys, a revealing of mysteries, a marvellous and indistinguishable mingling of the divine light with the enlightened mind which, joined in truth to God, is one spirit with him.³²

However in *Sermon 3*, Bernard uses the kiss to illustrate a spiritual progression involving repentance and renewal of life. Here Bernard divides the kiss into a tri-partite representation of the kiss of the Lord's feet, hand and mouth. He gives his audience the words to pray for the grace that the kiss delineates:

To you, Lord Jesus, how truly my heart has said: 'My face looks to you, Lord do I seek your face.' In the dawn you brought me proof of your love, in my first approach to your revered feet you forgave my evil ways as I lay in the dust. With the advancement of the day you gave your servant reason to rejoice when, in the kiss of the hand, you imparted the grace to live rightly. And now what remains, O good Jesus, except that suffused as I am with the fullness of your light, and while my spirit is fervent, you would graciously bestow on me the kiss of your mouth, and give me unbounded joy in your presence.³³

Here Bernard uses the image of the kiss to illustrate the features of a spiritual progression by degrees. The *Rule* uses this kind of image to illustrate the development of humility in the individual as a progression of rungs on a ladder.³⁴ The kiss of the Lord's feet is forgiveness of sins; the kiss of the Lord's hand is the rectification of life, by means of which the individual is raised up and given confidence. Purified by the tears of repentance, the sinner is prepared for the kiss of the Lord's mouth. This represents the direct intuition of the Logos in the individual, which is a highly wrought experience which the Logos and the soul exchange. Bernard elsewhere teaches that the

spiritual life is a progression in stages and says that it is a progression which will be complete in the afterlife.³⁵

Bernard has not yet finished with the image of the kiss or with the Bride's request. *Sermons* 4,5,6 and 7 continue the thematic and theological issues raised by Bernard's division of the kiss into three. In *Sermon 8* the kiss has become an image illustrative of the Trinity, in language that is distinctly Augustinian in tone:

If, as is properly understood, the Father is he who kisses, the Son is he who is kissed, then it can not be wrong to see in the kiss the Holy Spirit, for he is the unperturbable peace of the Father and the Son, their unshakeable bond, their indivisible unity.³⁶

This entire sermon is about love: the love that unites the Persons, the love of the Godhead for humanity and the love of the Bride for her spiritual Bridegroom. The Bride's request for the kiss is expressive of her desire for the Holy Spirit through whom the revelation of the Son is made. We have here a neat theological package that unites the Three Persons of the Trinity with one another and unites the Bride (representing individual Christians) with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit. The theme is revelation, but it is one that will not be complete in the individual in this life:

Thus the Father, when he kisses the Son, pours into him the plenitude of the mysteries of his divine being, breathing forth love's deep delight, as symbolised in the words of the psalm: 'Day to day pours forth speech.' As has already been stated, no creature whatsoever has been privileged to comprehend the secret of this eternal, blessed and unique embrace; the Holy Spirit alone is the sole witness and confidant of their mutual knowledge and love. For who could ever know the mind of the Lord, or who could be his counsellor?³⁷

Bernard has transposed the kiss from one register to another in this construction, by using the kiss as illustrative of revelation and of the love that unifies the Trinity. Underlying this teaching is the kiss, used as an act expressive of conjugal love. In terms of the Trinitarian doctrine, this image is acutely perceptive. The Holy Spirit is the kiss that the Father bestows upon the Son. The Father and the Son are united

as equals, the mouth of one is pressed to the mouth of the other. The symbolism of the kiss illustrates the unity and self-sufficiency of the Trinity. It illustrates, too, the equality and distinction of the Three, registering the order that exists among them and in which they unite.

The doctrinal basis of this teaching is found elsewhere in Sermon 89 *De Diversis*, (not from this series) in which Bernard writes:

The Son is the Father's mouth ... This reciprocal revelation of the Father and the Son only happens in the Holy Spirit. Thus if the Father and the Son kiss each other, this kiss is surely none other than the Holy Spirit.³⁸

Clearly for Bernard, the image of the kiss signifies an act of love exchanged between the Bride and the Bridegroom, and it presupposes that they are equals. The Bride is not a passive partner but exchanges the kiss with the Bridegroom as an equal. It is a fitting image both for the Trinity and for the revelation of Christ to the individual because this image neatly links these two categories and involves the individual in the act of revelation.

Lest we think, however, that Bernard regards the image of the kiss in the same kind of chaste sense as Origen, we must turn to one final passage in which Bernard talks about the desire of the Bride. As has been seen already, Origen moves away from the language of carnal love, preferring a chaste reading of the text. In contrast Bernard relishes the imagery of love and uses it to great effect. In *Sermon 9*, he puts words in the mouth of the Bride that are direct and almost profane:

'I cannot rest', she said, 'unless he kisses me with the kiss of his mouth ... if he has genuine regard for me, let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. There is no question of ingratitude on my part, it is simply that I am in love. It is desire that drives me on, not reason. Please do not accuse me of presumption if I yield to this impulse of love. Headlong love does not wait for judgement, is not chastened by advice, nor shackled by shame nor subdued by reason.'³⁹

There follows no spiritual explanation of this passage. Instead, Bernard has used the image of two lovers kissing, to write a sequence about love. In this he conveys the kind of spiritual ardour, the kind of love that he wants to kindle in his audience. Perhaps Bernard is giv-

ing us a glimpse into the pitch of his own inner life. What is significant is that Bernard uses the image of the kiss with all of its resonance. He has used the first verse of the *Song of Songs* and the image that it presents to construct illustrations of profound theological and spiritual meaning. And underlying all of this didacticism is the simple image of the kiss, as an act expressive of human love.

