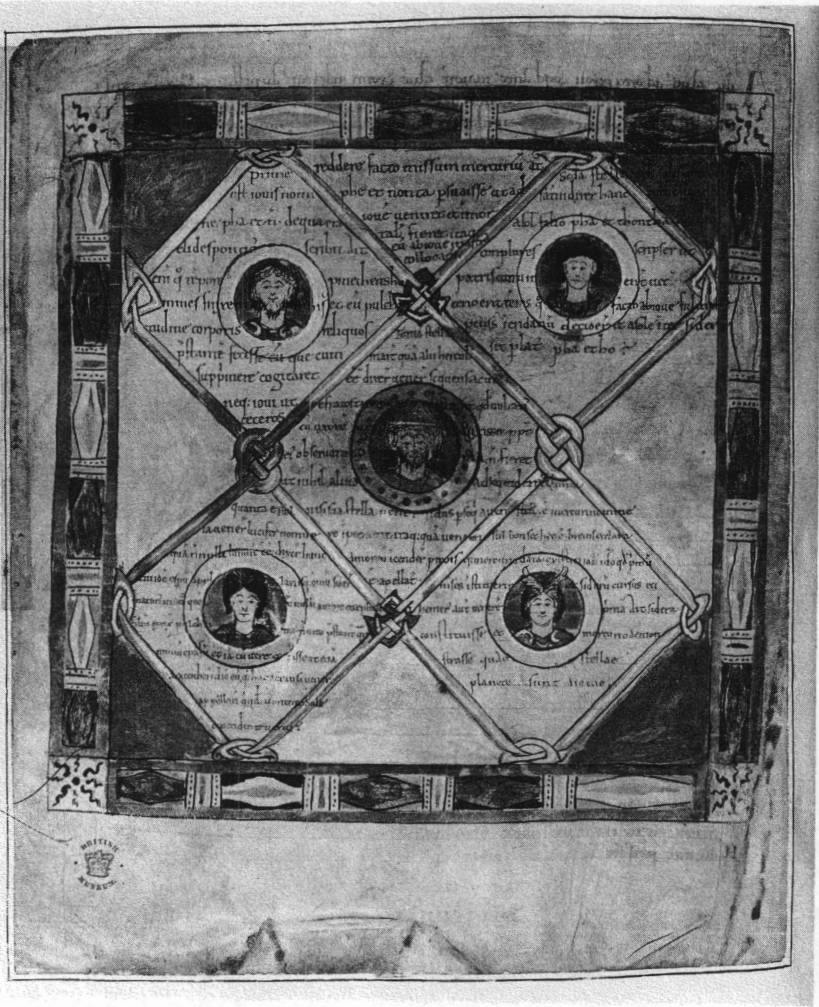


Medieval Mythography



Medieval Mythography

FROM ROMAN NORTH AFRICA
TO THE SCHOOL OF CHARTRES,
A.D. 433-1177

JANE CHANCE

WIPF & STOCK • Eugene, Oregon

Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W 8th Ave, Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

Medieval Mythography, Volume One
From Roman North Africa to the School of Chartres, A.D. 433-1177
By Chance, Jane
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ISBN 13: 978-1-5326-8891-1
Publication date 4/17/2019
Previously published by University Press of Florida, 1994

For my family,
especially my father, stepmother,
Aunt Thelma, Aunt Bobbye, Aunt Vi, and Uncle Steve;
and, most of all,
in memory of my mother and grandparents:
in tribute to the pioneer and immigrant qualities
of determination, independence, enterprise, and courage,
and to the Quaker belief
in peace and freedom.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

The development of the literary description of the gods in the Middle Ages did not match exactly the history of the iconological or iconographical treatment of the gods in manuscript illuminations. As Jean Seznec and Erwin Panofsky have frequently observed, the posterity of an image exists separately and may be propelled by its own life. Exhaustive studies of the astrological and mythological illuminations, most significantly by Fritz Saxl under the auspices of the Warburg Institute, have revealed a paucity of illustrations of the gods before the twelfth century, at least relative to the enormous collection of materials from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Up to the twelfth century the planetary and constellatory equivalents of the gods illustrated primarily astronomical, herbal, and bestiary texts. Thereafter, stories of the gods in a variety of texts about history and mythography were matched with appropriate depictions. But there were also time lags in the correspondences between literary texts and iconic depictions. Christine de Pizan's stunning and elaborate illustrations for her early fifteenth-century *Epistre Othea*, for example, incorporate detail from important mythographic commentaries dating from the twelfth century, most probably drawn from the collection of Chartrian manuscripts available in the royal library in her own time. In tracing the history of a myth, more important than the date of any manuscript illumination is the idea incarnated in its imagery.

Illustrations up to the twelfth century very often reflect the influence of the written text of the bestiary or the astronomicon (often that of Hyginus or Cicero), or else legitimate a classical or late antique author (Boethius, for example) or signify his importance for the Middle Ages (Bernard Silvestris) or the importance for a literary text of a particular figure (Pallas Athena), especially in place of the *accessus*. Because of this, the illustrations frequently will have no direct bearing on a mythological passage in a commentary and are used herein to suggest parallels that exist in two different traditions, written and visual. Because the fullest and most interesting illustrations come from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but with possible influence from the commentaries, say, of the twelfth century, they are used here as illustrations of significant but much older ideas (*Somnium Scipionis*, Oedipus, Hercules and Theseus, etc.).

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The scholarly forebears of this study include monumental works on classical allegoresis and the mythographers of late antiquity, chiefly Macrobius and Servius, and on the process of mythography in relation to the Renaissance and to art history as well as to patristic exegesis, by Pépin, de Lubac, Curtius, Panofsky, Seznec, D. C. Allen, Robertson, Bush, and Tuve. They also include more recent studies of medieval renaissances and literary theory and philosophy by Smalley, Judson Boyce Allen, Minnis, Stock, Wetherbee, and Dronke. Finally, this volume in its approach and conclusions is indebted to those studies of the commentary traditions of Virgil, Ovid, and the other poets by scholars such as Jeaneau, Courcelle, Comparetti, Hexter, Baswell, Westra, Gibson, and many others.

It will be clear to the reader, I hope, that this study does not pretend to be exhaustive. Hundreds of manuscripts in European libraries remain at present unedited, incorrectly identified, or miscatalogued, and in them, presumably, are glosses and comments that would vary the material presented in this volume. Their editing would no doubt alter what I said. But I believe that the outlines of this study will hold true, despite minor variations in, say, the Remigian commentary on Martianus Capella which dominated the ninth to the twelfth century.

The research, writing, and publication of this volume were fostered by various institutions, foundations, and libraries as well as by many individuals, to whom I would like to express my gratitude. The National Endowment for the Humanities Foundation provided a Fellowship for Independent Study and Research during 1977-78, during which the bulk of the research for this book was completed in London. I am also grateful to University College of the University of London for the Honorary Research Fellowship in English for 1977-78 that gave me access to the University of London Senate Library and the University College Library. In many ways that cannot be tallied I am also indebted to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for its Fellowship during 1980-81 that allowed me to complete the writing of a partial first draft of the first half of the book in Rome and Venice, and for the publication subvention to aid in producing this volume. In addition, Rice University's research grants—for a month of summer salary in 1978, for a sabbatical semester in 1980-81, for travel and for clerical expenses incurred in putting part of the manuscript on com-

puter disk in 1984–85, for travel funds and for a Mellon grant in 1988–89, for research assistance and travel expenses in producing the final manuscript in the summer of 1992—furthered the completion of this study; the Dean of Humanities also paid for indexing this volume.

Other academic experiences immeasurably influenced the writing of this book; to the organizations that made them possible I am also deeply grateful. The National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar for College Teachers on “Chaucer and Mythography” in the summer of 1985 provided a necessary audience and the perspective for pulling together and shaping the book into a series of twelve two-hour lectures. When I returned to the study after a hiatus, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded a month’s luxurious residency at its Villa Serbelloni at Bellagio on Lake Como, Italy, in July 1988, which enabled me to pull together my ideas for the latter half of the study, dealing with the late Middle Ages, so that I could continue my work at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton during 1988–89 at the School of Historical Studies.

Various libraries graciously permitted me to use their archives and to request microfilms and photocopies of needed materials and photographs of manuscript illuminations. For their generosity I would like to thank Rice University’s Fondren Library, the British Library, Oxford’s Bodleian and Duke Humphries Libraries, the Cambridge University Library, the University College Library and the Senate Library of the University Library of London, the York University library, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the Library of the American Academy of Rome and the Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, also of Rome, the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana of Venice, the Biblioteca Centrale Nazionale and the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana of Florence, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque Mazarine of Paris, the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz of Berlin, and Harvard’s Widener Library. The Hill Monastic Library in Collegeville, Minnesota, generously permitted me to use its archives in researching the volume. I am grateful also to Princeton University’s Firestone Library and the Library of Historical Studies and Social Sciences at the Institute for Advanced Study for their many kindnesses during my stay at the Institute in 1988–89.

Many individuals generously contributed in various ways to the research and writing of this book. Colleagues and mentors who provided invaluable encouragement and support include the late Richard Hamilton Green, George Economou, Jackson J. Campbell, Joseph B. Trahern, Jr., Charles Muscatine, and the late Bernard F. Huppé. The late Richard W. Hunt,

former director of the Bodleian, provided information about mythographic publications and specific manuscripts; Diane K. Bolton of the Institute of Historical Research of the University of London helped with Remigius and Boethius glosses of the tenth and eleventh centuries, offprints of her articles, and other bibliographic information; the late Professor Judson Boyce Allen of the University of Florida gave me information concerning late Ovid commentaries and access to his unpublished transcription of Alexander Neckam on Martianus. Thanks are also extended to Dr. Haijo J. Westra of the University of Calgary for information about Bernard's commentary on Martianus, the Berlin Martianus, and the Florentine commentary; to Fabio Troncarelli, for information relating to MS. Vat. lat. 3363 on Boethius and a copy of his book; and to Professor Richard Johnson of the Australian National University for information concerning Martianus Capella. Professors Petrus Tax and Joseph Wittig of the Department of Germanic Languages at the University of North Carolina very kindly loaned me transcriptions of their St. Gall and Remigian glosses on Boethius prior to publication. Professor Traugott Lawler of Yale and Mrs. Eleanor Silk made available glosses from the late Professor Edmund Silk's edition of Nicholas Trivet on Boethius. Readers of this manuscript at various stages, among them Winthrop Wetherbee, Stephen Russell, and Margaret Ehrhart, indicated changes that needed to be made; what mistakes remain, of course, are my own.

In addition, friends, colleagues, and students offered countless aids. William D. Reynolds of Hope College read a paper on my behalf at a conference when I was in England. Professor Paul O. Kristeller made thorough and invaluable comments on early portions of the manuscript. Dr. Arthur Field also provided helpful information concerning Landino's *Aeneid* commentaries; Theodore Steinberg, William Reynolds, Lois Roney, and Laura Hodges all read versions of the introduction and long sections of what were originally large Boethius and Virgil chapters. I am especially grateful to the participants in my 1985 NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers for their enthusiastic support and helpful comments—especially Sister Rosemarie Julie Gavin, Deborah Rubin, Judith Kellogg, Charles Moore, and Jeanne Nightingale. Julia Bolton Holloway insisted that I first write a book on Chaucer's mythography before writing this book—an idea (once implemented) that helped to define in a practical way the fourteenth-century uses of mythography. I am also very happy to have spent several wonderful dinners with Estelle James and Joel Williamson discussing fruitful possibilities for organizing the volume during my stay at the

Rockefeller Foundation's Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio on Lake Como in northern Italy, July 7–August 4, 1988. Finally, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton has earned my eternal thanks for the year granted me in 1988–89 to finish the volume and to engage in dialogue with the many professors there, among them Vittore Branca, Irving Lavin, Michael Richter, John Fleming, Peter Schmidt, Anna Kartsonis, and Deborah Pincus, who offered so generously new perspectives, bibliographic suggestions, and ideas for shaping my material. Enlightening conversations with Chris Baswell about *Aeneid* commentaries and the mythographic tradition helped spur the writing of this book in the fall of 1988. Readers for the University Press of Florida offered constructive ideas for improving the volume; I appreciate their thoughtful suggestions and hope that the completed book measures up. During the time in which I revised this volume, current and former graduate students Edie Hoffman, Padmaja Challakere, and Dr. Faye Walker-Pelkey challenged my ideas in stimulating ways. Last but by no means least, Judy Shoaf's careful copyediting of the manuscript strengthened the argument and made the study more accessible and useful to the reader. To her I am especially grateful for all manner of suggestions and ideas, as I am to Michael Senecal, who oversaw production of the book.

As the study progressed, various student graduate and undergraduate assistants, among them Valerie Luessenhop, Dr. Elizabeth Alkaood, Dr. Laura Hodges, Dr. Madeline Fleming, Ted Reed, Larry Kraemer, Padmaja Challakere, Karen Palermo, Holly Pinchevsky, and Dejan Kuzmanovic, helped compile a working bibliography and manuscript listings, collect texts, check references, and read proofs. The participants in my spring 1988 graduate seminar in feminist mythography, particularly Ann Bradley and Laura McRae, contributed in various ways to the advancement of this project. Undergraduates and graduates from my own department and others aided in the retyping, including Cindy Pfeiffer, Thelma Zavala, Kristine Hain, Robert Barber, and Jenny Hyan. Marcia Carey at the Institute for Advanced Study's Historical and Social Sciences Library verified documentation for some citations and located missing references. To all of these individuals and the institutions that support them I am grateful.

Dr. Helen Eaker of the Classics Department at Rice University checked and revised Latin and Greek translations and transcriptions, my own and others', throughout this volume and in many cases supplied her own, for which I owe her an incalculable debt, given the difficulty of some of the

passages; of course, whatever translation errors that remain are my own. Dr. Eaker has also, where appropriate, silently changed errors in transcriptions from published editions. Professor Joseph Wilson of the German department at Rice either translated the Old High German in the Notker chapter or rechecked my own translations; I am grateful to him for lending his expertise to this project.

Portions of this study have been delivered as conference papers, beginning in order of delivery with "The Epic Origins of Medieval Mythography," Thirteenth Annual Conference on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 5, 1978; "Revising Macrobius on Fiction: The 'Fabulous Cosmogony' of William of Conches," Session on Mythography and Literature, Fifth Citadel Conference on Literature: The Poetry, Drama, and Prose of the Renaissance and Middle Ages, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, March 15-16, 1985; "The Virgilization of 'Ovid' and Boethius: Mythographic Exegesis in the Early Middle Ages," Medieval Seminar, School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, October 26, 1988; and "Originality and Marginality: Pallas Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, and Christine de Pizan," English Department, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, November 15, 1989.

