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Uses and Abuses of *amicitia*: the Correspondence between Peter the Venerable and Hato of Troyes

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The importance attached to the concept of *amicitia* in medieval writing in general would seem to be reflected in the epistolary tradition. Letters are generally perceived as having a three-fold relationship to *amicitia*: they are seen as acts of friendship in themselves;¹ they are treated as documentation of particular friendships; they are used as sources for establishing the philosophical concepts and language of friendship prevalent at successive periods, for example in the studies of friendship within the monastic tradition made by Adele Fiske² and Brian McGuire³ which will be referred to later. At the same time, it must be remembered that letters are in fact literary constructs: the epistolary tradition is self-reflexive and self-perpetuating, and the same caveats as are applied to poetry, particularly first-person poetry - letter-writing can also be viewed as first-person narrative - should perhaps be applied to this area also. In their recent book on medieval female letter-writers Cherewatuk and Wiethaus, discussing the implications of the structural model for the study of epistolary literature produced by Janet Gurkin Altman,⁴ suggest that 'the letter's meaning is derived as much from the use or neglect of already existing epistolary conventions as from the context itself'.⁵

In this context absence, rather than presence, might seem to be a decisive factor. Apart from invective letters and letters which clearly emanate from enemies rather than friends (and even some of those masquerade as friendship letters, for example, the *consolatoria* addressed to Abelard by Fulco of Deuil),⁶ most medieval letters seem to make some use of the *topoi* of friendship. It might seem desirable to make a distinction between letters of pure friendship and official correspondence, which, as a formal division, goes back a long way: Julius Victor, a fourth century A.D. rhetorician, drawing perhaps on a distinction already made by Cicero, distinguishes between *epistolae negotiales* and *familiares*.⁷ Peter himself seems to echo the distinction

in letter 137: he complains that the letters and messengers he has received have been bringing 'negotia communia' rather than 'aliquid de vero amici affectu'.⁸ This serves as a useful *ad hoc* stick for 'beating' his friend but it appears on reflection to be somewhat specious. It is virtually impossible to make a cast-iron distinction between official and unofficial correspondence, partly because practical considerations meant that most letters, however apparently disinterested, contained some element of business material, but also because it is accepted that most letters which have survived were written with a wider audience in mind. Conversely, certainly in Peter's case, most letters, even those the content of which seems largely impersonal, seem to at least build their *captatio* around some gambit deriving from the standard language of *amicitia*. It is not so much the presence of *amicitia* which gives a letter its significance as the use to which it is being put: in deciding this, the selection and manipulation of *topoi* may become crucially important.

Peter's own 'language' of friendship - its dominant themes and images, the citations and *sententiae* on which it depends, along with the concepts embedded within them - and its place in the tradition of friendship writing can best be demonstrated from the close study of his correspondence with bishop Hato of Troyes. A certain amount of information can be gleaned about Hato. He was archdeacon and dean at Sens, then became bishop of Troyes in about 1122. There is evidence from charters that he was a generous patron towards Cluny and letter 69 shows that he performed ordinations for the daughter-house of La Charité (technically in the diocese of Auxerre). In late 1145 or early 1146 he retired into Cluny, and a letter survives from Prior Peter of St. John at Sens commemorating this event.⁹ In the eleven letters, written over a period of years, that make up Peter's side of the correspondence, taking into account superscriptions and citations, some cognate of *amicus* or *amicitia* appears more than 40 times. Five letters in particular - 5, 6, 81, 86, 121 - stand out from the rest by the degree of elaboration employed in their construction: this is not a question of length but rather of imagery, high-flown rhetoric and general striving after effect. The content of these letters, too, with their frequent citations from and allusions to the friendship tradition and their general air of philosophising reinforces the impression of self-consciousness. This might suggest that the Peter/Hato correspondence has been included in part, at least, as an exemplum of laudable *amicitia* and that in the writing of the five letters referred to

amicitia actually forms the public aspect, perhaps, even, that these are seen as miniature treatises - Peter's contribution to friendship literature.

Before looking in detail at the five letters concerned, it is worth glancing briefly at the origins and development of the literature of friendship. Adele Fiske has traced the development of the language of Christian *amicitia* and has shown how it grew from the fusion of two strands: the so-called practical tradition with its emphasis on mutual duties, obligations and benefits, as developed by Cicero and echoed in Jerome, and a more spiritual one of mystic friendship - the union of individual souls with and within the divine - deriving ultimately from neo-Platonism but promulgated by Ambrose and Augustine.¹⁰ These strands are enshrined in certain linguistic terms and images which by the time of Peter seem to have become standardised as *sententiae* and clichés: from the first tradition comes the terminology of obligation and regulation - *ius, lex, foedus* - , definitions of *vera amicitia*, the concept of the *vinculum spiritus* and the *glutinum caritatis*; from the second, imagery of fire, water, darkness, wound and sweetness. In the tradition of Christian writing on friendship, the terms *amicitia* and *caritas* are often used interchangeably;¹¹ nonetheless, each term has its own associations and tradition of development.¹² *Amicitia* can draw on both pagan and Old Testament allusions, in particular *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*. *Caritas* is prominent in Cicero's *De Amicitia*, also the *Song of Songs*; however, in Christian terms the most potent associations were surely with the New Testament, in particular with the writings of St. Paul and St. John where, to use the words of Hélène Pétré: 'la charité est aussi bien l'amour de Dieu que l'amour des hommes', a statement which she subsequently re-iterates.¹³ Peter seems to exploit these different associations in Letter 58 to Peter of Poitiers. After quoting the dictum 'idem scilicet velle et nolle' 'wanting and not wanting the same thing', (which he describes as '*verae amicitiae diffinitionem*' 'the definition of true friendship'), he follows it up with a second definition:

(ut) non duobus corporibus duae sed una utrique corpori
videretur inesse anima so
that there seemed to be not two souls in two bodies but a
single soul in each body

What follows seems to align the latter definition with the concept of Christian *caritas*:

Quod si tantus *innescentibus deum* esse potuit amoris affectus, ut non substantias confundendo, sed voluntates uniendo hoc dicere possent, quid mirum si *caritas dei*.. in eo nos univit qui facit utraque unum.. ?¹⁴

Therefore, if there could be such effect of love in those who did not know God, that they could say this not by the confusion of substance but by the union of wills, what wonder if the love of God has united us in Him who makes both one.. ?

The pagans had *amicitia* and union of wills; Christians have *caritas* and union in God. The inference seems to be that Peter is here making a hierarchical distinction between the two terms.

The concept of Christian *amicitia* was not without its problems: a potential conflict can be seen between the demands of universal Christian *caritas* and the requirements of individual friendship, and this conflict was likely to be at its highest in the microcosmic society of the cloister. McGuire, however, argues that this was experienced less acutely in the twelfth century than in the centuries which preceded and succeeded it, and that Peter himself, reflecting the outlook of his time, saw *amicitia* by its very nature as a stabilising force within the monastic institution.¹⁵ He supports this from the Hato correspondence, arguing that by his references to Cluny Peter is involving both Church and community in a personal relationship. While this may well be true, it is also possible that the frequent references to the community of Cluny may have another, more concrete, significance.

In the correspondence with Hato as a whole, the use of some cognate of *amicitia* far outstrips that of *caritas* or indeed that of other terms such as *amor* or *dilectio*. The letters mix classical allusions and reminiscences with Biblical ones and friendship *topoi* are drawn from both the practical and the mystical tradition.¹⁶ However, the placing of *amicitia* and *caritas* within the individual letters shows a rather different pattern. 5 opens and closes with *amicitia*; 6 begins with a clustering of terms around *amor*, then moves to a cluster around *amicitia* and ends with *caritas*. 81 juxtaposes the two. 86, however, has *caritas* in a prominent position at both start and end, while 121 starts with *amicitia* and closes with an allusion to *caritas*. Whether or

not this pattern is significant obviously depends upon the actual context in which the terms are used. At this point it may simply be worth signalling the fact that the series opens with an elaborate representation of *amicitia* and closes with an echo of St. Paul's eulogy of *caritas*.

Of the five letters in question, the first two seem to form a pair: their juxtaposition in the collection reflects the verbal echo that connects one with the other. The link, literally, is the 'silver chain': from its introduction based on a citation from *Ecclesiastes* in 5 - 'funis argenteus ruptus est', 'the silver chain has been broken' - it reappears as a metaphorical flight of fancy in 6 - 'subito in funeum argenteum offendi', 'suddenly I struck against the silver chain' - punning word-play which leads into a second citation from the Psalms - 'Et funes extenderunt in laqueum..', 'and they have extended ropes as a noose..' - and paves the way for the elaborate peroration, which intermingles Old and New Testament echoes. This presupposes a missing reply from Hato. 81 and 86 might at first sight seem to be linked: while 5 and 6 spring from Hato's 'failure' to write, the other two letters appear to show the reverse - here it is Peter who is under 'attack'. In actual fact, it is 86 and 121, despite the distance in placing from one another, which share a common theme - Hato's removal to Cluny - and related imagery, while 81 is arguably pivotal. A striking feature is that four of them - 5, 6, 86 and 121 - open with powerfully envisaged images; on the other hand, 81, set in the middle, is perhaps the most self-consciously derivative, stitching together well-worn *sententiae* and, as will be shown, juxtaposing practical and mystic commonplaces of *amicitia*. Retrospectively it seems possible to point to a gradual unfolding of purpose - the luring to Cluny of a prominent ecclesiastic - which reveals itself through a progressively deepening seriousness of content and style, giving a new emphasis to the first pair and paving the way for the triumphant finale of 121.

