

Matouš Beran and his Wordplays: A Case Study on the Art of Memory in Late Medieval Bohemia¹

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The fashion of the art of memory reached the Czech lands in the 15th century.² The first known Czech author of a memory treatise is Matouš (Mattheus) Beran.³ His whereabouts can be partly reconstructed from the explicits of manuscripts of his works. He was a monk at the Augustinian monastery in Roudnice,⁴ where he wrote a collection of sermons and biblical commentaries entitled *Confundarius minor* in 1417.⁵ In 1421, the year when the Roudnice monastery was destroyed by the Hussites, he seems to have been in Lipnice.⁶ Like many Catholics, Beran left the country during the

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² *Ars memoriae* in the Czech lands is an unexplored topic. More detailed information on the subject will be available in my study in the book currently under preparation in cooperation with Rafał Wójcik and Farkas Kiss, *The Art of Memory in Late Medieval East Central Europe (Bohemia, Hungary, Poland): An Anthology*. The book will also include an edition of the *Ars memorativa* by Mattheus Beran discussed below.

³ For more information on him see Pavel Spunar, "Matheus Beran – Matouš Beran," *Repertorium auctorum Bohemorum proventum idearum post universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans* I (Warsaw, 1985), 187-190. František M. Bartoš, "Matouš Beran, roudnický augustinián aspisovatel," *Časopis Národního musea* 101 (1027): 13-15; Jaroslav Kadlec, "Literární činnost roudnických augustiniánských kanovníků," *Facta probant homines. Sborník příspěvků k životnímu jubileu prof. Dr. Zdeňky Hledíkové*, ed. Ivan Hlaváček and Jan Hrdina (Praha: Scriptorium, 1998), 221-224, esp. 224. Beran was sometimes confused with Sulco (Sulko) de Hosstka and with Petrus Mathie de Bernaw (studied in Paris, Vienna, and Erfurt, he was in Erfurt in 1418-1423 as *doctor medicinalis*) – see František M. Bartoš, "Proslulý lékař Karlovy university věku Husova," *Jihočeský sborník historický* 13 (1940): 37-38; František Šmahel, appendix to "Mistři a studenti pražské lékařské fakulty do roku 1416," entitled "Mistři, licenciáti, bakaláři a studenti pražské lékařské fakulty do počátku husitské revoluce," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae* 20:2 (1980), no. 85.

⁴ The Roudnice (Rudnicz, Raudnitz) monastery founded in 1333 by Prague bishop Jan IV of Dražice was the first monastery of Augustinian Canons founded in the Czech lands (see Jaroslav Kadlec, "Začátky kláštera augustiniánských kanovníků v Roudnici," *Studie o rukopisech* 20 (1981): 65-83, German summary on p. 84-86); Franz Machilek, "Die Augustiner-Chorherren in Böhmen und Mähren," *Archiv für Kirchengeschichte von Böhmen – Mähren – Schlesien* 4 (1976): 107-144). Roudnice became an important cultural center. Some scholars speak of "the reform of Roudnice" as the Czech alternative to *devotio moderna* (see Jiří Spěváček, "Devotio moderna, Čechy a roudnická reforma (K úsilí o změnu mentalit v období rostoucí krize morálních hodnot)," *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 4 (1995): 171-194, German summary on p. 195-197), other, most notably Pavel Spunar (Pavel Spunar, "Česká devotio moderna – fikce a skutečnost," *Listy filologické* 127 (2004): 356-370) refuse it.

⁵ The codex is now kept in the Library of the National Museum in Prague under the shelfmark XVI.E.11. Beran says in the explicit: *Anno Domini 1417 hoc opus super ewangelia de tempore per anni circulum scriptum est per manus Fr. Mathei dicti Beran* (f. 393v). For more information about this compendium and preaching in Bohemia, see Pavel Soukup, "Die Predigt als Mittel religiöser Erneuerung: Böhmen um 1400," in print in a proceedings from a conference "Böhmen und das Deutsche Reich. Ideen- und Kulturtransfer im Vergleich (13.-16. Jahrhundert)" which took place in Munich in 2007.

⁶ This is information from a codex formerly kept in Dyson Perrins library in Oxford as no. 125 (cf. Šmahel, "Mistři," 63). It is an illuminated Bible together with several other texts finished in 1421 in Lipnice. Its explicit reads: *Explicit scutum fidei/ quo pugnans filii dei/ oculus iustorum/ scandalum incredulorum / Mathie de Rudnicze* [here ends the shield of faith by which the sons of God are fighting: an eye for just men and a scandal for unbelievers; of Mathias of Roudnice], f. 393r. The manuscript was sold as lot 15 by Sotheby's on April 17, 2003, in London, to a Swiss dealer Heribert Tenschert who subsequently sold it to a private collector not wishing to reveal his identity. Thus, only the most recent description of the manuscript remains to be consulted. It is a particular pity, since it nicely reflects the situation of Catholics during the Hussite movement: there are 15 Psalms to be used by Christians in times of trouble (*isti psalmi a xpistianis dicuntur tempore tribulationis*, f. 4r), brief summaries of the individual biblical books "include notes encouraging orthodoxy and emphasising its triumph over heresy, so the Book of Kings deals with the victory of the church over heretics, Jude condemns

Hussite wars – he is next found at the university of Erfurt. It was in Erfurt where he wrote his *Ars memorativa* together with a number of other, mostly medical texts in May 1431.⁷ In October 1437 he was in Basel and he wrote there two medical treatises, *Pulmentarius* and *Cyrurgia*. At that time he was seriously ill and hoped to return back to the Roudnice monastery to repent as soon as he got better.⁸ Finally, one of his letters copied by Crux de Telcz (Oldřich Kříž z Telče)⁹ was supposedly written in 1467 in Roudnice.¹⁰ So, if we can believe Beran lived so long and is not mixed here with another person,¹¹ he must have spent a substantial time after his exile at home.

Beran's works are revised selections from other authors and he does not conceal the fact. He describes his medical treatises in these terms,¹² as well as his *Confundarius minor*, which, as he says, he collected from a number of volumes.¹³ Another miscellany of texts Beran collected is called *Confundarius maior*.¹⁴ Thus, it would not be surprising to read that the *ars memorativa*, which is included in it and explicitly called a supplement to it,¹⁵ is not his own work but was found and appropriated by him. However, Beran states at the beginning (see Figure 1):

Ego frater M. Beran conspiciens ex una parte scolares quam plures a sciencia, quam omnes homines natura scire desiderant, ammoueri tum propter memorie delicate labilitatem, tum propter ignoranciam collocandi in memoria, que memorie sunt digna et collocata retinendi. Et ex alia parte huiusmodi defectus ne dum a me sed etiam ab aliis volentibus proficere cupiens separare et aliquid pro meo posse deo me adiuvante hoc compendium quod insignatur de arte Idnaromem in quo precipue de tribus tractatur scilicet locis, ymaginibus et rebus memorabilibus. Et quamquam multi multa opuscula circa hanc materiam condiderint,

heretics to eternal damnation, and the Apocalypse offers comfort for the tribulations of the church, past, present and future; passages of the Bible itself, which can be used when arguing against the Hussite practice, are stressed by pointing hands, and at the end there are “alphabetically arranged biblical references on various subjects, including blasphemy, heresy and heretics” (for a detailed description, see http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=426BZ [last accessed April 21, 2008], cf. also George Warner, *Descriptive Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts in the Library of C.W. Dyson Perrins* (Oxford, 1920), 294-295, no.125).

⁷ The autograph of the treatise survives as cod. I.F.35 of the National Library in Prague. It was finished on May 12, 1431 in Erfurt. Its explicit on f. 485r reads: *...per me fratrem M. Beran exulem canonicum regularium de Rudnicz manu mea propria...anno domini 1431 sabbato post ascensionem domini in Erfordia in domo pauperum* (cf. Josef Truhlář, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum latinorum qui in C. R. Bibliotheca publica atque universitatis Pragensis asservantur* I (Praha, 1905), 110-111, no. 267).

⁸ Manuscript N 53 kept in Metropolitan Chapter Library in Prague. See f. 7r: *Nota quod ego frater M. Ber[an] sum confessus super gratiam Basilien. Feria V^a 1437 in vigilia Omnium Sanctorum [31.10.1437] in maxima infirmitate mea. Penitentiam agree volo Deo me adiuvante, quando ero domi in monasterio Rudnicensi, amen.* And f. 109r: *... ego frater M. Ber[an], membrum quoddam inutile medicine Universitatis Erfordiensis, proposui et intendo aliqua brevia et utilia pro modo faciliiori simplicibus ac rudibus atque apothecis carentibus doctis vel simplicibus in scriptis tradere* (cf. Antonín Podlaha, *Soupis rukopisů knihovny metropolitní kapituly pražské II* (Praha: Česká akademie věd a umění, 1922), 437-440, no. 1577).