Portions of this study have been previously published in other forms, and permission to reprint has been obtained for all, including "The Origins and Development of Medieval Mythography: From Homer to Dante," in *Mapping the Cosmos*, edited by Jane Chance and R. O. Wells, Jr. (Houston: Rice University Press, 1985), 35-64; portions of "Allegory and Structure in *Pearl*: The Four Senses of the *Ars Praedicandi* and Homiletic Poetry of the Fourteenth Century," in *Text and Matter: New Critical Perspectives of the Pearl-Poet*, edited by Robert J. Blanch, Miriam Youngerman Miller, and Julian N. Wasserman (Troy, N.Y.: Whitston Press, 1991); portions of the introduction to *Christine de Pizan, Letter of Othea to Hector, Translated, with Introduction, Notes, and Interpretative Essay*, Focus Library of Medieval Women (Newburyport, Mass.: Focus Press, 1990); and portions of the "Introduction. The Medieval 'Apology for Poetry': Fabulous Narrative and Stories of the Gods," in *The Mythographic Art: Classical Fable and the Rise of the Vernacular in Early France and England*, edited by Jane Chance (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1990).

ABBREVIATIONS AND CITATION EDITIONS

The following is a list of short titles and abbreviations used in the parenthetical references to the main works discussed in the text and in the notes at the end of this book. Where it seemed useful, I have used the set of numbers with the widest possible range of referents: to the myth number rather than the page number in a myth collection, to the book and line number of a classical text or of a commentary on a classical text. Thus not only Virgil's *Aeneid* but several of the commentaries on it are indexed by book and line numbers; thus the paragraph numbers of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis* can be used by the reader whether Dick's or Willis's edition is in hand, or Stahl's translation (though in this case the commentaries follow a different system of numbering).

Where available, Loeb Classics have been cited. References to book, chapter, and line numbers of a primary text will appear by author and/or short title in decimal form, e.g., *Aen.* 1.10.11; references to multivolume primary works with page or column numbers cited will appear in colonic form, e.g., *PL* 150:36. Titles in Greek are either transliterated into Roman alphabet or translated into Latin. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are original. Further bibliographic information on the editions and translations mentioned here appears in the bibliography.

AHDLMA	<i>Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
Alexander Neckam, <i>Nat. rerum</i>	Alexander Neckam, <i>De naturis rerum</i> . Ed. Wright. Cited by page number. My translations.
AM	<i>Annuaire mediaevale</i>
AR	<i>Archivum romanicum</i>
ASNSL	<i>Archiv für das Studium der Neuern Sprachen und Literaturen</i>
Augustine, <i>Civ. Dei</i>	Augustine, <i>De civitate Dei</i> . 6 vols. Ed. and trans. Green. Cited by book and chapter.

Barb. Raia	Anonymous Barberinus Commentary on Martianus Capella from MS. Barb. lat. 10. Ed. Anne Rose Raia, "Barberini Manuscripts 57–66 and 121–130." Cited by page number. My translations.
Bernard, <i>In Theod.</i>	Bernard of Utrecht, <i>Commentum in Theoduli</i> . Ed. Huygens. My translations. The accessus is quoted from Jacobs's edition (cited in the notes). Cited by book and paragraph number. The book and paragraph numbers are the same in both editions.
Bern. Sil., <i>In Mart.</i>	<i>Commentary on Martianus Capella's De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii Attributed to Bernardus Silvestris</i> . Ed. Westra. My translations. Cited by page and line number of Dick's edition of Martianus.
Bern. Sil., <i>Sup. En.</i>	<i>Commentary on the First Six Books of Vergil's Aeneid by Bernardus Silvestris</i> . Ed. Jones and Jones, trans. Schreiber and Maresca. Cited by book and line number of the <i>Aeneid</i> in the edition, by page number in the translation.
B.L.	British Library
B.N.	Bibliothèque Nationale
Bode	Mythographi Vaticani. <i>Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres Romae nuper reperti</i> . Ed. Bode. 2 vols. Repr. 1 vol.
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
Boethius, <i>Consolatio</i>	Boethius, <i>De consolazione Philosophiae</i> . In <i>Tractates, De consolazione Philosophiae</i> . Ed. and trans. Stewart, Rand, Tester. Loeb Classics. Cited by book, prose or poem (metrum), and line number.
C&M	<i>Classica et mediavalia</i>
CCSL, CCCM	<i>Corpus christianorum</i> , series Latina, or <i>continuato medievalis</i>

Cicero, <i>Nat. deorum</i>	Cicero, <i>De natura deorum</i> . In <i>De natura deorum, Academica</i> . Ed. and trans. Rackham. Loeb Classics. Cited by book and chapter number.
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CTC	<i>Catalogus translationum et commentarium</i>
DA	<i>Dissertation Abstracts</i>
DAEM	<i>Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters</i>
DAI	<i>Dissertation Abstracts International</i>
Dante, <i>Inf., Purg., Par.</i>	Dante, <i>Divine Comedy: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso</i> , respectively. Ed. and trans. Singleton. Cited by canto and line number.
Dunchad, <i>In Mart.</i>	Martin of Laon, <i>Glossae in Martianum</i> . Ed. Lutz. Cited by section and paragraph (derived by Lutz from page and line numbers in Dick's edition of <i>De nuptiis</i>). My translations.
<i>Ecl. Theod.</i>	<i>Ecloga Theoduli</i> . Ed. Osternacher. Trans. Thomson in <i>Ten Latin School Texts</i> . Ed. Thomson and Peraud. Cited by line number.
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
Fulgentius, <i>Cont. Virg.</i>	Fulgentius, <i>Expositio continentiae Virgilianae</i> . In Fulgentius, <i>Opera</i> . Ed. Helm. Trans. Whitbread in <i>Fulgentius the Mythographer</i> . Helm cited by page, Whitbread by paragraph.
Fulgentius, <i>Mit.</i>	Fulgentius, <i>Mitologiae</i> . In <i>Opera</i> , as above. Cited by book and fable number in the translation, page number in the edition.

Fulgentius, <i>Sup. Theb.</i>	Fulgentius, <i>Super Thebaiden</i> . In <i>Opera</i> , as above. Cited by page number in both edition and translation.
HLF	<i>Histoire littéraire de la France</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
Hyginus, <i>Astronomica</i>	Hyginus, <i>Astronomica</i> . Ed. Bunte. Trans. Grant. In <i>The Myths of Hyginus</i> . Cited by fable number.
Hyginus, <i>Fab.</i>	Hyginus, <i>Fabulae</i> . Ed. Rose. Trans. as above. Cited by fable number.
Isidore, <i>Etym.</i>	Isidore of Seville, <i>Etymologiarum libri</i> XX. Ed. Lindsay. 2 vols; my translations. Cited by book, chapter, and item number.
JCP	<i>Jahrbücher für classische Philologie</i>
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
John of Salisbury	<i>Policraticus</i> . Ed. Webb. 2 vols. Cited by book and chapter; trans. in part by Pike, cited by page number.
John Scot, <i>In Mart.</i>	John Scot of Ireland, <i>Annotaciones in Marcianum</i> . Ed. Lutz; my translations. Cited by section and paragraph (derived by Lutz from page and line numbers of Dick's edition of <i>De nuptiis</i>).
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JWCI	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
Juvenal, <i>Satires</i>	<i>Saturae</i> . In <i>Juvenal and Persius</i> . Ed. and trans. Ramsay. Loeb Classics. Cited by satire and line number.
Kulcsár	Peter Kulcsár, ed. <i>Mythographi Vaticani I et II</i> .
Lactantius, <i>Achilleid, Thebaid.</i>	In <i>Commentarii in Statii Thebaida et commentarius in Achilleida</i> . Ed. Jahnke. Vol. 3 of <i>P. Papinius Statius</i> . Cited by book and line of Statius and page number. My translations.
Lactantius, <i>Narrationes</i>	<i>Narrationes fabularum Ovidianarum</i> . Ed.

	Magnus. In <i>P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon libri XV et Lactantii Placidi qui dicitur Narrationes fabularum Ovidianarum</i> . Cited by book and line number of <i>Metamorphoses</i> and page number. My translations.
M&H	<i>Mediaevalia et humanistica</i>
Macrobius, <i>Sat.</i>	Macrobius, <i>Saturnalia</i> . In <i>Macrobius</i> . 2 vols. Ed. Willis. Trans. Davies. Cited by book and chapter.
Macrobius, <i>Somn. Scip.</i>	Macrobius, <i>Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis</i> . In <i>Macrobius</i> . 2 vols. Ed. Willis. <i>Commentary on the Dream of Scipio</i> , trans. Stahl. Cited by book and chapter.
MAE	<i>Medium aevum</i>
Manitius, <i>Geschichte</i>	Max Manitius, <i>Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters. Handbuch der klassischen Altertums-Wissenschaft</i> . Vol. 9, part 2. 3 vols.
Martianus, <i>De nuptiis</i>	Martianus Capella, <i>De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii</i> . In <i>Martianus Capella</i> . Ed. Willis. Trans. Stahl, Johnson, and Burge, <i>Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts</i> . Vol. 2. Cited by paragraph (paragraphs are numbered continuously through the book, identically in Dick's edition as well as in those used for citation).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica
MJ	<i>Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch</i>
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MLQ	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
MLR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
MLS	<i>Modern Language Studies</i>
MP	<i>Modern Philology</i>
MRS	<i>Medieval and Renaissance Studies</i>
MS	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
Mythogr. I	First Vatican mythographer. See Kulcsár. Cited by fable number.

Mythogr. II	Second Vatican mythographer. See Kulcsár. Cited by fable number.
Mythogr. III	Third Vatican mythographer. See Bode.
NA	<i>Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde</i>
Notker	Notker Labeo, translation of and commentary on <i>De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii</i> . Ed. Schulte. In <i>Das Verhältnis von Notkers Nuptiae Philologiae</i> , etc. Translations from Old High German generally provided by Joseph Wilson (who provided the same service for Notker's Boethius glosses); Latin translations mine. Cited by page number.
Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>	In <i>Ovid in Six Volumes</i> . Ed. and trans. Miller. Loeb Classics. 2 vols. Cited by book and line number.
Paulys-Wissowa	Georg Wissowa and Wilhelm Kroll, <i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia cursus completus: Series Graeca</i> .
PL	<i>Patrologia cursus completus: Series Latina</i> . Ed. Migne. Cited by volume and column.
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
Raby, <i>Secular Latin Poetry</i>	F.J.E. Raby, <i>A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages</i> . 2 vols.
REL	<i>Revue des études latines</i>
Remi., <i>In Mart.</i>	Remigius of Auxerre, <i>Commentum in Martianum Capellam</i> . Ed. Lutz. 2 vols. Cited by section and paragraph number (derived from Lutz from page and line number of Dick's edition of <i>De nuptiis</i>). My translations.
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
RF	<i>Romanische Forschungen</i>
RJ	<i>Romanistisches Jahrbuch</i>
RMP	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>

Schol., <i>Ad Buc.</i>	Berne scholia (Adanan the Scot?), gloss on Virgil's <i>Eclogues</i> . In <i>Scholia Bernensia ad Vergilii Bucolica atque Georgica</i> . Ed. Hagen. Cited by eclogue and line number. My translations.
Schol., <i>Ad Georg.</i>	Berne scholia, gloss on Virgil's <i>Georgics</i> . Same as above. Cited by book and line number. My translations.
Servius, <i>In Aen.</i>	Servius, <i>Commentarius in Aeneidos</i> . In <i>Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii</i> . Ed. Thilo and Hagen. Vols. 1–2. Cited by book and line number; my translations.
Servius, <i>In Buc.</i>	Servius, <i>Commentarius in Bucolicon</i> . Ed. Thilo and Hagen, same title as preceding, vol. 3. Cited by book and line number; my translations.
Servius, <i>In Georg.</i>	Servius, <i>Commentarius in Georgicon</i> . Ed. Thilo and Hagen, same title and vol. as the preceding; cited by book and line number; my translations.
SM	<i>Studi medievali</i>
SP	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
Statius, <i>Achilleid</i>	<i>Statius</i> . Ed. and trans. Mozley. Vol. 2. Loeb Classics. Cited by book and line number.
Statius, <i>Thebaid</i>	<i>Statius</i> . Vols 1–2, as indicated above.
TAPA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
Theodulf, "De libris"	Theodulf of Orleans: "De libris quod legere solebam," "The Books I Used to Read" (<i>Carmina</i> 45). In <i>Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance</i> . Ed and trans. Peter Godman. Cited by line number.
Vat.	Vatican Library
Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>	In <i>Virgil</i> . Ed. and trans. Fairclough. 2 vols. Loeb Classics. Cited by book and line number.

Virgil, <i>Eclogues</i>	In <i>Virgil</i> . Ed. and trans. Fairclough. Vol. 1. Cited by book and line number.
Virgil, <i>Georgics</i>	As above, vol. 1. Cited by eclogue and line number.
William, <i>In Iuvenalem</i>	William of Conches, <i>Glosae in Iuvenalem</i> . Ed. Wilson. Cited by satire, line, and page number.

CHRONOLOGY OF MEDIEVAL MYTHOGRAPHERS AND COMMENTARY AUTHORS

The nature of the records for most of the Middle Ages and critical scholarship are such that it is impossible to name or date most of the works studied in this volume. All but the firmest attributions have been disputed and even the most distant terminus post quem may be challenged by a determined sceptic. "Remigius of Auxerre," therefore, can be shorthand for a group of works including, on the one hand, the second Vatican mythography—which may well have been written a century before the historical Remigius's birth, or, as I speculate, by a woman—and, on the other, the revisers of a Martianus commentary working in the generation after the historical Remigius's death.

While I have recorded many of these disputes in my chapters and notes, I am listing here the names and dates that will serve as a guide to the development of mythographic themes. In general, I prefer to speak of a work as belonging to a known author and to establish a chronologically probable relationship of influence (this is not always possible, of course). Thus, I will refer to the "Florentine Commentary" on Martianus Capella as a work of William of Conches, though it is almost certainly a set of notes by one of his students, and I will assume that its contents could have influenced Bernard Silvestris's *Aeneid* commentary, even though the attribution of that commentary has in its turn been questioned, and Bernard may never have seen the "Florentine" work himself.

What can usefully be assumed, in fact, is that each period's writers came to the classics of Rome and the late Empire through the commentaries and mythographies of the preceding period: Theodulf of Orleans read Ovid using Isidore and Fulgentius; William read Martianus through the Carolingian commentators. Each new set of ideas and attitudes overspread what had gone before and defined the way the next generation or school would approach the great myths. The giants on whose shoulders the pygmies stand, to use Bernard of Chartres's famous image, were not the *auctores* or classics themselves, but the great commentaries on them.

The absence of firm attributions opens up the possibility that some of the works listed here may have been written by women. The marginal and dangerous nature of classical myth may have attracted women taught to think of themselves as marginal and dangerous; the variety of roles played by goddesses, heroes, and sorcerers might provide new insights into patriarchalized biblical, contemporary, and imagined worlds. We know that this was true for Christine de Pizan, writing around the year 1400, and something of the sort applies to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, the tenth-century German nun who wrote Terentian comedies; I have taken the liberty, in chapters 8 and 9, of speculating on how one would read two medieval works if Hrotsvit or someone like her had written them.

FOURTH THROUGH SEVENTH CENTURIES

Italian

Verona scholia on Virgil (late 3d c.)

Junilius Philargyrius (4th c.), commentary on Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* (frag.)