Letter 5 opens powerfully but obliquely: an elaborately structured picture of the sun engulfed by waves of darkness preludes an apostrophe to *amicitia* itself. The loss of friendship is being treated in terms of apocalyptic upheaval: 'Rerum natura mutata est', 'the nature of things has been changed'. Only later does it transpire that this is actually a typical Peter *captatio* with a sting in its tail. In what may be seen as a bathetic move from the general to the particular, we learn that the point at issue is apparently Hato's failure to write:

Sed quorsum ista? Te, te inquam respiciunt olim unanimis
amice.. solebant a partibus vestris ad nos frequentes venire
legati...

But where is this leading? It concerns you, you, I say, once a
single-souled friend.. frequent messengers used to come to me
from you...

McGuire draws attention to what he describes as a new feature of the twelfth century, the appearance of letters dealing with failure in friendship: 'When friends disagreed or let each other down accusations came forward in force. Irony, bitterness and disappointment came to the surface'.¹⁷ However, one needs to be wary of confusing 'accusations' with reproaches of a more formulaic kind. In fact, this whole letter might be seen as a virtuoso development of a *topos*¹⁸ which at the same time forms a declaration of Peter's own affection. The bathos of the middle section is matched by succeeding hyperbole - Hato's messengers used to come thick and fast, but now:

invia facta sunt omnia impenetrabiles Riphei montes
interpositi, innavigabile Indorum pelagus effusum, et quod
astringit Scythicum glaciali frigore Pontum accessum
prohibent.¹⁹

Now everywhere has become untraversable: the impenetrable Scythian mountains, the unnavigable Indian sea and (the wind) which scythes the Black Sea with icy chill, act as a barrier and prevent access.

Peter piles up synonymous phrases in the Isidorean tradition and employs antithetical tricola to rhetorical effect: 'Queror... queror... queror'; 'nusquam... nusquam... nusquam'.²⁰

Biblical and classical reminiscences jostle one another in apparent harmony. The light and dark imagery portends the end of the world, but it may also be an echo of the classical use of the eclipse as a harbinger of disaster,²¹ while the description of fratricidal conflict also has a familiar classical ring.²² Friendship is equated with the dove of peace in an image drawn from *Genesis*, but its withdrawal from the earth is similar to that of Justice at the end of the Golden Age.²³ This impression is reinforced by direct citation. Gregory the Great is quoted on friendship: 'Probatio dilectionis, exhibitio est operis', 'the proof of

love is performance of good works', but so is Horace: 'animae dimidium meae' 'the half of my soul'.

It is tempting to dismiss the letter as so much rhetorical froth, a clever patching-together of classical and Biblical allusions with little, if any, serious intent. However, more may lurk under the surface than is immediately apparent. The apostrophe to a personified *amicitia* with which the letter starts precludes the description of fratricidal conflict referred to earlier. This description of a world in turmoil without *amicitia* might seem simply to be a reflection of the pragmatic view, ultimately traceable to Cicero, of *amicitia* as an essential force for the well-being of society.²⁴ However, the language used here:

Inde est quod nec proximus proximo, nec amicus amico, nec frater fratri, nec patri filius fidem servat; inde quod omnium necessitudinum iura violantur; inde quod sanguis universarum superficiem iam tinxit terrarum

As a result neither neighbour keeps faith with neighbour, nor friend with friend, nor brother with brother, nor son with father; all the laws of kinship are violated; blood has stained the surface of all the lands

can be compared with that found in letter 3, to Haimeric the Papal Chancellor:

In partibus nostris... *sic rerum ordo mutatus* (cf. 'rerum natura mutata est')... ut corporis Christi membra contra se invicem insurgant, et velut si digitus oculum eruere minetur, vel manus pedem abscidere temptet, ita se *intestina discordia* vastant, et non tam gladiis quam odiis, non tam percussoribus quam cupiditatibus insectantur

In our regions... the order of things is so changed... that the limbs of Christ's body rise up against one another, and, as if the finger should threaten to tear out the eye, or the hand to cut off the foot, devastate each other with intestinal discord, and pursue each other not so much with swords as with hatred, not so much by assassins as by lusts.

Although this is subsequently referred to a specific dispute, that between the bishop of Béziers and the monks of Aniane, it is worth remembering that the letter was probably written during the Papal

Schism of 1130-8. Fratricidal conflict is an image used for the latter by other churchmen, for example, Guigo of La Chartreuse to Haimeric (dated by Greshake to between 1132 - 4):

Proh dolor! A summis hodie pontificibus, et per totum pene orbem, exemplo Sedis apostolicae, *frater in fratrem*, id est Christianus in Christianum, sacra pecunia conducitur et armatur²⁵

What grief! Today by the high pontiffs, and through almost all the world, following the example of the apostolic See, brother is hired and armed against brother, that is, Christian against Christian, with holy money

and St Bernard to Hildebert of Turin:

ut verbis vos prophetis alloquar: *Consolatio abscondita est in oculis, quia mors dividit inter fratres*. Quidam enim, iuxta Isaiam, videntur foedus percussisse cum morte et cum inferno fecisse pactum²⁶

to use the words of the prophet: *Consolation is hidden from their eyes, because death divides the brothers*. For some, in the words of Isaiah, seem to have struck up a treaty with death and made a pact with hell.

Neither 5 or 6 can be closely dated, but a reference in letter 7, which seems to have close verbal similarities to 6 in particular,²⁷ to Peter's return from Aquitaine, leads Constable to date that letter to 1134. This might suggest that an apparently trivial 'offence' is being set within a wider framework of spiritual disharmony within the Church.

The letter which follows is equally elaborate. It begins with a flowery *praeteritio*: the prospect of an approaching meeting renders long explanations unnecessary and 'seals up the fountain of his speech'. If this were not so, Peter would be justifying the tone of his previous letter - which, of course, he proceeds to do. Once again, we have a virtuoso performance: this time Hato's reply is being turned back against him and what seems to start as justification turns into triumphant 'attack'. Hato's 'complaint' that now all he receives is bitter words becomes the pretext for an elegant variation on the re-kindling image: the 'myrrh' and 'aloes' of his rebuke seemed necessary to preserve and resuscitate a dying love - and even if they were not in

fact needed, the 'obsequium' of a devoted heart should not be scorned. He then seizes on Hato's 'interpretation' of the 'silver cord', professing to be hurt that his friend should interpret it as a reproach for failure to maintain his generosity as a patron. This immediately raises a question. The reproach is supposedly based on Hato's own words: 'Putastis enim...'. But is it to be interpreted as misunderstanding or misrepresentation? It seems highly unlikely that Hato could have failed to recognise the provenance of this citation: *Ecclesiastes* was a rich source of quotation for friendship writing,²⁸ and in any case, Peter subsequently added the periphrasis 'indissolubile... caritatis... vinculum'. This might seem to suggest that Hato's reply contained a deliberate misrepresentation. On the other hand, the misrepresentation might possibly have emanated from the pen of Peter himself. This should perhaps be seen as an elaborate game, in which two writers slyly attempt to outmanoeuvre each other. At any rate, it furnishes Peter with the excuse to launch into a kind of 'sermon',²⁹ which, basing itself on Horace's satirical attacks on avarice, can be taken as reflecting the concept of disinterested *amicitia* found in the *De Amicitia*.³⁰ Peter's references, however, impart a very concrete and particular flavour to its opposite: Hato is said to have interpreted it as a reproach 'quia a dando manus vestra cessasset' 'because your hand had ceased from giving'; Peter himself is not one of those who 'avariciam magis quam iustitiam colunt' 'worship avarice rather than justice', who 'amicitiam propter pecuniam conservant' 'maintain friendship for the sake of money'. At the end of the letter, the cord regains its proper significance, as the 'praeclarum caritatis vinculum', and is eventually transformed into the 'vinculum perfectionis'. The net result seems to be that the references to *amicitia* are boxed into a corner where they are associated with the world and with satire, while *caritas* is given spiritual resonance by the Biblical *auctoritates* by which it stands surrounded.