⁹ See Jaroslav Kadlec, “Oldřich Kříž z Telče,” *Listy Filologické* 4 (1956): 91-102 and 234-238. A note in Rudolf Urbánek, *České dějiny. Věk poděbradský* (Praha: Jan Leichter, 1930), 119 and 733.

¹⁰ This is ms. I.G.11a of the National Library in Prague. The greatest part of this ms. was written by Crux de Telcz, and includes the beginning of Beran's art of memory on f. f. 29v-30r. Beran's letter is included on f. 63r-63v. On f. 63v it reads: *utinam deo gracias accepturi datis Rudnicz sexta die mensis Aprilis annorum domini 1467 in fidem omnium prescriptorum sigillo prepositure maiori presentibus apenso* (see Truhlář, *Catalogus I*, 121-123, no. 285).

¹¹ In this letter he is called *Matthias praepositus Rudnicensis* (f. 63r).

¹² *Istum libellum nostrum ex diversorum doctorum dictis et scriptis collectum de morbis humani corporis et remediis tractantem non apothecaries sed coquina respicientem; ideo ipsum Pulmentarium intitulamus* (Metropolitan Chapter Library in Prague N 53, f. 109r).

¹³ Prague Lib. Of the National Museum XVI.E.11, f. 393v: *hoc opus... scriptum ...non tantum pro ewangeliorum expositione, sed pro predicacionis occasione, ut quicumque eo usus fuerit, devote deum pro Beran oret, quia cum maximo labore ipsum ex multis voluminibus non sicut voluit sed sicut scivit et potuit, collegit et in hanc formam redegit, et ideo hunc libellum confundarium nominavit, amen.*

¹⁴ Prague Nat. Lib. I.F.35, f. 3r: *in hoc nostro maiori Confundario...*

¹⁵ Prague Nat. Lib. I.F.35, f. 485r (the end of the art of memory): *Hec hec breviter collecta sufficiant pro nostro Confundario supplendo...*

tamen hoc videtur lucidius atque expeditius. Si autem aliqui reperiantur hoc minus benedictum, peto veniam a lectore pariter et correctionem. Amen.

[I, brother Beran, observing, on the one hand, that many scholars turn away from science, which all people desire to know by nature, sometimes because of slipperiness of delicate memory, other times because of not knowing how to place in memory the things worthy of remembering, and how to keep the things placed there. On the other hand, desiring to separate the defect of this type not from myself but from others wishing to advance, and somehow, according to my capacity, with God helping me [I produced] this compendium which is entitled *On the art of gnirbmemer*,¹⁶ in which there are mainly three subjects treated, namely places, images, and memorable things. And although many produced many opuscles on this subject, this one nevertheless seems clearer and more convenient. But if some find it less praiseworthy, I ask the reader for pardon and, in the same way, for correction. Amen.]¹⁷

Although he speaks of a *compendium*, Beran obviously claims a different type of authorship here than in his previous works.¹⁸ Yet, his treatise does not seem particularly original in either its content, which features all the commonplaces, or in the way it is organised. After the above-cited opening on f. 477r followed by several brief paragraphs (definition of the art, definition of place with its division, and the seven conditions of the places) we are surprised to see a second title on f. 478r: *Incipit tractatus artis euitaromem*,¹⁹ after which the treatise continues with specific subchapters formed by examples of items to be memorised. The list seems rather incoherent: verses, grammatical cases, biblical books, history, sermons, texts, glosses, authors, distinctions, arguments, quantities of syllables, the game of dice, cards, and chess. And even this structure is disjointed: after the first two paragraphs these examples are interrupted by a number of more theoretical chapters on forming the images. They are entitled: *On images in comparison to place*, *On images in comparison to images*, *On images in comparison to the memorable things*, *On places with respect to remembering*, *On places with respect to images*, *On comparison of the locators to places*, *On comparison of the places to the memorable things*, *On perfect and imperfect images*, *On fourfold way of forming images*, *On the way of making images by addition and by subtraction*. These, however scientific they may sound, give an impression of being quite random – for example the list of the 100 suggested memory places divided in groups of fives (another commonplace in late medieval memory treatises) is placed within the chapter *On images in comparison to the memorable things*.

Throughout the memory treatise Beran seems much occupied with the possibility of confusion.²⁰ On many occasions he urges his reader to be very careful and consequent in following the set rules to avoid mistakes and lapses of memory.²¹ At the same time, there are confusions in Beran's own treatise. For example, he suggests that the genitive singular should be memorised by the image of an iron knee (surely simply on the basis of the same beginning: *genitivus* and *genu ferreum*), but he promotes the same image for remembering the book of Genesis (which, again, begins with

¹⁶ Spelling backwards is a frequent mnemonic strategy. I think it is connected to the idea that 'to know' something means to truly grasp it, that is, to know it from the beginning to the end, from the end to the beginning, from left to right, from right to left, etc.

¹⁷ Prague Nat. Lib. I.F.35, f. 477r (my translation).

¹⁸ On the medieval notion of authorship, its various types and levels, see Michel Zimmermann, ed., *Auctor et auctoritas: invention et conformisme dans l'écriture médiévale: actes du colloque tenu à l'Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 14-16 juin 1999*, Mémoires et documents de l'École des chartes 59 (Paris: École des chartes, 2001).

¹⁹ I.e., *memoratiue* written backwards.

²⁰ This is actually not so unusual. E.g., Alastair Minnis states: "Worries about the fragility and fallibility of human recollection were expressed with remarkable frequency, memoria being seen as engaged in mortal combat with the forces of oblivion" (Alastair Minnis, "Medieval Imagination and Memory," *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism II. The Middle Ages*, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 265).

²¹ He says: *et hoc totum exigitur ne memoria confundatur secundum modum mouentem memoriam in confuso* (f. 477v), *omnia similia memoria non distinguitur et sic confunditur* (f. 478r), *ut memoria non erret* (478v), *ne memoria erret* (479r), *ne pro inordinacione rerum memoria paciatur defectum* (479v), *ne memoria turbetur* (479v), *ne memoria uacillet* (480r), *sic enim memoria confunditur et uacillaret* (480v), *ex hoc possit memoria confundi* (483r).

gen).²² Among the *imagines doctorum*, Beran proposes that Saint Augustine should hold a vault (*curvaturam*), and Saint Gregory a golden necklace around his neck (*aurea torqua*: I do not see the link in either case)²³. However, later on, when he gives advice on how to remember a quotation from Augustine (inc. *Quanto deum quis plus diligit*), he says that one should attach to the neck or the head of the image a golden necklace, which will signify that the quotation is from Augustine (*torquem auream*: here the *au-* beginning can evoke *Augustinus*).²⁴

As in the above mentioned examples, the relationship of the suggested images to the items to be remembered is not always evident now. It is characteristic that while Matouš Beran and other authors of *artes memoriae* provide guidelines about the ways to encode, that is, to create memory images, no one is concerned about the ways to decode, that is, to understand, them. The words to be remembered usually start with the same letters, or agree in one or more syllables with the names of the images they are remembered by. But the problem is, of course, that one has to be able to name the image by the correct name when revisiting the place in his mind. Beran usually uses the relevant name of the image, and thus the connection is clear. For example, Saint Thomas Aquinas should have a beam from a ship on his neck, that is, *themonem navis*: the beam, *themo*, should probably remind one of *Thomas*, and the ship of water, *aqua*, which should bring back *Aquinas*. Or, Saint Ambrose should have around his neck a rosary from amber (*Ambrosius – ambra*).²⁵ But other times the relationship is a bit more complicated, as for example Sant Bernard who should wear a cap – *birretum*, words which agree in only two letters.²⁶ And yet other times, the reasons for selecting a particular image remain mysterious (at least to me).²⁷ For example, Bede should appear with a bag with grains over his shoulder (*cum sacco frumenti in scapulo*), etc.²⁸ From the previous examples and from explanation of the method of creating the images it is clear, that the words Beran uses in these examples are not the words one should use to name the images in order to retrieve the link to these saints.

In any case, it seems that the idea behind the whole art of memory is to make the mind work and to sharpen the intellect: the image is never based on the simple and straightforward. For example, John Chrysostomus, that is ‘of golden mouth,’ should not be remembered as a man with a golden mouth, but rather, for reasons which remain unclear to me, as a man with a hood from grey cloth (*habens capucium de griseo panno*).²⁹ This work of the mind, however, implies exactly what Beran dreads so much: a possibility of committing a mistake, a danger of confusion of memory.