Charisius (365), *Ars grammatica*

Servius (ca. 389), *Commentarii in Vergilii carmina*

Boethius (b. ca. 480–524), *De consolazione Philosophiae*

North African

Nonius Marcellus (ca. 373), *De compendiosa doctrina*

Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius (ca. 360–ca. 435), *Saturnalia; Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis*

Martianus Capella (fl. 410–439), *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*

Fulgentius Planciades (468–533), *Mitologiae; Expositio continentiae Virgilii; Super Thebaiden*

Lactantius Placidus (6th c.), *Commentarii in Thebaida; Commentarius in Achilleida; Narrationes fabularum Ovidianarum* (?)

Iberian

Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636), *Etymologiae* (8.11.1–104, “De diis gentium”)

EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES:
CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

Irish

First Vatican mythographer (late 7th–8th c.)

Adanan (Adamnan) the Scot? (ca. 624–704), Berne scholia on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*

Anonymous Galliensis (Anonymous of St. Gall), commentary on Boethius

Anonymous Cambridge commentator, commentary on Martianus

John Scot Eriugena (fl. 846–877), *Annotaciones in Marcianum*

“Dunchad” (Martin of Laon, 819–875), *Glossae in Martianum*

French

Second Vatican mythographer (ca. 9th–10th c.)

Remigius of Auxerre (ca. 841–ca. 908), *Commentum in Martianum Capellam*;
Expositio in libro Boetii De consolatione Philosophiae

Spanish

Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans (ca. 760–821), “De libris quos legere solebam
et qualiter fabulae poetarum a philosophus mystice pertractentur”

German

Hraban Maur (ca. 780–856), “De diis gentium” (of Isidore) in *De universo*

Italian

Paul the Deacon (ca. 720–ca. 799), epitome of Festus’s excerpts from
Verrius Flaccus’s *De verborum significatu* (10 B.C.)

TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES: POST-CAROLINGIAN
PERIOD

Italian

Rather of Verona (ca. 887–974), glosses on Martianus

Stephen and Gunzo of Novara, glosses on Martianus

Liutprand of Cremona (ca. 920–972), glosses on Martianus

Eugenius Vulgarius (d. ca. 928), glosses on Martianus

Glossator of *Gesta Berengarii* (10th c.)

Papias the Lombard (ca. 1050), *Vocabularium* or *Elementarium*, from the anonymous *Liber glossarum* (690–750)

Belgian

Anonymous Bruxellensis (early 10th c.), commentary on Boethius

German

Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (ca. 932–ca. 1000), dramas, legends, epics
Ecloga Theoduli (ca. 10th c.)

Notker Labeo (d. ca. 1022), commentaries on Martianus and Boethius

Manegold of Lautenbach (1086–94), commentary on Ovid

Swabian

Bernard of Utrecht (11th c.), commentary on *Ecloga Theoduli*

French

Bovo II of Corvey (10th–11th c.), commentary on 9th Poem, 3d Book of Boethius

Baudri of Bourgueil (1046–1130), Poem 216: fragment of a moralized mythology

TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

French

Anonymous commentaries on Ovid's *Fasti* (e.g., *Glosule super librum Fastorum*)

William of Conches (1080–1154/60), *Glosulae super Boethium*; *Super commentarium Macrobianum in Somnium Scipionis*; commentaries on Martianus Capella and Plato's *Timaeus*

Bernard Silvestris (1085–1178), *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*; commentary on Martianus

Arnulf of Orleans (fl. 1175), *Glosule super Lucanum*; *Allegoriae super Ovidii Metamorphoses*; commentary on Ovid's *Fasti*

English

Osbern of Gloucester (12th c.), *Derivationes*

Pseudo-John Scot (Anonymous of Erfurt), commentary on Boethius

Ralph of Beauvais (fl. 1170s), *Liber Titani*; commentary on Lucan

Digby Mythographer (ca. 1180), *De natura deorum*

John of Salisbury (1115/20–1180), *Policraticus*

Alberic of London (third Vatican mythographer), *De diis gentium et illorum allegoriis*, or *Allegoriae poeticae*

Alexander Neckam (1157–1217), *Super Marcianum de nupciis Mercurii et Philologiae*; *De rerum naturis*

John of Garland (1180–1252), *Integumenta Ovidii*

Italian

Anonymous Barberinus (late 12th c.), commentary on Martianus, books 1 and 2

Huguccio of Pisa (1200), *Magnae derivationes*

Giovanni Balbi of Genoa (1286), *Catholicon*

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES:

ENGLAND, FRANCE, SPAIN

English

Nicholas Trivet (fl. 1314), *Expositio super librum Boecii Consolatione*; commentary on St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (books 11–23); commentary on Seneca's *Tragedies*

Thomas Waleys (fl. 1326–33), commentary on *De civitate Dei*, 1–10

John Ridewall (fl. 1331–40), *Fulgentius metaforalis*; commentary on *De civitate Dei*, 1–3, 6–7

Robert Holkot (ca. 1290–1349), *In librum Sapientiae*; *In librum duodecim prophetas*; *In librum Ecclesiastici*; *Moralitates*

Thomas Hopeman (fl. 1344–45), commentary on Hebrews

Anonymous, *De deorum imaginibus libellus* (before 1380)

Thomas Walsingham (d. 1422?), *Archana deorum*

French

Pierre Bersuire (fl. 1342), *Ovidius moralizatus*

Ovide moralisé (verse; 14th c.)

Colard Mansion's edition of the *Ovide moralisé* (independent French prose version plus French prose translation of early version of Bersuire)

Christine de Pizan (ca. 1365–ca. 1430), *L'Epistre Othea a Hector*; *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*

Tholomeus de Asinariis (14th c.), commentary on Boethius

- William of Aragon (14th c.), commentary on Boethius
 False Thomas Aquinas, commentary on Boethius
 Pierre d'Ailly (1372), commentary on Boethius
 Regnier of St. Tron (1381), commentary on Boethius
 Dionysius the Carthusian (Denis the Carthusian of Leewis) (1403-71),
 commentary on Boethius
 Arnoul Greban (15th c.), commentary on Boethius
 Josse Bade d'Assche (end 15th c.), commentary on Boethius

Spanish

- Guillermus de Cortumelia (14th c.), commentary on Boethius

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES: ITALY

- Dante, *Commedia* (begun 1307)
 Ottimo commentary on Dante's *Commedia* (1300-10) (? by Andrea Lancia)
 Anonymous Selmi (1321-37), *Chiose . . . alla prima cantica della divina Commedia*
 Graziolo de Bambaglioli (1324), *Il commento Dantesco*
 Jacopo Alighieri (1322-24?), *Chiose alla cantica dell'Inferno; Chiose di Dante: Purgatorio*
 Jacopo della Lana (before 1328?), *Commento on Dante*
 Petrarch (1304-74), *Africa*, 3.136-264
 Giovanni del Virgilio (fl. 1332-33), *Allegorie librorum Ovidii Metamorphoseos*
 Pietro Alighieri (1340-41), *Super Dantis ipsius genitoris Comoediam commentarium*
 Fra' Guido da Pisa (1343-50), *Expositiones et glose super Comediam Dantis; Dichiarazione poetica dell' Inferno Dantesco*
 Giovanni Bonsignore (ca. 1370), *P. Ovidio Methamorphoseos vulgare*
 Giovanni Boccaccio (fl. 1313-75), *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri; Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante (Inferno 1-17)*
 The False Boccaccio (Roveta) (14th c.), *Chiose sopra Dante*
 Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola (b. 1336-40), *Commentum super Dantis Comoediam; Expositiones super Pharsalia Lucani* (1386)
 Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), *De laboribus Herculis*
 Pietro da Muglio (1385), Dante commentary
 Giovanni Travesio (late 14th c.), Dante commentary
 Francesco Bartola da Buti of Pisa (ca. 1395), *Commento sopra la divina Comedia*

- The Anonymous Florentine (late 14th c.), *Commento alla divina Commedia*
Giovanni da Serravalle (1416–17), Dante commentary
Stefano Talice da Ricaldone (ca. 1474), Dante commentary
Giuniforto delli Bargigi (ca. 1440), Dante commentary (*Inferno* 1–24)
Cristoforo Landino (1481), *Expositione* (Dante); *Disputationes Camaldulenses*,
commentary on Virgil

"Until recent times, myth crouched at the gates of Paradise without hope of admittance."

DON CAMERON ALLEN

Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance

"Othea selon grec peut estre pris pour sagece de femme, et comme les ancians, non ayans encore lumiere de vraye foy, adourassent plusieurs dieux, soubz la quelle loy soient passees les plus haultes seignouries qui au monde ayent esté, comme le royaume d'Assire, de Perse, les Gregois, les Troyans, Alixandre, les Rommains et mains autres et mesmement tous les plus grans philosophes, comme Dieux n'eust encore ouverte la porte sa misericorde. A present nous crestiens, par la grace de Dieu enluminez de vraye foy, povons ramener a moralite les oppinions des ancians, et sur ce maintes belles allegories pevent estre faites."

[Othea in Greek can be taken for the wisdom of woman, and as the ancients, not yet possessing the light of true faith, idolized several gods, under whose law passed the noblest lordships which have existed in the world, such as the kingdom of Assyria, of Persia, the Greeks, the Trojans, Alexander, the Romans, and many others and even the greatest philosophers, as God had not yet opened the door of his mercy. At the same time, we Christians, by the grace of God enlightened with true faith, are able to restore to mortality the opinions of the ancients, and on these, many excellent allegories can be made.]

CHRISTINE DE PIZAN

L'Epistre Othea la deesse que elle envoya a Hector quand il estoit en l'aage de quinze ans

Introduction

MYTHOGRAPHY:

MARGIN AS TEXT, TEXT AS IMAGE

Always already a cultural sign, the body sets limits to the imaginary meanings that it occasions, but is never free of an imaginary construction. The fantasized body can never be understood in relation to the body as real; it can only be understood in relation to another culturally instituted fantasy, one which claims the place of the "literal" and the "real." The limits to the "real" are produced within the naturalized heterosexualization of bodies in which physical facts serve as causes and desires reflect the inexorable effects of that physicality.

JUDITH BUTLER,

Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity

Mythography and its allegorical methods, growing up in the classical and medieval schools where study of philosophy, or of the liberal arts leading to philosophy, flourished, existed by definition as a marginal and intertextual process. That is, it presupposed an original or poetic ("lying") text and it flourished as a separate text in the margins of the page, as a secondary and explanatory project. Our modern idea of literary criticism has its roots in medieval mythography as a hermeneutic employed by the Church in an attempt to educate its priests and monks in the universal language so that they might assimilate the knowledge of the greatest works of classical antiquity—not the mother tongue, the vernacular, but the tongue of Empire, of the fatherland, Latin. Written by grammarians, scholars, and philosophers, medieval mythography developed as a means of elucidation and translation, specifically of *translatio studii*, the translation from the Greek and Roman to vernacular cultures.

The authority for the determination of figurative meaning in classical antiquity and the Middle Ages derived from ancient Greek Stoic rationalization of the epics of Homer and has been termed "mythography," meaning the moralization and allegorization of classical mythology. "Mythography" differs from "mythology" chiefly in its form: "mythology"

is a unified system of myth, often in narrative form, whereas "mythography" is an explanation and rationalization of one or more myths, often in didactic form. For Homer, the earliest known user of myth in the Graeco-Roman world, *muthos* or *mythos* signified either speech or else unspoken words and thoughts as contrasted with deeds, although the word could also signify true or false story, rumor.¹

A definition of *mythos* possibly clearer to the modern reader is the later Aristotelian definition as "plot," interpreted anthropologically by Northrop Frye as "verbal imitation of ritual."² Mythography, in contrast, is the interpretation of myth—what the ancient philosophers termed its *hyponoia*, or "undermeaning." As exegesis it employs the tool of allegorical interpretation, which belongs more to the ancient exegete—whether philosopher or grammarian—than to the poet, although Roger Hinks has noted that "allegory stands, as it were, midway between poetry and prose: in its creative aspect it is the poetic rendering of a prosaic idea; in its interpretative aspect it is the prosaic rendering of a poetic image. Like the daemonic faculty in the words of Diotima, it reveals the ways of man to the gods and the ways of the gods to man."³

This tradition of developing fiction and fictionalizing depended upon the use of fables of the gods and heroes drawn initially from the Greeks and Romans and from Near Eastern cultures. The fables served as common denominators in the use of systematized and coherent metaphor—in the sustained fabulous narrative that would require allegorical interpretation by the philosopher for understanding during the Middle Ages. By rationalizing pagan gods through various historical, moral, physical, and allegorical means, medieval scholars also disseminated what came to be a theory of medieval fable and fabulizing. As in classical antiquity, such rationalizing of the gods was bolstered by the philosophers—the Neo-Stoics, especially in the Carolingian period, the Neoplatonists in the twelfth century, the Neo-Aristotelians (the Nominalists) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. What is novel about this minihistory of classical mythography in the Middle Ages is its constant and concomitant Christianization—the commentators were Neo-Stoic Christians, Neoplatonist Christians, Neo-Aristotelian Christians.

The major focus of the mythographic commentators in the Middle Ages was the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas descends into the underworld and encounters the shades of his father Anchises, his abandoned lover Dido, and a host of other mythological figures and beings. This marvelous descent into hell came to be linked with other descents into

hell made by Boethius's heroes Orpheus and Hercules and by Martianus Capella's god Mercury and personification Philology, who descend and ascend through the cosmos. This descent was also used as a paradigm for the interpretation of myth in terms of ethics, cosmography, and poesis.

How the Middle Ages received and reconstructed the classical heroes Aeneas, Perseus, Orpheus, Ulysses, Hercules, Theseus, and Oedipus and the gods Mercury, Pluto, Proserpina, Ceres, Juno, Pallas Athena and others, why they were associated with an underworld, why scholars and poets enabled the pagan gods to function in their commentaries and their poems, what they came to signify, will be the subject of this book. The steps in the process are clear: the pagan gods, in the view of St. Augustine, are devils, demons. But also in the view of St. Augustine, after death noble pagan humans are called "heroes." Within the underworld, then, lived these demons, devils, and heroes, conceived in ancient belief as rational beings, as powers of the air in the sublunary realm. Gradually the demonized gods came to be understood (through Stoic and Neoplatonic readings) as belonging to the underworld of earth itself, the massive and female center of material corruption called Nature (as opposed to the aetherial and masculine heavens). "Gods" ultimately became personifications in some cases, and "heroes" became weak individuals who required divine assistance in their epic quests in late medieval "epics" such as Dante's *Commedia*.

A different, valorizing, approach to the gods was facilitated by scholastics, in particular the Carolingians, because of their interest in education and therefore wisdom displayed within an heroic mythological context. The hero as demigod, when ideally constructed, should dominate the underworld, whether the underworld is hell itself or is figuratively understood as carnality, the mutable earth and its monstrosities. The basis for such an understanding of epic can be found in the earlier work of Fulgentius. In his commentary on the *Aeneid*, Fulgentius understands the epic hero Aeneas as representing the human ideal of arms and the man, that "manliness of body" (*virtus corporis*) and "wisdom of mind" (*sapientia ingenii*) perfected in the *fortitudo* and *sapientia* of Christ (*Cont. Virg.*, 7); he accordingly interprets the *Aeneid* as an allegory of the ideal human's development from birth to maturity. Fulgentius wrote commentaries on the epics of Statius, Virgil, and Ovid, and his setting in the *Mitologiae* is indebted to Martianus Capella.⁴ By extension, the ideal epic hero of Martianus might be identified as a combination of the two chief figures of his *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, the god Mercury, who represents

eloquence, and the mortal Philology, who represents knowledge; their wedding symbolizes the human ideal of earthly knowledge conjoined to divine eloquence. Examined using the same Fulgentian definition, the ideal epic hero of Boethius's *De consolazione Philosophiae* can also be seen as fragmented into separate figures, represented by Philosophy (or *ratio*) and the narrator Boethius (the willful and irrational, earthbound "body").