How much originality of language and thought is to be found in these letters? At first sight, the answer may seem to be very little. The figurative language is compounded from standard expressions found in the practical and mystic traditions: the 'caritatis vinculum'; the 'pactum foederis'; the fire of love; the emphasis on sweetness. However, this language is skilfully manipulated and integrated into an apparently seamless whole, and three of the set-piece images - the demise of *amicitia* as the end of the world, *amicitia* as the dove of peace, and the re-awakening of love as a kind of resurrection - appear

more unusual and striking. The citations are drawn from familiar sources and function basically as 'tags': no attempt is made to contextualise them or to probe or develop the concepts they enshrine. The 'philosophy' expressed (such as it is) is hackneyed. The value of these letters might seem to lie in the warmth and passion with which friendship is celebrated: we have an emotive and lyrical statement of its importance within the world, on both a personal and a general level. As such, they could be aptly entitled: 'Friendship lost' and 'Friendship regained'. However, again, it is possible that they should be read at a deeper level. In both letters, *amicitia* as it is experienced in the world is shown to be under threat: in the first it is shown as metaphorically 'withdrawing'; in the second it is shown as subject to corruption and distortion. At the same time, both letters may contain hints of what may be seen as encouragement to a deeper level of relationship. Friendship, in the guise of the dove 'aeternae pacis amica', 'friend of eternal peace' is said to have 'caelorum intima penetrasti', 'penetrated the depths of heaven'. The *topos* of flight from the world can be found linked with the concept of friendship in verse letters.³¹ Towards the end of Letter 5 the concept of heavenly love is linked with that of the 'beata vita': Hato is enjoined to write

simplici corde, si amor ille a *superno amore* dirivatus, quo pariter ad *beatam vitam aspirare olim coepimus* adhuc permanet

in singleness of heart, if that love derived from the heavenly love, by which formerly we began alike to aspire to the blessed life, still remains.

6 contrasts material gain which perishes with spiritual gain which is everlasting: 'de vobis non de *pecunia peritura in sempiternum* gaudere concupisco', 'I desire to rejoice in eternity over you, not over perishable money'. The use of *amor* in 5 may find an echo in the cluster of terms around the concept of the revival of love in 6: 'amato... corpori'; 'languescenti amori'; 'amor incorruptus'. The fact that these are followed by Biblical references to the anointing of Christ's body may suggest that this is more than just a striking variant of the re-kindling theme and that it hints at some kind of rebirth and spiritual renewal. The quotation from *Ecclesiastes* with which the letter concludes seems to suggest that friendship on earth is end-stopped and should be cherished and maintained. As yet, there is

no mention of the cloister, although the reference to the *sponsus* and *sponsa* in 6 might be taken as foreshadowing the concept of the 'paradysus claustris' to be invoked in 86; several other phrases too might be seen as hinting at *conversio*. Peter's words 'non quaero quae vestra sunt, sed vos' 'I do not seek what is yours, but you' might be seen as having such a double meaning, while the ending of 5, too, may have a concealed significance. The wording, 'ut *verus* in deo amicus, *vero* ut arbitror scripsi amico' 'I have written as a true friend in God to, so I think, a true friend', seems to take us back to the concept of *amicitia* with which the letter starts, reminiscent as it is of Ciceronian injunctions on 'vera amicitia', but the sense it embodies may draw on a different tradition. Augustine, for example, gives the concept of *vera amicitia* a specifically Christian twist when he says in a letter to a friend, now converted to Christianity: 'eum quem quoquo modo habui diu amicum, habeo iam *verum amicum*', 'he whom I long held in some way a friend I now hold as a true friend'.³² Later in the letter Marcianus is promised that if their friendship shares in human and divine it will be 'vera ac *sempiterna*'. In Augustine's letter, at any rate, 'true' friendship is linked to conversion.

Letter 81 contains ten instances of *amicus* or *amicitia*, two direct citations of the *De Amicitia* and a paraphrase of Gregory the Great relating to friendship, promising at first sight to give some clear insight into Peter's philosophy of friendship. However, on closer inspection this impression may appear to be misleading. These definitions of friendship would seem to be being used to turn the tables on his friend. Peter has been 'accused' of not replying to Hato's letters: the first sentence - 'Scripsistis, nil rescripsi. Misistis, nil remis. Locutus estis, nil respondi', 'You wrote, I did not write back. You sent, I sent back nothing. You spoke, I made no reply' presumably represents a direct adaptation of the latter's words. Peter protests his affection - God knows his feelings - but apparently admits culpability - what use is this if his friend does not know? He quotes the Ciceronian definition of friendship as 'consensio cum benivolentia et caritate' 'shared feeling together with good-will and affection', then caps it with an echo of Gregory - 'Quae...caritas ad minus quam inter duos haberi non potest' 'this affection can only be maintained between two'. Peter's elucidation that friendship cannot be maintained when friends fail to share their feelings seems to lend full weight to Hato's complaint. In fact, this may be misleading: he is about to suggest slyly that it is Hato who has failed, through listening to gossip, a

motif which may recall Cicero's demand for full trust - 'deinde non solum ab aliquo allatas criminationes repellere, sed ne ipsum quidem esse suspiciosum', 'not only to repel accusations made by another, but to be without suspicion';³³ he will later further undercut it, by insinuating that he has been in constant silent communication - 'cui semper adheret et loquitur animus meus' 'to whom my heart always clings and speaks', invoking the *topos* of spiritual presence despite physical absence. In fact, it is not at all clear that either the Ciceronian or the Gregorian definition is actually demanding frequent communication: the natural interpretation would seem to be that affection must be reciprocal.³⁴ The result seems to be that Hato's 'reproach' has first been supported, then undercut by pagan and Christian imperatives on friendship. The technique can be compared with that found in another letter of the correspondence, 85, this time attributed to Hato. This letter, too, makes great play with the 'amicitiae legibus'. It makes the claim that '*vera enim amicitia oblivionem nescit, interruptionem non patitur*', 'true friendship does not know forgetfulness, does not brook interruption', then follows it up with a reproach based on Peter's failure to maintain communication. The one seems at first sight to follow logically on the other. However, the opening of the letter, 'love knows no boundaries in time or space', which claims to base itself on the words of an unidentified philosopher, seems to put another complexion on the initial definition: perhaps a truer interpretation would be that friendship survives physical separation. That this is another sly manipulation of the commonplaces of friendship is further suggested by the wording of the 'reproach', which bears a suspicious resemblance to Peter's hyperboles in 5: 'forsitan calami non inveniuntur, incaustum abest, desunt nuntii, via montuosa est, pericula comitantur' 'perhaps pens are not to be found, ink is missing, messengers are lacking, the way is mountainous, accompanied by dangers'. It is tempting to see 85 as either the response to or the trigger for 81. As the texts stand, however, this does not seem possible. 85 neither contains the specific reproach referred to in 81, nor makes any reference to the pressing invitation to come to Cluny found in the latter.

Is there any serious point to this letter of Peter's? The suggestion that Hato has been listening to slander, if taken at face value, might seem to support McGuire's suggestion that Peter is concerned to rebut criticism and to involve church and community in a personal

relationship.³⁵ However, a similar vague reference is found in 5, and should perhaps rather be related to the rumour *topos* of courtly love. On the other hand, the stress on community may indeed be important. The second half of the letter shares with 18 a switch from demanding a letter to demanding a visit. Indeed, there may seem to be a slight element of possibly conscious contradiction here: spiritual presence would seem to render physical presence unnecessary, yet Hato's 'praesentiam' is said to be desired: Peter wishes to speak to one 'praesenti' rather than deal with one 'absenti'. In 18, in an adaptation of *Luke* 11, 8, Peter suggests that '(caritas) clamoribus igitur continuis ad ostium amici instare deliberat', 'affection intends to keep clamouring at a friend's door'; this might be seen as an echo of 5, where the words 'auscultavi et non fuit qui responderet', 'I listened and there was no-one to reply' is built on to a citation from *Job*. In fact, there would seem to be a progression here: 5 complains of failure to write; 18 complains of a failed visit; 86 will complain of failure to keep a promise.

In both 18 and 81, stress is laid on the monastic community as a whole: Cluny is described as 'vestra', 'vestrae... domui'; the Cluniacs as 'vestri'. In letter 18, Hato is told: 'Expectat enim vos vestra Cluniacus, quae nullatenus plene laetabitur, quam praesentibus et spiritualibus vestris benedictionibus repleatur', 'Your Cluny awaits you and will not fully rejoice until it is filled with the spiritual blessings of your presence'. If anything, the emphasis in 81 is even stronger:

Supplico (ut)... Cluniacenses vestri episcopum suum quem iam diutius *esuriunt* videre, videant, videant inquam et gaudeant, quia nil eos magis laetificare poterit, quam si *saltem ad modicum* tam intimo amico, tam desiderabili patre eis frui contigerit

I beg that... your Cluniacs may see their bishop whom they have been hungering to see long since, see, see, I say, and rejoice, because nothing will be able to delight them more than if, at least for a little time, they are able to enjoy so intimate a friend, so longed-for a father.

The use of 'esuriunt' may foreshadow the language of 'swallowing' (a metaphor for conversion) to be fully developed in 121; the repetition of 'saltem' - 'saltem usque ad apostolorum festivitatem', 'at least for

the feast of the Apostles'; 'saltem ad modicum' - may hint at more than a visit. Neither 18 nor 81 can be securely dated (although Constable suggests a relatively late date for 18). It seems a plausible interpretation, however, to read them as marking a step in the evolution of the correspondence, a gradual elucidation of what can be read as the veiled hints of 5 and 6. If this is so, it would seem a reasonable conjecture to see the use of *amicitia* as a lever in the process of conversion. Whether it also represents a lure will be seen from the last two letters.