Beran warns sufficiently about the possible dangers of confusing one’s memory. There is, however, another possible danger involved in such memory practice: images might, theoretically, be not only misinterpreted but even overlooked as memory images. Replacing something by something else on one’s mind may bring this special type of confusion, in which the mind, when revisiting the place during the act of recollection does not even recognise an object as standing for something (that is, does not realise it is a memory image), and interprets it as being simply what it is. This is surely one important reason why it is always stressed that the memory images should be striking and unusual. And, it obviously does not happen when there is a clear artificial memory context: going

²² He says: *Sit ergo imago nominativi singularis nabula, genitivi genu ferreum, dativi decanta, accusativi arcus argenteae, vocativi vocate, ablativi abacus* (f. 478r), and: *Genesis genu ferreum, ymago exodi flagellum percuciens, ymago numeri saccus plenus nummis ad numerandum, ymago levitici duo dyaconi cantantes, ymago deuteronomii uter plenus lacte caprino, Iosue iesia id est ecclesia parva sculpta in lapide, Esdre sint ostree, proverbiorum pratum viride, Ecclesiastes una hasta plena oculis, Ecclesiasticus una cos ad acuendum novacula* (f. 482r).

²³ *Sit ymago sancti Augustini habens curvaturam in manu... Sancti Gregorii unus cum aurea torqua in collo* (f. 482r).

²⁴ *...et ad collum vel ad caput ymaginis ponam torquem auream per quod innuitur quod originale est beati Augustini* (f. 483v).

²⁵ *Sit ymago sancti Thome de Aquino habens themonem navis ad collum, sancti Ambrosii unus habens cordam ad collum cum pater noster de ambra* (f. 482r).

²⁶ *Sancti Bernhadi unus cum birreto in capite* (f. 482r).

²⁷ The words connected often remind rather of Rabelais’ “comme qui pain interpretoit pierre, poisson serpent, oeuf, scorpion” (as who should interpret bread as stone, fish as serpent, and egg as scorpion), (*Gargantua et Pantagruel*, introduction to book 4 – a witty variation on Luke 11:11-12).

²⁸ *Ymago Bede unus cum sacco frumenti in scapulo* (f. 482r).

²⁹ [*Sit ymago*] *sancti Iohannis Cristosomi unus habens capucium ad collum de griseo panno* (f. 482r).

through a house built in one's mind specifically for the purpose of artificial memory, the recalling subject will, of course, interpret all encountered images as memory images.

However unlikely it seems in the context of a memory treatise, I could identify a completely overlooked word play of exactly this type in Beran's art of memory. In ms. Sankt Paul im Lavanttal 137/4, there is an art of memory treatise beginning (see Figure 2):

Conspiciens ex una parte scolares quam plures a sciencia, quam omnes homines natura scire desiderant ammoueri ... Ego frater Mattheus de Verona ordinis praedicatorum...

[Observing, on the one hand, that many scholars turn away from science, which all people desire to know by nature... I, brother Mattheus de Verona of the Dominican order...]³⁰

This is, with one little change of word order, exactly the same beginning, the only difference is the scrambling *Verona/Beran*.

Mattheus de Verona is a well-documented person,³¹ and his treatise on memory, written in 1420 and revised in 1423, survives in 9 manuscripts.³² Thus, *Verona* in the Munich manuscript is obviously not a misinterpreted *Beran*; it is the other way round: Mattheus Beran, perhaps charmed by the similarity of his name and the name of the author of the treatise he copied, used a play with words – a strategy he was familiar with thanks to the contents of the treatise, and created an 'image' of the very same type as the other memory images appearing in the text, by changing some of the letters of the original. This one, however, remained unnoticed and uninterpreted as a memory image, exactly because the context in which it was placed did not suggest in any way that it – *Beran* – should be interpreted as standing for something else. The purpose of this particular wordplay, however, is probably not creating a memory aid but rather distorting reality.

Beran's treatise is indeed a copy of Mattheus de Verona's earlier work. It is a copy in the medieval sense: although Beran follows his model, he changes the order of the paragraphs, omits parts, summarises longer passages, adds his little words, etc. The comparison of the two versions is useful,³³ especially since Mattheus of Verona often uses the names of the images, which make the link explicit. For example, while Beran has an obscure and possibly corrupted [*imago*] *Origenis unus cum portatico ad collum* (the image of Origenes should be one with gate-due on his neck),³⁴ Mattheus de Verona suggests: *unus cum uno organo paruo* (a man with a small organ (or pipe, or any musical instrument), which has the clear similarity of *Origenes* and *organum*).³⁵ Or, Mattheus of Verona spells the cap associated with Saint Bernard as *berretum* (which was common in Italy) rather than *birretum*, and so his words are more similar to each other.

³⁰ On f. 132r, my translation.

³¹ He was active at Padova university, in 1415 became prior at Dominican monastery in Verona, on January 31, 1419, he received bacclureatus, in 1421-1422 was teaching *Sententiae*, and in 1422 became *magister theologiae* (see Sabine Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und Scientia. Genese, Überlieferung und Funktionen der mnemotechnischen Traktatliteratur im 15. Jahrhundert. Mit Edition und Untersuchung dreier deutscher Traktate und ihrer lateinischen Vorlagen*, Frühe Neuzeit 58 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), 34-38.

³² The manuscripts are listed by Sabine Heimann-Seelbach, on p. 35. I have consulted only three of them so far. Since they substantially differ from each other, and there has been no attempt at editing the text, it is rather problematic to speak of Mattheus de Verona's treatise and compare it to the Beran's version.

³³ A full comparison of the two versions will appear in the study on Czech *artes memoriae*, which is currently being prepared.

³⁴ On f. 482r.

³⁵ Munich clm. 14260, f. 81r-v.

Only on a few occasions does Beran seem to add observations or suggestions of his own.³⁶ It remains the case that this art of memory was written by Mattheus de Verona. It has been misinterpreted as authored by Beran only because of the overlooked wordplay in an unexpected place. On the one hand, one is forced to reach the oft-repeated conclusion: the culture and literature of Central and Eastern Europe largely depended on Italian and Western models both during the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance. On the other hand, Mattheus Beran could be promoted as a unique creator of mnemonic wordplays, and it could be stressed that he goes even further by inventing a new purpose for them. If, however, we concentrate on the contents rather than struggle over originality, we face here another nice instance of the close (and, starting with Plato's *Gorgias*, much elaborated) relationship between rhetorics and distortion of the truth.

Figures:

Figure 1: Ms. Prague, National Library I.F.35, f. 477r, courtesy of the National Library in Prague

Figure 2: Ms. St. Paul im Lavanttal 137/4, f. 132r, courtesy of the Stiftsbibliothek St. Paul im Lavanttal and the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library

³⁶ For example, after the list of the 100 memory places (which also differs in a number of items from the Mattheus of Verona's version in ms. Munich clm. 14260), Beran suggests a more simple strategy: learning only one abecedary sentence of nine words. By putting different colour in the tenth place ten times, one gets 100 places to use:

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.
Abbas Bernardus cupit dare ecclesiam fratribus gratis hodie Ierosolimis.
Ista ergo sunt 9 loca per numerum alphabeti descripta et secundum suum ordinem figurarum representativa.
demum adorna decimum locum 10 albi, 20 viridem, 30 rubeum, 40 flaveum, 50 nigrum, 60 glaucum, 70
griseum, 80 ferreum, 90 argenteum, 100 aureum (f. 481r).

Since not all the manuscripts of Mattheus de Verona's treatise have been consulted so far, future research may reveal that even what seems to be Beran's original contribution was copied from elsewhere.

***Ad hoc*: Lists of Bernard Itier (1163-1225), librarian of St. Martial de Limoges³⁷**

This article concentrates on *ad hoc* lists – that is, lists which appear random and which are not written to be copied. They do not claim to be exhaustive. The items in them are, obviously, still selected and ordered but should the same person try to write a list with the same uniting idea in a different moment, the selection and order could be quite different. Most importantly, as I will try to show, some of the *ad hoc* lists challenge one of the intuitive characteristics of a list, which is also included in Ivan M. Havel’s contribution in this book, namely that there is a specific idea underlying the creation of any list.³⁸ Instead, I will try to show that a preexisting idea is not necessarily the driving force in the compiling of a list but rather emerges from it.

An example for such an approach are the astrological lists, which, united by answering the simple question “What do I see in the sky day after day?” eventually made it possible to see patterns and deduce rules on the basis of their contents. Similarly, a romantic laundry woman in Woody Allen’s short story *The Metterling Lists* discovers an exciting love affair in the laundry lists of one of her clients. Also association lists made by a patient during psychoanalysis can be claimed to be united by an idea, the question “What comes to my mind at this moment?” but it is the idea which *emerges* from the list in the hand of an experienced psychoanalytic, which is much more concrete and influential. These examples make it clear that here as anywhere else an important role is played by interpretation.