The Carolingian interest in classical wise heroes—in Prometheus as prudent and in the cycle of creation in which such classical figures appear as if impelled by a knowing Shaper—was introduced in the first Vatican mythography. Orpheus, Ulysses, and Hercules, in the various glosses on Boethius, all try to master the dark Neoplatonic underworld of the flesh in order to reach the light of "sovereign day"—and of God. In the Martianus glosses, Pallas Athena, the armed virgin goddess of wisdom, portrays a monastic ideal, an androgynous figure who in her ontology transcends the singular issue of gender. This issue, which surfaces consciously in mythography for the first time in the Carolingian commentaries on Martianus, elevates to greater prominence the Stoic physical rationalization of the gods; it also fleshes out the female deities previously depicted in somewhat marginal roles.

The tradition finally produces the epic hero of Dante's *Commedia*, the character Dante, in combination with the guide Virgil (in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*) and Beatrice (in the *Paradiso*): as Everyman, Dante learns from his initial guide Virgil, who signifies, according to Dante's son Pietro Alighieri, "ratio," or "philosophia rationalis," and from his later guide Beatrice, "theologia," with his vision of her signifying "studio theologica."⁵ Behind these allegorical projections of the human ideal looms Christ, whose superhuman love for humankind is suggested by the Good Friday setting and thirty-three cantos of each *cantica*, or book (thirty-four in the *Inferno*, although the first serves as an introduction to the whole of the *Commedia*). Thirty-three was of course Christ's age at his death, and one hundred—for the total number of cantos—was considered a perfect number in the Middle Ages.

Within and during these different periods when interest in classical texts resulted in reinterpretations of the antique, the common purpose of medieval mythography involved the repressed transmission of human sexuality, essentialized as female and textualized, embodied as text. Because of this scholastic context and because of its allegorical methodology, mythography served the purposes of patriarchy within the Church. Within

this phallogocentric point of view, allegory has been identified by medieval scholar Howard Bloch as an antifeminist form of discourse.⁶

Yet even in these terms mythography, if not allegory, as *translatio studii* would have occupied a role as institutionally subversive, empowering authority regarded as marginal, whether pagan or feminine, and therefore in the context of postmodern discourse to be designated as female in its difference, its "otherness." Such difference can be readily detected in the use of allegory, defined as "other speaking," *alienus*. A requisite usually for mythography and scriptural reading, allegory and its three "mystical" levels of meaning are discussed by Dante as a group in the "Letter to Can Grande" because, he explains, "allegory" comes from the Greek *alleon* (*sic*, probably in fact from *allelon* or *allon*), which in Latin is *alienus*, "strange," or *diversus*, "different,"⁷ that is, different from the literal or historical sense and therefore figurative, "polysemous."

In a recent discussion by Gregory L. Ulmer, allegory similarly constitutes a nonrealistic or representational mode. So Derrida, Ulmer notes, deconstructs the philosophy of mimesis: "'Mimesis,' which Derrida labels 'mimetologism,' refers to that capture of representation by the metaphysics of 'logocentrism,' the era extending from Plato to Freud (and beyond) in which writing (all manner of inscription) is reduced to a secondary status as 'vehicle,' in which the signified or referent is always *prior* to the material sign, the purely intelligible prior to the merely sensible."⁸ Grammatology is the answer—the sign, both signifier and signified, coupled with the gram, or *différance*, is a trace interwoven into a textile, or text. "The tendency of Western philosophy," says Ulmer, "throughout its history ('logocentrism') to try to pin down and fix a specific signified to a given signifier violates, according to grammatology, the nature of language, which functions not in terms of matched *pairs* (signifier/signifieds) but of *couplers* or *couplings*—'a person or thing that couples or links together.'"⁹

This coupled textuality might well describe the polysemy associated by Dante with medieval allegory. The new "representation," according to Ulmer, shifts from the conceptual concision of commentary and explanation to the specificity and density of example. The montage of fragments and examples associated with "invagination" is explicitly nonlogocentric (or nonphallogocentric). The boundary or parameter of marking a set, because it fixes difference from other, invaginates by means of "matting or mounting the example." Allegory, as a "surplus value" of writing, becomes a form of repetition, mimicry, different from allegoresis. Finally, Ulmer

suggests, "narrative allegory favors the material of the signifier over the meanings of the signifieds."¹⁰

The history of the mythographic tradition, then, might be described as the history of montage, of examples mounted in a frame whose boundaries of difference continually re-form. In other words, mythography is the history of the invagination of mythological premise and image—of text as image, of text *as* margin.

The embodying of the text serves to feminize the essentially patriarchal and misogynistic exegetical traditions of the Church—producing what might be termed "the hegemony of Juno" in the Middle Ages. For example, the classical figure of Eridanus that appears in a mid-ninth-century Carolingian manuscript (fig. 1) can be said to embody a text as image, or, more accurately in this case, a text situated within the body of an image—*embodied text*. The figure appropriately fixes the image of medieval mythography: a visual description in words, which in its writing of the body—*écriture*—speaks woman, *parle femme*.

If the purpose of medieval mythography was to recover or recuperate a lost image through text—the text embodying or envisioning or visualizing the god or hero—as a process of writing down the meaning of the story, then this recovery absorbs iconography, the illustration or script of the being. The process is repetitive, mimetic, full of cultural noise. So "Eridanus" depicts the figure Eridanus (Fluvius, Currus), the river god, with his jug, initially as a man (in later depictions he will appear as female). This image already makes him concrete—a river is not a man. But he is depicted as a man recumbent, with a sheaf of grain and a fallen jug—the river's flowing results in grain. In the manuscript, the river is not only anthropomorphized (= a man), iconographized (water jug and sheaf, illustrative of its purpose) but it is also named, in the text that it embodies, "Eridanus."

"Eridanus," according to Hyginus's first-century A.D. *Astronomica*, refers either to the Nile River or to the Ocean, both specific bodies of water in a specific, non-Western European geographical area.¹¹ In Virgil's *Aeneid*, "Eridanus" is identified as the Italian Po River, but also as part of the Elysian Fields; near its source, the Po apparently has an underground portion nearly two miles in length that allows it to be construed by the commentators as a river with underworld connections. Because Eridanus is also a constellation, it signifies and links the heavenly or otherworldly with the earthly. As a river, Po or Nile, its significations bridge Western Europe and North Africa. Mythologically, in genealogies of the gods Eridanus is



1. Eridanus. MS. Harley 647, fol. 10v (mid-9th c.). By permission of the British Library, London.

sometimes called Oceanus, to refer to the husband of Thetis and grandfather of Saturn. In this Carolingian manuscript, Eridanus is embodied text, a humanized text, a natural object, or its idea, transformed into a man (name, icon, figure) who is shaped out of words on the page. Even his spilling jug and quill-like sheaf might incarnate the process of embodying text—the transmission of idea, or image, through writing on a surface.

I take this figure to symbolize mythography—text as image, the margins of a manuscript made into text borrowed from other texts, that is, intertextualized. The way the figure is constructed reverses the iconographic process in which text describes the image or idea (substance) of a thing. For the figure can do what no icon can do—exist, simultaneously, on several levels of meaning, just as Eridanus is:

An Image

1. a literal, inscribed image on the page
2. an image of a man recumbent with jug and sheaf
3. an image of a man pouring, nude or clothed
4. an image, later on, of a woman pouring, and

A Man

5. a being known as Oceanus, husband of Thetis and grandfather of Saturn
6. a man or woman personifying a river
7. a force, personified
8. the writer or scribe or poet-priest, and

A River

9. a literal, natural river
10. the idea of a river, that is, a generative force
11. Eridanus (Fluvius, Currus)—a proper name
12. a specific river—the Nile River, Ocean (N. Africa = Egypt) or an alternate specific river—the Po River (Italy)
13. a heavenly river located in the Elysian fields or an underground/underworld river, and

A Constellation

14. a constellation depicting a river and therefore representing all of the above, and

A Text

15. a literary text, specifically Virgil's *Aeneid* 6.659, or Hyginus's *Astronomica* 2.32.

The complex *vox*, the *voces*, associated with this one figure sum up the



2. Constellations. MS. 210, fols. 119v–120r. Courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

philosophical problem of literary exegesis in antiquity and (given the influence of Virgil and Hyginus on the Middle Ages) the medieval period. In some medieval manuscripts of astrological treatises, chiefly Cicero's *Aratea*, the constellations stellify stories through their mostly star-connected animal figures, which are described both by illustrations and by the accompanying didactic text (see fig. 2).

In its embodiment of text, or text as image, mythography was associated even in the medieval Church primarily with Stoic philosophy. Stoic philosophy functioned to humanize, or feminize, the dissemination of mythography in the Middle Ages, not so much in terms of a corpus of Stoic writings translated into Latin (as was the case with Aristotle in the thirteenth century) as in a passive presence, especially in the realm of ethics. Even in the Hellenistic period covering five centuries, it was more important than the other great philosophies—Epicurean, Peripatetic, Platonic, Pythagorean. The humanism of this philosophy—and its permission for female equality, its “feminism”—depends upon its tenet that, in the words of Gerard Verbeke,

all human beings—free citizens and slaves, men and women, Greeks and barbarians—are fundamentally equal. . . . Even Aristotle admits

that some individuals are slaves by nature, and that women and barbarians represent a lower level of humanity. . . . Quite in agreement with their own physical system, the Stoics reject such discrimination. The soul of each individual, whatever his rank in society, is a particle of the divine Spirit.

Even though Neoplatonism as a philosophical approach dominated the schools beginning in the third century, it was itself full of some Stoic ideas—whereas Neoplatonism is spiritual, Stoicism is “a kind of materialistic pantheism,” so that “even the immanent divine Spirit is corporeal,” as Gerard Verbeke writes.¹² Further, Stoicism influenced the construction of early Christian ideas, in the Greek Christian writers Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Nemesius of Emesa, and the Latin Christians Tertullian, Lactantius, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine.¹³

In its feminizing impulse Stoic mythography simultaneously acts as a vehicle not for Jupiter, understood as God, the World Soul, aether, and father of Apollo, Hercules, and others, but for his sister-consort, Juno. Within what might be perceived as phallogocentric narrative allegory—the journeys of Aeneas, the genealogy of the gods, the descent of the hero, the adulteries, rapes, castrations of Jupiter (an image, in Derridean terms, for critical action)—also appear the invaginated boundaries, or frames, for each of these. Material spaces were associated with women, whether Dido or Lavinia, the invisible mother linking one father to son, or with the monstrous (female, pagan, infernal) underworld itself, that is, symbolic invagination, identified variously as Proserpina, Ceres, Cybele, Berecynthia, Circe. Together these women introduce the mortal victims of Jupiter's desire and also the immortal consort and sister whom he insults and ignores, Juno herself. Whereas most of the philosophical explanations of the gods begin with Jupiter as the One God, Progenitor, World Soul, most of the narrative allegories actually create a montage of females and are other, different, from what has been located as patriarchal discourse in both classical myth and medieval mythography.

According to Stoic philosophy, Jupiter (aether) and Juno (air) produce all creation. In addition, Juno acts as a conflation, or montage, of all the female deities, beginning with Saturn's consort Ops; she is the central female principle, matter to his time, associated with the lower element (air, that sublunary region between earth and moon) and negatively constructed according to the Neoplatonic cosmos in which earth was the dense center.

Specific agents of the one deity include Diana the moon, Duana, Trivia, Lucina goddess of childbirth, Ceres, Proserpina, Ops, Rhea, Cybele, and Berecynthia. Because of the late antique North African and Eastern Magna Mater cult (associated with Isis and others), readings of the female crept into the already Stoicized mythographies by the North African Roman Macrobius, Martianus Capella, Fulgentius, and then in the late Roman provincial writings of the Iberian Isidore. In the ninth-century commentaries on Martianus, glosses on such deities carefully proceed to introduce into Western culture many more female figures and new gods; this was largely the work of Irish scholars still full of Celtic native beliefs who came to Charlemagne's court to help him in his platform of educational reform.

Given this Stoic concept, there is another mythographic means of interpreting classical female deities, especially Juno. Juno is everywhere apparent beneath the mythological text; understanding her role is necessary to unravel the complex textuality of mythography. The story of mythography is her story, and the story of her subversive presence in the authoritative discourse of the Church. As virgin mother she represents a pagan Virgin Mary. The virginity of Juno would be matched by that of Jupiter's female progeny Diana and also Minerva, but opposed to the full-blown cosmic sexuality of Venus and Ops-Rea-Ceres-Cybele. And why Jupiter raped mortal females (and why Juno was so hostile to those women and the heroes they bore) is in pagan terms the story of human history—in Christian terms, of Original Sin. For example, Jupiter slept with a daughter of Atlas and produced Mercury; he raped Europa, whose brother Cadmus in following her founded Thebes. Juno was as hostile to her stepson Hercules, child of Alcmene and Jupiter, as to Paris of Troy, who chose Venus over Juno and Minerva. Her only true son was Vulcan, who as an embryo was carried in her thigh and who in Stoic terms represents the fire of creativity. In another sense, other "sons" might be identified as the centaurs who were produced by the lust of Ixion for Juno, and whose line eventually produced Chiron, the Christlike centaur who sacrificed his immortality to save the first man, Prometheus—thief of fire from the gods—from hell's torments.

From life on earth as an underworld it is not far to fiction as an "underworld," and female—the former concept articulated by the twelfth-century Neoplatonists William of Conches and Bernard Silvestris. The philosopher's task is to emulate Aeneas and descend into the underworld to reveal truth; the poet's job is to create that successful underworld. Thus the Neoplatonism of the twelfth century is not so much the beginning of a new

approach to poetry and fiction as it is the outgrowth and culmination of a process that had begun around the year 400 with Macrobius and continued with Fulgentius up into the sixth century.

Reading a pagan text, a seductive and entertaining fiction, was imagined by late medieval mythographers as a duplication of the heroic descent into an underworld. An archetype for the underworld, the name of "Demogorgon," the mythical progenitor from whom descend the other gods and heroes in Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum*, implies that the reader of this mythographic encyclopedia, like Dante in the *Commedia*, will explore hell. Derived from Bernard of Utrecht's late-eleventh-century commentary on the *Ecloga Theoduli*, "Demogorgon," or Demorigon, the Demiurge, who shares rule of the subdivided underworld with Pluto, combines *daemon*, suggesting the infernal, with Gorgon, the terrible and fierce quality associated with Medusa and her sisters. Coluccio Salutati's fifteenth-century encyclopedia *De laboribus Herculis* in its first two books defends poetry as itself a kind of descent into the underworld of artifice or fable, with its third book detailing the labors of Salutati's ideal epic hero, Hercules, and its fourth and last book discussing various kinds of descents into hell.