At first sight, as already mentioned, letter 86 appears to start from a similar base, Peter's defence against an accusation of failure in friendship. But whereas in 81 he finally produces a credible list of excuses, illness, the haste of the messenger, business, 86 takes another twist to become a very different sort of letter indeed. Far from excusing his silence, Peter justifies it on the grounds of Hato's failure to keep his promise to enter Cluny. The missive turns into a full-blown conversion letter (Leclercq calls such letters 'lettres de vocation';³⁶ Constable names them 'recruitment letters'). However, the affection *topos* with which it opens is not simply an irrelevant *captatio*: the concept of *amicitia* is woven into the fabric of the letter as a whole.

The letters falls into three sections: an appeal to Hato to fulfil his undertaking; an attack on worldly pomp; a dangling before him of the joys of retreat to Cluny. Each section centres round an opposition: fruitful silence versus infertile speech; episcopal pomp versus monastic humility; peaceful security versus dangerous political manoeuvrings. Imagery drawn from the language of mystic friendship underpins the first and last of these sections.

The opening introduces a vivid image based on the conceit of 'love rekindled'. Hato is like a bellows, Peter like a furnace. In fact, Hato is fundamentally misguided: in trying to resuscitate what he sees as a dying spark he is actually only stirring up some tangible manifestation ('vaporem sermonis'); checked within the confines of the furnace, the hidden fire glows within - 'infra clibani concava vel fornices deprimentes exaestuans latet incendium'.³⁷ This elaborate and visual passage serves several functions: it converts an apparent defence into an attack and sets up the opposition between speech and silence which will be further exploited in what follows. At the same time it can be paralleled from the figurative and lyrical style of Alcuin. For example, in one letter the latter describes the fire of his affection as

burning in the 'hollow' of his heart: 'sed quo magis ardet in pectoris antro, eo latius flammam suavissimi ardoris spargere assuescit', 'the more it burns in the hollow of the heart, the more widely it is accustomed to scatter the flame of its sweet ardour'.³⁸ Peter, of course, is making the opposite point: the fire burns strongly, but it is checked from expressing itself. A humorous note may be added by the fact that this appears to be a blatant contradiction of the argument used in letter 5. There he tried to shame Hato into writing by declaring that

si ignis est, calet. Si calet, non diu flammam continet. Si diu continuerit, mox ignis esse cessabit³⁹

If there is fire, it is hot. If it is hot, it does not long keep in its flames. If it keeps them in for long, it will soon cease to be fire.

The same feature can be seen in letter 22, also to Hato, in which he states that 'Iam, quia *stultum* est *sana* curare, *integra* resarcire...', 'now, since it is foolish to care for what is healthy, to mend what is whole...', whereas in letter 6 he justifies his use of 'myrrh and aloes', even if they were unneeded. In the course of this opening Peter has juxtaposed quotes from the *Aeneid* and the *Canticles* and made punning use of the idea that Hato is full not of air but of the Holy Spirit. This exuberance is about to take a more overtly serious turn as we come to the real purpose of the letter.

Peter now sets up a second nexus of imagery, based on trees: he knows well the value of silence, 'maxime cum arbor operum ex radice prodeat et vigeat meditationum', 'especially when the tree of works grows and flourishes from the root of meditations'. The concept of fruitful silence is now made explicit by its converse, that of unfruitful speech: 'Cur igitur essem infructuose loquax?', 'Why should I be fruitlessly loquacious?' The provenance of this image is presumably *Matthew*: a combination of the good and bad trees of VII with the barren fig-tree of XXI. This Biblical image will perhaps find an echo at the end of the letter in the form of the reference to 'lignum vitae'. The first tree image is followed up by a second:

Quis annosam quercum altis, iam radicibus innitentem se evellere posse praesumat, cum molle vimen et recenti adhuc nativitate tenerum, a domestica humo nulla vis studiosior agricolae abruptere potuerit?

Who could presume to be able to uproot an ancient oak, clinging now by deep roots, when no eager force of the farmer has been able to tear it from its native soil when it was still a pliant sapling, recently come to birth?

In view of the earlier quotation from *Aeneid* VI, it is tempting to see in this a deliberate perversion of the simile used for Aeneas in Book IV.⁴⁰ There the old oak is an image of strength; here it merely represents Hato's obstinacy. The 'molle vimen' is harder to place, although Ovid in the *Remedia Amoris* talks of the young sapling which is still able to be uprooted.⁴¹ The phrase 'a domestica humo' may hint that the tree is not simply to be uprooted but to be replanted, and Peter may have in mind some vague recollection of the opening of *Georgics* II, where Virgil discusses the re-planting of young trees to render them fruitful.⁴² Paradoxical as the concept of replanting may seem if applied to an old tree, he may be hinting at the 'transplantation' of Hato to Cluny which forms the subject of what follows.

The attack on episcopal and priestly pomp which follows is not overtly concerned with the theme of friendship. However, as the opposition arrogance/humility modulates into that of danger/security, the language of friendship seems to creep back, at first negatively, in terms of the enmity that lurks in the world:

quid de latratibus canum,⁴³ quid de insidiis, dolis, fraudibus,
circumstantium, coherentium, servientium?

what of the baying of dogs, the traps, tricks, deceits of those
who stand around, cling, serve?

then positively in a return to the language of mystic friendship. In an echo of 81, Hato is told of the brothers' desire 'de te longam famem suam reficere', 'to refresh their long hunger with you' and in Cluny he is promised a 'paradysus caritatis' in which the senses of sight, smell and taste will take delight:

ubi lignum vitae, ubi amenitas iocunda, ubi areolae aromatum
consitae a pigmentariis (*Canticles* 5, 13, of the cheeks of the
sponsus), quorum aspectu iocundaberis, odore oblectaberis,
gustu satiaberis

where (are) the tree of life, the pleasant place, the beds of spices

sown from unguents, in whose sight you will take pleasure, whose smell will delight you, with whose taste you will be sated.

This compact enticement seems to combine three elements. The 'eating' metaphor recalls the use of *esuriunt* in 81 and foreshadows the full development of the theme to be found in 121. The appeal to the senses belongs to the tradition of mystic friendship but also properly forms part of the paradise description. As for the paradise concept itself, several different strands seem to lie behind it. Giles Constable points out that among others both Geoffrey of Vendôme and Peter of Celle used the term paradise as a point of comparison for Cluny.⁴⁴ In fact, Peter Damian in a letter to St. Hugh had already recorded his visit to Cluny in terms very similar to those used by Peter:

vidi... paradisum... : vidi hortum deliciarum diversas rosarum ac liliorum gratias germinantem, et mellifluas aromatum ac pigmentorum fragrantias suaviter redolentem...⁴⁵
I have seen paradise, I have seen the garden of delights germinating the various pleasures of roses and lilies and sweetly redolent of the honey-flowing fragrance of spices...

However, this was far from being a compliment reserved to Cluny.⁴⁶ The concept of the *paradisus claustris* - the cloister as an earthly paradise - has been examined by Jean Leclercq, who gives references among others to Anselm and St. Bernard⁴⁷ as well as offering us an anonymous sermon from the twelfth century in which the 'lignum vitae' has its place, along with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.⁴⁸ The latter, in particular, invites a direct comparison with Peter: the brothers are described as 'fide virentia, spe florentia, charitate fructificantia' 'green with faith, flowering with hope, fruitful with charity', and there is a detailed description of the 'flowers' and 'fruits', 'cum omnibus primis unguentis', 'with all their first unguents'. The description of this earthly paradise draws on the *Song of Songs* as well as on *Genesis*, and this is reflected both in the 'hortus' of Peter Damian and in the citation used by Peter the Venerable. At the same time, the *Canticles* are also an integral part of the language of mystic friendship:⁴⁹ in letter 5 Peter identifies himself in successive quotations with bride and groom; 86, too, has the famous 'many waters...' citation prominently placed at the start. This is the final

aspect of the Paradise *topos*: Adele Fiske has traced the development of the idea of the 'amicus paradisi' - the friend as a taste of paradise, a restoration of lost innocence and a prelude of joys to come.⁵⁰ In the letter from Alcuin quoted above, the image of hidden fire is followed by a simile linking the 'fons caritatis' to the 'fons' that irrigates Paradise; another letter develops in some detail the image of the tree of friendship:

ubi radix conductae amicitiae in pectoris thesauro figitur, inde rami floribus fidei vestiti pullulasse certissimum est, usque dum fructibus aeternae beatitudinis refecerint veram habentes inter se caritatem⁵¹

where the root of founded friendship is fixed in the treasure of the heart, from there it is certain that branches have flourished clothed with the flowers of faith, until they burst out in the fruits of eternal beatitude, having true charity between them.

This may suggest that the juxtaposition of the images of fire and tree at the start of the letter hints at the concept of the 'amicus paradisi', onto which will subsequently be grafted that of the 'paradisi claustrum'. Peter's use of the paradise image may, then, have a two-fold significance: Cluny is an earthly oasis offered to a troubled friend, but it is also a refuge for an *amicitia* battered by the world, where friendship can aspire to the 'beata vita' and grow in perfection.