The *ad hoc* lists are closest to the association lists. Their uniting feature is the moment, that is, the context of the time and place of their creation. Their further features might include:

- a) ‘Unofficial’ character of the physical existence of the list – written on a piece of paper rather than printed, written in uneven writing on the manuscript margin, etc.
- b) Incoherence in the selection and order – items omitted, no strategy in order, etc.
- c) Items in the list do not share the same structure or do not give the same type of information
- d) The uniting idea is unclear, being revised during the list creation, or emerging only on the basis of the list’s contents

It is clear, that none of these criteria are absolute, since one can quickly copy on a piece of paper a carefully designed list from a book. Also, what may seem incoherent to the reader may have been a careful design of the author, or the list may be planned with the aim that its order and selection should strike the reader or seem incoherent; uneven structure of the items may be intentional; and, finally, the fact that we cannot specify a uniting idea of the list may be only due to our own inability. Thus, it has to be kept in mind throughout the discussion that it is actually impossible to distinguish with certainty an *ad hoc* list from a carefully designed one.

The charm of the *ad hoc* lists is exactly in their open and unfinished character. They present the ‘first draft’ of the items belonging to an idea (which may be very vague) in the order they are recalled by the person. Thus, they are not random, but rather more closely connected to association, knowledge, and memory of an individual in a particular context.

Unlike other written documents, *ad hoc* lists written in the past usually do not have much social or cultural impact. Their importance lies in the fact that they provide a unique insight into the ways of thinking of an individual.

* * *

The lists discussed here as a case study were copied on manuscript margins in late 12th and early 13th centuries by a single man, Bernard Itier (Bernardus Iterii, 1163-1225), monk and librarian of Saint

³⁷ Research leading to this article was supported from my junior research grant from the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic no. KJB801970701. I am much grateful to François Dolbeau and Greti Dinkova-Bruun for their kind help and advice.

³⁸ Article in print, page numbers not available yet.

Martial de Limoges.³⁹ Bernard was proud of his duty as a librarian and sometimes dates his colophons according to the year of his ‘librarianship’.⁴⁰ As a librarian, he was also diligent and serious: he bought many volumes,⁴¹ initiated restoration and binding of many others,⁴² and himself copied several texts.⁴³ Yet, we learn all this information from Bernard’s own notes written in the codices he was supposed to guard. The number of his ‘interventions’ is astonishing: out of the 214 surviving manuscripts written before 1225 which can be undoubtedly associated with Saint Martial, 95 bear some trace of Bernard’s activity⁴⁴ – there are numerous colophons, shorter or longer marginal notes, and many lists.

Even Bernard’s most famous and historically most important work – the ‘chronicle’ of Saint Martial⁴⁵ – does not take the form of a chronicle. It has been reconstructed from Bernard’s marginal notes in several different manuscripts.⁴⁶ The main manuscript is Paris BN 1338, where Bernard applies a unique strategy of placing his entries on the margins of the manuscript: the entry for 1130 is on f. 130, for 1134 on f. 134, etc. Although he does not use this method consistently, it suggests that his aim was not to present a story but to provide an overview, an easily searchable handbook, a tool. The ‘chronicle’ provides an unusually detailed source on everyday life at a medieval abbey.⁴⁷ It is, at the same time, a great mixture of Biblical and Roman history, of prose and poetry, of personal, local, and world events.⁴⁸ And Bernard’s other works seem to be similar in this respect. He wrote not only a sermon pronounced on the day of Ascension in 1211,⁴⁹ two epitaphs,⁵⁰ and a hymn,⁵¹ but also short

³⁹ For more information on Bernard, see Jean-Loup Lemaître, *Bernard Itier: Chronique*, Les classiques de l’histoire de France au Moyen Age 39 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1998); Léopold Delisle, “Les manuscrits de Saint Martial,” *Bulletin de la Société archéologique du Limousin* 43 (1895): 1-64; Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “L’écriture de Bernard Itier et son évolution,” *Medievalia et humanistica* 14 (1962): 47-54; Henri Duplès-Agier, ed., *Chroniques de Saint-Martial de Limoges* (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1874); Jeanne Bignami Odier, “Membra disiecta du fonds de la Reine dans les fonds Vatican latin de la Bibliothèque vaticane. Notes inédites de Bernard Itier,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Moyen Age. Temps modernes* 85 (1973): 587-610. This article is partly based on a chapter: Lucie Doležalová, “Bernard Itier (1163-1225) and Paris 3549 (XII, CHM),” *Reception and Its Varieties: Reading, Re-Writing, and Understanding ‘Cena Cypriani’ in the Middle Ages*, Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium 75 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2007), 124-133.

⁴⁰ E.g., ms. BN lat. 54 (an Old Testament from the 12th-13th century) has his note on fol. 1: *Anno MCCXXIII, mense novembri...emit hunc librum XXX sol. et VI den. Bernardus Iterii armarius, XXmo sui armariatus anno.* Or ms. BN lat. 2455 (Gregory the Great’s *Moralia* from the 12th-13th century) on f. 1r: *Hanc prefacionem scripsit Bernardus Iterii, huius loci armarius, septimo anno quo factus fuit ipse armarius, in festo apostolorum Symonis et Iude, anno gratie MCCX.*

⁴¹ E.g., ms. BN lat. 821 (a sacramentary) on f. 142v: *Hunc librum emit Bernardus Iterii, huius loci armarius de Willelmo Martelli, V solidos, anno MCCX ab incarnato verbo.*

⁴² E.g., ms. BN lat. 2770 (fragments of theological codices from the 10th, 12th and 13th centuries) – f. 179r: *Anno MCCV fecit me ligare Bernardus Iterii armarius et quatuor quaterniones ultimos qui antea non erant mecum adiunxit.*

⁴³ E.g., ms. BN lat. 3719 (sentences, hymns, theological fragments from the 12th-13th century) on f. 110r: *B. Itherii armarius scripsit hec omnia;* and on f. 115v: *Hec scripsi anno MCCX in festo Stephani pape.*

⁴⁴ See Lemaître, *Bernard*, xxxv-xlvi. See also his earlier article, Jean-Loup Lemaître, “Une chronologie de Bernard Itier,” *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1983): 137.

⁴⁵ See Lemaître, *Bernard*, lvi-lxx for details on Bernard as a chronicler, and xcix-ciii on the chronicle itself.

⁴⁶ Edited for the first time in *Historiens de France* XII, p. 452-453, and XVIII, p. 223-238 and 298-299. Another edition in Duplès-Agier *Chroniques*, 28-129. Most recently and most carefully edited in Lemaître, *Bernard*.

⁴⁷ “Bernard Itier est sans doute le seul auteur du Moyen Age qui nous permettent de suivre la vie quotidienne d’une abbaye, de voir vraiment comment les choses s’y passent, comment se déroule la liturgie, combien de moines occupent l’abbaye et ses prieurés...” Lemaître, *Bernard Itier: Chronique*, vii.

⁴⁸ E.g., entry for 1188: *Ludovicus rex nascitur, Philipus et Richardus reges crozaverunt se. Obiit Petrus Iterii, pater armarii.* (ms. BN lat. 1338, f. 188r, cf. Lemaître *Bernard Itier* 28, Duplès-Agier 62). The chronicle begins with a chronological list of Biblical persons, then moves to Roman history, including elephants, the phoenix, as well as information on important writers, King Arthur, etc.

⁴⁹ Ms. BN lat. 1813, f. 145r, edited in Duplès-Agier 219-224. The same manuscript includes a fragment of another sermon by him on f. 145v, Duplès-Agier 224-225.

⁵⁰ *Abbatis cuiusdam titulus funereus* (inc. *Quisquis ades rotulumque vides, sta, perlege, plora*), ms. BN lat. 3719, f. 111v, Duplès-Agier 217-8; and *Abbatis cuiusdam epitaphium* (inc. *Si prece vel precio differi fata licet*), ms. BN lat. 3237, f. 104r, Duplès-Agier 218.

treatises on philosophy,⁵² on the nature of man, and several other topics.⁵³ This already suggests an important aspect of Bernard's approach: he is interested in everything, but he is not interested in going into detail and desires to show his knowledge in an abbreviated way. His shorter notes make this strategy clear; they include opinions and legends about the Holy Cross, names of the gates to Jerusalem, a recipe for preserving the voice, a poem about chess, rhymed verses on the number seven,⁵⁴ a life of St. John the Baptist based on the four Gospels,⁵⁵ and notes on natural history – including stones, metals, and meteorology.⁵⁶

The majority of Bernard's works are abbreviated or condensed longer texts. They usually appear in margins or empty folios,⁵⁷ and there is no surviving information on their medieval reception – they seem to have served rather only their author and the monastery. Even scholars are often not sure what to make of Bernard. Symptomatic in this regard is the statement by Lemaître: “Bernard Itier reste toutefois difficile à classer.”⁵⁸

One of the difficulties with Bernard is his obvious pleasure in compiling lists. Bernard wrote indeed a great number of lists. On the one hand, he made several lists of the monks, boys attending the school, abbots, librarians, treasures and donations to the abbey,⁵⁹ as well as a list of books held by Saint Martial.⁶⁰ These ‘factual’ lists are mostly edited because of their historical value and relevance. They are not quite *ad hoc* lists, because they usually claim to be exhaustive.