Finally, there remains another way in which mythography occupied a feminized and feminizing role in the cultures of the Middle Ages. To us mythography might appear largely mimetic, unoriginal, and, like the manuscripts with which commentaries grew up, a matter of copying and recopying. A gloss on a Virgil myth in the fourth century (say, by Servius) might be used in a ninth-century scholium on another classical author, whose glossator might add to it other glosses on the same myth from different authors. One danger in recuperating the mythographic tradition is to assume that such commentators and scholars reworking the meanings of the classics were marginal in the modern sense of trivial or unimportant. True, a commentator such as Fulgentius might subscribe to the rhetorical modesty topos in terming himself a "homunculus," a humble interpreter of the greatest ancient poets, Homer and Virgil. And often an anonymous glossator would write in the physical margins of the great manuscripts of those works, or above the lines of the poem or text being studied.

"Marginality," of course, can refer to that which is marginal, not central, or part of authority. "Margin" as a noun is an economic term for the difference between cost and selling price; "marginal," in recent theories of social science, expresses the ontology of the situation of women, blacks, and other disempowered groups. In paleography it refers to the text outside the

text—in the Middle Ages that which exists as commentary: contemporary prose, explanations of terms and ideas written frequently in the vernacular in the margin next to an important (meaning classical, poetic, ancient) text. Marginal and writing marginally in all of the above senses, Christine de Pizan, a woman poet and philosopher who lived from 1360 to about 1430, wrote what might be termed a commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The question we might then ask, given the above, is in what sense a marginal writer—a scholarly commentator, or a woman like Christine writing a marginal text like the *Epistre Othea*—is “original” in the modern sense, and therefore important, worthy of study.

The greatest marginality, the largest hem between the authority of the classical period and its renewal in the sixteenth century, has been identified as the “mimetic” and “unoriginal” Middle Ages itself, which has been perceived as borrowing its culture from the Graeco-Romans. The lofty regard for antiquity and its giants in the twelfth century led the scholar Bernard of Chartres to envisage himself as a dwarf, a little man, sitting on the shoulders of giants. The ancients were read from the perspectives of the medieval commentators who sought to elucidate them in an age when “originality” was not spiritually authorized—an age of the dwarf, the margin, the unoriginal, the unauthoritative. For such reasons Petrarch, in a bold but mistaken attempt to bolster his and his nation's confidence, first described the Christian Middle Ages as the “Dark Ages,” anterior to the light of the “new time” and its study of antiquity and the classics—the *rinascimento* of his own day. Such marginality could itself empower a new perspective, however, enabling the dwarf to “see more and further” than the Roman giants whose writings taught the dwarf so much.

Medievalists have begun to question, rightly, just how naively classicism was accepted in the Middle Ages and just how naively we continue today to construe classicism's medieval reception. The outlines of the reception of classicism in the Middle Ages were well documented earlier in this century, with the classical privileged over what might be essentialized as the “medieval.”¹⁴ Jean Seznec's tracing of the three traditions of mythological interpretation (natural or physical, moral, grammatical or philosophical) from medieval models to Renaissance art was intended to show “the debt of the Renaissance to the Middle Ages” and thereby demonstrate the continuity of the classical tradition of mythology. But he denigrated the textual tradition of medieval mythography from which Renaissance artists drew for their subjects as a “complex and often very corrupt tradition.” Because the medieval period was “unable and unwilling

to realize that classical *motifs* and classical *themes* structurally belonged together," the period "avoided preserving the union of these two. Once the Middle Ages had established their own standards of civilization and found their own methods of artistic expression, it became impossible to enjoy or even to understand any phenomenon which had no common denominator with the phenomena of the contemporary world."¹⁵

Like Seznec, Erwin Panofsky regarded the Middle Ages as flawed, ignorant, and most of all monolithic, a single cultural entity—the "mediaeval mind," anthropomorphized as a misguided individual whose own "phenomenona of the contemporary world" were perceived by Panofsky, from the Renaissance vantage-point, as empty and unimportant.¹⁶ For these scholars what was important was the recurrence of classical themes and motifs—as if the historical preservation of classical culture should have been uppermost in the medieval "mind."

Very recently, Lawrence Nees's revisionist critique of Panofsky reassesses the normally pejorative term *medieval* to identify patristic as well as classical sources crucial to its culture in an accurate reflection of the specific historical period in which the art or writing actually occurred.¹⁷ No longer can we examine, say, Carolingian "classicism" (no matter how closely allied to antique representations) without understanding its polemical and political character, its alterity, its singularity—its medieval historicity. For that matter, naive acceptance of what has been termed "classical" (presumably Graeco-Roman) has been questioned by modern scholars: the way in which nineteenth-century classical scholars have constructed what they imagined to be the history of ancient culture in reality reflects their own prejudices for the Aryan over the Levantine, as Martin Bernal has shown with such stunning postmodern effect in *Black Athena*.¹⁸ History itself has been conceived as textual, a fabric whose "competing discourses" result in "patterns of interference" termed by Laurie A. Finke "noise." Historical noise, within the constructed subject of Western history as consciously male, is information not in itself meaningful whose examination involves " 'a putting into discourse woman.' "¹⁹ In the forthcoming book *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid*, Marilyn Desmond argues that (male) Virgil readers throughout history have read the epic, and its fourth book, as an "epitome of patriarchal poetry" that marginalizes the role and power of the African queen Dido.²⁰ Understanding the politics of reading classical texts in the Middle Ages will also place sanctioned interpretations against an appropriate background of cultural alterity, or noise.

In relation to mythography, then, "marginality" and "originality" accrue new, varied, and specific hues of meaning. Because medieval Christian students of Latin grammar far removed from the Roman Empire increasingly needed assistance in deciphering references to pagan gods and goddesses, help was provided by masters and lecturers who had studied glosses (interlinear or marginal annotations of the text) or commentaries (longer expositions that could stand alone and that introduce lines from the text for elaborate explanation) on those school texts. The difference between the two forms of annotation was clarified by the twelfth-century Huguccio of Pisa: the commentary is an exposition which does not consider the particular conjunction of words but only their sense or meaning, for it is in itself a study of the various doctrines or thoughts collected together about one work. In contrast the gloss focuses on individual phrases or words: "It is an exposition on words or lines and their meanings, as the sense does not exist except through words, so that the gloss is an exposition of the sense the word or line contains."²¹ Of course the two forms were not mutually exclusive. Huguccio's contemporary William of Conches distinguished between the gloss and commentary, but in his own work wished to combine the best from both types of analysis.

William of Conches also perceived the role of the commentator as more than marginal, trivial, or imitative in its shaping, clarifying, and unifying function, compelling us in this study of mythography to consider such "marginality" and "originality" from a more firmly medieval and historicized perspective. William declares,

Although we do not doubt many have commented on Plato, many glossed, nevertheless because commentators, neither connecting nor expounding the letter of the text, alone serve the ideas, and glossators are found in truth superfluous on light trifles, in truth most obscure on the weighty matters, we, aroused by the entreaty of friends to whom we owe all noble things, propose to say something on the abovesaid, cutting off the superfluous of others, adding the overlooked, clarifying the obscure, *removing abusive things*, and imitating the things said well. (My emphasis)²²

And in the twelfth-century handbook or commentaries, such glosses might be compiled with still other related glosses, and perhaps slightly changed to reflect some current scholastic or literary interest, until, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the collection of myths will have been organized into a unified entity with its own authority. Nevertheless,

"marginality" and "originality" as issues germane to the study of the medieval mythographic tradition can help to elucidate the importance of mythographic "texts" and the (mainly) men who compiled and wrote them in innovative ways that reinterpreted the original myths and the classical texts in which they appeared.

To document the way in which mythography changed in the Middle Ages, I would like to demonstrate by means of examples drawn primarily from the most "innovative" mythographers the confluence of historical necessity, the power of literary convention, and the creation of new paradigms, to use Thomas Kuhn's term. By "innovation" I mean those changes in the conventions of literary interpretation instituted by grammarians and scholars who applied what they knew to new mythological texts or situations for which there were no paradigms, working, as has been demonstrated, at least by the philologists tracing the history of Old and Middle English, by analogy. Such changes occurred through multicultural shifts and affected the genres of mythography, the pagan hero and god, the underworld with which the demigod or deity was associated, to result in an assimilation and transmogrification of pagan into Christian culture.

This first volume focuses primarily on the Carolingian mythographers. Their major resources derived from Macrobius and Fulgentius, two scholars working with Graeco-Roman materials in North Africa whose mythographic methods and materials were not only influenced but shaped by indigenous religious beliefs and practices, such as Egyptian heliocentrism and the Magna Mater cult. Moreover, the bringing together of scholars from York, Spain, Ireland, and St. Gall in Switzerland at Charlemagne's court would also allow innovative changes in mythographic paradigms because of cross-cultural intertextuality. As Thomas Kuhn notes, "Almost always the men [*sic*] who achieve these fundamental inventions of a new paradigm have either been very young or very new to the field whose paradigm they change."²³ These influential innovative mythographers perceived as new a culture different from their own. From Spain Theodulf brought with him to Orleans the old Roman education fossilized in Visigothic form and the encyclopedic knowledge of his countryman Isidore of Seville, based as that knowledge was on African sources like Martianus Capella. In Anglo-Saxon England, the desire of King Alfred of Wessex to translate Latin texts into the vernacular directed him to Boethius and the *Consolation of Philosophy*, with its mythological poems on the heroes of antiquity; the spread of King Alfred's scholars and scholarship to St. Gall in Switzerland and thence to Charlemagne's court

through Remigius of Auxerre would provide another conduit for cross-cultural innovation. John Scot from Ireland, along with Remigius of Auxerre, would demonstrate the great learning of the Carthaginian Martianus Capella, whose mythological figures would receive such Neo-Stoic glossation and feminize the essentially masculine and misogynistic mythographic tradition. The first two Vatican mythographers—perhaps Adanan the Scot of York and either Remigius of Auxerre or possibly a woman ecclesiastic—would gather together in what they saw as cohesive collections the ancient myths, the former collection an attempt at a universal genealogy of the world, a history of the world from the first man, Prometheus; the latter a history from the Creation. Such a parallel concept of history would lead to the *Ecloga Theoduli*, yoking the history of Old Testament legend to the genealogy of the pagan gods—one of the most widely circulated school book texts in existence and a text used by Chaucer and other late medieval poets.

The mythographers in this study, original in the only way they knew how, painstakingly worked out a means of understanding texts alien to them—written in an alien tongue, by alien giants, from a time different and therefore strange. Such supremely wise authorities, greater than any living authority, had much to hide from small, base, simple men who spoke only the vernacular. From such a nexus modern literary criticism springs and with it the modern notion of fiction as secretive and complex, polysemous, psychologically full. Whatever the tiny grammatical point made by the grammarian, whatever the Stoic or Neoplatonist explanation offered by the philosopher and the scholar, the centuries of scholasticism in the Middle Ages insisted that a text required a gloss, an interpretation. Only in the Renaissance, which demanded a return to the original classical text, without the intermediary medieval commentary, did Protestantism and Reformation also flourish, when it was possible for all to read the Word without a priest—as long as the reader was literate and books were relatively cheap. For us today, who read Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or Joyce's *Ulysses* only with a written guide by a literary critic or within the formal structure of a classroom, the medieval concept of the text and its requiring lecture-commentary is one for which we have an affinity. And for those medieval grammarians and philosophers, John Updike's *Centaur* or Joyce's *Ulysses* would have been, at least in idea (except for the privileging of contemporary subject matter), a wholly familiar kind of fiction.

Chapter One

THE ALLEGORIZATION OF CLASSICAL MYTH IN THE LITERARY SCHOOL COMMENTARY

In all of its forms throughout its long history, including the earliest, allegoresis developed as a necessary alternative to historical interpretation, that is, restriction of meaning to the letter alone. In this conflict between the letter and the spirit, some scholars wished to demythologize mythology, to make it historical through euhemerist or typological readings. In contrast, its defenders argued that the apparent immorality or blasphemy of Greek and Roman myths used by the greatest classical poets, like that of the Old and New Testament, cloaked a more spiritual meaning than was apparent from the literal or historical level.

The two systems or approaches to the text developed in reaction to one another. Allegorical interpretation offered in defense of Homer and Hesiod (ca. 700 B.C.) appeared within a century after these texts' composition and continued in the allegorism of the Ionians, Sophists, and other pre-Socratic philosophers, the Stoics, the Neoplatonists, and the Jewish and Christian theologians of the Alexandrian School. Among the descendants of Homer's attackers were the rationalizing theorists—Euhemerus and his school and the early Greek and Latin Church Fathers, who often inadvertently preserved what they had been trying to attack.¹ Further, a multilevel method of allegorical exegesis was vital not only in the works of the Greek Alexandrians and the Church Fathers but also in those of the Benedictine and Carolingian commentators, the Victorines and the Dominicans, and in texts from the *Commedia* down to little-known sermon writers of the fourteenth century such as Robert of Basevorn and Master Robert Rypon, who subscribed to the methods of the *artes praedicandi*.² Finally, the mythographic methods first used by Homer's defenders reappeared in Christian guise in the Middle Ages in commentaries on classics used by scholars in the medieval schools and universities and then by poets creating their own classicized poems.

Homer and Dante supply appropriate poles in the continuum of any survey of the origins of mythographic allegoresis, especially given their depictions of Hades, or the underworld, because both use gods, heroes, and monsters supposedly engaged in immoral activity. The actual Greek text of Homer was, however, not known in the Middle Ages; the stories came down by hearsay and through the so-called *Ilias Latina* attributed to "Pindarus Thebanus" (still very tentatively identified as Baebius Italicus, perhaps of the first century A.D.). Note the garbled example provided by a thirteenth-century Oxford manuscript (fig. 3), where Homer himself is being given the flower moly (like nightshade, according to Pliny) by Mercury (Hermes in Homer), Roman (and Greek) messenger of the gods and god of eloquence, but Egyptian god of the underworld; in book 10 of the *Odyssey* Odysseus uses the magical powers of the herb to counter Circe's incantation. There is no good Latin translation of Homer before the mid-fourteenth century, when Leontius Pilatus's translation was widely copied until it was superseded by better translations in the fifteenth century.³ Though Dante could not know Homer directly, Homer and Dante serve as the great chronological poles: Homer's poetry was responsible for initiating the practice of mythography in Greek antiquity, and Dante's poetry was responsible not so much for ending it—it continued for several centuries—as for using specifically medieval versions of mythography in a unified way no later poet would.