It is possible that the particular festivals used as points of reference in the letter also conceal a deeper significance. The promise is said to have been given on Palm Sunday; Hato is begged to be with the community of Cluny as priest of God for Easter itself: 'passionis scilicet et resurrectionis dominicae sacratissimos dies sacerdos dei cum eis peragas', 'that you spend with them as priest of God the most sacred days of the Lord's passion and resurrection'. Is this, perhaps, hinting at the motif of the 'Paschal friend'?⁵² It may also seem to recall the use of resurrection imagery in letter 6, just as the light image which follows - '(ut) splendore adventus tui rutilantium dierum lumen adaugeas', 'by the splendour of your coming you may increase the light of glowing days' - might be seen as cancelling out the withdrawal of light of the opening of 5.

There is one further point which might deserve attention. According to the letter, Hato's promise was made in the course of a visit to Cluny. A contrast is drawn between the public celebrations and the

private discussion which happened afterwards. This is said to have taken place in a chapel which,

longe venustior huius nostrae Burgundiae ecclesiis, picturis decentibus decorata, et gestorum Christi clarioribus miraculis insignita, *locum nobis secreti colloquii aptissimum* prebuit by far more lovely than the churches of this our Burgundy, decorated with fitting paintings and marked by the brighter miracles of Christ's life, offered us a place most suitable for private discussion

The stress on privacy and secrecy is reminiscent of that found in letter 58 to Peter of Poitiers, also in some ways a letter of conversion, while the description of the chapel seems like an architectural variant of the naturalistic *locus amoenus topos* often associated with the literature of retreat. While on the subject of architecture, however, it might be worth taking note of the fact that among the elaborately carved capitals which, still surviving, originally stood in the ambulatory of Cluny and formed part of the new building inherited by Peter, one depicted the four rivers and the four trees of Paradise, while another had what is now generally accepted as the four winds, marked out by the bellows which they held. Two of the capitals represented the eight musical modes, one of them showing two bells on the end of a stick being struck by a hammer. Peter Diemer suggests that the inscriptions found with them render a text designed for mnemotechnical purposes of a series of antiphons of the sort found in a *tonarius*.⁵³ Letter 121 ends with the *Pauline* reference to an 'aes sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens', 'a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal'. This may be purely coincidental, and indeed, the prominence of the capitals as originally placed was probably less than to-day. Nevertheless, there remains the possibility that Peter's imagery in 86 and 121 draws its inspiration from iconography and should be seen as functioning as a kind of 'aide-mémoire'. At the same time it may contribute to the portrayal of Cluny as a 'paradysus voluptatis'.

The final letter of the sequence (and of the whole correspondence) is 121. In order to determine its precise nature, it is important to consider whether it is another letter of the same type as the previous one or more in the manner of a coda to the correspondence as a whole. Constable seems to accept the former, suggesting that Hato is (once again) being urged to fulfil his promise.⁵⁴ On the other hand, it is

very differently structured from 86 and far more 'personal' in approach; at the same time the language might be said to introduce a note of anticipatory celebration:

Laetificat iuxta scripturam, etiam ad litteram, cor hominis...
Sic plane carissime sic prorsus in te hoc Salomonicum verbum
impleri cognosco

According to the scripture, even to the letter, it makes glad the heart of man... This word of Solomon I plainly recognise being fulfilled in you, dearest.

The ending also, 'cessent verba ut tandem succedant opera' 'let words cease that at last deeds take their place', seems to hark back to the concept of fruitful silence with which 86 opened. This seems to complete the pair and, indeed, the whole sequence. 'Friendship Frustrated' has been replaced by 'Friendship Fulfilled'.

The adage with which it starts - that new wines and new friends grow sweeter with time - was a familiar one. Peter gives it in its Old Testament form and attributes it to Solomon, but one can find the same idea in Alcuin's adaptation of Cato's Distichs.⁵⁵ A similar dictum is given by Cicero.⁵⁶ Once again, the interest comes not from originality but from the vigour with which a well-worn theme is handled.⁵⁷ Taste words abound in his exposition: the young wine 'sorbentis gustum *compungit*', 'is pungent to the taste when swallowed'; 'salubre simul et *mordax*', 'both cleansing and biting'; then, 'velut iuvenili fervore sedato', 'as if its youthful fermentation has calmed down', '*leni... sapore* quasi miti senectutis suavitate', 'with a gentle taste, as if with the mildness of old age', it is consumed 'ut *delectabile*,' 'as giving pleasure'. This language of taste can be paralleled from Anselm:

Cum igitur scias quia sapor dilectionis nec oculis nec auribus agnoscitur, sed solo *cordis ore delectabiliter gustatur*: quibus verbis aut quibus litteris meus et tuus amor describetur?⁵⁸
Since therefore you know that the taste of love is not perceived by the eyes or ears, but savoured with delight only by the mouth of the heart, in what words or what letter will my and your love be described?

The notion of drinking found in the citation - '*cum suavitare bibes illud*', 'with sweetness you will drink it' - and further amplified in what follows, becomes an explicit metaphor for his attempts to bring Hato to Cluny: 'ne te haurire, ne te in corpus Cluniacense transfundere possem', 'so that I could not drink you down, nor pour you into the body of Cluny'. At the same time it paves the way for the 'eating' imagery which will follow. This is prefaced by a citation from *Acts*, 10, 13: '*surge Petre occide et manduca*', 'arise Peter, slay and eat'. There is a long exegetical tradition which can be traced back as far as Augustine, of explaining this citation in terms of a mission to conversion of the Gentiles:

restabat ut tamquam *cibus* mundus incorporaretur Ecclesiae, hoc est, corpori Domini... occidendi ergo erant et manducandi: id est, ut interficeret in eis *vitam praeteritam*... et transirent in corpus eius, tamquam in novam vitam societatis Ecclesiae⁵⁹

It remained that like food the world be incorporated into the Church, that is, the body of the Lord... therefore they were to be killed and eaten: that is, that he should kill in them their former life, and they should pass into His body, as if into the new life of the society of the Church.

This is precisely what Peter proposes to do to Hato. He is told not to dread either Peter's sword or his teeth since what will be slain in him is the world, to give place to the monk.

Letter 5 started with the image of *amicitia* withdrawing from the world; letter 121 draws its being from the prospect of Hato entering the cloister, the '*paradysus caritatis*'. This would suggest that friendship is both the lever and the lure. At the same time, the letters would seem to hint that the cloister is where friendship can find its true fulfilment, away from the corrupting pressures and distorted values of the world. But it is also arguable that the nature of the friendship itself is shown as having undergone a kind of transformation in the course of the letters. The image with which 121 opens might seem to suggest that the process is one of natural development, of gradual maturing and development over time. The metaphors of swallowing and eating, however, seem to introduce an element of volition: Hato is said to have '*diu multum obstitisti, resilisti, refugisti*', 'long resisted, leaped away, shunned (it)'. In other

words, an element of willing acceptance, of renunciation of self-will seems to be incorporated into the concept of maturation. The increased prominence given to *caritas* in these two letters may suggest that it is being used to indicate this deeper level of relationship, while also implying that it can only be achieved in the cloister.

The correspondence is generally treated as the record of one particular friendship between an abbot and a bishop. McGuire takes this a step further, and sums it up as: 'a record of the author's patient efforts to bring a learned and articulate ecclesiastic into the monastery'.⁶⁰ It may be, however, that it should be taken further still and that the letters should be regarded as a model for 'conversion'. Three features in particular can be paralleled from the 'lettres de vocation' collected by Leclercq: in the second of these, written from Clairvaux under St. Bernard, an attack on the corruption of the values of friendship precludes a personal appeal,⁶¹ while of the letters of Matthew of Rievaulx, one contains a paradise description and the other uses Biblical *exempla* to advocate a symbolic renunciation of the world.⁶² Hato, too, is presented with models to follow, including that of John the Baptist; indeed, this letter, with its prolonged attack on episcopal pomp, couched in terms of heavy irony, might be seen as furnishing an *exemplar* for such a letter.⁶³

Earlier, it was suggested that the letters might have been included in part as an *exemplum* of laudable *amicitia*. Similarly, it may be that they should be seen as actually constituting a model for friendship. It might be argued that this arises at a secondary stage, that of collection and/or editing, but whether at primary or secondary level would seem immaterial. The letters as they stand, with their cross-referencing and interlinking imagery seem to present a coherent view of friendship, which shows it as leading inevitably to 'conversion'. Arguably, this involves a degree of partial 'fictionalisation' which centres on the *personae* of author and addressee, as well as the manipulation of the relationship portrayed.⁶⁴ The hall-mark of this relationship would seem to be a kind of banter which covers an underlying seriousness of purpose and has its roots in *caritas*: an '*amicitia iocosa*', to use the term employed by Ronald Pepin to characterise another epistolary relationship, in this case, between John of Salisbury and Peter of Celle.⁶⁵ Indeed, this concept seems to be articulated in letter 111 to Bernard of Clairvaux: 'Unde dulce michi est semper vobiscum loqui, et melleam inter nos *caritatis dulcedinem iocundis sermonibus* conservare', 'whence it is sweet for me always to speak with you and

to maintain between us the honeyed sweetness of affection with gay conversation', where the use of 'iocundis' seems to echo Bernard's 'complaint' of 110: 'Itane iocari libet?', 'Does it please you to jest in this way?'. In fact, the model may itself go back to earlier patristic models of epistolary friendships, such as those of Jerome and Augustine.⁶⁶ Indeed, its may have its origin in the *De Amicitia*, where it is said that friendship should be 'remissior', 'liberior' and 'dulcior', terms best defined in relation to their opposites: 'tristitia', 'severitas' and 'gravitas'.⁶⁷ At the heart of this portrayal, both figuratively and literally, is Cluny: the letters lead up to and away from 86, with its representation of Cluny as the 'paradysus caritatis'. Peter speaks at a personal level in the *persona* of *amicus*, but at a public level it may seem that he is adopting another *persona*, that of representative of Cluny and, more importantly, of the Cluniacs.