Yet, there is a particular list among them, which provides an important *caveat*: the chronological list of librarians of St. Martial de Limoges.⁶¹ This list is actually not complete: the librarian just preceding Bernard in the function is omitted from it. The existence of this person is, however, attested elsewhere,⁶² and it is also documented that Bernard had problems with the man. Without this information, the seeming completeness and objectivity of Bernard's list would have contributed to his predecessor's disappearance from history, simply because Bernard did not like him. Lists may, indeed, serve as codification, and therefore can be used for shaping reality.

On the other hand, Bernard compiled also a number of ‘fictional’ lists. These remain mostly unedited because they are of no use for historians. Most of them seem created *ad hoc* and their aim is not always quite clear. Only in few cases can Bernard's notes be related to the main text, as can be seen in the list of resurrection miracles performed by Jesus and the saints copied by Bernard in MS

⁵¹ It is called *prosa* in ms. BN lat. 5505, f. 1v and 2r, with musical notation (inc. *Mittit ad Virginem non quemvis angelum*) in Duplès-Agier 218-9.

⁵² *Philosophia unde dicta et quid sit, ex quave materia constat*, ms. BN lat. 3719, f. 4v, Duplès-Agier 226-230.

⁵³ *De hominis natura*, ms. BN 3719, f. 108r-v, Duplès-Agier 230-233. Other works appear in the same ms. and include: *De virtute*, f. 113v, Duplès-Agier 233-234, *De senectute et eius virtutibus*, f. 8v, Duplès-Agier 234-235.

⁵⁴ All these are in ms. BN lat. 3719 f. 109v-110r, 115v, 15r, 91v, 111v, and 7r.

⁵⁵ Ms. BN lat. 3237, f. 104r-105v, the life (*Vita sancti Iohannis Baptistae sumpta ex quatuor evangelistis*) from 1213 is on f. 111r.

⁵⁶ Ms. BN lat. 2367, f. 1r-2v.

⁵⁷ It is often assumed that Bernard's writing on the margin was due to the fact that parchment was very expensive (cf. Lemaître 138), D'Alverny even argues that it is a characteristic aspect of the manuscripts from Saint Martial that their parchments are filled with writing – there is never a folio left blank (D'Alverny, “L'écriture de Bernard Itier” 49). She is, however, wrong; I have consulted several manuscripts with Bernard's notes which, although bound by him or at his time, included void pages.

⁵⁸ Lemaître *Chronique*, vii.

⁵⁹ These lists provide a valuable source of information on the changing size of the abbey. Edited by Duplès-Agier 236-319 (edited in a bit confusing way together with other lists by other authors).

⁶⁰ Ms. BN lat. 1085 f. 104v, Duplès-Agier 330-339. The library must have held some 450 books. Duplès-Agier identified several of them with surviving manuscripts and a few others were identified later. (E.g., a book which Bernard refers to as his own volume of *Verbum adabbreviatum* in the list was identified by Vezin as ms. Paris BN lat. 3710 – see Jean Vezin, “L'exemplaire du “Verbum abbreviatum” de Bernard Itier,” *Scriptorium* 26:1 (1972): 54-55). Further lists (monks who received rent, abbots of Solignac, preachers whom Bernard heard in the chapter of St. Martial, bishops of Limoges, abbots of St. Martial, abbots of Cluny, and more) appear in ms. 1338 itself and are edited by Lemaître, *Bernard Itier: Chronique* 73-92.

⁶¹ See Lemaître, *Bernard Itier: Chronique* 435.

⁶² See Lemaître, *Bernard Itier: Chronique* 446.

Paris BN lat. 5321⁶³ just before the Lives of Saints. While some general mnemonic or educational goals of these lists could perhaps be argued for, sometimes it seems that Bernard was just writing for himself. Perhaps his presentation of ‘condensed knowledge’ was not destined for practical use but was a kind of boasting, a visible proof of ‘acquired culture’. The lists are definitely ‘learned’ lists. Bernard combines in them the Biblical text with classical and occasionally also historical and mythical sources.⁶⁴

The first list to be analysed here is preserved in ms. Paris BN lat. 2799.⁶⁵ After the main text of the codex, Gregory the Great’s *Cura pastoralis* (which ends of f. 87v), Bernard copied several brief texts, mainly songs with musical notation and various notes. Our list appears at the very end (followed only by *probationes pennae*), on f. 90v:

Samson fortissimus se cum aliis necavit
Absalon pulcherrimus in quercus compendit
Salomon in sapiencia non per se valuit
Asael velociter ad mortem properavit
Achitophel sibi male consuluit
Nadab et Abiud igne consumpti sunt
Alexander et Iulius Cesar dum gloriantur
orbem se subjugasse;
*altor[!] ferro alter veneno perempti sunt*⁶⁶
 “The strong Samson killed himself with others
 The beautiful Absalon hung on the oak tree
 Salomon’s wisdom was not useful to him⁶⁷
 Asael quickly hurried to die

⁶³ Codex no. 170 in St. Martial library. *Dominus Ihesus Christus suscitauit filiam archisinagogi infra domum, iuuenem extra portam ciuitatis elatum, Laxarum[!] quadriduanum. Paulus Patroclum, Marcialis Austriclinianum plus quam quadriduanum, Aurelianum et Andream pontifices ydolorum fulminatos, Ildebertum filium Arcadii comitis Pict., filium Nerve principis, hortarium armgerum[!] ducis Stephani. J. Euangelista Drusillam viduam. P. apostolus Tabitam, Martinus iii, Hylarius i, Elegius i, [little space] monacus de monte argentario ut dicitur in libro dialogorum i, Helias propheta i, Heliseus i in vita sua, alterum post, Agnes filium presidis qui eam diligebat. Philipus apostolus suscitauit filium pontificis et duos tribunos, Benedictus filium Rustici. M^o. CC. XVIII. vigilia S. Lucie. B. Iterii scripsit (f. 1v).*

⁶⁴ Bernard mixes Bible with classics in his lists of incipits. They appear in Ms Paris BN lat. 3237 (No. 200 in the St. Limoges library (top of f. 1r: *Lemovic. 200*), it is a miscellany from beginning of the 13th century). On f. 99r:

<i>Beatus vir qui non habuit in con. imp. et in via</i>	[Psalms]
<i>Bella per hemathios plusquam civilia campos</i>	[Lucan: <i>Bellum civile</i>]
<i>Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi</i>	[Boethius: <i>Consolatio philosophiae</i>]

And on f. 107v:

<i>Adam. Seth. Enos</i>	[Book of Chronicles]
<i>Arphaxat itaque</i>	[Book of Judith]
<i>Apocalipsis Ihesu</i>	[The Revelation of John]
<i>Arma virumque</i>	[Virgil: <i>Aeneis</i>]
<i>Ausculta o fili pre</i>	[Regula sancti Benedicti]
<i>A in omnibus gent</i>	[Papias: <i>Elementarium</i>]
<i>In principio – creavit deus</i>	[Genesis]
<i>– erat verbum</i>	[John’s Gospel]
<i>Imperatorie maiestatis</i>	[Petrus Comestor: <i>Historia scholastica</i>]
<i>Iacobus dei et domini nostri Ihesu</i>	[Letter of Jacob]
<i>In nova fert animus mu</i>	[Ovid: <i>Metamorphoses</i>]
<i>Iram pande mihi Pelidei diva</i>	[Ilias Latina]
<i>Iuste iudicate filium bo</i>	[Thomas Capuanus: <i>Ars dictaminis</i>]

⁶⁵ In the monastic library at St. Limoges, the codex had number 138 (cf. f. 2r top: *Lemovic. 138*).

⁶⁶ The last two words are on f. 91r, down on page.

⁶⁷ Greti Dinkova-Bruun suggested me to translate this item rather as “Solomon was not wise by himself,” meaning that he got his wisdom from God. It indeed makes better sense as far as the Latin language is concerned. If it is the correct translation, it would make the list still less coherent, and thus would make a good argument for its *ad hoc* character. However, as far as the contents of the list are concerned, the version suggested by me fits better (see the explanation below) and I hope it is also a possible one.