The evidence presented by the commentaries demonstrates that Bernard placed his exegesis of the *Song of Songs* within a tradition that is patristic which gave him an exegetical vocabulary to apply to the text. Inasmuch as Bernard interpreted the Bride and Bridegroom as representative of Christ-Church and Logos-soul and worked his interpretation around that dynamic, we can see that Bernard used the formulae which tradition provided for him, in the same way as did Gregory the Great and Bede. At the same time it is also clear that like Gregory and Bede, Bernard exercised his own freedom of movement and shaped his commentary to the needs of his Cistercian audience. Unlike Origen who tended to demote the sexual language and imagery of the text, Bernard developed a commentary that *both* allegorised the text *and* which used the sexual imagery that it presents. This would appear to contradict Berengar's remark that Bernard plagiarised his commentary. Berengar was a schoolman whereas Bernard was a monk writing for men of the cloister. The reproach operates at a surface level, it is the reflection of a humanist criticising a piece of literature. And at the literal level, Bernard has employed the conventions of exegesis and commentary as he had received them. However it is doubtful that Bernard would have asked of himself the same kind of questions. He was a spiritual man writing about mystical themes. He is not attempting to produce a novel exegesis of the *Song of Songs*. Instead Bernard is using all of the sources available to him, not least of all his own experience and reflection. Bernard was the master here, he controlled the sources that encompassed him, and produced a work that was both traditional and unique.

NOTES

- ¹ M.H. Pope, *Anchor Bible. The Song of Songs*, New York 1977, p.17.
- ² Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, Oxford 1981, p.54.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p.55.

⁴ L. Delisle, *Inventaire des manuscrits de la bibliothèque nationale: Fonds de Cluny*, Paris 1884, pp.240-64.

⁵ Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Paris 1957, p.84.

⁶ Berengar, *Apologeticus pro Abaelardo* PL 178:1863. 'Supervacua igitur explanatio tua esse videtur. Ac ne quis me putet improbabilia prolocuturum, proferam super hunc librum quadrigam expositorum, Originem scilicet Graecum, Ambrosium Mediolanensem, Retium Augustodunensem, Bedam Angligenam.'

⁷ See Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Confessors*, trans. with an introduction by Raymond Van Dam, Liverpool 1988, p.77.

⁸ Bernard, *Sermones Super Cantica Canticorum*, I, 1. The *Sermones* are in vols 1 and 2 of J. Leclercq, *S. Bernardi opera* (Rome 1957-58). In the following notes, the first figure indicates the sermon, the following figures indicate the numbers of the paragraph within the sermon.

⁹ Bernard, *Sermon* 61, 1,2.

¹⁰ Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, Harrisburg 1990, p.75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.75.

¹² Bede, *On the Song of Songs, Six Books*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL CXIXB, p.190.

¹³ Jerome, Prologue to Origen's *Homilies*; English translation by R.P. Lawson, *The Song of Songs. Commentary and Homilies by Origen*, London 1957, p.265.

¹⁴ Origen, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Prologue. (Lawson, p.22).

¹⁵ Origen, *Commentary*, Prologue (Lawson, p.22).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, (Lawson, p.53).

¹⁷ Jerome, *Prologue to Origen's Homilies*. (Lawson, p.265.)

¹⁸ Jerome Letter 107, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* VI, p.194.

¹⁹ A.Wilmart, 'L'ancienne bibliothèque de Clairvaux', *Coll. Ord. Cist. Ref.* 10, 1940, 117-18.

²⁰ Origen, *Commentary*, I,1.

²¹ Origen, *Commentary*, I,1.

²² Louth, p.64.

²³ Gregory the Great, *Commentary on the Song of Songs* 1,12, CCSL 144, p.14.

- 24 Gregory, *Commentary*, 1,8, CCSL 144, p.11.
- 25 G.R. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great*, Cambridge 1986, p.21.
- 26 Leclercq, p.25.
- 27 B. Capelle, 'Les Homélie de S. Grégoire sur le Cantique', *Revue Benedictine* 41, 1929, 212.
- 28 Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 61, 1,3. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Commentary on the Song of Songs* 11,15.
- 29 Bernard, *De Consideratione*, 1,11,12, Leclercq *Sancti Bernardi Opera* v.III.
- 30 Bede, *Commentary*, 2,1.
- 31 Bede, *Commentary*, 1,1.
- 32 Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, II,1.
- 33 Bernard, *Sermon 3* 3,6.
- 34 *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 7.
- 35 Cf. *Sermons 26 & 27*, *S. Bernardi Opera I; De Diligendo Deo; Epistle 11*
- 36 *Sermon 8*, 1,2.
- 37 *Sermon 8*, 6,6.
- 38 *De diversis*, 89,1, *S. Bernardi opera*, VI,1.
- 39 *Sermon 9*, 2,2.