NOTES

¹ Letters themselves suggest that this was a recognised convention. A letter received can be described as a revival of friendship e.g.

Laetissima mihi litterarum vestrarum chartula occurrit, febricitatem refocillans, dormientem resuscitans, imo et inertiae morbo tepentem ad antiquas studens reformare vires.

'Your letter brought me great joy, re-kindling my heat, rousing a sleeper, eager to revive to his old strength one who was luke-warm with the deep-seated disease of inertia' (Alcuin, Ep. LXXXIV, P.L. 100, 274D). Failure to write is ascribed to a 'failure' in friendship, *infra* n.18.

² Adele M. Fiske, *Friends and Friendship in the Monastic Tradition*, Cidoc Cuardeno no. 51, Mexico, 1970.

³ Brian P. McGuire, *Friendship and Community, the Monastic Experience 350-1250*, Kalamazoo, 1988.

⁴ Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a form*, Columbus, 1982.

⁵ K. Cherewatuk and V. Wiethaus, *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre*, Philadelphia, 1993, p.4.

⁶ See in P. Dronke, *Abelard and Héloïse in Medieval Testimonies*, Berkeley; London, 1976, pp.26-27, for an analysis of this letter.

⁷ James J. Murphy, 'Ars Dictaminis: the Art of Letter-Writing' in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, Univ. of California Press, 1974, pp.195-6. Cicero (*Ad. Fam.* II. iv) distinguishes between letters of information - 'ut certiores

faceremus absentes', 'to give information to those who are absent', and two other kinds - 'familiare et iocosum' and 'severum et grave'.

⁸ The text of the letters is taken from the edition of Giles Constable, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, Massachussetts, 2 vols., 1967.

⁹ See G. Constable, 'The Letter from Peter of St. John to Hato of Troyes', in *Cluniac Studies*, London, 1980, pp.38-52.

¹⁰ Fiske, 2, 0/13; 1/1-2/9.

¹¹ e.g. Cassian, *Collatio XVI, De Amicitia*, P. L. XLIX; ch. XXVIII, 1044A, 'haec de amicitia beatus Joseph spiritali narratione disseruit, nosque ad custodiendam sodalitatis perpetuam charitatem ardentius incitavit', 'the blessed Joseph said this about friendship in spiritual wise, and urged us to maintain more ardently the perpetual affection of companionship'; also Ambrose, *De Officiis Ministrorum Liber II*, ch. XXII, P.L. 16, 128A: 'Nec deseras amicum in necessitate...; quoniam amicitia vitae adjumentum est. ideo onera nostra portemus, sicut Apostolus docuit; dicit enim his quos ejusdem corporis complexa est charitas', 'Do not desert a friend in necessity...; since friendship is the assistance of life. Therefore let us bear our burdens as the Apostle taught; he speaks to those whom the affection of the same body has embraced'.

¹² Compare the comment of Reginald Hyatte on Latin writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: '(However), certain writers seem to avoid using *amicitia* to name Christian love or friendship, perhaps because of the term's worldly connotations, and they apply it principally to social and political alliances and kinship' (R. Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, Leiden, p.48).

¹³ Hélène Pétré, *Caritas, Etude sur le vocabulaire Latin de la charité chrétienne*, Louvain, 1948, pp.57, 59.

¹⁴ In fact, it might seem that Peter is being disingenuous in restricting the pagans to union of wills. The *De Amicitia* contains statements not dissimilar to his second definition e.g. XXI, 81: 'quanto id magis in homine fit natura, qui et se diligit et alterum anquirit, cuius animum ita cum suo misceat, ut efficiat paene *unum ex duobus*', 'this happens all the more by nature in man, who loves himself and seeks another, whose soul he may so mingle with his own, as to make almost one out of two'; also XXV, 92: 'nam cum amicitiae vis sit in eo et *unus quasi animus fiat ex pluribus*...', 'since the force of friendship is in him and, as it were, one soul is made out of many...'

¹⁵ McGuire, p.270.

¹⁶ McGuire suggests that: 'With Peter the Venerable we find a complete integration of classical literary statements of friendship with Christian ideals of love' (p.271). At first sight, the Hato correspondence seems to bear out this statement. However, it will be argued that Christian *caritas* is shown as having a dimension which goes beyond pagan *amicitia* and which can only find its true fulfilment in the cloister.

¹⁷ McGuire, p.276.

¹⁸ The reproach 'you have not written - has your love grown cold?' appears so frequently at the start of letters that it seems permissible to label it a *topos*, and as such it may be capable of being traced back a long way. Jerome, in his letter to Chromatius, Iovinus and Eusebius, makes use of such a reproach: 'Quibus... *queror*, cur tot interiacentibus spatiis maris et terrarum tam parvam epistulam miseritis, nisi quod ita *merui*, qui vobis, *ut scribitis*, ante non *scripsi*', 'I complain that separated by such a distance of land and sea you have sent so small a letter, unless I have deserved it for not, according to you, having written to you before' (letter vii, *Jerome: Select Letters*, ed. F. A. Wright, London; New York, 1933).

What follows - the suggestion of practical difficulties - lack of paper, lack of parchment, the haste of the messenger - are possible excuses put forward, only to be dismissed. The whole is lightened by learned references to 'some Ptolemy', 'King Attalus', the derivation of the term 'pergamena' for parchment, in a manner which suggests a playful use of intellectual 'one-upmanship'. The concept may originate as a light-hearted variant of the Ciceronian injunction of friendly admonition (*De Amicitia*, XXIV, 28).

¹⁹ The last clause of this, from 'astringit ... pontum' is an almost identical echo of Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 1, 1.18: 'astringit Scythico glaciale frigare pontum', 'it scythes the icy sea with Scythian cold'. This may suggest that Peter is challenging Hato to recognise the sources and inspiration behind this letter (and also, perhaps, that he has Lucan much in mind - see *infra* 21, 22.) The other phrases are presumably Peter's own. The choice of the Lucan phrase seems to fit in with the *topos* of love growing cold, a kind of metaphorical geography.

The idea of exaggerated physical obstacles is reminiscent of the Jerome passage referred to earlier (*supra* n.18); indeed, the list of writing materials which follows - reeds, quills, parchment, all conspicuous by their absence - might almost be modelled on it. The concept that physical barriers should form no obstacle to love is a commonplace, for example, Alcuin, letter XIV, 162A/B: 'quia latitudo charitatis nulla dividitur longinquitate, nullis clauditur terminis', 'since the breadth of affection is divided by no distance, shut off by no bounds'; also letter XIX, 172C: 'sepius ad nos currat charta exhortationis tuae, nec eam *Alpinum frigus* vel *viarum*

asperitas vel exundatio fluminum ullatenus impediat', 'May a letter of your exhortation come to us more often, unhindered by any Alpine cold or harshness of the roads or flooding of rivers' (an example, perhaps, of both literal and metaphorical geography). The concept seems to derive from the *topos* of spiritual presence in physical absence.

²⁰ On the Isidorean tradition see M. Winterbottom, 'Aldhelm's prose style and its origins', *Anglo-Saxon England* 6, 1977, 39-76 (59).

²¹ e.g. Virgil, *Georgics* I, ll.464-8 :

ille (sol) etiam caecos instare tumultus
saepe monet fraudemque et operata tumescere bella.
ille etiam exstincto miseratus Caesare Romam,
cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine textit,
inipaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem.

'The sun often warns that blind disputes are threatening, and deceit and hidden wars swelling-up. In pity for Rome on the death of Caesar, he even hid his bright head with darkening rust, and impious ages feared eternal night'. This pathetic fallacy reappears in exaggerated form in Lucan, *Pharsalia* I, ll.540-4 :

Ipse caput medio Titan cum ferret Olympo,
condidit ardentem atra caligine currus
involvitque orbem tenebris gentesque coegit
desperare diem; qualem fugiente per ortus
sole Thyestae noctem duxere Mycenae.