Achitofel gave himself a bad advice
 Nadab and Abiud were consumed by fire
 Alexander and Julius Caesar, while they
 celebrated that they had conquered the world,
 perished, one by sword, the other by poison.”

It could seem that the unifying idea of the list is “people who died violently, unusually, or prematurely.” Yet, upon a closer inspection one sees that, should it be so, one character stands out: Solomon. His death is not narrated in the Bible but there is no indication that it was violent, unusual, or premature.

Looking for parallels to this list, it seems that it might have been connected to another of Bernard’s creations appearing (together with several other lists) in Ms. Paris BN lat. 3237, on f. 105v:

<i>Nota in Samson fortitudo</i>	“Samson is noteworthy for strength
<i>in Absalon pulcritudo</i>	Absalon for beauty
<i>in Salomone sapientia et gloria</i>	Salomon for wisdom and glory
<i>in Asaele velocitas</i>	Asael for swiftness
<i>in Achitofel consilium.</i>	Achitofel for advice
<i>in Alexandro largitas</i>	Alexander for abundance
<i>in Julio Cesare probitas</i>	Julius Caesar for honesty
<i>in Nerone voluptas et temeritas</i>	Nero for lust and heedlessness
<i>in Moyse mansuetudo</i>	Moses for health
<i>in Daniele castitas</i>	Daniel for chastity
<i>in Iosia sanctitas</i>	Josias for sanctity
<i>in Juda Macabeo milicia</i>	Judas Maccabee for bravery
<i>in Cresi opes</i>	Croesus for riches
<i>in Johanne Bapista mira abstinencia</i>	John the Baptist for extraordinary abstinence
<i>in Iob paciencia.</i>	Job for patience.”

The characters featuring in the two lists overlap, only Nadab and Abiud from the former list do not appear in the latter one. The unifying idea of the latter list is clear: it is a list of both Biblical and historical personalities with their characteristic features. Although each item on the list begins by the name of the person, search for comparable lists in medieval literature shows that it is rather the characteristic features which are at its basis.⁶⁸ A similar list appears perhaps for the first time in *Proslogion* (chapter 25) by Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), where the seven joys of the body and the seven joys of the mind awaiting the blessed ones in the afterlife are presented. The topic is then further elaborated by adding the exemplary figures for each joy. This type of list is changed by various authors in various contexts.⁶⁹ Among the texts which Bernard could manifestly have consulted in the library of his monastery, there is *Elucidarium* by Honorius Augustodunensis (died ca. 1140),⁷⁰ a

⁶⁸ A more distant parallel can be seen in lists of peoples and their virtues and vices. Such lists were composed already in the Late Antiquity and were popular also throughout the Middle Ages. For a detailed analysis see: Paul Meyvaert, “‘Rainaldus est malus scriptor Francigenus’ – voicing national antipathy in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 66 (1991): 743-763, esp. 747-749.

⁶⁹ See Geoffrey Shepherd, “‘All the wealth of Croesus...’ A Topic in *Ancren Riwe*,” *The Modern Language Review* 51: 2 (1956): 161-167. Shepherd cites a number of relevant lists for this enquiry in his search for the source of a simile list in *Ancren Riwe* (The Nuns’ Rule, in Middle English, from the 13th century), where Christ as wooer of the human soul gives a list of what he gives to the loving soul: wealth (Croesus), beauty (Absalon), swiftness (Asael), strength (Samson), nobility (Caesar), prowess (Alexander), health (Moses). The passage in modern English reads: Heart shall never think of such great felicity, that I will not give you more for thy love, immesuarbly and infinitely more – all the wealth of Croesus; and the fair beauty of Absalom, who, as often as his hair was polled the clippings were sold – the hair that was cut off – for two hundred shekels of silver; the swiftness of Asahel, who strove in speed with a hart; the strength of Samson, who slew a thousand of his enemies at one time, and alone, without a companion; Caesar’s liberality; Alexander’s renown; the dignity of Moses (*The Ancren Riwe. A Treatise on the Rules and Duties of Monastic Life*, ed. and tr. James Morton (London: Camden Society, 1853), 399; Morton’s translation is a bit misleading, the original has at the end: *Cesares ureoschipe; Alisaundres hereword; Moiseses heale*).

⁷⁰ See, e.g., Yves Lefèvre, *L’Elucidarium et les Lucidaires*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 124 (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1954); Dagmar Gottschall, *Das Elucidarium des Honorius Augustodunensis*.

very popular dialogue between a master and his pupil on various theological problems, which features a similar list with in the same context of the bodily beatitudes.⁷¹ This list with a number of the same exemplary characters is actually an amplification of the enumeration of the beatitudes which just precedes it.⁷² After this, the spiritual beatitudes are treated in *Elucidarium* in the very same way. At the end of the passage, though, the Master explains to the pupil that the beatitudes in paradise are actually much better than in those characters which were provided as examples.

A similar list appears in Jerome's commentary on a verse from Matthew ("For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mt 16:26⁷³), but its context has changed:

Si haberes sapientiam Salomonis, si pulchritudinem Absalonis, si fortitudinem Samsonis, si longevitatem Enoch, si divicias Cresi, si potestatem Octaviani, quid prosunt hec cum tandem caro datur vermibus et anima demonibus cum divite sine fine crucianda.

"If you had the wisdom of Solomon, the beauty of Absalon, the strength of Samson, the longevity of Enoch, the riches of Croesus, the power of Octavian, what would be the use when the flesh is in the end given to the worms and the soul to the demons to be tormented without end with the rich."⁷⁴

Here, the listed features or riches are more clearly linked to perishable earthly properties, and are thus negative rather than positive.

Finally, in *Rhythmus de Contemptu mundi* attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux during the Middle Ages,⁷⁵ this tendency is brought even further: the context is, again, that one should not be too attached to the joys of the carnal state:

*Credendum magis est viris veracibus
Quam mundi miseris prosperitatibus:
Falsis in somniis, et vanitatibus,
Falsis in studiis, et voluptatibus.
Dic, ubi Salomon, olim tam nobilis?
Vel ubi Samson est, dux invincibilis?*

Untersuchungen zu seiner überlieferungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte im deutschsprachigen Raum mit Ausgabe der niederdeutschen Übersetzung, Texte und Textgeschichte 33 (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1992); Ernstpeter Ruhe, *Elucidarium und Lucidaires. Zur Rezeption des Werks von Honorius Augustodunensis in der Romania und in England* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1993); Monika Türk, 'Lucidaire de grant sapientie'. *Untersuchung und Edition der altfranzösischen Übersetzung des Elucidarium von Honorius Augustodunensis* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000).

⁷¹ *D. Levasti me super me. Haec sunt quae concupivit anima mea audire. Rogo te, haec aliquibus modis exprime.—M. Placeretne tibi si esses ita pulcher ut Absalon in cujus corpore non erat macula, et cujus coma multo pretio ponderabatur praecisa?*

D. O gloria!—M. Quid si cum hoc decore esses tam velox quam Asael, qui cursu pedum praevertebat capreas.

D. O gratia!—M. Quid si cum his duobus ita esses fortis ut Samson, qui mille viros armatos prostravit una mandibula?

D. O ingens decus!—M. Quid si cum his tribus esses tam liber quam Augustus, cui totus mundus servivit?

D. O claritudo!—M. Quid si cum his quatuor ita voluptate afflueres ut Salomon, qui nunquam cordi suo aliquid denegabat quod desiderabat?

D. O dulcedo!—M. Quid si cum his quinque ita sanus esses ut Moyses, cui nunquam dens motus est, nec caligavit oculus?

D. O sanitas!—M. Quid si his omnibus habitis deberes ita fieri longaevus ut Mathusalem, qui pene ad mille annos vixit?

D. O magnificentia! Mihi videtur, si cui optio ex his eligendi daretur, unumquodque pro regno jure eligeretur: si quis autem his omnibus polleret, merito toti mundo praefereendus esset (PL 172, col. 1169-1170).

⁷² *M. Septem speciales glorias corporis habebunt, et septem animae. In corpore quidem pulchritudinem, velocitatem, fortitudinem, libertatem, voluptatem, sanitatem, immortalitatem: In anima autem sapientiam, amicitiam, concordiam, potestatem, honorem, securitatem, gaudium (PL 172, col. 1169).*

⁷³ *Quod prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur, anime vero sue detrimentum facietur?*

⁷⁴ Richard of St. Victor (died 1173) provides a similar version in his Sermon 10, *De timore dei* (On the fear of God), most probably inspired by Jerome.

⁷⁵ It is a satirical poem of 3000 verses and was probably written by Bernard of Morlaix (fl. 1150). More recently edited by H. C. Hoskier, *De Contemptu Mundi, by Bernard of Morval* (London: Quaritch, 1929).