What this survey will reveal is that the ancient classical techniques advanced by the pre-Socratics, Platonists, and Stoic philosophers can be compared with the allegorical senses defined by Dante in the fourteenth century in his famous "Letter to Can Grande." The moral, etymological, and physical types of Greek allegorism at least vaguely resemble, respectively, Dante's moral or tropological, allegorical, and anagogical levels, as defined in his letter to his patron, Can Grande della Scala. Dante's moral or tropological level, which applies to the virtues or vices of the individual human, corresponds to the moral level of the Stoics. The Stoic moral level of meaning, which sees the gods as expressions of human faculties or vices and virtues, remains the same whether Greek or Christian. Dante's allegorical level refers either to the life of Christ (if a sacred text) or to an idea (if a classical myth); often an elaborate etymological explanation accompanies this form of allegoresis. This allegorical level, which reveals truths about Christ or Christ's life, can be seen in some way as similar to the Stoic etymological, which probes meaning through the origins and development of words—suggesting an absolute moral reality outside of the human.

Herba Cirsion de radice: uncias
 .vi. Amuli: uncias. vi. Decet: quia
 et hos duos: de adipis: nulpis: uncias tres
 et in panis linteis: et impones: in raderis
 effocum botum. Conter capiti fricatio.
Herba Cirsion superius pars frica
 et bene crica: et aqua ponderis nu
 tria: et capiti fricatio apposita: de eo ossa
 fracta extrahit: aut siquid in corpore so
 porum fuit: uel si pedibus calcata sint
 ossa alius serpentis: eadem herba con
 tra omnia uenena ualeat. Homini her

te Gallitricum aliud.



Herba Gallitricum p se diligenter
 crica: strumtisq: uirginum im
 posita: eas pfectissime sanat. ad capillos
 etiam Gallitricum tra. utangendo.
 et cum oleo bene deuota: omniq:
 corporis cum ea uirerit: purgas: capil
 li nigri efficiuntur. si sequenti lune
 ris.



Homini
 herbe:
 immo
 luum.

Herba Immolam: clarissima
 omniū et herbarum. homini ar
 cessante. in uentore ipsius mercurio
 affigunt: que rursu cum beneficio de
 monstratur. rotunda radice: in grapi
 in magnitudine cepe est: ad dolorem
 herba Immolam con. uarietis.
 caula. et imposita: dolorem maia
 pfectissime sanat.
 homerus. Mercurius.



maximas virtutes habet.
 Agrestis dicitur Choron. A lq: Dia
 luron. A lq: Scorpion. A lq: Cracē
 uocant. A lq: Croneron. et roptē.
 autē: Cinacel Galli: uiscorpion.
 Pyrogast: Hūene. Egyptij: Ver
 camū. Itali: oulecciam ea dicit.
 Nascentur ubiq: locis cultis: et multis.

Finally, Dante's anagogical level corresponds not to the physical or natural world but to a *supernatural* world, referring to the life of the Church or the afterlife; it thus transforms the physical level of classical allegorical interpretation. But the physical meanings of the Stoics parallel Dante's anagogical in that both reveal truths about the cosmos; the difference is that the Stoics were interested in Hades and earth whereas the Christians, like Dante, were interested in the underworld and paradise. The remarkable parallels between ancient philosophical and medieval theological and scholastic practice cannot perhaps be explained only by direct influence. At any rate, however, the allegoresis of the Stoics and pre-Socratics in its rationalization of classical mythology did not die out in the Middle Ages, as another Dante text, a passage on allegory in *Convivio* 2.1, attests.

We will trace the origins of mythography back to Greece in its accompaniment of the development of Stoic and Platonic cosmography and ethics and forward into the fourfold or polysemous exegesis of the text by Christian scholars in the Middle Ages. We will also explore the reasons for the preservation of classical myth in the Middle Ages, including the rise of medieval schools and medieval universities and the need to read Latin by means of the authoritative texts of Virgil, Statius, Lucan, Ovid, and others. From them emerged traditions of school commentary that would affect the portrayal of the gods as characters in late medieval poetry and would develop as an early form of literary criticism in the Middle Ages.

I. STOIC COSMOGRAPHY AND ETHICS IN READING HOMER'S SCANDALOUS GODS

In ancient Greek justifications of Homer there were basically three kinds of hidden meaning, or *hyponoia*, that licentious material could conceal—the natural or physical, the moral, and the grammatical.⁴ The physical undermeaning referred to natural forces or phenomena, the moral undermeaning referred to human faculties or qualities, and the grammatical referred to the philosophical reality of a name. In the Greek period the physical meaning was initially the most discussed, followed by the other two, while in the Middle Ages all three were given equal weight from the earliest examples. But in the Middle Ages the grammatical and moral came to be conflated into a single sense, very important in the period up to and including the Carolingian period (the late eighth through the ninth century) though it was supplemented (even supplanted) by a fourth type of

meaning, the Christian Neoplatonic, introduced between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.

The earliest form of reading, the physical, was described by the pre-Socratic philosophers in the sixth century B.C. and passed to the Stoics, both groups wishing to defend Homer; it was then used as a method of biblical exegesis by Philo, Origen, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine. The moral type was passed from the Platonists of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. to the Neoplatonists of the early centuries A.D.—from Plato to the pseudo-Heraclitus to Porphyry, Iamblichus, Macrobius, and so into the Middle Ages. The grammatical, the third and latest form, closely related to the moral, came from the etymologizing Sophists and Stoics of the fourth century B.C. and passed into the Alexandrian school, especially to Origen and Porphyry, and then to St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and Isidore of Seville. Origen and Augustine used both the Stoic physical and the grammatical forms, and all of the methods together were used in the pseudo-Heraclitus of Pontus.

All these styles of reading stemmed from philosophic reactions to attacks on the morality of the gods of Homer and Hesiod. Homer, author of the epic poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Hesiod, author of the short epic treatise *Works and Days* and the cosmological poem explaining the origin of the gods, *Theogony*, were both criticized by early philosophers for their descriptions of the gods engaging in immoral behavior. Critics fantasized that both poets received appropriate punishments for their infractions in Hades: Pythagoras of Samos (582–500 B.C., the dates set by Diogenes Laertius), who supposedly descended to Hades, claimed that he had witnessed “the soul of Hesiod bound fast to a brazen pillar and gibbering, and the soul of Homer hung on a tree with serpents writhing about it, this being their punishment for what they had said about the gods.”⁵ Xenophanes sternly declared that both “Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach among humankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception.”⁶ Heraclitus (540–470 B.C.) also lambasted both Homer (“Homer deserves to be flung out of the contests and given a beating”) and, to a lesser extent, Hesiod (“Hesiod is the teacher of very many, he who did not understand day and night: for they are one”).⁷

In the century and a half after Homer's poems were composed, pre-Socratic philosophers first offered specifically physical, or cosmographic, allegorical interpretations in defense of the poets' treatment of the bickering of Zeus (Jupiter) and Hera (Juno) and his violence toward his wife and her son Hephaestus (Vulcan). One of the earliest defenses, that the narrative

veils secrets about the underworld, occurs in support of episodes in the first and fifteenth books of the *Iliad*. Near the end of book 1, Hera's son Hephaestus begs her to placate Zeus so that her consort will not batter her, reminding her that when Hephaestus took Hera's part one other time Zeus hurled him below the divine threshold to Lemnos, where he nearly died. At the beginning of book 15, as Zeus views the devastation of the Trojans and the felling of Hektor, Zeus angrily blames Hera for this situation and reminds her of his punishment for her antipathy toward her stepson Hēraklēs, when Zeus bound her with golden chain or cord, weighted her feet with anvils, and hung her from the aether and clouds. Both passages were interpreted by early defenders of Homer as descriptions of cosmological justice. For example, Pherecydes of Syros in the seventh century or mid-sixth century B.C. in *Heptamychos* (*The Seven-Chambered Cosmos*) explains that an underworld for the punishment of the gods exists beneath our known world: "Below this part of the world is the Tartarean part; its guardians are the daughters of Boreas, the Harpies and the Storm-wind. Thither does Zeus banish any god who commits an act of lawlessness."⁸ According to Origen's recitation of this myth in *Contra Celsum*, pride or arrogance is the specific act of lawlessness that results in this punishment. Later, Celsus would agree with this cosmological interpretation: he understood that Zeus is really God and Hera is Matter, that the earth beneath the "divine threshold" is in reality the underworld, and that Hephaestus was sent there as punishment for his arrogance.⁹

Theagenes of Rhegium (ca. 525 B.C.), the first defender of Homer to use allegory explicitly, provided natural and moral explanations of another passage criticized by early philosophers. These two explanations would develop into separate approaches later in the evolution of mythography. In a scholium on the *Iliad* cited by Porphyry in the *Theomachy*, on the partisan involvement of the gods in the Trojan War, he explains the battling of the gods as representative of physical conflict among the elements: just as there exists a natural conflict between contrary elements, hot versus cold, light versus heavy, so also water quenches fire, with fire expressed by Apollo, Helios, and Hephaestus, and water by Poseidon and Scamander (and the moon by Artemis and the air by Hera).¹⁰ He also suggests such battling among the gods can be explained by moral oppositions. Athena or Phronesis (Wisdom) wars with Ares (Foolishness); Aphrodite (Desire) wars with Hermes (Logos, the Word, Reason).

The physical interpretations of Homer and Greek myths in general became more specific in the latter half of the fifth century B.C., especially

in the hands of the Ionian and Sophist philosophers, and later, in the fourth century, with the Cynics. Several Ionians argued that Homer's purpose had been to propound virtue and justice (not to excuse whatever apparently immoral divine activities were portrayed).¹¹ Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (ca. 460 B.C.) views Zeus as mind and Athena as art or technical skill,¹² and the rays of the sun as the arrows of Apollo.¹³ He says, "We give the name Iris to the reflection of the sun on the clouds. It is therefore the sign of a storm, for the water which flows round the cloud produces wind or forces out rain."¹⁴ His pupil Metrodorus of Lampsacus (d. 464 B.C.), according to Tatian, claimed that neither the gods nor the heroes existed but they were introduced by the poet for artistic reasons, "referring all to physiology," so that Hera, Athena, and Zeus can be equated with "the parts of nature and dispositions of the elements."¹⁵ Similarly, Metrodorus correlated the heroes of the *Iliad* with physical phenomena—Agamemnon with aether, Achilles with the sun, Helen with the earth, and Paris with the air—while he identified the gods as having cosmological influence on and correspondence to parts of the human body—Demeter to the liver, Dionysus to the spleen, and Apollo to the gall.¹⁶ That such cosmographic explanations were common is clear from the comedies and memoirs of Epicharmus of Syracuse (ca. 550–460 B.C.): Jupiter is facetiously said to be "Air; who is wind and clouds, and afterwards rain, and from rain comes cold, and after that, wind and again air. Therefore these elements of which I tell you are Jupiter, because with them he helps all mortals, cities and animals."¹⁷

The Sophists stressed etymological interpretation of myth even as they explained the gods as aspects of the natural world. Prodicus of Ceos, in the latter half of the fifth century B.C., used etymology to explain how myths cloak truth: he declared that the ancients found that the sun, moon, rivers, springs, and all other things beneficial to humankind were gods because they served humankind, as was the case with the Nile for the Egyptians. Thus bread was understood as Demeter, wine as Dionysus, water as Poseidon, fire as Hephaestos.¹⁸ Later, Democritus (ca. 420 B.C.), although not a Sophist, similarly equated Zeus with air, and noted that "Tritogeneia," literally "thrice-born," means that wisdom, or Athena, consists of three parts.¹⁹

In the fourth century Plato advanced etymological allegorism as a reflection of both moral and physical allegorism. In the *Cratylus*, he begins with Homer, as do so many of the philosophers. Plato argues that Homer correctly attributed names to particular things, as witnessed in the denotations of such names, for example, as "Xanthus" for the name of a river

rather than "Scamander," and the connotations of such names, for example, of Agis as "leader," Polemarchus as "war lord," and Acesimbrotus as "healer of mortals." But Plato also argues that names reveal an innate moral reality in addition to etymological connotations. Thus the name "Agamemnon" ("admirable for remaining") mirrors his character as "one who would resolve to toil to the end and to endure, putting the finish upon his resolution by virtue. And proof of this is his long retention of the host at Troy and his endurance."²⁰ The discussion concludes, after additional examples are cited, with a display of how etymological allegorism can also support a physical interpretation of the gods: the names of the gods are representative (for the earliest Greeks, at least) of the sun, moon, earth, stars, and sky because the Greek word for "god" (*theos*) comes from the fact of their constant running (*thein*).

Such etymological and physical allegorism culminated in the practices of the Stoics, who in the fourth to third centuries B.C. created a system of allegorical details in support of Homer: they assumed that Homer wrote with an understanding of Stoic physical and moral dogma.²¹ Zeno of Citium (340–265 B.C.), father of the Stoics, rationalized Homer's use of the gods by showing how all of them fit into an orderly natural schema wherein names signify natural forces.²² The major gods represent the regions of the universe: Juno is air, Jupiter, the heavens, Neptune, the sea, Vulcan, fire;²³ aether is a god and a principle of reason;²⁴ the Titans are the elements of the universe, as determined by the etymology of their name.²⁵ Zeno's teachings were expanded and developed by his followers, his pupil Cleanthes of Assos (b. ca. 300 B.C.) and Cleanthes's pupil Chrysippus (ca. 280 B.C.), as well as others.²⁶

Perhaps in reaction to the allegorical nature of much of Greek philosophy, the literal level developed its own school of adherents through a form of historical (nonallegorical) interpretation known as euhemerism, after its fourth-century B.C. founder Euhemerus, a Sicilian from Messina (fl. 316 B.C.). In his opposition to the allegorists Euhemerus rationalized the appearance of the gods as historical persons. While his rationalizations had been anticipated by a minor Stoic named Persaeus, who thought these gods had been men who had made discoveries in the arts and sciences improving our lives, Euhemerus did offer an important contribution to this school. In his *Sacred History*, on the basis of his travel records he inferred that the places sacred to the various gods and goddesses in fact were merely burial places of men and women. The importance of the work is reflected in its currency: it was later translated into Latin by Ennius.²⁷ In addition, both

Cicero and Plutarch referred to this interpretation of the gods, although they denied it as absurd.

Among the extant fragments of Euhemerus's work, treatments have survived for Jupiter as "the father both of gods and men" (and also, strangely, as the firmament);²⁸ for the Prometheus myth, which was attributed to Agroetas, Theophrastus, and Herodorus, in a scholium on Apollonius of Rhodes's *Argonautica*;²⁹ for the myth of Cerberus revealed as a poisonous snake and for the myth of Geryon revealed as a king, in the view of Hecataeus;³⁰ and for the serpent Pytho revealed as a cruel king known as the Dragon (according to Ephorus).³¹

Euhemerus's impact as a thinker is suggested by the fact that he had followers—chiefly Palaephatus, who thought myths were misunderstandings of ambiguous phraseology and accordingly wrote a rationalizing essay on the subject, but also Polybius and Diodorus—even though he and not his followers had the greatest influence on others.³² Indeed, Euhemerus's method and his interpretations are preserved in the third book of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, in the euhemeristic interpretations offered by Cotta the pontifex, as we shall see. Beyond this classical continuation of Euhemerus's ideas voiced by Cicero's high priest, Euhemerus also had a profound effect on the early Church Fathers, many of whom cited his rationalizations of the gods as historical persons and passed them on to the Middle Ages, and on Isidore of Seville (A.D. 575–636) in the enormously influential *Etymologiae*, which promoted not only the idea that the gods as men had founded and ruled over various cities but also the idea that they had discovered various arts and trades (Aesculapius, medicine; Mercury, the mercantile trade; Prometheus, statue making).