'The Sun himself, while rearing his head in the midst of heaven, has hidden his bright chariot in dark gloom, wrapped the world in darkness, and forced men to despair of day; the kind of night which descended on Thyestes' Mycenae, as the sun fled back through its rising'.

Peter's description shows considerable rhetorical skill: the triplet forms a tricolon crescendo, 'serenam diem'/'nitentes solis radios'/'meridianus fulgor' being balanced by 'tenebrosa nubila'/'caligosi aeris fumositas'/'teterrimarum... umbrarum faciem'.

²² The sentiments are reminiscent of those which dominate the end of *Georgics* I: 'vicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes / arma ferunt; saevit toto Mars impius orbe...' (ll.510-1), 'The neighbouring cities break their treaties and bear arms against one another; impious Mars rages across the world', as well as the start of *Pharsalia* I: 'cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni / certatum totis concussi viribus orbis / in commune nefas...' (ll.4-6), '(I sing of) battle-lines related in kinship and how, when the

covenant of tyranny was broken, they raged with all the forces of a battered world to common crime'.

²³ e.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, 149-50: 'et virgo caede madentis / ultima caelestum terras Astraea reliquit', 'and the virgin Astraea was last of the heavenly ones to leave the earth dripping with slaughter'; also Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 473 - 4: 'extrema per illos / Iustitia excedens terris vestigia fecit', 'it was through those that Justice, leaving the earth, last passed'.

²⁴ Cicero in the *De Amicitia* develops the concept of the 'social bond', 'societas quaedam': there is a natural affinity between men due to propinquity, but that forged by *amicitia* is stronger in that it cannot exist without 'good-will' (*benevolentia*) (V. 19); likewise, the demise of that bond leads to social disintegration (VII, 23): 'Quod si exemeris ex rerum natura benevolentiae coniunctionem, nec domus ulla nec urbs stare poterit, ne agri quidem cultus permanebit', 'If you remove from the natural order the bond of good-will, no household or city will be able to stand; not even the cultivation of the fields will remain'. Interestingly, Cicero also uses an image based on the hiding of the sun: 'Solem enim e mundo tollere videntur, qui amicitiam e vita tollunt', 'those who remove friendship from life seem to remove the sun from the world'.

²⁵ *Epistolae Cartusianae*, p.136, 10-13 ed. G. Greshake, Freiburg, 1992.

²⁶ Epistola CXXIV, *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol VII, p.305 ed. J. Leclercq and H. Rochais, Rome, 1974.

²⁷ Both 6 and 7 presuppose a reassuring letter from Hato. In 7, also to Hato, Peter rejoices that he has not 'a mente vestra excidisse, ut suspicabar', 'fallen from your mind, as I suspected'; he refers to a letter he has recently sent as one of 'amicabilium querelarum', 'friendly complaints'; the metaphor of the 'still breathing affection' - '(dilectio), seque adhuc spirare... indicavit' - recalls the language of corruption and preservation in 6. Both letters, also, express the hope of forth-coming meeting.

²⁸ e.g. McGuire, p.xxii.

²⁹ In letter 6, Peter 'identifies' himself in successive quotations with the *sponsa* and *sponsus* of the *Canticles*:

Quia et de sponsa in canticis dictum legi: *Favus distillans labia tua, mel et lac sub lingua tua*. Et de sponso: *Labia eius distillantia myrrham primam*

'For I have read it said of the bride in the *Canticles*: *The honey-comb dripping down your lips; milk and honey under your tongue*. And of the

groom: *His lips dripping the finest myrrh*. Gregory the Great in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (P.L. 79, 512D) gives the following allegorisation: '*praedicatores Ecclesiae bene labia sponsae esse dicuntur*', 'the preachers of the Church are well-named the lips of the bride'. This seems to suggest that Peter is deliberately characterising what is to come as a sermon, just as the opening to 5 ('*unde exordium faciam... ignoro*', 'I do not know whence I am to take the beginnings of my speech') may be seen as preparing the way for the *oratio* which follows.

³⁰ e.g. *De Amicitia* 12, VIII. 27 '*applicatione magis animi cum quodam sensu amandi, quam cogitatione quantum illa res utilitatis esset habitura*', 'by the inclination of the mind with a certain sense of affection, rather than by the calculation of the profit that the matter would bring'.

³¹ e.g. Paulinus of Nola: '*Et cum solutus corporali carcere / terraque provolavero*', 'And when, released from the prison of the body, I fly from the earth'; and Alcuin: '*Te modo quapropter fugiamus pectore toto / tuque et nos, mundus iam periture, fugis*', 'Therefore let us flee from you with all our heart, world soon to perish, you who flee us' (pp.4 and 14 in *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship*, ed. Thomas Stehling, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, London, 1984).

³² Letter 59, p.492 in *Augustine: Select Letters*, ed. J. H. Baxter, Cambridge, Mass., 1953.

³³ *De Amicitia*, XVIII, 65.

³⁴ It may be that the juxtaposition of the two citations in itself contains an element of linguistic playfulness. Elsewhere in the *De Amicitia*, in the context of the diminution of friendship, comes the statement: '*(ut) omnis caritas aut inter duos aut inter paucos iungeretur*', '(with the result that) all affection was between two or (at most) a few' (V, 20). If this is denuded of its context, the Gregory citation: '*(Quae consensio) ad minus quam inter duos haberi non potest*', 'this shared feeling cannot exist between less than two' might appear to be saying the opposite.

³⁵ McGuire, p.267.

³⁶ J. Leclercq, 'Lettres de vocation à la Vie Monastique', *Studia Anselmiana* 37, *Analecta Monastica* 3, Rome, , 1955, 169-197.

³⁷ This may reflect the pagan conceit that love when hidden blazes up more strongly: e.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV.63: '*Quoque magis tegitur, tectus magis aestuat ignis*', 'The more it is hidden, the more, being concealed, love burns'.

³⁸ Alcuin, letter XIV, 162 A/B.

³⁹ Alcuin also uses the idea that the fire of love needs an outlet in *Ep. CXIII*, 341B:

ut flamma charitatis in corde abscondita aliquam fortasse scintillam
elicere valeat: ne totum torpeat quod intus ignescit

that the flame of affection hidden in the heart be able to draw forth some spark: lest what burns inside be wholly torpid.

⁴⁰ ac velut annoso validam cum robore quercum
Alpini Boreae nunc hinc nunc flatibus illinc
erueri inter se certant; it stridor, et altae
consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes;
ipsa haeret scopulis, et, quantum vertice ad auras
aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.

'Just as the north winds of the Alps strive with their gusts, now on this side, now on that, to uproot an oak-tree, strong with aged strength; there is a great hissing, and the leaves strew the ground from on high as the trunk is shaken; but the tree clings firmly to the rocks and stretches with its roots as far into the underworld as its branches reach into the sky'.

⁴¹ *Rem. Am.* 85-88 :

Quae praebet latas arbor spatiantibus umbras,
Quo posita est primum tempore virga fuit;
Tum poterat manibus summa tellure revelli:
Nunc stat in inmensum viribus aucta suis.

'The tree which offers wide-spread shade to those who walk was a twig at the time of its first placing; then it could have been torn-up by the hand from the surface of the soil: now it stands increased to an immense height by its strength'.

⁴² e.g. *Georg.* 2, 23-24: 'hic plantas tenero abscindens de corpore matrum / deposuit sulcis', 'tearing away the saplings from the tender body of their mothers he has placed them in furrows'.

⁴³ Cf. Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, I, IV, 11.49-51.

⁴⁴ Geoffrey of Vendome, *Ep. IV*, I (*P.L.* CLVII, 147A); Peter of Celle, *Ep. 25* (II, I) (*P.L.* CCII, 428D). Geoffrey, asking Hugh of Cluny to intervene in a dispute with Hugh of Angers, is in fact uttering a veiled threat - that Hugh should not cause his brothers to fulminate against Cluny, 'quem secundum paradisum vocare audeo', 'which I dare to call a second paradise'; Peter of Celle's reference is not wholly complimentary - in the paragraph referred to he does indeed call Cluny the 'hortus Domini', but only to imply subsequently that it is being spoiled - 'Nonne voti et

sanctae institutionis paradisus violatur?', 'Is not the paradise of prayer and of holy institution being violated?' - and by Peter the Venerable's connivance, through too much laxity (430D).

⁴⁵ Peter Damian, Letter 4, *P.L.* CXLIV, 374C.

⁴⁶ McGuire, for example, mentions that Nicholas referred to Clairvaux after he first saw it as a Paradise (Ep.7, *P.L.* CIVC, 1602).

⁴⁷ J. Leclercq, *La vie parfaite. Points de vue sur l'essence de l'état religieux*, Paris-Turnhout, 1948, pp.161-169.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, 'Prédicateurs bénédictins aux XIe et XIIe siècles', in *Revue Mabillon*, XXXIII, (1943), 71-72.

⁴⁹ Both McGuire and Fiske draw attention to the importance of the *Song of Songs* in friendship writing. Peter uses it also to Peter of Poitiers in letter 58: 'et ego cum sponsa in canticis cantarem: *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus locutus est*', 'and I sang with the bride in the Canticles: my soul was melted when my beloved spoke' and receives it from Nicholas of Clairvaux in 179: '*indica michi quem diligit anima mea*' 'show me him whom my soul loves'.