Vel pulcher Absalon, vultu mirabilis?
Vel dulcis Jonathas, multum amabilis?
Quo Caesar abiit, celsus imperio?
Vel Dives splendidus, totus in prandio?
Dic, ubi Tullius, clarus eloquio?
*Vel Aristoteles, summus ingenio?*⁷⁶

The author asks repeatedly the same question: where is this person who excelled so much in this thing now? By this, he stresses again and again the passing character of this world.

What is the relationship of the Bernard's list we started with to these variations? Almost every item on Bernard's list includes three pieces of information: the name of the person, his typical feature, and the way he died. The features (or riches, or beatitudes) are presented by Bernard in a more dynamic way than in the other comparable lists – they are directly linked to the way of death (see above, e.g., “Salomon's wisdom was not useful to him, Asahel run quickly to his death”).

As for the characters and their characteristics, none of the discussed lists features the same ones and thus none of them forms a direct model for the list made by Bernard. His Samson, Absalon, and Salomon appear almost everywhere, Asahel, Achitophel, Alexander, and Julius Ceasar less frequently but can also be found in this context.

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abiud are, to my knowledge, never found in the context of the beatitudes. They are also the only ones to whom Bernard does not attach any characteristics in his list. Their death is narrated in one sentence in Numbers 26:61⁷⁷ and is just a little bit more elaborated in Leviticus.⁷⁸ Their story is usually placed in the context of a punishment for transgressing God's command, or, more precisely, doing what God has not commanded.⁷⁹ It is slightly obscure, though, because it is nowhere explicitly stated, where exactly the brothers made a mistake: their offering to God is just called *ignis alienus*.⁸⁰ Thus, we definitely have here an unusual, violent and premature death. As for the beatitude or riches the brothers should stand for, it could be assumed that they had a distinguished status as the first priests but Bernard's list itself does not say anything explicit.

At the same time, they are the only ones whose presence in the list in this particular codex could be linked easily to the main text copied, Gregory the Great's *Pastorale*.⁸¹ In the last, that is, the fourth, part, Gregory reminds the priests to remain modest, since their pride could be fatal to them. This is exactly how the Nadab and Abiud's story can be interpreted.⁸²

⁷⁶ PL 184, col. 1315.

⁷⁷ *Nadab et Abiu mortui sunt cum obtulissent ignem alienum coram Domino* (and Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the Lord).

⁷⁸ Lev 10:1-2 (*arreptisque Nadab et Abiu filii Aaron turibulis posuerunt ignem et incensum desuper offerentes coram Domino ignem alienum quod eis praeceptum non erat, egressusque ignis a Domino devoravit eos et mortui sunt coram Domino.*)

⁷⁹ The theme is treated in this way for example by Isidore of Seville in his *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum* (PL 83, col. 325: *Filii autem Aaron, qui, imponentes altari ignem alienum, igne divino exusti sunt, illos significaverunt qui, Dei traditione contempta, alienas doctrinas appetunt, et magisteria humanae institutionis inducunt.*)

⁸⁰ Thus, also several other theories exist. For example, the eleventh-century Jewish exegete Rashi says that the sin was either that they taught the law in the presence of their master (Moses), or that, since in Leviticus, their story is immediately followed by prohibition of alcohol to priest, they were intoxicated when offering the fire (Rashi, *Ad Leviticus* 10:2).

⁸¹ Actually, a note preceding the discussed list in this codex relates to the *Pastorale* very clearly. At the end of the *Pastorale*, Gregory compares pastoral care to navigating a ship (*Aliosque ad perfectionis littus dirigo, qui adhuc in delictorum fluctibus uersor. Sed in huius queso vite naufragio orationis tue me tabula sustine, ut quia pondus proprium perimit, tui meriti manus me levet*). Bernard's note then explores this parallel on the example of Peter, chosen by Jesus to lead the church: *Post me petre veni ped[is?]. vita. morte. Soluendique redis sit tibi possessatum, ecclesiam pro nave regas. Mare sit tibi mundus. Sint tibi scripture recia. Piscis homo. Pro velis tibi sit dilectio, lata sit arbor. Spes sursum tendens anchora firma fides, verborum stimul, pro remis utere spirito, corpore transversa, pro trabe tolle crucem, funes prelati sint forcia iussa fidei: remige finalis actio cuncta rectat.*

⁸² They are mentioned in the text but on a different occasion, in chapter 16, as drunk. According to Gregory, their sin was that they were drinking.

This list of Bernard may have seemed rather random at the beginning but in the light of the above quoted similar lists, it becomes clear that the information it contains is not included by chance: it is exactly the combination of listing the features in which the particular persons excelled (or the beatitudes they are examples of), with the ways in which they died, which reminds the reader that none of these possessions can be taken beyond this world. Thus, the list by Bernard Itier can be seen as a reply to the questions of the above quoted *De contemptu mundi* poem: Bernard literally answers how these people, remarkable for their particular characteristics, met their death. The library of St. Martial de Limoges owned a copy of *De contemptu mundi* (it is included in ms. Paris BN 3549), so such a link is not impossible. Yet, the poem is clearly not the direct textual source for Bernard – he does not select the same characters, and even those, which he includes, do not appear in the same order. In any case, it is uncertain that a direct textual model source for this list existed at all. Bernard was more probably drawing from his ‘book of memory’ where these characters were ‘stored in vicinity’, that is, associated.

The unifying idea of his list seems to be the ephemerality of this world: the characters listed did not necessarily die in a special way (like Samson), and they did not necessarily own one of the seven recognized beatitudes (like Nabal and Abiud). Bernard, only loosely inspired by the beatitudes and the discourse surrounding them, simply lists people who excelled in a way or possessed particular riches but died anyway. He chooses biblical and historical personages who died suddenly and in an unexpected way, since by that he stresses that it was a wrong presumption on their part to expect that they will be happy forever. His list is based on his personal association and memory, which, however, developed from the knowledge he acquired, on the basis of the problems and subjects his contemporaries were occupied with. It is a personal momentary selection but, at the same time, reflects frequent medieval Christian considerations of this world as a passage, the length and character of which is not in our hands.

* * *

Bernard Itier wrote another curious list combining biblical and historical characters. It appears in ms. Paris BN lat. 3237, on f. 105v, and reads:

Eva. Adam.
Dalida. Samson.
Bersabee. David.
Naamas. Salomonem.
*Jezabel. Achat*⁸³.
Helena. Paridem.
Cleopatra. Antonium et Iulium.
*Libia*⁸⁴. *Octavianum Augustum.*
Mariannes. Herodem Ascalonitam.
Herodias. Herodem Antipas.
Iustina. Valentianum primum.
Eudoxia. Archadium.
Theodora. Iustinianum.
Brunichildis. Theodericum.
Fredegundis. Chilpericum.
errare fecerunt multis modis. [they made [them] err in many ways]
Dalida persecuta est. Samsonem.
Iezabel. Heliam prophetam.
Herodias. Iohannem Bapstistam.
Iustina. Ambrosium.
Eudoxia. Iohannem Cristosomum.
Theodora. Siluerium et Vigilium exiliauit.
Brunichildis. Columbanum abbatem.

⁸³ I.e., Achab.

⁸⁴ I.e., Livia.

In this case, the unifying idea does not seem difficult to decode, since it is even explicitly stated: it is a list of women who made their men err in a number of ways (*errare fecerunt multis modis*).

However, the list is divided into two parts. The first one, ending with the list's idea, enumerates women and their husbands. The second one repeats 7 of the 15 women already mentioned, this time, however, except the first one, Delilah, they are not associated with their husbands but rather with men they really harmed. These are all either biblical or historical heroes of Christianity. Thus, it seems as if the second part of the list, rather than simply expanding and elaborating the first part, was a kind of its revision. As if the original idea was to list evil *wives* (rather than simply women) but the second thought would place stress on the evil *deeds* themselves and thus, the list would supply those truly persecuted rather than the husbands.

For example, Justina was the wife of Valentinian I (ruled 364-375) but is rather known for making her son Valentinian II promote an Arian bishop in Milan and enter a conflict with Ambrose.⁸⁵ Aelia Eudoxia was the wife of Arcadius (d. 404) but is known for her conflicts with John Chrysostom.⁸⁶ Theodora was the wife of Justinian (they got married in 523) but is known for having the Pope Silverius deposed because he did not want to promote the Acephali sect. She substituted him by Vigilius but later on had conflicts with him, too, and sent him into exile. Justinian did not agree but reacted too late. Brunhild was not the wife but the mother of Theodoric. Through her son, she eventually made Columbanus leave the country.⁸⁷ Originally a servant, Fredegund became the third wife of Chilperic I (ca. 539-584) after he killed his second one (who happened to be Brunhild's sister), and actually helped her husband: she killed Sigebert when he had Chilperic at his mercy. In Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*, she is depicted as very cruel and bloodthirsty.⁸⁸

Thus, a closer inspection shows that not all of the mentioned couples are husbands and wives: Brunhild is linked to her son rather than her husband. It is her taking the initiative, being in charge of things instead of the man, which links her to the other women.