In the century before and after Christ several Roman writers fully developed etymological, moral, and physical allegorism and also historical euhemerism, among them Cicero in *De natura deorum*, especially in the second book, and the pseudo-Heraclitus at the end of the first century A.D. in his *Allegoricae Homericae*. Both of these treatises were heavily influenced by the earlier Stoic philosophers: although Cicero is an Academic and not a Stoic, nevertheless he cites Stoic sources.

De natura deorum, whose title resembles those of works by Zenocrates and Chrysippus, is an imaginary dialogue or debate in three books, intended as an encyclopedia of cosmology and theology.³³ The dialogue is set in 77 or 76 B.C. at the home of Gaius Aurelius Cotta, a well-known pontifex or priest of the first quarter of the century and an adherent of the Academy who was also expert on Philo. The other debaters included Gaius Velleius

(a typical Epicurean and a real person about whom nothing is now known), Quintus Lucilius Balbus (a typical Stoic), and Cicero himself (who in the year 77 or 76 would have been too young to participate actively in the debate, although he claimed to belong to the Academy). The three books are divided to reflect three different approaches to the gods, with the Epicurean Velleius in the first book relaying a history of the Greek philosophers, the Stoic Lucilius Balbus in the second book declaiming on the gods, and in the third the Academic Cotta denigrating them but in the process also disseminating bits of information about them. The Stoic defense of the gods in the second book, which was derived from Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, provides a very clear exposition of physical allegorism, and the long genealogies of the gods in the third book (for example, for the three Jupiters, four Vulcans, etc., all with different parents) inadvertently affirm Euhemerus's position. In the first book, what information there is centers on the physical and cosmological explanations of the gods; in the second Cicero adds the etymological and moral explanations; but in the third primarily genealogical or historical explanations begin with the oldest gods like Aether and Day and move to the least important and most recent heroes like Aegisthus and Paris.

The Stoic defense of the gods in the second book is derived from the writings of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus on the gods as natural forces, "physica ratio" (*Nat. deorum* 2.63), with the immoral interactions of the gods perceived as veiling cosmography. For example, the fable of the castration of Caelus by Saturn signifies that the highest heavenly aether, that seed-fire which generates all things, did not require the equivalent of human genitals to proceed in its generative work (2.64). But Cicero depends heavily on etymological allegorism to make his points. When Jupiter puts Saturn in chains in an attempt to restrain his course and bind him in the stars' network, Cicero understands that "iuvans pater" (helping father, our father and the father of the gods) is attempting to bind and restrain time (in that "Saturn" comes from "quod saturaretur annis" ["sated with years"], 2.64).

The comments on the gods by Cotta in the third book—literalistic, euhemeristic, and genealogical in nature—are anticipated by Balbus's comments in the Stoic second book on several heroes, such as Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Aesculapius, Liber and Libera, and Romulus, all of whom Balbus regards as men or women who have been deified for their great contributions to humankind ("quorum cum remanerent animi atque aeternitate fruerentur, rite di sunt habiti, cum et optimi essent et aeterni,"

2.62). Cotta, commenting on such beliefs in those heroes as gods in the third book, responds contemptuously that this Stoic philosophy is rubbish, superstitions which appeal to the ignorant (3.39). His premise and conclusion remain the same: those which they call gods are not “*figuras deorum*” but “*rerum naturas*,” whatever men may believe and the Stoic philosophers conceive to rationalize them (3.63). While Cotta does not seem to understand Stoic philosophy at all, he does disseminate it. In his long diatribe intended to prove that these gods and heroes are natural things or beings and not divinities, Cotta discusses six different Hercules coming from six different regions with six different fathers: Hercules the son of Jupiter and Lysithoë; the Egyptian Hercules, son of the Nile; Hercules of the Digits at Mount Ida; Hercules son of Jupiter and Asteria and father of the nymph Carthago; an Indian Hercules, Belus; and Hercules, son of Jupiter and Alcmena (3.42). He also discovers three Jupiters, and similarly multiple sons and daughters of Jupiter, including the sun god, Vulcan, Mercury, Aesculapius, Apollo, Diana, Dionysus, Venus, Minerva, and Cupid.

Similarly Stoic in their desire to embrace all natural and moral knowledge through the principles of etymological allegorism are the *Allegoriae Homericae* of pseudo-Heraclitus (of Pontus, at the time of Augustus) and the *Compendium theologiae Graecae* of Cornutus (at the time of Nero).³⁴ While both writers addressed themselves to Homer, with Cornutus presenting a list of etymologies of the names of the gods and their epithets to reveal Greek origins, for the more important pseudo-Heraclitus the myths of the gods and heroes had three types of signification that summarize the three mythographic strands—the historical, in the explanation of events (the tradition inherited from Euhemerus); the natural, in allegories of conflict between forces (the physical tradition inherited from the early Heraclitus and the pre-Socratics); and the moral, in various personal and psychological qualities (the tradition inherited from the etymologizing Stoics like Chrysippus).

These Roman scholars who preserved so well the methods of Greek Stoic allegorism met with varied receptions in the Middle Ages. Cicero played a more important role than did the pseudo-Heraclitus:³⁵ St. Augustine used *De natura deorum* in *De civitate Dei*; St. Gregory in the sixth century wanted to destroy and ban all works by Cicero, his indignation in proportional measure to Cicero's importance; Abelard admired him in the twelfth century; the Italian Renaissance found him especially significant. More important, many of the Stoic ideas in *De natura deorum* influenced Macrobius, Martianus Capella, and Fulgentius, and through them a variety of

later medieval mythographers including the Vatican mythographers. Pseudo-Heraclitus affected the cast of Homeric scholia and other late Greek works which were not vitally important to the development of medieval mythography, such as the pseudo-Plutarchan *De vita et poesi Homeri*, the Stoic passages in Porphyry's *Homeric Questions*, and Eustathius's comments upon the Homeric poems.³⁶

At this stage, the history of mythography was profoundly affected by the advent of Christianity, which caused a dissociation between mythographic methods and mythographic substance and subjects. This dissociation of form from matter resulted in two consequences important for our study. The first consequence, which affected mythographic methodology, was more far-reaching and more important. The various religious controversies of this period—between Christians and Jews and between Christians and pagans³⁷—allowed apologists to adapt to Judaism or Christianity Stoic methods for rationalization of classical myths, thus preserving those methods of mythography for the Middle Ages. In the early centuries A.D., the Jewish and Christian scholars of the Greek Alexandrian School resuscitated early Hebrew exegesis in defense of the apparent immorality of the Old Testament. Thereafter, in the late second to the fourth centuries, the methods of allegoresis inherited from the pre-Socratic and Stoic philosophers were applied chiefly to scriptural materials, largely because the myths and their classical contexts were denigrated by the Christians as part of a move to discredit paganism. Euhemeristic methodology also was transmogrified into two late antique forms of interpretation markedly different from mythographic allegoresis and centering on the literal (or historical) sense—typology and etiology.

The second result of the Christian dissociation of form from content has to do with mythographic subject matter. The early Church Fathers who wrote in Latin, in their attacks on the pagan gods and the elaborate cosmic machinery often associated with them by the Stoics, often unwittingly preserved those earlier Greek mythographic interpretations which Euhemerus had attempted to strip away. The latter phenomenon is apparent especially in the writings of Tertullian (A.D. 145–220), Minucius Felix (ca. A.D. 210), Arnobius (fl. A.D. 300), Lactantius (ca. A.D. 306), and most influentially, St. Augustine (A.D. 354–430).

It is important, however, to qualify both of these statements of influence. Many of these writings, including those of the Alexandrian School, appeared in Greek, a language used because of the revival of Greek culture in the second century under the impact of imperial patronage and because

of the Greek New Testament; this revival on the one hand brought back the stylistic effects of the early Greek sophists but on the other may have influenced the use of Greek for liturgical purposes as a universal language by the Western Church until the mid-third century.³⁸ Because of the limited duration of this revival of interest in Greek, some of the writers mentioned here did not directly affect the Middle Ages, or at least the development of medieval mythography. Whether they wrote in Greek or in Latin, writers like Justin Martyr, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Clement and Origen of Alexandria³⁹ were not much liked by the medieval West, and although the fourth-century Latin writer Lactantius was the earliest Christian author to have any vogue in the Middle Ages, he was not very influential; instead, it was Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Hilary of Poitiers who commanded the respect of the Middle Ages.

II. CHRISTIAN READINGS OF SACRED AND PAGAN TEXTS

In relation to the first consequence of the advent of Christianity and its effect on the history of mythographic allegoresis, that is, the preservation of the early mythographic method, the continuing reliance upon figurative rather than literal interpretation of the Bible derived initially from the Alexandrian School of mysticism (as opposed to the literalistic School of Antioch). The important Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (20 B.C.—A.D. 50) held the same ideas about Jewish sacred literature that the Stoics held about Homeric literature⁴⁰ and even incorporated Stoic methods of exegesis employed in the defense and study of Homer in his interpretation of licentious or incestuous stories of the Old Testament: he viewed persons and things of the Old Testament as faculties of the soul, and tried to prove that Greek philosophical ideas, through the faculties of the soul, underlay the story of the Old Testament.⁴¹

Philo's followers Clement (A.D. 150–245) and Origen (A.D. 185?–254?) of Alexandria were Christian theologians who wrote in Greek and used and adapted Stoic methods for their treatment of the Old Testament. Clement, Origen's teacher and a founder of biblical criticism in debt to the philosophizing Jew Philo, introduced a rabbinical version of Greek interpretation into the Christian realm of *apologeticus* and *exegesis*. Plato to him was a great Christian before Christ, a "Moses Atticus"; but Clement also believed pagan writings rightly understood could yield Christian meanings and thus he divided all nonliteral meaning into ethical, theological, and physical levels, deriving from the Greeks his understanding of the

veiling of first principles of things in enigmas, symbols, allegories.⁴² Origen in his *Contra Celsum* battled the view of the Jewish Celsus that Christian doctrines were warped versions of Platonic idealism, or that the rites of the Christians derived from Stoic philosophy, Jewish tradition, Mithraic mysteries, the myths of Typhon, Osiris, and the Cabeiri, or even that the biography of Christ combined aspects of the myths of Hercules, Bacchus, Aesculapius, and Orpheus.⁴³ In one sense Origen then is *anti-euhemerist*—toward Christ as a divinity. Indeed, Origen brought multiple senses of Scripture to the Christian Church. Treating Philo as a Christian Father, Origen developed the simple contrast of the *sensus historicus* or *literals* and the *sensus spiritualis* into a threefold schema of literal, moral, and spiritual senses.⁴⁴

The Latin Church Fathers also distinguished levels of meaning in biblical texts in a way similar to that of the mythographers. Tertullian distinguished two levels of meaning, the literal and the figurative, but believed that the figurative could be correctly understood only by the Church.⁴⁵ St. Ambrose (d. 397) offered three only superficially novel senses—the somatic (literal, grammatical), psychic (moral), and pneumatic (allegorical, mystical) interpretation of Scripture; in contrast, St. Jerome (ca. 340–420) presented a scientific, objective, more historical method of exegesis.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, although he vowed never again to read Cicero or Virgil,⁴⁷ St. Jerome influenced the development of allegory in this period through his interest in etymology as an index of moral reality, a view markedly similar to the earlier Stoic views. He played on Hebrew words and names in the *Libri nominum Hebraicorum*, which influenced later philosophical treatments of words, such as those in Porphyry and St. Augustine, Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and later in the dictionaries of Osborn of Gloucester, Papias the Lombard, and Huguccio of Pisa.⁴⁸

Of all the Church Fathers, St. Augustine was the most substantial contributor to the doctrinal development of the allegorical senses (and yet one of the most influential adversaries of paganism). In his *De doctrina Christiana* he encouraged clerical study of the branches of knowledge of the trivium so as to better understand the multiple meanings contained in the Word of God. His interest in allegory, chiefly visible in the second book of *De doctrina* and inherited in part from Origen's *sensus historicus* (literal level) and *sensus spiritualis* (moral and spiritual levels), led him to apply the old Stoic idea of physical, moral, and grammatical (or etymological) allegoresis to the Bible. Augustine objected to improper interpretations being applied to Christ in the New Testament, such as the anointing of his feet with nard

in the manner of dissolute women, just as the early pre-Socratics objected to improper interpretations of the gods in Homer. St. Augustine drew upon Greek allegory in homiletic works like *Enarrationes in psalmos* and also used multiple explication in apologetics like *De utilitate credendi*.⁴⁹ He explains four different levels of meaning, as did Jerome, and, like Origen, distinguishes the literal from the figurative meanings, but Augustine takes care to warn in *De doctrina Christiana* that grammar and other *artes* be used to understand the sense of the literal level before the student moves on to the figurative levels of meaning. To read a text by the letter only, without understanding its figurative meaning, is to read it carnally, according to the Old Law, as if a work had a body (letter) and a soul (figure); “*Littera occidit*,” he notes in glossing Second Corinthians 3:6.⁵⁰

Other Church Fathers followed Augustine in differentiating the literal from the figurative sense, generally privileging the figurative sense as long as it was used for scriptural exegesis. Eucherius of Lyons (d. ca. 449–55) agrees with the distinction between two major senses, allegorical and spiritual versus literal, although he posits only three senses—literal, tropological, and anagogical.⁵¹ Gregory the Great (d. 604) in *Moralia in Job*, intended to interpret the book of Job according to the literal, allegorical, and moral senses, but after the fourth book concentrated on the moral and allegorical (valued as highly here as in his homilies on the Gospels and the book of Ezekiel).⁵² Last but not least, Isidore of Seville (d. 636) wrote on the allegories of scripture in a work entitled *Allegoriae quaedam sacrae scripturae* and also in one on the exegesis of scriptural texts, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum seu quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, important for the propagation of allegorical exegesis of the Bible; thereafter every commentary on the Bible for three centuries showed Isidore’s influence.⁵³

Euhemerism in the hands of the Church Fathers did influence the development of two forms of interpretation different from the exegetical methods of the Stoic allegorists. Indeed, in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, euhemerism as a method came to be preserved in the factual—or literal, historical—level of meaning, a source for what came to be known as biblical typology (in which the Old Testament prefigures persons mentioned in the New) and also for etiological interpretation (having to do with causes).

Both euhemerism and typology are literalistic systems of meaning. The euhemerist reader understands the Greek and Roman gods as historical persons; the typological reader understands Old Testament figures as types

of Christ or the Virgin Mary. Such a system made reading the ancient poets an acceptable activity to Greek philosophers and reading the Old Testament an acceptable activity to Christian scholars and teachers. In this sense a kinship can be discerned between euhemerism, typological analysis, and mythography: for all their variety of methods and goals, they all defend reading the text.