⁵⁰ Fiske: on Fortunatus see 8/21; on concept in general, appendix (latter also published separately as article in *Speculum*, 40 (3), 1965, 426-459).

⁵¹ Alcuin, Ep.XVI, 167C.

⁵² Constable draws attention to this motif in connection with 179. It originates in the second dialogue of Gregory the Great, describing a meeting between a certain priest and St.Benedict - to the priest's invitation, 'surge, sumamus cibum, quia hodie Pascha est', 'arise, let us take food, because to-day is Easter', Benedict replies, 'Scio quia Pascha est, quia videre te merui', 'I know that it is Easter, because I have deserved to see you' (*P.L.* LXVI, 130C). This is quoted by Alcuin, rejoicing over the visit of a friend: 'ita ut iuxta beati Benedicti responsum pascha me in tunc dilectionis adventu habere viderer', 'so that, in the words of the blessed Benedict, I seemed to have Easter at the arrival of my beloved'; in this case the point is that it is not actually Easter, but merely seems to be so (Alcuin, Ep. 260, 418, 4-5 in *MGH, Epistolae Karolini aevi*, II, ed. E. Duemmler, Hanover, 1895). 179 (from Nicholas) contains the following statement, 'desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare tecum', 'I have desired much to eat with you this Easter'; it is picked up and answered in 182: 'Ante pascha praestolor te, ut in pascha habeam te. Est, est nobis *caenaculum grande, stratum*, ... ad quod ego invito te', 'I command you before Easter, so that I may have you at Easter. We have a large upper-

room, furnished and ready... to which I invite you' (a passage which may evoke both the Last Supper and the mystic "feast" of the *Canticles*).

⁵³ Peter Diemer, 'What does Prudentia advise? On the subject of the Cluny Choir capitals', *Current Studies on Cluny* (40), 149-173 (152). Résumé in 'Les femmes savantes dans le choeur des moines. Le programme sculptural du déambulatoire de Cluny' in *Le gouvernement d'Hugues de Semur à Cluny*. (Actes du colloque scientifique international, Cluny, septembre 1988), Cluny, 1990, 385-397.

⁵⁴ *Letters*, II, p.181.

⁵⁵ See Fiske, 7/4, n.25.

⁵⁶ *De Amicitia*, XIX, 67:

non enim debent esse amicitiarum sicut aliarum rerum, satietates: veterrima quaeque, ut ea vina quae vetustatem ferunt, esse debent suavissima

'There should not be satieties of friendships as of other things: the oldest, like those wines which carry age, should be the sweetest'.

⁵⁷ Peter uses the same idea elsewhere, but in a far more schematic fashion. For example, in two brief letters aimed at ensuring Nicholas' visit to Cluny, he appeals to Galcher, cellarer of Clairvaux as an old friend who does not need many words, but to the prior, Philip, as a new friend: 'Spero in ipso quia veterasces in amicitia, et qui adhuc novus places, multo magis veterascens placebis', 'I hope in Him that you will grow old in friendship, and that, being one who gives pleasure while still new, you will please much more growing old' (Letter 183).

⁵⁸ Anselm, Ep. 59, p.174, 16-18 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. F.S. Schmitt, III, Edinburgh, 1946).

⁵⁹ Augustine, Sermo CI, *P.L.* XXXIX, 3. This interpretation is incorporated into commentaries on the *Song of Songs*, for example, Cassiodorus, *Expositio in Cantica Canticorum*, *P.L.* 70, 1073:

Dens Ecclesiae praecipuus erat Petrus, cui dictum est in visione: surge, occide et manduca: ac si diceretur, eos quos ad fide convertis, occide ab eo quod sunt, id est, ut desinant esse peccatores; et manduca, hoc est transfer, vel transforma in corpus Ecclesiae

'The outstanding tooth of the Church was Peter, to whom was said in a vision: arise, kill and eat: as much to say, those whom you convert to the faith kill from what they were, that they should cease to be sinners, and eat, that is, transfer and transform them into the body of the Church'.

⁶⁰ McGuire, p.265.

⁶¹ 'Omnes amici sunt fortunae, non personae', 'all are friends of fortune, not of the person'; 'Eousque defluxit humanarum rerum et caduca et caddenda mortalitas, ut illud sanctum amicitiae nomen inter venalia deputetur', 'the failing and bound to fail mortality of human affairs has ebbed to this point, that the holy name of friendship is counted among things to be sold'; 'Omnes certatim confluunt ut blandius amicum fallant', 'all rival each other in their haste to deceive a friend more seductively'; 'Adulatio enim similis amicitiae... recipitur', 'adulation pretending to be friendship is received'; 'quia nemo potest esse veraciter amicus hominis qui non fuerit amicus veritatis', 'no-one who is not a friend of truth can truly befriend a man' (Leclercq, 'Lettres de Vocation', 173).

⁶² 'et in proximo aperietur tibi ianua paradisi, hortus deliciarum...', 'and soon will be opened to you the door of paradise, the garden of delights'; 'Hic fragrat odor inaeestimabilis suavitatis, hic redolent flores rosarum...', 'Here is fragrant an odour of inestimable sweetness, here are redolent the flowers of roses'; 'aromata pigmentaria doctrinae sunt...', 'the spices are doctrines'; 'Lignum vitae in medio eius, fraterna caritas, quod est cibus perfectorum...', 'The tree of life is in the middle, brotherly affection, which is the food of the perfected' (*ibid.* 178-9); 'Relinque pallium cum Ioseph, teloneum cum Matthaeo, hydriam cum Samaritana, sepulturam patris cum homine evangelico, sindonem cum Iohanne, et pauper pauperem Christum imitare...', 'Abandon the shroud with Joseph, the taxes with Matthew, the water-pot with the Samaritan woman, the burial of the father with the man of the Gospel, the fine linen with John, and as a poor man follow Christ in poverty' (*ibid.* 176).

⁶³ sed o quid faciam? Sacerdotem ab altari, pontificem a populo, pastorem ab ovibus seiungere quaero? Frontem illam auri lamina *radiantem*, ineffabile nomen dei *gestantem*, caput cydari *decoratum*, rationali pectus, superhumerali humeros *adornatos*, veste sacra et gemmata corpus *praeifulgens*, ipsos in totius corporis fabrica ultimos pedes sandaliis *indutos*, ista inquam omnia et adhuc plura *supernum sonantia*, et hominem illum his indutum non iam terrenum sed totum *caelestem signantia*, caelis detrahare luto adiungere laboro?

But what would I do? Am I seeking to separate a priest from the altar, a pontiff from the people, a pastor from his sheep? Am I labouring to drag down from heaven and plunge in the mire that forehead radiant with strips of gold, bearing the unsayable name of God, the head decorated with the mitre, the breast adorned with the breast-plate, the shoulders with the pall, the body gleaming with the sacred and gemmed vestment, the very feet, least in the fabric of the whole body, shod in slippers, all these features

and still more ringing with the supernal, marking out the man who wears them as already belonging not to the earth but wholly to heaven?"

⁶⁴ It might be objected that the correspondence as presented in the letter-collection is not all from Peter, but comprises three letters from Hato. In fact, of these, two - 85 and 96 - seem to be closely modelled on Peter's own letters while the third, 71 is a formal expression of gratitude. In the series, at least, Peter's is presented as the dominant voice.

⁶⁵ R. E. Pepin, 'Amicitia Iocosa', *Florilegium* 5, 1983, 140-56.

⁶⁶ e.g. Jerome in letter previously quoted (*loc. cit.* 18); Augustine, in a letter to Severus, makes similar verbal play with the concept of *debitum* e.g.:

miraris fortasse cur me huius *debiti persolutorem* imparem dicam... sed hoc ipsum est, quod mihi magnam difficultatem respondendi litteris tuis, quia et quantus mihi videaris, parco dicere propter verecundiam tuam, et utique minus dicendo, cum tu in me tantam laudem contuleris, quid nisi *debitor* remanebo? Quod non curarem, si.. non ex caritate sincerissima dicta scirem sed adulatione *inimica amicitiae*. Hoc quippe modo nec *debitor* fierem, quia talia rependere non *deberem*; sed quanto magis novi quam fideli animo loqueris, tanto magis video quanto *debito* graver (*Select Letters*, Letter 29, p.200).

'Perhaps you wonder why I call myself an unequal repayer of this debt. But it is this very factor which has caused me such difficulty in replying to your letter, for to spare your blushes I refrain from saying how great you seem to me, and by saying less, when you have heaped such praise on me, what shall I remain but a debtor? I would not care for that, if I knew it had been said not out of sincere affection, but out of adulation, the enemy of friendship. In this way I would not be a debtor, since I would not be due to repay such things, but the more I know how faithfully you speak, the more I see with what a debt I am burdened'.

Serious issues may indeed lurk beneath both these passages, but the primary impression is one of playful manipulation of *topoi* and the expression of the writer's affection.

⁶⁷ *De Amicitia* XVIII, 66.