The second part of the list (the 'revision' where some of the female characters reappear) includes two verbs: *persecuta est* (persecuted) describes Delilah and Samson and can be linked to the following Jezebel, Herodias, Justina and Eudoxia, too; and *exiliauit* (sent into exile), which describes Theodora, the following Brunhild, but could also be linked to the preceding Justina and Eudoxia. Thus, as if the list was changing its subject on the way – it gradually and inconspicuously focuses on historical influential women who sent into exile Christian heroes. That may be the reason Fredegund from the very end of the first part of the list does not reappear in the revision: she did not send to exile any future saint.

While it was generally recognized in the Middle Ages that women, starting with Eve, were sources of much evil, it is not so easy to search for parallels, possible models, or at least possible sources of the association chains compiled by Bernard here. Engelbert of Admont who actually comes only after Bernard (he was born in 1250), in his *Utrum sapienti competat uxorem ducere* (Whether it is fitting for a wise man to get a wife), discusses biblical examples of both bad and a good wives.⁸⁹ He opposes Batsheba who was the cause of death to her husband, Uriah, to Judith who remained faithful to her dead husband and helped the whole Jewish nation when oppressed by Holofernes.⁹⁰ After that, he discusses further examples, opposing foreign women who charmed

⁸⁵ After her death, Valentinian made peace with Ambrose.

⁸⁶ She was perhaps responsible for his two exiles, since she took personally his complaints about extravagance in female dress.

⁸⁷ Columban was criticising the king for having concubines and refused to bless his illegitimate children. He also refused entry to Brunhild to his monastery.

⁸⁸ Book IX, Chapter 34. On the other hand, Gregory speaks very favourably of Brunhild.

⁸⁹ For noting the partial similarity between Engelbert and Bernard, I am indebted to Pavel Blažek.

⁹⁰ See Wilhelm Baum, ed. *Engelbert von Admont: Vom Ursprung und Ende des Reiches und andere Schriften* (Graz: Leykam, 1998), cap. V, p. 154-156. The parallel between the two is nicely established and developed: [Judith] *non igitur depositis suae viduitatis vestibul se lavit cum Bethsabee in solaro, ut regem alliceret et prophetam deciperet et amicum Dei a Deo alienaret et ipsa committeret adulterium et causaret mariti homicidium, sed in sekreto lavit corpus suum et colligavit cincinnos capitis sui et ornavit se ornamentis suis, non ad suam libidinem explendam, sed ad alienam decipiendam et ad consummandam ex se et in se Dei virtutem et populi Dei salutem, ut sic salva sua castitate deciperet et prosterneret non David, sed Holofernem, non regem, sed hostem, non prophetam, sed praedonem, non Dei amicum, sed inimicum, non principem populi,*

Solomon (he does not name Naamah, the Ammonite wife of Solomon included in Bernard's list,⁹¹ saying only *mulieres alienigenae et Ammonitae*) to the mother of the seven Macabees, Delilah harming Samson to Michol helping David, Jezebel seducing Achab to idolatry to Esther making idolatrous people find true God.⁹² The next chapter offers examples from profane history, first distinguishing three types of love: chaste (Penelope's for Ulysses), incestual (Faidra's for Hippolytus), and furious (Dido's for Aeneas). To the first one, Helen's love for Paris is opposed, to the second Valeria's for Servius, and to the third Lucretia's relationship to Tarquinius. Finally, Phyllis and Demophon are set into opposition to Laodamia and Protesilaus.⁹³ Engelbert reminds of Bernard in using both biblical and historical figures. However, influenced by the scholastic rules of debate, he gathers evidence for both sides – he notes both the positive and negative women. And, more importantly, his treatment is a rhetorically elegant and much elaborated retelling of the stories, it is not a list.

A brief list on the same topic appears in a very different genre – in a poem on Abelard and Heloise by an anonymous of Fleury. Three men, Adam, Samson, and Solomon (all appearing in Bernard's list in the same order), are enumerated as ruined by their wives, so that the chastity of Heloise becomes the more manifest:

*Adam, Samsonem, Salomonem perdidit uxor
Additus est Petrus, clade ruit simili
Publica summorum cladis fuit ista virorum...
Sola tamen Petri conjunx est criminis experts.*⁹⁴
“The wife ruined Adam, Samson, Salomon
Peter was added, he was destroyed by a similar disaster
This calamity of these excellent men was public ...
Only the wife of Peter is flawless.”

Bernard's women are all evil and they are all wives. Thus, the list, written in a monastic context could be interpreted as a personal re-confirmation in the decision of celibacy.

At the same time, we could see in the list the beginnings of the (more romantic) concept of *femme fatale* bound to fully develop later.⁹⁵ The women, though evil, were active and powerful. *Femme fatale* could be taken as a cultural code, that is, a topos of a particular behavior expected (or feared) from certain members of the society. The list would then provide “classical” literary testimonies in support of a theoretical model: the powerful wicked wife harming the husband, or through the husband. In this light, the mixture of the biblical and historical figures is not so striking. Bernard does not name any of his contemporaries; he lists only figures he encountered in written sources. The sources already present the women in a particular light; they frequently speak of historical personages in comparison to biblical characters. Thus, for example, Brunhild was already perceived as a ‘second Jezebel’ and Columban as a ‘second Elijah’ in the Life of St. Columban.⁹⁶

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sed tyrannum. Unde non mariti sui homicidium, sed genus sue liberatio et gaudium et inimicorum confusio et exterminium est secutum (p. 156).

⁹¹ Naamah does not play an important role in the Bible either. In Jewish midrash, however, it is narrated in detail how Solomon and her almost starved to death in the desert.

⁹² Chapter VI, p. 158-162.

⁹³ Chapter VII, p. 164-168.

⁹⁴ Ed. Peter Dronke, *Abelard and Heloise in Medieval Testimonies* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1976).

⁹⁵ For a similar list and further bibliography see François Dolbeau, “Un poème médiéval sur l’Ancien Testament: le Liber prefigurationum Christi et ecclesie,” *Lectures et relectures de la Bible. Festschrift P.-M. Bogaert*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 144, ed. J.-M. Auwers et A. Wélin (Leuven : University Press & Peeters, 1999), 367-391.

⁹⁶ *Vita Columbani* I, cap. 18, p. 86. For a detailed comparative analysis see Janet L. Nelson, “Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History,” *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. by Barbara H. Rosenwein and Lester K. Little (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 219-253; and Yitzhak Hen, “The uses of the Bible and the perception of kingship in Merovingian Gaul,” *Early Medieval Europe* 7:3 (1998): 277-289.

Both lists discussed above fulfill the criteria set for *ad hoc* lists: they appear in void folios or in the margins of larger codices, written in untidy scripts. The order of the items does not seem to follow a particular strategy (the chronological order is not kept throughout). The items do not have the same structure – some of the items do not provide the same type of information as the other ones. And, finally, the uniting ideas of the lists are not completely clear. In the first case, the idea most strongly imposing itself on the reader is the idea of ephemerality of this world, in the second one that women are evil (or perhaps rather powerful and can govern their men and through them).

The topics treated are well-recognized medieval intellectual topoi and patterns. The characters and their attributes listed do not reveal any unknown original information. In addition, writing such lists does not seem to have been a typical activity of medieval monks, and Bernard is even partly suspicious for the pleasure he takes in it.

What we have a chance to witness here is, however, very special: we get a glimpse of the way education and culture worked in everyday life reality. We see Bernard sustaining and re-inventing the cultural code, and thus taking a direct part in the complex process of cultural encoding and decoding. His lists are indeed momentary creations: if he wrote them a week or even a few minutes later, he might have written them very differently. Yet, through his lists, Bernard recreates existing medieval patterns. The cultural patterns are general concepts that are well-recognised by scholars but it is not stressed sufficiently that they are not static and final.⁹⁷ They are dynamic, being realized *ad hoc* again and again in the Middle Ages. In this way, the *ad hoc* (in Bernard's lists as well as elsewhere) is both momentary and long-lasting, both personal and general, and should not be excluded from our considerations.

⁹⁷ An important exception is Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), who persuasively argues that memory was a creative (a re-creative) process, hence its high esteem by medieval writers. It would be worthy of a separate study to consider whether the very function of literature in medieval society might have been to establish such cultural patterns or codes through which the behaviour of people could be interpreted, possibly influenced, or even manipulated (cf. Carruthers's analysis of Heloise's re-staging Cornelia's monologue (Carruthers, *The Book*, 179-182)).