Typology is, then, a biblical cousin to classical euhemerism, which also centers on *historia*. The Greek Christian theologians of the first two centuries A.D. adopted typological explanations of the pagan myths using a form of symbolism (rather than allegory) involving the literal or historical level of a narrative.⁵⁴ Justin Martyr, in his *Apologia pro Christianis*, at one point interpreted Hercules, Bacchus, Bellerophon, and Perseus positively, as types of Christ, with the strength of Hercules, for example, anticipating that of Christ. In another place Justin viewed them more negatively, as figures created by devils to block the progress of Christianity, so that, for instance, Perseus's immaculate origin would weaken belief in the Virgin Birth.⁵⁵ Theophilus saw the ancient myths of the Greeks as corresponding to biblical accounts, as in the floods of Deucalion and Clymenus which parallel the deluge of Noah.⁵⁶ Tatian viewed Moses as leader of the most ancient of nations who lived before the Trojan War.⁵⁷

That these two groups of special pleaders, the Christian euhemerists and biblical typologists, both expatiated on the literal level of the text rather than on figurative levels becomes clearer when examining a definition of the different levels of meaning, including the etiological, offered by St. Augustine in *De utilitate credendi*. St. Augustine distinguishes between the literal—which includes the historical (from *historia*, the letter), the etiological (from *aetiologia*, consideration of causes), and the analogical (from *analogia*, typology, the study of a text in relation to the congruity of the Old and New Testaments)—and the allegorical (from *allegoria*, figurative interpretation), a distinction similar to that of Origen. Nevertheless, he subsumes the first three levels under *historia*.⁵⁸ For Augustine, "history" is God's history, the history of Creation: in *De Genesi ad litteram* 1.1 he describes the fourfold division in a sacred book as "things of eternity," "facts of history," "future events foretold," and "moral precepts."⁵⁹

Etiology—where things come from—was of interest to euhemerists and the Christian apologists; analogy—comparing two different but in some way similar things, for example, the Old and New Testaments—was of interest to the Greek Alexandrians. Neither reading goes beyond the historical level of meaning; rather, they compare one text with a privileged

text or with "reality." Greek gods etiologically may be seen as mortal kings; Old Testament heroes who seem virtuous can be paralleled with New Testament figures by analogy. Moses may be seen *by analogy* as a type of Christ, through the strength of his faith in God; he is then an anticipation or prefiguring of Christ. Though Augustine uses "mystical" (allegorical) interpretation in *De civitate Dei*, he elsewhere and more often uses a typological interpretation that expounds on concrete historical events in the Hebraic sense.⁶⁰

The etiological sense was never very popular in post-Augustinian theory, perhaps because of its connection with the literal rather than the figurative sense of meaning: in the eighth century, Bede identifies "typical" with "allegorical," and in the thirteenth, St. Thomas Aquinas again notes, in the *Summa theologiae*, that the three Augustinian topics—*historia* (the literal sense), *aetiologia* (etiology, having to do with causes), and *analogia* (the relationship of like things), are all subsumed under *historia*.⁶¹ The typological sense, as defined by St. Augustine, later merged with the moral or tropological sense—so that Old Testament figures came to represent specific virtues—or else merged with the allegorical sense, so that Old Testament figures foreshadowed Christ and events in his life. By the fourteenth century this second merger had become predominant in discussions of the senses, but was often combined with the first merger as well so that Old Testament figures signified not only Christ but also various virtues and ideas.

As for the pagan myths themselves, the Latin apologists and Church Fathers utilized euhemerism to discredit paganism and the demigods in particular. The different levels of meaning were valid for biblical texts only, even though the study of pagan literature was permitted and pursued.⁶² Tertullian, who believed that the figurative level could be correctly understood only by the Church, especially objected to pagan allegorical readings (for example, Vesta as fire; the Muses—Camēnae—as water; the Great Mother as earth; Osiris as the rejuvenation of life in the natural cycle). Tertullian also denigrated Saturn, Jupiter, and their disciples as murderers and incestuous fornicators; he viewed Moses as a contemporary of Inachus living before Saturn and a thousand years before the Trojan War, or fifteen hundred years before Homer. Like the anti-Homeric philosophers and euhemerists before him, he condemned all poets as liars from whom no truth about the gods could be expected.⁶³

For the Latin writers who believed in Christianity and who openly disparaged paganism, the euhemeristic (or historical) rationalization of the

gods was an important tool. Minucius Felix (ca. 210) portrayed in his *Octavius* a dialogue among the Christian Octavius, the pagan Caecilius, and the arbiter Minucius, with the result that Christianity defeats Epicureanism. Arnobius (fl. 300), an African professor of rhetoric, after converting to Christianity wrote *Adversus nationes* as a pledge of fidelity to a mistrustful bishop. In the first two books he apologized for Christianity and in the last five attacked mythology as found in the poets and theater; in the best euhemeristic fashion he mocked moral and physical allegorization of myths and reduced the gods to men.⁶⁴ Lactantius (ca. 306), like Arnobius a convert, in contrast was not opposed to the Egyptian cults but rather regarded the pagan gods as literary souvenirs. He reintroduced two systems, one euhemeristic and historical (he actually quotes Euhemerus in describing the gods as conquerors, legislators, and so on), the other Stoic (that is, he views the gods as natural forces). As a pupil of Arnobius, Lactantius wrote a work entitled *Divinae institutiones* that was structured similarly to that of his teacher, in that three of its books attack paganism and four celebrate Christianity as the true religion—with much information about paganism perpetuated in those first three books. Like Arnobius he applauded euhemeristic justifications of the heroes and gods, as in the cases of Hercules and Saturn.⁶⁵

The greatest figure to discredit paganism was the Church Father Augustine, whose *De civitate Dei* attacked paganism in a way similar to that of Tatian, Clement and Origen, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Arnobius, and Lactantius, and who similarly advanced the euhemeristic interpretation of the gods as divinized men so popular with the other writers. St. Augustine's references to pagan deities in *De civitate Dei*, many drawn from Varro's lost *Antiquitates*, are mostly negative: throughout he objects to the variety and licentiousness of the gods and in mentioning pagan worship of them attempts to convince his reader of the superiority of Christianity.⁶⁶ Although Augustine greatly loved Virgil and felt that the truth about God or his Son might exist in heathen works, his view of the pagan gods was basically euhemeristic—for example, his view of Aesculapius and Mercury, for which he uses the third, euhemeristic, book of Cicero's *De natura deorum*—and references to the divinities outside *De civitate Dei* are few and incidental.⁶⁷

After the close of the patristic era, the fourfold method of allegorical interpretation continued to be applied in Bible commentaries by theologians and eventually was assimilated into the *artes praedicandi* by preachers, whereas mythographic allegoresis continued in the Middle Ages, especially

in the works of Neoplatonic philosophers and the commentaries on certain classics of the school grammarians. We shall examine these two developments separately, beginning with the fourfold method of allegoresis.

The conduit for the transmission of scriptural allegoresis from the Greek Alexandrians to the later Middle Ages was provided by the Latin Fathers and early commentators; thereafter, Benedictine and Carolingian commentators interested in glossing the four senses included Aldhelm, Bede, and Hraban Maur.⁶⁸ Among the later writers and commentators of the twelfth century were John of Salisbury,⁶⁹ Bonaventure,⁷⁰ and, one of the most important, Hugh of St. Victor, whose *Didascalicon* urged three readings of Scripture, the historical, allegorical, and tropological. Hugh also declared in *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris* that *allegoria* comes from a relation between two concretes: "Est autem allegoria, cum per id quod ex littera significatum proponitur, aliud aliquid sive in praeterito sive in praesenti sive in futuro factum significatur" ["allegory exists, moreover, when that meaning which is set forth literally, *ex littera*, signifies something done either in the past, the present, or the future"]. After Scripture is studied historically, he goes on, then it can be studied allegorically and morally (tropologically).⁷¹ He is followed by St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whom we have already mentioned,⁷² and by Hugh of St. Cher. Hugh of St. Cher notes that "historia docet factum, tropologia quid faciendum, allegoria quid intellegendum, analogia quid appetendum" ["history teaches what has been done, tropology what is to be done, allegory what is to be understood, analogy what is to be striven for"]; he also compares the four senses to the four coverings of the tabernacle, the four winds, the fourfold cherubim, and the four rivers of paradise.⁷³

More important for the history of mythographic allegoresis, the purpose of scriptural allegoresis gradually changed in the Middle Ages as the power of the Church increased. From institutional apology and textual rationalization emerged the Augustinian focus on the spiritual training of the individual cleric, needed to propagate the Church teachings, and, later still, on the spiritual edification and enhancement of the Church's members. By the twelfth century, the fourfold method was regarded as an aid to the mystical *ascensus ad Deum*; by the fourteenth century, preachers intent on combatting heresy and the weakening of the Church used the method to adorn their sermons.

In the later Middle Ages, if not in ancient Greece, both interpretations of meaning, literal and figurative, were viewed as equally true, but true in

different ways. St. Bonaventure in discussing the "fourth light," that which illuminates the mind for the understanding of truth, declares: "Although in its *literal* sense it is *one*, still, in its spiritual and *mystical* sense, it is *threefold*, for in all the books of Sacred Scripture, in addition to the *literal* meaning which the words outwardly express, there is understood a threefold *spiritual* meaning."⁷⁴ The four senses might overlap but there is no ambiguity or equivocation, according to St. Thomas: "These various readings do not set up ambiguity or any other kind of mixture of meanings, because, as we have explained, there are many, not because one term may signify many things, but because the things signified by the term can themselves be the signs of other things."⁷⁵ Most important, the literal meaning is one with, inhabited by, the figurative meaning: they are, like God and human in the Incarnation, one and the same. Dante declares in his "Letter to Can Grande," now citing Aristotle, "'As a thing is with respect to being, so it is with respect to truth'; and the reason for this is that the truth concerning a thing, which consists in the truth as its subject, is the perfect image of the thing as it is."⁷⁶

The seeds for this later usage appear even in the early Church Fathers. We have already discussed the well-known pedagogical passage from the *De doctrina Christiana* (3.5), which describes the Word of God as having an incarnational nature, both divine and human, in its figurative and literal meanings. Other Christian exegetes of the late empire similarly expatiated on the spiritual or figurative level of the text, as opposed to the literal, corporal level, as leading to understanding and then moral change. For John Cassian (ca. 360–435), allegorical methods of exegesis open up the deepest meaning of Scripture, beginning with *theoria*, or the three senses, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical, which terminate in the most profound understanding of divine and sacred truth. Thus, *theoria* or contemplation comes before purgation or *actualis*—correction of morals and elimination of vices.⁷⁷ Similarly, in the fifth century Eucherius of Lyons, in his preface to *Formulae spiritualis intellegentiae*, correlates the three figurative senses of allegory with the threefold "wisdom of the world"—physical, ethical, and logical or natural, moral, rational—concealed under a historical narrative, "quam gestorum narratione futurorum umbram praetulisse confirmat" ["which {allegory} they confirm has given, by a narration of deeds, a foreshadowing of the future"]. Thus the moral sense "ueritatem nobis factorum ac fidem relationis inculcat" ["inculcates in us the truth of the deeds and reliability in the telling of them"], the allegorical sense "ad uitae emendationem mysticos intellectus refert"

["applies mystical knowledge to the improvement of life"], and "anagoge ad sacratoria caelestium figurarum secreta perducit" ["the anagogical uncovers the more sacred secrets of the celestial figures"].⁷⁸ According to this fourfold method, "heaven" might be understood literally as the sky, tropologically as heaven, anagogically as angels, and allegorically as baptism.⁷⁹

By the Carolingian period, later in the Middle Ages, the three allegorical senses had multiplied into seven, in the *Enarrationes in libros regum* by Angelom of Luxeuil, all still meant to enhance faith, morals, and understanding. Angelom reveals that the original triple division was the origin of these *septem sigilli*, which include, in addition to *historialis*, the *allegorialis* (allegorical); a combination of these first two; the proper or topical in relation to any hint of Deity; *parabolaris* (one thing written in Scripture but something else meant—parable); prefigurations of the two comings of the Savior, of either the first or the second or both; and finally, the method (like *allegorialis* but differing in that it serves morals rather than faith) that has a "twofold preceptive quality, in that it both points to a definite moral to correct living, and also carries a figure of a larger life meant to be foreshown."⁸⁰

If the figurative senses exercise human faculties in understanding, as distinct from the more corporal association of the literal sense, then St. Bonaventure's twelfth-century definition makes this distinction more specialized: he relates the allegorical sense to the understanding of divinity, the tropological to the spiritual life, and the anagogical to the interrelationship between the two. There exists a threefold *spiritual* meaning, which the appropriate guide should pursue, whether the doctor of divinity, the preacher, or the mystic,

namely, the *allegorical*, by which we are taught what to believe concerning the Divinity and humanity; the *moral*, by which we are taught how to live; and the *anagogical*, by which we are taught how to be united to God. Hence all Sacred Scripture teaches these three truths: namely, the eternal generation and Incarnation of Christ, the pattern of human life, and the union of the soul with God. The first regards *faith*; the second, *morals*; and the third, the *ultimate end of both*. The doctors should labor at the study of the first; the preachers, at the study of the second; the contemplatives, at the study of the third. The first is taught chiefly by Augustine; the second, by Gregory; the third, by Dionysius. Anselm follows Augustine; Bernard follows

Gregory; Richard (of Saint Victor) follows Dionysius. For Anselm excels in reasoning; Bernard in preaching; Richard, in contemplating; but Hugh (of Saint Victor) in all three.⁸¹

The sermon-writer Robert of Basevorn, in his *Forma praedicandi* of 1322, understands the types of meaning to reflect the gradual perfecting of human in his ascent to God. The purpose in using the various senses differs in each case, but follows Bonaventure's distinction: "Faith is built by allegory; morals are formed by tropology; the contemplatives are raised by anagoge." Robert's allegorical sense, like his tropological sense, focuses on the human microcosm: human spiritual history (here represented by Old Testament figures and thereby suggesting the older typological sense) concerns Christ: "An allegorical exposition occurs when one part is understood by another. For example, by the fact that David slew Goliath it is understood that Christ overcame the devil." Robert explains that not all allegories are about Christ—they can also concern the Church and her parts, whether Gentiles, Jews, Apostles, the blessed Virgin, or the saints. The tropological sense focuses on our human and individual moral life: "A moral exposition occurs when one deed that must be done by us is understood through another, as the fact that David conquered Goliath signifies that every believer ought to overcome the devil." Finally, the anagogical sense concerns the Church Triumphant and the relationship between earth and heaven: "An anagogical exposition is one in which by some deed on earth is understood another that must be done in heaven or in the Church triumphant. This is seen in many mysteries concerning the temple, by which is meant the triumphant Church as the Church militant is understood by the tabernacle. Anagoge is derived from *ana* and *goge*, the former meaning 'up' and the latter, 'leading,' as if *leading up*."⁸²

In the late Middle Ages, such an exegetical technique probably developed concomitantly with the use of the rhetorical arts of the preacher. The late medieval preacher, unlike his predecessors interested in the fourfold method, was instructed to implement his moral aim through the use of the multiple senses of scriptural interpretation. Indeed, even as early as the eleventh century, Guibert of Nogent, in *Liber quo ordine sermo fieri debeat*, forming his *Prooemium ad commentarios in Genesim* (a work to provide the preacher with sermon materials), tells the preacher to enhance his moral aim by means of any or all of the four senses of scriptural interpretation.⁸³

While preaching was theoretically always significant, beginning with (presumably) the early defenders of the Old Testament, major preaching